

Chapter 19

Planning Education in an International Perspective: Making the Most from Global and Local Knowledges

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Abstract Central to my academic experience, teaching and research, is the development of theoretical and methodological approach called *Territorialist Approach*. Its central concept is *territorio* as manifest in space and time, and of the convergence of the local and global knowledges expressed in specific contexts from the different types of man-nature relationships to the culture of work and production, from local social practices and ways of life to the different physical, historical, and architectural components of urban and rural fabrics. All these elements constitute the multifaceted and ever evolving cultures and identities of places, cities, and regions generating the very specific physical and emotional landscapes when territories relate to their inhabitants. *Territorio*, considered as holistic common good, represents the main resource for both the general well-being of local communities and their significant and indispensable belonging at a global level. Planning education must stem from the awareness of that meaning of what are the resources, local and global, available to produce the desired effects of planning action on a specific area, where inhabitants are the fundamental actors in the process of transformation of their own *Territorio*. Theoretical tools to investigate and methodological-operational tools to enable the use of these resources in a proper way must be identified by university and other educational institutions in order to ensure an ethical and progressive transmission of knowledge to the students. This is possible only if a multidisciplinary approach is derived in the scientific arena and if the academic knowledge is opened to include local specifics. A few experimental paths in this area are LabPSM, as part of a wide national and international collaborative effort. We have been exploring during the last decades along with development of research activities, educational methodologies, whose main focus is innovation in human resource training and promotion and enhancement of values and potentialities of local territories. By working out and testing multidisciplinary courses, seminars, international workshops, and summer schools in various countries, our efforts are intended gradually to increase the awareness among academic

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circles and to train students as future professionals in the field of representation and operationalization of local territory and its tangible and intangible resources. A particular attention has been paid to the use of innovative media use and other articulations familiar to new generations to investigate, decode, and represent urban analysis results and consequent plans.

Keywords *Territorio* · Common good · Local-global knowledge · Multidisciplinarity · New languages

19.1 Introduction

Planning is about politics, policies, rules, processes, and projects for an efficient and fruitful spatial organization of resources. Its main objective is to balance the needs of economic activities and ensure better quality of life to all people, with particular attention to the weak and the poor in the society. The latter should be the very first beneficiaries of planning actions. Distributive justice or interest of the collective in preference to securing the advantage of a few has to be the way forward. Acting at different scales of intervention like neighborhoods, villages, rural areas, cities, metropolises, regions, nations, planners could achieve their distributional goals. This has very much to do with the environmental, economic, social, and cultural sustainability of physical transformations as part of the living and surviving in the present day globalized world.

Towering over all of the great changes in the world, the unstoppable process of globalization continues, with its pervasive, universal and varied impact. This is also a fact that metropolitan cities are absorbing all the capital inflows, information and innovations. They have become the centers of supranational government economies and finance. In addition to older global cities, all in the North, defined on the basis of common characteristics, ways of changing, and internal contradictions (Sassen 1992), new huge cities are more and more on the scene in a variety of roles and dynamics (UN Habitat 2013; also see UN Habitat 2011), committed to play their leading roles, and are located in the global south. Notable among these are Beijing and Shanghai, Mumbai and Bengaluru, Sao Paulo, Johannesburg, Seoul, Mexico City, Buenos Aires.

The turn of the millennium has in fact also brought with it a profound geopolitical upheaval. A sharper iconic acronym identifies new global powers known as the BRIC, i.e., Brazil, Russia, India, and China. In addition new countries (S-South Africa, M-Mexico, I-Indonesia, T-Turkey) have joined together with their populations, strategic, and financial resources to form significant groupings. In the recent transformation processes, differences, locally specific cities are strong, but many phenomena and ways to produce their built environments, mainly in largest cities, are very similar.

Hubs of finance, business, international transport, luxury residences, and sports events are planned with profit motive and designed by ubiquitous archistars, as driving forces for spectacularization effects (Lehrer 2004). No care at all, in this global competition, to represent the specificity and identity of the involved places and people living there is regarded significant. These motives and measures contradict the rhetoric of globalization as positive unification of the planet and can be synthesized in a word: fragmentation. A disruptive and selective process in the cities and territories is largely the effect of the new geography of centrality and marginality, functional to the spreading of global processes.

