

[DOI: 10.20472/IAC.2019.049.040](https://doi.org/10.20472/IAC.2019.049.040)

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## **THEORY AS A TOOL TO FOCUS VALUE ATTRIBUTES IN AN URBAN PLANNING CURRICULUM: BUILDING A NEW PERSPECTIVE**

### **Abstract:**

John Friedman's comments twenty years ago about the inability to have a single understanding of theory within urban planning is as relevant today as then. Friedman (1997) refers to "production of urban habitat, the rise of civil society, and the question of power" as central to any planning theory. Simplified this refer to context, the centrality of society and decision making. This seems to provide cues of why a single understanding is maybe not ideal. Each of the three elements mentioned by Friedman is varying and shifting in nature, from there the difficulty of a single appreciation of theory. Within this understanding, collaboration as a planning practice and a threshold concept also share this multidimensional nature.

This paper considers the juxtaposition of collaboration as both an urban planning construct and as a learning construct and starts to unpack a renewed understanding of collaboration as a value attribute. This is done through a diffracted (Barad, 2007) theoretical lens developed from social practice theory. The findings in this paper will focus on only the social practice conceptual framework and how collaborative learning theories are diffracted through the framework. A selection of collaborative learning theories was focussed on theorists such as Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998 and 2009; Dillenborough, 1999; Gherardi, 2000; Laurillard, 2012 and Dirkinck-Holmfeld, Hodgson, McConnell, 2012. These theories of collaboration were put in conversation (Collett, van den Berg, Verster and Bozalek, 2018) with social practice theory to obtain attributes of collaboration that are shared by social practice and collaborative planning education.

Throughout the theoretical exploration, the focus is shifted from collaboration as a professional skill (doing) to a professional value (being).

In conclusion, it is clear that a renewed understanding of collaboration as both a planning construct and a learning construct also necessitates a fresh consideration and interpretation of theories in both these domains.

### **Keywords:**

collaborative learning, social practice theory, professional value attributes, urban planning curriculum

**JEL Classification:** I23