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THE THEORY-PRACTICE GAP IN REGIONAL (TRANSPORT) PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, The National Transportation Agency (NTA) in Sweden introduced a new planning instrument called Regional System Analysis (RSA). The aim was to improve the focus and goal accomplishment in transport planning. In the RSA, the transport modes should complement each other in order to support the demand for transportation needs on regional and national levels, and to meet the transport policy objectives. The outcome should also be possible to aggregate to the national level.

According to changed planning prerequisites, insufficient accomplishment regarding potential for aggregating the RSA to a national analysis and the link to the next planning step regarding choosing between possible infrastructure alternatives, the NTA took initiative for this research (Trafikverket 2013b). The aim is to "evaluate methods for system analysis [...] of infrastructure planning. [...] A mechanism for translating goals to a more specific vision for implementation, where conflicting goals and an open discussion of the available battery of instruments can be discussed" (p1).

Similar research issues – analysis of deficiencies in using specific complex planning instruments in transport planning - have been studied by, for instance, Beukers et al (2012), Gudmundsson (2011), and Wilsson (2001). Beukers et al analysed through interviews the advantages and disadvantages of cost benefit analysis (CBA) in integrated land use and transport planning in the Netherlands. They concluded that the respondents (CBA experts, policy makers, politicians, and interests groups) perceived the CBA analysis as frustrating, characterised by "clashing values and approaches", "deficient communication", "occurrence of strategic behaviour", and "inferior cooperation" (p77). Gudmundsson (2011) analysed how complex knowledge can be anchored in a planning process focusing on what, how, and why certain knowledge is used in Sweden. To support the anchoring process, Gudmundsson emphasised the importance of communication, skills, and trust in the planning process. Willson (2001) analysed theoretically the conflict between the planners' instrumental rationality and the politicians' strategic rationality in planning processes. This tension results in dysfunctional planning processes, "poor plans, cynical planners, frustrated politicians, and a mistrustful public" (p8). According to Willson (p26), communicative rationality based on Habermas is preferable due to its provision of possibilities to avoid future controversies, handling the challenge of the shift from constructing infrastructure to "managing travel behaviour" and increasing learning capacity.

The empirical findings from this study did not correspond to the problems defined by Beukers et al (2012), Gudmundsson (2011), or Willson (2010). The initial research question remained: How could we understand what kinds of planning actually were taking place?

This conclusion leads us into recent planning research focusing on the planning theory - practice gap. Certain scholars, such as Willson (2001), March (2010), and Lord (2014) have specifically dealt with

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this issue and also contributed to this interesting field. This paper tests their findings empirically and theoretically.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the debate on the gap between planning theory and planning practice by proposing a set of theories that explain the gap and provide an understanding of how to bridge that gap. The specific research question to answer is: How can the gap between planning theory and practice be understood and bridged?

The structure of the paper is as follows. First, the empirical procedures are presented. This section is also a brief summary. The empirical findings based on the analysis of planning documents and interviews are then presented. Third, contemporary theoretical research (mentioned above) on the gap between planning theory and planning practice are presented and discussed.

EMPIRICAL PROCEDURES

Due to comprehensiveness and relatively well-developed RSAs, the following three regions were selected as case studies: Halland, on the west coast of Sweden; Skåne, in the very south; and Gävleborg, on the east coast (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The location of the Gävleborg region, the Halland region, and the Skåne region in Sweden.

The analyses were conducted in four major steps:

Step 1: In order to understand the planning procedures, the planning documents presenting the RSA for each region were analysed. The analysis was conducted in the light shed from conventional planning theories (see Table 1). However, this analysis did not provide a sufficient understanding of the planning processes or the documents. Planning theory seemed to be of limited utility in explaining the planning process.

Step 2: To develop a further understanding, the documents were then analysed according to game theoretical and institutional perspectives. Preliminary results then supported a hypothesis of a game approach based on a non-cooperation mode (Binmore 2007).

Step 3: With the goal of verifying or rejecting these hypotheses (1-2 above), seven interviews with planners and experts that participated in the regional planning procedures were conducted. However, neither planning nor game theory provided much assistance in understanding the planning processes

and the planning outcomes. There were still unexpected and unexplained gaps between theory and practice. This situation leads us to Step 4.

Step 4: In the final step, we performed an overview and an analysis of contemporary findings within planning research on the gap between planning theory and planning practice. Three kinds of focuses within this research field were selected: sociological, political, and philosophical. However, we do not regard these findings as convincing. Therefore, and with the aim of understanding planning practice and contributing to the debate on the planning theory - practice gap, we propose a return to four alternative, and still established, theories.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Planning context

The Swedish transportation planning system is formally divided into two spatial levels: the national and the county level. On the national level, the planning procedure is conducted in three steps: focus planning, object planning, and implementation planning (Trafikverket 2013b). Essentially, the NTA performs analyses and plans, and the Parliament prioritises between objects and distributes financial allocations between the regions. On the county level, the planning procedure is conducted by regional planning organisations in two major steps: focus planning and object planning.

The RSA was intended to constitute an analysis of the transport systems' functions and deficiencies in relation to demands and political goals in focus planning. The proposals that are suggested should be "efficient both for regional and long distance traffic"[2] (Trafikverket et al 2008: 4). Further on, "the planning process should be anchored in regional reference groups where the business sector, traffic operators, travellers, municipalities, and other interests should be included"[3] (p5). However, each region should itself decide upon the degree of political anchoring.

The transportation planning chain is basically as follows. In the first step, the RSA should provide an analysis of all types of transportation infrastructure (roads, rails, airports, and harbours). The RSA should comprise goals and functions, but not analyses regarding implementation of specific objects. Still, in this step, not only physical investments should be considered, but also other forms of steering tools, such as pricing systems and initiatives of changing people's behaviour, i.e., 'The four step principle'. This analysis should provide knowledge about the functioning of the transportation system into the county and the national transport plans. In the next steps, i.e., object planning and implementation, environmental impact assessment according to Swedish environmental law is accomplished for each planned object.

These guidelines and the title point at a system planning approach in combination with some communicative aspects. However, there are no specific guidelines for how to conduct these complex issues in terms of techniques for system analyses of plans, negotiation, social learning, anchoring processes, and possible constraints. As the RSA is assumed to prioritize between various means according to the four step principle, volunteerism regarding political involvement and anchoring is problematic.

In order to determine what kinds of planning were occurring, the RSAs and the interviews have been analysed in relation to a range of planning theories (see Table 1). The aim of these analyses was to define what kind of planning was actually accomplished.

Planning documents

Halland RSA: The RSA covering Halland describes the transport infrastructure and the transports in Halland (Region Halland 2008). The north part of Halland is within the Gothenburg labour market region. The RSA in Halland comprises goals, functions, commuting, freight, brief analyses of negative

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[2] Authors' translation.
[3] Authors' translation.

and positive consequences of activities, and suggestions for a range of activities and investments. The goals are formulated in general terms of accessibility, attractiveness, decreasing automobile usage and increasing public transports, and conflicts between high accessibility and low environmental impact (p22-25). Public and private organizations have participated in various ways in the process (all municipalities in the region, the county council representing the state, public organizations representing the neighbouring regions, etc.). Two meetings with invited public and private representatives have been held. The analysis was based on the functioning of transport corridors – not on specific transportation objects or modes – between urban nodes. General impacts on safety, equity, and environment are evaluated by positive (+) or negative (-) signs. The document's final section presents a list of desired transport infrastructure.