Results of selection of spaces through various mechanisms have resulted in fragmentation of the fabric of the city. On a larger scale, partitions seem to rewrite zoning for single-purpose areas: agriculture, industry, trade, tourism, residences causing further fragmentation of places. Fragments of agricultural and forestry land of enormous sizes in poor countries and regions, grabbed by transnational holdings and state companies to produce food and more and more of biofuels much required in the global market for energy.

Built fragments often surrounded by walls and fences are home to several businesses: holiday villages, clubs, resorts where the quality of landscape, sea, nature fits the desires of the globalized tourists; malls, supermarkets, outlets, and places of globalized mass consumption, recognizable by almost absent parking areas, in the new densely crowded areas; export processing zones, located close to large container ports and at the borders between low and high income countries (Paloscia 2012).

These fragments are reproduced everywhere in the world embodying the same trends, architecture, space, and work organization. They become estranged from the small local economies and the latter are damaged and often destroyed causing waste of land and resources, increasing pollution, territorial degradation, limiting the accessibility of land to local communities, expropriating part of their habitats, and privatizing collective resources and the commons.

Different kinds of fragments are the gated communities, a part of the urban landscape as limited sections of fortified residences. Recently they have been spreading all over the world cities and modest middle class urban areas including an increasing number of activities and services for the daily life of inhabitants (Marcuse 2002), eager to minimize the risks connected with the poor and insecure parts of the city.

Outside the growing fragments there is the formal city, supposed to be subjected to the rules and practices of planning, and the informal one without such regulations and depending on multifaceted ways of using its spaces to survive (Davis 2006). These are increasingly intersecting with the most affluent areas (Angotti 2013) and separated by barriers not physical but psychological, with variable dynamics of inclusions and exclusions (Roy 2011). But here we do not go deep into this serious question.

19.2 Approach

How to act as a planner in these specific areas after being aware of the general issues? How to define proper, updated training methods, and programs? There are many schools of thought and theoretical and methodological approaches resulting from different cultural traditions that can help in singling out ways to practice and teach planning in a very wide sense. Here, I introduce some personal experiences as a planner and as an academic.

Central to my academic experience is the theoretic and methodological, the so called *Territorialist approach*, as it comes out from a few decades of teaching and doing research on planning theories, methodologies, and practices as being part and founder in the late eighties of a group quite renowned in Italy and somewhere abroad as *Scuola Territorialista*, which recently gave rise to the *Società dei Territorialisti* (Territorialists' Society (www.societadeiterritorialisti.it)). Its key concept is *territorio* as the adding up of physical, built, and anthropic environment defined through a coevolutional process very much similar to that of a very complex living organism.

All these elements define the multifaceted and ever evolving culture and identity of a place, of a city, of a region, generating the very specific physical and emotional landscapes that link territories to their inhabitants. *Territorio*, considered as a holistic common good, represents the main resource for both the general well-being of local communities and their significant and indispensable activities at the global level.

As territorialists we have been always speaking of *Self-Sustainable Local Development* (SSLD) intended to depend on locally accessed environmental, cultural, social, economic, and political resources (Magnaghi 2005). These are closely linked and inseparable and contribute to the SSLD. Following are some the ways in which these contribute to SSLD:

- Enhance the capability and provide the tools for self-government and communities' participation in the study, planning, and management of cities and regions where they live;
- Promote and safeguard development and the sustainable use of ecosystems and the well balanced environmental quality in general;
- Contribute to a locally sustaining economy which is focused on endogenous human and physical resources and also become a part of the global output;
- Giving true value to the cultural identity of the places in an inclusive and fair manner.

The goal of SSLD is something reachable through a vigorous action in synergetic relations quoted before. This is a process whereby the involvement and research and action initiatives of planners can result in a significant fruitful contribution.

Local, to be clear, is intended independently of size. It could be a small village or a city or a wider region. Each of them is very much defined by its identity—specific

endogenous features open to dynamics of development—and at the same time by its ability to be part of wide, horizontal, and not hierarchical networks connecting it with the global systems.

