



TRANS ACTIONS

OF THE ASSOCIATION
OF EUROPEAN SCHOOLS
OF PLANNING

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1, JUNE 2019

TRANSACTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN SCHOOLS OF PLANNING

Transactions of the Association of European Schools of Planning is an international, bi-annual, peer-reviewed, open-access journal, produced and owned by the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP, www.aesop-planning.eu).

It is free of charge to submit a paper and to publish in the *Transactions of the Association of European Schools of Planning*. Accepted papers are accessible online, to everyone, for free.

All papers are subject to a double-blind peer-review process.

The Working Group for Transactions of the Association of European Schools of Planning

Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe, Middle East Technical University, Turkey; **Andrea Frank**, University of Applied Science Stuttgart, Germany; **Nikos Karadimitriou**, University College London, UK; **Olivier Sykes**, University of Liverpool, UK.

The Editorial Board

Andreas Schulze Baing, University of Manchester, UK; **Beata Banachowicz**, University of Lodz, Poland; **Karoline Brombach**, Universität Stuttgart, Germany; **Edwin Buitelaar**, Amsterdam School of Real Estate, The Netherlands; **Juliet Carpenter**, Oxford Brookes University, UK; **Giancarlo Cotella**, Politecnico di Torino, Italy; **Christophe Demazière**, Université François-Rabelais Tours, France; **Alex Deffner**, University of Thessaly, Greece; **Sebastian Dembski**, University of Liverpool, UK; **Xavier Desjardins**, Université Paris-Sorbonne, France; **Amnon Frenkel**, Technion Israel Institute of Technology, Israel; **Ferhan Gezici**, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey; **Athena Yiannakou**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece; **José Miguel Fernández Güell**, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain; **Thomas Hartmann**, Utrecht University, The Netherlands; **Markus Hesse**, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg; **Christine Lelévrier**, Université Paris Est Créteil, France; **Hannah Mattila**, Aalto University, Finland; **Karel Maier**, Czech Technical University in Prague, Czech Republic; **Morten Skou Nicolaisen**, Aalborg University, Denmark; **Frank Othengrafen**, Leibniz Universität Hannover, Germany; **Davide Ponzini**, Politecnico di Milano, Italy; **Frédéric Santamaria**, Université Paris Diderot, France; **Paulo Silva**, University of Aveiro, Portugal; **Richard Sliuzas**, University of Twente, The Netherlands; **Roelof Verhage**, University Lumière Lyon II, France.; **Brian Webb**, Cardiff University, UK; **Karsten Zimmermann**, Technische Universität Dortmund, Germany.

ISSN: 2566-2147

Journal Cover Design

Cinzia Ferrara / ferrarastudio design.

Journal Layout Design

Kırmızı Tasarım, www.kirmizitasarim.com

Journal Copyeditor

Bertie Dockerill, Department of Geography and Planning, University of Liverpool.

For All Correspondence

transactionsaesop@gmail.com

CONTENTS

Editorial

Working group for Transactions of the Association of European Schools of Planning _____ i

Let Us Teach for Real!

A Plea for Traditional Teaching

Anna Geppert _____ 1-6

Enhancing Internationalisation through Inter-Institutional Collaboration: Innovative Practices in Planning Education

Andrea I. Frank _____ 7-22

Planning the Mirage:

Lessons for Planning Education from Abu Dhabi

Surajit Chakravarty, Abdellatif Qamhaieh _____ 23-36

Mapping San Siro Lab:

Experimenting Grounded, Interactive and Mutual Learning for Inclusive Cities

Francesca Cognetti, Ida Castelnovo _____ 37-54

Practical Plans:

Refugees, Spatial Design, and a Workshop of Planning

Marco Cremaschi _____ 55-71

Rethinking Planning Education Using Massive Open Online Courses:

The Case of Rethink the City

Igor Moreno Pessoa, Luz Maria Vergara, Willem Korthals Altes, Roberto Rocco _____ 72-84

EDITORIAL

We are pleased to present the third issue of *Transactions of the Association of the European Schools of Planning*, the open-access, double-blind peer-reviewed journal of AESOP.

The purpose of AESOP is promoting within Europe the development of teaching and research in the field of planning. Since its foundation it has always sought to foster the development of planning education, with the original AESOP Charter signed in Dortmund in 1987 placing a particular emphasis on this dimension of planning school activity. Reflecting this, the focus of the present issue of *Transactions* is on new experiences and issues in planning education. The papers presented here address a range of contemporary issues in the design and delivery of planning education in Europe and other parts of the globe. The focus of the contributions is diverse, ranging from wider structural and contextual issues such as the internationalisation of higher education, through to papers which report and reflect on, experiences of teaching in different institutions and contexts, and using different modes of delivery.

This issue opens with a commissioned piece – a thought provoking essay from Anna Geppert (Sorbonne Université) entitled 'Let's Teach for Real!' This offers a reflection on the impacts of the rise of electronic devices and digital platforms on teaching and learning. The effects of these on attention span, memory and social skills are discussed, and the results of the author's banning of digital devices and eschewal of digital platforms in her teaching are reported.

The second article is from Andrea Frank (University of Applied Science Stuttgart, Germany) and is a detailed examination of how meaningful internationalisation can be enhanced through innovative inter-institutional collaboration. The paper problematises the ubiquitous discourse of internationalisation which permeates the higher education sector, and points to its rather limited, predominantly instrumental implementation. Drawing on selected cases from the field of spatial planning it suggests that interinstitutional collaboration and partnership may be one way to reinvigorate a socially responsible internationalisation inspired by authentic internationalism and learning for global citizenship.

The third paper from Surajit Chakravarty (Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta) and Abdellatif Qamhaieh (American University in Dubai) reports on lessons for planning education from Abu Dhabi. It delves into a further question relating to internationalisation, namely the appropriateness of Western planning education for students from developing countries. This relates to the wider question of whether their education can be based on general principles, or needs to be based on more context specific material. The notions of the 'one world' model of planning education and the assumption that planning curricula, like planning skills, can be transferred internationally are unpacked. The paper argues that the question of appropriate planning curricula ought to be revisited especially from the perspective of education in developing countries and it reports on the authors' experiences gained in teaching Urban Planning in Abu Dhabi.

The final three papers report on modules which have recently been awarded the AESOP Prize for Excellence in Teaching (between 2015 and 2017). The latter was established in 2002 and recognises that teaching is one of the main activities of AESOP Member Schools. The Prize celebrates and encourages excellence in teaching and is one of the means through which AESOP disseminates innovative practices in teaching in its Member Schools. The fourth paper from Francesca Cognetti and Ida Castelnuovo (Politecnico di Milano) thus reflects on the module which was awarded the AESOP Excellence in Teaching Prize in 2015. This was Mapping San Siro Lab, a five-year action learning project in one of the largest public housing estates in Milan. This experimented with a pedagogical approach based on grounded, interactive, action-oriented and hybrid learning, and reflected on how this could foster educational practices which address the inclusive city. The paper uses the experience

to reflect on situated learning, the co-production of knowledge with community partners, and pedagogical and social outcomes of such an action-oriented teaching practice.

The fifth paper from Marco Cremaschi (Ecole Urbaine Sciences Po) draws on the module which was awarded the AESOP Excellence in Teaching Prize in 2016. This considered the challenges and opportunities of migration at the local scale depending on factors such as the demographic size and economic strength of arrival cities or regions. Such elements have already structured a network of places, refugee-cities, integration hubs, and transit points that play different roles in the increasing process of human mobility. The paper reports on a university student workshop which addressed such issues in the context of the island of Lampedusa, through a teaching approach that takes into account the need to integrate different forms of knowledge and disciplinary perspectives.

The sixth paper from Igor Moreno Pessoa, Luz Maria Vergara, Willem Korthals Altes, and Roberto Rocco (TU Delft) reflects on the module which was awarded the AESOP Excellence in Teaching Prize in 2017. This was titled Rethink the City and delivered through a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) – a mode of delivery which is becoming more widespread including in urban planning education. In an echo of the first article in the issue, the authors note how it is still not clear how this method of delivering a learning experience is being developed, delivered, and impacting planning education. The article uses the case of the Rethink the City module to explore how planning education is facing these changes and contributes to debates about online education.

Taken together the papers presented here offer a glimpse into the diverse questions and practices which characterise planning education at the present time. They address key contemporary themes, such as how planning education responds to ongoing internationalisation, technological change, and the challenges of planning to foster greater social inclusion and justice. The papers also offer an optimistic insight into how planning educators are proactively and innovatively reflecting on and responding to these issues which form a backdrop to their teaching. We hope that readers will take as much pleasure as the Editors in discovering these insightful, thought provoking, and inspiring accounts of evolving teaching practice in the discipline.

Finally, we thank all the authors who contributed a paper to this issue, and especially our reviewers for their support of the journal.

Kind regards

Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe, Andrea Frank, Nikos Karadimitriou, and Olivier Sykes

LET US TEACH FOR REAL!

A PLEA FOR TRADITIONAL TEACHING

Anna Geppert^a

(Received 28 May 2019; revised version received 17 June 2019; final version accepted 17 June 2019)

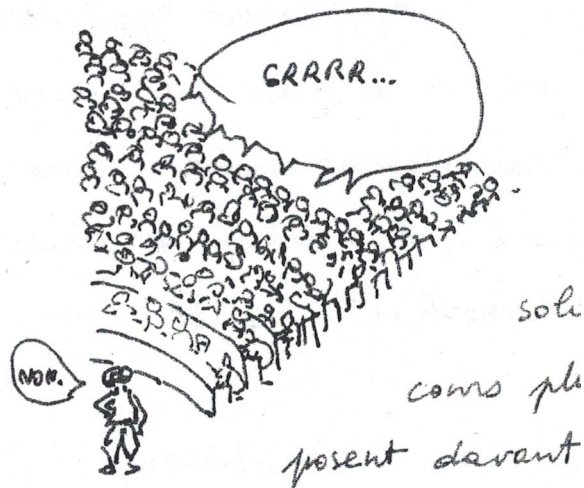
Abstract

Before we even noticed, electronic devices and the internet have invaded our lives and our universities. Far from being just an instrument, they change the way we teach, whether we want it or not. Unfortunately, instead of helping, they carry negative effects, well documented by research in psychology, psychiatry and neuroimaging over the last decade. They affect our attention, our memory, and our social skills. Without even being aware of it, we are playing the Sorcerer's Apprentice. Since 2011, the author has banned the digital and reinvigorated traditional teaching methods: a demanding, yet hugely rewarding experience. The present paper is a vibrant plea by a scholar to fellow scholars: let us get rid of the virtual! Let us teach for real!

Keywords

Planning education, learning methods, tech-free teaching.

a Town and Regional Planning Institute of the University Paris-Sorbonne, 191, rue Saint Jacques, 75005 Paris, France.
E-mail: anna.m.geppert@gmail.com



Wednesday, 5 October 2011, 8:55.

I enter the classroom with butterflies in my stomach: "Dear students, welcome. Before we begin, I must tell you that in my class, all electronic devices are forbidden."

At first, I meet with their heavy disapproval. But a few minutes later, it's magic: they are attentive, alert and cheerful.

Figure 1 - D-Day. This is an excerpt from a letter to my daughter where I am describing the beginning of my experience. (Geppert, 2012, *Lettre à Sophie 95*, 6 Oct. 2011).

1. From a Personal Experience to a Call for Action

For the past eight years, I have upheld the ban of all electronic devices, for the students as well as for myself. I got rid of desktop presentations, learning management systems, Massive Online Open Courses, even e-mails. The journey back to traditional methods has been a demanding, yet hugely rewarding experience. For some time now, I have been willing to share it with our community. In 2017, I proposed 'Planning Education in a Digital World' as the main theme for the AESOP Heads of Schools meeting. However, I never fully expressed my thoughts on the matter, perhaps because they needed to mature. The kind invitation from the Editorial Board of Transactions gives me this opportunity. Thank you!

While my intuitions were maturing, psychologists and psychiatrists were coping with the effects of the digital revolution. In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association included internet gaming disorder (IGD) in its list of non-substantive addictions (APA, 2013). Psychology researchers claim that compulsive internet use and social media addiction should be added to the list of agreed mental disorders (Pantic, 2014; Ryan et al., 2014). They have also developed indicators and methods for the evaluation of these disorders (Van den Eijnden et al., 2016), whilst countless surveys have shown the correlation between the use of smartphones and uneasiness, anxiety, feeling of loneliness, and depression. Young children are the most vulnerable (Clement and Miles, 2017). Don't give your children smartphones!

As far as education is concerned, ten years ago, a seminal study by Ophir et al. (2009) demonstrated that heavy media multitaskers perform worse than others in task-switching. The paradox is apparent: the 'scattered attention hypothesis' suggests that the distraction provided by digital environments causes attention deficits and depressive moods, hampering the heavy multitasker's performance. In the last decade, much research has investigated the effects of the digital environments on our cognition. Empirical research shows that academic performance is negatively impacted by the use of social media (Kirschner and Kaprinski, 2010), as well as smartphones (Lepp et al., 2014). In a recent experiment, a 20 minute lecture was delivered to two groups: one kept their smartphones, the other had them removed. No surprise: the group 'without smartphones' performed much better in the subsequent quiz (Mendoza et al., 2018).

No wonder that Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and other high-tech CEOs kept their offspring well protected from the products that made their fortunes, restricting their access to electronic devices. For their own children, they preserved printed books, outdoor activities, real life. (Bilton, 2014). But what about our students?

The present paper is personal and engaged. Initially, I wanted to share my still developing experience of tech-free teaching. While working on it, I discovered that an abundant literature, in psychology and psychiatry, confirmed a number of my intuitions. The most impressive was the 'online brain' by Firth et al. (2019). Confronting the findings of a very large literature, the authors analyse how the internet affects our cognition in three areas: our attention, our memory, and our social interactions. In each of these, the use of the internet can produce both acute and sustained alterations, reflected by visible changes in the brain. However, my paper remains what it was meant to be, a plea by a scholar to fellow scholars.

2. Teach for Real!

Virtual 'reality' is invading our universities as well as our daily lives. With the generalisation of smartphones, it became ubiquitous. Far from being just an instrument, electronic devices and the internet have changed the way we teach. In my opinion, we should opt them out.

2.1. Paper, Pen and Pencils

The digital revolution seems to have rendered obsolete handwriting – we can type on a computer, using software that will eventually correct or complete the text. The development of speech recognition applications seems to pave the way for even more easiness. Likewise, courses of computer-aided design are outcompeting traditional drawing. Whereas in business, it may seem convenient to dictate letters and realise visualisations swiftly, in education, slowness is necessary.

Handwriting is painstaking. It cannot be corrected and updated by deleting, backspacing, or rewriting. It cannot be endlessly moved and multiplied by cutting, pasting, and copying. These very limits force us to choose what we are writing, to decide what is important; to think. While writing, we organize the finite space of our sheet of paper. Whether hearing a lecture or writing an essay, we are doing it physically. This, again, helps us to structure reflection. Last but not least, handwriting is a wonderful support for memory. How many times, uncertain of the spelling of a word, have we scribbled it on a piece of paper? What we write gets fixed in our minds for good.

Hand drawing has irreplaceable educational value. In France, where planning is embedded in social sciences, my pupils are astonished when I ask for a hand drawing. Interestingly, every year, one or two of them discover an artistic talent that they weren't aware of. My hypothesis is that albeit hidden, this sensibility was part of their calling to our discipline. Skilled or not, all the students experience drawing as a way of looking at the surrounding world. With their pens and pencils, they reproduce the physical structure of buildings and landscapes, they try to catch colours, shapes, lights and shadows, atmospheres, and attitudes. It broadens their perception and improves their understanding of the world that they will soon be taking care of. Incidentally, afterwards, they also perform better in 3D modelling.

2.2. Books!

Before we had even noticed, the internet had become the first place where people look for information (Colley and Maltby, 2008). It is true for our students, perhaps also for ourselves. Optimistically, we hoped that the internet would be used like a giant library. But, although one can find there some good books in digital format, it isn't used in this way. Three years ago, at a meeting with a group of international PhD candidates, I asked about their readings. The first answer was: "I read a lot of blogs".

Perhaps it shouldn't have come as a surprise. Screens are not appropriate for sustained reading. On a sample of personal laptop users, a study measured that task-switching occurs every 19 seconds and that 75% of all on-screen content is viewed for less than one minute (Yeykelis et al., 2014, cited by Firth et al., 2019). How often have we 'googled' a question and been directed to a reference underlined in blue because we have already consulted it? Moreover, as we become quasi constantly connected to our devices, we tend to confuse the

inputs from internet with our own knowledge (Fisher et al., 2015; Hamilton and Yao, 2018). Unlike Socrates, we don't know our own ignorance.

Books! Well-written books, real books, books that look at me from the shelf, books that become lifetime friends, books that have music, flavour and scent, irreplaceable books! Let's also invite to the company a few, carefully selected journals.

2.3. Confrontation with Real Life Planning Problems

My late father Zbigniew Geppert, artist and engineer, was passionate about mathematics and computers. In the 1960s, he was learning COBOL, and in the 1970s, Pascal. At school, entering the 6th grade, we were asked to buy a pocket calculator. To my disappointment, my father refused. He told me:

I don't want you to accept that two hundred plus two equals four hundred without noticing that something is wrong. Before you use calculators, you must know very well how to count.

And he was right.

In spatial planning, it's even more subtle, because our statistics are describing places – you don't analyse cities the way you compare the calibre of screws in a production line. By transferring the calculations and the making of maps and diagrams to machines, we tend to jump over the process of their construction, which involves the thickness of space. How many wrong maps are based on right numbers, how many biased interpretations use accurate spatial statistics? Only one who has a sound understanding of space and planning should be allowed to even touch a computer.

In planning education, we develop this understanding through 'confrontation with real life planning problems'. We organise workshops, studios, project works... however we call them in our national contexts. Such 'regular exposure to and interaction with planning practice' is "one of the distinguishing marks of a fully fledged planning education" (AESOP Core Curriculum, 1995 in Geppert and Verhage, 2008, p.25). In recent years, simulations and Fablabs have gained momentum in professional and political practice. The impact of this shift on planning decisions and planning processes deserves a separate discussion. But as far as education is concerned, the experience of real fieldwork, direct contact with people, site visits and investigations, remains unique and should not be substituted.

2.4. Communication?

Suddenly, we've been overwhelmed by 'communication'. After the rising tide of e-mails, came the tsunami of online activities, proudly powered by the learning management systems acquired by our universities as tokens of modernity and progress – but also happening in the innumerable Facebook groups, Instagram communities and streams of 'snaps' that our students live in. For the scholars actively engaging in these activities, and even more so for the students, it tends to be very time consuming. For what purpose?

Are we really communicating, or are we yelling "a tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing"? (Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act.5, Sc.5). Social media is conveying a violent stream of poorly phrased and inarticulate thoughts. In this flow of filth, nuggets of valuable content are carried away, unnoticed. In spite of our efforts, our learning management systems bear hardly better fruit. Structurally, they foster quantity at the cost of quality. Altogether, social media generates a cacophony, a 'dictatorship of noise', where we cannot find ourselves, let alone the truth. To be able to really communicate, the first step is to rediscover the value of silence (Sarah, 2017).

According to Firth et al. (2019), teens as well as young adults are particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of online socialising, such as cyberbullying, loss of self-esteem, feelings of rejection and isolation, anxiety, and depression. Notwithstanding the intertwining reasons of this situation, our first responsibility is to create safe spaces protected from the internet, at least in our universities.



Figure 2 - *Homo obædiens*. Geppert, Zbigniew.1969. Crayon on paper. Collection of the Geppert Family, Reims, France.

3. David and Goliath

From eight years of tech-free teaching, I can present some conclusions. First, it gave me the practical confirmation, not only that this teaching style is possible in the contemporary world, but also that students like it – actually, my students prefer it. Second, ‘returning’ to traditional teaching has not been a way backwards, but a wonderful opportunity for refreshing, and hopefully improving my teaching methods. I have reduced contents in favour of steadier pace and deeper understanding. I have developed a compact but elaborate format for my handouts. The obligatory readings are few, but have to be done every week and I check their realisation. It may sound like primary school, but students perform better and we have much more mature discussions.

In the meantime, things have developed at a dramatic pace: “For better or worse, we are already conducting a mass-scale experiment of extensive Internet usage across the global population” - and this while a fuller understanding of the sustained impact of this usage across our society is yet to be gained (Firth et al., 2019, p.127).

Aren’t we playing the Sorcerer’s Apprentice? Having all the information at our fingertips is an illusion. It remains virtual – neither can we access all of it, nor could we handle it. If, at the same time, we reduce our capacities of memory, of sustained attention, of socialising, then it means that we are chasing after rainbows. The digital revolution is a threat to our minds. See the emotional waves going over the world after dramatic events, or the sudden uprise of new media icons. Where is reason? And, a few days later, what’s left of it?

In front of such issues, I feel small. I would like to have a solution for the world... But this is out of my reach. And so I keep doing my humble work, with those students that are my direct responsibility, “for what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Mark, 8:37).

References

- American Psychiatric Association (2013) *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders*. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association, text revision, 5th ed.
- Bilton, Nick (2014) Steve Jobs was a low-tech parent. *New York Times*, Sept. 10, 2014.
- Clement, Joe and Matt Miles (2017) *Screen schooled: Two veteran teachers expose how technology overuse is making our kids dumber*. Chicago Review Press.
- Colley, Ann and John Maltby (2008) Impact of the Internet on our lives: male and female personal perspectives. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 24 (5), pp.2005-2013.
- Firth, Joseph, John Torous, Brendon Stubbs, Josh A. Firth, Genevieve Z. Steiner, Lee Smith, Mario Alvarez-Jimenez, John Gleeson, Davy Vancampfort, Christopher J. Armitage and Jerome Sarris (2019) The 'online brain': How the Internet may be changing our cognition. *World Psychiatry*, 18 (2), pp.119-129.
- Fisher, Matthew, Mariel K. Goddu and Franck C. Keil (2015) Searching for explanations: How the Internet inflates estimates of internal knowledge. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 144 (3), pp.674-687.
- Geppert, Anna and Roelof Verhage (eds) (2008) Towards a European recognition for the planning profession. *Planning Education*, N°1. AESOP.
- Geppert, Anna (2012) *Lettres à Sophie*, 2011-2012.
- Hamilton, Kristy A. and Mike Zheng Yu Yao (2018) Blurring boundaries: Effects of device features on metacognitive evaluations. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 89, pp.213-220.
- Kirschner, Paul A. and Aryn C. Karpinski (2010) Facebook® and academic performance. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26 (6), pp.1237-1245.
- Lepp, Andrew, Jacob E. Barkley and Aryn C. Karpinski (2014) The relationship between cell phone use, academic performance, anxiety, and satisfaction with life in college students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 31, pp.343-350.
- Mendoza, Jessica S., Benjamin C. Pody, Seungyeon Lee, Minsung Kim and Ian M. McDonough (2018) The effect of cellphones on attention and learning: The influences of time, distraction, and nomophobia. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 86, pp.52-60.
- Ophir, Eyal, Clifford Nass and Anthony D. Wagner (2009) Cognitive control in media multitaskers. In *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 106. September 15, 2009.
- Pantic, Igor (2014) Online social networking and mental health. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, 17 (10), pp.652-657.
- Ryan, Tracii, Andrea Chester, John Reece and Sophia Xenos (2014) The uses and abuses of Facebook: a review of Facebook addiction. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 3 (3), pp.133-148.
- Sarah, Cardinal Robert (2017) *The power of silence: Against the dictatorship of noise*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.
- Van den Eijnden, Regina J.J.M., Jeroen S. Lemmens and Patti M. Valkenburg (2016) The social media disorder scale. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 61, pp.478-187.
- Yeykelis, Leo, James J. Cummings and Byron Reeves (2014) Multitasking on a single device: Arousal and the frequency, anticipation, and prediction of switching between media content on a computer. *Journal of Communication*, 64 (1), pp.167-192.

ENHANCING INTERNATIONALISATION THROUGH INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION: INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN PLANNING EDUCATION

Andrea I. Frank^a

(Received 5 March 2019; revised version received 5 May 2019; final version accepted 17 May 2019)

Abstract

Although internationalisation has been identified as a key transformative factor of higher education at the beginning of the 21st century and is firmly embedded in most institutional missions, there is growing concern amongst educators that internationalisation is being devalued and that the progress of its implementation has stalled. One particularly worrying aspect is a rather limited, predominantly instrumental implementation of internationalisation by institutions subsumed by neoliberal ideologies, economics and rankings, which prioritises international student recruitment over enhancing intercultural understanding, curricula and students' personal development. Responding to calls to re-orient institutional missions, this reflective essay seeks to stimulate a discussion of how aspirations of socially responsible internationalisation (internationalism) and learning for global citizenship may be reclaimed. Drawing on selected cases from the field of spatial planning, the author suggests that interinstitutional collaboration and partnerships could be a valid means to support (explicitly or implicitly) socially responsible internationalisation while also covering institutional performance targets. Cases are interrogated for their rationale (aims, institutional arrangements, focus) to gain an understanding of how they address various aspects of internationalisation and to draw lessons for wider adoption.

Keywords

Innovation, teaching, inter-institutional collaboration, planning education, internationalisation, university social responsibility

1. Introduction

Internationalisation has been identified as a key transformative factor in higher education at the beginning of the 21st century (Gacel-Ávila, 2005). This is largely driven by the notion that students need to be prepared to operate in a world that is more and more internationally and interculturally connected and globalised (UN Habitat, 2009; Sykes et al., 2015). While universities have featured considerable levels of international relationships and culturally diverse workforces from their early days (e.g., Peel and Frank, 2008), the internationalisation trend of late exhibits new dimensions and scales (De Wit and Hunter, 2015). As such, the internationalisation of higher education has become a “process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2003, p.2). More recently, De Wit and Hunter (2015, p.3) suggested that this process is to be conceived as *intentional and inclusive*, i.e. by “enhanc[ing] the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a *meaningful contribution to society*” (emphasis added by author). In sum, the modern internationalised university: (a) serves a global community by welcoming and attracting talented, international students and scholars, (b) addresses local as well as global problems, which often cannot be investigated in isolation, through research and social engagement, (c) ensures inclusive, intercultural learning and competency development in and through the classroom and curricula, and (d) fosters a more peaceful world by increasing mutual understanding.

While institutions insist that internationalisation is paramount to attain competitiveness, it should come as no surprise that different interpretations of the internationalisation agenda are promoted by different stakeholders within as well as outside institutions. Some literature distinguishes between ‘internationalisation’ (driven by neoliberal profit-seeking motives) and ‘internationalism’ (focusing more on intercultural competencies) (Jones, 1998), although this terminology is not adopted in this essay. As a result, strategies and interventions vary and inevitably, different internationalisation aspects incur different issues, costs, and benefits which, in turn, affect stakeholders unequally. For example, increasing the percentage of international students will represent a welcome financial and reputational gain at the institutional level, but classes with large proportions of international students tend to increase workloads and present a burden to individual educators having to offer additional learning support on a day-to-day basis (Peel and Frank, 2008; Sykes et al., 2015). Without their efforts being rewarded, educators can become resentful towards the internationalisation strategies favoured under entrepreneurial-competitive institutional governance models that lead to classrooms inhabited by large proportions of international students. Moreover, the presence of international students alone does not automatically induce intercultural learning; this requires facilitation and adaptation of teaching materials and approaches for which adequate institutional support needs to be available (Jones and Brown, 2007). A failure of institutions in Western countries to provide curricula that cover different national contexts can also make it difficult for international students to return successfully to their home countries, contributing to the brain drain in developing economies (UN Habitat, 2009; Sykes et al., 2015).

Given the wide-spread propensity at institutional level to focus on internationalisation in terms of mere quantitative performance (such as international student recruitment, numbers of student exchanges and degree mobility) – at least in the Anglo-American-Australian context, Brandenburg and De Wit (2011) have bemoaned a gradual deterioration of substance and subsequent devaluation of internationalisation. In order to re-establish the credibility of the internationalisation project, De Wit and Hunter (2015) call for a strengthening of the academic, political and social rationales of the internationalisation of higher education with a focus on enhancing the quality of learning such that “our students will be prepared to live and work in a global world.” (Brandenburg and De Wit, 2011, p.17). A quality focus may also help stem the latest threats to internationalised education deriving from anti-immigration and nation-centred sentiments that have arisen in the USA and a range of European countries (Altbach and De Wit, 2018).

This paper seeks to stimulate a discussion on how inclusive and socially responsible internationalisation and learning for global citizenship might be reclaimed in the current climate of commercial institutional policies, the commodification of knowledge, and isolationist national political tendencies. Drawing on selected cases of innovative initiatives in the field of urban and spatial planning education, the author argues that inter-institutional and international collaborations with multiple aims and agendas could enable academics to invoke synergies and compliance with broader institutional agendas while also developing quality learning and curriculum internationalisation for staff and students. This in turn allows all involved to focus on learning

and becoming. The latter – becoming – has been identified in addition to knowledge and skills as a necessary aspect for individuals to be able to cope in a globalised, complex world (Barnett, 2009).

Offering some theoretical context, the first section reviews drivers and conditions for collaboration in general. Second, issues in internationalisation in spatial planning are briefly recounted. Third, a review of five cases of curricular and learning-focused internationalisation in planning education employing inter-institutional collaboration and partnerships¹ are presented and analysed to better understand the conditions that aided their success and sustainability. Dilemmas, challenges and opportunities of collaboration for internationalisation are discussed and lessons drawn to assist wider adoption.

2. Collaboration in Higher Education

The literature on the ‘collaborative advantage’ in the world of business, research, development and production is extensive and growing (Kanter, 1994; Loan-Clarke and Preston, 2002; Hansen and Nohria, 2005; Skinner, 2018). Collaboration is also common in academic research, especially with funders, including EU research programmes frequently stipulating collaborative bids involving different institutions or disciplines. However, the benefits of cooperation and collaboration between higher education institutions for education and programme provision are neither as obvious nor as well documented and remain less prominent. Modest cooperation between different departments within a university typically exist, but by and large there tends to be less cooperation let alone collaboration for the purpose of creating synergies in programme delivery between institutions. Exceptions include strategic international alliances and collaborations between developed and developing countries’ institutions, featuring, for example, overseas franchises and dual degree agreements. Overall, this is to be expected – particularly in national settings that promote a commercial HE landscape - as universities offering programmes in the same subject are de facto in competition (Barnett, 2017) and, unless there are contractual agreements, there is no reward or incentive for individual academics to support other institutions – the occasional esteem-enhancing invited guest lecture or seminar representing excluded.² Academics may also share syllabi informally (to build social collegiate capital) or formally at conferences and workshops focused on pedagogy and education. Nevertheless, Eckel et al. (2004a, 2004b) have postulated that it still may make sense to ‘collaborate’ as the concepts underpinning the collaborative advantage also hold for higher education teaching.

2.1. Motives and Drivers

Cooperative ventures and alliance formation are generally motivated either by a scarcity of resources whereby partners can potentially save on costs and investments by pooling, sharing, and jointly using resources such as facilities, knowledge, or networks (e.g., Saxton, 1997), or by the potential to increase power (prestige), efficiency, or production (Osborn and Hagadoorn, 1997). Examples include inter-institutional cooperation and collaboration in the provision of distance education and the development of online learning materials where a collaborative advantage derives from economies of scale and the pooling of specialised expertise. The burden of substantial upfront investments necessary for the creation of online and self-directed learning resources is easier to bear when shared by several partners. The fact that institutions that have developed sophisticated electronic teaching resources tend to protect their investments by fiercely guarding copyrights of this material and restricting access to fee-paying students and employees of the institution(s) involved in their development shows, on the one hand, the level of value creation and on the other that collaborations between institutions can, indeed, increase institutional competitiveness (Eckel et al., 2004a, 2004b). While efforts are made to provide free access to knowledge and resources created by university research to all members of society via massive open online courses (or MOOCs) for example, any certification of learning derived from MOOCs does still incur costs.

1 While some distinguish collaboration to mean a group of individuals or departments working together towards a single shared goal, and cooperation to mean working together to achieve individual selfish goals – this essay uses the words interchangeably.

2 Part-time tutors/lecturers are exceptions as they, not infrequently, teach at multiple institutions.

Resource scarcity is certainly a growing issue for universities especially where neoliberal government policies and recessions have triggered considerable cuts in state funding to higher education. This means universities increasingly need to develop alternative income sources by raising tuition fees, if permissible, or via other revenue generating activities to sustain operations. White and Hauck (2000) and Hearn (2003) suggest that entrepreneurial, cooperative ventures such as joint degree programmes offered in partnership with other universities (and/or organisations) represent one opportunity to develop additional revenue streams. The report on Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education (OECD, 2004) endorses the growing importance of this collaborative driver documenting an increasing shift toward a revenue-generating approach in cross-border higher education, such as dual degrees with international partners.

