1 INTRODUCTION

Why this Book?

Planning as a subject for study is one of the most multidisciplinary: practice and theory cut across and draw on a breadth of social sciences and other influences. It is an integrative concern, an endlessly dynamic and interesting field for study and reflection, Moreover the aims, activities and implications of planning affect us all. The concepts included here and the way that they are applied have been shaped and reshaped by policy makers and practitioners, by commentators and academics within planning and across the contributory disciplines. These ideas and labels are actively shaping practice and are shaped by practice – they are fluid and open to appropriation. All of these concepts therefore reflect and can be used to understand planning activity in different ways. In selecting these key concepts we have included ideas that provide a basis for understanding planning and the factors that shape the relationship between society and environment. Planning policies tend to reflect social choices about resource use and the organisation of the built and natural environment.

One of the founders of modern sociology, Emile Durkheim, contended that a concept was a collective and abstracted representation taken from the flow of time and space (cited in Urry, 2000b: 26). While this view may sound rather daunting, it intimates that not only are concepts contingent and imperfect, but also that they are crucial in communicating ideas. Dictionary definitions indicate that a concept can be a new idea or that which encapsulates some otherwise abstract idea. Concepts can also be seen as accessible or 'compressed packages' of theory and practice. They are constantly being traded and modified, used and applied by different people for a variety of reasons. As such it is useful to 'freeze' the process and unpack some of the key ideas that have influenced the planning community over the past half-century or more. Presenting them here is important both to ensure that they are

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understood and that their contingent nature is revealed. By doing this, one can 'place' oneself and assess specific practices within the planning field in a more considered way.

This task is part of a wider need to understand theory and research methods that have long been established as core elements of planning education (e.g. Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), 2011). This is largely because analytical skills and an ability to critique research and deconstruct practice are widely recognised as important tools for planners. Often there is a perceived divide between theory and practice, and significant difficulties exist in trying to bridge this gap. Many planning books concentrate on the facts, rules and institutional arrangements involved in planning without contextualising or putting these into a conceptual framework. Conversely, students often feel that courses covering theory and methods can be rather abstract and disconnected from practice. This may also be because theory texts tend to consider theory in paradigmatic or conceptual silos, are written in inaccessible language, or are otherwise seemingly detached from practice. In our view, this situation can be alleviated by a clearer explanation of the key concepts that planners use or that otherwise influence action.

Beyond the standard theory and research methods texts there are few books available for students of planning that systematically explore the ideas and structuring concepts that planners may need in order to understand and apply theory and to assist in reflecting on practice. The idea is not to suggest that 'planning' can be broken down and covered comprehensively through the key concepts here; rather, these ideas should be indicative and illuminating for people who are entering and operating in policy fields that shape or sustain the relevance of these concepts. These abstractions do form much of the 'operating logic' of planning and a basis for argumentation in planning. As such we hope that this text will act as a useful reference for anyone engaging with planning systems, with development processes or with land use policy, but in particular for students of town planning, human geography and other related fields.

Planners, in the widest sense, need to be able to conceptualise the processes, justifications and conditions of operation that surround them. Rather than being experts or possessing an unmanageable load of 'expert knowledge', our view is that twenty-first century planners need to be able to understand and 'place' the expert (and lay) knowledges of others and then proceed towards open and clear deliberation and decision-making. Part of this open toolkit involves a wide appreciation

of ideas, drivers and difficulties associated with planning and the management of environmental change.

In this spirit, a standard introductory text on planning in the UK includes in its preface the remark that: 'It is not easy (or even useful) to define the boundaries of town and country planning … planning policies are now far broader [than ever before]. Moreover the importance of interrelationships with other spheres of policy, which has long been accepted, is now enshrined in the "spatial planning approach"' (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006: xix). This sentiment underlines and extends the importance of conceptual awareness as a means of seeing the linkages, overlaps and gaps in spatial planning and indeed with planning practices comparatively. Without an arsenal of concepts that are well understood and forged through debate and honed through reflexive application, planning practice is unlikely to be robust or effective. Linkages can be made more easily across concepts and fields of planning, and an understanding of how issues are framed can be established more readily.

