

11-1-2020

Seeing the Insurgent in Transformative Planning Practices

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Seeing the *insurgent* in transformative planning practices

Planning Theory

2020, Vol. 19(4) 371–391

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DOI: 10.1177/1473095219901290

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Abstract

Insurgent planning and radical planning are two of the most popular conceptual frames of reference for progressive planners and theorists of transformative planning practices. In the past decades, scholars have extended these two planning conceptions to new geographies and realities to shed light on how planning can challenge structural injustices and marginalization. However, less attention has been given to how insurgent planning renovates radical planning practices in response to the crisis of neoliberal urbanization. While appreciating that radical and insurgent planning remain braided in practice, this article contributes to the literature on transformative planning by highlighting how insurgent planning builds on radical planning and innovates with regard to social location, epistemic distinction, and analytical unit.

Keywords

insurgent planning, political, practices, radical planning, transformative planning

Introduction

Insurgent planning (IP) and radical planning (RP) theories emerged, entwined, and evolved in response to states shifting from welfare to neoliberal governance as well as researchers moving between global north/south realities.¹ IP and RP practices are not neatly separable categories that belong to self-proclaimed groups of radical or insurgent theorists and practitioners. In one possible effort to navigate this ambiguous theoretical terrain as there are no card-carrying members of RP and IP, I searched for authors who explicitly use the words “radical” and “insurgent” sometimes exclusively and sometimes interchangeably, and grappled with the evolving nuances of this decades-long discussion.² Perhaps, the earliest reference to RP is in Grabow and Heskin’s (1973) *Foundations for a Radical Concept of Planning*. In that article, they propose RP as a tool to dismantle “mass

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technocratic society” of economic growth and create “systems change and the realization of a decentralized communal society which facilitates human development by fostering an appreciation of an ecological ethic based on the evolutionary process: spontaneity and experimentation” (Grabow and Heskin, 1973: 109). Disenchanted with the capitalist welfare state in the US and echoing the calls for system change; black, red, and brown liberation; and eco-conscious communal experiments of the late 1960s counterculture, Grabow and Heskin sketched out in broad strokes the features of RP: systemic change, decentralization, communal social arrangements, and human development balanced with ecological ethic. Hudson et al. (1979: 390) built on the works of Schumacher, Goodman, Illich, Katz & Bender, Hampden-Turner, Gordon, Ellul, and Kravitz to argue that RP is composed of two streams: one which emphasizes self-reliance and mutual aid to “achieve concrete results in the immediate future” and the other which makes visible the “large-scale social processes” of domination. More importantly, they pointed out the differences between radical, transactive, and advocacy planning on questions of public interest, human dimension, feasibility, action potential, substantive theory, and self-reflexivity. None of these early pieces, however, elaborated on the concept of RP beyond general formulations.

In 1987, disillusioned with state-centered planning in the onslaught of neoliberal deregulation and privatization, Friedmann reinvigorated the discussion on RP in his masterpiece, *Planning in the Public Domain*. Friedmann (1987) theorized RP as an outgrowth of the social mobilization tradition, which “encompasses the three great oppositional movements of utopianism [Robert Owen, Charles Fourier etc.], social anarchism [Proudhon, Kropotkin, Bakunin, Sorel etc.], and historical materialism [Marx, Lenin, Luxemburg, etc.]” that critique industrialism and aim for collective political liberation. Friedmann affirmed the necessity of non-electoral, barrio-level, and extra-institutional people’s movements “from below” which are the central focus of social mobilization tradition. He argued that social mobilization has “informed planning within the social reform tradition even as they severely criticized it” but has failed to produce “a positive image of what a radical, transformative planning might be like” (Friedmann, 1987: 299–300). Friedmann then went on to elaborate in detail the various characteristics of RP. RP’s overarching goal is collective emancipation of humanity and “the client [of radical planning] is the mobilized community or group” (Friedmann, 1987: 301) where the impulse of transformation originates. Although “planners” and “people” are not always distinguishable in the transformative processes of RP, “planners do provide specialized skills and are consequently identifiable as separate individuals” (Friedmann, 1987: 303). In this sense, RP is the collaboration between organized communities in civil society (including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the context of developing economies) and radical planners who use their skills to sharpen and further the emancipatory work of communities (Friedmann, 1992: 306). Although Friedmann’s definition of RP expanded the realm of planning to include organized citizen activities as planning across global north/south contexts, he did not unpack the histories of these alternative practices of city-building at the time.

Within a decade, Sandercock’s (1998a, 1998b) edited volume *Making the Invisible Visible* and the book *Towards Cosmopolis* built on Holston’s (1996) work on “insurgent citizenship” and developed the theoretical space of “insurgent planning histories” to trace narratives of resistance to modernist liberal planning paradigm. Insurgent

