It would be incorrect to think of the minor as being three distinct minor scales; rather, one minor scale has three possible variations in the upper tetrachord. (The lower tetrachord will always be the configuration "whole/half/whole."

It is interesting to note as in the preceding illustration, that the upper tetrachord in the melodic-minor form of the scale has the same whole- and half-step configuration as does the upper tetrachord in major scales. It is also interesting to note that the upper tetrachord of the natural-minor form contains the whole- and half-step configuration in exact reverse order of that found in the melodic form of the minor scale (Ex. 5.8).