

Models of Urban Governance and Planning in Latin America and the United States: Associationism, Regime Theory, and Communicative Action

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In many American and Latin American cities alike, urban governance and planning are either in urgent need of reform or are currently undergoing haphazard reform. In many cases, innovative attempts to implement reforms have failed because of the inability of cities to develop their 'civic capacity'—the capacity to build and maintain broad social and political multisectoral coalitions in pursuit of common goals. As the experiences of cultural and political dilemmas, traditions, and contests vary from place to place and from time to time, it is only logical that analysts of urban governance processes in Latin America and the United States have come up with different models that attempt to both interpret and provide normative guidance for such complex processes within their particular geopolitical and socio-cultural specificities. This article discusses two main urban governance models developed in Latin America and the United States—associationism and regime theory—and considers the implications of those models in planning theory. Rather than portraying a compilation of different ideas, the attempt is to highlight the notion that, despite the fact that these theoretical and analytical urban governance models from Latin America and the United States have been inspired on the empirical study of different urban, regional, and national contexts, it is possible to identify some equivalences between them.

This article argues that these significant points of convergence are productive building blocks for the construction of more generalizable models of urban governance and planning in democratic cities in the Americas and beyond. It situates coalition and network politics at the center of urban planning and governance reform, suggesting that associationism and regime theory can be instrumental at analyzing the status of civic capacity of urban communities. Furthermore, the article claims that the points of convergence between these models of governance may achieve a more powerful synergy and productive status as tools for both analysis and action through their synthesis in, and reinforcement of, the notion of communicative action in urban planning theory and practice. Communicative action can be synergistically strengthened by the contributions of regime theory and associationism to further develop theories, tools, and processes to design, guide, and evaluate more democratic, equitable, and efficient urban governance and planning experiences.

Planners are far from powerless, we argue, but their power is not in a form they have typically recognized. They help to shape the flow of power, to mobilize it and to focus it. They are a part of it but not in control. But then, no one today is in control.
Booher and Innes, 2002, p. 223.

In many American and Latin American cities alike, urban governance and planning are either in urgent need of reform or are currently undergoing haphazard reform. In many cases, innovative attempts to implement reforms have been doomed because the failures of cities to develop their 'civic capacity'—the capacity to build and maintain a broad social and political multisectoral coalition in pursuit of common goals (Stone et al., 2001). As the experiences of political dilemmas, traditions, and contests vary from place to place and from time to time (Bevis and Rhodes, 2001a),¹ it is only logical that analysts of urban governance processes in Latin America and the United States have come up with different governance models that attempt to both interpret and provide normative guidance for such complex processes within their particular geopolitical and socio-cultural specificities.

This article discusses two main governance models developed in Latin America and the United States—associative networks (AN) and regime theory (RT)—and considers the implications of those definitions in planning theory. The aim is not to portray a compilation of different ideas. Rather, the attempt is to highlight the notion that despite the fact that these theoretical and analytical concepts have been inspired on the empirical study of different urban, regional, and national contexts (on the one hand, the in-and-of itself varied experiences of Latin American countries and cities; and on the other hand, those of the urban United States), it is possible to identify some parallels between the proposals of governance models from Latin America and the United States. These significant points of convergence are productive building blocks for the construction of more generalizable models of urban governance and planning in cities with democratic regimes in the Americas and beyond. The article situates coalition and network politics at the center of urban planning and governance reform, suggesting that regime theory and associationism can be instrumental at analyzing the status of civic capacity of urban communities, pinpointing the flows of the what, how, and who of coalitions.

Furthermore, these points of convergence between models of governance from Latin America and the United States achieve a more powerful and productive status as analytical and action tools through their synthesis in, and reinforcement of, the notion of communicative action (CA) in planning theory and practice. Thus, communicative action can be synergistically strengthened by the contributions of regime theory and associationism to further develop theories, tools, and processes to design, guide, and evaluate more democratic, equitable, and efficient urban governance and planning experiences.

Models of Governance from Latin America

The process of planning and managing cities in Latin America has not been a monopoly of the formal institutions of government. Rather, forces that are considered to be "outside" the formal public policy process exert an indelible impact on the morphology and development of urban centers in Latin America and the Third World (Castells, 1983; Turner, 1990; and others). Currently many groups, particularly the poor, shape the form and function of cities outside the formal structures of the states. The failure to acknowledge and accommodate—i.e., take advantage of—this structural fact has been a major cause of the continuation and exacerbation

of the disfunctions permeating Third World cities. By the 1990s, the failure of the state to lead urban development became more evident:

It is not simply the breakdown of public infrastructure, service deterioration, or managerial inefficiency which epitomizes this failure. It is the remarkable resilience of non-state agencies to challenge the monopoly of state institutions in shaping the character of cities today . . . In most Third World cities, Latin Americans included, the bulk of housing, transportation, employment and trade takes place outside formal state institutions (McCarney et al., 1995, pp. 100-2).