Fairweather's (1988) conjecture that institutions primarily participate in [international] cooperative ventures for matters of prestige and status remains nevertheless relevant. His hypothesis is in line with organisational learning theory, which states that the main motivator for collaboration in loosely coupled systems such as higher education is the ability to develop superior knowledge, or specific programmes with international learning outcomes or work-based dual degrees when institutions partner with industry. Although Kezar (2006) refers to this theoretical framework in an intra-organisational context, there is no reason why the development of superior knowledge should not occur or be relevant in inter-organisational cooperation between two or more institutions disseminating complementary knowledge. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, for academicians collaboration is often motivated to a greater degree by "reputational capital than cash" (Kendal, 2008). This implies that institutions are interested in long-term gains rather than short term profits. Overall, an increased institutional reputation will practically translate into improved opportunities for revenue generation in the long-term.

Further triggers for (international) inter-institutional cooperation and collaboration in higher education are linked to government policy. International student exchange and cross-border education is considered a means to operationalise objectives of national importance such as fostering mutual understanding, developing a skilled immigrant labour force, and building capacity (OECD, 2004). Governments use funding as incentives to influence organisational behaviour and to stimulate the formation of (international) collaborative partnerships. Programmes such as ATLANTIS (EU – USA cooperation in higher education) or ERASMUS (in the EU) facilitate staff and student mobility and promote the development of multi-institutional border-crossing curricula and degrees. The EU Erasmus Mundus scheme specifically encourages the creation of "quality" masters programmes in new kinds of specialised knowledge areas jointly provided by sets of institutions from at least three different EU countries.³ This has been identified as a strategy "to prepare participants from the EU and its partner countries for life in a global, knowledge based society" (van der Wende and Huisman 2004, p.29).

In sum, multiple drivers are at work in an additive way in inter-institutional and international collaboration. Partners may engage in cooperation due to different motives with internationalisation being one of them. However, collaboration is an essential precondition for socially responsible and balanced internationalisation.

2.2. Conditions for Successful Cooperation

As indicated, collaboration between academic institutions can be a lucrative and useful strategy with the potential to increase revenue, knowledge, and reputation; but this does not mean it is easy or straightforward. Successful collaboration hinges on individual competencies as well as group relationships (Kezar, 2006; Shore and Groen, 2009). Setting up cooperative ventures requires vision, leadership, and collaborative working skills such as the ability to identify partnering opportunities and activities, and the patience to build and nurture requisite relationships. "Developing a good fit takes time and requires building trust and becoming familiar with each other's priorities, values, and styles" (Eckel et al., 2004b, p.7). There is a need to understand the different requirements and structural frameworks of partner institutions; this is especially important in international ventures. Cooperation is frequently complicated or even compromised by differences in administrative

3 Between 2004 and 2013, ca 140 inter-institutional Master programmes were created (see https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus_en - accessed February 8, 2019)

processes and regulations governing the institutions involved (Dühr et al., 2016). Since overcoming such barriers requires the costly development and implementation of institutional coping mechanisms, compatibility as in a certain similarity in organisational structure and culture amongst partners increases the performance level and success of collaborations. In other words, partners should be different, yet similar (Beerkens and DerWende, 2007). In applied disciplines, barriers could arise from different interpretations and conceptions of professional roles (Fernandez-Güell, 2015). In order to maximise benefits from the collaboration, an awareness of a programme's foci is important. For example, Fernandez-Güell (2015) suggests it may be comparatively more fruitful for two departments from different countries to collaborate if the joint programme focuses on global issues that affect urban development in both places rather than a joint programme which focuses on local issues. Another key in cooperation and collaboration is the promise of a clearly identifiable reward – financial or otherwise for each partner. From a resource-based view, rewards will be greater if institutions complement each other. So, for instance, a research-intensive institution may cooperate with a teaching university that has a strong base of practitioner-educators. While one institution derives benefits from the practice-based expertise, the other will heighten its status through the connection with research expertise.

Sustaining cooperation long-term relies on the (evolved) trust and belief that benefits will continue to accrue. Following Axelrod (2000), it is predictable that individual institutions are likely to abandon a partnership sooner rather than later if the expected reward does not materialise. If lack of cooperation or fulfilling responsibilities within a partnership is jeopardising the rewards for all, it is useful to develop strategies that ensure adherence to the cooperative agreement through a contract or agreement (e.g., a Memorandum of Understanding) that outlines clear rules, expectations, and responsibilities. Kezar (2006) and Eckel et al. (2004a) highlight that any collaborative activity should ideally be aligned with institutional strategies and that committed individuals at each partner organisation must be identified. Backing from top tier administrators is vital as well. In this vein, Mohrman et al. (1995) suggest that organisational structures and processes at universities in themselves may pose barriers to cooperative ventures, as one cannot impose collaborative behaviour within a context that supports and rewards individualistic work that focuses narrowly on one's home institution. Strategies, mission statements and promotion criteria may have to be re-written such that they explicitly incorporate and foster collaboration. Overall, successful cooperation depends on the interplay of several factors, including institutional and programme complementarity and compatibility as well as individual leadership, collaborative capacity, relationships, trust, and individual incentives. Whether one of these factors will be more prominent is likely to depend on the type of partnership.

3. Internationalisation in Urban Planning Education

While planning educators more and more acknowledge that future practitioners should have exposure to planning issues and contexts outside their home countries (e.g., Pezzoli and Howe, 2001; Goldstein et al., 2006; Dandekar, 2009; UN Habitat, 2009; Scholl, 2012), the context dependent nature of planning knowledge, practice, and culture typically stymies simple transferability of planning knowledge (e.g., Fernandez-Güell, 2015; Othengrafen and Knieling, 2016). This awareness has led to a retraction of academic programmes offered by Western institutions for students from developing countries and dampened an (over)enthusiasm for internationalisation in recent years. It has also prevented thus far – the development and wide-spread adoption⁴ of international accreditation of planning education programmes (e.g., Harrison, 2003; Frank et al., 2012). The debate on whether planning programmes designed to educate professionals for Western, industrialised countries and economies offer knowledge and skills relevant for addressing issues in the developing world (Sanyal, 1989; Burayidi, 1993; Zinn et al., 1993; Afshar, 2001; Watson, 2008; UN Habitat, 2009) or whether such programmes present a kind of academic colonialisation is an illustration of this discourse in the planning field.

Nevertheless, internationalisation in and of planning education is important for a number of reasons. Pezzoli and Howe (2001) and Goldstein et al. (2006), for example, assert that curricula for spatial planning need to raise awareness of the influences of globalisation amongst future professionals. Issues such as climate change or recent large-scale population migration require actions and planning interventions at multinational if not global as well as local level. Planning departments in multicultural cities and internationally operating

4 Some exceptions exist such as the RTPi accredited planning programmes at Hong Kong University; The Chinese University of Hong Kong; University of Botswana (Botswana) and University of Cape Town (South Africa).

consultancies increasingly expect students to be 'globally-minded' with an understanding of international issues (Scholl, 2012) and to have multi-cultural literacies (Sandercock, 1999).

Curriculum internationalisation in the sense of developing globally competent planners, however, is not trivial (Looye and Sesay, 1998; Sykes et al., 2015). It requires considerable engagement by educators and resources (Jammal, 1993; Dandekar, 2009). In order to internationalise curricula, educators themselves require direct (international) experience (Auffrey and Romanos, 2001). Internationalisation in planning education has thus far relied mostly on field-based teaching, which entails limited accessibility due to its resource implications (Hoey et al., 2017). The increasing need and demand to incorporate international perspectives, and intercultural experiences and competencies in curricula more broadly exerts novel demands on programme delivery and curricula, which may be difficult to fulfil for institutions affected by a climate of fiscal austerity and government funding cuts in many Western European countries, and also elsewhere (e.g., Altbach et al., 2011).

That said, selected planning departments in UK, Australian, and New Zealand based institutions have established reasonable income streams through teaching international students either on their home or on satellite campuses. In the case of teaching foreign students on satellite campuses, valuable international experiences are gained by academics shuttling between locations, which can shape more internationalised curricula for the long-term (see also Sykes et al., 2015). Income from international tuition fees (if applicable) could be ringfenced to strategically pay for internationalisation in a comprehensive fashion. Building on Frank and Symonds (2008) who have argued that inter-institutional collaboration could create significant synergies in efforts to provide a curriculum containing up-to-date content on domestic and international topics, another approach may be for institutions to share resources and duties, i.e. collaborate, to achieve higher quality results and more inclusive, socially responsible internationalisation.

4. International Collaboration Case Studies

Several innovative initiatives⁵ in planning education are examined. In all five cases, institutions from different countries are delivering teaching jointly and thereby support curriculum internationalisation and learning. The analysis focuses on how and why the collaborative activities were set up, the supporting institutional arrangements, perceived benefits, and potential barriers. While the cases were chosen to illustrate a variety of possible approaches, motives, and collaborative intensities, ranging from degrees to joint projects, from bilateral arrangements to multi-institutional networks, and involving individual students as well as larger cohorts, no claim is made that all possible typologies are covered nor all world regions. Three cases involve solely European countries, one collaboration is pan-Atlantic between US and European institutions, and the fifth one links three world regions (US-Europe-SE Asia). Another selection criterion was that the collaborations had endured for at least three iterations and possibly longer. Information on the case details were collected through interviews with key actors, website site searches, and where available from student feedback.

4.1. Network for European and US Regional and Urban Studies (NEURUS)

The NEURUS⁶ is an example of a collaboration of an international consortium of faculties from three European and four US-based universities that is committed to promoting comparative studies of urban and regional development issues. The collaboration facilitates and supports mobility, for purposes of research and study, of a modest number of students and fellows amongst the partner institutions. Unlike standard year abroad schemes in the US, the NEURUS focuses on graduate students who will spend a single immersive semester at one of the partner institutions conducting a comparative research project in urban development.

The network was established in 1998 with seed funding from the US Department of Education and the European Commission Directorate General XXII (Education, Training and Youth). It initially consisted of six universities, three in Europe and three in the USA. Since project funding ceased in 2002, the consortium has become self-funded with occasional external monies obtained by individual scholars (e.g., Fulbright). Nevertheless, it has

5 Standard student exchanges (e.g., Erasmus mobility) or study abroad programmes were excluded in this essay.

6 See NEURUS website: <http://www.neurusinfo.org/about-neurus.html>

sustained operation for a remarkable two decades and still continues. A programme evaluation (Goldstein et al., 2006) reveals that contrary to expectations, all partner institutions managed to achieve the target of sending/receiving three students per year during the time when funding was available and have maintained an average of two exchanges per annum and institution thereafter.

Management structures are informal and devolved whereby each institution has a designated coordinator who is responsible for marketing, recruiting, and advising students. Students prepare for their credit-bearing mobility semester by enrolling in a specially developed distance learning module prior to their time abroad. This distance learning module requires three critical essays on comparative planning topics. Each institution also provides a range of support mechanisms for visiting students in terms of orientation and supervision. Academics from all institutions meet for one-week long seminars each Autumn (Europe) and Spring (in US) reviewing student projects and discussing research methods.

While rewards for the partners appear small from an external point of view, they seem to be accrued steadily and evenly amongst partners. Over 20 years, the network has organized around 40 seminars and facilitated the exchange of 217 students – this no doubt contributes to their institutions' internationalisation goals. Additionally, network partners' benefits include new course development and research (Goldstein et al., 2006), particularly as a grant from the ATLANTIS programme in 2004/5 provided the resources to create a certificate degree. Another factor contributing to the network's sustainability is its multi-dimensionality. The strong thematic focus – i.e. being a community of interest centred on comparative study methods and development issues caters to the research interests of the academics involved not solely to internationalisation and teaching. An interview with one of the consortium representatives highlighted the strong social bonds that exist amongst network members. Many of the individuals involved in developing the network knew each other well having studied and/or taught at the same institution – “there is a University of Illinois Urbana Champaign connection” (Silver, 2011; 2019), which helped to provide the high levels of trust and collegiality that have been identified as important for successful cooperation (Axelrod, 2000; Eckel et al., 2004a; 2004b). Another benefit is the opportunity to nurture such friendships during the annual seminars. Consortium membership has been stable with a few institutions joining and one dropping out. These changes do not reflect disenchantment with the collaboration but are due to the academics involved moving posts and taking the network with them and others having been associated with the network as students or fellows wanting to contribute and join to share in the prestige of being associated with the programme.

4.2. International Doctoral College – Spatial Research Lab

A similar initiative is the 'International Doctoral College' – a collaboration of six university departments (in three German speaking countries – Austria, Germany and Switzerland), which aims to enhance and internationalise doctoral education and training in spatial planning (Internationales Doktorandenkolleg/Forschungslabor Raum, 2012). Research in the field of spatial planning frequently requires a knowledge of mixed methods and working with a team of experts across disciplines. Providing support infrastructure in terms of supervision, or research methods training can be difficult especially in smaller departments as planning schools often are. Moreover, with limited numbers of doctoral students there is a risk that individuals have very isolated learning experiences and few opportunities for international exchanges, exposure to wider academic debate, and lack of a transparency of the standard of achievement, which the Bologna process is recommending for the third cycle of education in Europe (Koch-Christensen, 2005).

The motive for creating the 'International Doctoral College – Spatial research lab' was to overcome these issues by creating a different format of doctoral education. In contrast to the NEURUS, which was created after securing a seed funding grant, the instigators involved in this collaboration deliberately shunned external funding to avoid administrative workloads and restrictive moulds being imposed by funders. Administration is informal; whereby a rotating Chair for the programme is selected from amongst the collaborating institutions over the entirety of a three-year (doctoral training) cycle. To create synergy, all dissertations within one cycle address a topic under an overarching theme and doctoral students are supported by up to three one-week long seminars covering research methods and topical issues in the first two years. Seminars are hosted in rotation by each of the partners and designed to support students' research. The first intake, in 2007, comprised approximately 30 students across six participating institutions (University of Stuttgart, Germany; ETH Zurich, Switzerland; HafenCity University Hamburg, Germany; Institute of Technology at the University of Karlsruhe, Germany; Technical University Vienna, Austria; Technical University Munich, Germany). While participating

doctoral candidates gain their credentials under the regulations of their home institution, they profit from the discourses at joint doctoral seminars along the way. The doctoral research lab is presently in its third iteration (2017-2020).⁷ In addition to the research seminars, the supervisor team added field trips to locations relevant to the overarching topic (Scholl, 2019) in this latest iteration. Again, leadership, institutional similarities (e.g., German-speaking), and prior social contact represent success factors here. The number of partners remained stable over time, although there were some institutional changes. As in the previous example, these changes derived from academics retiring or changing posts. While collaborations regarding doctoral research training exist elsewhere such as the Wales doctoral training partnership (walesdtp.ac.uk) to create economies of scale for the training of social scientists, the cross-border collaboration of institutions adds an internationalisation perspective.

4.3. Collaborative International 'Live' Projects

'Live' projects known also as 'workshops,' or 'laboratories' are teaching activities whereby students act as consultants for a community organisation, local authority or similar type of partner. While highly valuable for learning, 'live' projects are resource intensive (e.g., Forsyth et al., 2000; Kotval, 2003) and international live projects incur additional complexities in their delivery. Nevertheless, with planning schools under pressure to increase the level of international experiences for students while also having to offer practice-based curriculum elements, international live projects represent a promising pedagogical approach that can satisfy both needs by bringing students from different cultures together for one-two weeks of project work. In fact, such projects are increasingly a feature of European planning education programmes – often supported by funding from Erasmus and Erasmus+ schemes. They are generally run once or twice but often cease once project funding runs out.

The live project example presented here derives from a network building project between three institutions (one UK, one US, and one Indonesian University) for which the joint teaching activity, a live project with students was conceived as integral to research and capacity building activities. The research element of the project provided a focus for the live project and meant that multi-national student teams were tasked with exploring the potential contributions of green infrastructure in promoting sustainable development. Following grant stipulations that activities should focus on issues in the low-income partner country, UK and US students travelled for two weeks to Jakarta (Indonesia) to work with students and faculty from the University of Indonesia and local government officials to develop solutions using green infrastructure approaches to address water and air pollution issues amongst other things.

As the educators for this collaboration came not only from different institutions but also brought different approaches to planning to bear – the first workshop revealed a considerable mismatch in expectations and problem-solving approaches. The host institution embraced an urban design approach in their education and expected students to conduct a site analysis followed by a physical design proposal, whereas the UK and US educators envisioned that students would engage in social science oriented primary data collection followed by the development of strategies and policy recommendations. The conflicting expectations added complexity and were critiqued by students as confusing. It further added stress to working in an already challenging context. The intensive discussions that ensued amongst students and academics, however, ultimately enhanced the results of the project with teams creating proposals that incorporated both design and policy elements. In subsequent iterations, student guidance and workshop structure embraced the traditions of all schools from the start enabling true intercultural learning and enhancement.

The primary aim of the project was to offer students a research-led international experience (working with students from another country at home or abroad), while testing out research hypotheses and data collection methods as a way of supporting the research project and contributing to capacity development. Students benefited not only from exposure to different national cultures and traditions but also different kinds of knowledge and expertise from the different institutions as well as local practices. In turn, academics had the opportunity to reflect on the merits of the different pedagogies and were able to enrich their own institutional

7 See also: <http://flr.wzw.tum.de/index.php?id=2&L=1>

practices. The field work experience for US and UK students was unique and could not have been arranged easily (if at all) without the Indonesian partner. The collaboration between foreign and native students allowed unique access to local populations through the local language. Student feedback has been very positive. US and UK students most frequently commented on how working with their Indonesian counterparts helped them expand their horizons and deepened their understanding of urbanisation challenges in developing economies; while Indonesian students voiced appreciation of the discussions with, and viewpoints of, their counterparts and the opportunity to practice their English.

All institutions have committed their own funding to continue the collaboration beyond the funding period. Rewards for the different partners are different but accrue on all sides and include two documents, which were derived from the students' project reports. The UK institution embedded the activity into an existing mandatory course and the live project's value derives from contributing to regular, credit-bearing teaching, providing a high-quality student experience as well as developing relationships with colleagues abroad for research collaboration. The US institution has long standing relations with the Indonesian partner and this workshop is one of many activities which maintains momentum in a collaboration that attracts international doctoral talent to the US as well as research projects. The Indonesian partner is under pressure to internationalise and publish more in English and the collaboration helps to fulfil these institutional obligations.

4.4. Institutional Partnerships Delivering Degree Programmes

The final two examples concern international, inter-institutional collaborations for degree programmes. While collaboration for dual degrees nowadays proliferates – frequently between developed and developing countries, the selected examples feature multi-lateral collaborations. The first is an Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters established following a call by the European Commission's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) to create degrees that would be offered by a minimum of three EU higher education institutions. The second is an idealistic bottom up experiment co-financed through a number of small-scale donors and drawing on social relationships and good will.

The two-year Master in Science in International Cooperation in Urban Development (Mundus Urbano⁸) is one of several interdisciplinary masters programmes in the field of Architecture, Urban and Regional Planning. Mundus Urbano commenced operation in the first funding tranche of the Erasmus Mundus Master Course (EMMC) initiative (2007/8) and has now run continuously for over a decade. Over this time, the programme has enrolled an average of 25 students per annum from 80 different countries with a broad spectrum of disciplinary backgrounds including architecture, planning, geography and political science. The programme is delivered by a consortium of four institutions: Technical University Darmstadt (TUD, Germany), University Grenoble Alpes (UGA, France), Universidad Internacional de Catalunya (UIC, Spain) and Università degli Studi Roma Tor Vergata (URTV, Italy). The first year is taught by the Faculty of Architecture at the TUD and conveys fundamental knowledge in understanding "space, society and technology in urban development in the context of globalization" (Mundus Urbano, n. D.). Thereafter, students will re-locate for semester one of year two to develop their specialism, which is provided through the partner institutions. Students selecting Urban Development Economics continue their studies at URTV in Italy; students specializing in (Emergency) Housing and Environmental Urban Development study at UIC in Barcelona (Spain); and students focusing on Urban Management and Social Programs attend UGA Grenoble (France). In semester two of year two, students are expected to pursue an internship or field research, or possibly a period of study at a non-EU partner university and submit a thesis (or a final exam in the case of Rome). Aside from the formal partnership between the four European institutions, each institution maintains a range of informal links with universities outside of Europe which will accept and support students' projects and fieldwork while enrolled on the Mundus Urbano.

In line with the international development focus of the curriculum, the programme's language of instruction is English for all core elements with some optional courses taught in the local language of the host institutions which contributes a valuable internationalisation aspect. During a phone interview, the programme director (based at TUD) indicated that without the inter-institutional collaboration it would be impossible to offer

8 see also: www.mundus-urbano.eu

the programme's high-quality curriculum. The seed funding provided the impetus to start the programme and was instrumental in alleviating the costs associated with the setup, the establishment of administrative structures and procedures for such a complex endeavour, and also provided student scholarships. The initial funding period for Erasmus Mundus courses was four years, after which programmes were to become self-sustaining. Each Erasmus Mundus programme is different in terms of structure, number of partners and their contributions, but all follow guidance on contractual relationships and administrative reporting as part of the grant conditions. As such, the structure of the institutional relationship is well defined and formalised. Administratively, the funding follows the students, i.e., partners receive a share for administrative costs proportionate to their contribution to the overall programme as well as funding for each student selecting their offered specialism.

The second example, a two-year master's degree under the title of architecture.studium.generale or 'Reiseuni. lab'⁹ represents an idealistic experimental degree that was inspired by Humboldtian ideals whereby universities combine research and teaching (Fallis, 2007, p.29). The degree course developed at the Brandenburg Technical University in Cottbus seeks to provide a broad professional education for architects and urban planners by merging a classical educational journey with intensive interdisciplinary project-based studies to foster graduates' ability and competencies in problem-solving and uptake of responsibilities in society. Curricular and conceptual leadership and administration was held by Brandenburg Technical University in Cottbus (also the degree awarding institution) but the majority of students' study time was spent at partner institutions. After an induction period in Cottbus, students embarked on an educational journey of three semesters spending seven weeks each at seven partner institutions across Europe and the Middle East (e.g., Tallinn University of Applied Sciences; Universidade Autònoma de Lisboa, Politechnika Wroclawska; Universität Innsbruck; Universidad de Sevilla, Tel Aviv University; Universität der Künste Berlin). At each location they worked in changing project teams under the supervision of the local host institution's academics on a local project before having one week to move to their next location. The final five months were spent on an individual master's thesis, which was focused on deepening one of the projects.

In the initial version of the program, 36 students in two cohorts completed the course (2010-2012, 2011-2013). Students paid a modest amount of tuition fees for the course while additional sponsorship was obtained from a wide variety of organizations for workshops and activities in the different project locations. Expectations for input from partner institutions were significant for comparatively little re-imburement. Opportunities for partner institutions to incorporate the activity into their own teaching or collaborate with the 'roving' student cohort were limited and diminished the potential for any non-monetary rewards in terms of knowledge or reputational gain. Furthermore, while the student cohorts of the first two intakes were highly motivated and exceptionally talented, a significant amount of the time contributed by the host institutions went unpaid, which made the arrangements unsustainable for several of the partner institutions and their educators (Mironowicz, 2011; 2019).

The programme was discontinued following a reorganisation at Brandenburg Technical University¹⁰ and re-started in 2015 with new arrangements and partners under the joint leadership of Tallinn University of Technology and Universidade Autònoma de Lisboa leading to a dual degree. Only time will tell if this new arrangement will be more sustainable based on lessons learned from the first iteration. The concept is certainly interesting. There was also concern that students were travelling too much of the time with the intensity of the forced relationship amongst the cohort causing tensions and issues hindering students' studies.

5. Discussion and Reflections

Internationalisation – in the sense of integrating global dimensions into all aspects of higher education is an important aim for institutions at the start of the 21st century (Gacel-Ávila, 2005; UN Habitat, 2009). Implementing socially responsible and comprehensive internationalisation requires care (Jones and Brown, 2007) and can

9 <https://www.reiseuni.eu/report/index.htm>

10 https://www.reiseuni.eu/report/1.02_reiseuni/reiseuni_02.htm#reiseuni_2.1

be thwarted if institutions focus on aspects that prioritise economic rationales over social and intercultural knowledge dimensions (e.g., Brandenburg and De Wit, 2011).

In the field of spatial planning additional difficulties to internationalise exist (e.g. Peel and Frank, 2008; Fernandez-Güell, 2015), including the fact that degree courses are generally designed to educate professionals to standards that reflect local/national context rather than international contexts making an explicit international profile for graduates less desirable. Planning education programmes, on the whole, are less amenable and attractive in terms of internationalisation compared to business or engineering degrees, for example. Consequently, internationalism in the field of planning requires thoughtful justification and has enjoyed slower progress compared to other subjects and disciplines. Considering recent critiques of internationalisation in HE, slower implementation may have been a blessing in disguise. Rather than single minded strategies, it spurred creative, multi-dimensional approaches often employing collaborative formats to enact internationalism as elaborated by the case studies above. The cases exhibit various types of collaborations and different institutional arrangements (Table 1). Two broad categories can be distinguished: those that involve shared programme elements (NEURUS, Intl. Doctoral College, Collaborative Live Project) and those involving the joint delivery of an entire degree course and award (ERASMUS MUNDUS, Reiseuni.lab). Looking at the relative success of the cases and the theoretical concepts underpinning successful collaboration, there are some important lessons to be learned from these groupings for future implementations of collaborative internationalisation.

First, joint degree programmes require more formal administrative arrangements than cases that adopt shared programme elements. The Erasmus mundus case – being a jointly delivered two year programme, exhibits comparatively strong and formalised arrangements that provide contractual clarity for responsibilities and rewards; this is in line with the high input efforts (administration), the importance of financial gain as reward, and the need to manage risks of programme failure due to partners, for instance, free-riding. In fact, in the Reiseuni.lab case the vague contractual arrangement may have contributed to the need to stop and re-start the programme. For all the other cases, less costly and more informal administrative approaches which relied on strong social relations and trust were in use, and this appears to have been sufficient as there were either few students involved or no monies to be exchanged for the activities. The strong reliance on social relationships is both a strength and potential weakness as the retirement of leaders may cause the network to falter. In cases of similar short-term, focused activities where social relations amongst partners are not as strong, it may be advisable to also put clear contractual responsibilities in place; something that many institutions favour under collaborative provision guidance.

Second, rewards are important in academic teaching related collaborations but not necessarily economic gain. Successful collaboration between different higher education providers can have significant benefits including enhanced internationalisation. The factor motivating individuals and the institution to engage in a collaborative effort depends on whether the average perceived (and actual) outputs (gains from the collaboration) exceed inputs (efforts to start and continue collaboration). It is interesting, that with the exception of the Mundus Urbano, perhaps, none of the cases appear to be driven predominantly by financial motives. Instead, instigators of the collaborations sought to invoke independent and intercultural learning, personal development and broadening students' horizons through curriculum enhancement, which often is easier to achieve when working fruitfully with partners.

The fact that collaboration cases have continued beyond their start-up funding further corroborates academics' strong interest in gains other than financial ones. Clearly, the creation of externally recognised superior knowledge and quality is prioritized and seen as vital to the health of the collaboration. An evaluation of the Erasmus Mundus Masters scheme showed that only about half of the 39 courses sampled and surveyed remained active beyond the period for which they received financial assistance (Voelkl and Pinocchio, 2017). This suggests that the creation of superior knowledge and financial gain are not mere substitutes but are intrinsically linked. In other words, only those programmes that offer superior, novel learning experiences attract sufficient student numbers to guarantee economic viability.

Table 1: Overview of Case Studies

	Partners & Duration	Drivers	Rewards	Arrangements & Conditions /Success Factors
NEURUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 partner institutions to start, growing (currently 13) • 20+ years 	Interest in internationalisation and comparative studies	Graduate student mobility, exchange, research, course development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal, no funds exchanged • Trust, personal links and reputational gain
International Doctoral college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 institutions • 3 cohorts with approx. 30 doctoral students (each cycle 3 years) 	Innovate doctoral education in spatial planning	Exciting projects, better student experiences which is ultimately good for reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal, low key, time limited, but with clear responsibilities for each partner • Similarity of institutional structures; leadership; trust; personal links; reputational gain
Collaborative Live Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-4 partner institutions • 4 repetitions (2016-19) 	Research project – involvement of students to test methods / approaches	Enhances student experience, programme marketing; international experience; combine teaching, research and outreach; testing hypothesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal but with workshop and travelling students received financial subsidy for first iterations; institutional bilateral MOUs • Reputational gain; leadership; personal links; rewards
Erasmus Mundus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 institutions: • 1 lead, 3 partners • 10+ years 	Call for proposals; seed funding to establish new programme; scholarships; internationalised degree	Prestige to partners, share of income proportionate to effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined responsibilities via contract and annual reporting requirements during funded period • Financial and reputational gains
Reiseuni.lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 institutions and other partners • 3 cohorts with interruption 	Idealistic; new internationalised curriculum; broad, liberal education – independent learning competency	New student experience; joint degree; innovation; combined teaching and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners are paid for service of hosting student cohort but funding basic and schedule disruptive to hosts; more structured setup in re-started version – dual degree • Complex arrangement based on personal links, social capital but with insufficient recognition / rewards for partner Institutions

Third, all cases foster explicitly or implicitly internationalisation of curricula and student learning. However, the three cases not involving full programmes provide multidimensional rewards at many different levels – satisfying a wide range of stakeholders and creating redundancies for risk mediation.

The NEURUS consortium, for example, aims to foster a better understanding of different dynamics in the US and Europe while also advancing comparative study methodologies. The collaborative activities of the network thus provide learning and research-led internationalisation through reflective discussions at seminars and one-to-one supervision of student participants. The development of global and international understanding is likely deeper than that which would be achievable through standard mobility activities especially since the learning is supported by guided online study activities. The initiative enhances both the knowledge of a self-selected group of students and that of educators. Findings from student reports regularly make their way into the courses of associated academics and, as such, foster an implicit internationalisation of the curriculum taught to wider student groups (Silver, 2011). With no equivalent programmes at the scale of those offered in Europe (such as the Erasmus Mundus) this long-standing initiative is a valuable approach to internationalising graduate education and document it via certification.

The International Doctoral College case similarly offers a multidimensional approach to internationalisation centred around research and comparing approaches of individuals from different institutions. In addition, an atmosphere of competition amongst doctoral candidates and providing transparency in standards is achieved while young researchers can start building professional networks in a supportive environment. The collaboration's success hinges on personal relationships, leadership, and institutional similarity (German language and Germanic institutional structures) with complementary knowledge offerings.

The live-project example brings together student cohorts from three different institutions and also integrates research and learning. For the first iterations student travel was cross-financed from a research and network-

building grant. This illustrates that, while internationalisation was one of the drivers in motivating the case, it was not the primary one. The focused discussions and debates amongst faculty and students from different nationalities seeking to solve a real-life problem facilitated deep and genuine development of international competencies and understanding. Indeed, it involved not only a discovery of different problem-solving approaches but also the unravelling of philosophical differences and what different groups value and prioritize. The team had to overcome significant issues of institutional differences in addition to addressing concerns surrounding the management of live projects more generally such as balancing the work needed in project preparation, not overusing sites and communities and finding new sites that fit the curriculum or research if necessary. Working in a collaborative inter-institutional environment, it is more likely to find different location and sites amongst partners while maintaining research interests as well as share workload burdens.

In sum, the internationalisation achieved in each of the cases (with perhaps the exception of the Reiseuni.lab) appears to be not only comprehensive but also inclusive, involving contributions from and benefits for all partners in a relatively balanced fashion.

Based on the theoretical arguments by Eckel et al. (2004a, 2004b) and Axelrod (2000), an unbalanced reward structure may manifest itself in the partnership exhibiting instability. Using continued existence as the measure – the least stable appears to be the Reiseuni.lab course. This may be due to the fact (in parts at least) that benefits for partner institutions in this arrangement were less clear, pronounced, and multi-dimensional than in the other cases where desirable rewards seemed to accrue for all partners and towards a range of strategic and desirable goals.

Drawing on the case studies, another factor – related to rewards is relevant to the successful and continued implementation of comprehensive internationalisation. Internationalising activities need to be embedded ideally as a credit-bearing element so as to ensure recognition for both faculty and students. In addition, associating the activity to multiple targets in the strategic plans of institutions is also important as this creates opportunities to justify efforts and resources along different lines pleasing different stakeholders. Modest numbers of students/researchers being involved as is the case in most of the examples allow a focus on quality over quantity, which is seen as favourable for comprehensive and socially responsible internationalisation (De Wit and Hunter, 2015; Altbach and De Wit, 2018; Marinoni, 2018).