We cannot hope to be comprehensive in our coverage and instead we have included a selection of key concepts and organised them so that they can be read as an entirety, in groups or individually as a reference source. Contributory or overlapping ideas are indicated in each concept chapter. This underlines the way in which concepts are linked and where similar ideas may be discussed using synonyms or other labels.

Concepts 'For' and 'Of' Planning

This book provides a guide to ideas that shape planning practice and research, which are concepts both 'for' and 'of' planning and this is a deliberate choice; to draw in from outside the planning 'discipline'. Some concepts are generally discussed and are quite widely applicable in the social sciences, while others have been developed from the activities and concerns of planning practice. In some cases there may be different meanings or applications in circulation. Every concept expanded on in this book has its own history or 'back-story' that needs to be appreciated to some extent to understand its utility and limitations. In reading these concepts and the related explanations, the reader should be able to reflect on the assumptions that are brought to

bear on situations where these concepts are 'in the script'. There are no simple 'answers' or 'off the shelf' solutions or understandings in applying these. Pre-assembled attitudes and experiences, combined with the situation at hand, will substantially shape understanding.

The ongoing process of formulating and negotiating conceptual development is often in tension with practice and empirical knowledge. The idea of praxis as a dialogical engagement between theory and practice is a sound principle, yet is often hard to maintain. Practising planners do need to retain the sensibilities of researchers if they are to have any hope of achieving a dynamic and relevant approach to planning in the coming decades, as do researchers or teachers in relation to practice. While we do not intend to over-theorise and complicate this book, it is important that students understand the terms outlined below. This is not because they appear explicitly in the text but rather, they act as a reminder to absorb the possibilities of each chapter in the light of different ways of viewing the world.

Three principles of knowledge and methodology can be usefully dusted down and employed as a reflexive filter when reading this text:

- The first is the idea of *ontological disposition* – the attitude taken towards knowledge, truth and legitimacy and which therefore highlights 'what' is to be studied. This puts an onus on planners to consider the suppositions or empirical assumptions made by any particular theory, or that are contained in any conceptual explanation.
- The second principle is best encapsulated by the term *epistemological perspective*. That label implies that there are different ways of conceptualising the world and different ways to research it. Individuals are likely to favour particular approaches, readings or parameters that constitute validity. This may involve an explicit 'ruling out' of particular forms of knowledge, inputs or methods of knowledge collection, as a result of particular pedagogic styles, or what could be a result of socialisation processes. This connects to normalisation, and implicit favouring of particular representations of knowledge, 'truth' or 'fact'. This highlights that we tend to rule-out or rule-in different ideas, 'facts' or influences depending on how they may suit our purposes or chime with our pre-existing attitudes. In this way, the use of different research methods, as below, may promote or underpin different epistemological positions.
- Third, *methodological approaches* are different ways of collecting and analysing data (see, for example, Alasuutari, 1995; Bryman,

> 1988; Silverman, 2000). These influence and are instrumental in constructing ontological and epistemological 'realities'. By choosing different techniques and approaches, the planning researcher (in academia or practice) tends to prioritise certain types of data over others. Methods used, knowingly or otherwise, also tend to bring different values and biases into the analysis – which then lead to conclusions and recommendations. Openness and awareness of these methodological predispositions and the strengths and weaknesses of each should be a core attribute of the 'thinking planner'.

Methodological, epistemological, and ontological stances or views recursively affect each other in some way. Another useful technique is to review the concept from the perspective of different interests or parties in any given situation; asking what ontological or epistemological stances are typically adopted by those interests (see also Chapter 9); and how different data and methods may influence argumentation and decision-making in planning.