Any specific spatial impacts of the suggested implementations are not presented. No information on estimated changes in traffic flows, changes in accessibilities, green house gas omissions, economic development, job opportunities, life chances, etc., are specified (impact analysis). In addition, no plan for implementation or costs is delineated (implementation planning). As the RSA does not present how specific parts of Halland or other regions are influenced by these specific transport infrastructure proposals, it cannot be regarded as a system analysis. No information is either presented regarding common knowledge formation, common understanding, or agreements between different (conflicting) interests in the region. Moreover, learning procedures are not established or presented. Therefore, the RSA for Halland cannot be considered as an advocacy or communicative planning process, either.

Skåne RSA: The Skåne RSA presented the aim of the RSA as defining needs and priorities, consolidating regional cooperation and consensus, and coordinating with external regions (Region Skåne 2008). Similar to RSA Halland, the RSA Skåne covers subjects as prerequisites, national and regional goals, dialogues, and presentations of what kinds of activities support goal accomplishment. A number of meetings with various interests groups, politicians, municipalities, and neighbouring regions have been held. In an appendix, the Skåne RSA makes a structured effort in analyzing the linkage between goals, functions, and measures (Trivector 2008).

Gävleborg RSA: The goal in the Gävleborg's RSA is quite general: "good accessibility [...] and well functioning transport possibilities"[4] (Region Gävleborg 2008: 10). The planning organization is well structured, comprising a focus group, cooperation with other regions, and anchoring with politicians. The RSA was also integrated in other regional planning procedures in which meetings with 200 people were held. At first glance, this procedure seems impressive. However, the learning procedure and possible formation of common knowledge and understanding is not described. Conflicts between interests, conflicting political goals, or anchoring processes with regional citizens are not presented. Essentially, the Gävleborg RSA constitutes a description of the region in terms of business, population, transport flows, etc. Each section in the Gävleborg RSA concludes with a list of necessary investments. Any social, economic, or ecological spatially located consequences based on various alternatives or political standpoints are not delineated. Moreover, the necessary investments are not related to various conflicting political views or alternative measures according the 'four step principle', such as decreasing costs for public transports, etc.

Conclusion: The analysis of these three planning documents is based on conventional planning theories (see Table 1). In fact, they do not correspond well to any of these theories. For instance, they do not specify what kinds of social, economic, and ecological spatial effects that various transport planning alternatives may impart. Possibly, some benefits would appear in one region due to investments in neighbouring regions. Halland RSA actually proposes transport investment in the Göteborg region. However, in the RSA's studied infrastructure, changes and possible consequences are not well defined from a system perspective. In addition, the advantages and disadvantages of various alternatives (not necessarily quantified) are not presented. Thus, some questions emerge: In what sense do these RSAs support social, economic, and ecological sustainability? How are various parts of the regions affected? What kinds of various interests exist? How are conflicts and synergies handled? How are consensus and common knowledge developed? Basically, a reader cannot determine what kinds of consequences

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[4] Authors' translation.

will possibly emerge, or what kinds of conflicts may exist or emerge, and how they will be managed. The RSAs could be defined as vague comprehensive rational expert planning processes with some meetings with predefined interests groups. Essentially, the conventional planning theories are of limited value in understanding and defining these processes and planning documents.

What they possess in common, however, is that they present a list of desired investments - either in the RSA or in the subsequent county object plans referring to the RSAs. The arguments are said to be based on a system analysis (which they are not). The RSAs are tools for requesting money from the government. These kinds of rationale point at a game theoretical approach (Binmore 2007). A hypothesis was therefore developed in which the RSAs are not guidelines for infrastructure development which aim at the accomplishment of planning goals, but rather function as devices to maximize economic allotment to the regions. The mechanism could be explained by game theory in which the regions in a non-cooperation mode compete for money from the government. This hypothesis would, if true, explain the poor quality of the planning documents (as instrumental guidelines for planning) and the result in the form of a list with 'necessary investments'.

In order to elucidate the planning processes and provide an answer to the question, 'What kinds of planning were actually conducted?' seven interviews with participating planners and experts were conducted. The design of the questions were based on conventional planning theories (foremost, Allmendinger 2009, Taylor 1998 and Friedman 1987), basic game theory (foremost, Binmore 2007), and sociology (foremost, Habermas 1984, 1987 and 1996 and Bourdieu 1980 and 1983. See also Ritzer 2008). The semi-structured interview procedures followed Holme et al (1997) and Beukers et al (2012).

Interviews

Each interview lasted for approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes. The aim was to understand what kinds of planning had been conducted. The first question was 'open': "Could you please describe the planning process". Later on, the questions were more precise, such as "What kind of social, ecological, and economic impact analyses did you perform?" From the interviews, a non-theoretical picture emerged. For instance, when answering the initial question, we expected some sort of planning model, theory, or initial literature study serving as guidelines for the understanding of the RSA guidelines developed by the NTA and the subsequent planning activities. One answer to the initial question was as follows:

"The anchoring with the municipalities was very important. I divided the region in a three day tour, rented a bus and brought all civil servants and politicians, had a look at each part of the region and the servants and the politicians pointed out - for them - important objects...thereby I got a broad anchoring." (Respondent 1 in region 3 (R1.3))

Thus, there was a sort of practical understanding of the question. None of the respondents referred to any kind of theoretical framework.

When defining a 'system analysis', we also here expected some references to the literature within planning theory, system planning, system analysis, or some description of how a system functions with external or internal change, and subsequent consequences for other parts of the system (Taylor 2008) - possibly described in terms of social, ecological and economic impacts - or changes in traffic flow and land use. Some of the answers were as follows:

" [long silence]...a good name to call it a system...there were no comprehensive thoughts... define?... No, I just think the transport system is a system... You make an analysis of that system... including all kinds of transport modes [...]" (R2.2)

"...[silence]... yeah…there is probably some scientific definition...eh, but... Yes, I would say that it is... it is... not barely an analysis, but a process that that includes an analysis, a process... but also a dialog... dialog activities where one works with objects, goals, challenges, problem descriptions, and possible measures on a comprehensive level for a region... um... I would say that." (R1.1)

"...long term planning...what kind of transport system do we need in the county...in the future. How does future freight-, private- and public-transport look like... commuting, where do people reside and work?" (R1.2)

"[..] in a system analysis should you present how does it look like right now? In a way was it a logic division. The focus planning is: What do we want? System analysis is: How does it look like? Object planning is: What shall we do?" (R2.1)

Several problems become apparent here. The system analysis usually comprises links, objects, changes, and consequences (Taylor 1998, Johanssen 1977, McLoughlin 1969). The lack of structure and common knowledge of some basic theoretical frameworks regarding the definition of system analysis is striking.

One answer to the question regarding the existence of theories or knowledge that guided the planning process was as follows:

"No. It depends on what you mean by theories [for instance, communicative planning or system planning theory] ... I dare to say that we were not really into this... it exists certainly as a basis, but you do not really use these terms." (R2.1)

When questioned about what kinds of human resources were represented in the planning process, we received the following answers:

"What do you mean? .... It was me [political science], traffic engineers from the national road and rail way agencies, Living environments [people from a department in the regional planning organization]..." (R2.1)

"... this was crystalized naturally... those who appeared prominent in certain fields were handpicked now and then." (R1.3)

"We who work here, we know the environment. What can you talk about with a regional politician? What are they interested in knowing? Or a municipal planner or politicians? That is not so easy if you sit in Borlänge [the headquarters of NTA]" (R1.1)

Apparently, there was no structured discussion (like Rydin 2007 suggests) regarding what kinds of knowledge from various fields were needed in the planning process.

