Are we all neoliberals now? Urban planning in a neoliberal era

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ABSTRACT

The modernist perspective of planning is concerned with making public and political decisions in respect of the planning of our places more rationally and consistent with an overarching public interest.

However the modernist perspective of rational planning action has been challenged by a postmodernist perspective of pragmatic planning, and more recently, by a neoliberal perspective rooted in the economic and political conditions of Milton Friedman's monetarism and Friedrick Hayek's classical liberalism.

This paper considers the ideology of neoliberalism in the context of the competing ideologies of postmodernism and modernism to identify the following:

> *an urban change model which identifies the relationships between urban change, ideology, planning theory and planning models;*

> *the cultural, social, economic and political conditions of neoliberalism;*

> *the broad policy setting of a neoliberal government;*

> *the key features of the neoliberal strategic management planning model which is used by neoliberal governments;*

> *the key features of planning practice arising from the use of the neoliberal strategic managerial planning model;*

> *the role of urban planners in a neoliberal state.*

The paper concludes that the neoliberal project is contestable and suggests that the adoption of collaborative planning processes and evidence based strategic management planning offers the opportunity for planners to reassert their professional status, rebuild the trust of the public and politicians and lift the planning profession out of its current malaise.

INTRODUCTION

Neoliberalism = Classical liberalism + (Theory of growth + Keynesianism)

"In one sense, we are all Keynesians now. In another nobody is any longer a Keynesian". (Milton Friedman, Time Magazine, February 4, 1966)

With these words in 1966, Milton Friedman the leading conservative economist of his generation, announced the passing of post war Keynesianism and the birth of neoliberal economics.

Whereas Keynes was concerned with achieving prosperity and stability from the depression and war scarred world of the 1930s and 1940s; Friedman was focussed on growing the already prosperous world of the 1950s and 1960s.

Friedman's neoliberal economics was an extension of the classical theory of growth which built upon but supplanted Keynesianism. As Keynes might have put it; Theory of growth + Keynesianism = Neoliberal economics (*Time Magazine, December 31, 1965*).

Friedman's neoliberal economics also built upon Friedrick Hayek's political philosophy of classical liberalism which espoused limited government, individual freedom and the rule of law.

The socio-economic and political conditions resulting from the fusion of monetarism and classical liberalism is known as neoliberalism.

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Neoliberalism is an ideology that involves a commitment to the rolling back of the Keynesian-welfare state's collectivist institutions and the ethos of universal provision and the rolling out of market mechanisms and competitiveness to achieve economic growth (Peck and Ticknell 2002:384; McGuirk 2005:61).

Waves of neoliberalism

Neoliberalism should not be seen as an end state or condition but rather as a process of changing the relationship between the public sector, private sector and civil society to facilitate economic growth.

Neoliberalism has advanced across the world in a series of four waves with Australia at the vanguard of each wave as summarised in Table 1.

> The rollback of Keynesianism in Australia under the rubric of economic rationalisation was commenced by the Fraser government in the 1970s and 1980s which preceded both Thatcherism in the United Kingdom and Reganism in the United States.

> The moderation of the rollback of Keynesianism under the Hawke and Keating governments in the 1980s and 1990s also preceded the Third Wave governments of Blair and Brown in the United Kingdom and Clinton in the United States.

> The roll out of neoliberalism under the Howard government in the 1990s and 2000s also preceded both the Bush presidency in the United States and the Cameron prime ministership in the United Kingdom.

> Finally, the moderation of the roll out of neoliberalism in Australia under the Rudd and Gillard governments since 2007 has preceded similar efforts under the Obama administration in the United States.

Table 1 Neoliberal waves

Australia	United States	United Kingdom
First wave (1970s to 1990s) - Neoliberalism roll back		
Economic rationalism - Fraser Liberal National Party governments (1975 - 1983)	Reganism - Regan and Bush Snr Republican governments (1980 - 1992)	Thatcherism - Thatcher and Major Conservative governments (1979 - 1997)
Second wave (1980s to 2010) - Neoliberalism roll back moderated (Third Way)		
Hawke and Keating Labor governments (1983 - 1996)	Clinton Democrat government (1992 - 2000)	Blair and Brown Labour governments (1997 - 2010)
Third wave (late 1990s to current) - Neoliberalism roll out		
Howard Liberal National Party government (1996 - 2007)	Ownership society - Bush Jnr Republican government (2000 - 2008)	Big society - Cameron and Clegg Conservative / Liberal Democrat government (2010 - onwards)
Fourth wave (late 2000s to current) - Neoliberalism roll out moderated		
Rudd and Gillard Labor governments (2007 - onwards)	Obama Democrat government (2008 - onwards)	?

However the moderation of neoliberalism arising from the Global Financial Crisis and the resulting Great Recession / Stagnation has not lead, as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd had predicted in 2009, to the death of neoliberalism, and its replacement by social-democratic capitalism; which Rudd described as "*a system of open markets regulated by an activist state*

and one in which the state intervenes to reduce the great inequalities that competitive markets will inevitably generate" (Rudd 2009).

Since 2009 Australians have elected neoliberal governments in most states and territories and if opinion polls are to be believed will elect a neoliberal Commonwealth government.

The reports of the death of neoliberalism therefore appear to be exaggerated; as are the claims that "*we are all Keynesians now*" (Rudd 2009). Indeed, the history of the last 50 years would indicate a jump to the right with only small steps to the left.