This situation requires that the cities' governance regimes be extremely ingenious in surmounting economic, fiscal, and political problems by devising appropriate, inclusive means of urban management.

Facing this condition, the notion of governance can be "a helpful analytical construct which can be used to rectify this anomaly," given the fact that it allows strong recognition and inclusion of institutions outside the state. In fact, in Latin America, no longer is everything expected from an all-powerful government, nor from any one development organization: "The change in attitude towards social organizations, the supportive role of NGOs, the evolving decentralization context, and the strengthening of local governments, foretell a more complex structure" of relations between society and government (117).

With respect to urban theory, in Latin America there has always been a creative transformation of the models generated in the North. Some authors call this process 'syncretism', i.e., "the creative metamorphosis of old forms into new ones, the transposition of universal theories and concepts into locally relevant forms of understanding, and the rendering of ahistorical frameworks into concrete forms of explanation" adjusted to the Latin American reality (Calderón et al., 1992, p. 35). The combination of shifting trends in governance, information technology, ideas and practices about collaboration in societal domains, globalization, transnationalism, and other unfolding phenomena in the current world are significant and ubiquitous enough to influence political action in Latin America. Moreover, as those trends seem "broadly convergent [in the Latin American continent], then the chances of seeing a strengthened new political model emerge are quite significant." Some Latin Americanists propose the 'associative network' as the central concept of that urban governance model (Chalmers et al., 1997, p. 563).

Chalmers et al. use the term 'associative' to mean the way in which these structures of representation² arise out of, and rest on, purposive, non-hierarchical 'acts of association'. Associating or 'associationism' is both distinct from, and historically parallel to, the two major principles of modern social and political organization—'hierarchies', with their relations of authority and dependency; and 'markets', with their faceless competition among atomized agents. In this model, the term 'network' characterizes a purposeful interconnectedness of social groups that shape public decisions and policy, without making assumptions about the nature of the norms guiding the participants's interactions. A working definition of ANs is then "non-hierarchical structures formed through decisions by multiple actors who come together to shape public policy" (567). While ANs connect segments of society with the state, "the growth of associative networks is not the 'growth of civil society', but the growth of its connections with the state" (9).³

The norms of ANs are "a combination of flexible adaptation induced by sheer pragmatism together with the possibility of a more 'discursive' or 'deliberative' democracy" (564).⁴ The form of any single AN is likely to be characterized by a diversity of organizations, individuals, and other participants. In addition, any particular network is likely to be reconfigured over time as issues, decision-making rules, participants, and opportunities change. Most importantly, the network entails strong emphasis on 'cognitive politics', involving debate and discussion of preferences, understandings, and claims. In this latter aspect, the AN model resembles

'communicative action' planning theory.⁵ Finally, there is a characteristic of ANs that is of particular relevance in the context of the Third World: while ANs can and often do involve actors with sharply unequal resources, there are typically more chances to avoid a direct test of strength with an unequal competitor, due to

the lesser importance of rigid, hierarchical authority relations (compared with party or corporatist forms); shifting and multiple patterns of identity (compared with clientelism and populism); and the more open-ended character of cognitive politics. This results not so much in more equality as less rigid inequality among the participants (8).

Unlike the pluralist model of competition among interest groups and demand-making on the state through pressure politics, the type of interaction found within an AN involves state and societal actors engaging in cognitive processes that can lead to the redefinition of interests. In ANs, the challenging task for any group or individual is to define or reshape its identity and goals and, through interaction with others, come to collective decisions. According to Chalmers et al., the practical implications of this urban governance model can entail progress on three dimensions: establishing relatively stable and effective government; helping overcome the drastic inequalities in Latin America; and building spaces for effective participation. The requirements that need to be met so that this model can promote stability, redistributive justice, and democratic participation are the following:

(a) organizations and procedures that coordinate the multiple decision centers and constantly changing networks, (b) a framework of rights that makes participation in associative networks possible, and (c) popular sector strategies that make the most of the opportunities and avoid the pitfalls of the new form (577).

