

Urban Planning in Evolution

Dino Borri, Italy

Abstract:

This lecture-tutorial introduces to the evolution up to now of urban planning theories-in-practice. It aims at highlighting the plural and evolving streams of knowledge which form the core of planning 'knowledge-in-action'. It introduces to the wicked problems and the dilemmas of planning with particular attention to the cognitive 'more-than-rational' approach which is emerging based on the many different planning paradigms of one century and half of planning theory and practice. The lecture-tutorial is structured in four parts: three of these parts deal with the three major approaches to planning still influential in the work of planners, the fourth and last part deals with a hybrid approach providing an integrated keystone to the development of planning.

The physical approach: architecture and engineering for urban forms and equipments, public health, education, *embellissement* and beauty emulation, normative approach, training of urbanists through tours and visits of urban success stories, role of experts in empathy with local communities.

The rational approach: from urbanism to planning, increasing influence of system science and cybernetics, plans as rational courses of action, planning as autonomous discipline which can be applied to different domains, planners as generalists with a specialization, increasing influence of technical expertise, inspiration by critical rationalism, emphasis on individual knowledge and rationality and marginalization of communities.

The communicative approach: increasing role of communities, experts and non-experts in dialogue, listening community voices, democratization of planning, , attention to individual and social knowledge.

The environmental approach: communicative, dialogic, planning is integrated with environmental planning, with increasing attention to systems and ecosystems in particular, to bioregions, to coming back to a balanced relation between human sphere and ecological non-human sphere, to incorporating the 'more-than-human-world' in the planning domain and planners' work, to considering culture as central in planning, to urban and regional ('bioregional') economy in an attempt to rebalancing urban consumptions and bioregional (resource-based) productions, to coming back to spiritual and austere way of life.

The hybrid approach: it moves planning origins back to the scientific revolution of the XVII century, with its separation between faith and reason: in this vein, planners would become protagonists of reconciliation between society and technique, emotion and reason; organizational science and organization development and management, in particular during the preparation – and, later on, the damage remediation – of the two world wars starting in Europe (1910s and 1940s), would become a crucial experimental field, witnessing evolution from rational and deterministic, expert, approaches to post-rational, non-deterministic, non-expert approaches; this hybrid and pragmatic approach to planning pays also relevant attention to knowledge-in-practice and in general to cognitive issues, and considers globalization as an important challenge for planning evolution and an extraordinary opportunity for changing societal orders; this approach to planning is also characterized by a radical opposition to the social and economic distribution of powers throughout different areas and regions in the planet.

Email addresses
dborri.dau@gmail.com