Planning and Planners: Skills and Understandings for the Twenty-first Century

It is to be hoped that our initial comments are not too off-putting: as mentioned, there is a tendency for people to be apprehensive about studying theory. It can appear daunting or lack a clear application to future careers, practice or to life in general. While we contend that theory is important per se, we also see that linking theories to keywords and ideas can help highlight the utility of theorisation and render ideas, concepts and theories more intelligible and revealing. As such, this is not a theory book but more of an explanation of how and where ideas are formed and used in planning contexts.

Furthermore the demands on planning and planners are seemingly ever widening in terms of the objectives or goals and skills and knowledges required, and to such an extent that planning-related activity is undertaken by a wide range of practitioners, or studied by a variety of disciplines in the academy. As indicated, planning as an activity is more diverse and complex than ever, and planners are being encouraged to adopt a broad and flexible conceptualisation of planning. For example,

Cullingworth and Nadin's (2006) overview of UK planning stands at almost 600 pages (with 11 pages of acronyms!).

What is planning anyway?

So far this chapter has concerned itself with the justification for the content of the following chapters and pointed towards the breadth of the subject or enterprise of planning. The concepts covered here reflect this breadth, but before we embark we feel it is useful to outline loosely 'what planning is', with this theme deepened in Chapter 2.

The growth in planning concerns and activity of different types has in some ways obscured what planning is or might be. Planning may mean different things to different people, and understandings (as well as practices and scope) have changed over time. When approaching the topic it can on some level appear beguilingly simple. The word planning appears rather innocuous on the surface – it is after all an everyday word that can incorporate the quotidian. For others it is heavy with meaning, implying 'organisation' or perhaps centralised control. There is a political dimension that pervades these attitudes. Byrne highlights how 'planning if it is anything, is a way of changing things – a mode of transformation' (2003: 172). This definition places planning as a means of effecting change, but it is also about shaping and speeding or slowing change. As a result, the operation of planning policies and powers is intrinsically politicised and planning has been open to critique from both the left and the right on the political spectrum: both in terms of mediating and ameliorating unfair spatial and economic outcomes and in terms of restricting individual freedom. This contestation has ranged from seeing planning as a means to 'disguise oppression in the language of liberal hope' (Hoch, 1996: 32), through to a justification for collective power to dominate 'rational' markets. This is important given the way that people respond to different plans, planners and policies that are wrapped up in ideological and interest-based concerns. Increasingly across Europe and elsewhere the market has become the engine of economies and of 'development'. Where this is so, planning is seen by some as providing necessary steering equipment, while others perceive it as an (unnecessary or unwanted) interference in the operation of the 'free' market. This view, of course, ignores the fact that all organisations, be they from the 'public' or 'private' sector, engage in forms of planning to 'transform' their activities or environment to achieve certain objectives.

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We are concerned here primarily with spatial planning involving the orchestration and management of development and of the interrelationships between people and place and various uses and activities. In this light, Healey (2006) identifies three strands or 'traditions' of planning. The first and possibly the most immediate form which tends to loom large in people's minds is physical planning, which involves management of development so that it is appropriate to its context. This is concerned with physical form and the interrelationships of function. The early British planners such as Ebenezer Howard, Raymond Unwin and, subsequently, Patrick Abercrombie certainly fell into this category, with many post-war planners and local government in the UK concentrating their efforts and resources on masterplanning, modernisation and reconstruction of neighbourhoods and whole towns. Healey succinctly puts it that in the past, planners saw urban problems as tasks to be resolved through intervention: 'the challenge was to find a way of organising activities which was functionally efficient, convenient to all those involved, and aesthetically pleasing as well' (2006: 18). As a result of this motivating aim, the focus was largely on achieving appropriate urban forms (see Ward, 1994). However, this objective has often been frustrated by insufficient regulatory powers and resources, or otherwise a lack of consensus and cooperation over the aims and impacts of planning schemes and policies. Moreover, shifting political, economic, technological and social conditions have played a part in undermining planners' aspirations in this regard; and the legitimacy and expertise of planners as arbiters of such processes has also been called into question (e.g. Davies, 1972; Klosterman, 1985).