Some of these reforms can be achieved by legislation, but its full realization depends on changing values, norms, and beliefs—i.e. changing traditions and producing new types of dilemmas and contests—among citizens and government and planning officials. While these are great challenges, some current Latin American examples show that such governance transformations are possible. For instance, new experiences of participatory urban planning are facilitated by new, enabling legal frameworks brought about, to a significant extent, by the struggle of social movements striving to democratize governance at the local level. Such participation, in turn, has contributed—to different extents—to undermine clientelism, patronage, neo-populism, and other practices of hegemonic politics, and to weaken technocratic planning. The experience of the Participatory Budget in Porto Alegre, Brazil, is an example of this (Fedozzi, 1997). Other planning efforts include cities that have recently drafted—or reviewed—"strategic plans," e.g., Bogota, Medellin, Cartagena, Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Salvador de Bahia, Recife, Santiago, Concepcion, Cordoba, Rosario, Asuncion, and Curitiba; cities implementing more participatory metropolitan or regional plans, expressed through the promotion of urban and economic transformation of the city, and public-private cooperation, e.g., San Jose, Quito, and Ciudad Guayana; cities seeking economic promotion through international city marketing campaigns, or urban renovation and revitalization of city centers, e.g., Monterrey, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Bogota, Lima, and Curitiba (Borja, 1996).

Significantly, from the political perspective, the AN notion resembles the 'governing coalition' (GC) concept of regime theory, advanced by American political scientist Stone and others. From the sociological perspective, the notion can be said to share some common roots with the concept of 'network society'⁶ detailed by Castells (1996; 1997; and 1998), and the related concept of 'network power' proposed by Booyer and Innes (2002). More on these notions follows.

Models of Governance from the United States

Urban governance in the United States has undergone significant transformations in recent decades. The regimes in US cities have coped with huge changes in their demographics, economies, and political processes (Howard et al., 1998). Many American cities have coped with regime transitions fueled by significant shifts in the base of electoral politics and a diminished stock of discretionary resources, among other factors. Conditions and responses have, of course, varied from city to city. As a result, there are a number of governance models that aim to explain the composition and functioning of the varied American urban regimes.

The *elitist* and *growth machine* models, proposed by Hunter and others (Hunter, 1953; Hollingshead, 1949; Mills, 1959; Logan and Molotch, 1987), see local political economies run by a cohesive and hierarchical private sector, and the business executives set agendas for relatively weak political actors, effectively removing alternative visions from the political arena. At the opposite side, the *pluralist* model, formulated by Dahl and others (Dahl, 1961; Banfield, 1961), highlights the strength of public leaders in bringing together mixed, diffuse, and sometimes competitive private actors. Yates' *hyperpluralist* model (Yates, 1977) sees economic diffuseness and ubiquitous political attenuation. According to this model, neither private actors nor political leaders are powerful enough to lead the urban political economy. Indeed, many analysts coincide in believing that, from the governance point of view, the greatest problem of American cities is their fragmentation, both geopolitically—division of territory, and therefore government—and ethnically, which is causing pervasive urban hyperpluralism. Cities coming from diverse political regimes—corporatists, elitists, or pluralists—and with urban forms as varied as Chicago, Philadelphia, Miami, Los Angeles, Detroit, New Orleans, or San Francisco, show evident convergent trends toward hyperpluralism (Savitch and Clayton, 1991a).⁷ Still another model, developed by Schmitter and others (Schmitter, 1977; Savitch, 1988), stresses both a unified business elite and strong political leaders, who set their own agenda. Under this *corporatist* model, both powerful private and public actors guide the political economy of a city toward particular goals.

However revealing or accurate these models are at describing certain specific urban governance experiences, the elitist, pluralist, hyperpluralist, and corporatist models can describe predominant trends within a given city, but should not be interpreted in absolute terms. Rather, they should be considered 'ideal types' that can facilitate analysis about the evolution and direction of urban governance. In any case, the intent of urban governance analysis should not be to furnish definite answers about which cities belong in what categories, but to focus on why have cities develop particular governance regimes, and to devise guidance for appropriate and effective planning and governance action in those cities (Savitch and Clayton, 1991a; Pierre, 1999).

By the mid-1980s, regime theory came to the fore, emphasizing the interdependence of public and private forces in meeting urban challenges. Associated with advocates of 'reinventing government', RT acknowledges the pluralists' and hyperpluralists' emphasis on fragmentation but seeks to bridge this condition by studying cooperation and coordination across institutional boundaries (Stone and Sanders, 1987; Stone, 1989; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). A 'regime' is defined as a set of arrangements by which the usual divisions between public and private are bridged.

Lauria claims that urban RT "appears to have gained the dominant position in the literature on local politics precisely because it dispenses with the stalled debates between elite hegemony and pluralist interest group politics, between economic determinism and political machination and between external or structural determinants and local or social construction. Rather, urban RT provides a robust conceptual framework that views these as false dualisms" (Lauria, 1997:1).

He explains that urban RT “asks how and under what conditions do different types of GCs emerge, consolidate, and become hegemonic or devolve and transform” (1-2).

