

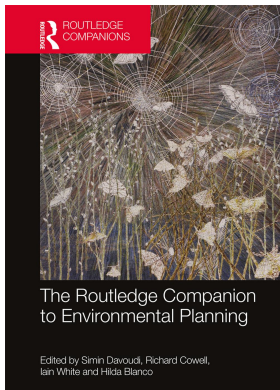
This article was downloaded by: 10.2.98.160

On: 20 Oct 2020

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



The Routledge Companion to Environmental Planning

Simin Davoudi, Richard Cowell, Iain White, Hilda Blanco

Visionary idealism in environmental planning

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315179780-5>

Michael Gunder

Published online on: 19 Aug 2019

How to cite :- Michael Gunder. 19 Aug 2019, *Visionary idealism in environmental planning from: The Routledge Companion to Environmental Planning* Routledge

Accessed on: 20 Oct 2020

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315179780-5>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: <https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms>

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Visionary idealism in environmental planning

Michael Gunder

Most people would consider it only rational to act, when it is possible to do so, in a manner that will create a better future, first for themselves, then for their family and friends, and then for their community and perhaps, if they are somewhat altruistic and/or if it does not take much effort, even for their wider society or the world itself. Of course, the devil is always in the details, and one person's better future may be considerably at odds with those of others – and that, of course, is the problem! This is particularly an issue if a person's better future is concerned with, say, the materialist things constituting collectively a successful economy versus another person's better future who is concerned about sustaining their natural environment. The tensions between these types of diverse positions is what traditionally constitutes politics and visionary idealism can often lie at the heart of this process.

The adjective 'visionary' according to the online Cambridge Dictionary (no date, no page) means 'with the ability to imagine how a country, society, industry, etc. will develop in the future'. 'Idealism' has a formal meaning derived from philosophy in which things, concepts and ideas that we sense in and about the world can only exist in the minds of the those that mediate (think) about them as mental representations (Kant, 1934). Idealism also has a more informal everyday meaning: 'the belief that your ideals can be achieved, often when this does not seem likely to others' (Cambridge Dictionary, no date, no page). Accordingly, this chapter will use the term 'visionary idealism' to mean: a belief about, and in, a mental idea (a virtual concept) that has become an ideal (a lofty aim) of what should become real (actual) in the world. Of course, visionary idealism is inherently a core dimension of all forms of spatial planning as the discipline strives to first imagine and then plan for a better future.

A term especially applicable to visionary idealism and environmental planning is ideology. An ideology is a person's discursive beliefs, views and values as to how one thinks about the world and how one wants it to become (Eagleton, 2013 [1994]). But this is seldom, if ever, purely self-determined. Rather, this is largely constructed and shaped by an individual's society via their socialisation, education and wider media influences (Gunder, 2011). Indeed, environmental planning can only operate within the scope of dominant global, national and even local ideologies that largely define planning's specific territorial purpose and powers of agency (Gunder, 2010, 2016). Consequently, both planning for a better future and the concept of visionary idealism are often entwined and entangled with ideology, especially when considering and/or

implementing a desired ideal that many people share among themselves about the future (Gunder and Hillier, 2009), as will be discussed extensively in this chapter.

For reasons of logical organisation, this chapter suggests that visionary environmental idealism is materialised in the world in three distinct but often overlapping modes, where the ideological concept of sustainability, or similar ecological concepts aligned with sustainability, are important factors underlying each of these three pathways. The first and most directly aligned with environmental planning practice is materially creating an environmentally desirable human settlement, the more sustainable of these habitations are often called 'eco-cities'. This is hardly a new task for planning; think of Ebenezer Howard's (1965 [1902]) famous *Garden cities of tomorrow* first published at the start of the last century. Current examples of eco-cities include Masdar City, Abu Dhabi, UAE or that proposed for Dongtan Eco-city, Shanghai, China (Cugurullo, 2016). Or consider this built environment materialisation occurring in more moderate form where there is contemporary planning for existing cities but in a sustainable manner so that they may achieve a reduced carbon footprint and/or enhanced urban resilience. Well known examples globally are Curitiba, Brazil (Macedo, 2013), or Freiburg, Germany (Kronsell, 2013).

