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Planning Theory:
Reconstruction or Requiem for Planning?

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Planning Theory: Reconstruction or Requiem for Planning?

1. A certain uneasiness about "Planning Theory"

In spite of the geometric progression in the quantity of scholars who have devoted themselves - more or less totally - to *theoretical* reflections about planning, both as a practice and as an academic discipline, (to the point of founding a new strand or discipline of study, *Planning Theory*)¹, I think that a diffuse, creeping uneasiness has pervaded all the participants of this discipline. This uneasiness concerns not only the role, the sense, and the boundaries of Planning Theory, but also of planning *tout court*. I would even be tempted to say, that - paradoxically - this wide reflection and debate about planning (called *Planning Theory*) has made worse instead of better, the uncertainties and 'derangement' of planning itself, both as practice and profession.

How can this have been?

Utilising a metaphor (which has been perhaps abused, and is perhaps abusive), it is as if, confronted with a dark pond (planning) in which objects at the bottom can only be seen in an obscure, deformed way, people would throw stones (planning theory) into the pond, in the hope being able to clarify and better define the objects. Instead, all they would accomplish would be to muddy the situation further and make comprehension impossible. After continuing in this manner for some time, these people would become discouraged and arrive at the conclusion that either:

¹ Consolidated through university course offerings, academic journals, congresses, and even academic associations.

- a) (for some people) it will never be possible to discern the objects clearly;
- b) (for others) the act of clarifying the pond creates new situations of darkness, subject to analogous uncertainties; or,
- c) (for some at last) there is no need to make the pond any clearer.²

This paper intends to further develop this initial reflection (with the unavoidable risk of contributing to the creation of further confusion) by trying to determine whether the voluminous reflection and debate within Planning Theory has led to a better understanding of the meaning of “planning” and a clarification of its role. And, if the response to this question is negative (as I would propose), the paper will examine:

- a) what the reasons are for the situation in which we find ourselves; and
- b) under what conditions a further development of the debate (which we still could call, without hesitation, *Planning Theory*) can achieve a real contribution to what should be its chief objectives: of *better understanding the meaning of planning and of helping to perfect its methods*.

2. Have we improved the clarity of planning methodology?

I would first like to revive, but with a slightly different meaning, the classical distinction (by Andreas Faludi, the scholar who has contributed more than anyone else to the animation of the wide reflection on planning) between theory of

² Despite the risk of being irreverent, it seems to me that planning theory debate has arrived at something similar to these conclusions. (See also alternative interesting considerations on this subject in Taylor, 1984, and Simmie, 1989). As a general reappraisal of the debate on planning theory, I recommend the collections of papers edited by Burchell and Sterlieb, 1978, and by Healy, McDougall, and Thomas, 1982.

planning and theory *in* planning.³ My argument will be that – instead of the twofold development of planning theory (*of* or *in*), an explosion has been produced of a sort of theory *on* planning (or *about* planning) which has been the cause of the poor results obtained by the former. In other words, developments in the theory on planning have prevented any real progress in the theory *of/in* planning.

The initial work of Andreas Faludi on this subject has been very useful, or at least, it had the potential to be useful. It was a great effort to summarise, in an organic or systemic way, all of the issues emerging from the practice of planning, and the lack of co-ordination among the many different approaches and directions developed during the 1950s and 1960s.⁴ If the Faludi work had been called, *The Logic of/in Planning*, it appropriately could remain as the foundation of an operational concept of planning, a sort of introduction to planning as practice. And, given its general validity (its applicability to all types of planning), it would have the capacity to become an advanced tool for operational awareness for the whole field of planning.

As such, Faludi's work could have kept its place as the foundation for many educational curricula in planning matters (physical, economic, and social). In others words, it could have continued to maintain the role of an introduction to the elaboration of the plan (of any scale or type), and to the plan's *implementation*.

Instead, Faludi's work has been received and commented on as an essay of political philosophy, an occasion to develop

³ Faludi, 1973, p.21

⁴ Of course the Faludi work was a product of its time. It profited from many other works oriented in the same direction (MacLoughlin, Chadwick, etc.). The companion book of readings, edited by Faludi himself, is a good example of the wide context of a "planning theory" as the logical reorganisation of the practice of planning in several directions. (Faludi, ed. 1973).

reflections - *generaliter* - on the relationships between *political science* and that particular field of political operation, the *development plan* (mainly in urban field). In such dress, Faludi's work fostered the development of considerations *on* planning which became an object of discussion as an end in itself, rather than as a means of introducing new and improved methods of planning.

