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Reinventing planning and planners: Ideological decontestations and rhetorical appeals

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journals.sagepub.com/home/plt**Simin Davoudi**

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Abstract

This article contributes to the debate about ideologically motivated planning reforms. It aims to advance the debate by exploring how change is legitimised through forms of rhetorical persuasion. It shows how political ideologies become embedded in planning policies and practices through strategies of legitimation aimed at justifying specific ideas, beliefs and values as self-evident and inevitable. These legitimation strategies rely on distinctive rhetorical appeals to steer planning discourses, policies and institutions. By using short illustrative examples of ‘ideology in action’ from Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands, the article shows that various combinations of rhetorical appeals to *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos* and *doxa* (logic, character, emotion and identity) are often simultaneously at work to naturalise contested planning reforms.

Keywords

legitimation, planning reforms, political ideologies, rhetorical appeals

Introduction

Various neoconservative writers, such as Bell (1960), Shils (1968) and Fukuyama (1989), have made claims that ideology is dead, and that we are now witnessing a new political

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era determined not by ideology, but by practical, 'evidence-based solutions'. Others have argued that the aftermath of World War II (WWII) and the Cold War created an 'exhaustion of political ideas' in the West (Lane, 1962: 15), where the boundaries between the left and the right became blurred, thereby paving the way for the so-called 'third way' politics (Giddens, 1998). Although much of these end-of-ideology sentiments depends on how ideology is defined, we argue that the invocation of the demise of ideology is itself an *ideological* act aimed at cloaking changes in public policy and planning in post-ideological rhetoric. As Lefebvre (1968: 87) suggested, 'extreme ideologising is accompanied by a certain conviction that the 'end of ideology' has been reached'. Those who desire for ideologies to end often subscribe to a pejorative view of ideology as myth, dogma and distorted beliefs. However, there is an alternative view of the ideology as an indispensable component of political life; one that cannot be eliminated without the demise of politics itself. We concur with Mills' (1960) suggestion that, 'any political reflection that is of possible political significance is ideological; in its terms, policies, institutions, men of power are criticised or approved' (p. 130). It is through ideological discourse that we encounter power and politics. Planning is no exception on this account. Political ideologies have always competed over the control of planning discourses, policies and institutions while navigating 'planning's own ideological legacies' (Shepherd, 2018: 509). Crucially, questions of why, when and to what extent planning should intervene in private property rights are political questions subject to different ideological responses.

We aim to contribute to this ongoing debate by presenting a new way of thinking about ideology in which a distinction is made between the ontological question of what ideology is (definition) and the sociological-political question of what ideology does (function). We advance the debate by linking these to the crucial question of how ideology sticks (legitimation). The article provides a conceptual framework based on rhetorically informed political theory of ideology, which is particularly useful in unpacking how broader ideological shifts navigate planning's own cultural legacy (Shepherd, 2018). Short examples from Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands (with which we are most familiar) are used to illustrate the role of ideologies in the birth of modern planning systems and their subsequent reforms, and the power of rhetorical appeals in legitimising them. These examples are neither in-depth case studies nor holistic accounts of a particular reform.¹ Their selection is primarily based on how well they illustrate the role of ideology and rhetoric in motivating change and continuity in planning, not how far they provide a balanced coverage of the three countries.

What is an ideology?

NOBODY has yet come up with a single adequate definition of ideology . . . because the term 'ideology' has a whole range of useful meanings, not all of which are compatible with each other . . . The word 'ideology', one might say, is a text, woven of a whole tissue of different conceptual strands; it is traced through by divergent histories. (Eagleton, 2007: 1)

The origins and history of ideology are diverse. Notwithstanding these diversities, a distinction can be made between the ontological definitions of ideology which focus

on *what an ideology is*, and its sociological and political definitions which focus on *what an ideology does*. For example, Marx's and Engels' definition of ideology as 'false consciousness' belongs to the former, whereas Freedman's (1996) view of ideologies as cognitive maps that chart critical dimensions of political debate belongs to the latter. Although our focus is primarily on the latter, and how this relates to urban and regional planning reforms, it is difficult to discuss what ideology does without first clarifying our understanding of what ideology is. Hence, a brief summary is presented below.

The word 'ideology' was coined by the French philosopher and aristocrat Antoine Destutt de Tracy in the late 18th century, around the same time as the terms 'left' and 'right' entered the political language of revolutionary France.² By using the term *idéologie*, which means the study or the science of ideas, he distanced his work from metaphysics and positioned it in the realm of positivist science. His intention was to use scientific methods to analyse and codify beliefs to then utilise them for progressive ends. But by an ironic twist of fate, he was bundled with the metaphysicians whom he wanted to discredit under the label of ideologue, a derogatory term invented by Napoleon to demote them.

The pejorative view of ideology as dogma and manipulation was reinforced by the writings of Marx and Engels who at the same time gave ideology its political meaning and highlighted its significance in class struggles. In criticising idealist philosophers, such as Hegel, they portrayed ideology as an illusory and distorted image of social reality; a 'superstructure' that works to obfuscate the material 'base'. In *The German Ideology* they used the analogy of camera obscura to argue that ideology rendered reality upside down in order to provide an inverted image which was at once a recognisable and distorted depiction of reality. For them, the political function of ideology was to protect capitalism from contestations by those who are disadvantaged by it. They claimed that 'the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas' (Marx and Engels, 1932: 59), and these ideas are used instrumentally to safeguard their class interests. The emphasis on distortion is also evident in Jürgen Habermas' (1984) view of ideology. While rejecting Marxism, he considered ideology as a systematically distorted communication in which, under the influence of social interests, there is a gap between what is publicly said and the intention behind it.