In all cases the international experience would lack quality without the collaboration, yet the two cases offering 'internationalised degrees' – the Mundus Urbano and the Reiseuni.lab would not be possible without the support of partner institutions in other countries. The hybrid examples of institutional collaboration (International Live Project, International Doctoral College and NEURUS, especially) that blend research, capacity development, student learning, and educator development provide interesting templates for promoting and implementing content and learning-focused (curriculum) internationalisation. It is suggested that these malleable projects can succeed even when cross-currents of neo-liberalist internationalisation and isolationist tendencies countervail due to their relative small scale, external funding injections, and links to educators' innate interests.

In the longer run, if we are to develop inclusive and socially responsible internationalisation that will truly help students to operate effectively and ethically in a globalised world, student learning from these and similar cases will need to be evaluated systematically and over time. While it may be helpful not to assess, rank and justify every activity, an intermediary means to re-orient internationalisation may involve the use of assessment frameworks as considered in the AESOP initiative¹¹ of assessing programme qualities, which includes an assessment of a programme's international foci, or the pilot evaluations for Dutch-Flemish programmes (Aerden et al., 2013).

11 https://www.aesop-planning.eu/news/en_GB/2018/06/05/readabout/aesop-quality-recognition

Acknowledgement

This paper builds on a study of the Centre for Education in the Built Environment funded by the Higher Education Academy. An early version was presented at the 2008 ACSP/AESOP Congress in Chicago. The author is indebted to those individuals who made time for interviews to discuss the case studies and to the reviewers for their inputs.

References

- Aerden, Axel, Frederik De Decker, Jindra Divis, Mark Frederiks and Hans de Wit (2013) Assessing the internationalisation of degree programmes: Experiences from a Dutch-Flemish pilot certifying internationalisation. *Compare*, 43 (1). DOI: 10.1080/03057925.2013.746562.
- Afshar, Farokh (2001) Preparing planners for a globalizing world: The planning school at the University of Guelph. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 20 (3), pp.339-352.
- Altbach, Philip and Hans De Wit (2018) The challenge to higher education internationalisation. *University World News* 23 February 2018. [Online] Available from: <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20180220091648602> [accessed 20 February 2019].
- Altbach, Philip, Liz Reisberg and Laura E. Rumbley (2011) *Trends in global Higher Education: Tracking and academic revolution*. Report prepared for the UNESCO 2009 World conference on Higher Education. Executive Summary. [Online] Available from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001831/183168e.pdf> [accessed 15 September 2011].
- Auffrey, Christopher and Michael Romanos (2001) Educating the educators: Global dimensions of collaborative fieldwork in an urban region of Southeast Asia. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 20, pp.353-364.
- Axelrod, Robert (2000) On Six Advances in Cooperation Theory. *Analyse & Kritik*, 22 (1), pp.130-151.
- Barnett, Ron (2009) Knowing and becoming in the higher education curriculum. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34 (4), pp.429-440.
- Barnett, Ron (2017) Constructing the university: Towards a social philosophy of higher education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 49 (1), pp.78-88.
- Beerkens, Eric and Marijk DerWende (2007) The paradox in international cooperation: Institutionally embedded universities in a global environment. *Higher Education*, 53, pp.61-79.
- Brandenburg, Uwe and Hans De Wit (2011) The end of internationalization. *International Higher Education*, 62, pp.15-17.
- Burayidi, Michael A. (1993) Dualism and universalism: Competing paradigms in planning education? *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 12 (3), pp 223-229.
- Dandekar, Hemalata (2009) A multiuniversity planning studio at the World Planning Congress: An opportunity for international planning education. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 28 (3), pp.382-390.
- De Wit, Hans and Fiona Hunter (2015) The future of internationalization of Higher Education in Europe. *International Higher Education*, Special issue, 83, pp.1-4.
- Dühr, Stefanie, Richard Cowell and Eric Markus (2016) Europeanization of planning education and the enduring power of national institutions. *International Planning Studies*, 21 (1), pp.16-33.
- Eckel, Peter D., Madeleine F. Green and Britany Affolter-Caine (2004a) Curricular joint ventures: a new chapter in US cross-border education? *Policy Futures in Education*, 2 (2), pp.299-315.
- Eckel, Peter D., Madeleine F. Hartley and Britany Affolter-Caine (2004b) *Cooperating to compete: A campus leaders' guide to developing curricular partnerships and joint programmes*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Fairweather, James S. (1988) *Entrepreneurship and Higher Education*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 6. Washington, D C: The George Washington University.
- Fallis, George (2007) *Multiversities, ideas, and democracy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Fernández-Güell, Miquel J. (2015) How future trends may affect international cooperation in planning education: The case of Spain and Latin America. *AESOP Planning Education*, no 3, pp.72-78.
- Forsyth, Ann, Henry Lu and Patricia McGirr (2000) Service learning in an urban context: Implications for planning and design education. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 17 (3), pp.236-259.
- Frank, Andrea I. and Barry C. Symonds (2008) Facilitating internationalisation in real estate and surveying education through international cooperation. In Mändle, Markus (ed) *Beiträge zum Kooperationswesen*. Band 1. Hamburg: Hamonia, pp.209-240.

- Frank, Andrea I., Detlef Kurth and Izabela Mironowicz (2012) Accreditation and quality assurance for professional degree programmes: Comparing approaches in three European countries. *Quality in Higher Education*, 18 (1), pp.75-95.
- Gacel-Ávila, Jocelyne (2005) The internationalisation of higher education: a paradigm for global citizenry. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 9, pp.121-136.
- Goldstein, Harvey A., Scott Bollens, Edward Feser and Christopher Silver (2006) An experiment in the internationalization of planning education: the NEURUS Program. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 25, pp.349-363.
- Hansen, T. Morton and Nitin Nohria (2005) How to build collaborative advantage. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. [Online] Available from: [http://www.pwc.com/Extweb/pwcpublishings.nsf/docid/9AC1CFD70D1E93B385257178003F96EF/\\$file/sloan.pdf](http://www.pwc.com/Extweb/pwcpublishings.nsf/docid/9AC1CFD70D1E93B385257178003F96EF/$file/sloan.pdf) [accessed 1 June 2008].
- Harrison, P. (2003) Towards the international accreditation of education in planning. *Newsletter of the Commonwealth Association of Planners CAP News*, 9, pp.5-7.
- Hearn, James C. (2003) *Diversifying campus revenue streams: Opportunities and risk*. Informed Practice Series. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Hoey, Lesli, Andrew Rumbach and Joshua D. Shake (2017) Bringing practice to the classroom: Using a deliberative learning and case study approach to teach international planning. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 37 (2), pp.223-233.
- Internationales Doktorandenkolleg/Forschungslabor Raum (2012) *Das Logbuch* (Bilingual: English/German). Berlin: Jovis Verlag.
- Jammal, Ibrahim M. (1993) Country profiles of international planning education in Europe. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 20, pp.585-605.
- Jones, Elspeth and Sally Brown (eds) (2007) *Internationalising Higher Education*. Oxon, NY: Routledge.
- Jones, Phillip W. (1998) Globalisation and internationalism: Democratic prospects for world education. *Comparative Education*, 34, pp.143-55.
- Kanter, Rosabeth M. (1994) Collaborative advantage: The art of alliances. *Harvard Business Review*, (July-August), pp.96-108.
- Kendal, S. (2008) *Personal conversation*.
- Kezar, Adrianna J. (2006) Redesigning for collaboration in learning initiatives: An examination of four highly collaborative campuses. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77 (5), pp.804-838.
- Knight, Jane (2003) Updated internationalization definition. *International Higher Education*, 33, pp.2-3.
- Koch-Christiansen, Kirsti (2005) *Doctoral programmes for the European knowledge society*. Bologna Seminar Protocol. Salzburg, 3-5 February 2005. [Online] Available from: http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Salzburg_Report_final.1129817011146.pdf [accessed 20 September 2011].
- Kotval, Zenia (2003) Teaching experiential learning in the urban planning curriculum. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 27, (3), pp.297-308.
- Loan-Clark, John and Diane Preston (2002) Tensions and benefits in collaborative research involving a university and another organization. *Studies in Higher Education*, 27 (2), pp.169-185.
- Looye, Johanna W. and Abdul Sesay (1998) Introducing diversity into the planning curriculum: A method for department-wide implementation. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 18 (2), pp.161-170.
- Marinoni, Giorgio (2018) Internationalization. *IAU Horizons* 23 (2), pp. 6-7. [Online] Available from: https://iau-aiu.net/IMG/pdf/iau_horizons_vol.23.2_en_v5_light_.pdf [accessed 2 February 2019].
- Mironowicz, Izabela (2010, 2019) *Personal conversation*.
- Mohrman, Susan, Susan Cohen and Allan M. Mohrman (1995) *Designing team-based organisations: New forms for knowledge work*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mundus Urbano (n. D) *Mundus Urbano*. Homepage Website. [Online] Available from: <http://www.mundus-urbano.eu> [accessed 10 February 2019].
- OECD (2004) *Internationalisation and trade in Higher Education: Opportunities and challenges*. Chapter 5: Key developments and policy rationales in cross-border post-secondary education, pp.205-235. Paris: OECD.
- Osborn, Richard N. and John Hagadoorn (1997) The institutionalization and evolutionary dynamics of interorganizational alliances and networks. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40 (2), pp.261-278.
- Othengrafen, Frank and Jörg Knieling (eds) (2016) *Planning cultures in Europe: Decoding cultural phenomena in urban and regional planning*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate.
- Peel, Deborah and Andrea Frank (2008) The internationalisation of planning education: Issues, perceptions and priorities for action. *Town Planning Review*, 79 (1), pp.87-123.
- Pezzoli, Keith and Deborah A. Howe (2001) Planning pedagogy and globalization: A content analysis of syllabi. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 20 (3), pp.365-75.

- Sandercock, Leonie (1999) Expanding the "language" of planning: A meditation on planning education for the twenty-first century. *European Planning Studies*, 7 (5), pp.533-44.
- Sanyal, Bishwapriya (1989) Poor countries' students in rich countries' universities: Possibilities of planning education in the twenty-first century. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 8 (3), pp.139-55.
- Saxton, Todd (1997) The effects of partner and relationship characteristics on alliance outcomes. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40, pp.443- 461.
- Scholl, Bernd (2019) *Personal Conversation*.
- Scholl, Bernd (ed) (2012) *Higher Education in spatial planning: Positions and reflections*. Zürich: vdf Hochschulverlag AG.
- Shore, Sue and Janet Groen (2009) After the ink dries: Doing collaborative international work in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34 (5), pp.533-546.
- Silver, Christopher (2011, 2019) *Personal conversation*.
- Skinner, Paul (2018) *Collaborative advantage: How collaboration beats competition as a strategy for success*. London: Robinson.
- Sykes, Olivier, Urmila Jha-Thakur and Karen Potter (2015) "What's Love got to do with it?" Some reflections on the internationalization of planning education. *AESOP Planning Education*, no 3, pp.80-89.
- UN Habitat (2009) *Planning sustainable cities*. UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). London: Earthscan.
- Van der Wende, Marijk and Jeroen Huisman (2004) Europe. In Huisman, Jeroen and Marijk van der Wende (eds) *On cooperation and competition: National and European policies for the internationalisation of Higher Education*, Bonn: Leemans, pp.17-47.
- Voelkl, Christine and Francesco M. Pirocchi (2017) *Sustainability of Erasmus Mundus master courses – best practice guide based on survey results and analysis*. Brussels: European Union- EACEA.
- Watson, Vanessa (2008) Comment on "The internationalisation of planning education: issues, perceptions and priorities for action" by Peel, D. and A. Frank. *Town Planning Review*, 78 (6), pp.757-793.
- White, Geoffry D. and Flannery C. Hauck (2000) *Campus, Inc. corporate power in the ivory tower*. Amherst, MA: Prometheus Books.
- Zinn, Frank D., T. S. Lyons and R. C. Hinojosa (1993) Bringing a global approach to education: The case of urban planning. *Environment and Planning B*, 20 (5), pp.557-65.

PLANNING THE MIRAGE: LESSONS FOR PLANNING EDUCATION FROM ABU DHABI

Surajit Chakravarty^a, Abdellatif Qamhaieh^b

(Received 17 September 2018; revised version received 17 February 2019; final version accepted 28 April 2019)

Abstract

Throughout the 1980s planning educators disagreed on the appropriateness of Western planning education for poor countries' students, and on the question of whether training of students from developing countries should be based on "general principles" or "contextual material specific to poor countries" (Sanyal, 1990, p.8). Today most planning programs in North America (and in the West in general) offer courses in 'international development', 'world cities', 'urbanization in the global South', or closely related topics. However, as 'the other' becomes more mainstream in Western planning education, the belief that Western planning education is robust enough to accommodate global differences (the 'one world' model of planning education), becomes more entrenched. Further, an unspoken assumption goes unquestioned – that planning curricula, too, just like planning skills, can be transferred internationally.

Over the last three decades or so, the advent of the age of interconnected economies and the networked society, has had a profound impact on global trends of development and urbanization. This paper argues that the question of appropriate planning curricula ought to be revisited especially from the perspective of education in developing countries.

Scholars educated in the West, who are teaching in developing countries, are in a unique position to assess the utility of bringing Western planning education to less developed parts of the world. This paper is based on the authors' observations and experiences over seven years, teaching Urban Planning at undergraduate level at a private university in Abu Dhabi. During this period the authors were involved with program design, course design, accreditation and quality assurance, mentorship, along with university service, teaching, and research.

The paper evaluates the practices and circumstances of urban planning in UAE and the implications for planning education. It is argued that there is a fundamental disconnect between the profession's ethics, and the reality of planning practice in the region. This gap has not been considered in depth in either program design or in accreditation standards. The paper concludes with recommendations for planning education in the Gulf region.

Keywords

Planning education, UAE, Gulf, Global South, one world planning

a (Corresponding author) Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, India. E-mail: schakrav@iimcal.ac.in

b American University in Dubai, UAE. E-mail: aqamhaieh@aud.edu

1. An Evolving Debate on the 'One World' Approach

The "dualism-versus-universalism" (Burayidi, 1993, p.223) debate in planning education was mainly concerned with adjustments in US curricula in response to various changes occurring in the 1980s and 1990s. Those in favour of the 'one-world' approach to planning education pointed to early trends in the intensification of global capital mobility, along with internationally roving consultants, and a growing number of international students in North American planning programs, to argue that planning education in North America had to make space for the international context. Those opposed to this position argued that not only was it impossible to do justice to the diversity of planning contexts within one program, but that US planning was also not always the best fit for contexts around the world. By the early 1990s the consensus seems to have been that the most appropriate way forward would be to provide a strong grounding in universalist planning principles together with a degree of flexibility allowing 'third world students' to take courses more appropriate to their "special needs" (Burayidi, 1993, p.229). Although we are referring mainly to the US experience here, similar concerns were also felt in Europe. For example, in the UK, there was also a call for the greater internationalization of planning education, though "significant questions were raised about the transferability of theory and methods across countries and cultures" (Morphet and Nadin, 1989, p.iv).

Burayidi (1993) and Sanyal (1990) have summarized the arguments comprehensively. For the sake of brevity and to avoid repetition, another review is not attempted here. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the debate remained centred around US curricula. This paper attempts to see the same problem from the other side. Over the last 25 years or so, since the peak of discussions on the subject, several significant changes have occurred that make it necessary for the issue to be revisited.

First, planning curricula in the US (and in the West in general) have found a stable balance, having made space for course options related to 'planning in developing countries' or 'international development'. Moreover, a number of programs have incorporated international labs and studios (Abramson, 2005; Goldstein et al., 2006; Dandekar, 2009; Klopp et al., 2014) in the spirit of "collective inquiry and learning" (Banerjee, 1985, p.36) with developing country students and scholars. The conversation regarding how both 'planning' and 'the world' ought to be approached from the perspective of developing countries, however, is only just beginning. In terms of planning education, what does it mean to see "from the South"? (Watson, 2009, p.2259). The question is critical for planning education in developing countries. Moreover, it becomes a source of dissonance for the growing number of educators in the field, who have been trained in the West and are teaching in the global South, particularly in non-democratic contexts.

Secondly, terms like "poor countries' students" (Sanyal, 1989, p.139) and "third world planners" (Burayidi, 1993, p.224) have gone out of fashion, and not just for the sake of political correctness. Developing countries, and cities within them, are growing rapidly in a complex ecology of core-periphery geographies arising from variegated relations with global capital. Many 'poor countries' have isolated districts that feature impressive skylines, advanced transit infrastructure, glittering financial centres, and exclusive gated communities. Writing on African countries, Odendaal observes that

[t]he disparities between rich and poor are vast in many circumstances, underpinned by infrastructure failure where privatised enclaves of wealth deeply contrast the slum condition that typify large tracts of urban space (2011, p.175).

Planners in these countries simultaneously deal with poverty and informality on the one hand, and rapid growth, fuelled by market integration and speculative pressures, on the other. All the while existential issues, such as resource shortages, conflicts, and weak institutions, linger close by. Then there are the countries of the Gulf region, the focus of this paper, that are not poor by any measure but, on account of several factors (including deficits in democratic processes, human rights and political freedoms), are still thought to be 'developing'.

Thirdly, there is a case to be made for including the flipside of globalization in coursework. The same processes of globalization that contribute to making the world 'flatter' also cause serious disruptions – and not just in

developing countries. As developing countries import know-how from, say, the US (since that is the context with which we are most familiar), they should also be informed that sometimes the US knows-not-how. Particularly sobering are the experiences of cities such as Detroit, Flint and other communities of former manufacturing hubs; of inner cities more generally – first relegated to crime and squalor and then ‘cleansed’ through waves of gentrification; and of the underprivileged in places like downtown LA. Frightening, too, was the apathy faced by the low-income neighbourhoods of New Orleans after hurricane Katrina. Certainly, the processes of introspection, inquiry, and improvement are robust in the United States. Moreover, both scholarship and practice in the field of planning have long been committed to making positive changes on the ground. However, multiple disasters during the period of globalization have pointed to entrenched systemic issues. It might be time for the developing world to reimagine planning education with an even greater emphasis on ethics – including social justice, inclusion and environmental responsibility – a cause being argued for also in the developed world (Martin and Beatley, 1993; Campbell, 2012; Thomas, 2012; Lowe and Ehrenfeucht, 2017).

Fourthly, there are new crises facing the planning profession, even as the old crises have not been fully resolved. As long ago as 1985, Kunzmann noted that “planning education is always in a state of crisis, has been in crisis since its existence and will be in a crisis for the foreseeable future” (1985, p.443). He did go on to commend the profession for tormenting itself over its roles and tasks. But despite sincere efforts, some of the long-standing challenges to the profession, including allegations of selling out (Harvey, 1978), crossing over to the “dark side” (Flyvbjerg, 1996, p.383), and being too generalized as a field (Wildavsky, 1973), are still relevant. In addition, Friedman (1994) recognized postmodern challenges to planning at the end of the twentieth century. While planning is still grappling with these charges, new challenges are emerging. In the field, landscape architects and real estate specialists are displacing planners and gradually usurping their roles. Meanwhile, in scholarship, the social sciences have claimed much of critical space within urban studies. Scholars outside the field of planning are often quick to blame planners, in toto, for the inequitable urban outcomes observed around the world. The idea of ‘urban practice’ is being redefined, specifically to exclude planners, if not explicitly in opposition to their work. This may not be as evident in the developed world where institutions are efficient and responsive. Nevertheless, this change is seen clearly in many developing countries where the reach of plans and planning institutions is uneven and ineffective.

It is important to make a note here about Abu Dhabi as a case study, and the authors as observers. In terms of wealth and power, neither Abu Dhabi nor the Gulf region represent the ‘global South’. That said, countries in the Gulf region are still considered ‘developing nations’ for good reasons. In at least two ways Abu Dhabi does serve as an instructive case. First, like much of the global South, Abu Dhabi is still figuring out its governance structures and institutions. Secondly, it follows that education in the fields of planning and public policy remain uncomfortably located within the educational landscape, which itself is in a state of experimentation. It is not the intent here to underplay the diversity that exists within the Gulf region. Further, we are fully cognizant of the diversity in politics, education and place-making that exists between the various parts of the Arab World. To be clear, the point is not to generalize the specifics of this case to other parts of the Arab World, or to the Global South. The argument, rather, is that Abu Dhabi demonstrates the existence of certain challenges, and also certain trends in terms of urban management, that might be faced by all developing societies, as well as by developed countries. In all contexts the contestations will be mediated by local circumstances, and so will the responses.

The authors are citizens of India and Palestine. Both authors completed their doctoral work in universities in the United States. The authors, both citizens of developing countries, approach this study with concerns for sustainable, sensitive and equitable urban planning in Abu Dhabi (as anywhere else). There is no question of attempting to impose a ‘Western’ view upon planning education in Abu Dhabi. On the contrary, we want to insist on innovation in planning education to better suit local circumstances, without undermining the values and ethics on which our field is based.

2. Research Questions

The foregoing discussion establishes the need to address emergent complexities especially from the perspective of developing countries. ‘Us’ and ‘them’ in the context of planning education are no longer

discrete categories, but have become diffused, nested, and intertwined. Afshar's call for interaction between planners working in developed and developing countries is relevant here. "Dialogue between planners and planning educators—North and South—must be intensified. There is likely not one global approach for all but a myriad of approaches, each fashioned for its own context" (Afshar, 2001, p.350).

This study is motivated by the following questions. What challenges do institutions and values of the state, in developing countries, present to planning education? What do these challenges mean for the 'one world' approach to planning education, especially in view of programs taught in developing countries?

This paper is based on the authors' observations and experiences over seven years (2010-2017), teaching Urban Planning at undergraduate level at a private university in Abu Dhabi.

In the next section we discuss some of the peculiarities of Abu Dhabi's polity, as these are particularly relevant to urban planning. This is followed by an account of the challenges faced by educators in the field of planning in Abu Dhabi and the region. This is not an exhaustive list of issues. The objective is to provide an idea of the kinds of problems planning education in the Gulf region can throw up. As mentioned earlier, there is considerable internal diversity within the Gulf region, and attitudes are far from homogenous. That said, a degree of generalization can be sustained. It is argued that these challenges arise due to the existence of a fundamental mismatch between the values and attitudes that inform the governance of Abu Dhabi, and those that are needed for good planning of places and communities. The paper concludes with suggestions for new avenues of research.

3. A City by Any Other Name

At the outset it is important to consider how political culture affects the essential nature of a city, and what that means for planning and planning education. On the surface Abu Dhabi looks like a 'normal' city, and one that has seen long-term economic growth based on its oil revenues. The city boasts top quality infrastructure, high-rise housing enclaves, glittering shopping malls, and numerous megaprojects aimed towards building a recognizable brand for the city. However, a city is more than the sum of its visible tangible pieces. Aspects of the political economy, sustainability, and urbanism of Abu Dhabi have been critiqued extensively. Current literature on planning and urban design in Abu Dhabi has noted problems with several aspects of the city's urbanism. In particular, the role of state-based developers in directing city growth, the importance of image in city building, the abject condition of low-wage labour, the absence of a sense of place, and the lack of democratic institutions have consistently been highlighted (Sharpley, 2002; Elsheshtawy, 2008; Davidson, 2009; Ponzini, 2011; Mohammad and Sidaway, 2012; Crot, 2013; Cugurullo, 2013; Caprotti, 2014; Chakravarty and Qamhaieh, 2015; Chakravarty, 2017; Qamhaieh and Chakravarty, 2017; Chakravarty, 2019)

It is important to keep in mind that though the cities of the region share some features of political economy, their development trajectories are unique. For example, even though Dubai and Abu Dhabi are in the same country, and even though both appear to be overrun with skyscrapers and shopping malls, their specific growth patterns are not the same, neither are the imperatives driving successive waves of investment (Davidson, 2007; Sharpley, 2008).

Summarized in the next section are some of the key points of Abu Dhabi's urbanism that are most relevant to the focus of this paper. This review is organized under three categories – (i) Public, (ii) Place, (iii) Planning. These broad themes are fundamental to urban planning and to planning education, and provide context for the pedagogical issues discussed in subsequent sections.

3.1. Public

The idea of the 'public', found in all dimensions of planning, is a contested term in Abu Dhabi and the wider region. The peculiarities of the region's polities are well understood. These include, most significantly, (i) a lack of democratic institutions (ii) there being upwards of 80% foreigners amongst the residents of major cities

(often referred to as 'expats') towards whom the state assumes little welfare responsibility, and (iii) power concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy individuals. In this setup, the various ideas associated with the term 'public' are either distorted or rendered meaningless. For example, in Abu Dhabi, ideas important to planning - such as the public sector, the public sphere, public interest, public-versus-private, and, not least, the public, (i.e., the public that participates, pays taxes, uses and produces space, and for whom the city exists) - are but apparitions of their normal selves. The absence of any real notion of public is absolutely disorienting - not only for teaching and understanding the idea of planning, but also for creating institutions that can substantively approach the goals of planning.

3.2. Place

The nature of contemporary place-making in Abu Dhabi accurately reflects the tensions of its political economy. To begin with, the city is dominated by megaprojects - particularly in the shape of shopping malls, tourist attractions, government buildings and large housing projects. Residential segregation across socio-economic lines is stark. Segregation of everyday life along class lines is common. For example, Al Maryah Island, an entirely new downtown area (also referred to as a 'lifestyle destination' in promotional materials), was created on a greenfield site, featuring up-market facilities, retail, and office space. Al Maryah Island is effectively an enclave for the affluent classes of Abu Dhabi. Meanwhile older blocks of the city are being gentrified fast with few alternatives being offered to the low-income individuals and families who live there. The middle- and low-income residents of the city are never consulted when these plans are made. Unsurprisingly, recent efforts of placemaking do not resonate with the population and have little to do with their needs and aspirations.

In the cities of the region, the interests of a vast majority of the residents are not represented in any way in the processes of urban planning and nor does the state consider itself accountable to them. How, then, should we interpret the spectacular placemaking that we see in Abu Dhabi? Invented places and megaprojects constitute a sequence of props and images that help the city fulfil a performative function. The city, in turn, helps keep up the grander pretence, while avoiding important questions such as labour relations and the ecological footprint. So, what do the tools and practices of planning look like in this context? What are the objectives of planning and how are they accomplished?

3.3. Planning

The first and main function of planning in Abu Dhabi is to maximize the rent yield from land. This is both a welfare function for locals, and a profit-making venture for locally-owned development agencies. The projection of an image of wealth, power and 'world class' status may be considered a component of this overall mission.

A second function is that planning helps give Abu Dhabi the appearance of being normal - in an ontological sense - a place like any other, a city amongst cities. In other words, planning joins other branches of government in manufacturing international acceptability and legitimacy, an important aspiration for a polity that faces scrutiny on various social and environmental issues.

Planning endeavours are ultimately subservient to the two functions described above. Meanwhile, planning, as the term is understood in liberal democratic societies, with its ambitions towards social justice and sustainability, is quite redundant in Abu Dhabi. The city, however, does value code enforcement, following standards (typically 'world class' standards), installing physical infrastructure, and building real estate, along with beautification and ornamentation.

4. Teaching Planning in Abu Dhabi

The foregoing overview of Abu Dhabi's urbanism illustrates some of the specificities of the city and region. In this section we discuss the implications of this for planning education. The next section collates an account of classroom experiences accumulated over a period of seven years.

4.1. Socialized Attitudes, Disciplined Voices

Local outlooks and attitudes towards existing social structures and hierarchies inform students' classroom behaviour. Students have been socialized to accept, as normal, the values that operate UAE's growth machine; a system in which they are winners and the dominant class. This applies to both local and non-local students, all of whom are from wealthy backgrounds.

Sometimes discussions in the classroom revealed certain attitudes that were disturbing. For example, some of the students found it challenging to confront the notion that human beings are born with equal dignity and basic rights. Although only a small minority of students voiced such opinions, they were visibly uncomfortable at the suggestion. One student quietly pointed out that "some of us are born wealthy". Students were also quick to categorize society as 'locals and expats', 'workers and professionals', 'Arabs and Westerners' and so on. These divisions informed students' attitudes towards basic questions such as whose city we inhabit, whom we plan for, how resources and benefits should be allocated, who should participate in planning, which voices matter and so on. This is a far cry from the attitudes of planning students in other parts of the world (Harris, 2015).

Whereas local students were confident in taking the position that, as citizens, their needs had to be prioritized, non-local students (mostly children of long-term expatriates from neighbouring Arab countries), were unsure of their stance on most issues, and not comfortable stating their opinions. Non-local students would usually speak in well-worn clichés, often supporting the locals' claims of priority, out of a fear of offending the local students.

A vast gap separates the upper-middle classes of Abu Dhabi, to which most expat students belong, from 'workers', and local students usually come from even wealthier families. Even so, local and expat students alike were usually apathetic towards causes such as providing greater affordable housing, increased public transport, the provision of inclusive public spaces, and undoing segregation. Various narratives were employed to justify the situation. For example, "this is the natural order of things", "the labour system rewards merit", "anyone can make through work hard", and (probably the most popular) – "low-wage workers are better off in UAE than the countries they came from, so they are already doing quite well". Discussions regarding segregation, labour regulations and hardships faced by low-income groups in Abu Dhabi seemed little more than academic to some students.

Problematic opinions on privilege, class position, prejudice, exploitation and labour are only a part of the reason why classroom sessions are difficult. Religious beliefs further complicate matters. All subjects and topics have to be examined from the perspective of religious acceptability. While most planning subjects can be discussed in a manner that does not offend religious sentiments, some are proscribed by hard lines that cannot be crossed. Hence, women's rights, LGBTQ issues, and the inclusion of religious minorities and the likes are not available for open candid discussion in the classroom. Such discussions create a great deal of discomfort because they call into question fundamental beliefs grounded in key facets of identity. The situation is particularly serious for planning and policy-making because of the importance of inclusion, representation, and participation in these fields (Sen et al., 2016).

Further, criticizing state policies in class is difficult. Students exercise self-discipline because of an awareness that criticizing policies could get them reported to the authorities. This applies to both nationals and expats. For those trained in liberal democratic contexts, the point of criticism is to build a better society. At times such critiques may be pointed towards an ideological position – but always in the spirit of debate and improvement. In Abu Dhabi, criticism of state policies is often taken as a slight towards the individuals who run branches of government. Most critiques of planning and policy-making, one can be thankful, are not misconstrued as attempts to undermine the legitimacy of the state. Nevertheless, not all scholarly criticism is tolerated equally. Certainly, some of the students were open to discussing all topics, and allowed themselves to set aside their own biases for the sake of dialog. Although this was the exception rather than the rule, the willingness of some students to engage new ideas in conversation was heartening.

4.2. Problematic Data Sharing

Data released by the Statistics Centre of Abu Dhabi (SCAD) are scant and conspicuously silent on important socio-economic variables. For example, data on income and ethnicity are not revealed, with details of labour and industry being, similarly, not available. GIS data that are shared are limited to shapefiles without associated datasets and attribute tables.

As a consequence, planning had to be taught in the absence of any real data. In studios, for example, population size and income mix had either to be estimated, or assumed. Similarly, the Location Quotient technique, along with demographic analysis, were taught using the US Census website. GIS courses, too, were mostly taught using US datasets. Even though the students were able to learn analytical techniques with imported data, other learning outcomes – for example, the ability to draw conclusions from data, the ability to apply techniques to address real-world challenges, and the ability to develop new research questions – were hampered by the fact that the datasets were from an unfamiliar context.

The discomfort with data has to do with a sensitivity to criticism – in a generalized sense, and is also a consequence of the fact that objective analysis might disrupt the narratives that have been internalized by society. It follows that the control of data seems to create more value for the state's bureaucracy than its use to solve problems and make plans.

Despite this, in some cases, local students working within government agencies were able to access data that were off limits to all other people. The same data could not be shared with faculty for independent research. There is reason to believe that state agencies are willing to share limited datasets, through trusted individuals, if there appears to be a sufficient chance that valuable analysis might emerge at the other end, or if the individual will have a chance to learn a skill or analytical technique. This seems to satisfy the “what do we get out of it?” question for those who are in control of data. That said, in these cases too, a few key elements of the data were usually withheld.

It is also important to mention here that security personnel in plain clothes (carrying identification) shadowed faculty and students when they attempted to collect data using surveys and interviews. Though there was no harassment, on numerous occasions students and faculty members were asked politely what they were doing and how the data would be used. On several occasions, within days of a data collection drive, a government agency announced intentions to make improvements related to the object of the study.

4.3. In a Land Far Far Away

The problem of having to use foreign data was mentioned in the previous section. Importing concepts and substantive knowledge is even more fraught. Urban planning is a field inherently produced by local contexts. For example, North American social structures, law, political values, and economic framework, have deeply informed how planning has evolved in that part of the world. Some ideas travel and translate well across societies, others do not.