historiography revealed how liberal citizenship and modernist planning were premised on exclusions and erasures of people's histories. Sandercock brought into conversation the histories of activist/practitioners such as Mel King and Gilda Haas, the Wik People's struggle around Native Title in Australia, the Municipal Department of Multicultural Affairs' effort in creating an inclusive Frankfurt, The Mothers of East Los Angeles' fight for environmental justice and other citizen initiatives from Latin America to North America. Histories of IP brought to focus "stories of people and organizations and agencies who are practicing a radical, democratic, and multicultural planning in the interstices of power, sometimes in the face of power, and sometimes (although less often) from positions of state power" (Sandercock, 1998b: 129). In this early portrayal, IP includes a repertoire of practices such as "mobilising constituencies, protests, strikes, acts of civil disobedience, community organization, professional advocacy and research, publicity, as well as the proposing and drafting of new laws and new programs of social intervention" (Sandercock, 1998b: 204). Sandercock's insurgent planners form coalitions, work on broad issues, appropriate state mechanisms to their ends, and bring about changes in their day-to-day lives. Through this extension, Sandercock diversified the domain of planning practices to include contestations to racism, sexism, colonialism, and so on—subjects that traditional planners (Sorensen and Auster, 1999) say are about social justice as opposed to public interest and better handled outside planning offices and through laws and political cultures. However, the nuances of different progressive planning practices were unclear in the plethora of activities Sandercock introduced. For instance, using state mechanisms for purposes of redistribution and challenging spatial injustice is a classic feature of advocacy/equity planning. Was this also RP and IP? What counts as IP practices continue to generate debate at present. Davy (2019) contended that "evil insurgents" such as alt-right parties, xenophobic groups, and White supremacists fit the definition of IP. On the other hand, the work of scholars such as Miraftab (2009) qualifies IP's definition through proposing specific characteristics that constitute IP. The still persistent dilemmas about what constitutes IP would benefit from taking into account, as this article does, how scholars have enriched the concept of IP and moved the concept forward from its earliest formulations. Understanding the nuanced contributions of IP, rooted in the entwined IP/RP relationships, requires us to pay attention to the contextual changes—that is, state-citizen relationships across global north/south—as well as the theoretical insights developed in the last decades of IP scholarship.

Emerging from scholarships that are in deep conversation with each other, RP and IP are genealogically bound. There are significant overlaps between RP and IP as they are both united in challenging the modernist paradigm of state-led planning (Shatkin, 2002) and aim to counter structural oppression. RP and IP literatures both recognize the dirty history of planning and want to undo the consequences through their shared commitment to spatial justice, their historicized analysis of oppression and strategizing liberation in specific contexts and in alliance with social movements.

Since Sandercock did not explicitly separate IP histories from the theorization of RP, scholars of transformative planning wrote RP and IP into each other (Beard, 2002, 2003; Friedmann, 2000, 2003; Irazábal and Foley, 2010; Siemiatycki, 2012). For instance, Friedmann (2000, 2003) read IP as a synonym for what he conceptualized as

transformative RP and argued that “radical or insurgent planning” is “rooted in civil society rather than the state” and “allied with social movements . . . and is inspired by the normative theories undergirding these movements” (Friedmann, 2003: 9). Similarly, Beard (2002: 18) highlighted that IP or RP wants to “address and redress unequal relation of power” across lines of difference. The flattening of IP’s distinctive features creates conceptual vagueness and room for misinterpretations such as IP is more radical RP. This article argues against such ranking of IP and RP in acknowledging that they are complementary in practice, while also countering the collapsing of IP into RP through highlighting the subtleties of IP which, though unelaborated, are not lost on planning scholars. Shatkin (2002) suggested that IP is centered on an analysis of actions and expressions of situated social movements, while radical planners work with insurgent actions emerging from social movements. Works such as Shatkin’s (2002) leave open the possibility to further elaborate IP’s distinguishable patterns and how IP couples with transformative planning practices such as RP. Likewise, Irazábal and Foley (2010) build on Friedmann’s conception of RP to argue that radical planners take a partisan role in social transformation and work with social movements outside the state bureaucracy. Irazábal and Foley (2010: 108) point to how radical planners have to maintain a “critical distance” and such a positionality raises dilemmas of “going native” with regard to their involvement in social movements. However, they do not delve into this tension. Assessing the planning literature on global south-east cities, Watson (2012) highlights that NGO-mediated state–citizen negotiations valorize local knowledges and practices by drawing them into an orbit of negotiations with experts working with as well as situated within the state bureaucracy. RP’s approach to learning from and working with local communities, in other words, is now an institutionalized reality where community knowledge and participation is a routine empowerment strategy that “legitimizes material exclusion by means of symbolic incorporation” (Miraftab, 2004: 240). Precisely in such a context of expanding regimes of urban governmentality through a “politics of inclusion” (Roy, 2009: 161) or what Miraftab (2009: 39) calls “domination through inclusion,” we need to renew and expand the discussion about IP practices in order to challenge the limitations of “inclusive planning” and take account of how IP conceptually evolved over the years to tackle the predicaments of neoliberal urbanization.

Adding to the vagueness of IP/RP was the fact that in their theorizations, RP theorists shifted the register between planner and planning seamlessly as if the two were the same, making it indiscernible as to when they were referring to professional expertise-based planning and planning as the work of mobilized communities. As neoliberalism co-opted the logic of inclusion and participation, the earlier theorization of multicultural cosmopolis and social learning models of RP and IP required rethinking. In two successive interventions, Miraftab (2009, 2017) re-positioned the aspirations of progressive transformative planning practices within a global context where participation is the tool of the master and argued that IP challenges the specifics of neoliberal domination through inclusion and that IP moves from distribution to structural change, that is, IP is counter-hegemonic. Miraftab (2017: 276, 278) conceptualized IP as practices that “ontologically depart from liberal traditions of so-called inclusive planning” as it “shifts the understanding of justice from a liberal Rawlsian notion of justice as fairness to a Youngian notion of justice based on recognition of difference and its politics,” which moves planning from representative democracy to participatory democracy and validates direct action to realize social justice. I build on the modulations that Miraftab