Starting from the work of Faludi (and others) it was possible and suitable to patiently and carefully develop the construction of the components, materials, and elements of a new building, the renovated discipline of planning, as *science* and as *practice*. It would be helpful to discuss, describe and define the supports of such a new discipline or science, the load bearing walls, the trusses, the floors, the stairways, the rooms and other spaces, the services, the flexibility of use, and the hallways to assure both independence and communication. And further, on a more operational scale, it would be suitable to deepen the consistency of different methods and approaches, in order to assure order and stability, sustainability, and the survival of the building of planning itself.

Unfortunately, very little of this has been done. Every single element of the building has been discussed by itself, forgetting its function in relation to the whole. Even the interrelationships among various parts or facets of the planning "building" have been analysed on a case by case basis, according to a limited (a too limited) scope. These analyses have ignored the general scope of the planning "building" as defined by its comprehensive design.

Missing what should be their proper mission, the planning theorists (who deserve this name, it seems to me, only in that they should engage themselves in *methods* and *techniques*, and not in *philosophical talkativeness*) have forsaken the planning practitioners (who should be, first of all, their pupils), without supporting them, at least in their formative stage, with disciplinary *know-how* and *rules*, with a behavioural code, i.e.

with basic guidelines, instructions and warnings.

Left to themselves, *practitioners* have “practised” planning without order and rules, without any analysis of consistency with the ‘environment’ and real consciousness of the ‘constraints’ or the ‘resources’, contravening even the most elementary requirements of planning: i.e. order, rules and consistency.⁵ Should we be surprised, then, if the planning practice has such poor internal consistency and low esteem outside the profession? I do not know (because I am not so familiar with geometry) whether this kind of planning deserves to be called *Euclidean* or *non-Euclidean*. But I do know for certain that it would horrify any good father of the scientific method (say Galileo Galilei, for instance). Respect for a *scientific* approach by planning theorists would render plans more consistent (i.e. more *rational*), and therefore, more feasible and implementable. *Rationality* can be identified with *reality*.⁶

Rationality which is not identified with reality, is not truly rationality. It is a pseudo-rationality. At the same time, however realistic and feasible, plans cannot exactly coincide with reality, which must be *ex-post* or historical. Plans try to have an impact

⁵ By ‘consistency’, I mean the capacity of a plan feature or decision to fit with environmental constraints that are beyond and outside the delimitation of the system or unit under planning. I recall one clamorous example of the kind of inconsistency from Italy: some decades ago, a research project of the Planning Studies Centre tried to extrapolate the whole pattern of the individual demographic forecasting drawn from the existing (master) plans of Italian municipalities (around half of the approximately 7,000 in all of Italy), through an appropriate weighted evaluation. The result was that around the year 2000 Italy should shelter 400 million inhabitants! You can imagine, what other results, in terms of capital investment, infrastructure, housing, land-use, etc, were reached. Who can assert – honestly – that this sounds only like a typical Italian case? (Archibugi, 1979).

⁶ As any scholar who has a real familiarity with the course of philosophical thinking (from Plato to Aristotle, Kant to Hegel) knows well, only in a vulgar (not really philosophical) version of our language is the *rationalist* in opposition to the *realist*.

on this reality; they intend to govern and possibly modify it. Otherwise what kind of plans would they be?

In these (ex-ante) terms plans must be 'irrealist'. As in the French saying. "*C'est stupide etre plus royaliste que le roi*", in the same way the planner saying is: "*No reason to be more realist than reality itself*". The best (ex ante) realism, is the replication of reality (so beloved by the model builders) and consequently any plan at all. According to certain current tenors of planning theory, this sounds like the implicit conclusion of its obsession with "realism".

Moreover, it is obvious that there will always be an imperfection in the implementation of plans. But this fact does not prevent them from being useful, or even necessary, if we wish obtain results. In a certain sense, plans are not made to be implemented, but rather to be instruments to enlighten decisions and actions, preventing them from being taken in darkness. The more rational the plan (the more it takes account of reality and its complexity), the more it has a chance to be successful in the creation of conditions suitable for the achievement of its objectives.