When teaching planning in a liberal-democratic context, even in the developing world – for example India (Chettiparamb, 2006), Sri Lanka (van Horen et al., 2004) or Botswana (Cavric, 2011) – an instructor could freely use terms such as ‘social justice’, ‘citizen rights’, ‘democratic principles’, ‘market competition’, ‘due process’ or ‘free speech’. These ideas may be contested, but their meanings are well understood. In contrast, these terms mean very little to students in Abu Dhabi (both locals and non-locals). Discussions based on these ideas are often met with scepticism. Even when students make the effort to study the concepts and engage in dialog, they are not convinced of the relevance of these ideas to their own societies. It is important to keep in mind that students in Abu Dhabi's universities are the haves of society. They do not belong to the class that would see personal or social benefit in questioning the status quo. Due to both vested interests and decades of conditioning (through social practice and shared narratives) most students struggle to develop a true appreciation of the ideas of liberalism, humanism, and environmentalism.

Students are, however, quick to get on board with those ideas that are considered relatively benign, or not conflicting with the basic structure of society. For example, while there is likely to be little tolerance of

discussions on LGBTQ issues (as mentioned earlier), and raising these issues in class may lead to much distress, the causes of 'accessibility' and 'special needs' are embraced quickly and wholeheartedly. Further, in a few cases, creative repackaging of ideas can lead to positive results, even if these ideas are not absorbed in quite the same way as elsewhere in the world. For example, while 'public participation in local planning' presented as a necessary component of democracy may find little traction, the same idea framed within the provisions of Islamic law, becomes far more palatable (Chakravarty et al., 2013).

Textbooks, too, contribute to the sense of distance and disconnect. There are few books examining the current pace and nature of planning in UAE, and not all are suitable for use as course textbooks. In the present case, instructors supplemented readings with recent articles on the region, but even so, many lessons (positive and negative) about planning seemed to students to be from faraway places, and not just in terms of distance.

While many local students had travelled extensively, for most non-local students, some of the places being discussed in class (for example, Dutch 'woonerfs', Italian piazzas or LA's ethnic neighbourhoods) were too far removed from their imaginations. This is not to suggest that local aspects of place-making were not discussed or underplayed. The souq (market), fareej (neighbourhood), baraha (open space), falaj (irrigation system in oases towns), burjeel (wind tower) and other aspects of local traditional urban design were discussed at length and encouraged in studio projects. However, equally important elements of planning and design from around the world were also included in the curriculum to ensure thorough training and ease of operation within an international professional workforce. Poignant, in this regard, is the situation of students from countries such as Syria and Iraq, for whom traveling abroad is particularly difficult. Being distanced from cases in this manner, meant that the students found it difficult to relate to the social norms and political values that underpin the character of these places. In view of the widespread fallacy, particularly in developing countries, that copying urban forms could lead to social development, instructors compensated with appropriate critiques and caveats.

Agencies working in the fields of planning and development do not seem to understand the fact that spaces are socially produced, and that copying elements of architecture and urban design cannot magically recreate successful urbanism in different cities if the rules and values therein are radically different. We used every opportunity possible to explain this to students and make them think critically about what makes places successful.

The same also applies to urban disasters – sprawl, abandoned city centres, cities destroyed by deindustrialization and so on. The situation will be remedied, to an extent, when more textbooks become available that critically examine urbanization in the region. It is less clear how the planning profession will address the fundamental changes occurring in the very meaning of 'a city'.

4.4. The Fate of History and Theory

Students seemed to invest less time and effort into courses dealing with history and theory. Their perceived lack of interest may stem from several factors, some of which are not unique to the UAE. For example, students, particularly undergraduates, are able to focus on theoretical subject matter for shorter periods of time. Electronic distractions are all too easy to reach for when working through difficult material. Moreover, these courses require significant amounts of reading, which is considered an onerous task by far too many young people, and was a challenge for all courses with a significant reading component.

Another reason students lack motivation in these courses is because of the perception that these courses lack practical utility. Students are not sure how history or theory will help them in their everyday work as planners, as pointed out by Beauregard (1995). In addition, at least two local factors play an important role. The first has been discussed briefly above. Planning theory is embedded in political economic contexts that are alien for UAE students. Similarly, few studies have dealt specifically with the urban history of UAE, because urbanization is a very recent phenomenon in this part of the world, and the state is invested in maintaining certain versions of its history. If critical historical work is tolerated, future scholarship will have much to contribute to planning history. At the moment, however, theory and the history of urban planning seem to be from somewhere else.

The second factor affects non-local students staying in UAE. For these students, their residence in UAE – the country where most non-local students were born and raised and where their family resides – depends on getting a job. Many of these students have no life to return to in their countries of origin. Some are from cities that have been levelled by war. Moreover, the prospect of getting jobs has become all the more difficult with the ongoing Emiratization project, which prioritizes nationals for employment in the public sector, and also imposes a quota on the private sector for employing nationals. Hence there is an unusually high pressure on college students to get jobs immediately after graduation so that their residence visa can be renewed. We have discussed already how planning in Abu Dhabi is increasingly becoming ornamental. In such a job market – where employers, state, and society are all not looking for critical thinkers – it becomes extremely difficult to convince students of the relevance of studying theory and history. Students, fixated on ‘hard’ skills, invariably show greater interest in techniques or methods (GIS, studio, documentation and the likes). Even within that small set, courses in research methods seem to be less attractive.

It is unfortunate that the value of planning theory is not understood. Not only are these courses rich in knowledge that informs planning practice and decision-making, but they also promote critical thinking, reasoning and self-education. Education in history, Peterson (2006) argues, trains planning students to think of plans, documents, and narratives as being socially constructed. It also encourages students to view maps, photographs, and other artefacts as repositories of knowledge.

Neuman (2005) has identified four roles, “explanation, prediction, justification and normative guidance” (p.123), through which theory guides professional practice. As Fischler (2012) puts it

[p]lanning curricula should include at least one course in planning history and theory, in order to introduce students to the field and profession they are about to enter, its origins and its evolution over time... Such a course gives students models with which to frame their thinking and their actions (from theoretical concepts with which to put a name on their ideals to design precedents for use in actual plans), puts their individual work in historical perspective, and can, in so doing, instil in them both pride and humility (p.112).

These skills and attitudes may be less appreciated because they are not tangible, but they are critical for higher education, and education in the field.

Teaching history to planners... means making them realize that they can be instrumental in fostering change but that change comes slowly, under popular pressure. It means giving them a sense of modesty as well as a sense of identity, a sense of caution as well as a sense of ambition (Fischler, 2006, p.288).

When the ability to make good decisions has been replaced by the imperative of making profitable decisions, what a planner can ‘do’ is quickly reduced to clerical tasks and uncritical preparation of maps and graphics. A diminishing interest in the history and theory of planning – on the part of both students and employers – will lead to planning that lacks a commitment to the field’s values and ethics.

4.5. Studio Issues

One lingering problem, particularly in design-related work, has to do with aesthetic preferences following from social practices. In site planning and design studios, one may find that preferences for inclusive public spaces, urban design at the human scale, or walkable, children- and elder-friendly neighbourhoods are not shared enthusiastically. Public life has moved almost entirely to shopping malls where segregation is enforced by purchasing power. The human scale has long since been eschewed for skyscrapers, megaprojects and wide streets. Walkability has also fallen by the wayside, as the old form of pre-oil settlements have been overrun by big-and-fast modernism. Indeed, people who take the bus are stigmatized (Qamhaieh and Chakravarty, 2017).

It is difficult to argue the importance of sustainability to the beneficiaries of state welfare that includes deep subsidies on gasoline, and free distribution of large residential plots, that are located in suburbs fitted with

their own shopping malls. Cars and parking rule the imagination of policy makers. Not only are these practices and urbanism the current status quo, they are also part of the city's self-image and the state's narratives of development. Planning and policy-making reinforces these ideals. One of the questions that agencies are now dealing with is that of where to moor boats that are not left in marinas. The matter becomes even more complicated when narratives tie the way of life to local culture, bypassing the fact that this way of life was unheard of only a few decades ago.

We have already mentioned the problems arising from the reluctance to share data. Even though we did our best to simulate projects, often with input from professionals working in state and private agencies, we believe the lack of real data is a serious loss for students. Similarly, the lack of real 'clients' for most studio projects meant that the projects lost a degree of "wickedness" (Balassiano, 2011, p.449). For example, students did not have adequate exposure to working with actual constituents with diverse interests. Lang (1983) argues that studio training gives students a feel for the "argumentative nature of the planning process" (p.126). Similarly, Nemeth and Long (2012) point out that working with clients is one of the key aspects of studio-based learning. We tried to compensate for this deficiency by bringing in external experts for midterm and final evaluations. This gave students an opportunity to get feedback from new perspectives, and also a feel of working with clients. It is also worth noting here that several students were able to work with real clients for their capstone projects.

In this situation, how does one approach the design studio? Do we teach a purely compliance-oriented planning studio where a site is simply divided into plots and provided with facilities according to a checklist? Or do we engage the community in a diverse and contentious part of the city? Do we stress marketable skills? Or do we aim for social awareness, environmental sensitivity, critical thinking and creative problem solving? These 'deep skills' seem not to sell as well as the knowledge of techniques and codes.

4.6. Unusual Internship Situations

Internships are another source of anxiety for planning educators, as well as for students. At least four problems are worth mentioning in this regard. First, as mentioned earlier, locals are given priority in all government hiring. This applies also to internships. Second, no other government agency accepts urban planning as a valid field of study. Although urban planning students could be useful as interns in agencies related to, for instance, economic development, labour, and the environment, their choices are effectively restricted to the Urban Planning Council, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Transportation, and private sector developers and consultants. As expected, this problem affects non-local students disproportionately. Third, (and ironic when contrasted with the point above) students who are already working tend to undertake internships with their employers which are sometimes quite unrelated to urban planning. A separate planning internship is a difficult proposition for students with families and fulltime jobs (from which they take time off to study). Such students are allowed to show management work, or site-planning or facilities-related assignments at work, as an alternative to a planning internship. Fourth, some students work for security agencies that are not allowed to discuss their work at all. In some cases it has proven difficult to get an official letter on a letterhead simply verifying the situation. Such cases can put the department in a very difficult situation.

4.7. Response to Challenges

We take pride in the fact that we tried to change the status quo wherever possible. In terms of research, we worked on local issues, and published studies that questioned gentrification, the exclusion built into transit options, and the weaknesses of current sustainability policies. We took students on field trips to 'labour villages' where they got to see first-hand, for the first time, the dormitory facilities where the faceless nameless numbers live. We took students on bus rides that pushed them out of their comfort zones and got them to see how the other 80% live. Interviews, life histories, and urban documentation were worked into courses and assessment schemes.

We also conducted live public participation exercises with our students, a first in the country. In one such exercise a woman could not hold back her tears as she told us that no one had ever asked for her opinion on

the neighbourhood where she lived and raised her children. The participation exercises were held with the permission of local authorities (including the police) and were helpful in generating useful information for local planning agencies.

Theory courses were aided with multimedia materials and assessments of an applied nature were utilized where possible. We encouraged critical thinking in the classroom and through assessment tools. Issues of sustainability and social justice were discussed at length. As a result of our efforts, at least some students, we believe, developed an appreciation for perspectives other than those into which they had been socialized. We hope they will remember these lessons when they are in decision-making positions.

Helping non-local students find internships and jobs remained a heart-breaking challenge. While some students succeeded in finding employment with consultants, several good students remained in the job market for far too long. Some had to take up jobs unrelated to their training, and some had to begin with clerical or secretarial work; posts for which they were overqualified.

We designed a sequence of four compulsory studios, which yielded multiple benefits for the students. The studios offered students increasingly complex planning issues. The first studio dealt with a small greenfield site and a straightforward brief. The main deliverable was a site plan with facilities and social infrastructure developed according to standards and needing to conform to basic urban design guidelines. The site got bigger and the brief more complicated for the second studio. The second studio involved design at multiple scales. Further, street sections and a land use plan were required as deliverables. For the third studio a special element (such as a waterfront, transit station, environmentally sensitive area, or historic site) were used to make the planning problem more challenging. The third studio got students to think about trade-offs and innovative approaches to the individual special site with which they were concerned. Urban design details (or other details as relevant) were added to the deliverables. The fourth studio called for a community planning exercise in an inhabited area with multiple stakeholders. The focus, for example, could be revitalization. Students were encouraged to create grounded workable plans that would bring benefits not only to the elites of the area but also to less privileged constituents. Cumulatively, the four studios afforded students the opportunity to make mistakes, learn from them and improve their skills, work in teams, work individually, and apply diverse theoretical knowledge to planning problems. Unfortunately, however, the planning authorities in Abu Dhabi seldom undertake this kind of work.

Thereafter, many students wrote their graduation projects on topics such as 'affordable housing', 'worker living conditions', 'public transit', 'gender and planning', 'accessibility planning', 'multiculturalism in the city', 'public participation', 'access to parks', 'public space designed by users' and so on. We have big hopes for these students.

5. Conclusions

Two avenues for future debate and scholarship emerged from the experiences recounted in this paper. The first relates to the idea of a 'one world' curriculum, and the second relates to the role of accreditation agencies.

5.1. The 'One-World' Curriculum

We entered the discussion of the 'one world' curriculum based on our experience in Abu Dhabi. Proponents of the 'one world' approach to planning education point to globalization and market integration as evidence of the large-scale convergence of economic values and development goals. While this may be true to an extent, convergence in the sense of trade and market regulation policies does not automatically lead to convergence in terms of political values and/or socio-economic structures. If we are to maintain that our field involves something more than code enforcement and ornamentation, not least concern for social and environmental justice, then we have to acknowledge that the cities of our planet do not exist in one world. Further, aside from the matter of politics and culture, convergence in terms of economic rules and attitudes has had an uneven effect on societies and places. In the developing world both urban processes and outcomes (Christensen, 2015)

have not improved concomitantly with market integration. If cities have become segregated, stressful, rife with inequities in mobility and housing, environmentally damaged, and overrun with surveillance, then these conditions have been reached by the perpetuation of violent and inhuman rules and regulations.

The outlook of governance, which privileges technology and profit at the cost of citizens and the environment, has not changed with globalization. Indeed, it may have become more entrenched. Even as the gap between countries in terms of absolute wealth slowly narrows, we are seeing a widening gulf in terms of rights, capabilities and development – not just between ‘us’ and ‘them’, but also between groups and communities within all countries. Meanwhile, dystopia covered over by a tapestry of faux urbanity is becoming the new normal.

A one-world approach is needed but not in terms of curricula. We need more universalization in terms of the ethics and values of planning, but not so much with regard to courses and program structures. We also need more universalization in terms of learning together across North-South divides, while also understanding that separate lessons might emerge from such interactions. Both pedagogy and research should “promote interdependency and shared responsibility” (Amirahmadi, 1993, p.538). This brings us to the issue of accreditation.

5.2. Role of Accreditation Agencies

The experience from Abu Dhabi shows that, procedurally, following a curriculum that passes successive external reviews does not guarantee that the values and ethics we consider to be part of the identity of planning will be passed onto students. If the profession wants to remain true to its own ethical guidelines it will have to rethink accreditation standards in developing countries, particularly in the Gulf region. The standards to which we hold planning programs in Gulf countries, affects not only the fate of planning in those countries, but also the identity of the professional globally. Experts who are invited to consult on accreditation and licensure must consider the wider repercussions of their decisions and recommendations. There has not been sufficient dialog on how accreditation of planning programs ought to be approached in contexts where planning does not operate under the assumptions which we take for granted, and where professional ethics of planning are radically different.

It would be necessary, in such a discussion, to recognize the aspirations of the younger generations and to take a longer view on the role of the profession in these countries. One approach could be to require planning programs to show evidence of the following four outcomes: (i) critical research in the region by faculty members, (ii) research by students on local issues, (iii) collaboration with local governments for studying urban issues, and (iv) university-community partnerships to benefit underprivileged groups. The latter will require flexibility on the part of state authorities in the region – at least in tolerating socially beneficial work without fearing calamitous outcomes. Pursuing these outcomes does not require changes to the basic nature of the political economy of the region. The goals, however, are achievable, and can bring the benefits of urban planning to underprivileged communities. Furthermore, these requirements reflect our shared values as planners, and will go a long way to protecting the integrity of the field.

References

- Abramson, Daniel B. (2005) The “Studio Abroad” as a mode of transcultural engagement in urban planning education: A reflection on ten years of Sino-Canadian collaboration. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 25 (1), pp.89-102.
- Afshar, Farokh (2001) Preparing planners for a globalizing world: The planning school at the University of Guelph. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 20 (3), pp.339-352.
- Amirahmadi, Hooshang (1993) Globalization and planning education. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 20 (5), pp.537-555.
- Balassiano, Katia (2011) Tackling “wicked problems” in planning studio courses. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 31 (4), pp.449-460.

- Banerjee, Tridib (1985) Environmental design in the developing world: Some thoughts on design education. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 5 (1), pp.28-38.
- Beauregard, Robert A. (1995) Edge critics. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 14 (3), pp.163-166.
- Burayidi, Michael A. (1993) Dualism and universalism: Competing paradigms in planning education? *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 12 (3), pp.223-229.
- Campbell, Heather (2012) 'Planning ethics' and rediscovering the idea of planning. *Planning Theory*, 11 (4), pp.379-399.
- Caprotti, Federico (2014) Eco-urbanism and the eco-city, or, denying the right to the city? *Antipode*, 46 (5), pp.1285-1303.
- Cavrić, Branko (2011) Evolution of Botswana planning education in light of local and international requirements. *Spatium*, 25, pp.30-38.
- Chakravarty, Surajit (2019) Un-cities: The urbanism of rapidly growing cities in the Gulf Region. In Banerjee, Tridib and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (eds) *New companion to urban design*. New York: Routledge, pp.83-94.
- Chakravarty, Surajit (2017) Buying (into) sustainability: Technocratic environmentalism in Abu Dhabi. In Caprotti, Federico and Li Yu (eds) *Sustainable cities in Asia*. London: Routledge, pp.135-145.
- Chakravarty, Surajit and Abdellatif Qamhaieh (2015) City upgraded: redesigning and disciplining downtown Abu Dhabi. In Lees, Loretta, Hyun, B. Shin and Ernesto Lopez-Morales (eds) *Global gentrifications: Uneven development and displacement*, Bristol: Policy Press, pp.59-80.
- Chakravarty, Surajit, Meera Al Mansoori and Meera Shehadeh (2013) *What's Arabic for charette? Public participation in the Baniyas neighborhood of Abu Dhabi*. [Conference paper]. Presented at the 49th ISOCARP conference in Brisbane.
- Chettiparamb, Angelique (2006) Bottom-up planning and the future of planning education in India. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 26 (2), pp.185-194.
- Christensen, Karen S. (2015) Both process and outcome are essential to planning. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 35 (2), pp.188-198.
- Crot, Laurence (2013) Planning for sustainability in non-democratic polities: The case of Masdar City. *Urban Studies*, 50 (13), pp.2809-2825.
- Cugurullo, Federico (2013) How to build a sandcastle: An analysis of the genesis and development of Masdar City. *Journal of Urban Technology*, 20 (1), pp.23-37.
- Dandekar, Hemlata C. (2009) Commentary: A multiuniversity planning studio at the World Planning Congress: An opportunity for international planning education. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 28 (3), pp.382-390.
- Davidson, Christopher (2007) The emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai: Contrasting roles in the international system. *Asian Affairs*, 38 (1), pp.33-48.
- Davidson, Christopher (2009) Abu Dhabi's new economy: Oil, investment and domestic development. *Middle East Policy*, 16 (2), pp.59-79.
- Elsheshtawy, Yasser (2008) Cities of sand and fog. In Elsheshtawy, Yasser (ed) *The evolving Arab city*, London: Routledge, pp.258-304
- Fischler, Raphaël (2006) Teaching history to planners. *Journal of Planning History*, 5 (4), pp.280-288.
- Fischler, Raphaël (2012) Fifty theses on urban planning and urban planners. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 32 (1), pp.107-114.
- Flyvbjerg, Bent (1996) The dark side of planning: Rationality and 'realrationalität'. In Mandelbaum, Seymour J., Luigi Mazza and Robert W. Burchell (eds) *Explorations in planning theory*, New Brunswick: Center for Urban Policy Research Press, pp.383-394.
- Friedmann, John (1994) Planning education for the late twentieth century: An initial inquiry. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 14 (1), pp.55-64.
- Goldstein, Harvey A., Scott Bollens, Edward Feser and Christopher Silver (2006) An experiment in the internationalization of planning education: The NEURUS Program. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 25 (4), pp.349-363.
- Harris, Kirk E. (2015) Understanding the disposition of urban planning students toward social justice and equity themes. *SAGE Open*, 5 (3), pp.1-15.
- Harvey, David (1978) On planning the ideology of planning. In Burchell, Robert and George Sternlieb (eds) *Planning theory in the 1980s*. New Brunswick, NJ: CUPR, pp.213-233.
- Klopp, Jacqueline, Jonathan Chanin, Peter Ngau and Elliott Sclar (2014) Globalisation and the urban studio: Evaluating an inter-university studio collaboration in Nairobi. *International Development Planning Review*, 36 (2), pp.205-226.
- Kunzmann, Klaus R. (1985) Educating planners in Europe: Trends and requirements-an international perspective. *Town Planning Review*, 56 (4), pp.442-457.
- Lang, Jon (1983) Teaching planning to city planning students. An argument for the studio/workshop approach. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 2 (2), pp.122-129.

- Lowe, Kate and Renia Ehrenfeucht (2017) Derailed values: Planning education, external funding, and environmental justice in New Orleans rail planning. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 38 (4), pp.477-489.
- Martin, Evelyn and Timothy Beatley (1993) Our relationship with the earth: Environmental ethics in planning education. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 12 (2), pp.117-126.
- Mohammad, Robina and James D. Sidaway (2012) Spectacular urbanization amidst variegated geographies of globalization: Learning from Abu Dhabi's trajectory through the lives of South Asian men. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 36 (3), pp.606-627.
- Morphet, Janice and Vincent Nadin (1989) Viewpoint: setting the planning agenda for the 1990s: Planning education. *Town Planning Review*, 60 (4), pp.iii-iv.
- Németh, Jeremy and Judith G. Long (2012) Assessing learning outcomes in US planning studio courses. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 32 (4), pp.476-490.
- Neuman, Michael (2005) Notes on the uses and scope of city planning theory. *Planning Theory*, 4 (2), pp.123-145.
- Odendaal, Nancy (2012) Reality check: Planning education in the African urban century. *Cities*, 29 (3), pp.174-182.
- Peterson, Sarah J. (2006) Priming the historian in all planners. *Journal of Planning History*, 5 (4), pp.289-300.
- Ponzini, Davide (2011) Large scale development projects and star architecture in the absence of democratic politics: The case of Abu Dhabi, UAE. *Cities*, 28 (3), pp.251-259.
- Qamhaieh, Abdellatif and Surajit Chakravarty (2017) Global cities, public transportation and social exclusion: A study of the bus system in Abu Dhabi. *Mobilities*, 12 (3), pp.462-478.
- Sanyal, Bishwapriya (ed) (1990) Breaking the boundaries: A one-world approach to planning education. Plenum Press: New York.
- Sanyal, Bishwapriya (1989) Poor countries' students in rich countries' universities: possibilities of planning education for the twenty-first century. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 8 (3), pp.139-155.
- Sen, Siddhartha, Karen Umemoto, Annette Koh and Vera Zambonelli (2017) Diversity and social justice in planning education: A synthesis of topics, pedagogical approaches, and educational goals in planning syllabi. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 37 (3), pp.347-358.
- Sharpley, Richard (2002) The challenges of economic diversification through tourism: The case of Abu Dhabi. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4 (3), pp.221-235.
- Sharpley, Richard (2008) Planning for tourism: The case of Dubai. *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development*, 5 (1), pp.13-30.
- Thomas, Huw (2012) Values and the planning school. *Planning Theory*, 11 (4), pp.400-417.
- van Horen, Basil, Michael Leaf and Sisira Pinnawala (2004) Localizing a global discipline: Designing new planning programs in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 23 (3), pp.255-268.
- Watson, Vanessa (2009) Seeing from the South: Refocusing urban planning on the globe's central urban issues. *Urban Studies*, 46 (11), pp.2259-2275.
- Wildavsky, Aaron (1973) If planning is everything, maybe it's nothing. *Policy Sciences*, 4 (2), pp.127-153.

Transactions of the Association of European Schools of Planning • 3 (2019)
doi: 10.24306/TrAESOP.2019.01.004

MAPPING SAN SIRO LAB: EXPERIMENTING GROUNDED, INTERACTIVE AND MUTUAL LEARNING FOR INCLUSIVE CITIES

Francesca Cognetti^a, Ida Castelnovo^b

(Received 10 October 2017; revised version received 19 February 2018; final version accepted 21 September 2018)

Abstract

The paper proposes a reflection on the Mapping San Siro experience, a five-year action learning project, promoted by the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies in collaboration with Polisocial, the public engagement program of Politecnico di Milano. The project is currently ongoing in one of the largest public estates in Milan, known as San Siro. It aims at experimenting a pedagogical environment based on grounded, interactive, action-oriented and hybrid learning, reflecting how new approaches can enrich the experience of educational practices for the inclusive city. The paper addresses a series of issues, which emerge from this experience, reflecting on situated learning, the co-production of knowledge with community partners, and an action-oriented teaching practice. In this paper, a reflection on the pedagogical and social outcomes of the experience is also proposed.

Keywords

Action learning, situated approach, knowledge, public housing, inclusive cities

a Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, Rector's Delegate Public Engagement, Politecnico di Milano, Via Bonardi 3 – 20133 Milano. E-mail: francesca.cognetti@polimi.it

b Politecnico di Milano Public Engagement Program, P.zza Leonardo Da Vinci 32 - 20133 Milano. E-mail: ida.castelnovo@polimi.it

1. Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that contemporary cities and related urban challenges require new approaches to teaching and learning. In Higher Education, an innovative approach to urban planning education, which acknowledges the limits of conventional coursework, is “action learning” – a process in which students, teachers, and local partners share learning experiences while working on projects for a specific community.

The aim of the paper is to test this approach through some theoretical reflections and describe the challenges faced and tools implemented within a marginal context, sharing findings from an experience on the ground. The paper describes the theoretical framework, and the opportunities and impacts of action learning through six stages: first, proposing a reflection on the approach and its guiding principles (par. 1); secondly, describing the urban context within which the action learning experience is taking place (par. 2); thirdly, briefly presenting the different phases of the implementation of the Mapping San Siro project (par. 3), and then, describing the approach developed within San Siro (par. 4; 5). Finally, the paper proposes a reflection on the pedagogical and social outcomes generated by action learning experiences (par. 6). The roles of students, teachers and communities are explored through an actual and on-going example – the Mapping San Siro Lab in Milan.

2. Action Learning for Inclusive Cities: Co-producing Knowledge and Co-designing Paths of Change

Contemporary cities and linked complex urban dynamics require new approaches to teaching and learning, related to how to manage and plan more inclusive cities. This is especially important given the recent economic crisis and the already existing pressures that welfare states have been subjected to. Cities, and especially deprived neighbourhoods, are suffering from a strong stigmatized representation that hinders an understanding of the complexity of social and spatial issues and the diversity of needs expressed by communities residing or moving there. For example, the provision of housing and welcome policies for vulnerable groups and their societal integration is an ever-existing challenge that has become one of particular urgency, especially in those deprived and marginal parts of cities. Planning cities for social inclusion requires innovative methods to understand the urban phenomenon, and new skills on the topic which trainers and students have to improve.

More recent pleas for the development of synergies between social and spatial understandings of ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec, 2014; Marconi and Ostanel, 2016; UN-Habitat III, 2017) are coming to the fore, albeit not necessarily with a prime focus on hospitality and social inclusion in relation to providing housing and social facilities for marginal and vulnerable communities. In the academic context, this challenge calls Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) involved in teaching Urban Design and Planning into particular account. HEIs are called upon to assume new awareness, as actors committed to the treatment of urban and social issues, and to take on new social responsibilities (Jiusto et al., 2013; Mitrasinovic, 2015). Relevant teaching tools and methods need to be refined; novel competences are required; and new narratives and representations need to be developed in order to produce a more in-depth knowledge of urban phenomena, prepare urban practitioners to tackle them, and contribute to the development of more incisive urban policies towards more just cities.¹

Two questions arise. First, which principles could guide an innovative method aimed at addressing this complexity? Secondly, how could this innovation enrich the experience of educational practices tackling inclusive cities?

1 On this specific issue the authors are involved in the Designing Inclusion project (Erasmus Plus KA2 – Strategic partnership - www.desinc.org) with University of Sheffield (UK) – coordinator, KU Leuven (BG), Politecnico di Milano (IT), Architecture Sans Frontières International (FR) and Housing Europe (BG). The underlying motivation of the project is to produce new pedagogical approaches and tools, addressing the interface between architecture, urban design, urban planning education for inclusive urban spaces in European cities. In the framework of the project, one of the outputs has been a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) (www.pok.polimi.it – Action Learning for Inclusion) which explains how to develop planning, urban and architectural design teaching with an action-oriented approach, by describing the meaning, and possible methods and tools of action-learning. It focuses specifically on engagement with vulnerable and marginalised populations.

The approach discussed here is based on four principles: it is a situated, interactive, action oriented, and hybrid approach. We can see these features in more detail in the next points.

2.1. Grounded Learning

Urban design and planning are commonly understood as interventions conceived from above: plans, programmes and urban policies are designed on different scales by one or more experts who analyse problems and recommend solutions. Often, analysis is also developed through secondary sources, such as statistical data, technical maps, photographs, and documents. This set of methodologies assumes that a city is made up of physical spaces and formal aspects, which can be shaped and designed through this approach.

On the contrary, a city is an assemblage of institutional, social, physical and infrastructural components that are produced and reproduced both on a daily basis and in the long term (Sassen, 2008); we have to consider the territory as a palimpsest made up by different signs not only related to the morphology. For this reason, students are invited to include in their planning activities elements which refer to material and immaterial aspects, for instance: space uses, perceptions, rules, traces, imaginations, powers and so on. Through this approach, it becomes crucial to understand intangible and non-visible aspects of the context, such as the general atmosphere, sound and visual qualities, signs of political tensions, and cultural characters, as well as daily challenges and desires.

For students, this requires a patient and situated observation activity to understand daily life conditions, living practices and challenges, and provides an opportunity to observe shades and changes in different times of the day as well as over time. This very immersive experience, particularly in a marginal context, addresses issues affecting spatial and social justice, starting with the recognition of the many forms of inequality and diversities which occur inside communities.

Through this method, students strengthen their proximity to the context, not just being critical observers but also taking part in the everyday life of the given community. Their presence in a marginal context also offers them the chance to broaden and reinforce personal relationships with inhabitants and local actors.

The ability to face these issues usually involves context-based ethical sensitivities. In other words, students that want to work with marginal communities for the enhancement of their quality of life need to develop a sort of empathy that often comes only with experience.

2.2. Interactive Learning

The learning approach for an inclusive city starts from the certainty that the urban environment is an increasingly complex arena, within which different stakeholders own different interests and kinds of knowledge.

Many persons populate the agora, in the name of their relationship with a city and territory, and they are legitimated or demand to be recognized as bearers of urban knowledge: an agora in which policy makers, entrepreneurs, grass-roots organisations, social workers and members of third sector agencies come together, often unconsciously. The acknowledgment of this arena leads to the need to re-compose different forms of knowledge (expert, ordinary, experiential, interactive).

The establishment of live teaching environments and the organisation of multi-stakeholder debates are the core of action learning activities in which students and trainers are involved. The whole process is rooted in immersive field experiences and in the creation of horizontal learning environments.

From this perspective, the learning process gains from the interpretation of common sense and acts to refine, expand, and make more accessible contents and possibilities of action.

This suggests a kind of circular process in which knowledge is refined during the interactive process, and in which there is no instrumental difference between scientific and common knowledge. On the contrary, there is an exchange between different kinds of knowledge, and the roles of recipient and giver are not pre-established (Cognetti, 2014).

The idea is that knowledge, which is local and specific, is generated through a practice of collective inquiry that leads to the construction of shared interpretations.

These understandings are connected to a specific network of actors at a specific moment (often temporary and unstable), and they acquire value when they are useful to all those who have participated in the exchange.

Producing such understanding, in a complex and marginal situation (such as non-transparent conditions in terms of rights, duties, sense of responsibility, and also issues of competence and professionalism), implies the use of different interpretations and views, both formalized and non-formalized.