(2009, 2017) articulated and weave into conversation scholarship that uses the framework of IP and deepen the meanings associated with the framework. In the more than a decade long accumulation of insights from scholars, IP has evolved its distinguishable patterns even as IP remains deeply tied to RP. In this article, I will group these patterns which highlight the distinctiveness of IP. The purpose of the article is neither to rank IP and RP as lesser or better framework within the progressive planning stream nor to make a case for a sharp schism between the two. IP and RP are in conversation with each other and both share a desire to fight for collective liberation of the oppressed, but to operationalize and use the two approaches productively we need to understand their nuances. In order to address our present predicaments in creating just cities, lifting up and collating the various cases of IP is important as IP challenges the dominant planning tradition, which still has not valorized the oppositional, illegal, and confrontational modes of planning. Participation, in the dominant model, ends up diluting calls for structural changes and legitimizing cities planned for profit and dominance. Highlighting and reflecting on the complexities of IP/RP also creates theoretical space for a new generation of radical planners (and others) who are grappling with how to position themselves vis-à-vis the social movements and IP practices, how to put democratic participation into practice without making participatory processes party to dispossession, how to navigate the political terrain within and outside their profession at the same time. In the concluding section, I will engage these issues further. Emphasizing the finer details of IP will refine our understanding and get us to a more just process of embodying and analyzing planning practices as we learn to see and engage with agencies and dynamics that stay unexplored otherwise. To avoid any slippages between planners and planning, professionals and communities in the rest of the article, I am using IP to exclusively refer to an evolving set of practices that can be grouped as IP practices; IP does not refer to people, planners, movements, or professionals.

In revisiting articles that directly and exclusively claim the term “insurgent” planning (IP), I will argue that there are three distinctive features of IP practices:

IP is grounded in political society;

IP leans more on the agency and epistemic privilege of marginalized social groups;

IP takes practice as the unit of analysis.

The article is structured in three segments, each dedicated to one of IP’s primary features. Each segment begins with RP’s contributions to questions of social location, epistemic multiplicity and unit of analysis, respectively, and delves into how IP builds on RP and develops IP’s distinctive features. We start with political society in the first section as it sets the social location for IP dynamics. We then go on to the epistemic source and end with the methodological mutations of IP scholarship.

Political society

The first point of clarification helpful to understanding IP is on the question of social location. In what social space does transformative planning, and more specifically IP,

unfold? A dominant proposition is that “radical or insurgent planning” is “a tradition of planning rooted in civil society rather than the state” (Friedmann, 2003: 9). Proponents of this view understand RP/IP to be organized, multi-ideological, and rights-based activism of marginalized social groups working with planners and NGOs within regulatory global-north states and developmental global-south states (Friedmann, 1989, 1992; Sandercock, 1998a, 1998b).³ In this articulation, civil society refers to “all forms of social organization that remain relatively autonomous vis-à-vis the state and corporate economy” (Friedmann, 1989: 503). To be clear, civil society conceived in this way is different from how Hegel, Marx, or de Tocqueville used the term. Civil society, in the post-WWII usage, is a descriptive concept which for instance the United Nations (UN) defined quite broadly as “the associations of citizens (outside their families, friends and businesses) entered into voluntarily to advance their interests, ideas and ideologies” (United Nations, 2004). Critics of this novel usage of civil society have pointed out that civil society is a complementary phenomenon of capitalism’s “territorial expansion” as state responsibilities are handed over to citizens (Goonewardena and Rankin, 2004: 118). Considering that in the era of neoliberalism civil society can operate as a site of various forms of domination (Ferguson, 2007; Harvey, 2005; Matthews et al., 2015; Mohanty, 1988; Puar, 2013), furthering capitalist hegemony through inclusion (Miraftab, 2009) and reproducing patron–client relationships and undemocratic practices in the case of development, IP practices deepen RP’s counter-hegemonic stance in taking a cautious approach toward civil society and carving out a space that can be interpreted as political society. In this section, I will draw our attention to IP scholars who have taken a critical stance toward civil society in recent decades and positioned IP as an oppositional movement to civil society’s oppressive dynamics and engaged with the claims-making practices of subjects under heterogenous neoliberal state conditions. In the steady gathering of evidence from these diverse scholars, we see that IP occupies a social space that traverses through and transgresses civil society, the economy, and the state—a social space which I shall call, borrowing from Chatterjee (2001, 2004), political society. Resonating with the line of thinking Roy (2017b) proposed in bringing political society into conversation around urban questions, I will use this dynamic concept to shed light on the distinct social location of IP practices. The observation here is not that other streams of transformative planning practices such as RP categorically exclude political society as a site of societal transformation or that those streams singularly and uncritically rely on civil society. Inclusionary planning processes co-opted and codified the sphere of urban politics to replace politics as contestation with politics as “technocratic mechanisms and consensual procedures” that legitimize dominant modes of urbanization (Wilson and Swyngedouw, 2014: 6) in what comes to be called the post-political order of “the daily choreographies of interest and conflict intermediation in public policy arrangements and rituals of governance” (Swyngedouw, 2014: 174). In this moment of post-political planning, we see a growing disillusionment with and failure of participatory operations of civil society (Laskey and Nicholls, 2019; Purcell, 2009). Detroit Community Development Corporations (CDCs) that, for instance, were supposed to foster people’s participation operated as conduits of government and developer interests, controlled information flow, and “worked to naturalize and valorize core planning norms and get residents’ buy-in for the overall project” (Laskey and Nicholls,

2019: 355). Freitas (2019) documented how the Right to the City policies of Brazil's progressive administration was co-opted toward exclusionary ends. When participatory mechanisms and spaces are structurally constrained through funding and resources to operate as legitimizing devices for dominant interests (De Souza, 2006; Pithouse, 2013), IP practices counter the power and legitimacy of the planning status quo through mobilizing in the space of political society, a social space often ignored in liberal as well as certain radical accounts (Pithouse, 2014). Here, building on RP's counter-hegemonic orientation toward structures of oppression, IP scholars point to how IP formations challenge the assumptions of representative democracy, free market, and multicultural-humanitarian liberalism underpinning the post-political status quo through practices located in political society. I will first provide my brief understanding of political society and then use the existing IP literature to illustrate my point.

