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A Lacanian understanding of the southern planning theorists' identification under the hegemony of western philosophy

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As a planning theorist who has studied and taught planning theory in the Global South and North, I grapple with the question – 'What does planning theory mean in the Global South?' To answer this question, I ontologically investigate the meaning of Southern planning theory based on a Lacanian approach. Drawing on the Lacanian theory of human subjectivity, this article explains how planning theorists' identities are constituted through their interactions within academia. Lacanian discourse theory assists in exploring how most Southern planning theorists adopt, internalise, and use hegemonic Western philosophy, ideas, and discourses as the only accepted mechanism of truth. Consequently, this process profoundly alienates Southern planning theorists from their local context, as they often devalue, overlook, and neglect non-Western beliefs, ideas, knowledge, and philosophy. I argue that although the number of Southern planning theorists has increased during the last decades, non-Western philosophy is seldom utilised as the core of their critical studies. Based on the Lacanian discourse theory, I show that they mostly remain in the hegemonic mechanism of knowledge production that is embedded in the colonial era.

Keywords: Colonialism, Decoloniality, Lacanian discourse theory, Southern planning theory

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Introduction

This article reflects my personal experience as a non-Euro-American planning theorist who has studied and taught planning theory in the Global South and then the Global North. During my study of planning in Iran, planning theory courses mainly focused on Western philosophy and thinkers rather than Iranian. However, historic Iranian cities were developed according to certain principles and regulations that were informed by local philosophy and ideas and planning clearly has a longer history than that of industrial capitalism in the West. The neglect of local philosophy and ideas in Iranian planning courses has been justified on the premise that the 'planning discipline is the invention of the West to address contemporary issues; thus, we should merely focus on Western ideas. Iranian ideas are irrelevant to planning.' Several famous thinkers, scholars, and planners such as Foucault (1980), Hall (2007), and Friedmann (1987), among others, have promoted this understanding of planning. I came to realise that the hegemony of Western philosophy in planning theory is not limited to Iran – it is a global phenomenon. As Winkler (2018, p.592) points out, '[T]he philosophical lenses and the methods we use to collect, analyse, synthesise and interpret our research findings remain rooted, whether knowingly or not, in Western systems of thought.' Despite this, over the last decade, the number of publications on planning theory in the Global South has increased significantly (De Satgé & Watson, 2018; Roy, 2011), with most Southern planning theorists and others criticising the role of planning in the Global South as being an instrument of colonialisation, Westernisation, and neoliberalisation (Njoh, 2010; Porter, 2010; Yiftachel, 2000).

I have been asked several times, 'Why do you work within planning theory? Since philosophy and theory emanate from the North, it is not relevant to the South.' As a Southern planning theorist, I am acutely aware of my own position as a normalised subject whose knowledge of planning has been shaped based on Western philosophy and ideas. Winkler (2018, p.592) argues that 'our privileged education, whether obtained in the Global North or South, effectively socialises us as Western thinkers'. I struggle with what it means to be a Southern planning theorist and how to 'engage in a process of claiming an existence defined by a sense of being true to oneself and not having to continually seek legitimation, validation, and acceptance in the eyes of the (Western) academy' (Dei, 2014, p.169). Friedmann (2008, p.131) argues that, '[F]rom the beginning, then, planning theory was being conceptualised as a bio-continental, Euro-American enterprise. And such it has remained.… [P]lanning theories are not only embedded in Euro-American planning traditions, they also suggest a way of thinking that is quite alien, to cite but one example, to Asian academic life.' The hegemony of Western philosophy and ideas is not limited to planning theory; the wider domains include, but are not limited to, philosophy and political studies (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Connell, 2014). Mahbubani (2010) in *Can Asians Think?* and Dabashi (2015) in *Can Non-Europeans Think?* reflect on,

> the naturalization of certain ways of thinking and producing knowledge that are given the name Eurocentrism … [by] devaluing the humanity of certain people by dismissing it or playing it down (even when not intentional) at the same time as highlighting and playing up European philosophy, assuming it to be universal. (Walter Mignolo, 2015, pp.x-xi)

The titles of Mahbubani and Dabashi's works were purposefully chosen to pose two questions to two groups of readers. The first question addresses non-Europeans and asks them: 'Can you think?' Western interlocutors are then asked: 'Can non-Europeans think for themselves?' (Dabashi, 2015). As Nietzsche famously put it, philosophies are narratives told from a perspective. They are the products of particular times and places, rather than timeless truths

valid for everywhere (Gunder et al., 2018). If philosophies are context and time-dependent narratives, why are non-Western ideas and narratives mostly overlooked in planning theory, particularly in the Global South? Friedmann (2008) defines three main tasks for planning theory: planning theory should evolve deeply in humanist philosophy to make clear its implications for planning practice; it should assist in the adaptation of planning practices to their real-world constraints with regard to scale, complexity, and time; and it should translate concepts and knowledge generated in other fields into the planning domain and make them accessible and useful for planning practices. From my perspective, local ideas, narratives, and terms should inform planning theory of the Global South in order to meet planning theory tasks in the context of the Global South as defined by Friedman. According to Gunder et al. (2018, p.2), '[P]lanning theories need to be contextualized and localized, as they are narratives developed in the context of particular circumstances and in response to certain concerns.' In the absence of non-Euro-American theories and under the hegemony of Western planning theories, I grapple with the question – 'What does planning theory mean in the Global South?' To answer this question, I ontologically investigate the meaning of Southern planning theory based on a Lacanian perspective.