In this sense, the chance to interact with common and specific knowledge becomes central. From this perspective, the understanding process happens through experience, life situations and the individual practices of everyday makers (Bang, 2005), and everyday cognition (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Relationships of a close and pragmatic nature with these individuals are not simple, but nevertheless provide enrichment for students, especially when they are able to build links between scientific knowledge and common knowledge, thereby making a city not just a field in which to apply knowledge, but also an environment to co-produce knowledge. This moves away from the idea of a city as an object, to the idea that a city is a partner, which we can build a co-designed path with.

2.3. Action-oriented Learning

This teaching method can be called action-oriented because it is linked to the possibility of producing transformation by promoting a collective learning process.

This is very important in those contexts where calls for not doing prevail over the calls for doing: marginal contexts are frequently characterised by a level of inertia and it can seem quite difficult to activate paths of change. The same perception of local community organisations and inhabitants is pervaded by a sense of their having an inability to challenge the currently accepted logic, which consequently causes distrust and abandonment.

For this reason, any contribution related to the possibility of introducing new elements seems central, both directly (through the same student group as promoters of transformations), and indirectly (when community partners have the capacity to become promoters of concrete interventions). This path explores the possibility of improving the quality of teaching through 'the imperative to act' (Parnell and Pieterse, 2010), alluding to the urgency of addressing development issues in a time of severe crisis for cities and general loss of rights. In this sense, the emphasis is on the results that new production of knowledge can induce in terms of change (social, perceptions, desires, space, and politics).

This approach is interrelated to the themes of action research; in this approach, research findings are seen as a common heritage for the territory, and are able to produce actual impacts and foster local activation.

In recent years, issues of action research have been taken up in urban disciplines as a 'family' of participative, experiential, and action-oriented approaches to planning (Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Reardon, 2006; Saija, 2014). In these contributions, action research opens up the possibility that urban planners can influence a set of elements, regarding both the perceptions and awareness of inhabitants and community partners. They have the opportunity to express different values and interests, the ability to perceive and draw new design strategies, and reimagine ways of undertaking transformation scenarios. Action research is one important framework for

bringing researchers and community stakeholders together as members of a knowledge production collective that focuses on effecting social change.

2.4. Hybrid Learning

In this method, students can have the opportunity to work closely with senior researchers and professionals, in an innovative process of exchange. The learning environment and pedagogical tools inherent within this approach propose both formal contexts of interaction and informal moments of exchange that come from the chance to experience neighbourhoods from the ground level.

This process is a 'peer to peer learning' process (Perrone, 2015) where students can take part in the whole research process, and experience elements of uncertainty, improvisation and hindrances, typical aspects of an undefined situation.

Within this approach, the learning process of students encompasses not just the use of participatory tools, but also an understanding of how the research process is actually developed in a marginal and undefined environment. In these terms, the relationship between research and pedagogical dimension is dialogic; both research and teaching are intended as processes of mutual learning, where different degrees of maturity and experience find place.

In this framework, the learning process is a hybrid process where research and teaching practice are connected, and the focus is on how the co-creation of knowledge can generate action and impact. A virtuous circle between practice – experiential and situated – and theoretical elaboration takes shape. Through a circular relationship between direct action and reflection on actions, the case study described here promotes an interplay between two dimensions (practical and theoretical), that are traditionally separate.

We deal with two parallel action research cycles, which influence and support each other (see Figure1), where the production of knowledge and the treatment of problems are the results of a continuous interaction between research, learning, action, and reflection (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Kolb and Kolb, 2005).

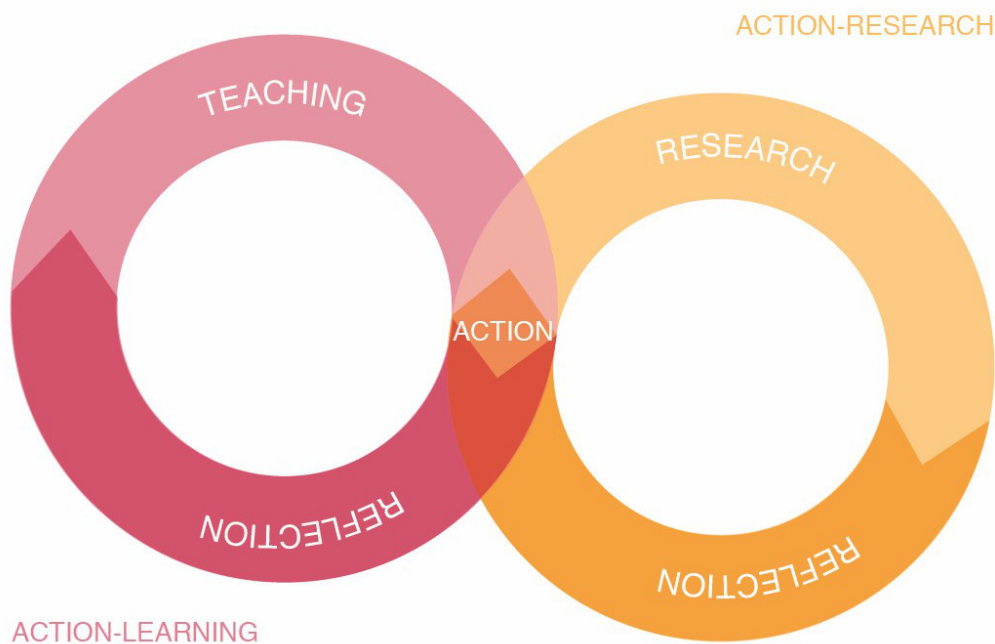


Figure 1 - The Method: Two Action Research Cycles in Parallel, Influencing and Supporting Each Other

3. The San Siro Neighbourhood as a Learning Context

The neighbourhood of San Siro has been the object of our activities and has acted as the learning environment that the action-oriented learning approach has been experimented in.

San Siro is a paradigmatic situation to look at: an urban marginal context placed close to the central part of the city; a changing historical neighbourhood that attracts a variety of living demands; a rich and active environment within which civil society takes action, promoting interventions and projects, in terms of social innovation, practices and bottom up responses to its needs, desires and expectations.

Nowadays, the neighbourhood is crossed by processes of change related to different themes and issues. It represents a complex reality to decode, which sometimes finds us unprepared, not only as researchers but also as citizens, questioning both our ability to understand and our attitudes towards living together.

San Siro is one of the largest public housing neighbourhood in Milan, built between the 1930s and 1950s and composed of about 6.110 dwellings, held and managed by the Regional Agency for Public Housing of Lombardy (ALER). There are around 11,000 residents, 40 percent (40%) of whom are immigrants (doubling the city's average); another consistent percentage are elderly people (mostly living alone), and people with psychological disabilities.

It is characterised by strong socio-spatial inequalities, intercultural/intergenerational conflicts, and a progressive lack of maintenance of the housing stock - in large part due to the financial problems of the public property owners.

For these reasons, even though San Siro is located in a quite central and well-connected part of the city, it is a marginal and problematic area in terms of living conditions: urban decay and blight exacerbate already existing problems, such as disadvantage, social exclusion, poverty, and the coexistence of different populations and cultures.

Thus, what usually emerges is a problematic picture on many fronts; they share a common denominator of low quality ordinary and daily life in which residents and local community organisations adopt 'survival tactics' in order to address the conditions they face (De Carli, 2014; Cognetti and Padovani, 2017).

The past and recent history of the neighbourhood suggest the existence of a net of potentialities, sometimes implicit, sometimes visible, that could be seen as resources for addressing some of the urban and social challenges that the neighbourhood faces. In this multidimensional and multi-problematic frame, we consider the strong and connected network of local organisations as one of the main resources.

The network consists of a rich array of community groups, non-governmental organisations, and local institutions which work towards the improvement of living conditions in the area, promoting social inclusion and social cohesion and also trying to build a different and more complex representation of a highly stigmatized neighbourhood. It is a grass-roots and fragmented network, composed of different souls and attitudes which, with scarce resources, is playing a dual role: dealing with everyday problems, and having a proactive role in terms of the production of shared visions for the future transformation of the neighbourhood.

Other resources are linked to some still timid and fragile initiatives promoted by local public institutions in order to face the new articulation and fragmentation of social needs. Moreover, a variety of practices are promoted by residents to cope with the everyday necessities of life.

For all these features, practicing within this kind of urban environment gradually allowed teachers and students to immerse themselves in a marginal context; this proved to be a fundamental learning opportunity.

4. Mapping San Siro Lab: The Action Learning Experience in Brief

Mapping San Siro (MSS) is an on-going action research and action learning project, in the public housing neighbourhood of San Siro. The project seeks to implement a live teaching project based on knowledge-

sharing between academia and the neighbourhood, thereby complementing research activity and teaching practice with civic engagement.

Supported by the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies (DASU) – Politecnico di Milano, and by the university's public engagement program Polisocial,² the experience started in January, 2013 with a two-month workshop that took place in the San Siro neighbourhood.³ The primary aim of the workshop was to study the complexity of the neighbourhood through an action-oriented approach, which was able to keep together the several dimensions of that reality: social, cultural, spatial and political. Central to the approach was a focus on how the co-construction of a specific knowledge of the context, interactively built both by students/researchers and local partners, could contribute to identifying ways for more inclusive and effective forms of urban transformation to be developed.

Through the involvement of over thirty students and ten teachers, (from several different disciplines and universities, and in partnership with several local community organisations),⁴ the workshop aimed to examine the underlying conditions, policies, physical and institutional spaces that enable or constrain the social and urban transformation of the neighbourhood.

At the same time, through a multidimensional, intercultural and cross-disciplinary path, the experience aimed at consolidating the educational process of students: by encouraging them to develop new social competences and stimulating them to operate as critical thinkers embracing the complexity of urban and social contexts in which they normally have to operate (Castelnovo and Cognetti, 2013).

At the end of the workshop, a group of about twenty people (students, young researchers and teachers), decided to stay in the neighbourhood and develop further activities. This need emerged from two different orders of reasons; on the one hand, two questions emerged clearly from the group: how could our knowledge, expertise and competencies support the activation of inhabitants and community partners? How could teachers and students contribute to produce a new and pertinent representation of the neighbourhood in order to make urban and social dynamics more understandable, and to transform the residents' living conditions in San Siro?

On the other hand, and arising from the workshop's activities, new issues for additional investigation and actions emerged, as well as new requests from the community partners.

From this, a second phase of work started that was more focused around three thematic axes: living conditions; courtyards and public spaces; and empty residential spaces. Four key objectives have defined the dual nature of the project and have guided the activities undertaken in this second stage:

- Understanding the complex dynamics of decision making and social practices which drive the living conditions in the neighbourhood
- Reshaping the image of San Siro to improve public opinion by highlighting its positive side
- Building up a different relationship with institutions with the purpose of influencing the public agenda
- Providing tools for more effective initiatives and actual projects, such as project design and management, fundraising, and spatial planning.

2 Launched in 2012, Polisocial is the public engagement program of Politecnico di Milano. The aim of the program is to extend the university's mission to social issues and activate new collaborations with civil society organisations. The purpose is to place the university in close contact with the dynamics of change in society, extending the university's mission to social issues, thereby building a "model" of public engagement that puts the social role of the university at the heart of the educational and research processes.

3 Beatrice De Carli and Francesca Cognetti initially promoted the workshop. See also: Mapping San Siro, Un'esperienza di ricerca-azione nel quartiere di edilizia pubblica San Siro a Milano - Anno 2013 (English subtitles) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cY8k-lsBS0>

4 The local network is composed of three different groups of inhabitants (Ass. Vivere San Siro, Comitato di quartiere San Siro, Comitato Abitanti San Siro); some local associations and third sector organisations (Ass. Mamme a scuola, Ass. Tuttimondi, Cooperativa Dar Casa, Coop. Tuttiinsieme); a local civic institution (Laboratorio di Quartiere – Comune di Milano).

After a year, the group originating from the workshop thought that a condition for the research activity to be carried on would be to set up a steady base in the neighbourhood. Therefore, in May, 2014, the group asked to ALER, the Regional Agency for Public Housing of Lombardy that owns and manages the housing stock, to provide a space for working and developing activities within the neighbourhood; a thirty square metre former shop was available in Abbiati 4, and has become the workspace of the group, called Trentametriquadri (see Figure 2).



Figure 2 - Trentametriquadri Space

In a short time, with the voluntary help of many students, friends and residents, Trentametriquadri has become a living place of exchange, interaction and dialogue between the University and the neighbourhood, where local partners and residents have access to information, data, facts and products about the dynamics occurring in the neighbourhood.

Setting up a base, activating an otherwise empty space, has marked an important change in the group's work, in terms of both the research methodology and the social and civic value/engagement of the project.

The space is currently the pivot of all activities related to the Mapping San Siro experience - such as teaching and research activities, public events, meetings with community partners, public debates, pilot projects and so on.⁵

Looking back over the past five years, this experience has helped the group of teachers to question the methods and tools that they use in their teaching practice related to planning and urban studies; Trentametriquadri has become an innovative pedagogical environment.⁶

5 See also www.mappingsansiro.polimi.it; www.sansirostories.com

6 With this approach, the project received the AESOP Excellence in Teaching Award 2015 and the Design Ignites Change Educator Grant in 2014.

In addition, this experience has allowed us to refine our reflection on the approach and the tools developed, as well as on the impacts generated (see Figure 3). In particular, the approach has focused on three main dimensions, which we explain further: situating, inquiry, and acting.

GOALS	THEMES	APPROACH	TOOLS	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	IMPACTS
Understand complex dynamics and social practices in the neighbourhood	Housing & Living conditions	SITUATING	<i>setting up a base local dialogues networking local education</i>	<i>/evaluation with local partners /situated exhibitions /caffè san siro (local open lessons) /learning activities</i>	for students <i>develop new sensitivities and awareness</i>	on the neighbourhood <i>tighten new alliances and networks</i>
Reshape the image of San Siro to improve public opinion	Vacant & empty spaces	INQUIRY	<i>participatory mapping map stories san siro 1:1 communication</i>	<i>/interviews /observation /neighbourhood walks /workshop with local partners /storytelling (www.sansirostories.com)</i>	<i>develop new capabilities and soft skills (teamwork, communication abilities, cognitive & emotional empathy, problem-solving abilities...)</i>	<i>acquire more awareness and new knowledge</i>
Build up different relationships with institutions and societal actors	Public & common spaces	ACTING	<i>micro interventions pilot projects scenarios</i>	<i>/micro-actions in public space /co-design activities /working tables</i>	<i>be able to understand urban & social dynamics in a critical way</i>	<i>micro transformations of space</i>
Provide tools for more effective initiatives and actual projects						

Figure 3 - The Scheme Represents Our Approach, Tools and Impacts

5. Situating, Contingency and 1:1 Inquiry

The presence of a stable base within the neighbourhood plays a fundamental role in the work. Over the years, the space has acquired different roles and meanings, becoming increasingly a sort of 'live lab' (Karvonen and Van Heur, 2014; Concilio, 2016).

The Lab submerses students into marginality through contact with very problematic issues and many different fragile populations in line with other experiences of learning centres that have a similar approach – in Europe and all around the world.⁷

The presence of a base helps to practice a dimension that we call contingency (Karvonen and Van Heur, 2014): a specific circumstance that takes shape in the *here and now* and defines a collective process of learning which is related to specific dynamics, facts and relationships. The place, dealing with the unexpected in the contingency, helps to reproduce unexpected results and fosters the use of the most diverse materials to collect clues.

The challenge has been to fine-tune a way of doing and acting which, according to Ingold (2013), we can call 'the art of inquiry'. In the art of inquiry, the interaction with the 'urban materials' with which we work and our reaction to them leads to a growth of our thoughts – "these materials think in us, as we think through them" (Ingold, 2013, p.6). In this perspective, as the author points out, each inquiry is an experiment: not in the sense of testing predetermined hypotheses, as usually happens with other sciences – such as natural ones – but more with regard to finding new research paths, identifying new partners and following their traces.

In this process we learn by observing, listening, and perceiving what the world has to say.

7 For instance, we can quote the Live work experience of the Sheffield University – School of Architecture; the Pratt Center promoted by the Pratt Institute in New York; the African Center for Cities – University of Cape Town – Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment; or PUKAR - Partners For Urban Knowledge Action & Research in Mumbai.

Therefore, learning takes place not as a process of accumulating information or doing sophisticated exercises of description and representation, but through a form of correspondence with the research materials and the questions that emerge from the field of study. The learning practice has a holistic connotation which involves knowledge but is not exclusively cognitive and linear. For example, information and skills can be acquired through a variety of practices, experiences and failures, as well as by the researcher.

Learning, in this way, embraces “a transformation of knowledge, and/or perception, and/or self” (McFarlane, 2011, p.15).

In addition, the base is a place of exchange within which activities are available to the most diverse people. Seminars, workshops and open lessons are tools for working in the live lab as an educational environment in which students are immersed (see Figure 4). The base can be used as open classrooms, where activities normally held in education related buildings (lessons, seminars, book presentations) are brought outside schools and universities and enlarge their public from scholars to social actors and inhabitants.

This represents a choice concerning the emancipatory role of education/pedagogy, in which an active and dialogic approach to the production and transfer of knowledge becomes a condition for the development (Freire, 1970). Freire developed the idea of ‘Knowledge-Creation’, conceived as an educational process able to develop and disseminate new capabilities and awareness, strongly criticizing the idea of education as a process of transfer of pre-established knowledge.



Figure 4 - A Group of Students Developing Projects for Urban Regeneration

Students have been working to put together different types of information by collecting data, stories, perceptions, interviews, and so on, with the aim of giving a voice to people, facts, and dynamics. Through this operation a ‘multiple sources’ observatory has been created to view the picture with different lenses. It brings

a clear identification of the problems and allows teachers, students and community to obtain a more realistic and usable representation of San Siro.

We call this operation *S.Siro 1:1*, in the belief that it is possible to obtain an accurate representation of the situation.

At the same time, understanding deeply this peculiar situation becomes a window to better understand the general trend of the city of Milan, regarding the issues of marginal neighborhoods and the crisis of housing policies.

Students contribute to the construction of this representation of San Siro by promoting surveys through interviews on specific topics (such as stories of a block, or gathering information on the living conditions of elderly people or foreign women), or through photo essays of daily life moments, or even through the elaboration of maps, data and schemes and their public dissemination.

From a pedagogical point of view, this process concerns the possibility of understanding and learning how to deconstruct complex phenomena through a dialogic and situated approach, getting close to fragile populations and their different perspectives. A second aspect deals with the possibility of critically reinterpreting what is emerging from communities' knowledge and returning it through synthetic forms of writing and representation. The third aspect concerns the development of accessible forms of communication, making the experts' knowledge obtainable by community partners and inhabitants. In this direction, a set of tools and devices of communication are developed (such as noticeboard, maps, flyers, website, maquettes - see Figure 5), paying attention to their usability (e.g. doing translation in multiple languages), for widespread dissemination.⁸

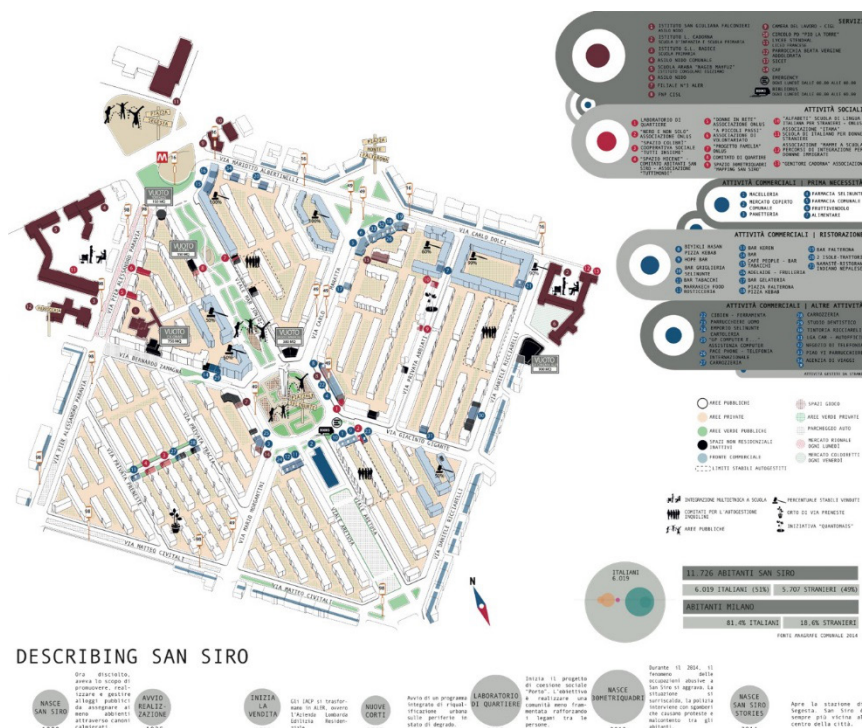


Figure 5 - An Example of Representation: The Map of Social Actors and Activities

8 An effort in this direction has been to produce reports and products accessible to community partners, experimenting with forms of representation as tools that could be easily understood: examples of this effort are what we called the Issues that are similar to newspapers, where the use of pictures and info graphics allow a better understanding of urban phenomena and social dynamics.

6. Taking Action!

The other goal is to act on concrete projects and activities co-designed with local community partners (formal or not) and inhabitants. In particular, the project aims to use the exchange experience with the local community to develop projects, in some cases involving actual design, in others, the design of urban masterplans, and consultation exercises. The overall goal is to start a design process to elaborate alternative urban regeneration hypotheses for the neighbourhood, stimulating a critical reflection about which resources could be activated.

Through co-designed activity and participatory practices, the group of students provides technical skills to explore new opportunities in order to implement concrete interventions in the area. Local groups and organisations are also involved in defining alternative future scenarios and in building development trajectories.

The proposed strategies and scenarios for San Siro put together the tangible and intangible resources of the neighbourhood in a complex picture. They envision collaborative and shared mechanisms of local activation, promoted by local or external partners for reactivating the neighbourhood.

Another output of the work on the ground has been the design of future scenarios (see Figure 6). Directions and programs have been designed in order to encourage community partners to reflect on the development of new perspectives of urban and social transformation. In particular, a scenario shows chances for development, highlighting tangible and intangible resources and their desired interplay.

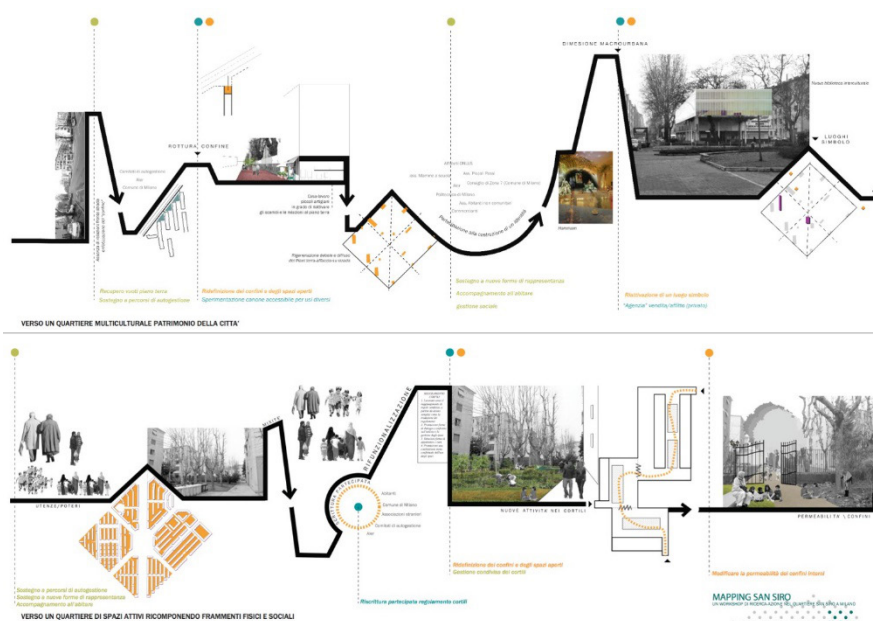


Figure 6 - Building Scenarios for San Siro

The design of these scenarios identifies *levers for change* conceived as *concrete steps*, and draw a different picture of the future of San Siro.

Through this projective design process, community organizations achieve a better awareness of their capability for activating these *levers for change*, in order to improve common goods, promote the social re-use of empty spaces, and introduce new rules shared as much as possible by all inhabitants.

For instance, a scenario that the Mapping San Siro project is working on identifies strategies for the regeneration of abandoned and vacant spaces (commercial and public spaces, empty dwellings) with the aim of suggesting a set of actions in order to reactivate and reuse them. In particular, this projective design process

involves different stakeholders (institutions and local networks) who are working together to define desirable transformations.

A second way to work on transformation is to promote concrete interventions designed to modify the consolidated setting of situations and places by directly intervening in physical space (see Figure 7).

Through a tangible action, the design activity is perceived as a transformative gesture, which leads to the re-appropriation of places.

Interventions, intended also as experimental actions, show a new quality of urban environment in which all the features and equipment of public and collective spaces can enhance and support social practices and new uses.

By activating a variety of competences and resources, these interventions might also become a learning opportunity to change urban discourse and policies in marginal contexts. Urban design projects with an incremental and non-invasive nature have the chance to empower community partners involved in the design process. These fragile social actors are mainly considered to be recipients of social and welfare policies.

This kind of intervention does not have the ambition to solve all the community's needs, but it is a device to enable local communities to assert themselves and give voice to their aspirations. While stimulating the imaginaries of change of many people, actual actions are signals of desirable futures for San Siro and, more generally, for public housing neighbourhoods in the city. Moreover, through the implementation of 'soft' actions (e.g. small projects on public spaces, or activities with children and foreign women, or guided walks to explore the neighbourhood, and so on - see Figure 8), the design practice has the chance to intervene on critical spaces and with regard to the empowerment of capabilities.



Figure 7 - Micro Project in the Public Space

Such actions are an attempt to construct new meanings, starting from the direct sharing of 'things to do' related to interests and common goods. These activities of place making (Silberberg, 2013) that combine very different elements (uses and practices, mechanisms of appropriation, transformations and functional

structures) do not necessarily refer to the design of spaces, but to design processes – in a broad sense – that start from places such as a small garden, a disused building, an event in public space, a community centre (Cognetti, 2014). It can be called “a cultural process starting from places” (Hannerz, 1996), and it concerns the dimension of relations, in which places often become the scenarios for local micro-processes based upon direct involvement and upon the opportunity of configuring new spaces of action in the city. It also refers to the possibility of establishing new links with the territory based upon the construction of collective spaces of identity, re-appropriation and self-representation (Cellamare, 2014).



Figure 8 - Neighbourhood's Walks: Understanding and Producing New Knowledge

7. Engaged Learning: Outcomes, Legacy, Perspectives

The experience of Mapping San Siro has tried to make a shift – both methodologically and in terms of meanings – from a traditional research and teaching practice toward forms of inquiry and experimental learning based on: the proximity to territories, practices of listening, dialogue and knowledge co-production with a local community, and a multidisciplinary approach.

The Mapping San Siro Lab is, in the first place, a pedagogical environment, a hybrid research/teaching project that moves among different academic and non-academic dimensions, trying to adapt tools and purposes of teaching practice within an experience on the ground conceived as a basis for learning.

Moreover, the Lab is an environment in which students, teachers, and community partners work together, a joint research for solutions, sharing ideas, desires, and expectations, producing new knowledge and strategic thinking with the aim of facing social challenges and promoting a more inclusive and equal city. All participants are involved in a process of interaction and they are committed to the enhancement of an innovative learning process.

As several scholars observe (Wiewel and Broski, 1997; Butin, 2003; Fourie, 2003; Oldfield, 2008), action learning experiences are usually assessed solely by appreciating their benefits in pedagogical terms. However, with

the engagement of social groups and communities being a key element in action learning processes, the effects on these participants are as important as the educational ones. This is a key element for understanding potential impacts of action learning and their implications on both pedagogical and societal sides. Indeed, the engagement in an action learning experience generates a variety of outcomes that, on the one hand, affects teachers and students, and on the other hand, affects community partners involved in the process.

Concerning students, action learning gives them the opportunity to develop new sensitivities and awareness. According to Nussbaum (2010), immersion in a real context and the chance to be involved in the complexities of real-life problems is a way “to make a classroom a real-world space continuous with the world outside – a place where real problems are debated, real practical skills evoked” (Nussbaum, 2010, p.65-66).

Such immersion shapes new capabilities and stimulates the development of soft skills such as teamwork, communication abilities, cognitive and emotional empathy, problem-solving abilities and so on. Through interaction and commitment, individual and collective abilities can be tested into reality; individuals can gain new critical perceptions and awareness of the world where they live and act.

These capabilities, developed within a situated learning practice and through interaction, are complementary to the competences acquired in traditional educational practice, and become increasingly necessary to face complex and multiple social needs (Gronski and Pigg, 2000).

Experimenting in this type of learning environment, students have the opportunity to develop new ways of looking at urban and social issues, questioning the social utility of their role both as practitioners and as individuals, within a process of civic growth. In pedagogical terms, such outcomes reveal the potential of action learning as a training device for future professionals, who become through it more attentive and responsible, and able to critically understand social and urban phenomena.

At the same time, it stimulates the development of new ways of approaching complex issues. According to Schuetze (2012), this learning process “entails a different, critical pedagogy moving from a ‘banking’ approach of education that sees the student as a ‘receptacle’ of knowledge, to a ‘problem-posing’ model. In such a model, there is a constant interplay between consciousness-building, analysis and action, simultaneous learning by teachers and students, and a direct link to practical problems of community development.” (p.72).

This reflection underlines the socially engaged attitude of action-learning practice, based on the fundamental idea of establishing an interplay between the teaching activity (usually developed within the university) and the experience on the ground: students and teachers are involved in dealing with concrete issues, cooperating with social actors, questioning the social utility of educational practice.

This kind of learning environment is a key condition for the educational process, if we consider that this process has to provide means for responsibly acting in the domain of social practices, contributing to their course and their change, in order to develop awareness and generate virtuous processes of civic growth. An idea of education that recalls Dewey’s assertion that both the purpose and process of education have to be connected to social action (Dewey, 1938).

Concerning community partners, action learning produces a positive legacy too. Central to such experience is a community-centred approach in which communities are not just passive recipients but also active agents in shaping their own life environments. They are relevantly involved in co-design and the implementation that follows thereafter. This consideration entails a shift: from a focus on physical space – often the main task for architects, urban designers and urban planners – to a focus on processes and interaction with communities.

According to Wiewel and Broski (1997), there are “several kinds of knowledge” (p.2); community partners own and develop part of them. For instance, they play a crucial role in making specific issues understandable. They are local experts with a specific know-how of their context and, along with teachers and students, they contribute to creating and recreating knowledge. In this process, knowledge is co-produced and is seen as a legacy able to support the empowerment of communities and provide tools for its action.

The way forward is to build knowledge that may support a strengthening of full public awareness. This could be an opportunity for the growth of civil society organisations. Community partners can use this knowledge in order to better understand their living environment and be more aware of the chances that exist to improve their living conditions.

In other words, a community can benefit from a more accessible and usable knowledge, intended both as a knowledge to understand complexity and a knowledge to act within it. In this sense, they can use it to equip themselves with new intervention tools, for instance the design of a new service or a feasibility study, built together with teachers and students as the output of a shared path.

Moreover, local actors acquiring knowledge and new awareness are even more able to influence the redistribution of power and legitimize single roles. For instance, they become more aware of the new relationships that need to be built and the networks which need to be created or strengthened, improving their social and political capital and feeling increasingly recognized in their role.

In conclusion, a reflection on the university's role: action-learning experiences are a good example of how a university can fulfil the task of empowering societal actors who are directly facing social issues and challenges. Indeed, the university plays a crucial role as a knowledge bridge (Benneworth and Cunha, 2015), an enabler, legitimizing local competences and capabilities as local expertise. Working with communities and supporting them also entail collectively taking responsibility for social issues, reinforcing the role of academia as a responsible actor among other actors. This also means opening up a reflection about what the role of university as a cultural and scientific institution should be, and how it can operate to support those parts of civil society, often marginalized, toward a more inclusive and just city.

These issues recall the contemporary debate on the public and civic commitment of universities, in the field of their third mission activities. Even if there are still some tensions between a traditional idea of universities as ivory towers and the new idea of socially engaged universities (Tapia, 2012), there are many different experiences⁹ all over the world which testify as to how universities are increasingly engaged and attentive to urban, social and economic developments.

Thus, in our own view, being an engaged University means operating on different levels. This includes a need to: build scientific democracy where knowledge does not become a factor of social exclusion, but is a key factor for inclusion (Cognetti, 2016); experiment engagement as interaction, supporting social actors toward the co-production of public goods. Finally, creating new opportunities of learning based on three core aspects: it has to be grounded, interactive, and mutual.