After formal independence, post-colonial nation states faced the dilemmas of modernization, for instance, whether modernization required them to adopt a Western liberal civil society. In countries like India, only a small section of citizens inhabits this Westernized civil society. The White man's burden became the Brown man's burden as the educated elite took on the civilizing role for the rest of Indian society which they saw as essentially traditional. Moreover, in the neoliberal phase of state restructuring from 1970s onward, the welfare state was dismantled in the global north and the provisions for socialized care was reduced through structural adjustment in the post-colonial developmental states. Instead, civil society was proposed as the third sector in which welfare organizations would provide services for citizens. The supposed role of civil society is to aid "backward" and "traditional" citizens catch up and establish themselves as individual entrepreneurs in the modern competitive and "free" economy. Chatterjee (2001) disagrees with this civil/traditional binary and instead argues that traditional society has had to change as well and engage in political struggles to live through post-colonial development and neoliberalization. Therefore, between state and civil society, he suggests, there is a mediating space called political society. In this space, groups and classes appropriate "political associations such as parties" in ways that are "not always consistent with the principles of association in civil society" (Chatterjee, 2001: 176). Instead of operating in a civil society with legible associational forms within a stable liberal constitutional order, IP practices unfold in the space of political society where hybrid property relations, deep identity conflicts, violence as well as mutual aid result from historically entrenched social inequalities. Although IP does not have well-defined institutional features, we can ascertain some common patterns within its fluxes.

Located in political society, IP practices place collective demands on the state, sometimes through violating modern state laws, accepted customs, the police order, and sovereignty of states. Cape Town's Anti-Eviction Campaign claimed shelter and basic services through practices considered illegal, such as "reconnection of services and repossession of housing" (Miraftab and Wills, 2005: 207). Negev region's Bedouin communities engaged in community planning in defiance of the Israeli state through organizing councils, naming villages, and developing a master plan (Meir, 2005). The IP practices of Bedouin Arabs around Beersheba challenged the Israeli state's sovereignty and constructed novel political identities through spatializing collective memory and creating autonomous institutions (Yiftachel, 2009). Russian Buryats, an indigenous

group, challenged the centralization and assimilation into Russia's land use and economic development plan through reviving "taboo historical figures and topics" and organizing "conferences bringing indigenous peoples together to consider common experiences and seek strategies to strengthen their indigenous identity" (Sweet and Chakars, 2010: 206). Women in Cato Manor and Warwick Junction in Durban, South Africa resisted evictions, rebuilt housing, and engaged in informal trading in the face of police repression (Meth, 2010). Barrio women in Chacao, Caracas, took over, expropriated, and occupied housing through women-led organizations (Velasquez Atehortua, 2014). Housing rights movement in Spain blocked evictions and took over bank-owned empty buildings to turn them into housing for evicted families (García-Lamarca, 2017).

Emerging from political society, the collective demands of IP are articulated in terms of universalizable rights, which gives IP's situated and particularistic politics a global resonance and connects IP's demands to discourses of rights, politicized democracy and globalization, though their illegality may keep them separate from the "respectable" representative processes of civil society. Although framed as collective rights (as opposed to individual) and coupled at times with illegal activities, IP's rights-framing allows IP practices to access the state and engage in "invited" spaces of participation with state actors and NGOs (Miraftab and Wills, 2005). The IP practices of Bedouins in Negev region aided them in gaining access to state planning agencies and bring recognition to unrecognized settlements (Meir, 2005). Unregistered associations in Dhaka provided water and electricity in informal settlements through negotiating with local administrations and political parties, though such practices are stigmatized in the press as the activities of goons (Hossain, 2012). Muungano wa Wanavijiji, a federation of the urban poor in Nairobi, Kenya, negotiated with government officials and appropriated invited spaces of participation to secure basic amenities and housing upgrades (Butcher and Apsan Frediani, 2014). In Bangalore, India, dwellers living in unauthorized properties paid for water pipes to gain "legitimacy and respectability . . . in terms of their land tenure and their social standing vis à vis the state" (Ranganathan, 2014: 601). Dwellers secured NGO-led housing resettlement project in Kathmandu, Nepal (Shrestha and Aranya, 2015). Countering eviction, Brazil's Vila Autodromo in Rio de Jenerio worked with universities and NGOs to produce counter-plans for the area (Ivester, 2017).

IP practices engage with participatory spaces while simultaneously questioning their legitimacy, that is, questioning the "dominance through inclusion" of neoliberal states (Miraftab, 2009: 32). This agonistic (Mouffe, 2011) approach to participation allows IP to re-appropriate invited spaces for alternative purposes. In Cobbs Creek restoration project, community residents co-opted a top-down restoration project and used the space of participatory citizenship to claim community identity and right to place, and challenged the racialized neglect they suffered under the state (Brownlow, 2011). IP's rights-framing allows for creating networks of trans-local counter-hegemonic solidarities, for instance, support networks for Buryat organizing (Sweet and Chakars, 2010) and squatter resistance to eviction in Kathmandu, Nepal (Shrestha and Aranya, 2015).

In civil society, law-abiding citizens organize around formal associations that rely on legally recognized rights. As the above examples show, the politics of IP practices does not rely on established rights. Instead, emerging from the social space of political society, IP practices rely on making claims to provisions for life-making in the language of

rights against existing laws, police orders, and sovereignties. This is why governing bodies see peoples engaged in IP practices not as citizens belonging to civil society, but at best as subjects in political society deserving humanitarian welfare or, in worse cases, subjects needing disciplining, punishing, and coerced segregation (Yiftachel, 2009). As the particularistic politics of IP practices leads to situated demands that resonate, nonetheless, with universalizable demands for emancipation, one of the salient aspects of IP practices unfolding in political society is that IP practices are able to cut across reified lines of difference such as nationality. For instance, migrants from Bolivia, Peru and Paraguay organized cooperatives with local citizens and made collective claims for housing and basic services at the local level in Buenos Aires (Bastia and Bressán, 2018).

