

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE POSSIBILITY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF  
FORMULATING PLANNING THEORY, IN TERMS OF SYSTEMATIC  
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAPTER I. PLANNING THEORY AND ITS CONCEPTUAL PHASE . . .	3
CHAPTER II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE TENDENCY TOWARD SYSTEMATIC FORMULATION . . . . .	8
A. Analysis of the changing views on the subject matter of planning . . . . .	9
B. Analysis of the changing views on the planning process . . . . .	12
C. Recognition of the need for systematic frameworks . . . . .	16
CHAPTER III. LOGICAL COMPONENTS AND FUNCTIONS OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS . . . . .	22
A. What is a conceptual framework? . . . . .	22
B. Logical components . . . . .	24
C. Logical functions . . . . .	30
CHAPTER IV. CLARIFICATION OF THE MEANING OF SYSTEMATIC FRAMEWORKS . . . . .	36
A. Partial understanding of the nature of systematic frameworks . . . . .	37
B. The levels of systematization . . . . .	39
C. The possibility of systematic formulation . . . . .	44
CHAPTER V. SIGNIFICANCE OF SYSTEMATIC FRAMEWORKS FOR PLANNING THEORY . . . . .	49
A. Logical significance . . . . .	53
B. Orientational significance . . . . .	55
C. Methodological significance . . . . .	57
CONCLUDING REMARK . . . . .	60
NOTES . . . . .	61
REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	66
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	

## INTRODUCTION

The idea of formulating planning theory through the use of "systematic conceptual frameworks" has been proposed by several planning theorists in their works<sup>1</sup>. However, the meaning of "systematic conceptual frameworks" as revealed in their writings is apparently far from clear. And its value for planning theory is, consequently, still up to further investigation. With this understanding, the main effort of this paper is thus directed toward a methodological clarification of the meaning of "systematic conceptual frameworks" and a proper evaluation of such a concept for the prospect of planning theory. This study is divided into three related approaches:

- a. To point out the implied but vague conceptions of "systematic frameworks" in various works on planning.
- b. To clarify the meaning of "systematic frameworks" in terms of logical components and functions.
- c. To investigate the significance of "systematic frameworks," after clarification, for the prospect of planning theory as a body of theoretical knowledge which undergoes different stages and levels of development.

The body of this paper falls into five chapters. The first chapter describes the situation planning theory is facing today and explains briefly why a methodological approach to the conceptual phase of planning theory is needed. The second chapter is devoted to identifying the tendency towards a systematic formulation of theories in the growing literature on planning. The third chapter is an analysis of component elements and logical functions

of conceptual frameworks. The fourth chapter takes up the problem of the clarification of the meaning of systematic frameworks at the present stage of planning theory. Finally, the fifth chapter is a full evaluation of the significance of systematic frameworks for planning theory as a developing method for gaining relevant theoretical knowledge. The scope of this study is confined to the conceptual aspect of those theoretical works, articles or books, intended as positive (not prescriptive or a rational model) approaches to the study and analysis of practical planning behavior. Specifically, relative emphasis is on the work of three authors, J. Friedmann, R. Bolan and Y. Dror. The primary method used is a theoretical analysis of methodological implications in works or studies relevant to this study.