Within the Marxist tradition, the contributions of three philosophers are noteworthy because, to use the above Eagleton's analogy, they wove new conceptual strands to the text which we will draw upon later in the article. Mannheim's (1936) writings on the sociology of knowledge emphasised the importance of *social and historical contexts* in the construction of ideologies, or what he called 'worldviews', and the existence of ideological pluralism. Gramsci's writings on 'hegemony' highlighted the ways in which ideological discourses are used to tie people to the capitalist state and win their consent. Althusser (1969) shifted ideology from a cognitive to an affective theory³ (Eagleton, 2007), from ideology as a myth to ideology as a material force that exists in ideological practices, rituals and institutions, or what he called 'Ideological State Apparatuses'. His conceptualisation of ideology as 'background ideas' disassociated it from positivist science and by broadening of the scope of ideology beyond its narrow association with the ruling class, he established the foundation of a new understanding of ideology as an

indispensable social function, which provides people with symbolic, affective and cognitive maps that render the world meaningful to them (Tedin, 1987: 65).

We concur with the broader view of ideology as a mental framework that people use to make sense of how the world should function and how they should operate within it (Hall, 1996), while acknowledging that stretching the concept to cover everything would make it meaningless. In our view, ideology provides the framework in which political struggles in and about planning concepts and institutions are discursively played out.

What does an ideology do?

Theorists of ideology have grappled with two fundamental questions: (1) does ideology exist or is it just an illusion and (2) is ideology a work of mind or a material practice? The first question is less prevalent as there are few contemporary theorists who argue that ideology is pure illusion. An important exception is the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) who extend the elusiveness of ideology to the reality itself. For them ideology is an 'empty signifier' because it represents an absence of an external reality (Gunder, 2004). In other words, if there is no truth, it cannot be distorted. This is a radical view but one that maintains the negative connotation of ideology and rejects its enabling potentials.

The second question has led to an understanding of ideology inspired by the insights from semiotic (and linguistic) theories. According to Voloshinov (1973) – sometimes considered to be the father of discourse theory and the creator of the first semiotic theory of ideology in 1929 – 'without signs there is no ideology'. Here, signs or 'systems of signification' (Barthes, 1972: 9) include a range of media such as words, images, symbols, sounds, objects and gestures through which meanings are made and realities are both represented and constructed. Systems of signification serve ideological functions as they attempt to define realities by reducing the unlimited interpretations around spuriously determinate meanings so that concepts are received by the subjects as natural and inevitable.

The conceptual decontestation

The above understanding of ideology is taken up by Freeden (1998, 2005) who considers decision making as a form of decontesting a range of potential alternatives. Drawing on Gallie (1956), he suggests that political concepts such as democracy, justice, liberty, and property are 'essentially contestable' because, first, they contain multiple interpretations of which none can be agreed upon as the right one and, second, they consist of multiple components of which none can be agreed to be included in or excluded from the concept. Because of such inherent indeterminacy we can never disambiguate all components of a concept, such as democracy, to arrive at an uncontroversial meaning of it (Freeden, 2005). It is the discursive function of ideology to decontest, or foreclose, political concepts by assigning a socially legitimated meaning to them and discrediting all other meanings in such a way that the given meaning becomes widely used as self-evident. This implies that the discursive struggle between competing ideologies becomes a struggle over which ideology gets to fix the meaning of political concepts.

For Freeden (1996), the decontestation involves a reconfiguration of the internal, structural features of ideology. Hence, what distinguishes one ideology from another is

the pattern or the morphology by which the concepts are assembled, rather than the concepts themselves. Concepts can only make sense within a given ideational milieu and their meanings depend on whether they are given core significance or relegated to the periphery.

A salient example of how ideologies work is the creation of urban and regional planning. The formation of planning was legitimised by ideological decontestation of some core concepts. Among them is the repositioning of the concept of liberty in relation to concepts of private property and the state. While today we may take planning intervention in property markets for granted, for the classical liberals of the late 19th and early 20th centuries it was seen as an ideologically unacceptable erosion of individual liberties. For them liberty and private property were one and the same thing and hence state intervention in the latter (in the form of planning regulations) was considered an intrusion in the former. After WWII, the necessity of a close link between the two concepts was challenged (Davoudi and Madanipour, 2015) and a new conceptual cluster emerged in which the ties between liberty and property were loosened and the role of the state was given core position. The change was constitutive of a major shift in the ideological landscape towards egalitarian liberalism (or social democratic ideologies) and the creation of comprehensive planning systems as one of its key markers and achievements.

The formation of the welfare states was intellectually aided by the economic logics of influential advocates such as Keynes and Beveridge in Britain and the *Ordo*-liberals of the German Schools (see below the discussion on *logos and ethos*). They argued that liberty should no longer be defined by the absence of interference, a *laissez-faire* economy and a minimal state. It should rather be given a 'positive' moral and social component and become associated with a greater role for the state in managing demand and mitigating the unequal consequences of the free market economy. This ideological turn, which underpinned the social democratic politics of the post-WWII welfare states, legitimated the creation of the institutions of planning and their regulatory power to intervene in private property rights. Public planning, previously concomitant with authoritarian regimes, was given core significance in the conceptual cluster and a prominent space next to the concepts of democracy and freedom to the extent that Mannheim (1936) advocated for 'freedom *through* planning'.