3. What are the reasons for the misleading development of planning theory?

I suspect that the origin of the misleading development of the planning theory has to be discovered in an equivocal - and apparently well based - extension of its field.

I will try to explain what I mean, evoking an early elementary, unsophisticated reference and justification of planning theory by Banfield (1959):

'The word 'planning' is given a bewildering variety of meanings. To some it means socialism. To others the layout and design of cities. To still others regional development schemes like TVA, measures to control the

business cycles, or 'scientific management' in industry. It would be easy to overemphasise what these activities have in common; their differences are certainly more striking than their similarities. Nevertheless, it may be that there is a method of making decisions which is to some extent common to all these fields and to others as well and that the logical structure of this method can usefully be elaborated as a theory of planning'.

I think that if planning theory would have limited its field to this concept, to the "method of making decisions which is to some extent common to all fields" and to the "logical structure of this method", then developments in planning theory could advanced further, and planning could have rescued itself from its widespread failure. This is not far from Faludi's earlier effort to give to planning theory its own proper field, distinct from the various applications of planning (which he called *substantive* planning) and to push planners – I suppose coming from any kind of substantive planning (but unfortunately this has not been the case) – to occupy themselves with the "common" aspect, which he called "procedural". In this way - as we know – Faludi risked creating a sort of excessive division between a theory *of* planning and a theory *in* planning. He paraphrased Britton Harris' expression (that I, too, consider very important): "We have great need of a science *of* planning in order to determine what is science *in* planning".

3.1 The equivocal case of the "substantive" side of planning theory

However the way in which Faludi chose to restrain planning theory to the first one, the procedural concept of planning, leaving the second, to the different cases of substantive planning, has probably also been a misleading factor. In doing so, he risked renouncing too much to establish strict connections between the procedural and substantive aspects. And to establish a permanent, integrated, interrelationship between different forms

of substantive plans, just (as considered in the Harris phrase) " to determine *what is science in planning*".

This division, which Faludi indeed never practised⁷, has probably been at the roots of the fact that planning theory – instead of becoming a theory of planning including the hard problem of defining *interrelationships* between procedural and substantive planning - has become a sort of theory *on* planning (in the sense that will be developed below); and, moreover, a theory on planning limited mainly to the experience only of town planners, missing the involvement of planners of other substantive plans.

Anyhow, while Faludi elaborated a clear and fruitful theory of planning, on the side of planning theory (that frankly I am reluctant to call only "procedural"⁸), the further developments of planning theory have been directed in a relatively disordered way, in a fashion that has missed the benefits of Faludi's effort. In other words, I have the sense that the major themes that have occupied the planning theory literature in the last two decades –

⁷ In effect, he stated that the distinction between theory in planning and theory of planning (the latter being planning theory) should not result in an entirely separate development of the two; and also that "clearly, both types of theory are needed for effective planning". He also stated that "planners should view procedural theory as forming an envelope to substantive theory, rather than vice versa". But independently from the question about which should be the "envelope" of the other, his main attention in his book, (and in further works) has been given to the procedural and - later - to the epistemological aspect of the planning knowledge and action, as a process, and poor attention to the substantive interrelations among different aspects of planning. Anyhow Faludi provided a very important contribution toward clarifying the procedural aspects of planning, and to formulating the foundations of a theory of planning in the substantive aspects. It is not his fault if the further development of the theory of planning has not taken this direction.

⁸ Because many of the topics of Faludi's book deal with methodological aspects of planning that have a substantial validity in the preparation of plans, i.e. in their substantive capacity to be effective and feasible in their contents and not only in their procedure or implementation.

for instance: rationality or rationalism in planning; the operationality of the planning mind, subject, agent or agency; the logical foundations of planning behaviour, and all the opposing approaches or methodologies usually discussed, blueprint versus processual outcome, comprehensive-deductive versus disjointed-incrementalist approaches, normative versus functional mode, environmental and contextual styles of planning, etc. – were exhaustively covered in Faludi's work, and found little improvement later in switching to what I call a useless theory *on* planning.