Thus, RT pays attention to the problem of cooperation and co-ordination between government, business community, and the third sector or civil society (Stoker, 1995, p. 54). Urban policies are then determined by the composition of a community’s governing regime, the resources that they bring to the table, and the nature of relations among its members (Wheeler, 1998). A regime is specifically about the informal arrangements that surround and complement the formal workings of government authority. In general, urban government authority in the United States is greatly limited—by the Constitution, a deeply engrained and generalized political tradition and ethos, and the autonomy of privately owned business enterprises. The exercise of public authority is thus complex and cumbersome, and hence informal arrangements assume particular importance in urban politics. Responding to these conditions, a regime involves

an informal yet relatively stable group *with access to institutional resources* that enable it to have a sustained role in making governing decisions . . . There is no all-encompassing structure of command that guides and synchronizes everyone’s behavior. There is a purposive coordination of efforts, but it comes about informally.

Thus, “*a regime is empowering*”—i.e., it is “a means for achieving coordinated efforts that might not otherwise be realized” (Stone, 1998, p. 25; his emphasis).

In an urban governance system of weak formal authority, informal arrangements to promote cooperation are especially necessary and useful. The informal arrangements through which governing decisions are made may differ from community to community, but everywhere they are driven by “the need to encompass a wide enough scope of institutions to mobilize the resources required to make and implement governing decisions,” and “the need to promote enough cooperation and coordination for the diverse participants to reach decisions and sustain action in support of those decisions” (27). Cooperation, however, is usually achieved at significant costs. Some costs are the resources expended in promoting cooperation—i.e., the particularistic benefits or “side payments” to each of the partners in the coalition (Savitch and Clayton, 1991b). In addition, achieving cooperation requires commitment to a set of relationships, and those commitments limit independence. If relationships are to be maintained, they need to be nurtured, even through sacrifices to avoid alienating allies. Forming coalitions is thus difficult, and community actors are not always willing to pay the costs. Because centrifugal tendencies are always strong, achieving cooperation is a major accomplishment and requires constant effort and selective incentives. There is no single formula for bringing institutional sectors into fostering cooperation.

Governance through informal arrangements is about how some forms of coordination of effort prevail over others. It is about mobilizing efforts to cope and to adapt; it is not about absolute control” (Stone, 1998, p. 26). For Stone, the proposed model of RT might be called *the social-production model*—‘power to’ rather than ‘power over’—as differentiated from conventional models of urban politics based on *social control* (with both elitist and pluralist variants). The social-production model is “based on the question of how, in a world of limited and dispersed power, actors work together across institutional lines to produce a capacity to govern and to bring about publicly significant results.” Research on urban regimes thus focuses on the study of “who cooperates and how their cooperation is achieved across institutional sectors of community life. Further, it is an examination of how that cooperation is maintained when confronted with an ongoing process of social change, a continuing influx of new actors, and potential break-downs through conflict or indifference” (28-9).

Extensive research on RT has identified several of its weaknesses. For instance, Lauria suggests the following flows of urban RT:⁸ 1) urban RT under-theorizes the connections between

economic and political agents and their wider institutional contexts; 2) it inadequately conceptualizes scale, underestimating the value of extrametropolitan spaces; 3) it tends to be tied to causal relations based on rational choice theory, instead of being open to causality based on more than individual rational actions; and 4) it inadequately theorizes capitalism, aside from the division between state and market (Lauria, 1997, pp. 7-8). Leo emphasizes the first point, namely, that RT needs a reevaluation in light of national and global contexts to understand local politics within “complex intergovernmental patterns of social production” (Leo, 1997, p. 95). He suggests that instead of regimes, it may prove more useful to think of combinations of local, regional, national, and global coalitions constituted to address different sets of policy concerns. His suggestion resembles the approach of ANs. Generally, in Latin American urban politics, the role of the supralocal government levels in urban politics is much more significant than in the US, and this condition may have facilitated the inclusion of those levels in associationist theorizing. Similarly, as there is typically greater vulnerability to global pressures in Latin American cities, the global context is usually also taken into account more explicitly when analyzing urban governance. For Stoker, if RT overcomes the traps of localisms and ethnocentric assumptions, it can provide a productive framework for urban governance analysis in other countries, and for cross-national comparisons (Stoker, 1995).

Partially responding to Lauria’s observations, Cox suggests that urban RT would benefit from strengthening two areas (Cox, 1997):⁹ 1) the mechanisms of cooperation: what are the ways in which cooperation across the public-private divide can be promoted? According to Cox, cooperation has been assumed rather than understood in RT. 2) The role of space. A number of agents with stakes in local development have place-dependent social relations. These relations are variable in their spatial reach and cannot be reduced to a local government jurisdiction. Space “remains something of a backdrop to the analysis rather than a set of relations that is actively mobilized by agents, which perhaps constrains them, and which they actively construct” (105-6). For Cox, “the spatial relation is a condition for mechanisms of cooperation” (106). The spatial relations of agents with interests in local economic development are of ‘local dependence’ (Cox and Mair, 1988)—i.e., agents of GCs have various place-based social relations that limit their spatial alternatives to particular local or regional economies. For example, local governments depend on a local tax base, and developers tend to be locked in to particular markets due to local knowledge and reputation. In addition to place-dependent social relations, structures of cooperation such as relations of trust can lock agents in to particular local arenas, so that locality-specific rules regulating exchanges can become local competitive advantages in-and-of-themselves.