The significance of context

Two points are worth highlighting. First, ideological shifts are not just a matter of ideational struggle over abstract concepts, they are also responses to material conditions and policy dilemmas. The rise of social democratic ideologies and the welfare states in Europe was a response to the Great Depression in the 1930s which revealed that 'far from being the guardian of every other rights' private property rights generate inequitable power relations and uneven realisations of liberty (Ely, 1992: 26). The spatial manifestations of such inequalities in the form of urban slums, regional disparities and housing shortages motivated calls for stronger planning interventions.

Second, and following Mannheim's emphasis on the significance of context, underlying the conceptual morphology discussed above is culture and history. Ideologies are constructed within a discursive formation that is constrained or enabled by social and

cultural contexts. According to Voloshinov (1973), 'the meaning of a sign is not in its relationship to other signs within the language system but rather in the social context of its use' (p. 21). In other words, it is not possible to determine whether a statement is ideological in isolation from its discursive context. That is why ideological concepts change considerably when they are transferred from one social context to the other, and from one planning system to another. Here, the meaning of context is not limited to its earlier understanding as 'backdrop' of ideological thinking and how that backdrop reflects the social interest of the bearer of an ideology. Context here refers to cultural constraints which are embedded in, and are integral to the structure of an ideology and the messages it conveys; it is a constitutive part of it (Festenstein and Kenny, 2005). The significance of culture and history is reflected in the ways in which the ideologically motivated creation of interventionist planning systems was strengthened by strong traditions of planning movements in Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands.

In Britain, such a movement was led by socially motivated visionary individuals, influential environmental groups, and powerful industrial philanthropists who pioneered the planning of 'model towns' for their factory workers. Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement was particularly significant in paving the way and legitimising a pro-planning narrative based on the welfare state's ideological goals. In Denmark, it was enabled by a conjuncture of driving forces including the consolidation of the Social Democratic labour movement, the development of the Danish welfare state (Kolstrup, 1997) and the interventionist character of the state's housing policy (Bro, 2009). In addition, the adaptation of international planning ideas by progressive municipal engineers (Aage Bjerre), civic designers (Alfred Raavad), architects (Frederik Christian Boldsen) and urban planners (Petter Bredsoff, Steen Eiler Rasmussen) significantly contributed to the emergence of different forms of planning during the first half of the 20th century and in the post-WWII era (Gaardmand, 1993; Vacher, 2004). In the Netherlands, the need for provision of mass housing empowered the state's production of urban expansion plans (Faludi and Van Der Valk, 1994), a development which was highly influenced by the *Stedebouw* movement (city builders) consisting of a group of civil engineers and architects who were followers of the *City Beautiful* movement. Key members of the movement who advanced pro-planning narratives included Cornelis van Eesteren, an architect and town planner in the City of Amsterdam and president of *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM). The *Stedebouw* movement and its influential members increased the justifications for and legitimacy of planning in the first half of the 20th century.

The above examples show how the shift to social democratic ideologies that led to the creation of the welfare states legitimated the introduction of modern institutions of planning in the three countries, and how the existence of traditional planning movements led by vocal pro-planning individuals and groups were paramount in social acceptability of interventionist planning.

What makes an ideology stick?

Ideological power is not just a matter of meaning, but of making a meaning stick. (Thompson, 1984: 132)

For an ideology to stick, it needs to endure and become embedded in policies and practices. This requires developing strategies of legitimation consisting of any combinations of *promotion* of specific beliefs and values that are in congruence with that ideology, *justification* of those beliefs and values as natural, universal, inevitable and self-evident, *inclusion and exclusion* of alternatives meanings, and *obfuscation* of social reality if necessary (Bell, 1960).

At the level of discourse, one way of implementing these strategies is through what Ernesto Laclau calls ‘tropes of naming’. Discourse analysts who follow Laclau argue that, ‘politics is always about nomination. It is about naming a political subjectivity and organising politically around that name’ (Critchley, 2007: 103). Through signification, the meaning of concepts is temporarily stabilised and the structure of discourses is anchored around key signifiers with which subjects identify. However, the discursive context within which ideologies are formed is as important as their semiotic conditions. Indeed, ideologies can be better understood as discursive *performances* (the use of language within a social context for the production of specific effects) rather than consciousness, and as power-infused *social interactions* rather than disembodied, abstract ideas. This echoes Althusser’s emphasis on understanding the ways through which power and knowledge are inscribed in ideologies. What makes an utterance ideological is not just its inherent linguistic properties and internal logic, but also the discursive formations within which they occur. We cannot understand the meaning and significance of ideologies by abstracting them from how they are used in arguments (Skinner, 2002). Effective ideological legitimation depends on not only what is said, but also who said it to whom, when and where, and to what end (Davoudi, 2018a; Davoudi 2018b; Eagleton, 2007; Schmidt, 2008, 2010).

One aspect of legitimation strategy is the decontestation of concepts through morphological rearrangements (Freedon, 1998) as we discussed earlier with regard to the reconfiguration of the conceptual clusters of liberty, state and property rights in favour of pro-planning interventions. We argue that another vital contribution to legitimation strategies comes from rhetorical practices that are external to the internal structure of the conceptual patterns and tropes of naming and emanate from the strategies of political actors who ‘express and embody their political thinking and communicate it to others’ (Finlayson, 2012: 758). According to Aristotle, rhetoric is the theory and practice of persuasion – opposite to dialectic which is theory and practice of naming. It is about persuading others to think and imagine in the same way as the persuader. Competing ideologies engage in various forms of rhetorical styles and techniques such as, delivery skills, narrative arrangement, vivid metaphors, irony, humour, exaggeration, tone of voice, gesture and dramaturgy (Dryzek, 2010: 320) to establish themselves as the cognitively and normatively legitimate ideology. Aristotle distinguished between three forms of rhetorical persuasion: *logos* (argument), *ethos* (the virtue of the speaker) and *pathos* (emotion).