Economic planning is the second approach that also has fallen foul of socio-economic change and dominant or conflicting political sensibilities. Such 'planning' seeks to manage and shape the economy at different scales or in different ways or directions. This of course is a task that falls on many and only some might actually recognise or define themselves as 'planners' – more likely economists. Ideals of efficiency and rationality in terms of how resources are used and distributed underpin this form of planning, and as a result it has been criticised as politically motivated and inefficient (for example; Evans, 2004; Webster, 1998). The fortunes of central economic planning in the West have met a similar fate to 'command and control' policies found in more totalitarian regimes, both past and present. One problem has been the difficulty in justifying and implementing the inherently top-down decisions made in the name of efficiency and redistribution. Indeed the rationale for this

style of economic planning has been influenced strongly by Marxist critiques of capitalism in aiming to redistribute economic benefits. This was often carried through via the construction and maintenance of welfarist regimes subsequently informed by Keynesian economics. However, such central control proved difficult to orchestrate, was criticised as undemocratic and if anything became socially regressive. Instead much economic planning has emerged as a market-curbing partnership between 'key market actors' and governments, where fiscal tools and policies remain as the main mechanisms for economic control but without outright ownership of production (see Adams et al., 2005). Aspects of economic planning can be seen through national policy statements and regional economic strategies, as well as more directly in the decisions and operation of finance ministries and budget allocations from the supranational to the local scale (see also Chapter 17).

Some planning structures and planners have also been criticised for being unjustifiably ideologically biased, or otherwise narrow, in attempting to objectify knowledge and hold up 'facts' or to propose limited alternatives on which others may base their decisions. This introduces the third form that planning takes: policy analysis and the administration of public policy (Healey, 2006). This is an important role and is largely concerned with the setting and implementation of public policy goals at the national and local scales, but is also increasingly about co-constructing and translating international agendas. It is somewhat beyond the concern with economic performance and production found with economic planning as it is also concerned with the attainment of more specific targets. This aspect of planning then is really about *how* to achieve fair and democratic ways of identifying objectives and then devising policies and programmes to achieve them. There is a second aspect of policy analysis which is concerned with the careful organisation of knowledge to inform planning: this may be seen as the *why* plan dimension – which is discussed in Chapter 2 and is one of the justifications for planning outlined by Klosterman (1985). How such knowledge is collected and interpreted is somewhat problematic and, as already suggested, the way that knowledge and methods are framed and deployed affects policy analysis immensely. According to Faludi (1973), this has meant that policy analysts have often attempted to decontextualise evidence or information from its political and institutional conditions, or from context, and presented technical solutions or options based on 'scientific knowledge'.

These three traditions illustrate the notion that how planning is viewed and framed will determine its extent and the relevance of the

concepts. Furthermore, how information and knowledge is bounded and categorised will influence planning practice. For our purposes, planning is a combination of all these types. Any given role or position in planning will involve a mix and a balancing of all of these strands, with emphasis being placed on different aspects, in different areas, at different times. The context of the political conditions found in those areas and times is also likely to shape the practice of planning. Therefore, the appreciation and relative importance of these strands of planning are contingent on the political climate and relative power of different interests in planning. The way that options and policies are formulated through these types of planning requires careful scrutiny, with the concepts and associated ideas contained in the following chapters helping in this process.

Since the 1990s the key policy aim of planning, arguably across the world, but certainly in the UK and much of Europe, has centred around the notion of sustainable development or sustainability, as discussed in Chapter 3. In global terms the impact of several rounds of environmental summit meetings (Rio de Janeiro, Johannesburg, Kyoto, Copenhagen) has served to underpin this agenda. However, the balancing of the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainability has involved an uneven and often uneasy amalgamation and reorganisation of the different planning strands outlined above. Although sustainability has been gradually embedded as the touchstone or 'metanarrative' of public policy, and the conceptual framework for much of contemporary policy analysis, it has spilled over to shape economic planning regimes (for example via calls for industrial ecology, environmental management, corporate social responsibility and carbon footprinting and other reduction or mitigation measures) and in physical planning (for example, in the almost obsessive search for the most sustainable urban form (see Breheny, 1992; Jenks, 2005; Jenks and Burgess, 2000)).