Characterized by direct action, self-organization, autonomous politics, constant negotiation and contestation, IP practices in political society translate to material access and gain by usually situational and at times unforeseeable means, not by legally establishing the right to access. IP practices lead to temporary, fluid, context-specific, and strategic arrangements that maybe partial and can always be retracted because IP practices mobilize rights politically, in that rights to personhood and property have no unquestionable legitimacy to exist outside the political struggles that make rights persist (Roy, 2017a). For instance, García-Lamarca (2017: 45) writes that the IP practice of eviction blockades in Bisbal del Pèndes, Catalonia, provide “only temporary respite from eviction” while creating more time to negotiate a long-term solution. In Dhaka, since slum dwellers rely on local leaders connected to upper-level politicians, dwellers’ insurgent practices can only ever achieve “a form of temporary security” open to the changes in broader electoral politics (Hossain, 2012: 75). Municipality authorities in Bangalore, India, provide “temporary document proving property ownership [*khata* in Kannada] which homeowners needed for obtaining bank loans” (Ranganathan, 2014: 601). Not all state promises to claim-making materialize. The residents of Vila Autodromo in Rio de Jenerio “have not been given promised documents to prove ownership and are still waiting for the undelivered upgrades, including a sports field and community square” (Talbot, 2018). In each of these cases, IP practices continue to build on temporary gains by keeping up the pressure for further gains.

Across global south/north, IP practices operate in the space of political society, as opposed to a modern civil society with consistent and discernible institutional and associational features. This is not to create a false binary between IP/RP but rather to reflect on how IP practices have to innovate and renovate transformative planning practices under specific contextual changes, that is, when civil society has been enrolled in processes of neoliberal urbanization. As such IP practices establish an agonistic relationship with civil society, the market economy, and the neoliberal state. IP practices are part of political society and not outside; therefore the contradictory and messy politics of political society is reflected in the operations of IP practices, such as the exclusionary practices of vigilante violence (Meth, 2010), xenophobia (Harrison, 2014), and anti-democratic and patriarchal dynamics (Runciman, 2014). IP practices cannot be engaged without embracing the possibility of these dynamics being part of the unfolding of IP practices. Engaging with IP practices requires stepping into context-specific political societies with embedded relations of internalized oppressions and exclusionary politics.

Epistemic privilege

RP is premised on “the mobilization of the disempowered in society,” and radical planners, Friedmann (1987: 393) argues, take on mediating roles and possess the mediational “skills of analysis, synthesis, communication, and managing group processes” along with “substantive knowledge,” which means radical planners “must command a ready fund of data, information, and theoretical insight pertaining to a given problem such as the environment, housing, or community economic development.” In RP and other related transformative approaches such as critical planning and planning for just city that nurture radical urbanism, the knowledges of the radical planners are refined and folded into the struggle through communicative acts between radical planners and communities. More specifically, Friedmann proposes that radical planners must analyze social problems, assist and facilitate strategy development, refine technicalities and participatory mechanisms, and mediate between social movements and state/capital—a set of tasks that presumes a certain class and social position for those engaged in RP. In other words, RP is about training planners who work within the state to open themselves up to the dissenting voices in the streets. Definitively in alliance with emancipatory social movements, RP modulates official planning practices to resonate with dissenting voices and mobilizations of the disadvantaged. RP challenges how expertise and administrative processes are hegemonized, and re-tools planning expertise to counter oppressive structures. Yet, professional planners remain the source of agency within RP, which is not to say RP undermines the agency of communities in struggle or that RP erases community mobilizations or that planning professionals have no role to play in strategies for social change. Put more clearly, RP emerged in the particular historical context of the 1990s to challenge expert and state-led planning. Theories of RP evolved through tumultuous moments such as Occupy uprisings into agonistic and anarchist streams (Jon and Purcell, 2018) and throughout RP practices have allied with emancipatory social movements (Angotti, 2019; Huq and Harwood, 2019; Marcuse, 2010; Randolph, 2017). The thread of RP scholarship contributes to transformative planning practice by spotlighting how the inclusionary planning paradigm fails (Hillier, 2002; Purcell, 2009) and by valorizing counter-hegemonic collective practices to reshape cities through self-government and pluralist democracy (Purcell, 2008, 2013). In a complementary gesture, IP scholarship enriches transformative planning practice by further detailing the micro-level nuances and historical specificities of practices among communities struggling to hold dominant planning institutions accountable, including progressive and inclusionary administrations. The second distinctive feature of IP rests on this very point. IP practices emerged in a neoliberal social and political world order and build on RP’s acknowledgment of epistemic multiplicity to shift the terrain qualitatively in relying on the agency and epistemic *privilege* of oppressed social groups. IP scholarship wades into the everyday level hows and whys to develop an intimate understanding of oppositional planning practices. In the re-democratizing moment of Fortaleza, Brazil, for instance, when a progressive administration operating under the framework of Right to the City invited the community organization Rede DLIS to revise the municipal master plan, the residents refused. As Freitas (2019) showed, Rede DLIS’ refusal was based on situated knowledge of participatory processes as many of the organization’s members had participated in drafting the existing master plan. When

invited to participate in revision, they pointed out that “nobody had asked them whether the plan should be revised in the first place. They did not think it should be revised; rather, it should simply be implemented” (Freitas, 2019: 301).