This article also reflects and analyses my self-identification as a Southern planning theorist who has trained and worked within Western-based academia. All planning theorists' identities are constructed and constantly reshaped through their interactions within academia, including, but not limited to, the university, the wider academic society, and higher education institutions such as academic publishers. Through these interactions, planning theorists 'are socialised into planning that values (or at least gives the appearance of valuing), a core of common norms, knowledges, and practices while simultaneously being absorbed by essentially contested and intractably ambiguous intellectual discourses' (Gunder, 2004, p.299). How and why do planning theorists so often overlook non-Western philosophies and ideas? Furthermore, how does academia define, naturalise, and promote certain ways of thinking and producing knowledge in planning theory? This article will draw on the discourse theory of Jacques Lacan (2006) to propose answers to these questions and provide insight as to how planning theorists consciously and unconsciously accept and apply Euro-American theories in their investigations to become fledgling members of the planning discipline. The first section justifies the utilisation of Lacanian discourse theory. The second section reviews the concepts of the Global South and Southern Planning Theorists. The following four sections focus on Lacanian discourses. The last section provides the conclusion.

Why Lacanian Discourse Theory?

Jacques Lacan (1901–1981) was a post-Freudian psychoanalyst, philosopher, lecturer, neo-structuralist, theoretician, surrealistic poet (Sturrock, 2003), and one of the most influential intellectuals of the 20th century (Foucault, 1998; Thakur & Dickstein, 2018). Lacan developed his psychoanalytical approach based on Freud's psychological method (Evans, 2010; Homer, 2005). He investigated human self-identification as a process and conceptualised the mechanism for collecting knowledge of the self and the world, specifically through the use of language when interacting with others (Gunder, 2011; Sturrock, 2003). Lacan defined the human subject's identification as an unconscious process. 'For Lacan, the true subject is the subject of the unconscious, not to be confused with the ego, which functions in consciousness as a structure of identification' (Muller, 2000, p. 44). The subject of the unconscious significantly challenges the pre-existing dominant approaches in philosophy, such as phenomenology, which focus on human subjectivity and consciousness (Homer, 2005).

Lacan's psychological theory, particularly his definition of human subjectivity, has contributed

to individual and social studies (Dean, 2000; Elliott, 2019). The Lacan psychoanalytical approach and its subject identification has significantly influenced philosophy, sociology, anthropology, politics, and linguistics, among others (Russell, 2008). It is particularly influential in the study of post-colonialism. 'So powerful is the legacy of colonial rule that the subject of the post-colonial condition is always already somehow predetermined, somehow stamped, indeed inscribed by the colonial experience' (Jabri, 2013, p.11). Authors, including Bhabha (2004), Burman (2016), Easthope (1998), Fanon (2008 [1952]), Kouri and Skott-Myhre (2016), Spivak (1999), among others, have applied Lacanian subject identification to trace the trajectory of the post-colonial subject in their colonial and post-colonial studies. The utilisation of Lacanian theories helps in identifying how 'the system of Western coloniality has more fundamentally penetrated and shaped [colonial] and post-colonial subjectivities' (Vieira, 2019, p.154). They conclude that most anticolonial movements are entangled with Western colonial ideas and values because their actors' subjectivity is already normalised through their interactions within the colonialised social, economic, and political institutions and mechanisms.

Gunder and Hillier (2003, 2009, 2016) were the first to utilise the Lacanian psychoanalytical approach in planning theory. In 'Shaping the Planner's Ego-Ideal' (2004), Gunder explains how planners are socialised into a profession through their education process in which their identities as planners are shaped based on common norms, values, knowledge, and practices.

Discourse is at the core of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, through which Lacan investigates 'the subject as the subject of discourse' (Clarke, 2015, p.72). Lacan uses the term 'discourse' to 'stress the transindividual nature of language, the fact that speech always implies another subject, an interlocutor' (Evans, 2010, p.44). Lacan also used the term 'discourse' to investigate different social relations and 'the crucial factors through which language exercises power in human affairs' (Bracher, 1988, p.32). As a result of this investigation, he formulated four discourses: the university, the master, the hysteric, and the analyst. Brown, Atkinson, and England (2006) define these discourses as follows:

- The master's discourse refers to ascendancy, dominance, governing, and commanding;
- The university's discourse relates to education, training, and indoctrinating;
- The hysteric's discourse refers to resistance, protesting, and desiring;
- The analyst's discourse refers to analysing, transforming, or revolutionising.

Lacan's discourse 'provides an account of the intersubjective production of knowledge, and of knowing as a socially mediated act' (Campbell, 2004, p. 57). Lacan developed four algorithms to present the discourses, which provide an understanding of the connections between discourse, subjectivity, and social practice, such as planning theory from the Global South. All algorithms include four algebraic symbols: master signifier (S1), knowledge (S2), divided subject ($), and surplus enjoyment (*a*) (Evans, 2010). Lacan differentiates the four discourses from one another by changing the positions of these symbols in the algorithm. The symbols rotate through four positions: the agent is in the position of agency or dominance which defines the discourse; the other refers to whom the discourse is addressed; the product represents the by-product as the result of the interchange; and the truth is the representation of the factors underpinning, yet repressed by, agency or dominance (Olivier, 2009). Figure 1 presents the structure of the four discourses.

In Figure 1, the horizontal upper arrow is crucial to all four discourses as it shows that the desiring agent addresses the other. This movement from the agent to the other reveals the human tendency to create social connections. Nonetheless, for Lacan, 'the relationship

between agent and other is marked by a "disjunction of impossibility"' (Vanheule, 2016, p. 2) because the other never fully receives the agent's intended message. Therefore, since the other cannot respond adequately to the agent's message, Lacan does not use an arrow to connect the other back to the agent.

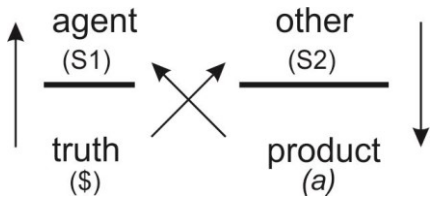

Figure 1. *The structure of the four discourses*

Lacan (2007) explains the hidden function of discourse in the lower part of the algorithm. The first position on the bottom left is the truth. Lacan uses an arrow pointing upwards to connect truth to the agent. This arrow means that truth is a repressed element that informs the agent's discourse. This repression generates the possibility of a social bond that is represented at the upper level of the formula (Vanheule, 2016). Therefore, Lacan depicts a diagonal arrow to show the effect of truth on the other. The right arrow pointing downwards shows a product that is created when the agent communicates with the other. The product stimulates the agent through 'a disjunctive position in relation to the truth that set the discourse in motion' (Vanheule, 2016, p.2). The utilisation of the Lacan discourse assists me to investigate how Southern planning theorists' identities are shaped through different social positions in academia.