Planning and its specialisms

The three traditions conceal numerous fields or specialisms, such as transport planning, urban design, rural planning, conservation planning and waste planning. Planning is so broad that no single planner is likely to be 'expert' across such a range of activities and scales. Therefore, it is increasingly important that planners are aware of, and understand, the unifying concepts that influence the range of planning activity. Indeed if planning is concerned with interrelationships, as

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suggested above, then this text acts as a kind of translator and 'bridge' that can help to link different parts of their studies or experiences. Moreover, establishing, or at least committing to paper, a set of boundary-crossing concepts for planners to share helps to ensure a degree of common understanding and provides a useful toolkit of ideas.

Understanding where different ideas and expertise fit into the 'real world' or how they may influence the policy aims, or aspirations of different interests, or indeed other ideas that are in circulation, is the next best thing to actually being a polyglot. In one sense this provides the basis of Schön's (1983) 'reflective practitioner' who seeks to critically engage with the concepts that shape their professional practice (see Healey, 2006; also, Murdoch, 2005). For us, the ability to consciously reflect on and act to (re)construct spatial planning practice is a prerequisite skill in a rapidly changing environment and in a politically dynamic context. Planning employers have consistently encouraged universities to allow students to develop and hone analytical skills, and this requires an ability to understand and assess 'real world' situations critically. The Egan review (2004), which investigated skills for planning and related professions in the UK, indicated that key generic skillsets should include: evaluation of alternatives, analytical skills, visioning and creative thinking, and working with other partners or stakeholders. This inherently requires a knowledge and understanding of key concepts and of theory, and the development of a reflexive disposition in order to make connections, inform decisions, and provide a platform for critical and constructive thinking. In this context, the chapters in this book act as horizontal integrators and some will be of close relevance to particular topic areas, while some may be necessary to unlock the content of others.

The Concepts: Range, Selection and Structure of the Chapters

The nature and practice of planning is such that ideas and concepts are drawn into and influence planning from a variety of source disciplines such as geography, sociology, politics and economics. The concepts included here indicate how and where the ideas come from and how they are typically understood or applied. The concepts are chosen either because they are recurring and enduring concepts in planning, or they

are, in our view, the main ideas that are closely linked to the integrative key components of planning practice. In recognition of the social constructionist perspective that underpins our approach, we contend that all of the concepts are inherently 'social' in their formation and deployment (see Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

Each of the chapters provides a detailed explanation of the concept, outlining various contested definitions and the evolution of how the concept has been used, as well as links and examples of application or relevance in practice. Furthermore, each concept is associated (at the very start of each chapter) with a family of related sub-concepts or terms that are 'embedded' or linked with the core concept. This illustrates the fact that key concepts do not stand alone, but are part of a tapestry of words and ideas that are used in planning to structure and shape policy and practice. This also means that while concept labels may not necessarily change, the way that concepts are understood or used may well alter over time. The chapters are broadly structured such that the concept is introduced, then the main components and debates are 'unpacked' and explored before the application and use of the concept in relation to planning practice is outlined. A concluding section, briefly drawing out the key themes, is followed by a short note on further reading.

Some concepts (e.g. sustainability, plan, place and community) are considered important enough to have a more extended analysis of their meaning, and these are slightly longer than others. Overall, we have striven to provide not only concise overviews of the key concepts, but also to highlight their breadth and the more apparent interlinkages between them. Other chapters included here are 'Networks' (Chapter 4) in which the linkages between actors and different actants are emphasised; 'Systems and Complexity' (Chapter 5), which picks up on more recent understandings of the interrelations that may be seen between actors and the environment, and indicates how planners may have difficulty in understanding and predicting outcomes or managing change. We also consider implementation (Chapter 7) as a key idea and goal for planning activity in terms of the aim and difficulties in reaching goals. The use of designations (Chapter 8) and the linked concept of hierarchy (Chapter 6) are explained as ways of organising and demarcating space and lines of power. We then move on to think about the different interests (Chapter 9) involved in planning and the commonly cited 'public interest' justification for planning decisions. Negotiation is considered, given the way that many decisions and situations in planning tend to