Second, these ideals may be materialised through popular movements, or political parties, that attempt to democratically modify the existing largely neo-liberal capitalist world to one which has a greater environmental responsibility for biodiversity and carbon neutrality (Swyngedouw, 2010). This is perhaps most strongly personified by the popular face of many Green Parties currently contesting democratic election around the world, who advocate moderate, rather than radical, built-form practices and behaviours for carbon neutrality, climate change adaptation or urban resilience within capitalist democracies (Blühdorn, 2013). These types of moderate environmental policies have also, of course, been deployed by other elected political parties in government (Allmendinger, 2016). Further, in this regard, Swyngedouw (2010, 2015), as well as others including Allmendinger (2016), warn how sustainability has often been deployed in contemporary politics so as to de-politicise democratic practices of the traditional state and replace them with a consensual techno-rational overarching form of governance. This is a form of governance which incorporates spatial and environmental planning as one of its functions, yet in a manner that tends to predominantly facilitate market interests, while often only providing lip service to the environment (Allmendinger, 2016). This second trend will be referred to in this chapter as 'post-political ecological modernisation'.

Third, and perhaps most profoundly, these ideals are materialised as radical or 'deep green movements' (Dodson, 2007 [1990]) that attempt to profoundly change the world's current dominant pro-market ideology of neoliberalism (Gunder, 2010, 2016). These are radical movements that strive to overturn the current global anthropocentric capitalist imperative for material consumption and wealth creation with its resultant adverse environmental and social consequences. While their specific goals may differ, all of these radical movements give an overarching precedent to sustaining the global environment in a manner that is well within the world's steady state ecological carrying capacity and often in a way that reduces the need for traditional government and planning, as least as we currently know them (Dodson, 2007 [1990]; Martínez-Alier et al., 2010; Rees, 2018).

The following sections will consider each of these three perspectives in more detail. But to do so, the chapter will first consider what constitutes ideology. It will then consider the concept of sustainability from this viewpoint. The chapter will contend that sustainability is largely an ideological concept that underlies all three perspectives materialising environmental visionary idealism, but it is not the only ideological dimension influencing and impacting on these perspectives. The chapter will conclude that most moderate environmental visionary idealism is largely dominated and over shadowed by pro-market ideology. Accordingly, possibly the only type of environmental visionary idealism able to displace this pro-market domination is via the implementation of a radical deep green alternative, however unlikely this may seem today.

Ideology's universal promise: the illusion of safety in an uncertain world

Ideology's initial meaning was that of the 'science of ideas' as developed by Destutt de Tracy in 1797, but, with the rise of Marxian thought, this meaning largely disappeared by the end of the 19th century (Fine and Sandstrom, 1993, p. 22). For Marx, ideology was about the creation in a society of a false consciousness about material life through 'various guises such as morality, religion, and metaphysics' so that the 'ideas of the ruling class [became] the ruling ideas' (Freeden, 2003, pp. 5–6). Of course, if one is aware of false consciousness, it becomes rather difficult to be readily duped by it, so any contemporary understanding of ideology and how it may now work must be considerably more nuanced. The psychoanalytical perspective of Lacan and his follower Žižek provides this necessary sophistication (Gunder and Hillier, 2009). Indeed, Frederic Jameson (2003 [1977], p. 37), writing over 40 years ago, observed that we can ascribe to Lacan 'the first new and as yet insufficiently developed concept of the nature of ideology since Marx'.

The concept of lack is core to Lacan (2006 [1966]), for it is the lack of something that we want that constitutes desire and this fundamentally provides 'the ontological underpinnings of human existence' (Ruti, 2008, p. 485). Gunder and Hillier (2009, p. 24, emphasis in original) observed 'that the political or technical deployment of a "lack" or "deficiency" is a powerful planning and political trope for response and action, [as] who would wish to live in a "deficient" city lacking in *safety, competitiveness, sustainability* or some other shortfall?' Indeed, these authors contend that one of the roles of planning is to provide a fantasy of how the planned future city will resolve its identified problems – lacks – and be enjoyably complete and fulfilling, free of any future fear or worry.