3.2 *Expanding too much the scope*

The main misleading factor - as already stated - remains the excessive extension given to the scope of planning theory. John Friedmann for instance - author of the well-know impressive encyclopaedic treatise about planning (in the public domain) - in the introductory chapter of his work, precisely devoted to the "terrain of planning theory"⁹, after a very interesting and long reasoning about market rationality and social rationality, the uses of planning, the relations between planning and the political order, and other remarks, does not give us any definition of the *terrain* or the subject-matter of planning theory. On the contrary he concludes that:

"a comprehensive exploration of the terrain of planning theory must cull from all the relevant disciplines those elements that are central to an understanding of planning in the public domain. The theory of planning is an eclectic field, bounded by political philosophy; epistemology; macro-sociology; neo-classical and institutional economics; public administration; organisation development; political sociology; anarchist, Marxist, and utopian literature" .¹⁰

⁹ Friedmann, 1987, Part 1.

¹⁰ p.39-40. And given the vast boundaries attributed to this "eclectic field", I don't understand why we should "exclude", in his opinion, other

But we can ask ourselves if this "eclectic field" should not be the same as other research strands different from planning theory. This doesn't help us to better define the specific subject of planning theory. And it also makes sense to ask ourselves if such reasoning under the headline of *planning theory*, developed over an expanse of such vast boundaries, origins and "mines", could be at the origins of the regretted *loss of identity* of planning theory itself.

Nobody intends to deny that the planning theorist, as well as the planner, possesses and cultivates his own cultural background and has roots in a vast range of strands, works and even academic disciplines (going under several more or less conventional and innovative headlines). But this occurs for everybody, not solely for the planning theorist. And the mere (full or partial) list of possible roots from which planning theorists can draw, does not help us to understand, or better define, his or her own terrain of work: terrain that he or she has to cultivate in a specific way, to justify the formation of a new discipline. From this eclecticism does not arise a more precise definition of this terrain, as – for instance – from Banfield's scant phrase (which the unceasing adorer of novelty would define, without real justifications, as "old" or archaic). From this cultivated eclecticism, only confusion arises. And, frequently, also superficiality.

If planning theory can not even succeed in defining itself and its object, and if an endless series of definitional possibilities from different points of views are left open, how can it help us to get a more precise definition of planning *tout court* (which should be one of its first tasks)?

And if we shall not succeed in getting a more precise

disciplines (see footnote 16), such: "psychology, cultural anthropology, geography, history, political science, micro-sociology, and the humanities, including design theory".

definition of planning, how shall we avoid that planning activities not reduce themselves to an endless "telling of stories"¹¹(territorial, sectorial, historical), without any intrinsic connection, without any method of reading, without any elementary instruction or regulation, without any "principle", "foundation", methodological "primer" – in short, without any of those ingredients which in any field of knowledge mark the difference between a practised approach (based on so called "experience") and science or professionalism? Is there not the risk that we transform planning (and our planning conferences) from instead of a profession (art or science, as we prefer) into a wide literary bazaar?

¹¹ It is not by chance that an explicit trend – and for this reason much more consequential and consistent than other equivocal manifestations of a generalizing politology on planning – to see the task of the "theorist" (a disconcerting thesis for one who is bound to the Greco-Roman etymons, but anyhow suggestive) limited to that of "telling stories," in the conviction that "...planning arguments are characteristically expressed as stories. As they both tell and manage these stories, planners maintain and redesign communities" (Mandelbaum, 1992); or the task is that of "reading plans" as they are developed and located in the urban history (Mandelbaum, 1990, 1993). And it is not by chance that this reduction of the planners' professionalism to the telling and reading of urban stories and plans ("planners as writers"; "plans as narrative") be sustained by a professor of Urban History. At least in this case people know from the beginning – with clarity, sincerity, and intellectual honesty – what is intended by "planning theory" (see also Thorgmorton, 1993, 1996). My only divergence is that all this could be named "Urban History"; then – with some reserve – "(Urban) Planning History"; then, perhaps (but it would be an unsupportable sophistication), "Theory of Planning History"; but certainly not "Planning Theory." And as a final result of those kinds of elaborations, I can discern a product of amusing weekend reading for urban planners (but only for those who have enough sensibility and imaginative acumen to penetrate and understand them as hermetic poetry); but I am scared to consider them as the basis of a professional know how for young professional planner candidates!