As the title included the term 'system analysis', we expected some sort of control or estimation of various consequences. Some answers to the question, "What kind of impact assessment was conducted?" were as follows:

"...No. We did not suggest any physical constructions, either. That was in the next step... that was not that great... was difficult... was very fuzzy, if we should compare with a zero alternative..." (R2.2)

"Don't know...capacity should be as good as possible." (R1.3)

"Social, economic, and ecological impacts? ... That is always a difficult question. Of course, these kinds of linkages exist... are in [the process] all the time. But, it is hard to quantify [...]" (R2.1)

No structured discussion of what kinds of consequences or impacts that might occur and should be analysed was thus apparent. One answer that concerned the planning document as a political product was as follows:

"If we had integrated this analysis [the technical report from Tivector (2008)] in this [the RSA] would the document not be so easily accessible [...] for readers, for municipalities that would accept it, for politicians. It should be a public document that presented the region [...] ...what can I say...[...]. The main problem is that a political decision must be ... it's very hard to describe [...] at an aggregated level

the plan must be easily communicable. Politicians must be able to communicate their message of what they made a decision about. Politicians would like to have visionary projects [...]" (R2.1)

On the question about how developed common knowledge (social learning/communicative planning approach) was managed, it was answered as follows:

"Some sort of knowledge is difficult to document. How does this actor reason? What will happen if I suggest this? Then this situation will emerge there, and then those people will think something here, and so forth." (R1.1)

Conclusion: Based on these kinds of answers, our conclusion was that the RSA, in practice, was not conducted according to a system planning approach - but possibly a vague comprehensive rational planning approach with some communicative efforts - although citizen participation is not dealt with in a structured way or not at all apparent. Moreover, the planning documents avoid presenting any consequences that expose political conflicts. The planning documents are, in that sense, non-political. Our hypothesis on a non-cooperation mode (Binmore 2007) between the regions based on a game theoretical approach was, to some degree, rejected, as well (see Table 1). On the one hand, it was declared that the regions strive for investments and maximizing their budget (R1.1 and R1.3). On the other hand, informal and formal networks, as well as repeated inter-regional negotiations in a number of meeting points, support a cooperation mode between the regions. This cooperation mode was also manifested when Region Halland invested money in an infrastructure project in the västra Götaland region. These findings, as well as the unexpected altruistic attitude among the planners, implied a rejection of the hypothesis regarding game theory (pure individual budget maximization and a non-cooperation mode).

The planners and the experts interviewed emphasized two major positive aspects of this planning process: 1) communication, learning, and consensus with various participants (private, municipal, regional, etc.); and 2) a comprehensive approach regarding the development of the transport infrastructure. Still, these conclusions were not guided by explicit knowledge in planning theory.

Theories	Planning documents			Interviews		
	Region 1	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**
System planning	N	N	N	N	N	N
Rational planning	(Y/N)	(Y/N)	(Y/N)	(Y/N)	(Y/N)	(Y/N)
Communicative planning	N	N	N	(Y)	(Y)	(Y)
Game theory and negotiation	(Y)	(Y)	(Y)	N	N	N
Other kinds of planning theories	N	N	N	N	N	N

Table 1.[5] Results from the document study and the interviews. Y = Yes, N = No. Parentheses imply 'to some degree'. "Other kinds of planning theories" are implementation planning, advocacy planning,

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[5] A brief overview of various planning theoretical approaches follows. The system planning approach is when the city or the region is regarded as a system with interlinked parts: a change in one part or link then affects all of the other parts and links in terms of people, economic activities, flows, environmental impacts, etc. Rational planning is structured in terms of goals, means, consequences, evaluation, feed back, and espouses objectivity. Communicative planning is based on communication, learning, and consensus-building between interests. Game theory and negotiation are used as a framework to understand planning processes in which people could negotiate their interests and decide whether or not to cooperate. Implementation planning acknowledges experiences from the implementation sequence in planning. Advocacy planning acknowledges that politics and different kinds of interests are sometimes in synergy and sometimes in conflict. Social learning acknowledges knowledge formation and management, and the learning process in which methods and goals might be adjusted during the

social learning, regime theory, and regulation theory. For comprehensive overviews on planning theories, see Allmendinger (2009), Friedman (1987), and Taylor (1998).

Qualitative analysis of the documents and the planners regarding the influence of conventional planning theories or game theory on the planning process thus provided insufficient explanatory value (see Table 1). Planning theory cannot explain the actual planning process. There seems to be a significant gap between planning theory and planning practice. What kinds of knowledge guided the planning processes? This situation motivated focusing on the contemporary planning research front regarding the gap between planning theory and planning practice.

LOCATING THE THEORY - PRACTICE GAP

Three relatively recent studies were selected dealing with the theory-practice gap from three perspectives: 1) sociology, based on March (2001); 2) politics, based on Willson (2010); and 3) philosophy, based on Lord (2014).[6] These scholars also provide excellent overviews of philosophical perspectives on planning theory. Still, they also supply empirical results that do not correspond with the empirical results from this study, and their theoretical reasoning could be critically debated. As all three depart from the communicative planning paradigm, some focus is placed on this specific issue in the first section here.

Bridging the sociological gap: Acknowledging Habermas system perspective and the importance of the planner's social capital

March (2001) discusses the influence of planning theory on planning practice. For this purpose, two cases in the state of Victoria, Australia, 1982-1997, were studied: (A) a legislation process aiming at simplifying the planning procedure; and (B) the use of a residential design code aiming at supporting higher urban densities (p112, 116).

In the first case, (A) knowledge in institutional design and Faludi's (1973) theory on rational comprehensive planning was, according to March (2010), more relevant than communicative planning theory in order to explain the process. In the second case (B), March (p116) describes how the combination of neo-liberal ideology and a striving towards inner city development gave rise to high density projects in which urban quality should be ensured by design quality. Planners became defenders of design - instead of communicative planners - and used "subjective measures" instead of "numeric tests" when describing urban qualities (p116-117).[7] March also describes a situation in which people, organizations, and interests have the opportunity to participate in the planning process. However, the result was, according to March (p118), the opposite of a communicative planning process - "an anti-dialectic manifest of participation" that does not cope with the core values of communicative planning.

March thus argues that, in these planning processes, communicative planning theory cannot be used as an explanatory theory (p119). March expresses that: 1) as most planners today are trained within the theoretical framework of communicative planning and therefore - based on the findings above - dismiss (communicative) planning theory and are ill skilled for their job (p122); 2) "The lack of wider meta-theoretical test of [communicative] planning theory has allowed for a considerable misuse and unintended outcomes in planning practice" (p121); and 3) the legal statues of planning have "meant that both theorizing planning and using [communicative] planning theory are weak influences upon city and regional development [...]" (p121).

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implementation procedure. Regime theory recognizes different economic, social and environmental problems, and needs in various parts of a region. Thereby, different types of cooperation between public and private organizations are needed. Regulation theory acknowledges different problems and needs of regions in relation to the capitalistic system on global level. See Friedman (1987), Taylor (1998), and Allmendinger (2009).