Another aspect in need of strengthening in RT is a developing framework to explain regime continuity and change (Stoker, 1995).

Saving the aforementioned differences in scope, the term ‘GC’ can be equated to the term ‘AN’ from the Latin American model. They both make the notion of regime concrete. They emphasize the notion that informal arrangements are formed and maintained by a core group who come together in making important decisions. ‘Governing’, as used in ‘GC’, does not mean command-and-control ruling. In studying both GCs and/or ANs in the US or Latin America, basic research questions are *who* makes up the GC or network, *how* is the coming together accomplished, and *what* are the consequences of the who and how. Coalitions and networks conform urban regimes to shape policy, but they do not do so by themselves. Regimes or ANs are the mediating agents between the fluxing pressures of extralocal forces and urban circumstances, and the making of urban policy.

Both in Latin American and American cities, the importance of flexible ‘networking’ at the local level in the absence of a fixed locus of urban governance power, greatly determines the ability of ‘GCs’ or ‘ANs’ to effectively respond to urban challenges. Thus, the overall

characteristics of ANs proposed for Latin America—i.e., diversity, constant reconfiguration, emphasis on cognitive politics, and lesser prominence of rigid hierarchies—are also the features that describe effective GCs in the United States.

How Do These Models Inform Planning?: The Communicative Action Approach

How can these aforementioned urban governance models inform theory and practice of physical planning and urban design? And conversely, how can new urban planning and design mechanisms be developed to enhance urban governance? As a basic prerequisite, an urban planning approach based on governance notions of ANs or GCs ought to facilitate the incorporation of all stakeholders in the processes of urban planning, design, and development, and to transcend technocratic modes of planning and managing (McCarney et al., 1995). There are a number of strategies that may be of use. Encompassing a number of interdisciplinary contributions, the 'communicative action' perspective suggests specific ways in which successful planning processes—based on the associationist or regime governance models discussed—can be developed.

Building upon cooperation and coordination, the CA school of planning theory emerged in the 1990s emphasizing the transformative nature of social processes and interactions within urban and regional planning processes (Innes, 1992, 1995; Forester, 1993; Godschalk, 1992). This perspective, based on the work of philosopher Jürgen Habermas, focuses on the notion that carefully designed, participatory processes involving multiple stakeholders can help create consensus on critical social problems and foster the political will to bring about change (Wheeler, 1997).¹⁰ Theoretical planning philosophies of social learning and social mobilization (Friedmann, 1987) are closely allied with this perspective, as are social science theories of cooperative action (e.g. Axelrod, 1984), and cooperative management of common pool resources (Ostrom, 1990). In addition, Warren (1992) has made a number of detailed suggestions regarding how cooperative structures of urban governance can be nurtured,¹¹ and Putnam (1993) believes that planners and government officials can contribute to the enhancement of social capital.¹²

Today, one of the biggest challenges facing planning is to articulate a common understanding of social problems in a world of multiple, divergent cultures. In support of CA, Healey and others regard scientific rationalism, moral idealism, pure relativism, and democratic socialism as all insufficient or inappropriate to address this challenge. As an alternative, Healey turns to Habermas' 'intersubjective reasoning' (Healey, 1996; Campbell and Fainstein, 1996). This does not make the task any easier. For a process to be 'communicatively rational', a number of conditions laid out by Habermas must be met: All stakeholders must be involved, they must be empowered and competent, and 'ideal speech conditions' must be approximated. That is, within the content of the communication there must be no domination by any party, participants must put aside all motives except that of reaching agreement, and criteria of comprehensibility, truth, rightness, and sincerity must be present (Sager, 1993). The parties must also have equivalent degrees of communicative competence, and not be hindered by deception, self-deception, or strategic interaction (Dryzek, 1987). Needless to say, bringing about these conditions is a major, if not an altogether utopian task, and in any given situation the conditions can be only approximated.

By redefining theories of associative and deliberative democracy through a critical theory approach, Young proposes norms and conditions of inclusive democratic communication under circumstances of structural inequalities and cultural differences (Young, 2000). Her work can also effectively enhance CA. It is still to be demonstrated in practice, however, that CA universally demands the inclusion of, an openness to, the 'others'. It is a difficult standard to accomplish, yet the success of CA would remain questionable inasmuch as "the concrete differences of

marginalized persons are ignored or erased by the public realm of discourse” (Sim, 1999, p. 213).