Is "rationalism" all this? It seems to me only common sense.¹²

On the other hand, Friedmann himself, in the same chapter on the terrain of planning theory, introduces a series of questions about planning theory which can be considered absolutely appropriate (if settled in systematic and consequential order) to constitute a very interesting syllabus for a discussion of planning theory.

3.3 *Expanding the terrain and the roots*

From the vision of the 'terrain' or field arises the vision of the 'roots'. It is not surprising that Friedmann speaks about "two centuries of planning theory" (even if in terms of "traditions"). In this historical perspective the problem to reconstruct planning theory from a historical point of view gives us the opportunity to develop a sort of "history of planning theory" and to draw to the discipline people and writers which did not have any idea of being the traditional founders of planning theory in its different approaches.¹³

Even if the "two century" beginning (from the age of the "Enlightenment" and of the democratic and industrial "Revolutions"), makes sense given the marked social and economic changes connected with that age, people may be curious to know what strict 'rationale' has set aside many others

¹² And this has nothing to do with the *vexata quaestio* of the origins of knowledge and its connection with action. The entire history of philosophy has dealt with this question, to attempt to deal with it in a few pages. I persist to follow the idea that knowledge and action are intimately related and we have to tailor, to calibrate our cognitive analysis to the definition of our action objectives (decision-oriented analysis), and this offers or obliges us to have a certain awareness of the relativity of the planning objectives. But, I repeat, this calls for another level of reasoning, and has nothing to do with my previous sentence.

¹³ This occupies two thirds of Friedmann's book (Part 2) and even the rest is a continuous coming back to the historical bases (Part 3).

social and political thinkers from the Enlightenment, or immediately before¹⁴. But even in this 'narrowness', the heritage discovered by the planning theory is incredibly vast. According to Friedmann, it embraces the entire history of political economy¹⁵; it includes all the movements of scientific management¹⁶; it is identified with all the traditions of sociology as a science¹⁷; and - as "*social mobilisation*" - encompasses all possible socialist thinking¹⁸.

In sum, the roots of planning theory - so intended - are the entire social and political thought of the last two centuries. I do not believe that in these circumstances, it could be easy for planning theory to find its own identity.

From this vision, it is not surprising that under the heading of planning theory, we find people who deal with a huge range of themes, from political science to sociology, from economics to psychology, and also any kind of social movement (liberation of women, or of homosexuals); the same range that we can find

¹⁴ I think, for instance, of the work of Vico, Locke, Hume, Turgot, Rousseau, Kant, Wegelin, Condorcet, to mention the first that come to mind, and which deserve no less than the other to be included in the list of the unaware progenitors of planning theory.

¹⁵ In the approach named as "*policy analysis*": from Adam Smith, to J.S. Mill, Jevons, Walras, Marshall, Pigou, Keynes, until the new "welfare economics", and in the same time all school of system analysis and engineering, policy science and public policies.

¹⁶ In the approach named "*social learning*": from the engineering method of Taylor, with derivations from and connections with "Organisation Development (OD), and other issues of educational psychology.

¹⁷ In the approach named as "*social reform*": the entire tradition of sociology from Saint-Simon to Comte, Durkheim, Max Weber, Mannheim, until Popper and even modern American sociology; as well as the entire tradition of institutional economics (from the German historic school to Veblen, Commons, Mitchell), and American pragmatism (James, Dewey).

¹⁸ Encompassing from the Utopians to Marx and Marxists; but also Radicals and Anarchists, until the "Frankfurt School" (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas).

under any other heading of knowledge.¹⁹

This is truly the crucial point for planning theory's future. In order to justify such an expansive field, planning theory must characterise itself with a limited and restrained point of view: actually the point of urban planners, *stricto sensu*. Planning theory becomes the recreational and hobby field for urban planners.

Well, my idea is that planning theory should be exactly the opposite. It should start with a rigidly restrained field of analysis - planning, in its different applications - and bring to it an enormity of points of view; those points of view remained until now very separate, to such an extent as to make each one incapable of providing a truly *integrated* and *comprehensive* vision of planning.

The theory of planning should be the output of a permanent exchange of points of view from planners of different origin and professional extractions aimed at building a common doctrine and methodology, and a new professionalism.