As we mentioned in the introduction, a rhetorically informed political theory of ideology is especially useful in shining light on how broader ideological shifts are played out in the context of planning’s cultural legacy (Shepherd, 2018) to bringing about change, and how various forms of rhetoric are used to make the reforms embedded in the micro-politics and practices of planning. Using the Aristotelean categories and their

elaborations by Finlayson (2012), we show how rhetorical appeals have been utilised in legitimising the neoliberalisation of planning systems through the decontestation, redefinition and fixing of their purposes and meanings. In addition, we draw on the notion of *doxa* (the assumed knowledge/opinion) to highlight the role of identity building in making the neoliberal ideological shifts embodied and encultured by planners.

Invocation of logic

Logos is about the deployment of quasi-logical reasoning so that they are received by a given audience as natural. Here, the use of classical rhetorical themes (*topoi*) – cause and effect, cost and benefits, means and ends – is not to prove but rather to persuade (Finlayson, 2012 drawing on Laclau). The aim is to establish a premise upon which a political argument can be constructed. Analogies and metaphors are frequently used to define a present situation in ways that future events can be shown to follow logically. For example, if financial deficit defines the present economic situation, an austerity policy appears to be the logical action to follow.

An example of the invocation of logic in the pursuit of ideological goals is the promotion of evidence-based policy by the New Labour Government in Britain during the 2000s (Davoudi, 2006). The rhetorical appeal to evidence typified the market-oriented reforms of urban and regional planning and other public services by presenting them not as ideologically motivated, but rather as a logical and necessary response to a ‘new’, ‘rapidly changing’ and globalising world. It reflected and reinforced the claims about New Labour’s pragmatic stance and Tony Blair’s statements on the ‘end of ideology’ (see, for example, Lichfield, 1998). The managerial language of ‘modernisation’ was obsessively used to depoliticise a ‘radical change’ of planning from a regulator of development to its expeditor. Coupled with the narratives of ‘what matters is what works’, the emphasis on evidence base sought to undermine the role of value judgements in planning decisions.

In a highly selective approach to evidence gathering, economists were commissioned by the Treasury to review the planning system. Among them was Kate Barker, a member of the Bank of England’s monetary committee at the time and former chief economic advisor at the Confederation of British Industry. Her two influential reviews provided a quasi-logical premise on which an ideological argument in favour of reducing the burden of planning regulation on private housing supply was constructed. A similar argument was put forward in another Treasury-commissioned review by Rod Eddington. This described the transport sector as having ‘a strong evidence base’, using ‘world-class analytical methodologies’, and understanding ‘how to make appropriate risk transfer to the private sector’ (Eddington, 2006: 51). Suggesting that planning imposes ‘unacceptable cost, uncertainty and delay on all participants and the UK more broadly’ (Eddington, 2006: 58), the report complemented the invocation of *logic* with that of *character* and called for the establishment of ‘a new independent Planning Commission . . . comprised of well-respected experts of considerable standing to . . . decide the planning decision for strategic transport schemes’ (Eddington, 2006: 57).

Clearly, this was not the first time that the appeal to *logos* was used to provide intellectual legitimacy for political ideologies. Margaret Thatcher (Conservative Prime

Minister 1979–1990) founded and made extensive use of ‘think tanks’ to ‘sustain the radical momentum of Thatcherism by reinforcing the sense of a collective crusade’ (Denham and Garnett, 1996: 52). Since then, the rhetorical appeal to evidence base has been a key contributor to making the neoliberalisation of planning not only stick, but also move forward.

In Denmark, a conservative-liberal coalition government (1982–1993) appealed to ‘cause and effect’ and ‘means and ends’ logics to introduce neoliberal agendas into planning and reorient its founding principle of equal development (Galland, 2012a, 2012b). As in the UK, the government’s ‘Modernisation Programme’ employed new public management catchphrases such as ‘market governance’, ‘freedom of choice’ and ‘new financial mechanisms’ to justify the need to adapt to new economic conditions (Andersen and Pløger, 2007: 1356). Moving away from its original narrative of ‘equality’ towards one of ‘diversity’, the national-level purpose of planning was reframed to support (business) development in regions and larger cities – the latter then conceived by the government as long-standing ‘losers’ of former social-democratic redistributive policies (Galland, 2012b: 1372–1375). Spatial differentiation thus became the means through which planning was to support the government’s renewed agenda of modernisation and internationalisation (Ministry of the Environment 1989: 5):

It is the government’s view that the earlier form of development pursued by the nationwide goal of equality is outdated. The future must be guided by regional political activities that have diversity. Attention must be given to harnessing the development potential of the regions to strengthen Denmark’s position internationally.

An appeal to ‘*appropriate* development’ remained a fundamental aim of the new-fangled Danish Planning Act of 1992 and was subsequently employed by the government to further legitimise its so-called modernisation and internationalisation agenda while ensuring its continuity. This enabled the recentralisation of national spatial development priorities towards the promotion of Copenhagen as the international metropolis and gateway of Scandinavia (Ministry of the Environment, 1992). This state selectivity was dressed up as an essential response to inevitable forces of globalisation which would also yield a trickle-down effect of affluence from Copenhagen to the rest of the country.