Urban planning in a neoliberal era

The neoliberal dominance has significant implications for urban planning. From a neoliberal perspective, much of urban planning is seen as distorting land markets and increasing transaction costs through bureaucratisation of the urban economy; which should be rolled back by contracting the domain of planning (deregulation) and then privatising segments of the residual sphere of regulation (outsourcing) (Gleeson and Low 2000b:10).

As a result the raison d'etre of planning as a tool of correcting and avoiding market failure is dismissed; and planning is subsumed as a minimalist form of spatial regulation to provide certainty to the market and facilitate economic growth.

Ideology, theory, policy and practice

Whilst it is unclear how ideology influences planning theory and in turn how planning theory effects planning practice, a consideration of ideology and planning theory does provide a basis for understanding how planning policy and practice may evolve as a result of a neoliberal planning reform agenda.

As Forester (1989:12) observes:

"*Theories can help alert us to problems, point us towards strategies of response, remind us of what we care about, or prompt our practical insights into the particular cases we confront*".

Themes of paper

This paper has 6 themes:

> First, it establishes a model of urban change; a model that seeks to show the relationship of ideologies, planning theories and planning models to the components of urban change and the institutions responsible for that change.

> Second, it seeks to flesh out the cultural, socio-economic and political conditions of neoliberalism in the context of the competing ideologies of postmodernism, modernism and premodernism; to provide an ideological context to both the broad policy settings of a neoliberal government and the use of planning theory in a neoliberal state.

> Third, it seeks to flesh out the debate on planning theory to provide a theoretical context for the consideration of the neoliberal strategic management planning model in the context of the competing postmodernist collaborative planning model.

> Fourth, it discusses the key characteristics of the neoliberal strategic management planning model to provide context for the consideration of the potential implications in planning practice from the use of this model.

> Fifth, it seeks to identify the planning policy outcomes which are likely to be associated with a neoliberal government, to provide context to the potential scope of future urban planning reform in a neoliberal state.

> Finally, it discusses the role of the urban planner in a neoliberal regime and provides a suggested path out of the malaise that currently afflicts the planning profession in Australia.

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URBAN CHANGE MODEL

Components and institutions of urban change

Urban change occurs as a result of the interplay of three institutional components (Newman 2000:1):

> the market represented by the private sector;

> the government represented by the public sector; and

> the community comprising a civil society (the so called third sector).

The characteristics of the institutional components and associated institutions of urban change are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2   Components and institutions of urban change

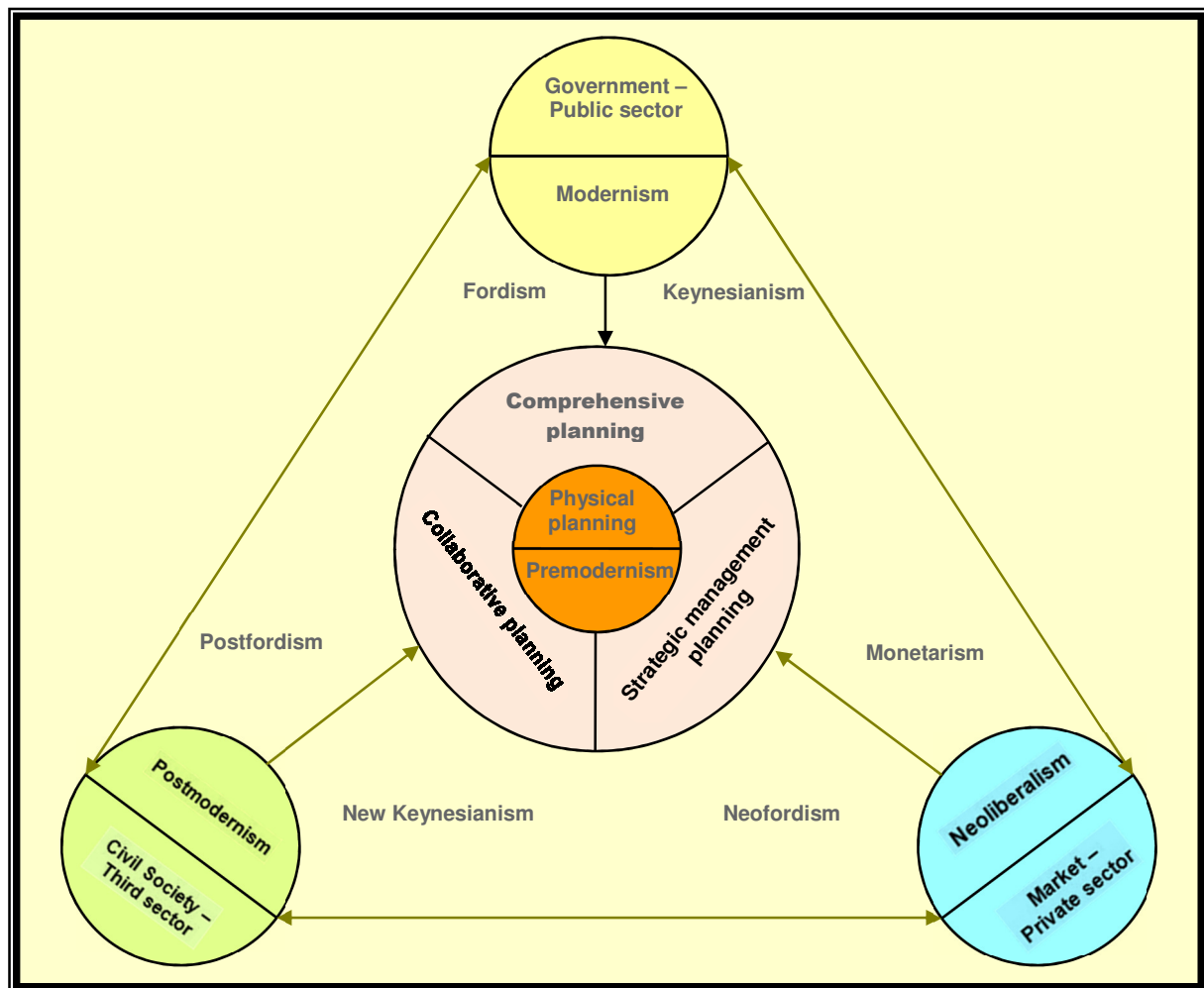| Market – private sector	Government – public sector	Civil society – third sector
Institutional stakeholders		
Consumers, producers, employers, employees, trade associations and unions	National, state and local government including public sector entities	Communities including media, churches, educational bodies, associations and community groups
Institutional role		
Provision of wealth for development	Protection of rights and public realm	Guardian of culture and ethics
Institutional outputs		
Goods and services	Laws and regulations; infrastructure and services	Values and vision
Institutional focus		
Focussed on an aggregated criteria of choice based on the notions of utility or satisfaction	Focussed on an overall idea such as 'the spirit of history' or the 'essence of society'	Focussed on the society (modernist) or societal groups (postmodernist) as the first ethical subject and consequently on a common conception of the common good of the society (modernist) or a societal group's conception of good (postmodernist)
Institutional horizons		
Short term	Medium term (based on the term of office)	Long term