In this regard, for Žižek (1989, p. 45), '[i]deology . . . is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our "reality" itself: an "illusion" which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel', which underlies our insecurities in an uncertain world, especially when engaging with the future. In this context, Žižek contends that it is 'the horror of contemplating the unknowable' that 'leads people to weave imaginary webs, or fantasies, of what they claim can be known, and to fabricate harmonies where antagonisms reign' (Freeden, 2003, p. 111). Here, importantly, planning facilitates 'this ideological task by harmoniously articulating how populations should enjoyably use their settlements, spaces and environments when seeking a better future', or, alternatively, act in a more sustainable and resilient manner to stave off the fear of future environmental catastrophe (Gunder, 2010, p. 306).

Importantly, planning is considered by many to be a 'magpie discipline', which deploys numerous important concepts drawn from the social and natural sciences to structure the discipline's understandings of the natural and built environment. These concepts often inherently have, or often gain in their public policy acceptance, an ideological dimension when they are deployed in planning for a community's perceived security and hence desired future (Gunder and Hillier, 2009). The following section considers one of these important planning concepts: 'sustainability', as an illustrative example.

Sustainability as an ideological concept

In search of a new 'vision' for planning . . . one which can 'reach out to society as a whole, addressing its wants, needs and insecurities' . . . a 'vision to rank with those of Ebenezer Howard a century ago' . . . There is a consensus that such a vision can now emerge . . . sustainability

(Davoudi, 2001, p. 86).

The word ‘sustainable’ has a fuzzy meaning that is impossible to clearly or concisely define, so that it can mean many things to different people. Hence business people, socialists and ecologists may desire a sustainable future, especially under the rubric of ‘sustainable development’ (WCED, 1987), with one group thinking that such a future is about sustainable economic growth, another group about having a socially just society and a third group about a future of sustained biodiversity and climate stability. Sustainable development supposedly promises ‘it all: economic growth, environmental conservation, social justice; and not just for the moment but in perpetuity’ and in implementing it ‘[n]o painful changes are necessary’ to our current way of life (Dryzek, 2005, p. 157)! Indeed, for this very reason, ideals like sustainability are called empty signifiers, as they can make diverse promises to many different perspectives (Davidson, 2010; Gunder, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2010, 2015).

Further, sustainability is a transcendental ideal, which means that it is a lofty desired societal goal that resides external to existing human experience or established knowledge (Gunder, 2006, p. 212; Žižek, 1993, p. 16). Accordingly, no one really knows what a transcendental ideal ultimately is or will become. Sustainability is a signifier constituting what we fundamentally perceive the world is lacking, even if we cannot fully describe what this lack actually is or what its fulfilment will actually mean. But we believe it is “‘the real thing”, the unattainable X, the object-cause of desire’ (Žižek, 1989, p. 96). In this regard, Žižek (1989) referred to such ideals in the title of his book as ‘sublime objects of ideology’ for even if they are unclear and ambiguous with diverse meanings, most people are still attracted to them as highly important concepts of desirous aspiration and identification.

Lacan (2007) calls these special words: master signifiers. Indeed, these master signifiers of aspiration and identification have ‘to remain empty in order to serve as the underlying organizing principle of a series’ – the central organising element – of ordinary signifiers comprising groupings of related narratives and discourses (Žižek, 2000, p. 52). The master signifier gives the illusion of unanimity in the discursive field being engaged with by these diverse signifiers, even if the field is actually ‘riddled with differences, antagonisms, and contradictions’ (Bryant, 2008, p. 18). A master signifier, such as sustainability, is not a guarantor of specific meaning, or even the meaning itself. Rather it is metaphorically rather more like the light which attracts all the moths to the flame, like the flag we all pledge allegiance to, something unquestionably good like motherhood, the *Thing* that we profoundly believe in and defend with our honour and sometimes even our life. Indeed:

[I]ts role is purely structural, its nature is pure performative . . . it is an element which represents the agency of the signifier within the field of the signified’ – in short: it is ‘the dazzling splendor of the element which holds [everything else] together.

(Žižek, 1989, p. 99)

Each master signifier of ideology has a similar function. That is to structure a discourse in a specific way so that the other words in that discourse have specific meanings aligned with that of the master signifier (Žižek, 1989, p. 102). When an environmental planner considers a discourse through the prism of sustainability, or through the ideological lenses of another master signifier, such as neoliberalism, the same signified word in these two different discourses will have different specific meanings and connotations. Consider how a ‘sustainable city’ conjures a very different vision of a desirable future than that of a ‘neoliberal city’! Indeed, it can be argued that much that constitutes an environmental planning education is learning the specific meanings and often implicit values that underlie the words used in the different planning discourses constituting the

knowledges pertaining to planning master signifiers like sustainability, resilience, social justice, governance, globalisation and even neoliberalism (Gunder, 2004).