[6] Others who have also analyzed and contributed to defining the planning theory - practice gap are Alexander (1997), Binder (2011), and Talvitie (2009).

[7] This reasoning might not necessarily support the dismissal of communicative planning theory.

Instead, planners reject planning theories and have learned planning "on-the-job" (p120). March (p121) defines the problem as the gap in the communicative planning theory of not including an institutional situation.[8]

March (p110) locates contemporary planning practice in a philosophical and planning theoretical divide between, on the one hand, positivism and comprehensive rational planning, and on the other hand, critical theory and communicative planning. The planners are regarded to be locked in one of these perspectives, and therefore not able to deal with both moral issues *and* technical facts. March thereafter introduces Sartre and Marx in order to widen the perspective and relate planning practice to sociology. As we understand, March therefore aims at positioning the planner in an agency-structure context (a sociological approach).

March claims that the sociologies developed by Sartre and Marx are useful in understanding the failure of planning practice and in understanding the planner in his/her social context. March (p111) refers to Marx's (1997[1848]) 'The Manifesto of the Communist Party' and concludes that "Actors, including planners, are agents within the wider structure of a governance setting. This acknowledges that we have choices, but must work within circumstances not of our own choosing". This interpretation of Marx's text is surprising.

In general, and also in 'The Manifesto of the Communist Party', Marx presents a situation in which the individual is completely dependent on the environmental circumstances characterized by the capitalistic system. This could be exemplified by these quotes: " [...] a class of workers, who lives only so long as they find work [...]" (Marx, 1997[1848]: 874), and "[...] man's ideas, views, and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness, change with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations, in his social life [...]" (Marx, 1997[1848]: 891). However, in a future society characterized by communism, people should experience "[...] the free development of each is the conditions of the free development of all." (Marx, 1997[1848]: 882).

Thus, Marx does not discuss individual freedom vis-a-vis the environment in terms that could be understood in the way that March presents them.[9]

Further on, March (p112) links the failure of communicative planning theory to unintended consequence based on Sartre's (1961[1986]:47) concept of "the practico-inert". March (p112) interprets the 'practico-inert' in the following terms: "The practico-inert suggests that inertia allows action to tend towards undesirable outcomes, combined with most actors' passivity. This may explain the failure of theory to strongly influence planning practice in many circumstances."

The term 'practico-inert' is not easy to understand. Yovel (1997:97) interprets the practico-inert as "[...] the inert bulk of products, institutions, traditions, class relations, and externalized processes, in which human praxis have thus been embodied and which now constitute the external constraints under which this praxis must continue. Sartre names this historical facticity le Practico-Inert [...]"

Sartre (1991[1960]:46-47) himself states: "Thus, as the active power of the holding together it's parts, the only corrective of an act of imagination: *the* symphony or *the* painting, as I have showed elsewhere, are imaginers projected through the set dried paints or *analogon*. In the case of practical objects - machines, tools, consumer goods, etc. - our present action makes them seem like totalities by rescuing, in some way, the *praxis* which attempted to totalities their inertia. We shall see below that these

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[8] However, first, the institutional approach is already apparent in Habermas' (1975, 1987 and 1985) writings on the relation between the lifeworld - including public spheres, and the system, and in Healey's (1997) collaborative planning theory. Still, Healy (1997) does not refer to Habermas (1975:293, 294, 297) regarding the need for a "social evolutionary learning process'", "new institutional arrangements", and "the concentration of cognitive potential".

[9] Our understanding of Marx as determinist is conventional (see Thrift 1983) - even though this issue has been critically discussed (see Ritzer 2008:276).

inert totalities are of crucial importance, and that they create the kind of relation between men which we will refer to, later, as the practico-inert."

As we understand, the "practico-inert" is the environmental (physical and social) effects on our actions, thoughts, norms, and knowledge. The 'practico-inert' thereby constrains our individual freedom and affects the outcome of our actions in a way that might appear as uncontrolled and unwanted. However, it is not clear to us why the 'practico inert' should explain the failure of planning theory. Why should theories be apprehended as useless because human creations are influenced by uncontrolled circumstances? In fact, the outcome should be the opposite: If there is an *ex-post* evaluation of goal achievements (which rarely occurs) and this evaluation exposes a low goal attainment - then there should be a desire for more knowledge regarding why the plan failed - not less knowledge and less theory.

Still, a number of sociologists have developed similar theories on the relation between the individual and his/her environment (Bourdieu 1983, 1980/1992), and unintended consequences (for instance, Giddens 1984, Habermas 1987). Also within planning theory (system planning and rational planning), uncontrolled influences and unintended consequences are seen as something natural and serve as feedback into the planning cycle (see Johanssen 1977, Friedman 1987, and Taylor 1998).

Thus, we do not fully comprehend why Sartre is specifically used for this purpose. The term 'practico-inert' is not easy to understand, either. March (2010) uses Sartre's second philosophy[10] to position the individual planner towards determinism and Marxist theory to position the individual planner towards volunteerism. Usually, Sartre and Marx are positioned the other way around (see Ritzer 2008, Thrift 1983). Sartre is most famous for his existentialistic philosophy emphasizing the individual free will vis-a-vis environmental conditions, and Marx is most famous for his historical materialism emphasizing the individual dependence vis-à-vis environmental conditions.[11] The choice of these theories is therefore surprising.

Instead of making a meta-theoretical test incorporating all kinds of theories as March (2010, p121) suggests, we believe it is worth returning to Habermas (1975, 1987, 1985, 2007[1996]) communicative action theory.[12]

The communicative planning theory is foremost based on Habermas communicative action theory: "Reason and the rationalisation of society" (Habermas 1984) focusing on the lifeworld (see, for instance, Healey 1997). However, when also incorporating the system perspective in the second part of Habermas communicative action theory - "The critique of functionalist reason" (Habermas 1987) - the capacity of handling complex planning procedures and decisions from a lifeworld perspective is severely constrained.[13] Communicative planning theory, in general, does not, to a sufficient extent, acknowledge the complexity in the administrative and economic systems, and the differentiation of the lifeworld in partial public spheres as they are described by Habermas (1985, 1987, 2007[1996]). Thereby, the belief in consensus and understanding within communicative planning could be questioned.

Habermas (1975, 1985, 1987) describes society as one coin with two major sides: the lifeworld and the system. In addition, the components of the actor and the objective world - "entities about which true statements are possible" (Habermas 1987:120) - are included. The lifeworld is the communicative action system in which hearers and speakers meet. It is the society from the perspective of "acting

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[10] His first philosophy is described, for instance, in Sartre (1946). The philosophical development from the first philosophy to the second philosophy is described in Yovel (1997: 96, 99).

[11] See, for instance, Ritzer 2008, Thrift (1983). Rizter (2008) also describes the debate regarding the degree of determinism with Marxism based on the concept of dialectic.

[12] Friedman (1987: 267) regards Habermas communicative action theory as a "utopia where nothing ever happens (except a good conversation)". However, Friedman (1987) does not refer to Habermas (1987).

[13] Even though Habermas' (1987) definition of "system" is different from how "system" is defined within rational planning and system analysis, some similarities exist.

subjects" (1987:117). It is divided into private and public spheres. Habermas (1987:117) presents the relation this way:[14]

[…] society is conceived from the perspective of acting subjects as the *lifeworld of a social group*. In contrast, from the observer's perspective of someone not involved, society can be conceived only as a *system of actions* such that each action has a functional significance according to its contribution to maintenance of the system.