Global South and Southern Planning Theorists

There are different ways of naming global social, economic, and political divisions, including 'North/South', 'centre/periphery', 'West/East', 'developed/underdeveloped', 'metropole/ colony', and 'First World/Third World'. Although these terms have their own points of reference, they all allude to the realities of profound global division, that is, 'the long-lasting pattern of inequality in power, wealth and cultural influence that grew historically out of European and North American imperialism' (Connell, 2007, p.212). Among these terms, I will apply the terms 'Global South' and 'Global North' as the centre of my argument in this article.

There is a lack of consensus around the term 'Global South' and its social, economic, political, and ideological meanings and implications. 'The notion of the global south is fluid and increasingly contested, both geographically and conceptually' (Oldfield & Parnell, 2014, p.3). Clarke (2018) argues that the term 'South' was initially suggested to replace previous terms such as developing countries or the Third World. She adds that the word 'Global' was added to 'South' under the influence of 'globalisation' discourse in the 1990s. Watson (2016) and Dados and Connell (2012), among others, argue that the definition of 'Global South' should include an entire history of colonialism and neo-imperialism, which have generated and more crucially maintained the existing social, economic, and geographical inequalities around the world. Following Connell (2007), I use the term Global South to refer to regions which have been greatly affected by hegemonic Euro-American knowledge, discourses, norms, and values. 'Those who use the word 'southern' are rarely referring to the Global South as a geographic location but rather to a critical perspective which aims to both deconstruct and reconstruct our understanding of the world everywhere' (De Satgé & Watson, 2018, p.12). Under the hegemony of Euro-American knowledge, Southern theorists, as the agents who

represent the modern world, are often 'eager participants in the formation of universalized global culture' (Meyer, 2000, p.240). Thus, they often reinforce the existing mechanism of knowledge production, which is embedded in the colonial era (Connell, 2014).

'Global South', however, is also an empty signifier lacking specific signification and concise meaning, and can accommodate a set of different and, even controversial, meanings (Gunder & Hillier, 2009). 'Global South' is also an identifying label, among others, which Lacan names 'master signifiers'. The subject's identity is constituted in wider society with a range of master signifiers such as male, planner, theorist, and Southern (Verhaeghe, 1998). Bracher (1999) argues that master signifiers include both descriptive and abstract signifiers. Master signifiers shape the subject's ego-ideal, which includes their core beliefs, values, and a sense of self-recognition of who they are, or so they believe. Master signifiers thus describe and articulate who individuals are to others, or at least how they want to be seen by others. Lacan (2006) argues that the subject's identification is an incomplete identity because there is always an inherent lack in the identification. This lack persuades people to constantly search for completeness, which shapes the human subject. 'Each abstract master signifier of identification is in turn comprised of a complex aggregate of ordered words constituting diverse narratives of contestable sets of knowledges and beliefs' (Gunder & Hillier, 2009, p.16). The term 'Southern planning theorist' is the combination of three master signifiers. Southern is a master signifier that is pervasively used to describe a group of individuals who are perceived as 'others' (Connell, 2007), and subsequently shapes the identifications of the group with a set of contested and contestable meanings which mostly normalise and more crucially internalise their historic inferiority. Gunder and Hillier (2009, 2003) investigated the role of master signifiers, such as planning, in the process of shaping planners' identities. The following sections will primarily consider the term 'Southern' to represent non-Euro-American planning theorists who often neglect local theories, ideas, and knowledge. Based on Lacanian discourses, I conceptualise the connections of Southern planning theorists within academic and non-academic institutions that constitute their individual and collective identities.

Colonialism and its Discourses of Mastery

The master's discourse is associated with self-assurance and control of others (Clarke, 2012). The absolute ruler, like the domineering parent, teacher, or colonist, must be obeyed because of who they are. 'The master's discourse is that kind of discourse which functions to organise the social field according to its "master signifier" (S1) – whether that be "empire", "masculinity", "kingship", "whiteness", "blackness", "the market", "development", or "globalisation"' (Olivier, 2009, p.28). Lacan developed the other discourses based on the discourse of the master (Schroeder, 2008); however, he developed the master's discourse drawing on Hegel's works to conceptualise the structure of the dialectic of the master and the slave (Grigg, 1993). The master is represented by the master signifier (S1) as the one who imposes order on the submissive other – slaves. This master signifier provides knowledge (S2) to the receivers – the slaves – concerning the master's wants. Yet, knowledge does not belong to the master but to those who obey (the slaves). The discourse of the master proceeds in an unconditional manner and must be obeyed on the sole authority of its enunciation (Salecl, 1994). Although the master, as a subject, is an alienated and divided subject ($) like any others, this alienation is concealed from both the master and the subordinate. 'The master is as deluded as anyone else as to the source of his own power. That is, the master may try to tell himself that he deserves to have power, but in his unconscious (which he cannot confront) he knows that this is the empty claim of a master signifier' (Schroeder, 2000, p.4). The master is not primarily interested in knowledge, but merely generates knowledge to maintain his/her position as the master (Lacan, 2007). 'I AM = I AM KNOWLEDGE = I AM THE ONE WHO KNOWS' (Ragland

1996, p.134). Once the master's discourse establishes its hegemony, other existing discourses should follow and operate under the master's discourse; otherwise, they should be eliminated. The discourse of the master works through asserting itself ruthlessly in the social field. It represses all knowledge that may reveal the inadequacy and incompleteness of the 'master' (Olivier, 2009). In this context, non-Euro-American knowledge and ideas that may challenge the hegemony of the master's discourse are aggressively omitted or marginalised (Connell, 2007; Dabashi, 2015).