In this vision, there are the foundations of a new discipline of planning²⁰, adapted to the modern conditions of public or community management. This new management increasingly exploits improved know-how concerning the effectiveness of decision-making, and increasingly "rational" methods, i.e. greater consciousness of the complexity of governance problems.

Therefore, the relation between, (a) the know-how improved through new integrative methods and, (b) the governmental and communitarian institutions and decision-makers, is an integrative part of the new discipline. This relation, its development, and its

¹⁹ With this trend, we can expect to find soon in our journals (nominally specialised) – as turn the wind of fashionable subjects – papers on Christianity, Buddhism, Zionism, the evolution of Eroticism, the culinary Art and the Diet issues, Bio-ethics, Cosmopolitanism and so on: all subjects about which I foster my sincere and deep personal interest.

²⁰ More details on this new discipline, in a paper of mine (Archibugi, 1995).

functional articulation can be the *object* of the planning theory. But no more than is proper; no more than is necessary to make planners the controllers of decision-making consistency, and prompters of the limits and constraints in the relationship between different goals and objectives, and between objectives and means. Without the risk of becoming decision makers themselves (as planners, of course; not as citizens).

And again this vision does not address another issue, recently developed in the planning theory debate: that the planner should assume even decision making roles and abandon the role as "dead-wood" of effective management. This is an old subject, stemming from the common, widespread frustration of planners about the lack of implementation of their plans. But this "implementation problem" has been seen by the true planning methodologist (or planologists) in very different ways than it is seen at the level of practitioners. To make plans effective, they must be - in the first place - feasible; and their feasibility comes from their consistency with planning at other levels and their consistency with the environmental conditions. To achieve this level of consciousness, the method recommends separating the "selection problem" (in the plan preparation phase) from the "implementation problem" (in the plan management or application phase)²¹. The connection must be not simultaneous, but operational, that is it has to follow a pre-defined procedure and feed-back.

It is surprising that this argument - despite its wide appearance - recurs many times²² and not necessarily with improved logic.

²¹ The separation of "selection" from the "implementation" problem, has been one of the leit motif of methodological reflections of a great planologist, Ragnar Frisch (see, 1970).

²² See for instance the work of G. Benveniste and its reception in our community (the comments dedicated to him in the issue No.8 of the journal *Planning Theory*). Frankly I don't find anything new in this work compared to the past work of Banfield and Wilson (1963), Etzioni (1968), Rabinovitz (1967, 1969), Dennis (1970 and 1972), Dror (1971) Robert Goodmann

3.4 *The lack of relationship with "substantive" planning*

Many authors lay stress not on the vastness of the planning theory field, but only on the many approaches that support it. However from the best intentions to make students aware of the multidisciplinary of the approaches to planning theory can arise another dangerous and misleading development of planning theory itself.

For instance, in a very useful introductory textbook on the "approaches to planning", Alexander²³ - rightly concerned about giving content to planning theory - felt that it was not possible to leave out of consideration the meaning and content of planning itself, for which we attempt to develop the "theory". And he stated:

"The substantive aspects of planning are the hardest to delimit: they can range into areas as divergent as housing, transportation, health services and economic development policy. Among major relevant substantive fields addressed in one planning theory text are urban growth, neighborhood units, zoning, and the physical environment. Another anthology divides up the field by functional sectors: physical, social, public policy, and economic planning" (p.8).

Therefore, if we continue with Banfield's already quoted formula, it is just the *relational process among different contents* and substantive aspects of planning that become the *substantive content of the planning theory*. And again I agree with Alexander when he state that *"the core of planning theory is the planning process: how should and do people plan?"*; but, stating at the

(1971); and in comparison to the simple, complete and elegant synthesis of the problem made by Faludi, in the last chapters of his first work (1973).

²³ The best synthesis of all the current strands of thought on planning theory is in Alexander's book (1992, second improved edition) . Therefore I have preferred to use this book for comments , even if other books have an equivalent validity in representing the current trend of thinking.

same time, that *"the planning theory explore the planning process and examines its components: What are they? How do they interrelate? How are they affected by the context of planning efforts? How do they determine planning outcomes? All these affect the question of how planning should be done"*. To me, all this constitutes a substantive theory or methodology of planning, approached from all sides.