The system, in turn, constitutes the chains of activities in the society as they appear from the perspective of an observer. The system is divided into the administrative activity system and the economic activity system (and a number of subsystems). The administrative system accomplishes social goals, and the economic system adapts the society to available resources. As we understand, the administrative and economic systems control these chains of activities by rules, laws, plans, and possibly even norms and money. The system mechanisms and steering media have to be anchored in the lifeworld (Habermas 1987:137, 173, 305). Thus, all citizens produce and reproduce both the communicative-steered lifeworlds and the media-steered systems.

Lifeworld processes have limitations in reaching mutual understandings and in handling expert knowledge. As consensus cannot be achieved in large groups with diverse interests - a number of public spheres (compared with political pluralism below) will, in that case, emerge (Habermas 2007[1996]:391). The public sphere provides the political system with taxes and loyalty, and functions as a signal system and defines societal problems – however, not solutions or decisions (Habermas 2007[1996]: 388; 1985:360). Even though public spheres could develop consciousness collectively, they cannot act on a system level collectively (Habermas 1985: 360). Further on, unmediated specialized knowledge cannot be utilized in the public sphere (Habermas 1985:340, 349). In order to handle complex problems, a "concentration of cognitive potential" within the administrative system is needed (Habermas 1975: 293).[15]

In order to develop social responsibility and solidarity in the society, it is important to protect and recouple those processes in the lifeworld which cannot be replaced by system-steering media (1987:356, 372). This does not, however, imply that the administrative system necessarily should shrink. For instance, in order to handle ecological problems, a global administrative system level is needed (1987:394). In order to balance the lifeworld (social responsibility) and the systems (efficiency), Habermas (1985:364) suggests "building up restraining barriers for the exchange between the system - the system opened for impulses from the lifeworld and of building in sensors for the exchange between the lifeworld and the system".

Thus, a planner in the planning procedure is included in a lifeworld of a social group whose actions and decisions are governed by communicative actions. However, if we want to know anything about the world outside of this social group, we must position ourselves in the observer's position (cf. Habermas 1987:117).[16] In order to understand these communicative processes *and* media-steered systems of action outside of our own lifeworld, we must not only position ourselves as observers, but also use expert knowledge from the social sciences (Habermas 1987:173).

Based on this theoretical reasoning, the failure of communicative planning practice is not due to unintended consequences, but rather a neglecting of the limitations in communicative action, integration of

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[14] However, the systems expand out of sight from the lifeworlds (Habermas 1987:173) and cannot be understood from a lifeworld perspective. When society developed in further complexity, the system "burst out of the horizon and can only be accessible to the [...] knowledge of the social sciences" (1987:173).

[15] There are also other criticisms worth mentioning, for instance, the limitations of individual interests to incorporate the common interest - social dilemmas - in a communicative planning process (Voogd et al 1999) and the unwillingness to actually learn (Friedman 1987).

[16] An interesting societal role in the planning context is the position of the civil servant - or the planner employed in the administrative system: "Actors who assume the roles of employees or of clients of the public administration detach themselves from lifeworld contexts and adapt themselves to formally organized domains of action" Habermas (1987:321).

system complexity and differentiation in public spheres. The problem seems to be that the communicative planning theory needs to also *integrate* the system perspective, a learning mechanism, and a 'potential for cognitive concentration' in a structured way.

The empirical findings presented here both support and reject March's suggestions. The communicative planning approach that appear in the RSA studied here – still quite undeveloped - are opposed to the March (2010) findings greatly appreciated by planners, and unforeseen results are not mentioned as a major negative aspect. Complex information (the technical report from Trivector, 2008) regarding the linkage between goals, functions, and measures – the system perspective – is however considered as a problem to *integrate* and to *communicate* (se below) in the planning process (R1.1 and R2.1).

Still, March highlights some crucial issues. For example, it is important to understand the planner in his/her social context. Habermas believes in, and acknowledges, common knowledge, mutual understanding, and consensus in the lifeworld. In order to understand planning processes and planning, we believe - as March - that the planner should be considered in his/her lifeworld, i.e., in his/her social context.

From the reasoning above, it is apparent that communicative planning should learn more from Habermas (1975, 1987, 2007[1996]) communicative action theory.[17] Still, it is not easy to comprehend why planning theory is not in use as a guiding theory in the RSAs studied here and - based on the reasoning above – we do not understand the introduction of Sartre's and Marx's theories in order to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In order to understand the planner in his/her context, we believe - and as March suggests - that sociology is the key. The empirical findings here indicate that not only the system perspective is lacking, but also a theory managing the importance of knowledge on what-to-talk-about and who-to-talk-to (see R1.1). Other resources than knowledge in planning theory seem to be useful. Based on these empirical findings basic contributions from Bourdieu are here reviewed to further illuminate the gap between planning theory and planning practice.

Bourdieu (1983: 312) argues that individuals in a social struggle - by acquiring and using social (social networks), cultural (formal education, informal knowledge, and objectified cultural capital), and economic capital - strive for status positions. This position-taking is governed by three kinds of mental schemes: the cognitive scheme, the habitus, and the practical sense (Bourdieu 1980/1992: 52, 66, 139). The habitus is - as we understand it - a direct consequence of environmental conditions as an "internalization of externality" (Bourdieu 1980/1992: 55; cf. Bourdieu 1980/1992: 56). The habitus is an individual mental resource for action that is shaped by external possibilities and constraints experienced by the individual. Practical sense, in turn, is the "social necessity turned into nature, converted into motor schemes and body automatisms, is what causes practices" (Bourdieu, 1980/1992: 69). By the practical sense – "the feel […] for the game" – the possible future outcomes are managed (Bourdieu 1980/1992: 82).

When using Bourdieu's basic concepts in understanding the interviews, it is apparent that what matters are informal knowledge, social capital, the understanding of the social context (habitus), and knowledge of how to behave in a complex social process, i.e., a 'feel for the game'. Formal and informal knowledge in planning theory are of limited value. The main goal of the planners and the participants might not be to produce good plans or a good urban form (see Yiftachel 1989 and Friedman 1987), but rather to take a position and act according to the implicit rules of the game. By using Bourdieu's theory, it is thus possible to define one missing link.

Thus, the first reasons why communicative planning fails is, according to the empirical analysis and this sociological review, not due to the existence of unintended consequences. It is connected to: 1) a neglecting of the limitations in communicative action regarding system complexity and differentiation in public spheres (Habermas (1985, 1987, 2007[1996]); and 2) a neglecting of the planners' social

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[17] It is also surprising that Habermas' major contribution - the integration of the lifeworld and the system – is not incorporated in the communicative planning theory.

context and the implicit 'feel for the game'. Some mental schemes and some capital matter - others do not (see Bourdieu 1983, 1980[1992]).

From these perspectives, unintended consequences are understood as natural outcomes of a planning process, and there is no reason for rejecting communicative planning based on these circumstances. On the contrary, planning practice should not be restricted to communicative planning theory, but should be positioned in a broader sociological context. Similar to March, we believe that an institutional approach[18] - however, based on Habermas (1975, 1987, 1985) - is of decisive importance in order to make planning theory (knowledge about planning) useful and to design an efficient planning process. To bridge the sociological gap, it is here suggested that also the second part of Habermas communicative action theory - the system perspective - should be *integrated* in the communicative planning approach, and in an open process define what kind of knowledge (Bourdieu's capitals) that should influence the planning process (the RSAs).