Lacan believes that modernity has transformed the traditional discourse of the master, such as master and slave (Boucher, 2006). During the colonial era, the relationship between the Global North (the colonists) and the Global South (the colonised) was constructed based on the relation of master and slave from the Hegelian perspective (Teixeira, 2018). In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (2008 [1952]) argues that master-slave relations have been sustained and even reinforced since colonialism. In the post-colonial era, (S1) and (S2) constitute the totality of the structure of the new master-slave relations. If the colonial master was a paternalistic master, who functioned based on a vertical structure of power, the new structure of power is more horizontal than vertical. The colonist as the dominant agency, through its master signifiers (S1) that generate knowledge (S2), compels the individuals (slaves) to adapt themselves to the master's norms and values. 'The other [colonised/enslaved] has to sustain the master in his illusion that he is the one with the knowledge … in the Hegelian sense: it is the slave who confirms by his knowledge the position of the master' (Verhaeghe, 1995, p.27). In *Southern Theory*, Connell (2007) explains how the mechanism of knowledge and theories, which are embedded in the colonial era, has pervasively developed to sustain the hegemony of Euro-American theories (the master). The hegemony of Euro-American theories reinforces the pre-existing master/slave relations by generating new kinds of dependency (Connell, 2014). In planning, the diversity of planning practice around the world is well-recognised and debated. However, regardless of the existing diversity in practice, Watson (2014, p.23) observes that 'for many decades the intellectuals who led the field in planning theory have lived and worked in the Euro-American regions and, consciously or not, have produced ideas about planning'.

The lower lines in Figure 1 refer to the subject's unconsciousness, which is fundamental to Lacan's discourse theory. For Lacan (2006), all subjects are alienated ($) from knowing their unconscious being and desire. They never know themselves completely and cannot fully present their own self-consciousness. The master is also an alienated subject, which is the truth of the master's discourse. 'The masters' weakness is that they are unconscious of their own desire, the actual reason for asserting the master signifier (S1), for the hidden truth of the discourse is that of the divided subject' (Gunder, 2004, p.306). The discourse is vital to maintain and reinforce the master's hegemony. The subliminal function of the discourse is to conceal the master's weakness from both the master and the salve. Also, in the discourse, 'the master (S1) is the agent who puts the slave (S2) to work; the result of this work is surplus (*a)* that the master attempts to appropriate' (Evans, 2010, p.45). The object petit *a* is the 'object-cause' of the desire for an unattainable object – a surplus enjoyment. 'While the desired content (object) promises to provide pleasure, a surplus-enjoyment is gained by the very form (procedure) of pursuing the goal' (Žižek, 2017, p.9). Therefore, the failures of the master in providing the promised object do not generate discontent in the slave. The process itself produces a surplus-enjoyment at the subjective level.

In planning, the theories deployed by planners in the Global South often fail to address the issues in non-Western contexts (Njoh, 2010; Watson, 2014). Yet, Southern planners are mostly involved, and enjoy being involved, in the process of learning and then implementing

Euro-American theories in their plans and policies. Euro-American knowledge and theories are perceived as truths ($) that are essential for planners, including planning theorists from the Global South, because the master (S1) says they are, and the coloniser is the master who always knows! Southern planners and theorists, 'in obeying the master forgo jouissance as the loss of enjoyment or frustration, not to mention loss of spontaneity and creativity, produced by their obedience and conformity to the master' (Gunder, 2004, p.306). The Southern planners' enjoyment is generated through the process of learning and implementing theories and is the hidden product of the master's discourse.

Post-colonialism and its Discourses of University

'Lacan's diagnosis of modernity involves the displacement of the master by the bureaucrat' as the discourse of the university (Boucher, 2006, p.274). For Lacan, the discourse of the university is not limited to educational institutions such as universities, although they play a crucial role in this mechanism of power (Schroeder, 2008). The university discourse refers to the bureaucratic, technocratic, and scientific mechanisms of the production of knowledge, including, but not limited to, universities, publishers, and governmental and non-governmental institutions. The displacement of the master's discourse by the university discourse does not necessarily mean that power has been replaced by reason. Zupančič (2006, p.168) argues that,

> What Lacan recognizes in the university discourse is a new and reformed discourse of the master. In its elementary form, it is a discourse that is pronounced from the place of supposedly neutral knowledge, the truth of which (hidden below the bar) is power, that is, the master signifier.

Schroeder (2008, p.53) argues that 'the university's discourse is meritocracy – rule by experts who (are supposed to) deserve their position by virtue of their superior knowledge'. The agent who has the constituted knowledge (S2) has the dominant position in the university's discourse. Knowledge always creates an acceptance of dogmas and assumptions – master signifiers (S1). Lacan (2007, p.167) argues that,

> [W]hat happens between the classical master's discourse and that of the modern master … is a modification in the place of knowledge…. The fact that all-knowing has moved into the place of the master is something that does not throw light on it, but rather makes a little bit more obscure what is at issue, namely, truth … this is well and truly the S2 of the master, revealing as it does the bare bones of how things stand under the new tyranny of knowledge…. Now the sign of truth.

The other is reduced to becoming the unattainable object, the cause of desire (*a*) who intends to fully know and consequently control either natural or human objects. Although a complete understanding of the object is unattainable, the process generates enjoyment that fuels further knowledge creation (S2). The fact is that 'behind all attempts to impart an apparently 'neutral' knowledge to the other can always be located an attempt at mastery (mastery of knowledge, and domination of the other to whom this knowledge is imparted)' (Evans, 2010, p.46). Since all existing scientific and non-scientific methodologies are inherently incapable of providing full understandings of natural and social phenomena, the product of this discourse is a divided subject ($) who is alienated from their desires and interests as well as the context.

As the product of the university discourse, Southern planners and planning theorists are also alienated subjects ($), whose identities and desires are shaped and normalised within the university and academia. Academic or professional planners, like others, are often not aware of this alienation.