The picture is more like a community oriented and livable cities and regions, of an environment that is projected into a self-sustainable future, re-establishing all the links between the urban context and the rural and non-rural hinterland, and at the same time strengthening its synergy and cooperation at a national and international level (Paloscia 2007).

The central role in this process is played by the *patrimonio territoriale*; Italian terms not that easy to translate as the word *territorio* is more or less corresponding to ‘local heritage’ in a wide sense. It should be considered as the main multifaceted collective resource to be investigated carefully in order to know its various components, and to share them with all the inhabitants. A resource that should be protected through planning regulations and consolidated local customs, and should be reproduced and increased through short, medium, and long-term transformation projects.

Patrimonio territoriale, as intended here, is the result of space and time, and of the convergence of the local and global know-how expressed by a specific place or spatial context: from the culture of work and production to the different types of landscapes, from local practices and ways of life to the different physical, historical, and architectural components of the urban fabric, and so on. All these elements define the multifaceted and ever evolving culture and identity of settlements and more generally of the bioregions, which are the main resources for the general well-being of the communities that live there.

At the same time *Patrimonio territoriale* is a key factor for a significant and well-defined presence at a global level, a feature that, in the contemporary world, cannot be ignored. Operational tools to define the conditions to deeply know and use it in an appropriate and fruitful way become a strategic issue to be identified and processed. One of these specific and essential tools is education of new generations of planners.

19.3 Discussion—Planning Education

Planning education must stem from the awareness of what are the resources, local, and global, available to produce the desired effects of a planning action in a specific area, where inhabitants are the fundamental actors in the process of transformation of their own *territorio* and where planners are supposed to offer their professional expertise to help in reaching the planning objectives.

Theoretical tools to investigate and methodological-operational tools to implement the use of these resources in a proper way and with appropriate rules must be identified by academics in order to produce ethical and progressive transmission of knowledge to the students of planning.

As we know, planning and its teaching proceed often too slowly compared to the society's needs and changes, the transformations and evolution of the urban and regional spaces, and the cultural impact they produce for youth and students in particular. Everyone agrees on the need to innovate the content of the training programs in schools of planning through new perspectives given the centrality of the principles of environment, economic, social, and cultural sustainability. But beyond the claims, this is quite a complicated task and the paths required to be followed are often complex and incoherently multidirectional.

Basic preliminary parameters to be shared in designing planning educational programs have to be listed. The hope is that something fruitful would come out for a discussion with colleagues from different countries. These parameters are representative of different layers of educational activities. These are:

Methodology	Multidisciplinarity
Range of action	Internationalization
Knowledge	Local and global
Knowledge Tools	New languages

19.4 Methodology—Multidisciplinarity

Planning cannot proceed as a field of theories, knowledge, techniques, and tools designed to manage the space separately from other disciplines that deal with the city, land, and environment. It is necessary to overcome the linear and sectorial approaches that lead to the separation of knowledges with a reductionist view, imbued with technicism, aiming to consider the territory as a segmentable *tabula rasa*, neutral sum of various components that are disjointed whose resources can be used one by one in a way functional to external exploitation.

It should be taken as a multidisciplinary approach, operating to analyze and manage the complexities of sites, starting from the interaction of their different components—economic, social, environmental, cultural, ethnic, etc., to reconstruct an image that is multifaceted, but unified, independent, and equipped suitably to serve specific needs.

It is essential therefore for teaching in urban planning to define, deepen, and continually update specific knowledges and technicalities of the discipline, which give it its scientific legitimacy over time. At the same time it is equally essential to promote a set of educational activities that move in a common area of convergence of all these fields of knowledge that intersect, overlap, contaminate, influence, and feed each other in outlining the multifaceted reality of places and spaces. It is here that the students must be prepared to intervene with analysis, integrated plans, and projects.