IP practices are animated through the historically evolving agencies of oppressed peoples, agencies that often dismantle, appropriate, and/or co-opt the visions of official planning and put forward alternative visions. In this sense, IP practices are grounded in the oppressed social group’s epistemic privilege or epistemic advantages (Wylie, 2013)—knowledges and ways of knowing that professional planners cannot directly access. The concept of epistemic privilege emerges from long-running inquiries within feminist standpoint epistemologies (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1990; Haraway, 2003; Harding, 1991; Hartsock, 1983). Epistemic privilege is not essentialist, that is, not a given reality for anyone located in a certain social position. Epistemic privilege results from the expansion of situated political consciousness and, therefore, can be separated from identity extremism and essentialism. Arguing for a realist notion of epistemic privilege, Mohanty (2018) writes,

to say that members of a group possess an epistemic advantage over other groups about a certain subject is to say that they are located in society in such a way that their everyday experiences are likely to produce certain kinds of insight about the social world. It is to say something about an angle of vision, a vantage point, which is shaped by causally significant social relations.

In pointing to how IP practices rely on epistemic privilege, I am not suggesting that RP is incognizant of the interests of oppressed social groups. Indeed, theorists of social transformation—from Marxists to feminists and others—exemplify that it is possible to theorize social conflicts from the standpoint of oppressed groups even though the theorists themselves might be from dominant social groups. Similarly, radical planners can provide “hard-hitting critical analysis of existing conditions” (Friedmann, 2000: 464). What I am suggesting is that IP practices shift the ground of knowledge from that of professional analysis to that of first-hand collective knowledge of social groups living under oppressive conditions. IP practices start to theorize planning—with its concerns for public good and social justice—from these other sites of epistemologically partial yet advantageous positions.

The epistemic privilege of IP practices provides insights into the historical workings of oppression and is the basis for IP’s technologies of appropriations and contestations. Irazábal and Neville (2007: 7) point to insurgent neighborhood-making in New Orleans where, outside the formal spaces of electoral politics, banking institutions and homeowners’ associations, “many African-Americans ‘produce neighborhoods’ through insurgent street celebrations and the maintenance of dynamic and neighborhood-based ‘social aid’ organizations.” The mutually shared social and financial support as well as the street performances emerge from localized knowledges of skills, cultural/social resources, and opportunities for mobilization. Sweet and Chakars’ (2010) work on IP practices among Buryat indigenous intellectuals shows- that the revival of suppressed Buryat language and cultural resources such as holidays, religions, and traditions was a critical axis along which IP practices challenged exclusionary Russian nationalism and market liberalism.

Situated knowledges are mobilized when slum-dwelling women in Cato Manor and Warwick Junction in Durban deploy their naked bodies to shame the police and stop evictions after negotiations fail (Meth, 2010). Instances such as this show how IP practices rely on deep understanding of what kinds of subversive practices need to be deployed at what points to reach desired ends. The Gezi movement's insurgent performances are another set of examples that show the mobilization of IP's epistemic privilege. For instance, the Standing Man protest performance where protestors simply stood still "challenged the police state's codes for what constitutes acts of resistance, and bewildered police forces on how to handle the supposedly passive protests of masses 'just standing'" (Ay and Miraftab, 2016: 568). IP practices in that instance relied on knowing in a context-specific way how to disrupt the symbolic order under repressive political circumstances.

One way to think of the epistemic link between planning professionals and social movements is where experts produce knowledge and community members process and refine that knowledge. Through providing analysis and information, radical planners assist "in devising appropriate strategies of struggles; refining technical aspects of transformative solutions . . . helping to rethink the group's course of actions in the light of new understandings" (Friedmann, 2000: 464). IP practices enrich that relationship by positioning marginalized communities as producers of strategic and technical knowledge that further the struggle underway. In Detroit, insurgent knowledge-making practices showed how participatory planning processes were disconnected from everyday and historical realities of residents (Laskey and Nicholls, 2019). In Spain's housing rights movement, the PAH, disrupting the accumulation of capital through IP practices included producing and sharing "knowledge on the practical and legal considerations of occupations, including how to obtain energy and water supplies" (García-Lamarca, 2017: 47). Brazil's Rede DLIS collectively scrutinized planning policies on specific issues, shared their understanding with the larger public, and crafted a political sensibility in the collective that rights come with obligations (Freitas, 2019). During the South African student movement, the students refused to produce any leaders for negotiation because the epistemic privilege of IP practices was in seeing that "the politics of containment works through introducing a range of binaries—invited versus invented, leaders versus masses—so as to identify and subdue projects of grassroots autonomy" (Miraftab, 2017: 280). By not putting forward leaders, IP practices in that instance "created an ambiguous liminal space" in order to "sustain this illegible threshold long enough to frustrate and suffocate existing modalities of law, state power, and capital accumulation" (Miraftab, 2017: 280). In the case of Berlin-Tempelhof airport regeneration project, Hilbrandt (2017) shows that IP practices appropriated the invited spaces of participation through introducing technical knowledges which highlighted the project's drawbacks, reframed the scope of the debates, and provided alternative visions for development.

In the multiple traditions of planning thought all dedicated to expressing the role of professional planners, dominated and oppressed groups have experienced an epistemic disorientation for long. IP practices take stock of that epistemic violence and reorients the epistemic landscape to unequivocally center the knowledge production of subordinate groups. How can professional planners, one might ask, relate to the epistemic privilege of IP? Without hastening to demarcate the territory of professional planners in IP, a

move which once more re-centers professionals, I will take up the question of whether professionals can engage in IP in the concluding section.

Practices

The first and second sections explored the subtleties of IP practices with regard to social location and epistemic position. The third section points to a methodological nuance—IP practices take practice as their unit of analysis, innovating on RP approach which took actors as its unit of analysis. RP is conceptualized as the doings of radical planners in a social learning model where they collaborate with community actors (Friedmann, 1987, 2011). In this manner, RP legitimized and drew attention to actors who were previously neglected or discounted from planning as these actors were non-professionals. Building on RP's legitimization, early IP scholarship made visible insurgent histories and later IP scholarship shed light on what constitutes insurgent practices in the post-political moment. Arguing for an ontological distinction between the inclusive planning paradigm (i.e. equity/advocacy) and IP practices, MirafTAB (2017) proposed that IP is about practices and not actors, meaning *the same actors can be engaged in IP and non-IP practices as their context changes*. Looking at planning as a set of practices horizontalizes the realm of planning where planning is not the exclusive work of any one person or one organization. Instead, differently situated people can engage in different planning practices and align their practices to move urban futures in socially just directions. In this section, I will reflect on the significance of conceptualizing IP as a set of practices with certain consistent criteria.