Bridging the political gap: Acknowledging conflicts in a pluralistic society

Willson (2001) theoretically investigates two planning paradigms used in transportation planning: rational and communicative planning.

Willson departs from an understanding of transport planning in which instrumental rationality and environmental determinism dominate as paradigms. He regards transport planning as undeveloped in the perspective of planning theory. Transport planning is also - according to Willson - ignored in planning theory. The objective scientific rational planning paradigm that dominates transport planning focuses on optimal solutions that support defined goals. Still, in practice, the planners face not only "competing interest groups" and "multiple, perhaps ideologically defined problems", but also a political reality governed by "strategic rationality" (p6). In contradiction to the dominant planning paradigm in transport planning, the objectives in the political strategic rationality are not directly linked to optimal solutions, but win-win situations, broad and opened agreements in which "benefits are focused and the costs are dispersed" (p7). Even though there has been a greater focus on participation, the complexity in planning and the tension between instrumental rationality and strategic rationality have, according to Willson, actually resulted in modest progress of this kind. This tension results in dysfunctional planning processes, "poor plans, cynical planners, frustrated politicians, and a mistrustful public" (p8).

In order to overcome the tension between planning and politics, Willson, in contrast to March (2010), suggests a communicative rationality focusing on language based on Habermas (1984) communicative action theory. Although Willson recognizes some difficulties, such as time consumption, limitations in the number of participants and difficulties in achieving consensus, he proposes this theory as a solution.

The empirical findings here do not support the conflict between strategies and instrumentality. Instead, a conflict exists between the need for political communication and planning complexity. Politicians must be able to describe and explain the decision of complex issues in an understandable way (R2.1). The possibilities and constraints of communicative action theory have been discussed above.

Even though Willson recognizes some problems, he does not bring up the possibilities, limitations, and implications of a differentiated lifeworld, "concentration of cognitive potential ", "the evolutionary learning process", and the anchoring of the 'system mechanisms in the life world from Habermas (1975:293, 294, 1985, 1987). Thereby, the main hindrances to reaching consensus in the communicative planning process remain.

Still, Willson identifies something important: the issue of politics in planning and the political influence on planning documents and space. The fusion of planning and politics seems to also constitute a major problem in the empirical material, i.e., the RSAs, covered here. These planning documents ex-

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[18] See Alexander (2005) and Healey (1998).

press more of an attractive picture of the regions than serve as guidelines for future actions. In addition, as Friedman (1987) emphasizes, planning is not an objective rational process, but is rather value-laden and therefore political.

Following Davidoff (1965), the pluralistic planning approach is here proposed in which the comprehensive planning should be further political - and thereby also understandable. The design of the planning procedure thus depends not only on how various interests should be handled, but also on the interpretation of what kinds of interests and problems exist and should be prioritized, which constitutes a political issue (see Schumaker 2010[1990]). The formulation of problems, suggestions for solutions, and understandings of consequences are value-laden and therefore political issues. In addition, urban and regional changes have different consequences for different groups in the society.

It is here proposed that the second reason why communicative planning practice fails is due to a false belief in the possibilities of reaching understanding and consensus. This situation produces one of the gaps between communicative planning theory and planning practice. The answer is to turn planning and space into a political issue in which the definitions of problems and measures are explicit - and a political task.[19]

How could this negotiation take place between different ideological perspectives? And how should the process and the plan be anchored in the life world? The answer to these questions depends on political perspective (Allmendinger 2009, Yiftachel 1989). Marxism, pluralism, and liberalism point at different understandings towards the position of planning in a political context.

The political landscape cannot, of course, be described in an easy comprehensive way. However, it may be possible to position some major ideologies on an axis between 'strong state - no market economy' to 'minimal state - full market economy' (see Figure 3).

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[19] This has, for a long time, been a Marxist position.

No private prop-erty. Social owner-ship and control.	Marxism	Two major classes. Capitalism is the determining force in the society. Planning supports the prevailing capitalistic structure. In the communist society: no market economy, social ownership (land, buildings, and infrastructure) and control of the means of production (land use plans). The socialistic ethic: equal material conditions.
	Neo-Marxism	A number of classes, interests, and social groups. Capitalism is regarded as a strong structuralizing mechanism. Planning supports capitalism.
	Neo-Pluralism	A number of social groups. Capitalism is one (strong) structuralizing mechanism, among others. Unequal power distribution is assumed.
	Pluralism	A number of social groups and interests. Equal power distribution is assumed. Ownership (land, buildings, and infrastructure) and control (land use plans) are assumed to be separated, to some degree.
	Neo-Liberalism	Similar to below, but emphasizes a minor strong state managing market limitations as external effects. Social market economy emphasizing social security and social justice (Freiburgh School).
Private owner-ship and control of property. Free trade and strong market. Minimal state.	Liberalism (classical)	The individual's rights and freedom. Utilitarianism. Private ownership and control. Minimal state. No specific group interests. Laissez-faire. Full market economy. Welfare is maximized by free trade and exchange. The society is too complex for any one to interpret and plan. Liberal ethic: The individual freedom, inviolability and equal distribution of juridical opportunities.

Figure 3. Position of major ideologies.[20]

The different political positions imply decisive different understandings of the world and thereby dissimilar roles for planning.

From a Marxist perspective, society today is governed by capitalism and characterized by class conflicts. Capitalism will result in two classes: capitalist, and a proletariat with no resources. Then, all problems are also connected to capitalism - and planning only functions as a device that supports further capital accumulation (Kiernan 1983:80). The only way of handling this situation is to, by revolution or non-incremental structural change (Manley 1983:381), transform the society into a communist society in which private property is abolished and the means of production are democratized.

In the liberal perspective, society is regarded to be too complex to be regulated by a plan or by planning. Free exchange is assumed to better serve the people's needs and maximize their welfare (Allmendinger 2009; McCann 2001). Governments and plans restrict the functioning of the market economy and decrease welfare. The neoliberal perspective also acknowledges the necessity of a well defined, minor and strong state managing external effects, and securing and regulating private property. Social responsibility is also a part of some directions within liberalism.

A difference between Marxism and liberalism of major importance to planning is the understanding of the urban system. Liberals regard society and the urban system - under market conditions - to be a self-regulating and stable system that optimizes welfare.[21] Marxists, on the other hand, regard society

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[20] For a further detailed description, see Allmendinger (2009), Davidoff (1965), Manley (1983), McFarland (2007), Nozick (2001[1974]), Schumaker (2010), Taylor (1998), and Taylor and Jordan (2009). Naturally, there are a number of political movements that not are covered here. Of importance are conservatism, social liberalism, and "the third way" (Giddens (2010[2000]) and Alexander 2009:242).

[21] Liberal ethics emphasises individual freedom vis-a-vis the state and other authorities. Capitalist ethics states that individual income (distribution of wealth) in a market economy reflects fairly (based on "economic justice") each individual's contribution to the overall economy and the welfare in the society (Kristol (1978[2010]:325)

and the urban system - under market conditions - to be unstable,[22] unfair, and suboptimizing welfare (Allmendinger 2009).