Despite the difficulties, consensus-based participatory planning, Healy argues, offers one potential mechanism for overcoming the grid-locked political situation common in many metropolitan regions, both North and South, by fostering democratic debate. Expanding of the CA model, Innes and Booher have connected the theory of deliberative democracy with network-based policy-making for a new paradigm of public participation within collaborative planning institutions. ‘The collaborative model’, as they call it, claims that “planning should be done through face-to-face dialogue among those who have interests in the outcomes, or stakeholders” (Innes and Booher, 2000, p. 18). They reach results “not by argument, but by cooperative scenario building, role playing and bricolage—piecing together the ideas, information and experiences all members have to create new strategies” (19).

CA planning theory shares some fundamental similarities with both the ANs and regime urban governance models presented above. These latter models, however, are more concerned with power relationships, institutional and political arrangements (both formal and informal) that reflect those relationships, and alternative ‘regimes’ or ‘networks’ between different groups that can lead to different results. Communicative planning theory, on the other hand, is more grounded in philosophical theory (e.g., Habermas’), and is more concerned with the processes of planning and social learning. In fact, communicative theorists have been criticized for not considering power relationships sufficiently, focusing on processes instead (Wheeler, 1998). Thus, there is a great potential for complementarity between the ANs and regime governance models and CA in planning.

One significant dimension that has been overly dismissed by the theorists of both RT and ANs, on the one hand, and of CA, on the other hand, is the one that refers to the different spatialities involved. In particular, the theory of CA has been criticized for being a “grand theory” (Giddens, 1985) that “pays no attention to the significance of webs of difference and connection over space” (Gregory, 2000, p. 132). In the real, everyday worlds of urban power/knowledge struggles, ideal speech conditions do not exist. Based on this circumstance, participants in urban planning and governance processes should strive to openly and explicitly acknowledge, account for, and redress social and spatial inequalities, and devise some mechanisms to strive for equity, particularly through the leveling of speech conditions among different stakeholders.

In the intersection of urban governance and planning, there are at least four fundamental issues that theoretical and analytical models need to address—power, knowledge, space, and subjectivity. In the following paragraphs, I summarize the differential conceptions that ANs, RT, and CA have of power, knowledge, space, and subjectivity. I also distinguish the most relevant contribution(s) of RT and AN to CA, and suggest aspects that remain weak in these three models, which could benefit from further research for the definition of more robust models of urban governance and planning.

Power. In AN, power is diffused, generated through ‘cognitive politics’ based on cognitive exchanges (debates on preferences, positions, and claims). In RT, power is also diffused, following the social production model: ‘power to’ rather than ‘power over’. Pre-emptive power or social production power, the contribution of RT, is the capacity to provide leadership and build and maintain a long-term coalition, i.e., a regime, that enable tasks to be done. Regimes pre-empt the leadership role in their communities (Stoker, 1995).¹³ Similarly, in CA power is diffused, ideally leveled off through equitable speech conditions. The collaborative planning model (derived from CA) advocates the ‘network power’ concept: power grows as players build on their interdependencies to create new syntheses (Booher and Innes, 2002).¹⁴

Among the potential contributions of RT and AN to CA in the area of power are a greater acknowledgment of power; better accounting for circumstances and processes in which power is constructed, maintained, and transferred among agents and institutions; and more politically sophisticated understanding of power relations—i.e., responses to the questions who makes up the GC or network, how is the coming together accomplished, and with what consequences. In addition, all three models may benefit from research to broaden understanding of governance that articulates other components of a political economy beside the political, e.g., theorize connections between economic and political agents, and between local and extralocal agents. Additional research could focus on developing frameworks to explain regime continuity and change.

Knowledge. In AN, knowledge is diffused, constructed and reconstructed in the processes of networking between civil society and the state. Hence, knowledge is a product of cognitive politics within discursive or deliberative democratic processes. In RT, knowledge is also diffused, constructed in processes of cooperation and coordination across institutional boundaries. Political resources are expended in coping, adapting, and promoting cooperation, but the emphasis is not as much on discursive power as in AN. One of the dilemmas of regimes that concern knowledge posits social learning vs. the defense of privilege for businesses and elites. This trade-off can have profound impacts on social inclusivity and democracy.¹⁵ In CA, there is a greater focus placed on knowledge. Knowledge—understood as innovation, new heuristics, and shared meanings and identities—is produced by the conditions enabling network power: diversity and interdependency of agents, and authentic dialogue (Booher and Innes, 2002).¹⁶ Finally, CA offers the potential for the production of “emancipatory knowledge” through processes in which the stakeholders side with the oppressed and/or let the oppressed speak for themselves, therefore challenging the status quo (Habermas, 1981).