> The more systematic knowledge is received, the more students are transformed into 'normalized' planners, symbolically regulated by these norms, knowledges, and practices, while at the same time they become progressively more alienated from their own unconscious desires and any passionate response, or challenge, to the received 'wisdom'. (Gunder, 2004, p.307)

The alienation is more intricate in the Global South because the modern bureaucratic systems, such as governmental organisations and the mechanism of knowledge production including educational institutions and universities, were often established and developed during the colonial era. The university discourse has been predominately reinforced in the post-colonial period. The discourse progressively normalises Southern planners' identity, including planning theorists, based on the colonisers' knowledges, values, and norms (Connell, 2007) and consequently alienates them from their local interests, values, and ideas. Winkler (2018, p.589) argues that 'for most of us who are educated within privileged (or what I refer to as Western) ways of knowing, we simply cannot accept that some things will remain unknowable (unless we decolonise our minds). In fact, we are trained, and we train others, to know the text [of the hegemonic discourse]'.

Lacan suggests 'a sort of historical movement from the master's discourse to the university discourse, the university discourse providing a sort of legitimation or rationalization of the master's will' (Fink, 2018, p.33). The modern bureaucratic system normalises the subjects based on Euro-American knowledge. The intellectual hegemony of the master 'has a broad institutional underpinning, including universities but extending far beyond them into professions, governments, corporations, and communities of practice, creating in these institutions a common-sense in which other logics of knowledge seem exotic, objectionable or downright crazy' (Connell, 2014, p.218). Other knowledge that challenges the hegemony of the colonists', or masters', knowledge is perceived as irrational and full of untruthful ideas that should be eliminated from society. Universities and international publishers play crucial roles in normalising and reinforcing the hegemony of Euro-American knowledge, philosophies, and ideas in the Global South and Southern academics have often endeavoured to investigate their societies based on Euro-American hegemonic knowledge.

The colonial [master] relationship of knowledge has been increasingly institutionalised through universities and other academic institutions (Connell, 2007). The professional identity of planners is shaped and, more importantly, normalised through their interactions and socialisations within academia based on hegemonic norms, values, and discourses, or through 'the ideology of how we define and use space' (Gunder, 2010, p.299). Healey (2012, p.188) argues that

> planning concepts, techniques, instruments and the general idea of 'planning' itself flow from one place [Global North] to another [Global South], particularly in the context of the transnational flow of planning ideas. In the past, our conception of such flows was underpinned by linear and singular models of development pathways – the 'modernization' myth.

Colonialisation and the project of modernisation, or modernity, are intertwined as two sides of the same coin: 'there is no modernity without coloniality' (Mignolo, 2007, p. 476). The flow of planning ideas is not a neutral process; rather, the discourse of the university has reinforced the hegemony of the colonists, or masters in the Global South. These concepts, techniques, instruments, and the general idea shape and fortify the hegemonic discourses that 'frame the possibilities of thought, communications and action for practitioners, for participants and non-participants in planning, and for theorists' (Richardson, 2002, p. 354). In the context of South

Africa, Watson (2004, p. 253) observes that,

> Students will inevitably find themselves confronting conflicting rationalities, or different worldviews in practice and they need to be able to approach these situations with critical understanding, rather than backing off in confusion or disdain. Unexpectedly, it is often students who have grown up in conditions of poverty and/or a non-Western culture who most enthusiastically embrace mainstream and Western notions of modernization and development, and are the first to dismiss their cultures and contexts as inferior or backward.

In the Global South, planners are mostly acclimatised to hegemonic Euro-American theories, intellectual discourses, critical perspectives, and philosophical lenses within planning and wider academia (De Satgé & Watson, 2018; Friedmann, 2011) and the best practices particularly from the Global North (Healey, 2012; Njoh, 2010; Vainer, 2014). Under the influence of post-colonial studies, particularly the concept of 'borrowed urbanisms', Roy and Ong (2011) conceptualised the term 'worlding' to investigate how the Global South cities have been 'worlded' in the discourses and imaginaries of the colonial and then the post-colonial era. This acclimation is vital for Southern planners' identification and sustains and improves their position as planners in academia and wider society. Based on Lacan's works, I consider how the transnational flow of planning discourses and best practices from the Global North to the Global South shape Southern planners' identity from two different intertwined stages, namely ego-ideal and ideal ego. Lacan argues that 'the ego-ideal is a symbolic introjection, whereas the ideal ego is the source of an imaginary projection' (Evans, 2010, p.53). By using the Lacanian concepts of the ego-ideal and ideal ego, Gunder (2003, 2004) points out that new planners are socialised into a profession with a core of common norms, knowledge, and practices in the university and then in practice.

'The ego-ideal stands for what the individual wants to be. But that is not all… the subject sees himself as his parents or other significant others desire him to be' (Declercq, 2006, pp. 76-77). For Lacan, the kernel of the ego-ideal is formed through both identification and idealisation (Glowinski, Marks, & Murphy, 2001). The ego-ideal includes the main values, norms, and sense of self that the person believes and uses for self-identification and also to present themselves to others (Gunder, 2010). Universities, other educational institutions, and planning schools contribute to reshaping students' ego-ideals to become, or to be seen as, good students and later good planners. The 'relationship between the teacher and the pupil is always based on transference, that the teacher is 'the subject supposed to know' for the pupil' (Salecl, 1994, p. 168). 'Symbolic-order transferences are in place when the teacher functions primarily as an authority figure from whom the student seeks recognition, positive reinforcement, or new, more powerful, master signifiers or knowledge' (Bracher, 1988, p.133). This symbolic transference is crucial to learning about the values, norms, knowledge, and discourses in the planning discipline. When students arrive at the university, their ego already contains 'a whole organisation of certainties, beliefs, of coordinates, of references' (Lacan, 1988, p.23) based on their interactions within their local societies and communities. As Watson observes, these local norms, values, and beliefs are often different from the hegemonic values and norms of planning. In the university, 'the professor overcomes the student's intransigence through transference and interpolates new master signifiers and supporting subcodes – value and knowledge sets – that the student seeks to adopt in identifying with the educator' (Gunder, 2004). When the Southern planning student's ego-ideal is entangled with planning's pervasive signifiers (S1), norms, values, and knowledge (S2), 'the ego's defensive posture, the subject's perception of itself, of others, and the world around it is submitted to a systematic distortion [$], which is part of communication' (Jagodzinski, 2004, p.50).