A similar shift towards neoliberalisation of planning was taking place in the Netherlands during the 1980s. While spatial equality was central to urban and regional planning in the early part of the decade, by the late 1980s the emphasis was moving towards maximising the economic efficiency of regions and unlocking distinctive potentials as reflected in the Fourth Planning Report of 1988 (Waterhout et al., 2013). According to Ed Nijpels, the then government minister responsible for spatial planning, the philosophy of the document was that priority locations needed to be made due to limited government resources because it was only *logical* ‘to make the strong stronger’ rather than make ‘the weak slightly stronger’; that the latter would not work whereas support for stronger locations would maximise the trickle-down effect and increase the total return for the Dutch economy (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2000). Economic growth and infrastructure development became the new goals of spatial policy, replacing the earlier focus on public housing. Key transport infrastructure, such as Amsterdam Schiphol airport and the port of

Rotterdam, became important focal points. Policy rhetoric moved from ‘regions powered by the Hague’⁴ to ‘regions powered by themselves’ (Boekema and Broos, 1998) reflecting a shift from regional policy focusing on the development in poorer regions to spatial planning focusing on growth in economically strong areas (Atzema and Wever, 1994).⁵

As the above examples show, in all three countries pseudo-scientific economic principles were used as logical responses to ‘inevitable’ forces of globalisation, masquerading ideologically motivated neoliberal reforms of the planning systems with striking similarities in the use of technocratic language of modernisation, and seductive metaphor of trickle-down.

Invocation of character

The rhetorical appeal to *ethos* is about ‘who’ said it. It renders ideologies credibility by the appeal to the character of promoters (speakers): their perceived trustworthiness, expertise, charisma and, more generally, authority. What constitutes ‘authority’ is a matter of contestation between competing ideologies and changes according to time and space. For example, since the Enlightenment the legitimate source of authority has shifted, in some societies, from metaphysics (God’s words) to science (experts’ views) with experts assuming a powerful *ethos*. Authorities legitimate ideologies and are legitimated, sustained and challenged by them. In addition to citing such sources of authorities, the appeal to *ethos* ‘is above all about inviting audiences to accept an argument because of who is making it’ (Finlayson, 2012).

The history of planning offers several examples of highly regarded experts who have been embroiled into discursive formations to legitimise ideologically motivated reforms, not always because of the scientific validity of what they say but because of who they are. Classic examples in the UK include those who earned the title of ‘founding fathers’ of planning. Among the more recent examples, the one that stands out is Sir Peter Hall and his provocation for experimenting with non-plan and freeports, after his visit to the economically dynamic and entrepreneurial Hong Kong and Singapore (Allmendinger, 2014). Faced with Britain’s declining inner cities, the Thatcher Government seized upon these ideas to designate planning-free/relaxed Enterprise Zones (EZ) and Simplified Planning Zones (SPZ). Both became the embodiment of Thatcherite attack on planning in the 1980s. The zoning policy itself was just one part of an extensive, and well-documented (Thornley, 1991), neoliberal agenda of de-regulation, market-incentivisation, entrepreneurialism and ‘rolling-back the frontier of the state’ but, its legitimation through the invocation of character was relatively unique.

Disillusioned with the paternalistic welfare state and perceived failure of comprehensive planning to deliver spatial justice, Hall (1977: 5) suggested experimenting, on a small scale, with ‘zones of fairly shameless free enterprise’ where planning rules would not apply. Although he considered them as ‘last ditch solution to urban problems’ (Hall, 1977), the Thatcher government captured the provocative language, especially of non-plan, to purchase legitimacy for creation of EZ and SPZ and its wider neoliberalisation of planning. It was not just the idea of non-plan that was appropriated, but also the perceived *ethos* of Peter Hall. As a highly respected public intellectual, planning expert, and, crucially, perceived left-wing urban scholar, he added considerable weights to the

legitimacy of the policy. In the words of Stuart Butler, who transferred the idea to the United States, ‘What Peter Hall was saying, because he was the ‘unplanning *planner*’ . . . got a lot of interest, and Geoffrey Howe⁶ had taken this on’ (quoted in Stedman Jones, 2012: 319, emphasis added).

In Denmark, the appeal to *ethos* became particularly prevalent during the 1990s when urban entrepreneurialism was added to the neoliberalisation of the national planning agenda. The shift in policy was legitimated by the appeal to ‘corporate’ expertise of neo-elitist networks (Andersen and Pløger, 2007) who were appointed to sit on ad hoc committees and quangos to deal with planning and development affairs (Jørgensen et al., 1997: 57). Their perceived *ethos* validated urban development and infrastructure investments in and around the Greater Copenhagen Region, thus enabling the introduction of entrepreneurial practices in urban development and regeneration. Regarded by critics as a withdrawal from conventional Scandinavian urban planning styles, such ‘flexible urban governance modes’ raised concerns about their intrinsic capacity to dodge traditional local planning practices and jeopardise local democracy (Desfor and Jørgensen, 2004).

The appeal to expertise also assisted the Danish liberal-conservative coalition government (2002–2011) when appointing a ‘Commission of Administrative Structure’ to justify the implementation of a municipal government reform. The Commission itself legitimised the creation, enactment and implementation of this state project by appealing to the *logic* of economies of scale deemed to tackle the weak performance of the existing local government configuration. Influenced by the Commission’s promotion of greater efficiency and managerial effectiveness (not equity), another expert committee was set up whose recommendations justified the revocation of statutory regional planning and the reallocation of its functions and responsibilities to municipal and national levels (Galland, 2012a; Galland and Elinbaum, 2015).