Sustainability is an empty ideological element, a master signifier par excellence, whose signification – its own meaning – can only be partially gathered through embroidering it extensively with more explicit and more clearly understandable signifiers. Sustainability, similar to other inter-related environmental master signifiers, such as ‘nature’ (Swyngedouw, 2010), ‘green’ (Dodson, 2007 [1990]; Stavrakakis, 1997) or ‘ecology’ itself (Žižek, 1996, p. 131) are each constituted by a complex symbolic ideological montage of supporting signifiers constituting a discourse or knowledge about them. This is a tapestry comprised of a bricolage of concepts/terms/signifiers tied together with what Lacan (2006) calls ‘points de capiton’ – quilting or nodal points (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p. 112) – which anchor and stop their master signifier from sliding around too much in its overarching, but still fuzzy, meaning. For sustainability, these include words/concepts such as: ‘carbon-neutral’ or ‘carbon-footprint’, ‘environmental wellbeing’, ‘biodiversity’, ‘sea level rise’, ‘de-growth’, ‘global warming’, ‘Anthropocene’, ‘resilience’ and so on. All act as quilting points through which an always fluid and unbounded matrix of general representations and narratives constituting the master signifier itself – sustainability – are voiced and communicated. All these quilting terms in aggregate constitute a discursive mosaic that is ‘an articulation of various separate moments around [the] master signifier’ comprised of ‘a family of nodal points that bind them together’ (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 266).

Importantly, before the emergence of ‘this articulation – before the intervention of the nodal points . . . these moments pre-existed as floating signifiers, as proto-ideological elements with no particular . . . connotation’ attributable to their yet to emerge master signifier: sustainability (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 266). Indeed, much debate emerged about protecting the environment during the 1970s, if not before, and the Brundtland Report constituting sustainable development was published in 1987 (WCED, 1987). But it was only when these nodal points began to universally coalesce around sustainability in the latter half of the 1990s that sustainability emerged as a populist movement and key environmental planning issue, even though to today’s practitioners, sustainability may now seem as if it has always existed (Gunder, 2006, p. 213).

Moreover, this master signifier and its nodal points are more than just mere anchor points; ‘they refer to a “beyond” of meaning, a certain enjoyment expressed as fantasy – notably, the desire for an environmentally balanced and socially harmonious order’ (Swyngedouw, 2015, p. 133). Indeed, it is via this kernel of enjoyment created by this illusion/promise of future completeness/wholeness that the master signifier will provide once it is somehow being achieved which allows this fantasy element of ‘sustainability’ to act as a sublime object of ideology. Further, in doing so ‘sustainability’ is able to grip and bind itself to the subject at the unconscious level of desire and hence of personal belief, identification and aspiration (Gunder, 2016, p. 23).

The range of environmental visionary ideals

The Eco-City as the materialisation of economic sustainable development

Davoudi (2013, pp. 254–5) considers the two most significant drivers of contemporary visionary idealism within planning and its related built environment fields to be rapid global urbanisation and climate change. She contends that this is culminating in numerous utopian visions of carbon-neutral future communities ranging from high-tech de-carbonating smart cities to low-tech communal settlements attempting to create sustainable closed-cycle spatial metabolisms.

But Davoudi (2013, p. 257) cautions in this regard that ‘the story of planning is littered with the ruins of utopias which were demolished by the vested interest of powerful players’. Indeed, what goes unsaid by Davoudi is a third driver of utopian visionary idealism and most everything else globally, that is the ideological dominance of neoliberalism and its privileging of the market and capital accumulation over all other societal ‘goods’ (Gunder, 2010, 2016).

An excellent exemplar of this is Masdar City. In 2007, the Abu Dhabi government launched its six square kilometre area eco-city development of Masdar City. Globally, it immediately ‘became a relentlessly repeated reference and virtual blueprint for future sustainable development’ (Jensen, 2016, p. 45). The proposed totally renewable energy-based, zero waste and zero carbon city was to have 50,000 residents and an additional daily 50,000 mass transit commuting workers when finally completed in 2016. However, with the world financial crisis of 2008 and the more recent collapse of global oil prices impacting on Gulf State incomes, the project has largely been downgraded and diminished to a university campus with the majority of its environmentally innovated initiatives sidelined (Jensen, 2016, p. 50).