De Satgé and Watson (2018, p.13) argue that 'northern dominance of the publishing industry along with journal editors, reviewers and citation systems … can work to support hegemonic theory and writing styles'. The transference occurs in the process of publishing internationally in which Southern planners, including planning theorists, often deploy dominant discourses, master signifiers, and knowledge sets (S2) as the only accepted mechanism of truth in academia (Connell, 2014). Influential academics, such as well-known thinkers, pioneer scientists, and/or theorists, significantly influence the mainstream of the discipline by offering new master signifiers (S1). These academics mostly work for the main research and educational institutions in the Global North (Connell, 2007; Dabashi, 2015). They, wrongly or rightly, act as role models (the subject who knows) for young academics, including Southern planners (*a*). Consequently, their works are referenced and quoted in academia. The international, high-ranked publishers often require a rigorous blind peer review process, in which it is usual for two assessors to evaluate the quality of a research. Authors mostly attempt to develop their argument according to the predefined framework of journals and publishers, and more importantly deploy the dominant master signifiers (S1) in their works based on the works of influential academics.

For Lacan, the ideal ego originates in the mirror stage, 'which functions as a promise of future wholeness which sustains the ego in anticipation' (Evans, 2010, p. 118). Introducing best practices to Southern planners plays an important role in reshaping their ideal ego and significantly influences their identification. During their education and work as planners, Southern planning students are constantly informed about the best international planning practices (De Satgé & Watson, 2018; Njoh, 2010; Watson, 2004). The selection of the best practices is not a neutral process; rather, it is inherently political whereby Southerners endeavour to literally imitate these ideal projects from the Global North. Vainer (2014) believes that 'constituted and legitimized in theoretical, methodological, or operational paradigms, shifting notions of 'best practice' have built and sustained universal notions of the city models, planning practices, and projects embedded in and disseminated through colonialism and globalization.' Southern planners often conform to Northern ideal practices since they are informed by evidence and scientific knowledge, and affirmed by the hegemonic discourses, norms, and values of the planning discipline. These best practices are introduced as solutions to be deployed in situations and contexts entirely different from the ones for which they were comprehended, which is absurd (Njoh, 2010). Yet, Southern planners eagerly search for new exemplars from the Global North.

The hidden product of this discourse is the divided subject ($), who is an alienated subject. Southern planners as technocrats attempt to understand their cities and local societies based on the prevalent master signifiers and norms and values in order to transform them according to the best practices in the Global North. Yet their attempts 'inevitably fail because they strive to capture and contain that which resists such capture' (M. Clarke, 2012, p.54). Therefore, they ask the subject who knows (S2) from the Global North to provide new knowledge and explanations for their local issues. The discourse of universities reinforces 'academic dependency' (Alatas, 2006), in which the attitude of Southern planners in the Global South 'is one of 'extraversion', that is, being oriented to sources of authority outside their own society' (Connell, 2014, p.211). This academic dependency is more pivotal in planning theory, as the theoretical stage of knowledge production was omitted in the Global South during colonialism (Connell, 2014).

The Hysteric's Discourse and Southern Planning Theorists

'The hysteric's discourse is the discourse of anxiety. It is the speech act of dissatisfaction and

disappointment of an alienated subject' (Hillier & Gunder, 2005, p.1058). The hysteric's discourse takes the form of a question, complaint, protest, and resistance against the discourse of the university (Bracher, 1988; Olivier, 2009), as well as the master's discourse. 'The discourse of the hysteric represents a half-turn, or 180-degree revolution, from the discourse of the university' (Clarke, 2012, p.55). The hysteric's discourse consists of an agent, a split subject ($), who is lacking something and therefore challenges master signifiers (S1). The split subject ($) is 'a manifestation of the alienation that occurs as a result of the subject's accession to language – an alienation that is suppressed in the discourses of the master and of the university, but which gains expression and dominance in the discourse of the hysteric' (Bracher, 1988, p.44). The truth is that the object petit (*a)* as the cause of desire is an object that cannot be attained. 'For the truth of the discourse of the hysteric, represented by dissatisfaction, or lost enjoyment *a*, stems from the non-coincidence of the subject and its favoured master signifiers' (Clarke, 2015, p.81). The product of the hysteric's discourse is new knowledge and affirmations (S2) that attempt to answer the hysteric, and more importantly, to maintain the position of mastery (Hillier & Gunder, 2005).

The discourse of the hysteric identifies overlooked knowledge by questioning hegemonic knowledge and its master signifiers (Clarke, 2012). Michael Gunder (2004, p.307) argues that hysterical discourse should be appreciated as it may present ethical queries, essential transformations, and creativity that are necessary 'to develop the passionate, reflective, adaptable, creative, and ethical – 'Is this fair?' – practitioner'. De Satgé and Watson (2018) point out that there has been a recent 'Southern turn' in the various fields, including urban studies, planning, sociology, and anthropology, among others, in which hysteric scholars, as divided subjects ($), have questioned the hegemony of master signifiers, inherent knowledge, norms, and values produced in the Global North such as liberal democracy and its global mechanism of truth. They argue that Southern theorists refer to the social, economic, political, and historical differences between the Global South and North that reveal the necessity of new theoretical concepts, master signifiers, and knowledge. Also, colonialism has informed the processes of knowledge production in the Global South. For example, De Satgé and Watson (2018) observe that the deployment of 'collaborative planning' as a master signifier has failed to increase local residents' participation in the process of decision making because of the deficiencies of civil society and other democratic institutions in the Global South. Winkler (2018, p.590) proclaims that 'we are excited to learn that our Southern and 'insurgent' planning initiative is drawing much interest.… Yet regardless of our purposeful embrace of planning values such as "equity" and "socio-spatial justice", we simply cannot find a way into the [Southern society]." Porter (2010) argues that the prevalent master signifiers in the planning discourse, such as state, civil society, and property ownership, are perceived as the universal truth, and any rejections will result in severe consequences.