The neo-Marxist[23] and neo-pluralist perspectives are today, in a number of respects, quite similar (of course, with some objections) (McFarland 2007). The neo-pluralist perspective is somewhat vague (regarding normative positions on the distribution of wealth, income, property, and theory of value, see Manley 1983). Basically, both acknowledge a spectrum of different interest groups. Still, the capitalist system is regarded as the major force in structuralizing society (Manley 1983). The neo-pluralistic perspective recognizes the influence of capitalism - but as one force among others (Manley 1983). The pluralistic alternatives departs from Weber's (1983[1922]:212) definitions of social classes based on economic class and status forming a number of interest groups. The attitude is that, although power constitutes an unbalanced distribution in society, most people are regarded to have some degree of power (Manley 1983). Therefore, the negotiation in planning processes between interests (with different powers and resources) and exercise of power (McFarland 2007) should be carried out by a planner who represents certain interests (advocacy planning) in a democratic process. Even though there are conflicts, there are also common interests and understandings. Based on this reasoning, the development of society cannot, from a pluralistic perspective, solely be understood from a (neo) Marxist paradigm.

Thus, the descriptions of problems, solutions, and possible consequences cannot be understood without a clarification of the political discourse. Contrary to Willson (2001), we do not believe that communicative rationality could solve the tension between the planners' instrumental rationality and the politicians' strategic rationality. We believe that one of the major problems is that planning and plans are presented as too simplistic and non-political, i.e., the system complexity (technical report from Trivector 2008) and the underlying political discourses are not sufficiently communicated. The understanding of the society, the region, the city, various kinds of problems, and the role of infrastructure as a device of contributing to a better society are not communicated. The effects on various social groups and interests in the RSAs studied here are also not presented. Consequently, the planning process, the prioritization between alternatives, and the decisions - the plans - cannot be understood. Therefore, a transparent political dimension in the planning process is decisive.

In Habermas (1987, 1985, 1996) communicative action theory (see above), the political system should *communicate* expert knowledge about the functioning of the system into the lifeworlds, integrate public spheres as signal systems, let social power be transformed into political power, strengthen the lifeworlds in society, and make use of communicative action in the planning process.

Following Davidoff (1965:216): "In an ideal situation local parties would establish political platforms, which could contain master plans [...]". Then, the voters would face blue, green, red, etc., master plans. Possibly, *one* plan could be produced in a democratic political process using Schumaker's (2010:163) method, in which various interests groups are identified and welfare is distributed among them based on "complex equality". There might also be negotiations and agreements between the parties on colourful compromises. At first glance, pluralistic planning seems to neglect participation. However, this is not the case. Schumaker (2010) emphasizes the influence of representatives (political parties among other interests), participants, and public opinion. Thereby the planning will be understandable, hopefully transparent, and possible to judge in the next democratic election.

According to the empirical analysis and this political theoretical review, it is here suggested that the second reason why (communicative) planning fails is: 1) due to the difficulties of *communicate* complex system issues; and 2) due to a false belief in the possibilities of reaching understanding and consensus. Political conflicts in the planning procedure, in the planning documents, and in space are natural in a pluralistic society. To bridge this political gap, it is here suggested to: 1) *communicate* the system perspective and expert knowledge in social sciences (Habermas 1983, 1987); and 2) acknowledge

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[22] "Creative destruction" is a key term (Harvey 1989:138).

[23] The Marxist tradition has developed into a number of variants: Post-Marxism, "Marxism without Marxism", etc. (Ritzer 2008:324).

public spheres (Habermas 1996), and follow Schumaker's (2010[1990]) political pluralism and Dafidoff's (1965) advocacy planning approach. In other words, turn planning, space, and the RSA processes into a political issue in which the definitions of problems and measures are explicit and conflicts are debated in the public spheres and managed in a democratic political assembly.

Bridging the philosophical gap: Acknowledging single and double hermeneutic relations based on Critical Realism

In order to locate the "root of the problem" of a fragmented, confusing and non-explanatory planning theory, Lord (2014), in his theoretical analysis, identifies the historical conflict as between positivism and post-positivism (p32). This conflict, in turn, is based on a false belief in true understanding, consensus, and "the best argument" (p29). These theories - or paradigms - make supporters "theoretically incapable" of understanding each other (p32). This "dissonance" between theory and practice (in which the best argument does not win) is by Lord (p29) defined as the "theory-practice gap". This gap manifests itself in practice by "poor quality, unnecessary or unwanted infrastructure" (p29).

The underlying idea here is that, as people cannot fully understand each other, there will always be some degree of misunderstanding in the communicative planning process. This gap of understanding is explained by solipsism, i.e., only I, as an individual, can understand what I myself actually mean when I use a certain word, and no one else.[24] I do not actually know if other people even exist.

Therefore, the focus on phenomenology and communicative planning in understanding other people does not work. Phenomenology (and communicative planning) fails, according to this reasoning, on its own premises. Still, private language - based on solipsism - cannot exist, either (p34). Language is regarded to be a social phenomenon. The gap is regarded to exist due to a misunderstanding regarding where language exists and how it can be understood.

Lord identifies two major problems: 1) The inherent contradiction within phenomenology (post-positivism) in developing understanding between people based on the theory of solipsism; and 2) the intermediate conflict regarding understanding between positivism and post-positivism.

In order to overcome these gaps, Lord refers to Wittgenstein and proposes a complex analytical non-theoretical approach focusing on language (p28).[25] By investigating words based on their use in everyday practice - by a "language game" (p33) - their actual meaning is assumed to be understandable. A "language game is simply a linguistic encounter and the task of philosophy is to elucidate that game and the rules by which it is played, lay them bare and thereafter conclude the exercise complete" (p35). By using a language game, it is thus assumed to be possible to develop an understanding between people, and thus carry out and explain a planning process. By this method, Lord intends to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Even though Lord introduces philosophy and contributes a number of important issues regarding planning theories and problems with language, we do not understand his complete rejection of phenomenology, and the proposed solution of using Wittgenstein's 'game language' approach.[26] It is not clear to us from Lord's text why he departs from the historical conflict between positivist and post-positivist planning and different opinions regarding the possibility of reaching consensus within the post-positivist theory of planning as the main arguments of the gap between theory and practice. Even

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[24] This might be questioned, as well.

[25] Wittgenstein argues (according to Lord 2014) that no private language can exist due to the situation, as we understand, that language should exist somewhere, and cannot be defined individually (existing only as a private language), but only socially. It must originate from somewhere. Lord (2014) refers to Hacker (1995) and argues that if the private language is "unknown to any other speaker [this] entails that it would also be unknowable to the individuals own mind". In addition, "introspection can never lead to a definition - it can only lead to a psychological statement about the introspector" (Lord 2014:34). Thereby, the existence of a private language is rejected. Still, Lord (2014) uses solipsism as an argument for rejecting phenomenology.

[26] However, Wittgenstein's language game is already used by Habermas (1984:95).

though some infrastructure projects are unnecessary and possess a 'bad' design, it is not easy to evaluate their utility, whether a particular solution is optimal (see Rydin 2007), or why these projects were actually implemented. The functioning of the lifeworld as an antennae detecting "system deficiencies" – as unnecessary infrastructure – is already a part of Habermas (2007[1996]:391) theory. Even when language is investigated by the language game, Lord (2014) does not explain how the individual interpretation of every word should be handled or how a common understanding of the language could be achieved. According to the level of abstraction, the usefulness of Wittgenstein's language game in planning practice also seems dubious. Still, as discussed above, the expectation in communicative planning of the capacity in the communicative process in reaching consensus, as Lord also asserts, is here regarded as being too high.