Source: Newman 2000:2; Moroni 2004:155; Alexander, Mazza & Moroni 2012:75

Planners influence all components of urban change; the market, government and civil society. They work through the private, public and third sectors using a collection of planning theories and practices to influence urban change; or on some occasions to prevent urban change.

Relationship of planning theory and practice to urban change

The interrelationship between the planning theories and practices used by planners and the components and institutions of urban change is shown in Figure 1.

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Figure 1 Urban change model

It is clear that planning and the capacity to effect urban change is critically influenced by planning theory and practice; although the extent of this influence is not well understood.

An understanding of planning theory requires it to be placed within the context of broader cultural, socio-economic and political change; being the historic shift from premodernism to modernism, and then to postmodernism and more recently to neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism in a historic context

The broad cultural, socio-economic and political changes that have influenced western societies such as Australia, have had a profound effect on planning theory and practice.

These changes exist in a historic century-long linear process of transition from premodernism, to modernism, to postmodernism and finally to neoliberalism.

The cultural, socio-economic and political conditions of modern, postmodern and neoliberal ideologies are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3   Cultural, socio-economic and political conditions

Modern	Postmodern	Neoliberal
Period or era		
Modernity – The period of modern thought from the Enlightenment to the present	*Postmodernity* – The period of postmodern thought from the 1960s to the present	*Late capitalism* – The period of neoliberal thought from the mid 1970s to the present

Modern	Postmodern	Neoliberal
Political conditions		
Social democracy – The political conditions involving: • a universal society existing as a structure • the collective good of the society • welfare services that are delivered to ensure equality of opportunity and removal of differences within society	*Social liberal (deliberative) democracy* (*Third way*) – The political conditions involving: • multiple societal groups existing as networks and flows • the good of each societal group • welfare services that are delivered to ensure personalised integrated services to reflect the differences within society	*Liberal democracy (New Right, Thatcherism, Reganism)* – The political conditions involving: • individuals; there being no society or societal groups • the good of the individual • welfare services that are delivered by the market with limited targeted welfare services
Cultural conditions		
Modernism – The cultural conditions which accompany a method of thought in which human reason is able to identify objectively existent and knowable laws of reality that can be used to effect change to achieve a unitary common public good or truth (Hirt 2002:3)	*Postmodernism* – The cultural conditions which accompany a method of thought in which human reason is able to identify the subjectively constructed views of groups that can be used to effect change to achieve a good as defined by those groups	*Neoliberalism* – This economic theory has little to say about the cultural conditions of society
Social conditions		
Fordism – The social conditions which accompany industrial mass production using repetition and simplicity of standardised products for mass consumption by a mass market (Goodchild 1990:126)	*Postfordism* – The social conditions which accompany flexible small batch production of specialised products for consumption by different groups in niche markets (Goodchild 1990:126)	*Neofordism* – The social conditions which accompany the provision of services using information technologies to niche markets that predominates over declining industrial and manufacturing activities
Economic conditions		
Fiscalism (Keynesianism , Welfarism) – The economic conditions of a mixed economy involving predominately the private sector but also a significant role for the public sector in terms of monetary policy by central banks and fiscal policy by governments to stabilise output over the economic cycle	*New Keynesianism* – The economic conditions of a market economy involving the private sector where the role of the public sector is limited to macro-economic stability, investment in infrastructure and education, containing inequality and guaranteeing opportunities for self-realisation (Giddens 2000:164)	*Monetarism* – The economic conditions of a market economy involving the private sector where the role of the public sector is limited to monetary policy by central banks

Neoliberal cultural, socio-economic and political conditions

In the context of a consideration of the planning reform agenda it is important to understand the potential cultural, socio-economic and political conditions of a neoliberal state:

> *Cultural conditions* – Neoliberalism has little to say about the cultural conditions of society as it is a theory derived from economics.