In the Netherlands, the rhetorical appeal to *ethos* in planning is frequently related to making links and creating strategic alliances with other governmental departments to provide credibility and resources for planning. From the enactment of the first law on spatial planning in 1956, relatively few resources and binding instruments were made available to the planning minister. Therefore, financing and implementing spatial policies generally required cooperation with other ministries. Interdepartmental commissions, alongside informal processes of consensus-building, were used to ‘persuade’ and ‘seduce’ ministers from other departments to support spatial plans (Grijzen, 2010; Priemus et al., 1997). One of the defining features of the Dutch planning system is its capacity to align (and realign) itself with prevailing governmental interests and resources. This can be seen in the shifting relationship between housing and planning policy. While the original social democratic rationale for planning was largely to provide a framework for large-scale social housing, by the end of the 20th century the decentralisation, deregulation and liberalisation of housing provision along with the withdrawal of national financial support reduced the *ethos* of the housing sector and hence its rhetorical appeal for planning to achieve its goals. The same is also true for the links between agricultural policy and spatial planning (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000). In place of these old allies, planning policies were recalibrated to appeal to the authority of new allies, including governmental departments responsible for economic

development, and transport. The change is not simply a replacement of one source of ethos with another in order to maintain access to resources, it is also indicative of the government's ideological shift from social democratic goals of housing provision towards neoliberal goals of economic growth and competitiveness. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the shift in alliances led to noticeable changes in the policy priorities, rhetoric and instruments contained in plans.

Although many basic principles of planning that form the core of its professional approaches (such as, concentration of urbanisation and spatial cohesion, differentiation, and hierarchy) have remained relatively constant (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000.), their weight has varied from one statement to another. More importantly, the meanings given to them have changed so that they can be aligned with and appeal to the ethos (authority and resources) of the prevailing government departments. A 1980s' example is when the former Ministry of Spatial Planning called on the government's National Planning Service 'to come up with new concepts better fitting the economic rhetoric of that time' (Korthals Altes, 1995). As the analysis of Roodbol-Mekkes et al. (2012) shows, although the Dutch planning doctrines and principles have generally remained intact, the meanings attached to them, modes of implementation, roles of different levels of government have changed to align the system with the dominant political ideology of the time. This is in contrast to Denmark where the objectives and principles of planning were changed in their letter and intent.

The above examples show how the neoliberalisation of planning in the three countries has been reinforced by the appeal to different sources of perceived authority (*ethos*) ranging from the knowledge of respected individuals (as in the UK), to the expertise of corporate elites (as in Denmark) and to the powerful position of other government departments (as in the Netherlands).

Invocation of emotions

The appeal to *pathos* is probably the most contested aspect of rhetorical appeals especially by the rational choice theorists who consider it as revocation of reason and violation of the autonomy of the rational agent. The appeal to pathos invokes premises that are held by, or seem to be plausible to, a given audience. Therefore, 'its currency is particular rather than universal appeal' (Dryzek, 2010). To be effective, ideologies should be received by people as not only convincing (in intellectual and cognitive terms), but also persuasive (in normative and affective terms) with the emphasis often being on the latter. Motivating political action often relies on invoking emotions and the affective registers. Indeed, ideologies may be distinguished by their specific 'emotional tenors' or 'major mood' such as 'resentment' or 'fraternal feeling' (Finlayson, 2012).

Discourses in and about planning are peppered with emotive languages that are aimed at their audiences' affective registers. Among these, housing policy, which has always been a key part of planning discourses and policies, has consistently appealed to pathos. For example, the post-WWII social democratic ideologies used the emotive language of 'homes for heroes' of the war to legitimise and gain public acceptance for large scale social housing provision in countries such as Britain. Similarly, Mrs Thatcher's 'Right to Buy' scheme and privatisation of social housing – which brought private property back

to the core of neoliberal conceptual cluster and connected it to democracy and freedom – sought legitimacy by invoking not only the traditional conservative values of home ownership, but also the aspirations of lower and middle-class population. The former is evident in Anthony Eden’s (British Conservative Prime Minister 1955–57) concept of ‘property owning democracy’ and his appeal to the emotive language of mastery versus slavery:

Our objective is a nationwide property-owning democracy . . . this is to be a fundamental principle of political philosophy. Man should be master of his environment not its slave. That is what freedom means. (Eden, 1946)

The latter (invoking middle-class’s aspiration) is an example of the use of affective appeals to offer the targeted audience a sense of identity. Eden’s rhetoric was reiterated in the Conservative Party’s 1979 manifesto under the heading of ‘Helping the Family’. Constituting a form of subjectivity from which ideological discourses can make sense to a wider range of social groups was a key legitimisation strategy of Thatcher’s neoliberal agenda (Hall, 1996). The subsequent New Labour Government expanded this emotive appeal by redefining households as asset-bearing home owners whose ‘Homes are more than shelter’ and play ‘a major role as an asset in household balance sheets’ (Barker, 2004: 1). Similar appeals to pathos were used by the current Conservative Prime Minister when launching the revision of the national planning framework. She called for ‘rewriting the rules on planning to help . . . build more properties – restoring the dream of home ownership’ (Prime Minister’s Office, 2018).