Critics have subsequently referred to the project as ‘greenwashing’ and accused the Abu Dhabi government ‘of using Masdar as a façade for the world while avoiding clamping down on unsustainable domestic lifestyles and public infrastructure’ (Crot, 2013, p. 2814). Indeed, Crot (2013, p. 2810) contends that the government’s ‘interpretation of sustainability is clearly skewed towards the combination of economic success and environmental progress’. With the latter being achieved via technological solutions and the use of renewable resources without regard to the protection of wildlife and its habitats, or with any regard for social sustainability. Cugurullo (2016, p. 2430) observes that what underlay the design of Masdar City was not ecological research on its surrounding biophysical environment, ‘but rather market analyses studying the economic environment that surrounds the clean technology market’. Further, Cugurullo (2016, p. 2421) declares that the eco-city of Masdar ‘reflects one of the most international manifestations of the ideology of sustainability: ecological modernisation’, which ‘rejects environmental concerns as antithetical to economic priorities, and advances technological innovation as the equaliser of economic growth and environmental preservation’.

Post-political ecological modernisation

Similarly, numerous studies globally of planning and public environmental policy for sustainable development in more conventional cities and at both the local and higher levels of government have found a similar privileging of the economy over that of the environment, with at best only token regard to social considerations (for example: Allmendinger, 2016; Coffey and Marston, 2013; Gunder, 2006; Rico and Lin, 2012). These manifestations of ecological modernisation, as identified by these works along with the research of Swyngedouw (2010, 2015), have also manifested a post-political dimension. This is a dimension that displaces traditional modes of local political democratic decision making with regimes of techno-scientific governance predicated on a pro-market sustainable development consensus supported globally by the United Nations and World Bank as the best way that the world’s cities should develop (Rico and Lin, 2012, p. 192).

Much contemporary visionary idealism about the environment contains a significant component of fear intertwined within it. The diverse narratives through which the contemporary understanding of our environmental status is constructed is one systemically entwined with invocations of fear for forthcoming catastrophes and apocalypses, of significant human distress, if not outright ecological annihilation, in the not so distant future (Swyngedouw, 2010, 2013). A wide range of imaginary fantasies of catastrophe are proposed as a consequence of non-adaptation of particular saving prescriptions. While some are based on valid scientific modelling,

such as sea level rise, others are even more apocalyptic and often without significant clear scientific evidence, be it endemic drought with wild fires and resultant eventual desertification, widespread ecological collapse, tsunamis, global epidemics, the supposed consequences of post-peak-oil (not withstanding now market driven ongoing transitions to alternative energy and transportation technologies), an extensive period of large volume volcanism and the like. 'In sum, our ecological predicament is sutured by millennialism fears sustained by an apocalyptic rhetoric and representational tactics, and by a series of performative gestures signalling an overwhelming, mind-boggling danger, one that threatens to undermine the very co-ordinates of our everyday lives and routines' (Swyngedouw, 2010, p. 308).

In this regard, Swyngedouw (2013, p. 10) contends that this catastrophic language primarily serves a useful ideological empowerment function in our post-political contemporary world of governance. It acts in a manner so as 'to turn nightmare into crisis management' so that this 'nurturing of fear, which is invariably followed by a set of techno-managerial fixes . . . serves precisely to depolitize'. Accordingly, while our dominant elites and leaders can admit that while the situation may now be grave, they can still insist that through the application of correct techno-managerial responses our 'homeland security (ecological, economic, or otherwise) is in good hands' (Swyngedouw, 2013, p. 10). Of course, environmental planning is a central technological process in this post-political ideological pro-market process (Allmendinger, 2016; Swyngedouw, 2015).

Radical deep green movements

Beyond an acceptance of the global neoliberal status quo are radical environmental movements with a goal to change the world and its fundamental ideological values away from those of ever-increasing consumer material consumption and the market. These include ecofeminism (Mies and Shiva, 2014 [1993]), sustainable de-growth (Martinez-Alier et al., 2010; Trainer, 2015), social ecology (Bookchin, 1988), and deep ecology (Naess, 1984). While all have strong elements of sustainability embedded within them, they go beyond mere 'market' sustainability. Moreover, these deep green movements do propose a fundamental requirement for a radically changing, or replacing, of capitalist growth so as to live within the Earth's carrying capacity.