> *Social conditions* – Neoliberalism is premised on the social conditions of a services based economy where the provision of services using information technologies to niche markets predominates over declining industrial and manufacturing activities (the so called deindustrialisation of western societies).

> *Economic conditions* – Neoliberalism is premised on the economic conditions of a market based economy involving the private sector; where the role of the public sector is limited to monetary policy by central banks. Neoliberalism rejects the use of fiscal policy by government to stabilise output over the economic cycle.

> *Political conditions* – Neoliberalism is also premised on the political conditions of a liberal democracy which involves the following:

  · individuals who have the right to pursue a good life that does not harm others;

  · services that are delivered by the market or subject to competitiveness;

  · a limited role for the government in providing information and guidelines; as well as targeted welfare services for areas of social exclusion.

These broad socio-economic and political conditions provide the ideological context which will influence the broad policy settings of a neoliberal government.

NEOLIBERAL POLICY SETTINGS

The broad policy settings which are generally associated with modern, postmodern and neoliberal ideology are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4   Policy settings

Modern	Postmodern	Neoliberal
Government function		
Big centralised government involving political-administrative control	Smaller but better integrated centralised government where political-administrative control is maintained	Decentralisation Depoliticalisation Agencification
Government policy focus		
Social policy focus to ensure social cohesion	Social policy focussed on social exclusion and economic policy focused on full employment and planning	Liberalisation
Government economic management		
High taxes and spending	Lower but better targeted taxes Spending on social exclusion areas	Financialisation Fiscal conservatism
Government regulation		
Regulation	Regulation to address areas of social exclusion	Deregulation

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Modern	Postmodern	Neoliberal
Central and local government relationship		
Central and local governments address the public interest	Central and local governments address group interests, in particular areas of social exclusion Local governments are well funded but are also more accountable to central government	Growthism Entrepreneurialism
Government and private sector relationship		
Government provision, commercialisation and corporatisation	Public-private partnerships Reliance on volunteer and faith based institutions	Marketisation Privatism
Government and civil society relationship		
Government help for citizens	Community self-help Government help for areas of social exclusion	Individualism Individual self-reliance and entrepreneurship Clientelism / consumerism

Source: Jackson 2009:405; Robinson 2011:1100

In the context of neoliberal ideology the following broad policy settings are likely to be adopted by a neoliberal government:

> *Decentralisation* - Neoliberal governments tend to favour small central governments with decision making and implementation being delegated vertically to international governance (internationalism) and down to regional governance (regionalism) and local governments (localism) and horizontally to private sector and civil society partnerships and networks. Central governments seek to either steer (but not row) or direct (but not implement).

> *Depoliticisation* - Neoliberal governments favour tools, mechanisms and institutions to separate political and administrative functions so that an issue, policy field or decision is no longer the responsibility of politicians in order to remove the political character of decision making (Flinders and Butler 2006: 296).

> *Agencification* - Neoliberal governments favour structural disaggregation of integrated administrative structures into single purpose task specific semi-independent agencies (Sager 2009:69).

> *Liberalisation* - Neoliberal governments tend to focus more on economic policy directed to competition and innovation rather than on social and environmental policy.

> *Financialisation* - Neoliberal governments tend to favour financial markets and institutions having a greater influence over economic policy.

> *Fiscal conservatism* - Neoliberal governments tend to favour lower taxes to increase consumer choice, lower spending (austerity) and a user pays approach.

> *Deregulation* - Neoliberal governments tend to focus on market led development with lesser regulation in terms of rules, processes and internal considerations like expert jurisdictions and job security to reduce the role of government (Sager 2009:70).

> *Growthism* - Neoliberal governments tend to focus on the soliciting of growth, in the case of central governments, and the facilitating of growth, in the case of State and local governments, to create a favourable business climate.

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> *Entrepreneuralism* - Neoliberal governments tend to support entrepreneurial spirit, such as risk taking investment and profit motives, rather than political-administrative managerialism involving the provision of public services.

> *Individualism* - Neoliberal governments tend to emphasise individual self-help, entrepreneurship and freedom of choice over government and community help.

> *Clientelism/consumerism* - Neoliberal governments tend to focus on the satisfaction of users, clients, customers and consumers who will optimise their own individual benefits in exchange for political support rather than serving citizens who have rights and obligations within the context of a civil society.

> *Marketisation* - Neoliberal governments tend to focus on the provision of services through privatisation, outsourcing, sub-contracting, competitive policies and market proxies in the residual public sector.

> *Privatism* - Neoliberal governments tend to focus on the facilitation of private sector activity rather than government or community activity.

These broad policy settings together with the broader socio-economic and political conditions of neoliberal ideology, provide the context for the consideration of the use of planning theory by planners.

PLANNING THEORY IN A NEOLIBERAL STATE

Neoliberal planning theory

Given the neoliberal socio-economic and political conditions and broad policy settings which have become entrenched within governments across the world in the last 50 years, it is likely that the use of neoliberal planning theory will become more dominant amongst planners.