3.5 *Planning theory: general or not?*

At a certain point (p.10) Alexander states: *"The eclectic nature of planning theory has so far resisted integration. There is no 'general theory of planning' ; indeed, serious observers have expressed doubts whether the development of such a theory is even possible..."* . In my opinion it is not the eclectic nature of planning theory which has resisted integration, but only the eclectic nature of planning *tout court*.

Planning theory is *'general'* or does not exist at all. Planning theory - if a *'rationale'* has to exist and if it *can* exist - rests in the purpose to surpass the eclectic nature of planning, in its substantive manifestations and applications; and to provide to the different substantive planning a common field of understanding and consistency and (through understanding and consistency) a common process of decision and implementation. Planning theory cannot split itself into different substantive forms or levels of planning; its role is to be a tool of the consistency check; and it has the synergetic role of facilitating implementation, when and where substantive planning fails because of its unilateral approach. That unilateral approach which produces *limited rationality* (in Simon's terms) or *sub-optimality* (in Pareto's terms). All this according to the unavoidable search for a higher "rationality".

In sum, without a search for a *general planning theory*, even a search for a planning theory *tout court* would make not sense. (Ragnar Frisch would call it "half logic"; and Dudley Seers

"pseudoplanning")²⁴.

If we firmly anchor ourselves to Banfield's formula, the substance itself of planning theory is to elaborate a *general methodology of planning* activities and establish an operational nexus (*substantial* and *procedural* at the same time) among different types of planning. Otherwise we can remain very easy in the our traditional substantive multiple cultures and practices of planning , without inventing our stories as 'planning theory'. In this case, I do not understand what this word - "theory" - has to do with those stories.

A similar dangerous trend is the opposite belief that planning theory must be bound to some "theory of society". Once John Dyckman (1969, see also: 1966 and 1970) affirmed: "*The theory of planning must include some theory of the society in which planning is institutionalized*". "Must include"? I agree, of course, with the remark that any planning activity can be strongly conditioned by the theory of society and also institutions prevailing in the environment (in the country or any other form of community). But planning theory must study a methodology of planning which does not recognise, *per se*, the peculiar conditions of each environment, and represents only a betterment of any practical mode of government and decision making. So it seems to me exactly that it *should not* "include" a theory of society.

The further adaptation of the methodology to individual circumstances is a successive skill, which has nothing to do with the foundations of the methods. I cannot imagine to develop so many theories of planning for the many theories of society that we can encounter or develop for each circumstance (country, community, form of government, an so on). Any discussion on the different theories of the society would implicate a wide debate and would transform planning theory into a sociological debate.

²⁴ Frisch (1970, 1976); Seers (1972).

3.6 A vademecum for good planners professional relations?

Many planning theorists think and argue that planning theory is justified because for the practical professional planner (mainly urban-planner), more than techniques - called 'routine techniques',

"we need understand the planning process and the diverse roles in it of planners, their clients - government, organizations, and institutions, and their members: elected and appointed officials, administrators, and other experts - and the public at large and its components: community elites and workers, suburbanites and central-city poor, organized interest group and the "silent majority", "averages", and "minorities" : women, blacks and other groups, handicapped, and elderly, and the young".²⁵

But is it wise to consider all this as "the field of planning theory?" . In that case, I'd really be scared.

Without a doubt, all those things – along with many others - must be faced by the planner in the practical exercise of his or her profession. Without a doubt he or she must be concerned about effective situations concerning the social and political environment in which he or she operates, as much as they are concerned about the physical or natural environment. But all this belongs to an obvious awareness which accompanies any kind of professional activity, more or less linked to social life - medicine, psychology, law, management, social defence and welfare, and - last but not least – political science. Besides, is that truly the 'field' of the theory of (urban) planning? Or, rather, its environment? By analogy, all that could also be the field for a theory of medicine, of psychology, of law, of management sciences, of political science, and so on?

If the theory of planning should teach the planner to attend to

²⁵ Always we refer to Alexander, p.2

all those things, it would represent a window on a very dangerous "holism"; that holism which has induced our planning theory literature to rush to busy itself with everything, to wear the shoes of somebody else: the political scientist, the economist, the public manager, the jurist and the historians, or simply, of the scholar of the most curious aspects of social history, (just for instance, among dozens of cases, the history of Blues Heritage Conservation or of the Gay and Lesbian Emancipation²⁶).