Among the potential contributions of RT and AN to CA in the area of knowledge is the complementarity between the focus of AN and RT on power (knowledge is seen as a product of power relations) and CA on knowledge. Further research would be needed for the reinforcement of the network power and emancipatory knowledge concepts through theoretical and empirical studies, and the working out of new syntheses and synergies with other theories that supplement RT, AS, or CA weaknesses (e.g., with regulation theory for the governance of production and consumption systems,). Additional research could focus on developing frameworks to explain mechanisms of cooperation at the intersection of power, knowledge, space, and subjectivity.

Space. In AN, the space encompasses the nation-state, whereas in the case of RT, it is urban/local focused. In both cases, space is only the backdrop of the analysis rather than socially constructed. In CA, there is no account of space either, yet CA processes demand the inclusion of all process-related stakeholders, and in that sense, space is assumed as the one occupied by the set of agents with linkages to the case or process at hand.

The contributions of RT to CA are the theory and analytical tools to understand the specificities of the urban governance dynamics. The contributions of AN include the acknowledgment of different levels of government: metropolitan/regional, state, and national. Further research would be needed to account for intergovernmental patterns of governance, and international and global dynamics; the spatial conditions for cooperation and the types of cooperations determined by spatial factors; and the material and discursive practices of space—i.e., questions on how is the built environment imaginatively, discursively, and physically enacted.

Subjectivity. In AN, individuals and institutions build a collective, fluxing subjectivity for the AN through cognitive politics. In RT, agent relations are based on rational choice theory. Thus, the GC is made up by the sum of individual or institutional subjectivities acting on rational self-

interested motivations. More similar to AN, in CA relations are based on an array of motivations. Stakeholders start off from but go beyond self-interest and rational choices to achieve communicative rationality and sometimes 'emancipatory rationality' (Booher and Innes, 2002).¹⁷

The contribution of RT to CA is the awareness of rational choice dynamics. The contributions of AN are a greater basis for causality and establishing relationships, and a greater awareness and importance of collective subjectivities. Further research could establish broader, more sophisticated models for causality and establishing relationships. It may further unveil and elaborate on different layers of subjectivity (individual, institutional, regime- or network-based) based on empirical cases.

Postscript

Much research has been done on models of urban governance and planning in the US, and thus many defining features, strengths, and weaknesses of both regime theory and communicative action have been extensively exposed. Much less research, at least available in the English language, has been done regarding the model of associative networks, and addressing this unbalance would be necessary to make these model comparisons more robust. However, this article has identified relevant similarities and complementarities that suggest rich opportunities for cross-fertilization. Indeed, despite the pitfalls and differences among these models, there would be promising possibilities if the two approaches—the governance models of RT and ANs on the one hand, and the planning model of CA on the other—were to complement each other for more encompassing tools of both theoretical and methodological political analysis and for richer and more productive planning and governance models of practice. In addition, the thickening of these theories by the redressing of their current flows—and particularly their a-spatial frameworks—offers the potential to be a vast and productive area of research, and a promising tool for the enhancement of urban governance and planning practices in Latin America, the United States, and beyond.

As coalition and network politics are at the center of urban planning and governance practices in Latin America and the US, RT and ANs can be instrumental at analyzing the status of civic capacity of urban communities and formulating productive reform. Simultaneously, CA can be synergistically strengthened by the contributions of these governance models to further develop theories, tools, and processes to design, guide, and evaluate more democratic, equitable, and efficient urban governance and planning experiences.

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1 For Bevis and Rhodes (2001b: 12), a 'tradition' is "a set of theories, narratives, and associated practices that people inherit, and that then forms the background against which they form beliefs and perform actions." A 'dilemma', on its part, "arises for people when a new belief, often itself an interpretation of an experience, stands in opposition to their existing ones thereby forcing a reconsideration of the latter." Finally, 'political contests' are the confrontations of exponents of rival political positions or traditions seeking to promote their particular sets of theories and/or policies within the context of certain laws and norms. Political contests may lead to reforms of government—reforms that stand as contingent products of contests over meanings (which in turn reflect different traditions and dilemmas).

2 According to Chalmers et al., a structure of representation is "a set of actors that are linked to decision making centers through an ensemble of procedures and organizations in which bargaining *and* cognitive exchanges occur, influencing the policies adopted by that center" (1997: 565; their emphasis). Here, 'cognitive exchanges' mainly refer to social learning and communication.

3 A robust associational life has been considered a cornerstone of democracy since Tocqueville. However, different types of associations have different effects on democracy, either supporting or destructing to various degrees democratic citizenship, public deliberation, voice and representation, and varied forms of governance. When studying the associative networks's connections with the state, attention should be granted to the what, how, and why of the effects of networks on democracy. Similarly, the potential trade-offs within ANs should be also analyzed—e.g., internal solidarity can hinder stakeholders's dissent and deliberation, even when enhancing public deliberation (Warren, 2001).