References

- Bang, Henrik P. (2005) Among everyday makers and expert citizens. In Newman, Janet (ed) *Remaking governance: peoples, politics and public sphere*. Bristol: The Policy Press, pp.159-178.
- Benneworth, Paul and Jorge Cunha (2015) Universities contribution to social innovation: Reflection in theory & practice, *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 18 (4), pp.508-527.
- Butin, Dan W. (2003) Of what use is it? Multiple conceptualizations of service learning within education. *Teachers College Record*, 105 (9), pp.1674-1692.
- Castelnovo, Ida and Francesca Cognetti (2013) The double responsibility of public engagement: Reflections from the Polisocial Program. In Nash, Eliza J., Nevin C. Brown and Lavinia Bracci (eds) *Intercultural Horizons Volume II: Intercultural Strategies in Civic Engagement*. Cambridge: Scholars Press, pp.41-55.

9 For instance: the Extension Programs in South America; the Campus Engage, the Irish civic engagement network in Ireland; the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) and the Beacons for Public Engagement in the United Kingdom. In universities of North America: the Public Service Centre at MIT; the Public Service & Community at Berkeley University of California; the Public Engagement Unit at the Cambridge University; the Engaged Learning + Research at the Cornell University, just to quote some of them.

- Cellamare, Carlo (2014) Self-organization, appropriation of places and production of urbanity. In Cognetti, Francesca and Carlos Cellamare (eds) *Practices of reappropriation*. Planum Publisher, Roma-Milano, Publication available on www.planum.net
- Cognetti, Francesca (2014) What forms of participation today? Forms, pressures, competences. In Cognetti, Francesca and Carlos Cellamare (eds) *Practices of reappropriation*. Planum Publisher, Roma-Milano, Publication available on www.planum.net
- Cognetti, Francesca (2016) Ricerca-azione e università. Produzione di conoscenza, inclusività e diritti. *Territorio*, 78, pp.40-46.
- Cognetti, Francesca and Liliana Padovani (2017) New meanings for public housing through the co-production of knowledge - Policies for everyday life in marginal neighbourhoods. In Bargelli, Elena and Thorsten Heitkamp (eds) *New Developments in Southern European Housing*. Pisa University Press, Pisa.
- Concilio, Grazia (2016) Urban living labs: Opportunities in and for planning. In Concilio, Grazia and Francesca Rizzo (eds) *Human smart cities: Rethinking the interplay between design and planning*. Springer, pp.21-40.
- De Carli, A. Beatrice (2014) Informal trajectories of housing in San Siro, Milan. In Cognetti, Francesca and Carlos Cellamare (eds) *Practices of reappropriation*. Planum Publisher, Roma-Milano, Publication available on www.planum.net
- Dewey, John (1938) *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan.
- Fourie, Magda (2003) Beyond the ivory tower: Service learning for sustainable community development. *South African Journal for Higher Education*, 17 (1), pp.31-38.
- Freire, Paulo (1970) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Herder & Herder.
- Gronski, Robert and Kenneth Pigg (2000) University and community collaboration: Experiential learning in human services. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43 (5), pp.781- 792.
- Hannerz, Ulf (1996) *Transnational Connections. Culture, people and places*, New York: Routledge London.
- Ingold, Tim (2013) *Making: Anthropology, archeology, art and architecture*. New York: Routledge.
- Jiusto, Scott, Stephen McCauley and Jennie C. Stephens (2013) Integrating shared action learning into Higher Education for sustainability. *Journal of Sustainability Education*, 5, http://www.jsedimensions.org/wordpress/content/integrating-shared-action-learning-into-higher-education-for-sustainability_2013_06/
- Karvonen, Andrew and Bas Van Heur (2014) Urban laboratories: Experiments in reworking cities. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38 (2), pp.379-392.
- Kolb, David A. (1984) *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. New Jersey: Prentice.
- Kolb, Alice Y. and David A. Kolb (2005) Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in Higher Education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4 (2), pp.193-212.
- Lave, Jane and Etienne Wenger (1991) *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marconi, Giovanna and Elena Ostanel (eds) (2016) *The intercultural city: Migration, minorities and the management of diversity*. London: IB Tauris.
- McFarlane, Colin (2011) *Learning the city: Knowledge and translocal assemblage*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Mitrasinovic, Miodrag (2015) Concurrent urbanities: Design, civil society, and infrastructures of inclusion. In Mitrasinovic, Miodrag (ed) *Concurrent urbanities: Designing infrastructures of inclusion*. New York: Routledge, pp.179-203.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. (2010) *Not for profit. Why democracy needs the humanities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Oldfield, Sophie (2008) Who's serving whom? Partners, process, and products in service-learning project in South African urban geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 32 (2), pp.269-285.
- Parnell, Susan and Edgar Pieterse (2010) Realising the 'right to the city': Institutional imperatives for tackling urban poverty. *International Journal for Urban and Regional Research*, 34 (1), pp.146-162.
- Perrone, Camilla (2015) Planning with communities: Resistance, contingencies and adaptations. *AESOP Planning Education*, 3, pp.46-51.
- Reardon, Kenneth M. (2006) Promoting reciprocity within community/university development partnerships: Lessons from the field. *Planning Practice and Research*, 21, pp.95-107.
- Reason, Peter and Hilary Bradbury (2001) *Handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice*. London: Sage.
- Saija, Laura (2014) Writing about engaged scholarship: Misunderstandings and the meaning of "quality" in action research publications. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 15 (2), pp.187-201.
- Sassen, Saskia (2008) *Territory, authority, rights: From medieval to global assemblages*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Schuetze, Hans G. (2012) Universities and their communities-engagement and service as primary mission. In McIlrath, Lorraine, Ann Lyons and Ronaldo Munk (eds) *Higher Education and Civic Engagement. Comparative Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.61-77.

Silberberg, Susan (2013) *Places in the making: How placemaking builds places and communities*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Tapia, Maria Nieves (2012) Academic Excellence and Community Engagement: Reflections on the Latin American Experience. In McIlrath, Lorraine, Ann Lyons and Ronaldo Munk (eds) *Higher Education and Civic Engagement. Comparative Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.187-203.

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) (2017) *New Urban Agenda*, Habitat III, Quito, Ecuador.

Vertovec, Steven (2014) *Super-diversity*. London and New York: Routledge.

Wiewel, Wim and David Broski (1997) *University involvement in the community. Developing a partnership model*. (web.pdx.edu/~wubbold/Ecolmpact08/Partnership%2520model.pdf)

Grants and Funding

Design Ignites Change Educator Grant 2014, awarded by Worldstudio Foundation e Adobe Foundation (US).

Excellence in Teaching Prize 2015, awarded by AESOP – Association of European Schools of Planning.

Funded by SoHoLab - The regeneration of large-scale Social Housing estates through LivingLabs - ERA-NET Cofund Smart Urban Futures (ENSUF), 2017-2020.

Funded by Designing Inclusion – DESINC – Erasmus+ – KA2 - Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices Strategic Partnerships for higher education, 2016-2018.

PRACTICAL PLANS: REFUGEES, SPATIAL DESIGN, AND A WORKSHOP OF PLANNING

Marco Cremaschi^a

(Received 15 October 2017; revised version received 2 February 2018; final version accepted 2 May 2018)

Abstract

Migration generates both challenges and opportunities. The magnitude of flows and effects on local resources are rarely equally distributed, indeed, the demographic size and economic strength of arrival cities or regions consistently affect outcomes. The nature of these challenges and opportunities is, therefore, extremely varied. These elements have already structured a network of places, refugee-cities, integration hubs, and transit points that play different roles in the increasing process of human mobility. The paper discusses the role of planners in dealing with refugee crises starting from the experience of a university workshop. This allows for a plea in favour of a different approach to planning, one that insists on practice, spatial strategies, and implementation. The paper also illustrates a different teaching approach that takes into account the need to integrate different forms of knowledge and disciplinary perspectives.

Keywords

Practice, refugees, teaching, spatial strategies, planning

1. Introduction

Urban planners, as well as most social scientists, have a direct interest - besides an intellectual duty - to study the places of crises and social emergencies. Unprecedented situations are, in fact, the only opportunity to observe phenomena still in formation; moreover, a *statu-nascenti* situation is the closest to a laboratory experiment in the hard sciences. The 2008 global crisis has multiplied the number of places in crisis, and a new cleavage is rising within a few European areas in recovery (Rosés and Wolf, 2018) as well as the many afflicted by the consequences of the economic transition.

The refugee crisis fits in between these processes, and poses difficult questions to both growing metropolises and decaying marginal areas. Starting from an educational experience, this paper critically examines the interplay between the related ambitions of combining a technical-scientific understanding of spatial issues with an ethical commitment to 'repair the world'. In addition, it reviews the conceptual implications of the commitment to sustain those localities most exposed to the worst effects of global crises.

This paper describes an educational experience that tried to address this double challenge entailing a sort of 'mission impossible' – engaging localities while addressing non-local issues – which approaches the planning tradition of dealing with wicked problems. The ambition of the paper is twofold: first, to discuss the organization of a learning experience on a border problem – planning for refugees in weak places – which raises profound ethical and theoretical concerns; secondly, to advance our specific understanding of planning as a policy-design activity aimed at suggesting provisional spatial arrangements, yet achievable and critically responsive to larger global changes.

In order to introduce the topic, the paper rapidly summarizes, in the next section, the main trends in migration flows and the condition of refugees in Europe today. It criticizes the notion of crisis and emergency, stressing instead the long-term features of the process of immigration. However, it also acknowledges the uncertainty of future trends, and the need to address, simultaneously, global concerns and local priorities.

The following section addresses the peculiar situation of the municipality of Lampedusa in both geographical and geo-political terms. The border condition and its geographic marginality impacts on the institutional capacity of the island to manage its own development.

The fourth section describes the teaching and conceptual criteria behind the preparation and organization of a specific learning environment, a one-week in-situ workshop in Lampedusa, organized in May 2016 by a team from Sciences Po¹, Paris, which had the aim of tackling the impacts of migratory flows while supporting the development of the village. This reasoned chronicle tries to summarize a few methodological points, addressing, in particular, the challenge raised by the time pressure placed on the exercise.

What can we learn from Lampedusa? The methodology adopted is discussed with reference in particular to the different ways of integrating different disciplinary views and concerns; and the need to combine different forms of knowledge. In particular, the fifth section discusses how planners can deal with the refugee crisis by delving into the growing networking of local actors.

On a more general level, the workshop also taught participants something about the practice of planning itself. The sixth section deals with the role of planning when facing the issues of refugees' transition. Again, the need to link development to non-local scales questions the capacity of planners to deal with change in general terms. Linking practice and planning, while turning away from the high-theory ambitions, paves the way to a potentially more successful way of addressing local issues.

1 The Master's in Urban Planning and Design is offered at the School of Urban Planning of SciencesPo, a research university focused on the social sciences. The Urban School of Sciences Po aims at training specialists of the 'construction' of urban and regional policies in a multi-disciplinary professional culture. The team of the Cycle d'Urbanisme included Marco Cremaschi, director; Irène Mboumoua, academic coordinator; Jérôme Baratier, Marie Bassi, Alessandro Formisano, teachers; Marina Marino, Davide Cornago, Cesare Onorato, tutors; and Jérôme Michel et Coralie Meyer, assistants.

Finally, the seventh section illustrates some general implications for practice² of the teaching approach deployed during the workshop, again noting the need to integrate different forms of knowledge and disciplinary perspectives.

In conclusion, this allows for a plea in favour of an approach to planning that insists on a combination of practice, spatial strategies, and implementation.

2. Places vs. Politics

The arrival of refugees in Europe is not recent (Gabaccia, 2004). Over the past thirty years, Europe has received 11.6 million new arrivals. From an analytical point of view, it is worth considering the current arrival of refugees as the latest step in a long transition which can be traced back to at least the late 1940s (Panayi, 2009). According to recent Eurostat figures, foreigners account for about 7 percent of citizens within the EU (Vasileva, 2012). In 2016, member states took more than 1 million decisions on asylum claims. For refugees, figures relating to main actors, flows, routes and policies have evolved on rhythms dictated by, sometimes unpredictable, international events (Aiyar et al., 2016). In 2012 there were 336,000 registrations, yet of late, the annual figure has almost doubled from the 700,000 peak registered in 1992 after the fall of the Berlin Wall (European Commission Migration and Home Affairs, 2017).

It is clear that migratory flows are not a temporary event (Agier, 2010). In 2016, about 140,000 refugees were registered in transition centres in Italy, almost the same number as the previous year. A few islands, local authorities and communities, like Lampedusa and Ventimiglia in Italy, Lesvos in Greece, Grande-Synthe, and Calais in France (Babels, 2017) are on the forefront. For twenty years, Lampedusa has been committed to providing hospitality to thousands of refugees, while at the same time tackling a dispute over tourism development and environmental protection (Bassi, 2016a). Rather than an emergency (Guiraudon, 2018), it is a long story (Marrus, 2002).

Although the number of refugees in Europe is not negligible, it corresponds nevertheless to a very small fraction of the European population. As is well known, Europe receives a minor share of the number of people forcibly displaced all over the world. However, both the concentration of refugees in some entry or transit points, like Calais in France (Collectif, 2016), and the policy of relocation in small communities have resulted in strong but dissimilar reactions, sometimes racist and violent, sometimes the opposite, namely, open-handed and inclusive (like the sanctuary city network: RFT, 2016).

Immigration ranks amongst the highest concerns in European public opinion. In 2016 Eurobarometer, immigration recorded 28 percent as an issue of concern, whereas unemployment received 33 percent. The media often discusses this topic as a 'refugee crisis', which did not occur at the continental or national level.³ Most of the discourses on refugees and emergencies, crisis and urgent interventions, are framed by a strong ideological dimension.

The spatial impact on the territorial development of cities and regions is even more varied as a consequence of the changing European urban landscape. The 2008 economic crisis accelerated the ongoing spatial transformation, accentuating disparities, inequalities and vulnerabilities amongst cities and regions. The regions of Europe are heavily affected by the consequences of the crisis of 2008, either by the effort required to maintain development processes or through the consequences of spatial restructuring. One has to note that the presence of refugees weighs disproportionately on a few regions and localities that the economic crisis of 2008 had already impoverished.

2 Baum (1997) specifies that practice has its own requirements, different from research or decision making models. Teaching has thus to accommodate to these requirements. While sharing his statement "Planning is a practice, a way of acting", I have to highlight Baum's reminder that most of the planning education is not about practice.

3 Insatisfaction with media coverage is a growing concern for international institutions, the Council of Europe and National aid agency. Hate speeches are multiplied while scant voice is given to refugees and actors of the 'crisis' (see for instance Georgiou and Zaborowski 2017; EJM 2015).

Besides figures, the geographical impact also shows some complex elements. The number of refugees is growing largely due to the Middle East and Afghanistan wars (Agier, 2002); however, regional crises in Africa have generated intense and continuous flows of migrants. In 2015, 1.3 million migrants applied for asylum in Europe, half of them from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

However, there is not a single point of arrival. During the first months of 2016, for instance, refugees' trajectories changed. Large flows followed a few land routes, from Libya to Turkey towards Central Europe and Germany, Greece being one of the major transit points. Governments have established several provisional camps far from the landing islands, along the routes or at border crossing points (Agier, 2011) (Figure 1).

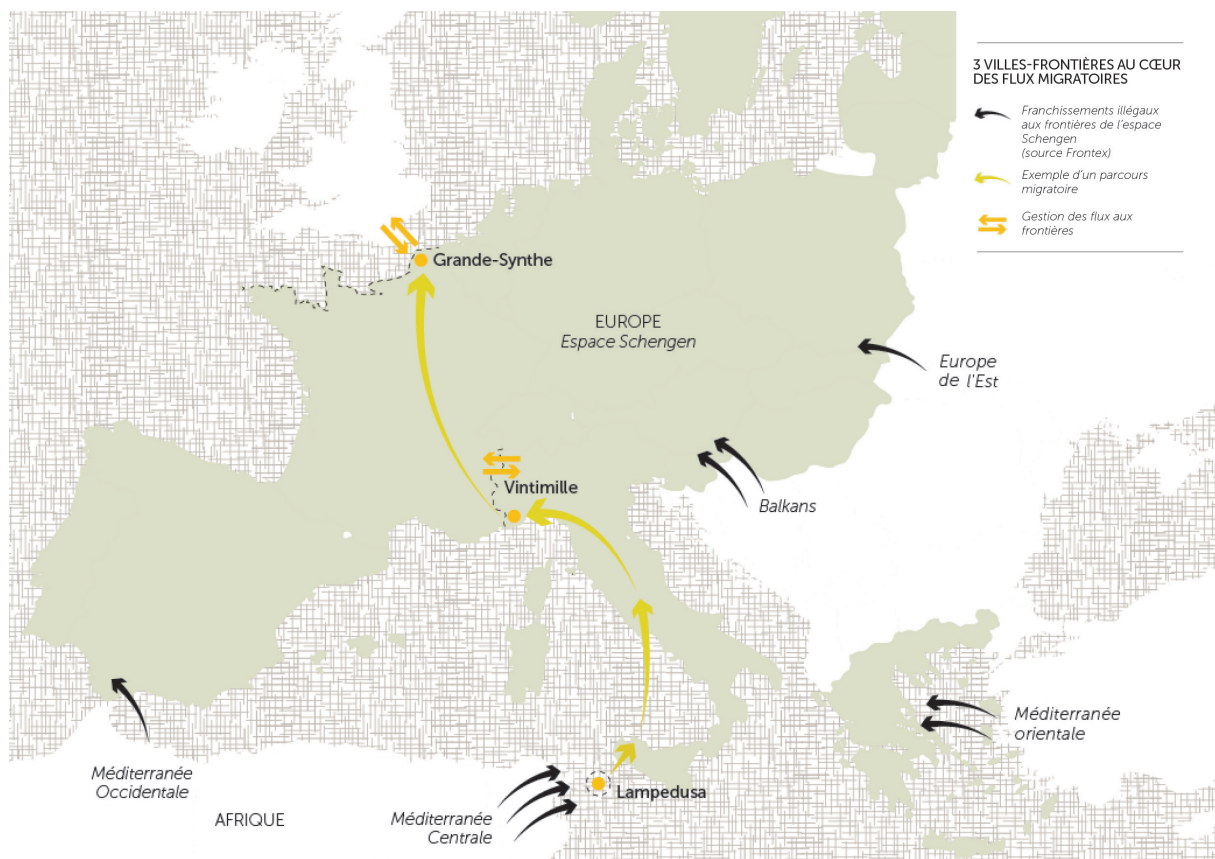


Figure 1 - Map of Border Cities (Source: Laetitia Pieri, Cycle 2016).

Place matters; this is the first element to be acknowledged when approaching these issues, and this raises a considerable challenge to both national integration policies and local spatial planning (Sanyal, 2012). Over the next few decades, whether "by chance or by design" (Altman, 2016), our cities and regions will definitely change, and their porosity – to refugees as well as to other populations – will be a major variable of this change (Saunders, 2012).

Politics matters as well, in a second and even more difficult way. In fact, new migratory routes have recently exposed nation states and the European Union to new political dilemmas. These dilemmas concern both international policies and the domestic affairs of European countries. The rerouting of the global flows of refugees has also produced an unprecedented impact on the international positioning of the EU.

At a national level, refugees add to the difficult management of integrating the more permanent population of 'legal' migrants; a far higher number than refugees. In a few decades, sometimes in a few years, migrants and the children of migrants have become a permanent feature of all European countries. Most live in large cities, but an increasing number are now located in the countryside. Even the remotest village is today confronted

with the permanent presence of foreign-born inhabitants (Balbo, 2015). Member states face the consequences of a long history of imperfect arrangements in balancing different cultures, faiths, and languages.

Among the commentators (Altman, 2016; Guiraudon, 2018), some point to the fact that the present transition is highly uncertain. In the near future, the flows of migrants and refugees may increase or perhaps decrease, according to a combination of factors; political situations and geographical routes may vary; social profiles, subjective expectations and public controversies will likely evolve. In all scenarios, however, some localities will continue to function as either arrival points, exchange platforms, sanctuaries, or places of integration. Whichever solution is adopted, whichever model of Europe prevails, everyday life in some parts of the EU has already irrevocably changed.

3. Being a Hotspot

Lampedusa is a little island of 20 square kilometres and 5.5 thousand inhabitants, at the end of the European continental platform (Melot, 2009). In 2016, 88,000 refugees landed at Lampedusa, a few hundred less than the year before, while in Italy there were 138,000 refugees hosted in transitional centres. This island has received more than 400,000 immigrants since 1983,⁴ more than 80 times its own population.

Although small, Lampedusa poses a considerable challenge to urban planning: the metabolism of the island has changed; water consumption as well as garbage production have rapidly increased. Space and landscape, as well as natural and economic resources are overloaded, and this is not a temporary situation. The resilience capacity of the island is no longer enough to adapt to the refugee crisis.

The presence of refugees in a small community changes the latter's relationship with resources, increases the stresses upon often-exhausted public services, and introduces new populations, cultures and ways of life. The arrival of the refugees has profound impacts, as while affecting all economic activities, some have suffered while others have prospered. Furthermore, the slim public service has suffered an enormous stress, activating new cleavages through the local community, and stirring up local conflicts.

Hence, the notion of crisis acquires other nuances (Guiraudon, 2008). What may be a political crisis at the national level is a material crisis at the local level. From the point of view of the communities on the forefront of the refugee crisis, this is not a temporary effect. Local communities do not have either the political or the financial resources to compensate for the new burdens that they face.

These phenomena are of different natures: insularity in itself, ecological marginality, migrant flows, difficult economic conditions, and global warming are five amongst many. Besides, the economy and institutions are weak, and constantly exposed to the risk of corrupted behaviour.

These "extreme conditions" (Donolo, 2001) increase the reciprocal weakness of the state and society. In addition, the refugee crisis has brought new actors, mostly non-local or even international, who made the local political scene more dynamic.

What does it mean for some localities to become hotspots, to be at the interface between the movement of refugees and the network of intergovernmental relations? What hotspots and camps teach us around Europe is that every city or village is an island: "a strong and fragile island at the same time. Strong in its people, in its knowledge, in its resources, but shaken by global phenomena that overcome it".⁵

4 Almost 15 thousand, however, drowned at sea (la Repubblica, 18 feb. 2016). In October 2013, the shipwreck of a fishing vessel almost on the shore of Lampedusa caused almost 400 casualties. The catastrophe triggered a vast debate that brought eventually the Italian government to establish a Naval patrolling system named Mare Nostrum, later replaced by the European Frontex (Guiraudon 2018).

5 As Mimmo Zambito, its charismatic vicar, defined Lampedusa: see Cycle (2016, p.5). As a visitor, one is often silently reminded that what Lampedusa threw on the table is its 'body and soul': the geographical space it occupies, and the capacities of its inhabitants to adapt to a fast-evolving environment.

Lampedusa is organised in political forms like all regions. Many public institutions are present, not all are equivalent, and some have strong reputations. Interests associate and act in thick networks through consolidated ties.

Even more importantly, the refugee crisis has brought new actors, mostly non-local or even international to the area and this has contributed to the dynamism of the local political scene (Bassi, 2016b). In the last twenty years, Lampedusa has been striving to preserve its environment while engaging and developing its ability to manage the arrival of thousands of refugees.

Lampedusa had a robust planning approach during the administration of Nicolini. Mrs. Giusi Nicolini,⁶ mayor between May 2012 and June 2017, first adopted a firm policy in support of nature and landscape protection, and tried later to put urban developments and sprawl under control. The mayor was also committed to hosting refugees (Lendaro, 2015) while preserving the environment.

In general terms, this exemplifies a condition of weak institutional as well as market organization that planners have rarely addressed. Lampedusa demonstrates critical conditions:⁷ a weak economy, a lack of institutional presence (Donolo, 2001), and feeble social capital (Cremschi, 2006); cumulatively these contribute to an insular and fragile environment. Perhaps unusual for a European observer, these conditions are not uncommon in a global context (Watson, 2003). What then, if plans are not drawn in due and proper form? Combining political economy with neo-institutionalism and paying attention to the empirical forms of collective action (Le Galès and Vitale, 2013), it becomes possible to enquire how places are (somehow) governed; and consequently, we can explore how local actions can be planned.

Though small in size, Lampedusa poses a dramatic challenge to urban planning, combining a situation of possessing a weak economy, geographical marginality and under development, with a tradition of feeble institutional presence and a perennial exposure to the risk of corruption. These conditions are extremes in the sense that they challenge the notion of the state providing societal guidance and acting as a coherent set of institutions and values. Lampedusa thus presents an interesting case study because it seems to require a different planning approach.

4. What a Workshop Does for Participants

The aim was threefold (Cycle, 2016): to find a spatial and strategic solution to the problem of migrants; to propose an articulation between those processes which affect the island at both the local and the global scale; and to inscribe the proposed actions with the more general problem of insularity, in keeping with the mayor's mandate.

The workshop was built upon a few specific characters of the master's programme:

- First, a strong interdisciplinary learning environment.⁸ A third of the participants had a degree in architecture; a third in aménagement (urban and regional planning), geography, landscape design, engineering or environmental techniques; the others had a background in a wide range of social sciences (sociology, political science, law, economy, and so on).
- Secondly, the workshop dealt with social issues 'framed in space', and tried to suggest both policies and spatial strategies to address these. In fact, the Cycle d'Urbanisme adds to the various SciencesPo's curricula a unique understanding of physical space, and orientation to designing policies and regulatory systems.

6 A few months before the workshop, Giusi Nicolini travelled to Sciences Po in Paris to portray her vision to the students of the Cycle. She asked the students to bring ideas and proposals to the island's new master plan.

7 In Italy, many areas of regional decline are neglected, in particular those that are located at the periphery of urban and metropolitan centres. Historically, southern regions have received additional funds; of late, a National policy has addressed marginal areas (aree interne), requiring, however, consistent funds and an ambitious development approach. For a review, see Cremaschi (2010, 2011).

8 For almost 50 years, the Master's degree has provided students with a combination of programs on public policy, social sciences and urban design. The Master's degree stands at the crossroads of planning, design, real estate and urban studies (Micheau, 2009).

- Finally, the participants benefitted from the practical experience and the teamwork previously completed during the internships, tutorships, and study trips that had occurred throughout the course of the master's programme and, in particular, the working group. Participants worked in groups of six or seven throughout the year, under the direction of a practitioner, according to a contractual agreement. A permanent tension between professional experience and academic reflection characterised these classes. A strong emphasis was placed on the 'learning by doing' approach, therefore half the time was devoted to research groups or team work.

The 39 participants had enrolled in 2016 in the Cycle d'Urbanisme⁹ and came from a wide range of disciplines; almost all already held a Master's degree. The workshop was the second step of a two-part sequence.

In Paris, students were subdivided in provisional groups according to their topic of interest (initially: economic development, landscape, urban regeneration, public space and the refugee crisis). In 2016, the Mayor Giusi Nicolini and the planners of Lampedusa¹⁰ went to Paris to meet the students and discuss the objectives of the workshop. She evoked the notion of frontier to assert a new role for the island, as an interface between a global stake and the local reality. She wanted to "reverse the logic of the border" and give a new breath to the island: "The drama of the refugee movement has taught us our unique status in the Mediterranean. The time has come to project Lampedusa as the gateway to the European continent".

A series of bibliographic searches through the press, scientific literature, and the reading of technical files made it possible to constitute a database prior to the trip. This more theoretical part reflected on the specific issue of combining different forms of planners' knowledge.

In Lampedusa, the workshop was structured around visits, interviews, and group work. Building on a few previous specificities and previous experiences,¹¹ the workshop provided full immersion in a context, without restraints.¹² (See Figure 2 that is described in footnote 12.) These visits complemented a vast array of personal explorations, informal meetings, and thematic research.

During the workshop, the participants were expected:

- to understand the situation and identify the conditions that might trigger a project to change;
- to identify the logic and components of a new process of development;
- to locate the actors, analyse their logic and identify the issues at the interface between context and actors.

In particular, the participants engaged in describing the social profile of different groups of populations, their spatial arrangements, the ways in which they organized their everyday lives, and the frictions that resulted from the overlapping of these areas and activities. The challenge was to extract from these spatial practices

9 Participants: Iliès Acharhabi, Félix Arrivé, Léa Assouline, Éléonore Basset, Anne Bellée, Camille Bourguignon, Maud Chevet, Sarah Colombié, Yann-Kévin Creff, Jean Déal, Clément Derym, Robin Drosson, Emmanuelle Emmel, Boris Fillon, Jules Gallissian, Alix Gastineau, Jérémy Gay, Simon Henry, Helena Hiriart, Cécile Ivanovsky, Sophie Jacquemont, Béatrice Lacombe, Ludovic Lamaire-Maringer, Caroline Lefèvre, Alix Loisier Dufour, Faustine Masson, Cosette Méric, Mark Moulines, Laetitia Pieri, Mathilde Préault, Myriam Ruffa Leclère, Amaranda Sanchez, Xavier Seurre, Eva Terliska, Suzanne Thibault, Camille Thisse, Kieu Mai Truong, Louise Vachon, Florent Vidaling.

10 The site of Lampedusa is well known, the southern Italian island having been challenged by the arrival of refugees for decades; however, a contact with the local urban planners gave rise to the study visit to Lampedusa, as a good example of 'improvisation' (Laws and Forrester, 2015). The costs of the workshop was entirely supported by the School, even though the municipality contributed in kind (office space, time, information, maps), and the partner association ALDA helped in organising the final conference.

11 Thanks to Nicolini, Marino, Onorato and Cornago for having made available all the information and documentary resources that allowed the workshop and the exhibition to be realized.

12 During the visit, for instance, about 70 refugees marched past the church in the centre of the village, against the hotspot. The reception centre of Contrada Imbriacola was declared a hotspot in September 2015, the first of ten structures planned in Greece and Italy. Ten days later, a fire supposedly caused by a few Tunisians who were to be repatriated, damaged the centre. Other fires had taken place in 2009 and 2011. The protest addressed the node of identification, which implies denial of the prosecution of the trip to other countries. That same day, two Coast Guard ships disembarked 121 migrants found by MSF's Bourbon Argos from Libya. They were to be hosted at the hotspot that already had almost 550 migrants.

those elements, which could nourish a development strategy, the main concerns of which were tourism, refugees, and the rehabilitation of the built environment.



Figure 2 - Migrants' Protest in Lampedusa

Source: arch. Florent Vidaling, taken during the workshop in Lampedusa

Within the few available days, the chance of integrating factual knowledge with social interaction could, by no means, lead to sound analytical results. However, it allowed for a few robust propositions, including the following:

- The economic development of the island may organize around the land/sea interface, with the aim of reducing the tourist, energy and maritime dependence of its inhabitants.
- The need for an integrated approach to the migratory phenomena aimed at responding to emergency needs with an integrated vision of culture, education and health services.
- The need for a spatial development plan that proposes to enhance the interface between the settlement and the environment.

In general, the aim was to provide an external perspective on local problems in a forward-looking but realistic approach. Consequently, it was expected that local actors might eventually appropriate the program suggested by the report and adjust the proposed actions to the local context.¹³

Regarding the teaching methodology, the class had a deliberate concern with timing, pressure, and organisation. The participants worked together to identify the appropriate arrangements and organisational solutions, while dealing with emergent issues in a weak economic context, under the pressure of external forces and the extreme conditions of institutional and environmental fragility. The workshop required them to locate the actors and to analyse their logic, in order to identify the issues that existed at the interface between context and actors. In particular, the participants had to provide a social profile of the different groups of

¹³ The report was translated in Italian and sent to be diffused to the population. However, a change occurred in the administration in 2017, undermining the dissemination process.

populations and, in so doing, interrogate their spatial arrangements and resulting friction, either through observation or survey.

Additionally, the time limit did not allow for an extensive participatory process, although the inhabitants' practices were taken into account, and the investigation of actors' position was central. Nevertheless, the real process of integrating inhabitants into the workshop was out of reach and, therefore, intentionally left aside.

Finally, the sequence of operations exploited the time constraints, the tension to produce, the need to exchange information and collectively contribute to the different steps of a unitary process. The rhythm of the workshop was extremely intense: every three hours, or at least twice per day, a general session was called. The participants had a slot of one hour to synthesise their work and to put in common ideas and doubts. Every group had five minutes for a rapid presentation. Half of the session was free for participants to mingle in front of the working tables (as in a poster session), asking questions and presenting comments. Late night sessions offered a time for exchanging ideas about the work done and organizing the following day.