The approaches to planning theory that are embodied in premodern, modern, postmodern and neoliberal ideologies are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5   Ideological approaches to planning theory

Premodern	Modern	Postmodern	Neoliberal
Humanistic premise of planning (the planning end)			
Utopia – An end state in which individuals are emancipated towards an ideal society	*Collective public interest* – An end state in which society en masse is emancipated towards a common good for the society	*Group interest* – An end state in which groups within society are emancipated towards a good defined by those groups	*Individual interest* – There is no end state for society or societal groups; but rather the right of each individual to pursue a good life that does not harm others
Epistemological premise of planning (the planning means)			
Artistic design method – Universal laws of physical and aesthetic design principles which can be objectively defined by human reason	*Rational scientific method* – Universal laws of planning principles which can be defined through value-free scientific reason (positivist knowledge)	*Participatory method* – There are no universal laws; only the subjective value laden principles of individuals which can be defined through a participative process (culturally subjective knowledge)	*Managerialist method* – There are no universal laws; only an individual good which can be pursued through a managerial process of defining and implementing goals, objectives and strategies

Premodern	Modern	Postmodern	Neoliberal
Planning theories			
Physical planning (Unwin 1996; Triggs 1909)	• Rational planning (Sharp 1940; Abercrombie 1959; Keeble 1969) • Systems planning (McLoughlin 1969) • Procedural planning (Faludi 1973)	• Advocacy planning (Davidoff 1965) • Incremental planning (Lindblom 1959) • Radical (action) planning (Friedmann 1987) • Participatory planning (Arnstein 1969) • Communicative planning (Habermas 1984; Healey 1997)	Strategic spatial planning (Kaufman and Jacobs 2007; Healey 2007)
Planning models			
Physical planning	Comprehensive master planning	Collaborative planning	Strategic management planning
Planning era			
Before First World War	• 1930s – avant-garde movement • 1940s to 1980s – adopted by Government	• 1960s to 1990s – part of counter culture • 1980's onwards – adopted by Government	• 1970s to 1990s - Neoliberal roll back • Late 1990s onwards - Neoliberal roll out

Source: Goodchild 1990:126; Hirt 2002

Planning theory is based on two different premises; the end and the means. The first premise is that planning has a humanistic or social emancipation end. The second is that planning theory has an epistemological premise being the means by which planning delivers the identified end (namely social emancipation).

Humanistic premise of planning theory

In neoliberal planning theory, the planning end is not an end state for society such as the collective public interest of the society in the case of modern planning theory or societal group interests in the case of postmodern planning theory.

Rather it is the individual interest; the right of each individual to pursue a good life that does not harm others.

Epistemological premise of planning theory

Neoliberal planning theory postulates that the end of an individual good life is not pursued through the rational scientific method of value-free scientific reason to define a societal public interest in the case of modern planning theory or a participative process to define societal group interests in the case of postmodern planning theory.

Rather the neoliberal end of an individual good life is to be achieved through a strategic management process of defining and implementing goals, objectives and strategies.

In neoliberal planning theory, it is the managerialist method which is embodied in strategic management planning that is the predominant planning model.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLANNING MODEL IN A NEOLIBERAL STATE

Strategic management planning is a planning model that is focussed on the definition and implementation of specific and attainable goals, objectives and strategies. It differs from the comprehensive master planning model which aspires to an abstract common public good or interest of the society. It also differs from the collaborative planning model which focuses on societal group goods or interests as defined by those groups.

It is anticipated that strategic management planning will become the predominant planning model amongst urban planners in a neoliberal state.

The key features of the strategic management planning model, as compared with other planning models, are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6   Key features of planning models

Physical planning	Comprehensive master planning	Collaborative planning	Strategic management planning
Concept of the region or city			
City Beautiful – Cities are a symptom of social order and disorder	*City Functional / Mechanistic City* – Cities are an object that can be rationally ordered and mass produced	*Just City* – Cities are an expression of the social diversity of its citizens and the ecological diversity of its environment	*Entrepreneurial / Competitive / Productive City* – Regions and cities are an economic object that are competing against each other for economic growth
Planning governance			
Limited uncoordinated community and government initiatives	Government led with limited community involvement	Government led with significant community involvement	Private sector led through the market
Planning approach			
Government top down with no bottom up community involvement	Predominantly government top down with some bottom up community involvement	Predominantly bottom up community involvement with top down government involvement	Bottom up through the market with limited top down government involvement
Planning scale			
City with some district level planning	City and district level planning	City and district level planning with some local and site planning	Strategic planning at city and district scale with development planning at local and site levels
Planning horizon			
Long term	Medium term	Medium term at the city and district levels and short term at the local and site levels	Short term
Planning focus			
Physical urban form and aesthetic design based planning at the city	• Detailed spatial urban form and infrastructure based planning at the city	• Infrastructure based planning at national and state levels	• Strategic spatial urban form and infrastructure based planning at city and