Naming the subjects and building identity

According to (Althusser, 1971: 171), ideology’s practical function is to “‘recruit . . . or “transform” the individuals into subjects’ by giving them an imaginary sense of their own identity which may not correspond with the reality of their social conditions. Our discussion so far has shown that both the reconfiguration of conceptual clusters and rhetorical appeals play important roles in such identity building. But, to be effective, it is crucial to know the situated character (or disposition) of the audience (Yack, 2006) and align ‘the specific *topoi*’ of the ideology with their ‘more general *doxa*’ (assumed knowledge) (Dryzek, 2010; Finlayson, 2012). This requires identification and naming of the subjects of politics and the appropriation of the imaginative power of rhetoric to retrospectively invent common sense and public opinion or *doxa* (Finlayson, 2012).

A highly visible example of such identity fabrication is the redefinition of key concepts in political language and replacement of “‘state-citizen” relations with “provider-client” ones’ (Freedon, 1999: 43). In line with neoliberal preference for commodification of public services, the term customer assigned a new identity to citizens portraying them as sovereign individuals with free choice and capable of exerting ‘more influence about policies and services as a spur to improved quality and value for money’ (Sanderson, 2001: 299).

In Britain, the change was initiated by the Conservative Government in the 1980s and further refined by the New Labour Government as part of its wider ‘modernisation’ agenda (discussed above) as ‘provider-customer’ relations (Vilder and Clarke, 2005).

'Customers' satisfaction' audits became a key measure of planning performance and the term 'customer' was embraced by eminent planners such as Ted Kitchen (2007). The redefinition of the concept of citizen was accompanied by the broader agenda of 'culture change' which sought to reformulate the self-image of not just the users of planning as customers, but also the professional planners themselves. The aim was to instantiate the neoliberalisation of planning into planners' everyday practice and turn planners into not simply the objects of ideologically motivated reform, but also its carriers, as reflected in the statement by the then Government's Chief Planner arguing that, 'it will not be possible to deliver the change that is required without . . . a different attitude and ways of working among those who operate the systems' (Ash, 2002).

The attempt to change planners' culture included probing their recruitment and skills 'crisis' and generating 'a common goal' for them, as was suggested by John Egan (2004), a former chairman of BAA, the owner of Heathrow airport. The direction of change was to make planners 'market responsive' (Communities and Local Government, 2006: 6–7) by incorporating price signals into their decisions, as requested by Barker's (2004) review of housing, mentioned earlier. However, although the term customer is now widely used, it is often redefined against the welfarist planning values notably the belief in 'the public interest' (Clifford, 2012). It is argued that this has led to 'a tension between vocational commitment to professional values and the neutrality required of the public bureaucrats' (Inch, 2010: 361). In our view, under the guise of neutrality a new self-conception of planners – a new *doxa* – has been constructed which still carries a commitment to public interest but understands and articulates it through the prism of economic competitiveness, efficiency and entrepreneurialism. To be effective, the neoliberal ideological topoi have to navigate planners' *doxa* which in this case means maintaining their self-image as 'guardians of public interest' but redefining the meaning of public interest in *economic* terms whereby market and customer choice play central roles (Freeden, 1999).

In Denmark, attempts to change local planning culture emerged alongside the government's justification to implement the structural reform alluded to earlier. As in Britain, this change necessitated the reframing of the 'users' and 'providers' of planning. Portraying the reform as the enabling force of the 'welfare state of the future', the government's Commission of Administrative Structure redefined the concept of 'citizen' by linking it to the concept of 'freedom of choice' defined by monetary principles: '[c]itizens are entitled to value for money and the opportunity of choosing among various options' (Ministry of the Interior and Health, 2004: 21). In validating the need to amalgamate municipalities into larger units, the Commission highlighted the benefits of utilising economies of scale without jeopardising the citizens' democratic control of the public sector, asserting that 'local democracy in larger municipalities is as successful as that of the smaller ones' (Ministry of the Interior and Health, 2004: 19). The new meaning given to the concept of citizen and its alignment with other key signifiers such as 'local democracy', 'sustainability' and 'efficiency' justified and facilitated the government's ideologically motivated reform of municipal structure and the need for a new planning culture (see Grange, 2014).

As 'providers' of planning, professional planners were given a new identity. Political advocacy for local planning culture change enabled the creation of a highly influential

public–private partnership, the ‘Plan09’ project, established between the Danish Ministry of the Environment and Realdania (a member-based philanthropic entity that grew out of a mortgage credit institution). Aimed at enhancing political ownership and commitment, Plan09 showcased ‘example projects’ characterised by ‘creative dialogue methods’ whereby planners were requested to adopt a ‘networking role’ while learning from inter alia politicians, developers and consultants (Realdania and Ministry of the Environment, 2009). To promote the ‘renewal of planning’ in Denmark (Skou, 2010), the partnership focused on a number of themes such as urban regeneration, climate and the environment, the re-making of municipal plans (and their priorities) and new methods for planning ‘the open land’ – framed as ‘the municipal planning of the future’ and qualified as ‘better than regional planning’ (i.e. regional land-use planning) (Rolandsen and Østergård, 2010).

While the aim to foster political ownership over planning at the local level was generally perceived to have been achieved (see, for example, Dansk Byplanlaboratorium, 2010), Plan09 also prompted criticism of the planning profession (Grange, 2014). Throughout the existence of Plan09 (from 2006 to 2009), it was contended that urban planning decisions should not be made by the planning profession alone, and that professional planners, without their new ‘networking role’, were not capable of reflecting upon the current and future needs of planning (Grange, 2014). When Plan09 came to an end, statements were made that planners’ professional ambitions needed to coalesce with their new identity as providers if they were to develop in unison with societal change (Rolandsen and Krog, 2009: 26).