Despite the hysteric agent's expression of alienation, Zupančič (2006, p.165) maintains that 'the truth of her or his basic complaint about the master is usually that the master is not master enough'. Lacan argues that the hysteric agent is asking for, and will get, a new master (Bracher, 1988). 'The tendency in this discourse is for the subject to seek a new master, new sources of certainty, whilst demonising the old' (M.Clarke, 2012, pp. 55-56). More importantly, the hysteric remains in solidarity with hegemonic knowledge because his/her subjectivity 'depends on there being a symbolic order of language, law, and sexuality' (Schroeder, 2000, p.200). Bracher (1988, p.45) argues that

> the receiver of the hysterical subject's message is summoned to respond by providing a master signifier, (S1), in the form of an object that will satisfy all desire, or a secure meaning that will overcome anxiety and give a sense of stable, meaningful, respectable identity.

The new master is a subject 'who knows'. According to Bracher (1988, p.45), '[M]aster signifiers covertly entail or produce a system (S2) of knowledge/belief within which the master signifiers take their bearings and assume their force, and within which the hysterical subject can thus find its stability.' Many planning theorists utilise 'cognate, northern-dominated, disciplines (urban studies, social science, economics) and … philosophical positions (Habermas, Rawls) which are shaped by a faith in Western liberal democracy as a desirable normative project' (De Satgé & Watson, 2018, p.15). Yet, hysteric Southern planners, as with other disciplines, often turn to the opposite spectrum of Global North ideas such as Marxist, post-structural, and post-colonial theories and their associated master signifiers. Southern planning theorists increasingly use post-structural and post-colonial theories to challenge 'abstract universalised theories which claim to be valid everywhere, while their highly parochial nature is not difficult to reveal' (De Satgé & Watson, 2018). The hysteric agent ($) hails the receiving master to respond with an answer that contains new knowledge (S2). However, the new master is required to communicate convincing knowledge through the dominant discourse – the university discourse. Connell (2007) argues that under colonialism, a mechanism of knowledge production developed that omitted the capability of theory production in the Global South. Consequently, the Global North has become the only source of new knowledge and theories. Hountondji (2002) argues that the colonial mechanism of knowledge production has persisted in the post-colonial era. Consequently, the attitude of intellectuals and theorists in the Global South 'is one of 'extroversion', that is, being oriented to sources of authority outside their own society' (Connell, 2014, p.211), often looking toward the Global North for new master signifiers and knowledge that can be deployed in their social contexts. Thus, hysteric Southern theorists often utilise Euro-American 'conceptual lenses' and critical perspectives, particularly Marxist, Foucauldian, or Habermasian, among others, to challenge hegemonic master signifiers, knowledge, and norms in planning and to propose new theories to define their local context (De Satgé & Watson, 2018). The quest for a new master who promises certainty also involves academic researchers and planning educators, including Southern planning theorists, who continually attack the dominant knowledge until new insights and answers emerge (Fink, 2002). The answers supplied are inherently not those sought for because the new knowledge 'is unable to produce a particular answer about the particular driving force of the object *a* at the place of truth' (Verhaeghe, 1995, p.11) that drives the hysteric agent, or planner.

Following Michael Gunder, I believe that the hysteric's discourse should be valued and appreciated in its ability to question the hegemony of the Global North and its production of planning knowledge, in particular planning theory, because the hysteric's discourse remains within the existing mechanism of knowledge production that is shaped by the Global North. This discourse, in its best capacity, may assist Southern planning theorists to develop 'critical perspectives on existing theory and practice' (De Satgé & Watson, 2018, p.24).

The Analyst's Discourse, Revolutionary Southern Planning Theory, and Decoloniality

The analyst's discourse is the inverse of the master's discourse, whereby the object petit *a* is in place of the agent and the divided subject is in the position of the other (Vanheule, 2016). The analyst's desire is to know the unconscious cause of the other's dysfunctional symptoms, which is the hidden truth beneath the agent's knowledge (S2) (Gunder, 2005). Lacan describes the analyst as the subject who should know (Schroeder, 2000). The knowledge is that the truth underlying the object petit *a* is not the analyst's own expertise and knowledge of scientific adequacy. Rather, the hidden knowledge is the analysand's own unconscious knowledge of the truth in his/her subjective position, which 'begins with an awareness of the philosophical spaces from where we think and interpret the "the world"' (Winkler, 2018, p.589). In other words, 'the agent (analyst) reduces himself to the void which provokes the subject

into confronting the truth of his desire' (Žižek, 2016, p.486). The goal of the analyst's discourse is to assist the alienated subject ($) in acquitting the irritation of the call to enjoyment.

For Lacan, the analyst's discourse is the 'one truly radical or potentially world-changing discourse' (Schroeder, 2000, p.25). Lacan maintains that to 'accomplish what truly merits the title of revolution in relation to the discourse of the Master … [the analyst should] be in a position to interrogate what there is of culture in the position of mastery' (Bracher, 1988, p.47). In the analyst's discourse, 'the subject is in a position to assume its own alienation and desire and, on the basis of that assumption, separate from the given master signifiers and produce its own, new master signifiers' (Bracher, 1988, p.45). Žižek (2016, p.495) argues that,

> The analyst's discourse stands for the emergence of revolutionary-emancipatory subjectivity that resolves the split into university and hysteria: in it, the revolutionary agent (a) addresses the subject from the position of knowledge which occupies the place of truth … and the goal is to isolate, get rid of, the master-signifier which structured the subject's (ideologico-political) unconscious.