Physical planning	Comprehensive master planning	Collaborative planning	Strategic management planning
level (city visions)	level (master, blueprint and layout plans) • Development control based land use planning at the district level (zoning plans)	• Detailed spatial urban form and infrastructure based planning at the regional level (regional plans) or city level (master plans) • Development control based land use planning at the district level (zoning plans) • Urban design based planning at local and site levels	district level in place of detailed master plans (strategic spatial plans) • Development based planning at local and site levels in place of development control based zoning plans
Regional, city and district planning themes			
• Promotion of massed suburban expansion • Promotion of garden cities • City beautiful movement • Parks and open spaces movement	• Redevelopment of slums with high rise buildings in open spaces • Controlled low density suburban expansion • New towns within green belts • Urban neighbourhoods criss-crossed by freeways	• Renewal and regeneration of central cities and infill sites • Increased urban density within compact urban space • Containment to minimise land consumption, preserve open space and reduce infrastructure costs	• Place branding, marketing, promotion and competition (Euro cities; capital cities; world cities; cool cities; creative cities) • Attraction of the creative class (IT; arts; biotechnology; science) • Attraction of corporate investment (free land or buildings; lower infrastructure charges; grants; tax relief such as stamp duty and payroll tax) • Central city and adjoining areas redevelopment for commercial office space and residential apartments • Employment centres focussed on the services sector • Mega infrastructure projects seen as strategic economic assets • Social infrastructure including exhibitions and arts, cultural and sporting venues and events for the creative classes

Physical planning	Comprehensive master planning	Collaborative planning	Strategic management planning
			• Suburbs as residual places • Suburban master planned communities
Local and site planning themes			
• More daylight and sunlight for canyon streets • Public health and sanitary reform • Tenement house reform • Municipal art and civic art	• Zoning of urban space into self-contained single land use or functional districts • Reduction of urban density • Mixed flats and houses • Demolition of dilapidated buildings	• Integration of land uses and functions into mixed use districts of urban space • Increased urban density • Mixed land uses • Emphasis on local context • Preservation of historic buildings and local cultural heritage	• Performance based zoning (flexible zones, urban enterprise zones, business improvement districts) • Flexible building standards • Integrated development control • Reduced standards of service for infrastructure – roads and open space • Reduced garden space for houses • Urban design

Source: Goodchild 1990:126; Jackson 2009:405

A strategic management planning model operating in a neoliberal state is anticipated to have the following significant characteristics:

> *Concept of the region or city* – Strategic management planning is focussed on ensuring that the region or city is an economic growth object which can compete efficiently against other regions or cities for economic growth. The focus is on an entrepreneurial, competitive and productive region or city.

> *Planning governance* – Strategic management planning is market led by private sector developers.

> *Planning approach* – Strategic management planning is a bottom up market led approach rather than the predominantly top down/bottom up approach characteristic of the comprehensive master planning model (associated with modern planning theory) or the predominantly bottom up/top down approach characteristic of the collaborative planning model (associated with postmodern planning theory).

> *Planning scale* – Strategic management planning is focused on local and site level planning with limited regional, city and district level planning rather than on the city and district level planning characteristic of the comprehensive master planning model and local and site level planning characteristic of the collaborative planning model.

> *Planning horizon* – Strategic management planning has a short term horizon reflecting the reality that planning is intended to be capable of continual revision in response to the market.

> *Planning focus* – Strategic management planning is focussed on strategic spatial urban form and infrastructure based planning at city and district levels and development based planning at the local and site levels in place of the detailed plans and zoning plans associated with comprehensive master planning and collaborative planning.

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> *Regional, city and district level planning themes* – Strategic management planning is focussed on the following themes at the regional, city and district levels:

  • urban branding, marketing, promotion and competition;

  • central cities and adjoining areas as key economic growth areas;

  • employment centres traditionally focussed on industrial areas but increasingly focussed on the service sector;

  • mega infrastructure projects such as road and public transport which are seen as strategic economic assets;

  • key social infrastructure such as exhibition centres, science and technology parks, sports stadiums and cultural districts which are focussed on the creative classes;

  • suburbs that are seen as residual places not to be touched; the 'heartlands'.

> *Local and site planning themes* - Strategic management planning is focussed on the following themes at the local and site levels:

  • performance based controls;

  • flexible standards;

  • integrated development control;

  • reduced infrastructure service standards (to avoid so called gold plating);

  • reduced garden space for houses;

  • urban design.

The increased use by planners of a strategic management planning model will have a significant influence on planning practice.

PLANNING PRACTICE IN A NEOLIBERAL STATE

Neoliberal planning practice

The broad neoliberal socio-economic and political conditions and associated policy settings which have emerged under neoliberal governments will encourage the use of neoliberal planning theory and models that will have an increasing influence on planning practice.

Generally speaking it is expected that policies and processes associated with the comprehensive master planning model (in the case of modern planning theory) and collaborative planning model (in the case of postmodern planning theory) will be rolled back; whilst policies and processes associated with the strategic management planning model will be rolled out through public policy and legislative reform.

The anticipated implications for planning practice of the increased use by planners of neoliberal planning theory and a strategic management planning model is summarised in Table 7.

Table 7   Implications for planning practice of neoliberal planning theory and models

Policy settings	Policy implications	Political implications
Government function		
• Decentralisation • Depoliticalisation • Agencification	• Reduced central government planning • Limited central government control of local government planning	• Greater electoral accountability • Stronger role for local clientel relationships