On this front, it should be emphasized as converging trends to multidisciplinary are in action in all fields of knowledge. When the theme of the transformations of

the space is central, specifically the city and territory, the various disciplines tend to develop new approaches, both in research and teaching, in the direction of a unitary and non-sectorial reality. Some examples (Magnaghi 2014) are:

Planning	Identity and participatory planning
Agronomy	Multi-sectoral and integrated rural space, zero-food miles agriculture
Environmental Sciences	Bioregion, nature-culture integration
Archaeology	Ecomuseums, museums of the territory-Hydrogeology integrated plan of river basin
Economics	Local production, multi-sectorial no profit networks, short supply chains
Anthropology	Innovative life styles, use of common goods
Philosophy	Relations between thoughts and places
Medicine	Narrative medicine, patient as individual in his environment
Engineering	Geography, Jurisprudence, History of Art, etc.

In this framework of multifaceted disciplinary contribution, when called to configuring transformations, the planner has to be the technician, who in possession of adequate preparation that allows a comprehensive view of the urban phenomenon, has the right skills to promote, facilitate, and coordinate interventions in an area. It is therefore necessary that the university is able to provide the appropriate knowledges to student planners to do so.

19.5 Range of Actions—Internationalization

Internationalization seems to be a keyword charged with perspectives and innovative values, a sort of reference point widely shared among those characterizing the current phase of profound general crisis with new and dynamic challenges induced by it for its overcoming whom the majority of societies are sticking to our topic, and the universities are crossing through.

This is an element that becomes increasingly important and urgent international perspective that records, in a progressive manner over the past two decades, the tumultuous changes preventing its equilibrium. Nowadays any remaining significance of outdated divisions between developed and developing countries between global north and south are no longer geopolitically sustainable.

In a globalized world, from any point of view one may want to look at it, the internationalization appears as an obligatory path, an essential tool for scientific research and advancement of knowledge, regardless of the values to which schools of thought and fields of investigation can refer.

Whether it is strongly market and profit oriented research, pure and basic research in cutting-edge fields, development of new technologies for the great

climatic and environmental changes or investigation and design research or action anchored to the specificity of places, there is a need for a supranational action, seen as a more and more essential condition for discussion and practice of science in the broadest sense, whether theoretical, methodological, or more directly applicative.

It appears increasingly indispensable to widen observation and exchange of experiences with a view to effective reciprocal opening and comparison. We should do the study of different theories, policies, methodologies and instruments, products, synergies, and dissemination of innovative approaches oriented to an advance of knowledge and immediate effects for spreading human well-being. This is very true with regard to planning interventions at different locations and scales. It appears much fruitful that every academic is experienced in international networks, the comparison of different contexts in history, culture, geomorphologic, social, and economic characteristics, and a wide range of solutions to cope with urban, environmental, and territorial issues.

University education in arranging the various levels of learning and specializations must of course stick to this shared need, promoting and supporting, with adequate financial means any kind of international exchanges considering it indispensable basis for the training of students and young researchers. From this point of view, recently the European institutions seem to have acquired full knowledge of the issue and are finally taking it very seriously. In the research area, the new and well-funded seven years program, *Horizon 2020*, is liberalizing participation to EU projects to all non-European countries, something which was very complicated earlier.

In parallel, the *Erasmus* program, the most important students' exchange program for non-European students and scholars has been totally revamped. It has allowed with great success in the last decades the participation of very large number of students, but only if enrolled in European universities, raising the expectations of many young people eager to cross the thresholds of old Europe. The introduction of the new *Erasmus Plus* programme has finally overcome this gap, widening the possibility of students exchange to all countries of the world.

19.6 Knowledge—Local and Global

As awareness of the negative effects of globalization spreads, the process of standardizing and thus strongly undermining cultures and identities, historical roots, modes of production, craftsmanship, lifestyle, fruits of the earth both in the urban areas and in the country side, the need for restatement of the relationship between local and global will also increase.

The destructive effects on everything that does not respond to the logic of the global market require the definition and establishment of a new hierarchy between different levels of knowledge. It should return a central role in everything that each specific site has produced over time in a continuous process of adaptation, often

naturally sustainable, between man and nature, between inhabitants and their surrounding environment.

The concept of *Patrimonio Territoriale* condenses what this process can do everywhere. Its sustainable development depends on the ability of local communities to preserve existing resources by putting them to good use and making them functional in a positive way and becoming a part of globalized future. It is something indispensable and vital as its presence in the arena of international relations is well understood.

