

PLANNING THEORY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Lee C. Slusser, AICP

MAJOR PLANNING THEORIES (I.E., MODELS OF THE PLANNING FUNCTION)¹

1. **Synoptic Rationalism:** In philosophy in general, rationalism is the foundation and embodiment of the scientific method. It serves the same role in planning theory. The rationalist model of the planning process generally contains the following steps.
 - Goals and objectives are set.
 - Policy alternatives are identified.
 - The policy alternatives are evaluated – vis-à-vis effectiveness (in attaining the goals and objectives), efficiency, and constraints – using scientific conceptual models and evaluation techniques (e.g., cost benefit analysis).
 - The selected policy alternative is implemented.
2. **Incrementalism:** This theory – which was espoused by Charles Lindbloom in *The Science of Muddling Through* – is a practical response to rationalism. Planning is seen as less of a scientific technique and more of a mixture of intuition and experience. Major policy changes are best made in little increments over long periods of time. Incrementalism very accurately describes what actually occurs in most planning offices on a daily basis.
3. **Transactive Planning:** Like incrementalism, transactivism does not view planning purely as a scientific technique. Transactivism espouses planning as a decentralized function based on face-to-face contacts, interpersonal dialogues, and mutual learning. Transactivism is roughly behavioralist-style planning.
4. **Advocacy Planning:** Advocacism abandons the objective, non-political view of planning contained in rationalism. Planners become like lawyers: they advocate and defend the interests of a particular client or group (which is preferably economically disadvantaged and/or politically unorganized or underrepresented).
 - Paul Davidoff was an early champion of advocacy planning. He argued that there is no one public interest for planners to serve, and thus, that planners have no choice but to become non-objective advocates for specific interests and groups.
 - Saul Alinsky developed an advocacist vision of planning that is centered around so-called “organizations.” Alinsky’s organizations develop where people feel powerless. These organizations then hire planners (which Alinsky largely sees as political organizers) to identify problems, develop an awareness of these problems, and generate action.
 - Alan Altshuler also argued for abandoning the objective, non-political view of planning. He felt that to be effective, planners must become actively involved in the political process.
5. **Radical Planning:** In a sense, radicalism takes transactivism to its logical extreme. Radicalism hates hierarchical bureaucracies, centralized planning, and domineering professional planners. It argues that planning is most effective when it is performed

¹ Hurley, Clare G. “Planning Theory ...approaching the millennium...” *Study Manual for the Comprehensive AICP Exam of the American Institute of Certified Planners*. Chapter Presidents Council, the American Planning Association, November 1999. Pages 30-32.

by non-professional neighborhood planning committees that empower common citizens to experiment with solving their own problems. The ideal outcomes of this process are collective actions that promote self-reliance. Much of the radical planning literature that I have personally read is based on Marxist interpretations and theories.

6. **Utopianism:** Utopianism believes that planning is most effective when it proposes sweeping changes that capture the public imagination. Daniel Burnham's *Plan of Chicago*, Frank Lloyd Wright's *Broadacre City*, and Le Corbusier's *La Ville Contemporaine* are often cited as utopian works.
7. **Methodism:** Methodism addresses situations in which the planning techniques that should be used are known, but the ends that should be achieved by these techniques are not. Such a situation would be making a population projection just to have it handy when it is needed. Methodism views planning techniques as ends into themselves.

DISSECTING TECHNIQUES²

Dissecting techniques are used to produce theories about planning's function in society. These techniques are based on describing what planners *actually do*, and not on idealized visions of what planners *should be doing*. Incrementalism and methodism are partially products of dissecting techniques.

ARNSTEIN'S "LADDER OF PARTICIPATION"³

Arnstein's theory divides public participation in policymaking and planning into three major levels – based on the power that the general public actually has.

1. non-participation (the general public is manipulated)
2. tokenism (the general public is informed, consulted, and placated)
3. citizen power (the general public becomes a partner with actual control over policy)

MAJOR THEORIES OF URBAN SPATIAL ORGANIZATION⁴

1. **Cocentric Theory** (Burgess, 1925): A city is seen as a set of cocentric rings (these rings are roughly listed, in order, below). As the city grows, each ring invades and overtakes the next ring out – a process called **Invasion/Succession** (thus, Cocentric Theory is sometimes referred to as "**Invasion/Succession Theory**").
 - The central business district (CBD)
 - Independent worker housing
 - Better housing
 - Commuter/suburban housing
2. **Sector Theory** (Hoyt, 1939): High-density residential, commercial, and industrial uses radiate out from the central business district (CBD) in "sectors" that follow major transportation routes. More expensive housing also radiates out from the CBD

² Hurley. Pages 28-29.