In many subsequent projects, Realdania’s significant political clout and its role as key funder and protagonist often overshadowed and constrained the ‘acting space’ of local planners (Grange, 2012) and thereby their role in ad hoc urban development processes (Galland, 2013). It is argued that political interventions such as Plan09 constituted an attempt to reinforce ‘the planner’s ideological commitment to a social order in which advanced liberal values were promoted’ (Grange, 2014: 2680). Altogether, the case denotes how the construction of a new doxa was used to transform the identity of planners as well as the essence of Danish planning from being conceived as ‘the spatial expression of the welfare state’ (Jensen and Jørgensen, 2000) to ‘only one of many incarnating bodies onto which the newly transformed welfare state projected itself, in order to establish a new hegemonic relationship’ (Grange, 2014: 2679).

Summary and conclusion

The ideological struggles for determining political agendas have become staples of everyday life. Contrary to the end-of-ideology claims mentioned in the opening of this article, ideological boundaries are becoming sharper and more visible rather than being blurred. That is why the debate about ideologically motivated planning reforms is both timely and necessary. In contributing to this debate, we presented a conceptual framework based on rhetorically informed political theory of ideology which brings together the ontological definitions of ideology (what is an ideology?), its sociological and political definitions (what does an ideology do?) and its legitimisation strategies (what makes an ideology stick?).

Summing up the first two dimensions, we define ideologies as socially and historically constructed bundles of contested and contingent ideas, values and beliefs with recurring, yet fluid and dynamic, patterns. They produce widely shared conceptual maps that help us navigate through complex political landscapes. Ideologies are performative and action-oriented, and through discursive decontestation of concepts they compete over the control of political narratives. We showed how the creation of the post-WWII planning systems was justified by social democratic redefinition of planning intervention in private property as the guarantor of freedom and democracy.

We extended the above understanding of ideologies by adding a third dimension and exploring how ideologies stick and become embedded in planning practices, and embodied by planners through strategies of legitimation which justify specific ideas, beliefs and values as natural, inevitable and self-evident. We focused particularly on the crucial role of rhetorical appeals in enacting such legitimation strategies. Using short illustrative examples from Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands, we showed how distinct forms of appeal to logic, character and emotion have been used in variegated ways to legitimise the ongoing neoliberalisation of planning in these countries.

The examples show that the invocations of logic (*logos*) have been a particularly powerful legitimising force in all three countries drawing on strikingly similar language of evidence-base, modernisation, and internationalisation. Regardless of content and style (means-ends, cost-benefit, cause-effect), quasi-logical reasoning has been used to present the ideologically motivated reorientations of planning discourses, practices and institutions as necessary responses to a globalising and competitive world. The invocations of logic tend to be accompanied by those of character (*ethos*). The authorities of experts, appointed commissions and ad hoc committees and their reviews and reports, as well as the power and resources of other government departments have been tactically drawn upon to legitimise neoliberal planning reforms. In doing so, the character or standing of protagonists (i.e. their perceived trustworthiness, expertise, charisma and authority) were proved as important in effective persuasion as their intellectual credibility. The invocation of emotions (*pathos*) were also used to promote and embed new policy rationales. Language couched in pragmatic (e.g. adapting to new economic conditions) and affective (e.g. responding to home-ownership aspirations) terms were deployed to justify the neoliberal reconstruction of the conceptual clusters in such a way that reposition democracy next to private property. To complement and reinforce these rhetorical appeals, deliberate attempts have also been made to reinvent planners' self-identity (*doxa*) in line with the requirement of neoliberal reforms of the system, turning planning and, crucially, planners as new allies of market forces and neoliberal entrepreneurial agendas (Lovering, 2010). This resonates with Foley's (1960) observation that, 'at the very time that town planning was seemingly being so solidified (in Britain), it was in effect being somewhat reshaped from inside' (p. 229).

The examples in this article illustrate that various combinations of *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos* and *doxa* are often simultaneously at work to make ideologies stick and become embedded in planning discourses, practices and institutions. They also show the significance of culture and history. One important contextual factor is the precarious co-existence of diverse planning concepts and values and their internal tensions and contradictions, which have made planning a relatively easy target for ideologically motivated reforms.

However, as some of the examples have shown, such reforms have often been contingent on the legacies of planning cultures and traditions. These sometimes enable and reinforce change and sometimes condition or resist change. In the current climate of intensified ideological struggles over the control of political agendas, planning will undoubtedly be subject to further decontestation of, especially, its peripheral (more malleable) concepts. The critical question is whether and how the cumulated outcomes of such ‘tinkerings around the edges’ would lead to radical transformations of planning as we know it.

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Notes

1. For a full account of the evolution of planning systems in these countries, see Knapp et al. (2015).
2. This originated from the seating arrangements in the French revolutionary assembly.
3. Without denying the existence of cognitive elements in ideological formation so knowledge still plays a role in ideological formation but, it is less of theoretical knowledge than a pragmatic, experiential one.
4. The Hague, as the seat of Dutch government, strongly directed regional policy during periods of economic growth up to the late 1970s.
5. A similar policy shift can be observed at the European level where Cohesion Policy (regional policy of the European Union) places an increasing emphasis on developing the endogenous potential of regions (McCann and Ortega-Argilés, 2015).
6. Geoffrey Howe was Margaret Thatcher’s longest-serving Cabinet minister and held the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1979 to 1983.

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