In recent years in Latin America (Gudynas 2011), there is an increasing experience about suggestions and teachings which can be sourced. Innovation in the process of reacquisition and new appreciation of what native cultures have produced and settled over the centuries, resisting pervasive and destructive globalizing processes is quite significant.

In this vision it is of great importance to involve younger generations specifically students being the future planners. Their learning and practice should be aimed at training in the field of analysis, representation, and valuation through sustainable projects locally and their tangible and intangible resources. It is important to stress the inherent potential of the *Patrimonio territoriale* in creating the opportunities for professional work in various fields, while improving the condition of the local society and exploring their resilience or absence of it.

At the same time we must reject the isolationist and autarkic attitudes against the large adaptations of global knowledge and of transnational scientific research. It should aim to maintain and enhance what is ethically justifiable and what is devoid of the purpose of domination and exploitation by vested interest aiming to define everything in terms of established invariants and aspects universally shared and transmitted to build the idea of a generalized development and wholesomeness. A global knowledge to the service of humanity in its global dimensions then can be achieved in different contexts and in the synergistic intersections with local knowledges.

19.7 Tools—New Languages

In educational matters the key issue is the ability to communicate with the younger generations. A relatively high proportion of lecturing could be ineffective and unattractive to students. One should be able to alternate traditional ways of teaching, not easily replaceable especially for some scientific areas, with new idioms, styles or languages, highly interactive, able to attract and retain the attention of young people because they stimulate their desire to participate actively and bring out the personality and attitudes helpful to the success of the collective learning process.

If we adopt the idea of multidisciplinary approach in the teaching of planning, the language used can vary widely, incorporating all those fields that can be more or less directly involved in the organization and articulation of the uses of urban space

and the surrounding environs. These are numerous. Here some tools and techniques already used in the experimental courses of education in planning are quickly mentioned. Art in its various forms is certainly an element with a high potential.

There is a growing interest in planner–artist collaboration in different scales of contemporary planning practice and innovative research. Artists-led activities could work as a powerful vehicle of communication in the planning process (Metzger 2011) and at the same time improving planning education. Artist workshops and performances in public urban spaces and in wider open areas can provide original and effective, perceptive and intuitive elements to open up new possibilities in the potential uses of space and design ideas to give it a different organization.

Complexities of cities and regions are something difficult to teach through traditional teaching methods and tools. The areas of concerns of planners and planning educators can be widened by collaboration with the artists' worlds, thus giving a fruitful contribution to develop at the same time planning practices and training methodologies (Sandercock 2005).

If our objective is the identification of new perspectives for teaching various branches of planning practice and as it is to devise innovative methodologies for exploring, interpreting and achieving the full value of the local potentiality, heritage and community action to promote participatory planning projects, then one must take note of a wide range of activities which are at the frontiers of planning discipline. This is all the most important as we might even say indispensable as the object of study, research, plan moves in the making of a formal plan. For it is essential for a massive change of practice towards alternative methods and tools, which are yet to be deeply explored.

A short list of examples of tools, very much connected with innovative media and intended as potential ways to involve young generations in activities to increase the knowledge of the local *Patrimonio territoriale* could include: video making, storytelling, interactive cartography, enlisting of local and global music, emo-mapping, comics in participatory planning, photography, model building, multi-ethnic sports, facades painting and so on. New languages immediately perceivable by students and effective in getting them to grasp the mechanisms of use of space outside the formal rules of town planning are critical to the development of planning education.

With reference to my personal experience, the testing of these tools is currently underway in an Italian–Caribbean cooperation project between the LabPSM (Laboratory Cities and Territories in the Southern Countries) of the University of Florence that I coordinated, and the EBCCI (Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination) of the University of the West Indies based in Barbados.

Its goal is to establish an educational program that takes into account a unified and inseparable way the two components of a self-reliant and sustainable development: human potential specifically students, and the territorial heritage. Based on this, the project aims to stimulate and train the students, first through the transfer of methodologies, and second, the tools aimed at consciously producing new knowledges.

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