Policy settings	Policy implications	Political implications
	• Contracting out of planning functions • Central government off-loads unfunded risks and responsibilities to local governments • Policy solutions borrowed or adapted across jurisdictional boundaries	• Fiscally constrained local governments
Government policy focus		
• Liberalisation	• Focus on innovation and competitiveness rather than on full employment and planning • Social wage is seen as a cost of production rather than as a means of redistribution to maintain social cohesion • Welfare to work to reduce welfare expenditure	• Reduced social cohesion • Increased social exclusion
Government economic management		
• Financialisation • Fiscal conservatism	• Limited provision of infrastructure and services • Less maintenance of infrastructure and services • Greater private sector provision • Reduced developer contributions in new growth areas • Reduced focus on urban renewal projects • Focus on cost recovery and user pays	• Fiscally constrained governments • Infrastructure and services failures • Price hikes • Cross-subsidies are increased • Rent seeking by the private sector
Government regulation		
• Deregulation	• Removal of comprehensive master planning and collaborative planning policies and practices • Simplified planning regulation • Plans that are more flexible • Plans that give less direction to local government • Plans that give more certainty and predictability to developers • Plans with fewer directives and more negative regulation • Plans that specifically integrate central and local government priorities • Enabling regulations for major or mega projects • Use of reserved planning powers (Ministerial call ins and directions) to facilitate projects • Speeding up of development assessment, public inquiry and plan preparation processes	• Less importance of rules, processes and expert jurisdictions • Less concern for development externalities • Stronger role for the private sector in determining the form and location of development • Potential impact on the spatial cohesion of cities • Reduced oversight and increased risk of corruption • Risk of regulatory capture

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Policy settings	Policy implications	Political implications
Central government and local government relationship		
• Growthism • Entrepreneurialism	• Local governments focus on place branding, marketing, promotion and competition rather than place making • Local governments focus on economic growth projects generally in central city locations at the expense of investment elsewhere • Politicians and planners gain financial acumen and act as urban entrepreneurs • Governments mimic corporate style and logic • Public services seen as ineffective and wasteful and a drain on entrepreneurial activity	• Local governments forced to compete with each other for economic growth • Reduction in public services
Government and private sector relationship		
• Marketisation • Privatisation	• Rise of the intermediate services sector (private professional advisers who do planning work) • Developer led development rather than plan led development • Developers take over plan making • Developers are stakeholders in major public infrastructure projects • Public assets privatised or divested • Privately governed community interest developments such as residential subdivisions, apartment developments and master planned gated communities with private streets, services and governments such as Homeowner Associations • Compulsory purchase of private land for public benefit by private landholders • Business improvement districts (UK/US) where revenue from a district is spent in a district • Privatised planning regulation (for example private certification) • Limited public review of public infrastructure projects (focus is on selling the project not evaluating the project) • Private sector involvement in financing and operating infrastructure • Competitive bidding for urban renewal and infrastructure projects • Private sector provision of rental housing rather than public housing • Privatisation of public spaces (public	• Loss of citizen entitlements • Excess profits • Price hikes • Asset stripping • Poor driven to the worst located areas • Profit seeking by private contractors increases public sector expenses

Policy settings	Policy implications	Political implications
	plazas; pavements; urban parks; government land and buildings) · Privately governed and secured neighbourhoods through management (for example gated communities, community interest developments (US) and Homeowners Associations (US)) and passive design (for example master planned residential estates)	
Government and civil society relationship		
· Individualism · Clientelism	· Corporate style advisory boards replace community based consultative groups · Focus on owner occupied and rental housing rather than public housing, community houses and housing associations · Focus on private schools rather than public schools, TAFE and other public educational facilities · Focus on private hospitals and private health insurance rather than public hospitals · Limited investment in social infrastructure to address areas of social exclusion	· Downsizing of services · Limited access to shelter and services for the poorest · Rise in informality in cities

Source: Jessop 2002; Jackson 2009:405; Robinson 2011:1100

Waves of neoliberal planning reform in Australia

In Australia, three distinct waves of neoliberal planning reform by State governments can be broadly identified as summarised in Table 8:

> *First wave* - Neoliberal roll back associated with Liberal National Party State governments where state, regional and city strategic planning was eschewed in favour of standardised district level land use based zoning plans to maximise development control efficiency and local and site level development control plans to facilitate development.

> *Second wave* - The neoliberal roll back was subsequently moderated by State Labor governments under which State planning policy guidance was provided on balancing social, environmental and economic matters, detailed spatial plans were prepared at regional and local government levels and standardised land use zoning plans and neighbourhood plans were prepared to guide future development.

> *Third wave* - The neoliberal roll out has been reintensified since 2010 by State Liberal National Party governments which have implemented or proposed:

· State planning policies focused on economic growth;

· strategic spatial plans for regional and local government areas;

· land use zoning plans and neighbourhood plans that are development not control oriented.

Table 8 Waves of neoliberal planning reform in Australia

Planning scale	First wave - Neoliberal roll back	Second wave - Neoliberal roll back moderated	Third wave - Neoliberal roll out
State governments	QLD - National and Liberal Party governments (1970s - 1989) NSW - Greiner/Fahey Liberal governments (1988 - 1995) VIC - Kennett Liberal government (1992 - 1999)	QLD - Goss, Beattie and Bligh Labor governments (1989 - 2012) NSW - Labor governments (1995 - 2011) VIC - Bracks and Brumby Labor governments (1999 - 2007)	QLD - Newman Liberal National Party government (2012 onwards) NSW - O'Farrell Liberal government (2011 onwards) VIC - Baillieu and Napthine Liberal National Party governments (2010 onwards)
State level planning	Apparatus dismantled as district level planning is seen as the appropriate planning scale	State planning policies provided guidance for a wide range of economic, social and environmental matters	State planning policies amended to prioritise economic growth over social and environmental matters
Regional level planning	Apparatus dismantled and State government devolution to regional government offices	Detailed spatial urban form and infrastructure plans for metropolitan areas and regional cities	Strategic spatial urban form and infrastructure plans for metropolitan areas and other regions
City/town level planning	Rejection of strategic spatial planning	Detailed spatial urban form and infrastructure plans for local government areas	Strategic spatial urban form and infrastructure plans for local government areas
District level planning	Standardised land use based zoning plans to maximise development control efficiency	Standardised land use based zoning plans with increased self-assessable and code assessable development to maximise development control efficiency	Standardised land use based zoning plans which are development not control oriented
Local and site level planning	Development control plans to facilitate local or site level development	Neighbourhood plans to protect local areas and facilitate known local or site level development	Neighbourhood plans which are development not control oriented