Decoloniality has emerged and developed within the context of the Global South owing to Southern thinkers and theorists (Quijano, 2007; Tlostanova, 2019; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Decoloniality investigates 'who produces knowledge, from where, and why, and never starts with applying the established [Western-based] theories to some new post-colonial material' (Tlostanova, 2019, p.168). Decoloniality aims 'to decolonize the 'mind' and the 'imaginary,' that is, knowledge and being' (Mignolo, 2007, p.450). Mignolo (2017, p.44) argues that, 'Decolonial thinking strives to delink itself from the imposed dichotomies articulated in the West, namely the knower and the known, the subject and the object, theory and praxis.' To delink from the logic and discourse of coloniality, people utilise the local discourse, including its vocabulary and narratives. Decoloniality embeds in the local discourse, norms, and values, which inherently generates pluriversality and diversity of truth against the hegemony of Western universalism and its mechanism of truth. Although decoloniality originates in non-Western ideas, it is aligned with the analyst's discourse, as the role of the analyst is to communicate with the alienated society ($) and to analyse and introduce alternative master signifiers based on the local discourse, norms, and values.

In planning, Gunder (2005, p.102) suggests that 'this is perhaps a role for the critical theorist and hence, perhaps, that the analyst's discourse might be metaphorically one discourse for critical 'academic' research that seeks to draw out the hidden structures of ideological illusion and fantasy underlying our social reality'. The analyst's discourse provides the space for critical scrutiny which 'explicitly renounces its own rights to the determination of the structure of speech' (Clarke, 2015, p.82). The agent, the Southern planner *a*, assists the alienated society ($) to reveal its obscure desires and dysfunctional master signifiers (S1) that have been imposed by hegemonic knowledge production. 'Lacanian critique can reveal that what the subjects of a community are asking for (and perhaps think they are having) in their values, ideals, conscious desires, and identifications is not the only expression or even the most truthful embodiment of what they really want' (Bracher, 1994, p.126). The product is a new set of master signifiers shaping a new discourse which is different from the dominant discourse and its master signifiers. De Satgé and Watson (2018, p.189) argue that the Southern planning theorist should use contemporary ethnographic research which 'requires the language(s) to employ a suite of literacies in order to identify, code and interpret a range of social markers associated with relative length of stay, living circumstances and locality, employment status, type of work, access to social networks and proximity to local figures with power and influence, gender and age'. Understanding local discourse and knowledge as well as post-colonial

discourse (S2) is crucial for communicating with the colonised society as divided subjects ($). Through their interactions with the colonised society, Southern planning theorists, as analysts, should seek to identify the colonialists' master signifiers that have shaped and sustained their identity as a colonised society. Hillier and Gunder (2005, p.1063) suggest that 'operating as a Lacanian-inspired analyst of planning practice within society means trying to find its hidden essence, its unconscious fantasy, cause of desire, which operates from behind the facade of master signifiers and the entire signifying apparatus'. The analyst's discourse should potentially include 'techniques that are directly applicable to the political strategies that an organizer uses for activating political agents' (Krips, 2004, p.140). Based on the analyst's discourse, Southern planning theorists should act as analysts to introduce a new set of contestable master signifiers, narratives, interpretations, and alternative perspectives to traverse beyond the hegemonic mechanism of knowledge production that is inherited from the colonial era (Hillier & Gunder, 2005). Winkler introduces the concept of decoloniality to planning based on her planning project in South Africa. The local discourse and maser signifiers assist her 'to revision planning as an anti-colonial project that is de-linked from only Western ways of knowing, being and acting' (Winkler, 2018, p.599). Also, Winkler acts as an analyst who deconstructs the local discourse, norms, and values to suggest alternatives in planning discourse.

Conclusion

Under the influence of post-colonial studies, and more recently decoloniality, there has been a 'Southern turn' in planning and other relevant disciplines such as urban studies, geography, sociology, anthropology, and political studies over the last decade (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Connell, 2007; Dabashi, 2015; De Satgé & Watson, 2018; Edensor & Jayne, 2012; Yiftachel, 2000). Yet, Euro-American ideas, knowledge, and philosophies persist around the world in the post-colonial era as a pivotal component of the hegemony of the Global North (Hountondji, 2002). The role of the hegemonic mechanism in producing knowledge, including through educational institutions and universities, and in reinforcing and expanding the hegemony of the Global North has been thoroughly investigated in academia and planning. This mechanism of knowledge production has generated a hegemonic discourse composed of 'sets of knowledges and beliefs communicated between individuals in society via language in speech and writing' (Gunder, 2004, p.301). The hegemonic discourse is based on a set of master signifiers that encompass 'stopping points, words, terms, or phrases that create points of order out of disordered nebulous aggregations of associated knowledges, beliefs, and practices' (Fink 1998, p.38). To traverse hegemonic Euro-American knowledge production and its master's discourse, Southern planning theorists should investigate the prevalent master signifiers that shape their self-identification. This investigation should include at least two stages: self-analysis and then analysis of their societies.

The prevalent master signifiers have shaped the identifications of Southerners, including planners, and have therefore become part of their self-identification. For example, the term 'Middle East' was coined by America and Britain in the early 20th century for military-strategic interests (Bilgin, 2004). Regardless of the existing social, cultural, and ethnic diversities in the region, the residents of the region often accept and utilise this master signifier for their self-identification and distinguish themselves from others. The deployment of master signifiers such as 'Southern' reinforces the colonial hegemonic mechanism of power as Southern people, including planning theorists, are perceived as inferior. While non-Euro-American planning theorists largely rely on the Euro-American hegemonic discourse and often deploy prevalent master signifiers to frame their arguments, they mainly function within the university's discourse and the hysteric's discourse, which are embedded in the master's

discourse. Planning theorists should avoid colonial discourse, including dichotomies such as Global North/South, in their works. They should develop alternative theories based on the local discourse through their interactions with society. Alternative theories are context dependent and propound 'pluri-versality and truth and not … uni-versality and truth' (Mignolo, 2017, p.41). The conceptualisation of alternative theories fortifies the diversity of planning practice around the world.

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