Any such prescription for such radical action will take tremendous political will. Indeed, 'neither *sustainability* nor *justice* can be achieved unless global resource use, consumption, "living standards" and GDP within rich countries are reduced to a small fraction' of their current levels – 'in the region of 10 percent' – 'and are kept there' (Trainer, 2015, p. 59). Further, many may question if the necessary popular will exists to so radically change our world from one of considering economic growth as a positive to living in a world of de-growth so as to maintain humankind within the Earth's truly sustainable carrying capacity. Undoubtedly, to do so will require a very strong new 'imaginary' of the future with an appropriate de-growth ideology that the vast majority of the global population can readily agree with and be willing to live within. This is a world which will require a profound change of ideological spirit, one that contradicts the core elements that have propelled most of global 'society for 200 years – above all, the quest for material wealth' (Trainer, 2015, p. 67).

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed visionary idealism and environmental planning in their entanglement with ideology. It has then discussed the concept of sustainability as one example of an ideological master signifier. The chapter then drew on this ideological analysis to critique visionary environmental idealism as it is materialised in the world via three diverse ways: planning for

contemporary environmental built-forms; contemporary post-political ecological modernisation and governance; and as movements for radical ideological change. In doing so, it examined the domination of market ideology in our neoliberal world and the consequences that this may have for effective visioning within environmental planning. The chapter suggests that perhaps only radical green movements may provide effective means to curtail the worst attributes of the Anthropocene. But this would only occur if sufficient people, including those in environmental planning, are willing to adopt the necessary ideological perspective and implement the necessary profound action to bring this radical visionary idealism into being.

Many members of the public, as well as environmental planners, believe strongly in their responsibility to sustain the environment. But as this chapter has illustrated, this belief is open to capture by our dominant neoliberal ideology so as to channel these beliefs in a manner that ultimately sits at odds with the attainment of an ecologically sustainable future. Perhaps a radical engagement with visionary environmental idealism is the only way to overcome this pernicious domination. Of course, it is the responsibility of each reader to decide for him or herself what future world that he or she may wish to help create.