However it is critical to note that the characterisation of neoliberalism planning reform into three waves obscures the hybrid nature of neoliberalism where there have been multiple configurations of neoliberalism at different planning scales within and between Australian states and where the processes of neoliberal roll back of Keynesianism and the roll out of neoliberalism have been in conflict (McGuirk 2006:61).

ROLE OF THE PLANNER IN A NEOLIBERAL STATE

The emergence of neoliberal planning theory and its associated strategic management planning model and consequential implications for planning practice have inevitably resulted in a re-evaluation of the role of the planner in urban change.

The role of a planner under the physical planning, comprehensive master planning, collaborative planning and strategic management planning models is summarised in Table 9.

Table 9   Planner's role under different planning models

Physical planning	Comprehensive master planning	Collaborative planning	Strategic management planning
Knowledge and skills			
Specialist knowledge of utopian ideals and planning principles	Specialist knowledge of planning principles and specialist skills to manage the planning process to define the public interest and planning principles	Specialist knowledge and skills to manage the planning process to facilitate consensus of group interests	Specialist knowledge and skills to manage the planning process to facilitate economic growth outcomes
Decision making			
Utopian rationality - Rational vision	*Instrumental rationality* - Rational plan	*Communicative rationality* - Rational process	*Economic rationality -* Rational outcome
Ethical perspective			
Technician – Value neutral adviser to a decision maker	*Technician* – Value neutral adviser to a decision maker	*Politician* – Value committed activist that advocates policies for group interests	*Hybrid* – Hybrid of a technician and a politician that advocates for economic growth outcomes

In a neoliberal state it is expected that the planner will be required to develop specialist knowledge and skills to manage the planning process to facilitate economic growth outcomes; in preference to social and environmental outcomes and in preference to a common public interest for the society or societal group interests.

In a neoliberal state, a planner is expected to make decisions (or provide recommendations) based not on instrumental rationality (that is the rationality of the plan) or communicative rationality (that is the rationality of the planning process) but rather on the basis of economic rationality. A rational decision is one which is in the general interest of the public as defined by means of a potential Pareto improvement; namely that a policy should only be implemented if those who benefit from the policy could compensate those that lose from the policy and still be better off (Gleeson and Low 2000b:15).

This will require the planner to gain greater financial and economic acumen and act as an urban entrepreneur.

This will inevitably require the planner to adopt a hybrid role involving the following (Howe 1980; Steele 2009:4):

> first, as a technician that seeks to be a value neutral adviser to a decision maker; but

> secondly, and more significantly, as a politician who is a value committed activist that advocates economic growth outcomes.

It is this second political role that is likely to cause an ethical dilemma for some planners for the following reasons:

> first, there is currently a strong professional and in some cases personal commitment on the part of some planners, to sustainable development (or ecological sustainability) and its goal of balanced economic, social and environmental outcomes;

> second, to actively facilitate development could be seen by some planners as co-opting planning to the private sector which is only one of the sectoral interests involved in urban change and whose focus is quite appropriately limited only to profit.

CONCLUSIONS - ARE WE ALL NEOLIBERALS NOW?

The planner plays a critical role in influencing and sometimes preventing urban change through their work for the private, public and third sectors; which are the institutions responsible for urban change in our society.

The traditional modern and postmodern perspectives of planning that have underpinned the planners' use of planning theory and practice are being challenged by an energised neoliberal ideology.

Neoliberalism rejects planning's role as a tool to correct and avoid market failure and seeks to subsume planning as a minimalist form of spatial regulation to provide certainty to the market and facilitate economic growth.

Planners must understand that neoliberalism is but a process; it is not an end state of history or geography. The neoliberal project is neither universal, monolithic or inevitable; it is contestable (Peck and Tickell 2002:383).

Neoliberalism is simply the process of restructuring the relationships between the public, private and third sectors, to rationalise and promote a growth first approach to urban change. As stated earlier in this paper; Neoliberalism = Classical liberalism + (Theory of growth + Keynesianism).

Each planner must personally and professionally determine where they stand in relation to the restructuring of the institutions of urban change that is being heralded by the neoliberal reform of planning and the planning system in Australia.

As a profession it is critical that planners regain the trust of the public and their elected representatives. This can only occur where the decision making and knowledge and skills of planners is seen as independent from politics. This requires planners to play to their strengths:

> Collaborative planning should be used to identify societal interests whilst acknowledging to the public that not all of the public's interests can be translated to a physical outcome in a planning instrument.

> Comprehensive evidence based planning should be used to demonstrate to politicians both the money that will be wasted on policies that do not work as well as the benefits that will accrue from policies that will work.

In short planners must reclaim their professional credibility by asserting their right to contradict the public and politicians. The first step involves the planning profession taking an active and positive part in the forthcoming contest between planning and neoliberalism.

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