The mention of practice introduces into planning theory the practice turn, which has been a growing influence predominantly in sociology but also in other fields. The practice turn, to simplify quite a bit, proposes that larger systems are the effects of sets of activities resulting from the entanglement of humans and non-humans, that is, practices. Practice scholars conceptualize activities in different ways but some conceptualizations are more apt for IP, such as activities conceptualized as collective skills, tacit knowledges, know-how, dispositions and presuppositions (Turner, 1994). Barnes (2001) suggests that practices are necessarily collective and sustained through coordination and knowledge-building among people within a specific material context. Taking practice as the unit of analysis reveals that planning and state institutions, financial exchanges, religious beliefs and reasons, power and knowledge, science and language, bodies and materials, history and imagination—all these seemingly disparate realities that have been grouped into distinct categories—emerge within a field of practices, which is “the total nexus of interconnected human practices” (Cetina et al., 2005: 11). IP practices would be a sub-set of this universe of practices. In detailing the role of planners, operations of institutions and social systems, RP analyzes and exposes individuals, discourses, and structures in how they take part in oppressive dynamics. In this sense, RP exposes how expertise and governance are exercised and hegemonized within oppressive structures. IP furthers RP's transformative agenda to expose and change the structural sources of oppression through shifting the unit of analysis to *practices* and showing how oppressive structures are formed, embodied, assembled, stabilized, maintained, or dismantled through everyday activities. From an IP perspective, institutions and social systems are

effects of materially mediated and embodied practices that result from multiple articulations. Deploying the practice lens allows IP to pay attention to how certain networks of transformative relationships form, change, and take effect (or fail). These highly contextualized practices linked by shared understandings are the subjects of research and analytical scrutiny of IP literature. Practice lens can render visible power dynamics in concrete detail since a practice approach to planning sees power “as something to be channeled, rather than held” (Rydin and Tate, 2016: 10). For instance, Bedouins engaged in the practice of identifying themselves by village names as opposed to tribal names so that the Israeli state is compelled to recognize their territorial claim and cannot frame the Bedouins as essentially de-territorial nomadic tribes (Meir, 2005). Here, the abstract object (names) mediates the power relations between the Israeli state and Bedouins, and the Bedouin’s enactment of self-identification inserts a novel power dynamic in their relation to the Israeli state.

IP’s practice lens is powerful in the way it can translate totalizing concepts such as “racial capitalism” (Melamed, 2015) into a set of everyday practices—the way we inhabit (or do not) our houses, the way we grow (or do not) our food, the way we occupy (or do not) public spaces. Seen this way, seemingly insurmountable phenomenon such as racial capitalist markets become more vulnerable to intervention, while retaining micro-macro separation (Gille, 2010). Mandela Park residents, for instance, refused to be pacified by verbal promises of arrears and interests cancelation and insisted on the practice of getting a statement written on an official bank letterhead (Miraftab and Wills, 2005). Through such practices, housing market hegemony—the normalization of eviction as an ordinary market process as well as pacification through false verbal promises—was reconfigured in that instance. Naqab Bedouins crafted a memory practice through mobilizing and circulating the Palestinian Nakbah as a trope “in public speeches, media discourses and local commemorations” and connected it to the Israeli state’s “persisting policies of dispossession and forced removal” (Yiftachel, 2009: 251). Detroit residents created a memo to demystify exclusionary planning processes (Laskey and Nicholls, 2019). Books produced in Buryat language is a critical cultural artifact through which IP practices challenged the Russian state (Sweet and Chakars, 2010). The material document of water bills worked as a performative technology to legitimize peri-urban dwellers in Bangalore and reconfigured the state through that everyday practice (Ranganathan, 2014) as the water bill stands for a document of habitation legible to the state and thereby modifies *de facto* the state’s requirement of property documents. In each case, material as well as abstract objects—from letters with official letterhead to circulated tropes to memo to books to water bills—redirected power dynamics in unexpected ways in support of the marginalized and fostered the viability of such novel alignments of practices furthering the struggle for social justice.

The methodological contribution of conceptualizing IP as a set of practices is that such an approach brings into focus the material mediations (e.g. paper documents, books) and embodied specificities (e.g. positioning of bodies, circulation of tropes, self-identification) that constitute transformative planning practices. Using practice as a unit of analysis also allows researchers to develop criteria for what constitutes IP practices. For instance, Miraftab (2009, 2017) argued that IP practices are counter-hegemonic, transgressive, and

imaginative. In a similar vein, García-Lamarca (2017: 41) defined IP practices as those that “enact equality and disrupt the dominant production of space, creating possibilities to generate new urban meanings and relations.” In addition to these characteristics, the IP literature I have reviewed here show two more characteristics of IP practices: necessity and identity reconstitution.