require negotiative responses, as is mobility and accessibility and its consequential implications for planning (Chapters 10 and 11). The concept and implications of rights in planning are covered in Chapter 12, given, in particular, the role of planning in determining and enforcing property rights. Chapter 13 focuses on place, space and sense of place, and discusses these at some length, including aspects of urban design activity. Community (Chapter 14) is then examined. This features as a concern for planners that is linked to questions of sense of place and reflects a wider aim in many countries both to maintain community and to create the conditions for more cohesive societies.

A broad take on the concept of capital (Chapter 15) is explained and unpacked as a means of conceptualising resources which are used, stored, traded and exchanged through policy decisions, development and regulation. An examination of externalities and impacts (Chapter 16) is included as these are often regarded as important justifications for planning regulation. The use and concern for regional and national competitiveness (Chapter 17) is covered, highlighting how planning can aid, but is equally seen sometimes as a brake on, economic activity. The longstanding use of amenity as a rhetorical justification for planning and development control is explained in Chapter 18.

Lastly but by no means least, a consideration of development (Chapter 19) concludes the key concepts selected. This final chapter is important as planning and development tend to go hand-in-hand and significant cross-disciplinary cross-fertilisation has occurred in recent years between the range of built environment disciplines and their professional communities. Planners have been central initiators and shapers of theory in that process, feeding through into the more empirically based paradigms of surveyors, engineers, construction managers and (to a lesser extent) architects. This is reflected in recent debates around the conceptualisation of the development process itself where a number of academics have led the way in deconstructing the various relational webs seen to be involved. Indeed it is through this type of process of reconceptualisation that other established ideas are being opened up and discussed in planning.

Reflecting the ‘emergent’ nature of planning concepts, we are now seeing modifications to planning policy and practice arising from the need to address climate change. We have not given climate change a separate entry as it clearly relates to the idea of sustainable development (Chapter 3), but its recent rise in importance indicates that the environmental agenda continues to permeate and restructure planning

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practice and its associated core concepts. We have accommodated this fact specifically and more generally by including cross-references and indicating conceptual linkages where they are appropriate.

This introductory chapter has set out the content and the reason for needing to think conceptually when involved in planning. We also hope that the reader will be able to gain an insight into 'what, why and how' planning has changed and has sought justification over time. Although the dissection of single concepts can provide useful windows into the worlds of planning practice, a more comprehensive and contextualised reading of the concepts delivers a more critical and thoughtful appreciation of the dynamics of planning and interests in planning. We hope that this introductory chapter might help the reader to begin that reflexive process and to see how different ideas, interests and contexts impact on how concepts are deployed, understood and refined.

FURTHER READING

Each chapter has its own suggested readings but there has been a steady stream of core texts on planning theory and their content has evolved over time, reflecting the 'accumulation' and reinterpretation of key concepts. It is interesting to compare the theoretical ideas covered in Bailey (1975) with those in Allmendinger (2009) or trace Patsy Healey's theoretical explorations in Healey (1983 or 1988) with her later work on relational approaches (Healey, 2006). There are a number of standard texts on planning theory, including Taylor (1998), Campbell and Fainstein (2003), and Hillier and Healey (2008). The application of theoretical ideas to practice is a challenging endeavour but has been done well in Forester (1989), Healey et al. (1988), Low (1991) and Flyvbjerg (1996). Some of the sister volumes on key concepts in human geography (Holloway et al., 2009) and urban geography (Latham et al., 2009) are also useful aids. Two more recent texts, Morphet (2010) and Rydin (2010a), add to the resources that describe and delineate the roles and purposes of planning in society.