The empirical findings here do not provide any evidence for the first problem concerning solipsism. However, the empirical findings, to some extent, support Lord's notion about the second problem (the positive – post-positive gap). One of the answers from the interviews (R1.1) indicates that technical reports (Trivector 2008) are difficult to *integrate* in the RSA processes.

Still, a theory of bridging the first problem (a logical argument for the existence of other people and an external world outside the mind of the subject) is needed as prerequisite in order to bridge the second problem: positivism contra post-positivism (a theoretical framework structuring the relation between the subject and external objects).

It seems reasonable that an external world exists, that other people exist, that they have a private language similar to my own private language, and that we, to some degree, can learn from and understand each other. It is here argued that the first problem (solipsism) could be handled using an alternative philosophical framework: the theory of "scientific inference of other minds" (Pargetter 1984: 160). Pargetter (1984) provides a logic for acknowledging the existence of other people. The existence of other people cannot be proved – but by the hypothesis of the existence of other people with minds similar (but not identical) to my own can be checked by observation of the (expected and unexpected) behaviour of other people. Pargetter (1984: 160) states:

"What I can check on is that this hypothesis [the existence of other people with minds and languages] does explain the behaviour of other people in a satisfactory way, and this is the only check required for the justifiable use of a scientific inference."

Still, 'scientific inference' does not provide a conceptual framework how to link the subject to the social and physical world (the second problem).

Concerning the second problem (the gap between positivism and post-positivism), critical realism has been expressed as a bridging philosophy for studies of the subjective, the social, and the physical world (Sayer 1992, Allmendinger 2002, Naess and Saglie 2000).[27]

The basic assumption in critical realism is that an external real world exists, but we as individuals have our own interpretation of this world. The world is assumed to consist of subjects, physical and social objects. Social objects are socially produced and socially defined (see Sayer 1992: 24ff, 147). Physical objects are physically produced and socially defined. Social objects, e.g., persons, organizations, have social relations and form social structures. Physical objects have physical relations (distances, connections, etc.) and form physical structures. The subject has a single hermeneutic relation with physical objects, in which a change in the subject's conception of the physical objects does not change the physical object. In addition, a double hermeneutic relation with social objects - a change in the subjects conception of the social object/structure does change the social object/structure (perhaps not very much), and vice versa. Thus, there is a learning process regarding conceptualization of the world. The definition of the objects depends on the subject's perception and social processes. The use of Critical Realism might thus contribute to solving the gap between positivist and post-positivist the-

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[27] Critical realism has also been criticized by Hedström (2005).

ories. It is acknowledged that an external world exists that could be subjectively understood and socially defined - possibly with competing definitions.

It is here argued that the positivist – post-positivist dichotomy (the second problem) emerges in communicative planning due to a selective use of Habermas sociology (as discussed above) of not *integrating* the system perspective (i.e., technical reports). This problem could be philosophically bridged by using "scientific inference of minds" (Pargetter 1984: 160) and Critical Realism (Sayer 1992).

Thus, misunderstandings exist, but could, to some degree, be solved in lifeworld and administrative system processes. In the system world (a pluralistic society), conflicts and different world views should be accepted, supported by a debate among the public spheres and handled in democratic political processes developing 'concentration of cognitive potential' (Habermas 1975, 1996). Critical realism and the scientific inference approach might well serve as bridges to overcome the philosophical gap of misunderstanding based on the theory of solipsism and the theoretical dichotomy between positivism and post-positivism in planning processes.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS

This paper analyses the gap between planning practice and planning theory. The analyses expose three important outcomes. First, in order to understand planning processes, sociology was more useful than planning theory. By using sociology - in this case, Habermas and Bourdieu - it was possible to localize the theory- practice gap 1: the sociological gap. This gap has two roots: the first is the neglecting of the system perspective in communicative planning theory - but not in Habermas (1975, 1987 and 1985) communicative action theory. The second root is the incapacity of planning theory to understand the planner in his/her social context. In order to understand the non-use of planning theory, it is here concluded, based on Bourdieu (1980, 1983), that social capital, informal knowledge, and 'a feel for the game' are of greater value than formal knowledge in planning theory. For instance, planners R1.1 and R2.1 refer to their social network and their knowledge regarding what kinds of knowledge are possible to use and what kinds of actions are possible to carry out. In order to strengthen planning theory, we therefore suggest an *integration* of Habermas (1985, 1987) system perspective and a deeper understanding of the planner in his/her social context (Bourdieu 1980, 1983) in communicative planning theory and practice.

Two, planning is, to a great extent, a political issue. The planning documents studied here do not express a political position or balance between various interests. The political discourse is hidden, and political conflicts are not presented. Still, based on the empirical material, complex planning issues regarding the functioning of the system (Habermas 1987) must be accessible and possible to *communicate* in the society (R2.1). This is a major problem in a pluralistic society characterised by different world views. What kind of classes and status groups exist, and how are opportunities and resources redistributed among these groups (Schumaker 2010) due to spatial changes? As planning documents rarely describe these welfare issues, planning cannot be fully understood. This is the root of gap 2: the political gap. Based on Habermas (1996) theories on public spheres and Schumakers (2010) theories on pluralism, we suggest a return of advocacy planning (Davidoff 1965) theory and practice in which political values and distribution of welfare due to spatial changes (system perspective) are *communicated*. This could be accomplished either by an explicit political evaluation of the proposed plan (Schumaker 2010) or by comparing different political spatial alternatives in a democratic political process (Davidoff 1965). In other words, planning should be made as a political issue and different interpretations of the world, definitions of interest groups (public spheres), distribution of welfare, understandings, conflicts, agreements, and compromises between various political positions should be debated within and between public spheres, presented and managed in representative democratic political assembles. Then, planning will be transparent and communicable in society.

Third, yes, we agree with Lord (2014) that the gap between positivism and post-positivism, to some extent, still influences planning practice (the problems of incorporating a technical report). Still, we do not support the use of Wittgenstein's rather abstract language game as a measure to sort out misunderstandings in planning practice. Instead, we propose Critical Realism (Sayer 1992 and Allmendinger 2009) as a philosophical bridge between positivism and post-positivism, i.e., a real world exists which

we can interpret by single and double hermeneutics. We also do not support Lord's (2014) hypothesis that misunderstanding due to solipsism is the major factor of conflicts within communicative planning. It seems reasonable that other people and objects outside the subjective mind exist and that those people can understand and learn from each other (Pargetter 1984), although not necessarily develop consensus (Habermas 1996). Again, conflicting interpretations should be handled within a political framework by democratic procedures (see above).

This analysis is based on a limited number of interviews and documents within regional transport planning in Sweden. Therefore, our conclusion regarding planning theory and practice cannot be generally extrapolated. Still, we hope that this analysis will contribute to the debate on the gap between theory and practice in the planning community.

Our main conclusion is that planning should be understood in - and developed due to - its social context. Bourdieu's and Habermas' theories, (neo) pluralism and Critical Realism might serve well as theoretical frameworks in order to develop planning theory into a useful asset in future planning practice.

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