This workshop model provided the opportunity for young professionals to work together outside academic obligations, in an advanced, interdisciplinary, and project-oriented atmosphere. The occasion bypassed rigid cognitive patterns by immersing the participants in a 'strangely familiar' context that aroused the inevitable (but not unpleasant) element of surprise while exposing them to an apparent lack of systematic knowledge.¹⁴

The incumbent deadline and the operating mode implied the need to prioritise all information according to utility and reliability. The workshop exploited the absence of a career-specific or cognitive concern for future professional developments.

During the workshop in Lampedusa the participants learned some of the skills needed for creating urban plans and social research in conditions of urgency and to work as a professional team, integrating competence in a comparatively large group through semi formal procedures of discussion (Figure 3).

They wrote, produced, and printed a report for the Mayor in less than a week (consisting of five production days and 1,600 hours of work). An international conference concluded the workshop, which was organised with the support of the Centre d'Etudes Européennes of SciencesPo and Alda, and aimed to enable the exchange of experiences and best practices between municipalities and policy makers at the forefront of the current migrants' crisis.¹⁵ Finally, in July 2016, an exhibition was organised at the Pavillon de l'Arsenal in Paris by a group of participants, which was later exhibited to the Biennale dello Spazio Pubblico of Rome, in May 2017.

5. Knowledge and Action

While teaching studios have become a growing concern for the education of planners (Long, 2012), workshops are educational events, based upon practices, which aim to deal with a situated context and real situations. Workshops promisingly assemble social concerns with a design oriented tool (Neuman, 2016); they often, but do not necessarily, shoulder the mode of design competitions in order to nurture creativity, and the compact time frame that is typical of design charrettes.

The Lampedusa workshop was intended to encourage participants to develop their critical thinking, reframe their previously acquired professional habits, and enlarge their views and understanding of urban/spatial issues.

14 The appreciation was very consistent. A final assessment, once returned to Paris, granted very positive returns, both from students and instructors on most of the topics (destination: 100%; instructors 87%; organisation 75%; preparation, however, stuck at 60%).

15 The conference took place in the presence of the MEP Ms. Kyenge, rapporteur for the European Parliament on migrations in the EU. The Mayor of Barcelona Ms. Ada Colau and the Mayor of Palermo M. Leoluca Orlando sent a videomessage. Three mayors, Damien Carême of Grande-Synthe in France, Enrico Loculano of Ventimiglia in Italy and Nicolini exchanged experiences and suggestions for initiatives that might also affect other and larger municipalities.

At the core of the model lay a double concern with practice; the construction of a set of realistic propositions; and a cooperative (not competitive) model of learning and exchanging views around the design process.



Figure 3 - The Strategic Project of "The Green Valley" (Cycle 2016)

Baum (1997) underlined the idea that the gap widens between theory and practice because educators tend to replicate research attitudes. Elaborating on this, the workshop combined a sociological approach with a design approach. This translated into a few main methodological keywords: investigation, immersion, interaction and imagination. While the first pair derive from the quantitative and qualitative tradition of sociological analysis, the second is clearly indebted to a policy-design approach.

The first step of investigation is influenced by a pragmatic approach (Servillo and Schreurs, 2013). The participants prepared some preliminary notes on thematic groups before the trip to Lampedusa, mixing expert data (from statistics and maps) and ordinary information (from newspaper and novels). All sources, however, were derived from an accurate selection of literature and technical documents. This exercise had previously been the object of a few analytical and methodological courses in the first semester (Figure 4).



Figure 4 - The Structure of the Built Environment (Cycle, 2016)

Direct observation of a sensory landscape has a long and varied tradition, which is well inscribed in urban studies (Debord, 1956; Lefebvre, 1974; Lynch, 1960). The participants investigated, in groups, different parts of the island, and thence registered and reciprocally confronted senses of amazement and phenomenological findings; an approach which increasingly complements traditional geographical analysis (Muis, 2016). This exercise had previously been the object of a transversal course developed at the Urban School across all master programmes. Direct observation suggested that three 'spatial ecologies' organise the island: urban space, the natural environment, and the line of fracture induced by areas for migrants. Note that neither population nor ecology claim here any theoretical status; they tentatively distinguish between social groups and environments in order to make progress in analysing the manifold ways in which actors relate to places.

Interactive knowledge developed through dialogue and interviews with the main actors, as pointed out by Lindblom and Cohen (1979). A list of interviews was preselected during the first preparatory phase and enriched in situ. Moreover, in this case, this was part of the methodological and analytical tools provided in class earlier in the year (Lascombes and Le Galès, 2007). Engaging in a conversation with actors enables a better understanding and allows for the interpretation of context in a less superficial way. For instance, it rapidly became clear that the field of action lay at the interface between four "populations": the inhabitants, the tourists, the migrants and the growing body of non-local professionals induced by the presence of the latter.

By imagination, we mean the specific form of knowledge retrofitted into the process by a projection into a future state designed by projects and policy interventions. The matching between populations and ecologies was considered to be the initial frame of all possible developments. The intersection between populations and ecologies frames the possible evolution. Within this, it becomes possible to study which interfaces evolve, and which opportunities develop.

This latter step eventually delves into the strengths of what even Wildavsky (1973) appreciated of planning, though in an ironic and critical way: planning is not a rational enterprise, on the contrary it has an inherent 'theological' side (that is, normative and visionary). Friedmann (1995) too emphasized the "normative mode of theorizing" at the core of planning. Responding to how the actors normatively define their expectations (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003), planners interpret the situation in actors' own terms, which enables them to draw significant proposals even if the outcome is necessarily uncertain and provisional.

6. Refugees, networks and planners

Aside from the material outcomes, the workshop brought both participants and instructors to a better conceptual awareness of the place of planning and design.

A first conclusion hints at the limitations of the traditional forms of urban statutory planning. Since the late 1980s, the French notion of Urbanisme has been reshaped around a strong interventionist attitude that relies heavily on the notion of the collective management of urban redevelopment.

Urbanisme addresses the spatial transformation of cities and countryside, and contributes to their social, economic, and political adaptation and development. Stemming from a variety of disciplines concerned with human settlements, it is a rich and comprehensive field, requiring specialised technical knowledge, which often leads to specific urban design proposals.

However innovative from a design perspective, Urbanisme focuses mainly upon the built environment, and implies a growing economy. In contrast, the approach adopted in the workshop focused on spatial design and the development of local societies under the new conditions of global flows and emergent crises.

Thus, a second conclusion was that planners have to get involved in broader actions beyond the aims of regulatory planning and/or the design of built environments. The aim of the class was to experiment with planning in real world conditions, and to answer explicit needs through an integrated multidimensional and multi-scalar approach, which combined a strong physical orientation with the highest possible awareness of political and policy dimensions. In this sense, the notion of 'practical plans' looks beyond the technical and political models of regulatory planning to see how collective actions can address exceptional problems such as the refugee crisis in a context where both institutions and the market are weak. These places have become global thresholds and have somehow connected in a network that links the landing territories to the integration cities. The network draws on the trajectories of the immigrants as well as increasingly on the institutional connections of organizations, policy communities, and NGOs. To manage these problems, it is necessary to connect actors who operate at different geographical scales. Such a network would allow cities where refugees settle to exchange knowledge and improve their approaches. The policy is also modelled on archipelagos or long networks like the trajectories of migrants.

Consequently, the design of places cannot be severed from an appreciation of networks even at the scale on an island like Lampedusa. "Far from being deprived of resources Lampedusa suffers from a lack of connection and development of these potential assets" (Cycle, 2016, p.5).

Lampedusa has, in fact, been able to connect to a larger network of centres dealing with the integration of migrants. Indeed, a network of the border mayors has been set up in Lampedusa and signed by several cities including Pozzallo, Riace, Ventimiglia, Calais, Lesbos, and Barcelona. According to this approach, all these places are not islands, but knots of an emerging network.¹⁶

There is no doubt that a friction exists, as several NGOs pointed out. The small community of Grand-Synthe represents a good example, having succeeded in forcing the government to take up the responsibility to shelter the refugees (Cherblanc, 2016; D'Haenens, 2017).

However, the debate on the arrival of refugees has already had dramatic consequences for the political balance, sometimes unexpectedly. It will take time to resolve these disputes, and it is unclear whether this emerging network may affect the EU and its international position. In all scenarios, some localities will function as a

16 In May 2006, these shelter towns met in Barcelona and later in Lampedusa. Notably, the mayor of Barcelona Ada Colau declared in September 2015 that "we will do everything we can to participate in a network of shelter towns". The prominent philosopher Jacques Derrida added that "We expect from shelter cities what we give up asking the state." In 2016, Nicolini declared to the newspaper *la Repubblica* that Barcelona sent help and experts to Lampedusa and Lesbos.

crossing platform. Perhaps these can also teach us how to manage the change that will affect the geography of Europe as well as its 'political ecology'. Such a situation forces planners to act, as national states do not have clear strategies, and market forces are absent or do not have the interest or capacity to intervene.

The limited scope of traditional planning, the constraint of integrating various sets of development actions, and the need to address networks and places at the same time, though by no means original conclusions, have the consequence of imposing an intimidating list of challenges, well beyond the scope of the workshop. These are general concerns that planning has however the need to address; all might find some support in existent academic debate.

7. Plans and Practice

A large part of the planners' debates over the last 30 years has concentrated on discussing the virtues and plights of either state-led actions or market-oriented partnerships. Not surprisingly, most of the justifications for planning rely onto two main pillars: either that planning produces an efficient functional setting that maximizes capital accumulation, taking into account for instance transportation and utilities' networks; or that planning allows for addressing market failures, such as poverty, pollution, or land reclamation.

As is well known, these two major justifications have been often questioned. Foucauldian critiques have clarified the role of planning amongst other governmental techniques (Scott, 1998; Yiftachel, 1998). From this perspective, concerns arise with regard to the large-scale changes that often do not produce the sort of positive trickle-down effects that were expected. Many great expectations have been eroded, as is well known in development economics (Hirschman, 1967), by unintended and unforeseen consequences.

Recently, self-organisation and microdesign (such as acupuncture: Lerner, 2014) have been rehabilitated by many approaches. They would eventually trickle-up the positive effects of self-organising systems that are supposed to produce, in turn, a progressive improvement of urban social conditions – "a thousand tiny empowerments", as Leonie Sandercock (1997, p.129) expectantly put it. However important, micro-events cannot open the boundaries of closed communities; additionally, they cannot introduce innovative elements such as new capacities or new actors. Many of the leading models of planning, such as communicative or insurgent planning, overstate the force and capacity of civil societies to stand against the state (Watson, 2002), leaving us unfit to react to the proliferation of disorder (Donolo, 2001). Moreover, they ritually appear to celebrate harmless social practices (Bianchetti, 2016). Essentially, both justifications ignore the condition of weak governments and weak markets that characterize a vast number of peripheral European regions. Extreme situations are dense with intractable problems (Schon and Rein, 1995) that require planners to deal with ongoing controversies. At the core of most socio-technical controversies that deal with these problems, new assemblages of actors go beyond the commonplace opposition between technical and local knowledge, and allow for the rediscovering of the technical expertise of users and the combination of formal and informal forms of knowledge (Tironi, 2015).

Furthermore, another model of social change is discussed within scholarly literature, which depends on the social connectivity that exists among actors across geographical scales. Connectivity spurs a potential for collaborating and exchanging information and knowledge. In this case, planning selects critical actions and empowers agents, enabling them to cross impeding spatial boundaries or global scales. Thus, it is possible to check back on the possibilities of political and collective actions (Le Galès and Vitale, 2013). Governing is somehow possible, and is often the result of networks tying together actors across usual cleavages: institutions and NGOs, public and private, technicians and politicians (a recent example can be found in Sotomayor and Daniere, 2017).

Planning and space are thus embedded in specific forms of social change that new interventions might activate. Change occurs at different scales and in different ways. The plan is defined as the interface, the 'translation agency', which is built among a number of actors, some of them institutions, involved in a situation. This interface is contingent upon a spatial and geographical situation. All societies are in fact established in space,

although all spatial features are social constructions (boundaries, distance, concentration, symbolism and so on). Setting up such a conversation within the context implies the recognition of the historical interaction between things and objects that has been continuously mediated in a reflexive way.

Eventually, the plan results from a conversation between materials, objects, and actors, which is embedded in time, space, bodies, and relations. However, a concern for things is recent in planning. We need to tackle at the same time the hybrid objects we work with (Beauregard, 2012), and the historical, political and economic assemblages of our age (Giardini, 2015). As for this, it is possible to rediscover the virtue of a project approach, as a form of limited action and local rationality, with the paradoxical yet modest strength of an uncompleted 'low theory' (Verma, 2011).

8. Conclusions and Betrayals

In the definition provided by Hamdi, "practice (is) that skilful art of making things happen" (2013: XIX). One has to acknowledge that this quality has not been among the most acclaimed virtues of planning thus far. Rather, the visionary function of planning has mostly served high-modern, over ambitious, rhetorical schemes (Scott, 1998). However, a relationship with practice is not the problem of planning alone. If one agrees that politics is not just an arena, a profession, or a system, politics also shares the same troubled relationship.

It is an uncomfortable position, as Ben Jelloun (Markhal, 1987) once clearly formulated, a seemingly double bind: if you are committed to planning and practice, you are probably betraying both of them.¹⁷ The frame of high modernism makes planning and practice clash though their apparent ties.

We can, however, think of urban planning in a different way, as a part of an institutional sedimentation, though probably not an emergent one, nor the most important (recently). This paper makes an effort, to demonstrate that urban planning can help us focus upon the boundaries and spatial limits that organize and sometimes constrain public and private actions.

As for the concept of 'Practical Plans', the antonymic friction between the two terms projects planning beyond the divide between technical and political issues. In non-ordinary situations, another approach is required. Exceptional conditions include those where both state and market institutions are weak and clear-cut roles fade away. Since the 2008 crisis, means of development are lacking in a large part of Europe, and a concern with the spatial restructuring of the continent is rising everywhere.

Part of this concern is due to the magnitude of refugee flows, which raises challenges for cities and localities. The experience of a workshop such as this one can open a reflection on different approaches to planning. In tackling spatial strategies, planning has focused upon implementation issues at the expense of other considerations.

Therefore, this example offers a model for a teaching approach that addresses some crucial loopholes in the practice of planning. Overall, a practical approach to planning teaches the need to integrate different forms of knowledge into the construction of a proposal for collective actions. This raises, in turn, vast theoretical concerns; from the point of view of spatial design, the incomplete process of theorisation offers a paradoxical opportunity to bridge the gap between lay and expert knowledge.

In particular, four adjectives animated the workshop as well as the preparatory debate conducted during the previous year. The proposal for Lampedusa was conceived as a collective effort, based upon the reading of the context created by actors that are imbedded in material issues, and cannot be understood outside the discourse that framed it.

17 Once Tabar Ben Jelloun explained the troubled position of a dual language novelist: "My wife is Arabic and my mistress is French, and I maintain a relationship of betrayal with both of them" (Markham 1987, quoted in Sanyal 2012).

The educational experience helped prospective planners to disentangle the collective, contextual, material and discursive dimensions that frame all kinds of strategy. It also helped them to spatialize this strategy through an accurate, almost ethnographic reading of local practices. Eventually, it led to the elaboration of actions designed upon networked resources, thus locating the plan at the intersection of spatial scales.

Planning has often been associated with major, radical changes, under the metaphor and policy instruments of the 'blueprint'. This is no longer the case: the period of big plans being over, radical solutions are no longer part of the discussion.

Spatial planning thus contributes in a very limited way, whilst a reflection on the scales and bounds of the possible actions helps to "engage the future of spaces" (Cycle, 2016) and avoid patent betrayals.

References

- Agier, Michel (2002) Between war and city: Towards an urban anthropology of refugee camps. *Ethnography*, 3 (3), pp.317-341.
- Agier, Michel (2010) Corridors of exile: A worldwide web of camps. *Metropolitiques*, 25.
- Agier, Michel (2011) *Managing the undesirables: Refugee camps and the humanitarian government*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Aiyar, Shekhar, Bergljot Barkbu, Nicoletta Batini, Helge Berger, Enrica Detragiache, Allan Dizioli, Christian Ebeke, Huidan Lin, Linda Kaltani, Sebastian Sosa, Antonio Spilimbergo and Petia Topalova (2016) *The refugee surge in Europe*, IMF.
- Altman, Anna (2016) The refugee crisis is remaking European cities. *The New Republic*, 13 Oct., p.12-13.
- Babels (2017) *De Lesbos à Calais: Comment l'Europe fabrique des camps*, Paris : Bibliothèque des frontières.
- Balbo, Marcello (ed) (2015) *Migrazioni e piccoli comuni*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Bassi, Marie (2016a) Le passage par Lampedusa : photographie d'un long chemin de croix, *Mediapart*, 18 juin.
- Bassi, Marie (2016b) Les acteurs non-étatiques face à l'immigration en Sicile et à Lampedusa. *Après-demain*, 3, pp.36-38.
- Baum, Howell S. (1997) Teaching practice. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 17, pp.21-29.
- Beauregard, Robert A. (2012) Planning with things. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 32 (2), pp.182-190.
- Bianchetti, Maria Cristina (2016) *Spazi che contano: il progetto urbanistico in epoca neo-liberale*. Donzelli, Roma
- Cherblanc, Claude (2016) Réfugiés de Grande-Synthe, interview du Maire, Damien Carême. *Mediapart*, 1 juin.
- Collectif (2016) *Décamper. De Lampedusa à Calais*. Paris, La Découverte.
- Cremaschi, Marco (2006) The dark side of social capital: Crime, development, and social regulations in Southern Italy. Paper presented in the annual congress of Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP), Napoli.
- Cremaschi, Marco (2010) Strumenti fragili, strategie incapaci: per un ripensamento. In I. Vinci, a cura di, *Pianificazione strategica in contesti fragili*, Angeli, Milano.
- Cremaschi, Marco (2011) Piano e sviluppo locale: un intreccio da dipanare. In D. De Leo e V. Fini (eds) *Ripensare lo sviluppo locale*, Liguori, Napoli.
- Cycle d'Urbanisme (2016) *Fédérer l'espace, connecter les échelles, activer les ressources*. Lampedusa-Paris.
- Debord, Guy (1956) Introduction à une critique de la géographie urbaine, Les Lèvres Nues, n° 9, nov. In Blanc N., Christoffel D. (2008) *Le monde est rond bis*, Presse de Sciences Po, n° 2008/2, n° 36, pp.115-125.
- D'Haenens, Delphine (2017) On ne me laisse pas le choix, regrette Damien Carême, maire de Grande-Synthe, *La Voix du Nord*, 26/09/2017.
- Donolo, Carlo (2001) *Disordine. L'economia criminale e le strategie della sfiducia*. Donzelli, Roma.
- EJN (Ethical Journalism Network) (2015) *Moving Stories, International Review of How Media Cover Migration*. London.
- European Commission Migration and Home Affairs (2017) *Common European Asylum System*. Available from: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en [Accessed 8 Sept. 2017].
- Friedmann, John (1995) Teaching planning theory. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 14, pp.156-162.
- Gabaccia, Donna (2004) A long Atlantic in a wider world. *Atlantic Studies*, 1 (1), pp.1-27.

- Georgiou, Myria and Rafal Zaborowski (2017) *Media coverage of the "refugee crisis": A cross-European perspective*. Council of Europe.
- Giardini, Federica (2015) *Strategie/Agenda, ovvero dei mezzi o dei fini, Ibidem*, 4, pp.9-11.
- Guiraudon, Virginie (2008) Les politiques de gestion des frontières et de l'immigration. Chapitre 6: Dans *Politiques publiques 1: La France dans la gouvernance européenne*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, pp.173-194.
- Guiraudon, Virginie (2018) The 2015 refugee crisis was not a turning point: Explaining policy inertia in EU border control. *European Political Science*, 17 (1), pp.151-160.
- Hamdi, Nabeel (2013) *Small change: About the art of practice and the limits of planning in cities*. Routledge.
- Hajer, Maarten A. and Hendrik Wagenaar (eds) (2003) *Deliberative policy analysis: understanding governance in the network society*. Cambridge UP.
- Hirschman, Albert O. (1967) *Development projects observed*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.
- Laws, David and John Forester (2015) *Conflict, improvisation, governance: Street level practices for urban democracy*. Routledge.
- Lascoumes, Pierre and Patrick Le Galès (2007) Introduction: Understanding public policy through its instruments. From the nature of instruments to the sociology of public policy instrumentation. *Governance*, 20 (1), pp.1-21.
- Le Galès, Patrick and Tommaso Vitale (2013) Governing the Large Metropolis. A Research agenda. *Working papers of Programme Cities are back in town*, Paris, Sciences Po.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1974) La production de l'espace. *L'homme et la société*, 31 (1), pp.15-32.
- Lerner, Jaime (2014) *Urban acupuncture*. Island Press.
- Lendaro, Annalisa (2015) No finger print! Les mobilisations des migrants à Lampedusa, ou quand l'espace compte. *L'Espace Politique. Revue en ligne de géographie politique et de géopolitique*, 25-1.
- Lindblom, Charles Edward and David K. Cohen (1979) *Usable knowledge: Social science and social problem solving*. Yale University Press.
- Long, Judith Grant (2012) State of the studio: Revisiting the potential of studio pedagogy in U.S. based planning programs. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 32 (4), pp.431-448.
- Lynch, Kevin (1960) *The image of the city*. MIT press.
- Markhal, James A. (1987) Arab novelist falls in love with French. *New York Times*, Nov. 25.
- Marrus, Michael Robert (2002) *The unwanted: European refugees from the First World War through the Cold War*. Temple University Press.
- Melot, Élise (2009) Lampedusa, terre de confins, *Mouvements* 4 (60), pp.124-129.
- Micheau, Michel (2009) *Quarante ans d'urbanisme. Clés pour le présent*. Paris: La Tour d'Aigues, Les Editions de l'Aube.
- Muis, Anne-Solange (2016) Psychogéographie et carte des émotions, un apport à l'analyse du territoire?, *Carnets de géographes*, 9.
- Neuman, Michael (2016) Teaching collaborative and interdisciplinary service-based urban design and planning studios. *Journal of Urban Design*, 21 (5), pp.596-615.
- Panayi, Panikos (2009) Postwar Europe: A continent built on migration. In Larres, Klaus (ed) *A companion to Europe since 1945*. John Wiley & Sons, pp.432-449.
- RFT (2016) *Making Heimat: Germany, arrival country*. Biennale Venezia.
- Rosés, Joan and Nikolaus Wolf (2018) Regional economic development in Europe, 1900-2010: a description of the patterns. CEPR Discussion Paper No. 12749.
- Sandercock, Leonie (1997) *Towards cosmopolis: Planning for multicultural cities*. Academy Press.
- Sanyal, Romola (2012) Refugees and the city: An urban discussion. *Geography Compass*, 6 (11), pp.633-644.
- Saunders, Doug (2012) *Arrival city: How the largest migration in history is reshaping our world*. Vintage.
- Schon, Donald A. and Martin Rein (1995) *Frame reflection: Toward the resolution of intractable policy controversies*. Basic Books.
- Scott, James C. (1998) *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. Yale University Press.
- Servillo, Loris and Jan Schreurs (2013) Pragmatism and research by design: Epistemological virtues and methodological challenges. *International Planning Studies*, 18 (3-4), pp.358-371.
- Sotomayor, Luisa and Amrita Daniere (2017) The dilemmas of equity planning in the Global South: A comparative view from Bangkok and Medellín. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 38 (3), pp.273-288.

- Tironi, Manuel (2015) Modes of technification: Expertise, urban controversies and the radicalness of radical planning. *Planning Theory*, 14 (1), pp.70-89.
- Vasileva, Katya (2012) Nearly two-thirds of the foreigners living in EU Member States are citizens of countries outside the EU-27, *Eurostat Statistics in focus*, 31.
- Verma, Niraj (2011) Urban design: An incompletely theorized project. In Banerjee, Tridib and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (eds) *Companion to Urban Design*. Routledge, pp.57-69.
- Watson, Vanessa (2002) The usefulness of normative planning theories in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. *Planning Theory* 1 (1), pp.27-52.
- Watson, Vanessa (2003) Conflicting rationalities: Implications for planning theory and ethics. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 4 (4), pp.395-407.
- Wildavsky, Aaron (1973) If planning is everything, maybe it's nothing. *Policy sciences*, 4 (2), pp.127-153.
- Yiftachel, Oren (1998) Planning and social control: Exploring the dark side. *CPL bibliography*, 12 (4), pp.395-406.

Transactions of the Association of European Schools of Planning • 3 (2019)
doi: 10.24306/TrAESOP.2019.01.006

RETHINKING PLANNING EDUCATION USING MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES: THE CASE OF RETHINK THE CITY

Igor Moreno Pessoa^a, Luz Maria Vergara^b, Willem Korthals Altes^c, Roberto Rocco^d

(Received 6 October 2017; revised version received 19 March 2018; final version accepted 15 May 2018)

Abstract

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) are becoming a popular educational tool in different disciplines. Urban planning education is no exception and new MOOCs are being released every year. Despite this, it is still not clear how this new learning experience is being developed, delivered, and impacting upon planning education. This article sheds light on this issue using the case of the Rethink the City MOOC organised by the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of TU Delft. The course received the AESOP Excellence on Teaching award in 2017 and serves as an example of how planning education is facing the change towards online education. The article briefly introduces the course and develops on the challenges and results of it. Based on the course team experience of preparing and delivering the course, the article contributes to the debate about online education and supports fellow academics involved with the creation of new MOOCs.

Keywords

MOOC, urban planning education, Global South

a (Corresponding author) TU Delft, Urbanism, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Building 8, Julianalaan 134, 2628 BL, Delft, The Netherlands. E-mail: i.pessoa@tudelft.nl

b TU Delft, MBE – Management in the Built Environment Research for the Built Environment, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Building 8, Julianalaan 134, 2628 BL, Delft, The Netherlands. E-mail: L.M.Vergaradalencon@tudelft.nl

c TU Delft, MBE – Management in the Built Environment Research for the Built Environment, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Building 8, Julianalaan 134, 2628 BL, Delft, The Netherlands. E-mail: W.K.KorthalsAltes@tudelft.nl

d TU Delft, Urbanism, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Building 8, Julianalaan 134, 2628 BL, Delft, The Netherlands. E-mail: R.C.Rocco@tudelft.nl

1. Introduction: Learning About the Global South

The world has become predominantly urban in the last decade (UN, 2015). However, this change is not being led by traditional urban centres in Europe and Northern America, but by the extremely accelerated urbanisation processes within the emerging economies of the Global South. Much existent research has pointed out the implications of this change on planning theory and practice (Miraftab, 2016; Roy, 2011, 2016; Watson, 2016a). Not only will planning practice and research have to adapt to this new reality, but also planning education. Accordingly, it is imperative to debate how planning education is dealing with this change. In the same way that traditional planning tools may not be suitable to address the urban challenges of the emerging world, educational strategies may also have to change in order to better address and meet the needs of the Global South. Even though the urban challenges of the Global South have a clear global aspect, the aim of the course is to impact locally. It follows, that a traditional classroom approach is not suitable to connect lecturers and researchers based in Europe with local students and practitioners based in the Global South. Therefore, this paper explores the opportunities and challenges of online education by presenting and making some reflections on the process of developing and delivering an online urban planning course focusing on the Global South.

The concept behind the course was to explore educational strategies that would connect the researchers from TU Delft with practitioners and urban enthusiasts in the Global South. From the beginning it was clear that to be able to reach a great number of participants from the Global South, the course had to be online and affordable. The option to go for a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) seemed the best fit. The result was the creation of the Rethink the City MOOC, which attracted more than 10.000 participants.

The idea of developing this course emerged as a bottom-up initiative. PhD candidates focusing on research about the Global South within TU Delft wanted to expose and discuss their work with students and professionals working abroad in the field. The aim was to generate a platform to connect the frontline on-going research within TU Delft with people working in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This first idea developed into a proposal to create an open online course, aiming to connect researchers in TU Delft and (prospective) planners in the Global South. This bottom-up structure with young PhDs presenting their research made it possible to have a stronger connection between participants and lecturers. In this sense, it was easier for the participants to debate the urban challenges of China when the lecture and discussion was led by a young Chinese researcher working in TU Delft. This model was repeated in other cases discussing urban challenges, such as, in Ghana, Chile or Malaysia. This bottom-up initiative led by the PhD candidates triggered both interaction and debate.

The paper is structured as follows. The first section discusses the benefits and challenges of online education in urban planning compared to traditional education. The second section describes the course Rethink the City in terms of learning objectives, pedagogical approaches, and assessment tools. The paper finishes with a discussion of the results regarding critical thinking, theory and practice integration, student engagement, and the challenges to overcome.

2. Online Education in Urban Planning: Benefits and Challenges

2.1. What is the Rethink the City MOOC?

A MOOC, as the name suggests, aims to reach a large audience and provide open education. It was based on these two principles, great impact and affordability, that the course team started to design the course. The idea was to connect to a large audience in the Global South, trigger a critical discussion, and receive feedback from participants. Additionally, as is later discussed, the course was also able to activate some local initiatives, which generated a local impact greater than that which had been expected.

The Rethink the City course was developed during a year and it was delivered during seven weeks of intensive work. The content was divided into three modules based on the thematic expertise of the team in Delft. The majority of the course team was made of PhD candidates developing research on the Global South. The course

was an interesting opportunity to enhance links between researchers in Delft and the habitants of where they were conducting research. Therefore, the course focused on three urban themes relevant to the Global South: Spatial Justice, Urban Resilience, and Housing Provision and Management.

As previously mentioned, existent academic expertise from TU Delft was used to trigger debate around these thematic modules and was presented in a range of challenging case studies from, amongst others, Ghana, Brazil, Malaysia, Chile, and China. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of challenges in the Global South, the course provided a combination of theoretical lessons, a presentation of case studies, and testimonies from practitioners. In addition, students were requested to deliver practical assignments in which they connected theory with their own local challenges. The aim of the course was that students develop a critical perspective about their urban environment and how to translate this knowledge into analytical tools and innovative urban solutions.

Even though the course had a high percentage of experienced practitioners, which shows the level of interest on the topic amongst more advanced professionals, the course originally targeted undergraduate, master planning students, and young planners. We considered that the open and online format would allow participants and staff members to be part of an inclusive educational experience in which students from the Global South could really implement, in their own local realities, what they learned in the course.

2.2. View of TU Delft Online Education

Rethink the City is part of a greater TU Delft strategy to improve the quality of education around the world through online learning. In 2014, the university presented its innovative program, which included open and online courses. Since 2014, more than 750,000 students have enrolled in TU Delft online courses (Nelson et al., 2016). The development of TU Delft courses is supported by the pedagogical model called Online Learning Experience (OLE), which strives to increase quality. The OLE is an important guideline that serves all TU Delft online courses and generates the opportunity for knowledge and experience sharing between course teams. The OLE model has eight course design principles that guide the development of TU Delft online courses: to be flexible, diverse, inclusive, supportive, interactive, active, contextual and innovative.

The Rethink the City team followed these principles in every step of the construction of the course. The principle of flexibility involved students receiving all three modules of the course at once; they could choose the order and the time taken to complete the modules. The course not only had a diverse team, but the activities and assessments were developed in a creative way to keep participants motivated. In addition to being free, the course also made provision for the inclusion of non-English speaking communities; it was subtitled in both Spanish and Chinese. Naturally this was a great opportunity for TU Delft to increase its internationalization and enhance its voice on the Global South debate and education. The high amount of participant from the Global South and especially from Latin America shows that there is a great potential to further develop TU Delft presence there.

With 11 PhD candidates on the staff team, the supportive aspect of the course was higher than a traditional MOOC, especially with the daily participation of the staff team on the course platform, on Sketchdrive (a platform for the assignments), on the course Facebook page and Instagram. Regarding interactivity, the course had a vivid discussion forum and more than 10,000 images and comments were uploaded on the assignment platform (Sketchdrive). Every module had two practical assignments plus a final assignment, which made the learner experience quite active whilst also ensuring that they learnt by doing. The contextual aspect was achieved by the PhDs presenting their case studies complemented by three lectures from practitioners working on the ground. This created a good balance between theory and practice. The course was rather innovative. It was created and coordinated by PhD candidates, which is not commonly seen on MOOCs. Additionally, it focused on alternative approaches for the urban challenges of the Global South, while using innovative tools, such as the Sketchdrive platform, to do so.