References

- Allmendinger, P. (2016). *Neoliberal spatial governance*. London: Routledge.
- Blühdorn, I. (2013). 'The governance of unsustainability: ecology and democracy after the post-democratic turn'. *Environmental Politics*, 22(1): 16–36.
- Bookchin, M. (1988). *Toward an ecological society*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.
- Bryant, L. (2008). 'Žižek's new universe of discourse: politics and the discourse of the capitalist'. *International Journal of Zizek Studies*, 2(4): 1–48.
- Cambridge Dictionary [Online]. Available at: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/>
- Coffey, B. and Marston, G. (2013). 'How neoliberalism and ecological modernization shaped environmental policy in Australia'. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, 15(2): 179–99.
- Crot, L. (2013). 'Planning for sustainability in non-democratic polities: the case of Masdar City'. *Urban Studies*, 50(14): 2809–25.
- Cugurullo, F. (2016). 'Urban eco-modernisation and the policy context of new eco-city projects: where Masdar City fails and why'. *Urban Studies*, 53(11): 2417–33.
- Davidson, M. (2010). 'Sustainability as ideological praxis: the acting out of planning's master-signifier'. *City*, 14(4): 390–405.
- Davoudi, S. (2001). 'Planning and the twin discourses of sustainability', in A. Layard, S. Davoudi and S. Batty (eds.) *Planning for a sustainable future*. London: Spon, pp 81–99.
- Davoudi, S. (2013). 'Urban futures', in N. Phelps, R. Freestone and M. Tewdr-Jones (eds.) *The planning imagination*. London: Routledge, pp 252–66.
- Dodson, A. (2007 [1990]). *Green political thought*. New York: Routledge.
- Dryzek, J. (2005). *The politics of the earth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eagleton, T. (2013 [1994]). 'Introduction', in T. Eagleton (ed.) *Ideology*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp 1–20.
- Fine, G. and Sandstrom, K. (1993). 'Ideology in action: a pragmatic approach to a contested concept'. *Sociological Theory*, 11(1): 21–38.
- Freedon, M. (2003). *Ideology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gunder, M. (2004). 'Shaping the planner's ego-ideal: a Lacanian interpretation of planning education'. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 23(3): 299–311.
- Gunder, M. (2006). 'Sustainability: planning's saving grace or road to perdition?' *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 26(2): 208–21.
- Gunder, M. (2010). 'Planning as the ideology of (neo-liberal) space'. *Planning Theory*, 9(4): 298–314.
- Gunder, M. (2011). 'A metapsychological exploration of the role of popular media in engineering public belief on planning issues'. *Planning Theory*, 10(4): 325–43.
- Gunder, M. (2016). 'Planning's "failure" to ensure efficient market delivery: a Lacanian deconstruction of this neoliberal scapegoating fantasy'. *European Planning Studies*, 1(24): 21–38.
- Gunder, M. and Hillier, J. (2009). *Planning in ten words or less*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Howard, E. (1965 [1902]). *Garden cities of tomorrow*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Jameson, F. (2003 [1977]). 'Imaginary and symbolic in Lacan: marxism, psychoanalytic criticism, and the problem of the subject', in S. Žižek (ed.) *Jacques Lacan: critical evaluations in cultural theory, volume III*. London: Routledge, pp 3–43.
- Jensen, B. (2016). 'Masdar City: a critical retrospective', in S. Wippel, K. Bromber, C. Steiner and B. Krawietz (eds.) *Under construction: logics of urbanism in the Gulf Region*. London: Routledge, pp 45–54.
- Kant, I. (1934). *Critique of pure reason*. London: Dent.
- Kronsell, A. (2013). 'Legitimacy for climate policies: politics and participation in the Green City of Freiburg'. *Local Economy*, 18(8): 965–82.
- Lacan, J. (2006 [1966]). *Écrits*. London: Norton.
- Lacan, J. (2007). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan: the other side of psychoanalysis, book XVII*. London: Norton.
- Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and socialist strategy*. London: Verso.
- Macedo, J. (2013). 'Planning a sustainable city: the making of Curitiba, Brazil'. *Journal of Planning History*, 12(4): 334–53.
- Martinez-Alier, J., Pascual, U., Vivien, F.-D. and Zaccai, E. (2010). 'Sustainable de-growth: mapping the context, criticisms and future prospects of an emergent paradigm'. *Ecological Economics*, 69(9): 1741–7.
- Mies, M. and Shiva, V. (2014 [1993]). *Ecofeminism*. London: Zed Books.
- Naess, A. (1984). 'A defence of the deep ecology movement'. *Environmental Ethics*, 6(3): 265–70.
- Rees, W. (2018). 'Planning in the Anthropocene', in M. Gunder, A. Madanipour and V. Watson (eds.) *The Routledge handbook of planning theory*. London: Routledge, pp 53–66.
- Rico, M. and Lin, W. (2012). 'Urban sustainability, conflict management, and the geographies of postpoliticism: a case study of Taipei'. *Environment and Planning C*, 30(2): 191–208.
- Ruti, M. (2008). 'The fall of fantasies: a Lacanian reading of lack'. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 56(2): 483–508.
- Stavrakakis, Y. (1997). 'Green ideology: a discursive reading'. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 2(3): 259–79.
- Swyngedouw, E. (2010). 'Trouble with nature: "ecology as the new opium for the masses"', in J. Hillier and P. Healey (eds.) *The Ashgate research companion to planning theory*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp 299–318.
- Swyngedouw, E. (2013). 'Apocalypse now! Fear and doomsday pleasures'. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 24(1): 9–18.
- Swyngedouw, E. (2015). 'Depoliticized environments and the promises of the Anthropocene', in R. Bryant (ed.) *The international handbook of political ecology*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp 131–45.
- Trainer, T. (2015). 'The degrowth movement from the perspective of the simpler way'. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 26(2): 58–75.
- WCED (World Commission on Environment and Development) (1987). *Our common future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Žižek, S. (1989). *The sublime object of ideology*. London: Verso.
- Žižek, S. (1993). *Tarrying with the negative*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Žižek, S. (1996). *The indivisible remainder*. London: Verso.
- Žižek, S. (2000). *The fragile absolute*. London: Verso.