4 As their counterpart theorists in the North, Latin Americanists are influenced by the work of Dryzek, Habermas, Mansbridge, Sabel, and others. From Chalmers et al.'s ANs, the theory has evolved and expanded more amongst theorists in the North—Dryzek, Hirst, and Young. Their contributions to the concept of networks and associations can be captured in the theories of associative democracy and deliberative democracy. Although both associative and deliberative democracy have much in common, the associative democracy has more of a focus on the role of networks and associations in the political structure, whereas deliberative democracy focuses more on the art of deliberation and communication among groups. The theory of associationism could take either the focus of communication amongst groups by deepening the analysis with the theory of deliberative democracy, in which case it could rely on communicative action; or it can focus more on the systemic view of associative democracy.

5 This appreciation is further elaborated in the following section.

6 The 'network society' is a concept at a global level of analysis that explains the disjunction between the local and the global society, and the different spatio-temporal frames between power and experience. In Castells's words, the network society is "the specific social structure, associated with, but not determined by, the rise of the informational paradigm" (1998: 239). Current societies, then, seem to be constituted by "the interaction between the 'net' and the 'self,' between the network society and the power of identity" (352). The concept is brought to bear in the present discussion because global forces greatly influence and are reflected in governance experiences at the local level, where the importance of flexible 'networking' in the absence of a fixed locus of power greatly determines the ability of GCs or ANs to effectively respond to urban challenges. In effect, one of the biggest challenges to urban governance and planning in our world is to cope with the new and changing requirements and demands of the informational mode of development, and accordingly transform the traditional modes of urban governance and planning.

7 For many analysts, political instability and fragmentation that lead toward pluralist or hyperpluralist urban environments are a legacy of the *postmachine era* in many cities in the United States (Ferman, 1998).

8 Lauria's provocative article and edited book (1997) is devoted to suggest the reconstruction of urban regime theory through cross-fertilization with regulation theory for the understanding of urban politics in a global economy.

9 Cox also discusses the question of the public-private divide, but the issue falls beyond the scope of this article.

10 Habermas's theory of CA is based on speech-act philosophy, sociolinguistics, and the anti-positivistic concept of conversational implicature, which refers to what is implied in the rich context of speech as opposed to the same words in a written sentence (Sim, 1999).

11 Warren recommends incorporating private firms as well as nonprofit and voluntary organizations

as participants in urban problem-solving, fostering democratic and functional structures at neighborhood levels, and legitimizing diverse opportunities for open, nonhierarchical collective action (Warren, 1992).

12 Robert Putnam defines social capital as the “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (1995: 67; see also Putnam, 1993a and 1993b).

13 According to Stoker, there are at least three other forms of power in urban politics: 1) systemic power, available to agents of certain socioeconomic status; 2) command or social control, exercise to achieve domination over other interests; and 3) coalition power, involving actors seeking to bargain on the basis of their autonomous strengths (relatively unstable).

14 Network power, Booher and Innes argue, is the most effective power for the informational age. Network power “emerges as diverse participants in a network focus on a common task and develop shared meanings and common heuristics that guide their actions . . . In the process, innovations and novel responses to environmental stresses can emerge . . . Power is a jointly held resource enabling networked agencies or individuals to accomplish things they could not otherwise . . . The choices available to individual agencies or interest groups as a result of participating in such collaborations can be wider and often more attractive than what they can gain through more traditional power struggles or maneuvering” (Booher and Innes, 2002: 225-6).

15 In the words of Stone, “the greater the privilege being protected, the less incentive to understand and act on behalf of the community in its entirety . . . Thus, to the extent that urban regimes safeguard special privileges at the expense of social learning, democracy is weakened” (Stone, 1998: 38, 40).

16 Booher and Innes explain that diversity should be “consistent with the full range of interests and knowledge relevant to the issues at hand.” Agents must recognize their interdependence and “be in a situation in which their ability to fulfill their interests depends on each other’s actions.” Lastly, for authentic dialogue to exist, “[t]he communication flowing through the network must be both accurate and trusted by participants” and they must “have discourse in which all are empowered and informed and in which sincerity, legitimacy, and accuracy of what people say can be judged” (Booher and Innes, 2002: 226).

17 Linked with Habermasian concept of emancipatory knowledge, emancipatory rationality goes beyond practical rationality through dialogues among diverse stakeholders that produce not only practical results, but also are more likely to “see the beyond the accepted rationalizations in a society and the assumptions that interfere with insights” (Booher and Innes, 2002: 228).