In all of the IP cases I have cited so far, IP practices are practices of collective necessity (Jabareen, 2017) that are legitimized by the subordinate social group engaged in the practice. Principle of necessity highlights the fact that IP practices prioritize survival and livelihood over the maximization of profit, or in more classical terms, use value over exchange value. Chatterjee (2011: 58) points this out in the operations of street vendors; he writes,

operating within a public and anonymous market situation, the vendors are subject to the standard conditions of profitability of their businesses. But to ensure that everyone is able to meet their livelihood needs, *the association will usually try to limit the number of vendors who can operate in a given area* and prevent the entry of newcomers. On the other hand, there are many examples where, if the businesses are doing particularly well, the vendors *do not*, like corporate capitalists, continue to accumulate on an expanded scale, but rather agree to extend their membership and allow new entrants. (My emphasis)

IP practices reclaim and reconstitute the subjectivities engaged in these practices. For instance, the IP practices of Buryats are about reclaiming their indigenous identity (Sweet and Chakars, 2010), and the IP practices of Negev Bedouins reconstructed a novel spatial ethno-nationalism that hybridizes Arab and Bedouin identities (Meir, 2005). The insurgent appropriation of Cobbs Creek park restoration involved reclaiming the community identity of Black political activism in the area (Brownlow, 2011). Struggling in solidarity, migrants and citizens in Buenos Aires recreated their collective identity as neighborhood dwellers in spite of national-level tensions over native/migrant status (Bastia and Bressán, 2018). Defaulted debtors who came to the PAH were full of guilt and shame, but through engaging in IP practices, they were able to de-individualize their predicaments and move past their alienated subject positions, the individualized “guilt and shame around being a debtor,” toward enacting democratic and egalitarian subjectivities (García-Lamarca, 2017: 49). Such IP practices take us past the Youngian solution of “group differentiated citizenship” (Young, 1989: 258) of multiculturalist and humanitarian status quo, where each group (women, gays, Blacks, natives etc.) is pre-constituted and negotiate their interests in the political process. Instead, IP practices show that subjectivities can be reconstructed, that is, novel political identities with shared interests can be crafted in the political sphere. This also implies that the repressive dynamics of political society can be transformed as identities and social relations are reconstituted through IP practices. Seeing IP as a set of practices is not merely descriptive, but also normative. In IP scholarship, IP appears to be a set of practices premised on collective necessity, practices that enact equality, counter-hegemony, transgression, and imagination through situated political contestations that lead to the reconstitution of political subjects. Though, the practice lens of IP is in its very early stages and much more remains to be done in order to enrich and deepen the conception of IP as a set of practices.

Conclusion

In the previous sections, I explored the contributions of IP. As is evident from IP scholarship, insurgent practices emerge from the lived experiences in political society and insights of subordinate communities. At this point, questions might arise—can insurgent planners come from outside insurgent communities? Could professional planners who want to be part of transformative planning practices engage in IP? The operating assumption in such questions is that IP is the work of specific *actors*. This assumption is understandable as early work on IP centered insurgent activists, mobilizers, and communities. However, as I have tried to highlight in this article, the evolving literature on IP has shifted away from an analysis of insurgent *actors* to a contextualized exploration of insurgent *practices*. More simply, there is no stable category such as an insurgent “planner,” “architect,” “professional,” “community,” “individual,” or “movement.” IP is one set of practices in a contested field of multiple planning practices. The question is often raised, “Can a professional planner with a transformative agenda engage in IP?” Although the IP literature so far has not documented such a figure, perhaps the answer depends largely on the political context of the professional in question. Whether and how radical professionals use political opportunities during crises, push the envelope, and slip into enacting IP practices along with other actors (in alignment with the evolving criteria of IP) would be a generative arena of further research.

The overarching aim of IP since its conceptual inception has been to affirm and legitimize the planning practices of socially marginalized groups in order to expand the conception of what constitutes planning. In order to unequivocally validate planning practices outside professional parameters, there has to be clearer understanding of the nuances of IP practices. In its pursuit of collective emancipation and spatial justice, early RP situated itself in liberal civil society and its traditions and theorized from the epistemic position of RP professionals. As the social and political context changed and progressive planners witnessed processes of community empowerment co-opted into dominant city-making processes, the post-political critique contested the planning profession of early radical planners. IP scholars then looked to contemporary innovative strategies and practices and deepened the counter-hegemonic dimensions of RP. This repertoire of practices, that is, IP practices, is located in political society, theorizes from the standpoint of the epistemic privilege of marginalized groups, and takes practices as its unit of analysis in order to understand how everyday practices of necessity, equality, counter-hegemony, transgression, imagination, and identity reconstitution are contesting and transforming the shape of contemporary urbanisms. In this venture, transformative planning practices such as RP and IP practices are complementary, not synonymous. Of crucial importance is the fact that IP takes us past the depoliticized centrist-technocratic status quo of liberal democracies. IP practices reconstitute the social through everyday couplings of situated practice/epistemic privilege while throwing into question the common-sense foundations of the free market, the humanitarian liberal state, and multicultural civil society.

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Notes

1. In the most expansive sense, neoliberalism refers to

an historically ascendant pattern and hegemonic ideology of capitalist development, organically linked to a host of post-1970s tendencies towards global economic integration, financialization, and normalized practices of “market rule” . . . a pervasive rationality of lean- or small-state transformation, modeled on the principles of entrepreneurialism, efficiency, cost control, privatism, and competition . . . and an umbrella term for a programmatically connected family of pro-market, pro-corporate, and pro-choice policy measures, including the sale of state assets and services, regressive tax reforms, programs of “deregulation,” the granting of corporate concessions and exemptions (even from market rule itself), the penal or paternalist management of poverty, the commodification of social life and natural resources, and the (often technocratic) imposition of fiscal discipline, structural adjustment, market tests, and devolved austerity. (Peck et al., 2018: 6)

Despite the proliferation of *neoliberalism* in planning theory (Allmendinger, 2017), the term remains incomplete and contested among its promoters and dissenters (Pinson and Morel Journel, 2016; Venugopal, 2015).

2. I located articles via EBSCO database up to 2018.
3. In his more recent collection of reprinted writings with new introductory essays, *Insurgencies: Essays in Planning* (Friedmann, 2011: 7), Friedman re-emphasized his claim that he sees “civil society, both indigenous and international” as the site of alternative politics, though with more caution.

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