³ Janson, John M. "Planning History Summary." *Study Manual for the Comprehensive AICP Exam of the American Institute of Certified Planners*. Chapter Presidents Council, the American Planning Association, November 1999. Page 76.

⁴ Janson. Pages 89-92.

– towards large open spaces and higher ground. Less expensive housing takes whatever land is left over.

3. **Multiple Nuclei Zone Theory** (Harris and Ullman, 1945): Certain land uses group together to take advantage of unique facilities (e.g., universities), specializations, co-dependencies, or externalities. This theory is often applied to cities with more than one CBD.

CENSUS 2000⁵

1. The proper name of Census 2000 is “The 2000 Decennial Censuses of Population and Housing.”
2. Census 2000 was performed as follows.
 - The 2000 Census Master Address File was created from the 1990 file, the U.S. Postal Service’s Directory Sequence File, and (in MSAs) the Local Update of Census Addresses.
 - Each address on this file was related to its Census units and political jurisdictions.
 - A questionnaire was mailed to each of these addresses.
 - These questionnaires were collected. Enumerators were sent to those households that did not mail back their questionnaires (in 1990, only 65% of households did).
 - The information from the questionnaires and the enumerators was entered into a digital database.
 - This information was then tabulated and mapped.
 - The results of the Census are due on the President’s desk by December 31, 2000.
3. About 17% of American households received the long form. Thus, the long form is a sample, and long form data must be tested via inferential statistics to insure accuracy.
4. About 83% of American households received the **short form**. The 2000 short form was the shortest since 1820. It addressed only seven subjects: the (1) names, (2) ages, (3) genders, (4) races, and (5) Hispanic ethnicities of the household’s members; (6) the relationships between these members; and (7) whether the involved home was rented or owned by the household.
5. Census 2000 and the 1998 test census were the first to allow the respondents to select more than one race in describing themselves.
6. Census 2000 was the first to not consider cooking facilities and legal status as parts of the definition of the term “housing unit.” This may cause an artificial rise in the number of housing units nationwide.
7. Census 2000 was the first to use Optical Mark and Intelligent Character Recognition technology.
8. Census 2000 was the first to not use a post-Census review in estimating the undercount.
9. The following are some commonly used Census statistical units.
 - **Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)**: An area – consisting of one or more counties – that contains an urbanized core of over 50,000 residents

⁵ *The National AICP Exam Preparation Course Guidebook*. Washington DC: the American Institute of Certified Planners, 1999.

- **Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA):** A regional MSA that is composed of two or more smaller, constituent MSAs – each of which is called a **Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA)**
 - **Minor Civil Division (MCD):** A Census unit that is only used in 29 states, and that usually (always in Pennsylvania) corresponds to a municipality. **Census County Divisions** are used in the 21 states that don't have MCDs.
 - **Census Tract:** A small Census unit with approximately 4,000 residents. Census tracts are only used in MSAs and in some other counties. **Block Numbering Areas** are used where census tracts are not.
 - **Block Groups:** These are groups of **blocks**, which are the smallest Census units.
 - **Tribal Designated Statistical Area:** A census unit drawn by tribes that do not have a recognized land area.
10. It has been estimated that the 1990 U.S. Census missed 1.6% of the total U.S. population, 4.4% of the African-American population, and 5% of the Hispanic-American population. Hispanic male renters were the most often missed.

METHODS OF ESTIMATING AN AREA'S POPULATION BETWEEN CENSUSES⁶

1. **Extrapolation techniques:** See notes.
2. **Cohort-Component Population Projections:** See notes.
3. **The Housing Unit Method:** Housing data from the last Census is used as a base. This data is then adjusted using subsequently issued building, demolition, and conversion permits for housing.
4. **The Ratio Correlation Method:** Multiple correlation/regression is used to relate population changes to typically four independent variables (which are typically automobile registrations, housing units, two-year average resident births, and jobs covered by unemployment insurance).
5. **The Component Method II:** This is a simplification of the cohort-component projection technique that estimates migration rates for those under 65 from elementary school enrollments.
6. **The Administrative Records Method:** This is a simplification of the cohort-component projection technique that estimates migration rates from the number of tax returns filed.
7. **The Comparative Method:** This method estimates an area's population based on the historical characteristics and trends of another, similar area.
8. **The Ratio (or Step-Down) Method:** An area's population is proportionally derived from projections of a larger region to which the area belongs.

LEFTOVER DEMOGRAPHIC FACTS

1. The 1940 U.S. Census was the first to reveal a pattern of cities losing ground to their suburbs.

⁶ *The National AICP Exam Preparation Course Guidebook*. Page 152 ("Fact Sheets & Readings").

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE AMERICAN POPULATION THAT WAS URBAN	
1900	40%
1920	50%
1960	70%
1980	73.7%
1990	75.2%