2.3. Benefits for Urban Planning Education

A general issue in planning education is the need to make links between the “transnational flow of planning ideas and practices” (Healey, 2013, p.1511) and the local embeddedness of planning in its context. This tension originates from the movement of modernist planning as a science based approach to urban and rural development and traditional local practices of planning (Healey, 2012), and means that “the worlds within which an idea arrives and has effects may be far removed from the world which generated the momentum in which an idea was given initial shape and meaning” (Healey, 2013, p.1517). This has even resulted in a physical separation of modern planned cities for the colonial elite and traditional practices for everybody else (Home, 2014; Siame, 2016; Watson, 2016b). As Ratnayake and Butt (2017) indicate:

The internationalization of planning practice and planning education is problematic as it inevitably raises question of the utility of comparison and the embedded nature of local knowledge. Yet these experiences potentially serve three important purposes; by requiring reflection on values, developing cultural literacy and developing a sense of participation in a ‘globalized’ profession (p.53)

One way to address this challenge is by having local planning schools in which teachers form the linchpin between embeddedness in their local context and being active in academic debate. In a recent review of planning programmes in Europe, Frank et al. (2014, p.46) indicate that almost “all planning education programmes in Europe are residential programmes”. Although most European planning programmes have a focus on planning in a national or European context, “a range of institutions still offer international development planning degrees at postgraduate or master level, mostly taught in English” (Frank et al., 2014, p.47). Such a distance between academic institutions and local practices has the advantage of helping to teach ideas that provide new insights to localised practices, i.e., the “reflection on values”, the “cultural literacy” and the sense of being part of “globalized profession” (Ratnayake and Butt, 2017, p.3). Many teachers in these programmes have a true commitment to international development issues, ensuring that the courses stay relevant for localised embedded practices. In some cases, links between international ideas and practices, and local embeddedness may be improved as reasons other than professional development also play a role in choosing to study abroad (Kunzmann and Yuan, 2014). An important issue, however, is that international programmes may only address a small elite of planners and planning students of the Global South. Following a full academic programme is expensive, not only because of tuition fees, but also because of the costs of living in more expensive environments and the opportunity costs associated with not being able to make a living locally. These issues can be addressed by a Massive Open Online Course, which can be followed for free from the home environment, with a relatively small investment in time and effort, whilst still providing opportunities to develop reflections on values and planning thoughts, as well as promoting a sense of being part of a wider, global community. These courses can be followed by novices to the field as well as by professionals who may consider that such a programme, if well designed, is a method of “work-integrated learning [...] in which students learn and develop knowledge and skills through a wide range of interactions with people in the workplace, and through the completion of tasks, which may or may not be prescribed by academic supervisors” (Rosier et al., 2016, p.489).

2.4. Challenges and Differences from Traditional Education

On-line education presents us with several challenges. It is difficult to replace face-to-face interaction between teachers and students: there is a reason why people get together to learn. The main problem seems to be the direction of learning: in a classroom environment, the richness of interactions and the diversity of backgrounds guarantees that students learn as much from each other as from teachers, and that teachers also learn from the students. In the MOOC *Rethink the City*, we tried to cater for shortcomings by creating online environments where students could interact and learn from each other. This also allowed teachers to learn from students’ accounts and experiences. By interacting with students through short assignments based on narratives about urban problems, it was possible to create an atmosphere of mutual learning. This is a fundamental aspect of modern education that needs to be contemplated in the design of online courses.

The diversity of backgrounds was emphasized, rather than overlooked. This is relevant because it contributed to the promotion of alternative visions on urban challenges at the local level, privileging local voices. It was essential, therefore, to find ways to let local voices speak in the course. This was done by creating a platform where students uploaded pictures and films about urban challenges, which had been commented upon and discussed by other students.

This fits with contemporary thoughts about flipping the classroom (Graham et al., 2017), which involves teachers being facilitators, rather than dispensers of knowledge. The emphasis must be on learning not on teaching. In this perspective, students are not recipients of knowledge, but co-creators. It also caters to the need to 'de-colonise' planning education. We are aware that this is a very contentious subject. However, we believe that planning systems and planning education in Latin America, Africa and Asia follow excessively European-centred models of knowledge and education, and that local knowledge is generally overlooked in favour of an Anglo-American based literature (Paasi, 2005). We were not able to deviate from this literature in its entirety, and we cannot claim to have 'de-colonised' our planning views, but the inclusion of students' and practitioners' voices in the course gave us the possibility to expand the discussion.

Although the topic of transcultural understanding was not explicitly addressed during the course, we were surprised by the lack of friction in open forums. These forums were moderated, but we did not feel the need to intervene in the conversations that students from very different backgrounds were having in the open platforms. In short, interaction and diversity formed the basis of this course and this translated into a rather cooperative stance from participants.

The great advantage of online education is its reach, and when it comes to education about and for the Global South this is very relevant. We heard several accounts of students in Africa and Latin America who follow MOOCs regularly and hence have access to education that would be difficult to obtain in their home countries. In this sense, MOOCs have the potential to foster transnational understanding and collaborations, if they allow for participation and mutual learning. It is important to highlight that the local practitioners invited to give interviews in the course also worked as academics in local institutions. Moreover, the majority of the PhD candidates presenting built their educational career in the Global South and were financed by institutions from the Global South. This made the connection with local academics stronger than in a regular on-campus course.

3. Course Description and Pedagogical Approach

3.1. Learning Objectives

The focus of the course on today's urban challenges of the Global South was channelled through three themes: spatial justice, housing provision and management, and urban resilience. The aim of the course was to contribute to current urban debate that stresses the importance of going beyond traditional strategies and policies. We discussed questions such as: Is the just city framework applicable in cities with extreme socio-economic inequality? Can community-led housing initiatives provide effective solutions for households in need? How can resilience support development instead of perpetuating a disadvantaged condition?

The purpose of the course was to progressively build-up a critical perspective about local urban challenges in the Global South. Through a combination of short theoretical lessons, the presentation of case studies, testimonies from practitioners, and practical assignments, participants learned how to develop a critical approach to understand their own urban environments and how to translate this knowledge into analytical tools and innovative urban solutions. Therefore, the course had four main learning objectives: (i) identify alternative theories in spatial justice, housing provision and management, and urban resilience; (ii) identify urban challenges in local contexts; (iii) develop a critical perspective about their own urban environment; (iv) translate knowledge into analytical tools and innovative solutions to contemporary urban challenges. By the end of the course, it was expected that the course participants would have learned new perspectives to identify, understand and analyse one urban challenge of the Global South. The learning objectives did not

focus on developing a comprehensive understanding of all urban challenges of the Global South, but rather that the participants could identify, criticize and produce solutions for one of the local challenges that they faced.

3.2. Pedagogical Approaches

TU Delft has been involved in urban planning education for decades. The Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment is not only an international authority on the matter, but also has a tradition of being on the frontline of innovation in education. Given this, it seemed natural to transfer that experience of urban planning education to the virtual world.

Based on the aforementioned OLE educational model in section 2.2, the course aimed to deliver the same quality of the on-campus courses, while also taking advantage of the flexibility of the internet. The course was developed in a manner that it would make it possible to debate the urban challenges of the Global South including those people who were on the ground living such challenges. The lecturers from TU Delft had direct contact with participants worldwide. Taking advantage of this communication technology, the course connected TU Delft researchers to students and practitioners in 160 countries. Even though we have been working with online education for a few years, the pedagogical experience created through the Rethink the City course was quite special as we could extend the scale and impact of discussions.

The course used two online platforms that were constantly fed during the course, and promoted an intensive knowledge exchange experience. The first platform was based on edX and aimed at ensuring text discussion and communication between staff members and participants. This platform hosted discussions on varying topics, from fostering development while protecting heritage, to how to plan resilient cities with low financial resources. In order to have a more vivid debate and because of the technical constraints of edX, another platform (Sketchdrive) was used just to upload images.

The two platforms were the core space for knowledge exchange. The Rethink the City staff¹ strategically relied on this pedagogical tool as one of the main aspects of the course. Given its large scale it was impossible for the teaching staff to reply to all the questions raised in the forum. Therefore, the team designed and moderated the two platforms in order to potentiate this knowledge exchange aspect. Since we had an extremely diverse group participating from different parts of the world, the discussions were very rich and based on the participants' local knowledge.

In this sense, it is important to understand some changes on the lecturer's role when working in such a large-scale course. Besides triggering discussions with the video lectures, the lecturers had to steer and moderate the discussions to promote knowledge exchange between the students. This differs from the traditional role of a lecturer in on-campus education where every question or student observation is addressed by the lecturer. On a MOOC, knowledge is not generated by the lecturer alone; it is a collective construction made by both lecturers and participants.

3.3. Course Structure

As previously mentioned, the course was structured in three thematic modules (see figure 1 and 2). This structure offered a flexible setup, and the three modules were simultaneously available from the beginning of the course. This meant that participants had freedom to follow the course according to their own pace while also following it according to their own thematic preference. Nevertheless, workload estimations and fixed deadlines for assignments were incorporated in order to ensure an appropriate allocation of time per module and in order to define the main stages of the course.

1 The course was supervised by Prof. Willem Korthals Altes and coordinated by PhD candidates Igor Moreno Pessoa and Luz Maria Vergara. In total 11 PhD candidates and three guest practitioners from outside TU Delft gave lectures.

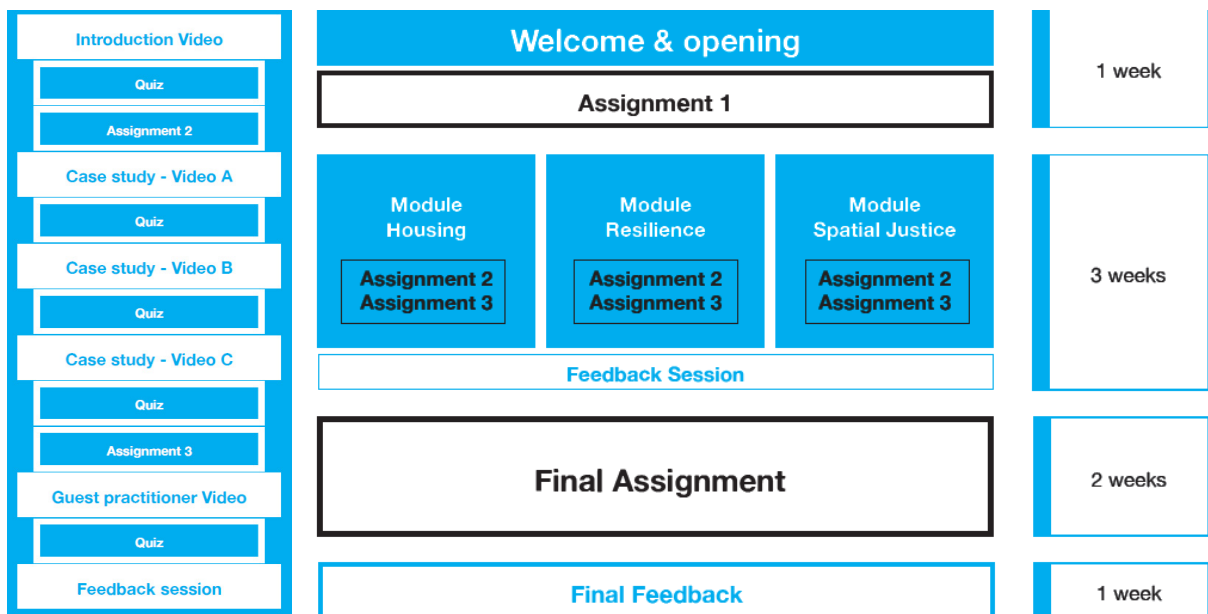


Figure 1 - Module Structure

Figure 2 - Course Structure

Therefore, during the seven weeks for which it ran, the course was chronologically ordered into four stages, starting with an introduction and opening section (week 1), the three modules (weeks 2 to 4), the final assignment (week 5) and the closure of the course with final feedback (week 7). Apart from the general structure, each module of the course followed the same structure: first, a more comprehensive theoretical presentation was given by a professor from the faculty; thereafter, a series of three lectures, presenting cases studies, were given by PhD candidates; finally, the third part of each module was a lecture by a local practitioner exploring the challenges faced when implementing the theory and research presented. Additionally, during the modules, the students had to do practical exercises where they had to engage with their local context and explore an urban challenge mentioned in the lectures (see Figure 1).

The thematic selection of the modules was based, firstly, on the inclusion of topics that addressed the most contingent urban planning challenges for the Global South, and secondly, on the academic expertise of TU Delft lecturers. This led to the creation of three modules addressing spatial justice, housing, and resilience. The module on spatial justice analysed concrete cases of spatial justice and injustice in the Global South and discussed how contemporary theories apply. It aimed to address issues of spatial justice in the booming metropolises of the South, where spatial fragmentation and inequality are extreme (Pessoa et al, 2016), and to emphasise what is different from issues of spatial justice in the Global North.

The module of housing discussed the role of the State, society, markets and third sectors in housing policies, exploring opportunities for ownership and rental models in different contexts. Some topics of interest were; social innovations in housing, collaborative housing approaches, and the role of third sector organisations. In the module, two different angles of the topic were discussed. First, the relevance of alternative models that had flourished in previous decades to solve the increased demand for new houses for specific groups in the society; secondly, new challenges with regard to the management of increasing housing stocks and how to avoid quick neighbourhood deterioration and devaluation (Vergara et al., 2019).

Finally, the module on urban resilience introduced students to the concept and shed some light on case studies of resilience and risk management that applied alternative approaches to the topic. The module aimed to go beyond the simplistic notion of resilience as a struggle for survival, which is based on the idea that communities in the emerging world are more resilient since they have more complex social, economic and environmental challenges than the Global North. Instead, this module explored the possibilities of the Global South as a fertile ground to conduct research on how to use these complex threats as an opportunity to build better urban environments. Table 1 provides an overview of the lectures per section.

Table 1: Outline of Lectures

Section	Lecture title	Content description
Introduction	Rethink the City: an introduction to the content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction presenting the main goals of the course and the approach towards the Global South.
	Rethink the City, but with care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of methodological and ethical problems of exporting ideas about planning, especially in countries of the Global South.
Spatial Justice	Spatial Justice. What is it and why should we discuss it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the concept and its theoretical underpinning • Presentation of spatial justice as a framework for decision-making and action.
	The relevance of human rights for planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of human rights and their relevance for the practice of urban planning. • Discussion of the differences between negative and positive rights and how this impacts on the built environment.
	Diversity in the city. Promises and pitfalls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition and analysis of the concept of diversity through a critical lens. • Relevance of diversity in urban policy, identifying promises and pitfalls.
	Public space and spatial justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interrelation between digital media and physical spaces in contemporary societies, focusing on social media as a tool for demonstration. • Presentation and analysis of the Bersih movement in Malaysia.
	A practitioner's view: Quito, Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with a housing planning and advisor for the Municipality of Quito, Ecuador. • Discussion of main challenges to achieve a more sustainable and just city such as participation, inequality, housing provision, informality and gender unbalance.
Housing Provision and Management	Housing in the Global South. An introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background elements to understand the main issues that countries in the Global South are facing with regards to the provision and management of social and affordable housing today. • Presentation of main challenges and description of the elements needed for a comprehensive housing policy.
	Affordable housing in China: the role of public and private sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the trends of housing development in China between 1949 and 2015, introducing the dynamic roles of the state, the local municipalities and the real estate developers. • Presentation of three current initiatives: Governmental developers, urban villages and housing rental companies.
	Challenges of public housing management. The case of local authorities in Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the State role in the production and management of affordable housing in Ghana and presentation of major weaknesses in Ghana's public housing management. • Discussion and analysis of opportunities for reform of the sector in order to achieve improved quality.
	Social Housing in Chile. Lessons from a homeownership perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of housing policies based on ownership, presenting the new challenges regarding the quality, maintenance and management of this housing stock. • Discussion of opportunities for bottom-up approaches and the inclusion of new actors in housing policies.
	A practitioner's view: Co-housing project in Delft, The Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case of community-led initiative of housing provision presented by the architect of the project. • Visit to the building complex and conversations with residents.
Urban Resilience	Introduction to Urban Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Resilience definition, origin and theoretical approaches. • Discussion of the implications for urban planning and management.
	Resilience thinking when planning in the South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical perspective on resilience thinking in planning for the Global South. • Discussion of common challenges related to planning for resilience in the Global South.
	Exploring resilience possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of mapping as a tool to understand complex spatial problems and to help populated regions to be more resilient. • Analysis of the spatial development of the Pearl River Delta in China using mapping techniques.
	Resilience in transition. Changing water values in delta cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of resilience in the context of urbanizing delta cities and the integration and balance of diverse values of water. • Relevance of resilience thinking with the understanding of history and the local context by using a Chinese case study. • Discussion of elements for future planning strategies in changing contexts.
	A practitioner's view: Santiago, Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with the Deputy Resilience Officer of Resilient Santiago, a project created to improve the resilience capacity of Santiago, Chile. (The project is part of the programme 100 Resilient Cities from the Rockefeller Foundation.) • Presentation of the challenges faced in the creation and implementation of such a comprehensive resilience project.
Closure	Reading the City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the process of understanding and representing an urban environment. • Presentation of four-steps process of design thinking: description, interpretation, reduction and abstraction.
	The New Urban Agenda: a roadmap for fair and sustainable cities around the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the New Urban Agenda 2016-2036 • Discussion of the role of planning professionals, academics and urban activists in implementing the new agenda.

3.4. Assessment

Assessment of students' work is one of the challenges that remains unsolved in MOOCs, especially with regard to the value of using automated grading software, the validity and consistency of the peer assessment, and how to avoid fraudulent practices (Hew and Cheung, 2014).

Acknowledging these limitations, we highlight two main challenges regarding assignments and assessment that were frequently discussed during the planning of this course. First, it is important to acknowledge the impossibility of offering individual assessment to students given the high number of participants. Secondly, the design of a fair grading system was needed, so as to create a threshold for those participants who approved the course and wanted to pursue a certificate. Furthermore, the grading formula needed to be clear enough to avoid misinterpretations. Therefore, assessment and assignments were carefully planned so that the course page would incorporate these requirements before published.

The course had two main types of assignments: quizzes and practical assignments. The quizzes were placed right after the lectures and had the purpose of checking students' understanding of the videos. Quizzes were graded through an automated system and the participants could immediately check if they had answered the questions correctly. The practical assignments had the goal of helping students to understand the main topics discussed by presenting applied examples. Each module considered two theme-based practical assignments in which participants had to upload a combination of visual content and an explanatory text on Sketchdrive. These assignments were self-assessed by the participants using either a checklist or a rubric. In addition to the theme-based assignments, the course considered an introductory (and optional) assignment and a final assignment. While the first one was designed to foster participation at the beginning of the course, the final one would consist of a visual essay in which students had to offer a critical perspective on the theories and challenges explored during the course. The assessment of the final assignment was through a peer-review process using a rubric. In order to successfully pass the course, participants had to fulfil three requirements: approve two out of the three modules, complete the final assignment, and have a final grade of 60% or more.

Some measures were taken to deal with the challenges mentioned. First, automated grading was confined only to the quizzes, limiting their weight in the total grade for the course. Second, the rubric was consistently used first for the self-assessment and then for the peer-assessment, reducing mistakes when it was applied to peer evaluation. Third, the use of a multi-criteria requisite to pass the course reduced fraudulent practices. Finally, a higher weighting for the final assignment as part of the total overall grade, created a natural filter for those students who were auditing the course rather than wishing to obtain a certificate.

4. Results

4.1. Critical Thinking

The course encouraged learners' critical thinking through lectures, assignments and instructors' feedback. Students were progressively guided from the theory to the real-life challenges and from a descriptive perspective to an analytical perspective, as a means by which to prepare them to analyse their own realities with a critical lens. One of the main goals was to tear down prejudices and general approaches that do not contribute to a comprehensive perspective about the urban challenges of the Global South. One example is the inclusion of the term Global South at the beginning of the course, as an umbrella term to refer to regions and countries that face, to some extent, similar urban, social and political challenges. It was a deliberate decision of the course team to avoid terminology such as developing countries or third world, in order to provide a concept richer in terms of political and empowerment connotations as well as being less hierarchical than its predecessors (GSSC, 2015).

Similarly, the course reflected on the relationship between global theories and local embeddedness as two different layers to understand the challenges and the solutions. The students were confronted with different case studies as examples of problems and opportunities of regions in the South. They were encouraged to learn

and extract lessons from these cases, while also being aware of local realities and contextual variables. The subsequent step was to make students get in touch with their own realities regarding spatial justice, housing, and resilience. To do this, practical assignments encouraged them to systematically analyse their own cities or neighbourhoods from different topics, understanding the complexity of their urban challenges, while at the same time foreseeing solutions from a planning perspective. At the end of the course, students were more aware of the nature of the urban challenges selected as well as the solutions needed to tackle them. These solutions were conceived from a local perspective, transforming the available resources into opportunities and enabling thinking 'out of the box'.

Other important elements on the development of critical thinking were the peer review process and the spontaneous interchange between students in the two platforms of the course. These discussions referred to more complex issues while the course was in progress confronting the theory. The staff participated in the discussions, answering questions and opening new debates, while the students were able to provide valuable and relevant feedback for their peers. An interesting example was the discussion started by a male student from Egypt about the meaning of gender discrimination in the use of public space. The discussion, which started as a question, evolved into a rich debate in which female and male students from different countries contributed their own perspectives, interchanging their own understandings and experiences about the topic. At the end of the course, the student who had started the question did his final assignment on this topic, enabling him to showcase a new perspective by which to understand the *right to the city* and the use of public space.

4.2. Theory and Practice Integration

The course combined the presentation of the most up-to-date theoretical debates and academic research with testimonials from practitioners who were implementing real cases relating to such debates. The course tried to not only have a balance between theory and practice, but also to connect them in each thematic module. This combination provided an interesting learning path in which participants could understand the main barriers and difficulties of their cities as well as the successful elements when frontline theories are used in practice.

Additionally, the practical assignments required real engagement from the participants in applying the theories to their local contexts using a critical lens. After the course, students were more aware of the complexity that lies behind the urban challenges in the Global South. As future professionals, actual urban planners, urban designers or architects, they have learned the risk of adopting foreign solutions without questioning the impacts at a local level as well as the dangers of using general and standard approaches to solve local problems.

As mentioned in the introduction, we had a surprisingly large group of working professionals taking the course (41% of participants). One of the positive outcomes of this was the knowledge exchange between them and the undergraduate students. It was possible to observe constant discussions on the online platform between more experienced professionals and bachelor students. We believe that this connection with planning professionals was extremely fruitful to the students. Additionally, we also had lectures given by practitioners in the field sharing real case studies. As witnessed in some testimonials after the end of the course, the practitioners' lectures were very well received by the students.

4.3. Students' Engagement and the Creation of an Online Community

In the field of online education, scholars have pointed out the relevance of establishing a collaborative learning community between students and instructors as one of the "essential components for improving the quality of online courses and student outcomes, satisfaction, and learning" (Kurucay and Inan, 2017, p.21). The role of building a learning community is relevant in order to address elements of traditional education such as face-to-face classroom engagements or fieldwork, both of which are difficult to replicate online (Shapiro et al., 2017).

The course's attracting of more than 10.000 students represented a positive starting point, but also entailed new challenges to the course team with regards the management of this community. By the end of the course,

there were between 15 percent and 20 percent active students, a high number for Massive Open Online Courses. This definitely required closer support from the whole team in giving feedback and moderating the online forum. In total, we had 11 staff members replying and solving issues on the platform daily. This not only required extensive coordination, but also some personal dedication, especially as the forums were extremely active on weekends.

The course forums and Sketchdrive provided the platforms to consolidate an online community. They represented the main space of knowledge exchange and interaction with the course team, as well as between participants. The latter used the course platforms intensively to discuss their local urban challenges with peers in different parts of the world. While 1,500 students participated in the forum, 10,000 visuals were posted and commented on Sketchdrive. This exchange was one of the strengths of the course, which was highly appreciated by the participants in the post-course survey. Students highlighted “the connection between students and the feedback videos”, the existence of different platforms “to give our opinion to others’ work and to have so many people of the course concerned on the different assignment and our comments”, and “the exchange of opinions between people who lives around the globe in very different circumstances and conditions”.

Additionally, the course coordinators used social media to complement the promotion of the course, and to create informal spaces of interaction beyond the edX environment. The Facebook page rapidly became a key tool to start building-up this community before the course began. Now, with almost 2,000 followers, it is the main communicational channel with the community considering that the course has finished and the edX platform has been closed. One of the main challenges that remains is to keep this community captive and engaged in new versions of the course or in future projects of the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment regarding urban planning in the Global South.

4.4. Challenges to overcome

The course demonstrated several positive aspects, but also some pitfalls. Starting with the more challenging side, it was already apparent during the development of the course that the tools offered on the edX platform were not sufficient to promote the learning experience of disciplines that require more visual and spatial content. The use of a second online platform to upload and display the images sent by the participants was fundamental in enabling the course to go beyond the learning experience of watching videos and debating in text. Urban planning, even in a virtual environment, needs maps and images. Sketchdrive was a positive asset to overcome this technical limitation of edX; however, there is a natural loss when hosting a course on more than one platform. This limitation will definitely be overcome as edX and other MOOC online platforms develop to better support courses (such as architecture, urban planning and industrial design) which are dependent on visual aspects.

Another point that the experience of the Rethink the City can contribute to understand this educational phenomenon is the lack of control over the participants’ profiles. Even though the designed strategy was aimed at young students and urban enthusiasts, the course attracted many experienced professionals. This is part of being an open course. Rethink the City showed that it is important to have a course structure to accommodate this rather unpredictable factor. To stimulate the knowledge exchange aspect of the course was absolutely fundamental in this regard. More experienced professionals can be an important asset in forum discussions.

5. Conclusions

Massive open online education is a relatively new phenomenon. The two major platforms hosting MOOCs in English were only founded in 2012 (edX and Coursera). Therefore, we are still trying to grasp the impact of this new learning method and are also still trying to identify how to get the most out of it. In planning education its adoption is even more recent. It is still not clear how this step from the physical world to the virtual one will happen in disciplines – such as urban planning – that are so connected to spatial references.

Notwithstanding, and despite being a novelty and having many uncertainties, it is clear that there is no step back. Online education is here to stay.

Furthermore, it can be seen from the Rethink the City experience, that knowledge exchange was not only a strategic tool to manage a diverse and massive group of participants, it also became the core educational aspect of the course. This is quite unique in planning education, especially in Europe where planning courses are still very 'residential' (Frank et al., 2014). The capacity to break the boundaries of the local context and connect it to a global scale is absolutely unprecedented. In this way, the transfer of a planning course from the physical helm to the virtual one is already a step towards a less residential type of planning education. It is vital to approach this global scale as an opportunity to promote knowledge exchange and not a unidirectional educational experience from lecturers to participants.

Moreover, the change of scale from local to global also brought insights on the possible impact of an urban planning MOOC. Having 10.000 participants from 160 countries gives a completely different dimension to the societal impact of a planning course. A MOOC is not forming new urban planners, but has the capacity to influence a diverse and broad range of people. The course was designed to foster critical thinking, to provide grounded examples of theory and practice integration and, despite the challenges of the massive participation, to create an online learning community even beyond the edX environment. Throughout the delivery of the course, it was already possible to witness how participants were taking practical steps to implement in their local contexts the knowledge produced in the course. In this regard, and as mentioned in section 4, the final assignment was the materialization of this knowledge transfer from theory to practice.

As the aim mentioned in the introduction was to create a local impact connecting the researchers from TU Delft to urban enthusiasts of the Global South, the experience of the Rethink the City MOOC seemed successful. This is not only because it managed to extend and enrich the debate being undertaken in TU Delft with a global audience, but also because it demonstrated that a different educational approach with higher exchange and knowledge co-creation is possible. This has a special meaning in the context of the Global South, since the access to low cost good quality higher education can be a challenge. Additionally, it also points to a possible change in the role of higher education institutions, from being less centres of knowledge production to more moderators and virtual hosts of a collective knowledge exchange process. The broad and open discussions of topics such as the right to the city, access to a good public transport system, gender discrimination or spaces of protest can have great local impact in places where these debates are not that disseminated.

Even though it is still hard to measure the societal impact of the Rethink the City, based on the participants' testimonies it seems safe to affirm that the course had the capacity to influence many more people and places than any other course that the staff team are involved with. The effects of such a massive and open planning education is still not clear; however, the Rethink the City MOOC enabled the opportunity to experience, first-hand, the potential of a truly global urban planning course.

References

- Frank, Andrea, Izabela Mironowicz, Julia Lourenco, Teresa Franchini, Peter Ache, Maros Finka, Bernd Scholl and Anita Grams (2014) Educating planners in Europe: A review of 21st century study programmes. *Progress in Planning*, 91, pp.30-94.
- Graham, Marnie, Jessica McLean, Alexander Read, Sandie Suchet-Pearson and Venessa Viner (2017) Flipping and still learning: Experiences of a flipped classroom approach for a third-year undergraduate human geography course. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 41 (3), pp.403-417.
- GSSC (2015) Global South Studies Center Cologne, online <http://gssc.uni-koeln.de/> [accessed on 05/10/2017].
- Healey, Patsy (2012) The universal and the contingent: Some reflections on the transnational flow of planning ideas and practices. *Planning Theory*, 11 (2), pp.188-207.
- Healey, Patsy (2013) Circuits of knowledge and techniques: The transnational flow of planning ideas and practices. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37 (5), pp.1510-1526.

- Hew, Khe F. and Wing Sum Cheung (2014) Students' and instructors' use of massive open online courses (MOOCs): Motivations and challenges. *Educational Research Review*, 12 (Supplement C), pp.45-58.
- Home, Robert (2014) Shaping cities of the Global South: Legal histories of planning and colonialism. In Parnell, Susan and Sophie Oldfield (eds) *The Routledge handbook on cities of the Global South*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp.75-85.
- MirafTAB, Farnak (2016) Insurgent planning: Situating radical planning in the Global South. In Fainstein, Susan S. and James DeFilippis (eds) *Readings in planning theory: Fourth edition*. Wiley, Blackwell, pp.480-498.
- Nelson, Jorge, Willem van Valkenburg and Sofia Dopfer (2016) The TU Delft online learning experience: From theory to practice. In Teixeira, Antonio Moreira, Andras Szuc and Ildiko Mazar (eds) *Re-Imaging Learning Environments. Proceedings of the European Distance and E-Learning Network*. Budapest, 14-17 June. ISBN 978-615-5511-10-3.
- Kunzmann, Klaus R. and Liu Yuan (2014) Educating Planners from China in Europe. *disP - The Planning Review*, 50 (4), pp.66-70.
- Kurucay, Murat and Fethi A. Inan (2017) Examining the effects of learner-learner interactions on satisfaction and learning in an online undergraduate course. *Computers & Education*, 115 (Supplement C), pp.20-37.
- Pessoa, Igor M., Tuna Tasan-Kok and Willem K. Korthals Altes (2016) Brazilian urban porosity: treat or threat? *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers - Urban Design and Planning*, 169 (2), pp.47-55.
- Paasi, Anssi (2005) Globalisation, academic capitalism, and the uneven geographies of international journal publishing spaces. *Environment and Planning A*, 37 (5), pp.769-789.
- Ratnayake, Rangajeewa and Andrew Butt (2018) Encounters with the unfamiliar: International planning education. *International Planning Studies*, 23 (1), p.51-64.
- Roy, Ananya (2011) Commentary: Placing planning in the world-transnationalism as practice and critique. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 31 (4), pp.406-415.
- Roy, Ananya (2016) Who's afraid of postcolonial theory? *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 40 (1), pp.200-209.
- Rosier, Johanna, Christine Slade, Tim Perkins, Claudia Baldwin, Eddo Coiacetto, Trevor Budge and Andrew Harwoodet (2016) The benefits of embedding experiential learning in the education of planners. *Planning Practice & Research*, 31 (5), pp.486-499.
- Shapiro, Heather B., Clara H. Lee, Noelle E. Wyman Roth, Kun Li, Mine Çetinkaya-Rundel and Dorian A. Canelas (2017) Understanding the massive open online course (MOOC) student experience: An examination of attitudes, motivations, and barriers. *Computers & Education*, 110 (Supplement C), pp.35-50.
- Siame, Gilbert (2016) The value and dynamics of community-based studio projects in planning education in the Global South. *Berkeley Planning Journal*, 28 (1), pp.40-67.
- UN (2015) World urbanization prospects: The 2014 revision. Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, New York, <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2014-Report.pdf> [accessed 05/10/2017].
- Vergara, Luz M., Vincent Gruis and Kees van der Flier (2019) Understanding housing management by low-income homeowners: Technical, organisational and sociocultural challenges in Chilean condominium housing. *Buildings*, 9, 65.
- Watson, Vanessa (2016a) Seeing from the South: Refocusing urban planning on the Globe's central urban issues. In Fainstein, Susan S. and James DeFilippis (eds) *Readings in planning theory: Fourth edition*. Wiley, Blackwell, pp.540-560.
- Watson, Vanessa (2016b) Planning mono-culture or planning difference? *Planning Theory and Practice*, 17 (4), pp.663-67.