If the theory of planning has to find its own field, it seems to me convenient that it shall find it within the peculiarities of planning itself, that it shall provide a sort of reflection on itself, and overall, shall provide a guarantee of consistency among multiple manifestations of planning and the substantive fields in which it operates (land use, economic and social investments, transport, environmental protection, health protection, and so on). We are always dealing with the consistency within a process which keeps its own identity: planning; and planning only.

This process needs to follow clear methods and procedures. It is not "routine", but a skill or science. And we are dealing not with the political "feasibility" of the plans (which is a matter for the political scientist or the policy-maker), but with their technical feasibility (or "planological" feasibility).

In other words, planning theory must help planning to be really comprehensive and consistent; and I would like to consider this a technical aspect, the most important aspect of the true skill or professionalism of the planner. It is mainly through this kind of consistency, provided by the capacity of internal co-ordination, that plans achieve the condition to be politically implemented: not a sufficient condition, I agree, but an indispensable one.

²⁶ See Clyde Woods' very interesting paper on the Blues Epistemology and Regional Planning History (the case of the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission); and the equally fascinating Moira Kenney's invitation to understand the Urban aspects of Gay and Lesbian Marginalisation. Both papers are in our (supposed specialist) journal on/of *Planning Theory* (No.13, 1995).

If they become, further, politically implemented or not due to other historical or situational factors (for instance:

- the great power of subjects that operate for their own special interests and to damage the interests of others or the public interests;
- the interest of bureaucracy to make not transparent its own administrative incapacity or interest;
- corruption, mafia or lobbying influencing the decision-making; and so on),

the planner can take account of this only if it enters into an official and formal planning process, becoming the explicit objectives of the plans. But it seems to me that to pay attention to those factors should not become the task of the planner (nor become, therefore, a field of planning theory) if we want to avoid that this theory transform itself into a permanent "tale" of peculiar situations, useless for other peculiar situations.²⁷

It does not seem to me – even in the case of a systematic presence of those above factors – that we must include them in our planning ‘models’, just to make more 'realistic' and probably feasible the plans ‘implementation’. At the most, we can accept to include in the defined standard of a methodology of comprehensive planning, special moments of serious and engaging controls on the possible behaviour of groups or interests. We should pay attention to, as exogenous to the planning process, a normal concertation of official stakeholders. (through non tamed enquiries or polls). This attention could belong to the field of planning theory (or methodology, in my preferred sense given to the word ‘theory’). But it should be contained within the limits of a general lists of prescriptions of operations to carry out in the preparations of plans and of their evaluation; not much more, otherwise planning theory (or methodology) risks transforming itself into a treatise of sociology, without the necessary competence and systematic

²⁷ See for other points of view also Thorgmorton, 1993 and 1996.

consciousness.

4. Expectations and results from the integration of the planning sciences

My thesis is that - instead of developing truly interdisciplinary approaches and producing new learning bases for the preparation of plans (in a context which would be in support of a *planning society*, to again use Faludi's nice expression²⁸) - in the name of planning theory a sort of planning "self-analysis" or "meta-analysis" has broken out. This type of analysis has led to a sort of crumbling of everything that could be consolidated and cohesive in planning, through its methods and practices.

People should expect a broadening, unifying and integrating of the different approaches and fields of planning, at least those practised for public purposes (from physical-spatial to economic and social).²⁹ Instead, what we have achieved is a further brooding, approach by approach, field by field procedure, which has led to a sort of solipsism within a water-tight compartment for each conventional discipline (economists with economists, town planners with town planners, systems analysts and engineers with systems analysts and engineers, social planners with social planners, etc.). It is surprising how little acquaintance there is within each of these groups for the most important theoretical contributions developed by other groups.³⁰

²⁸ See always Faludi (1973): the last chapter.

²⁹ On this point see the contents of integration outlined in my previously quoted paper prepared for the "first world-wide conference on planning sciences" (Archibugi, 1992), but also my obstinate researches from the past (1969, 1974, 1989) to present (1994).

³⁰ Just to site one glaring example, how familiar are planning theorists coming from the conventional town planning point of view with the work of the planning theorists coming from the economic point of view, such as

I will give some examples which I hope will be familiar to everyone (at least as historical events):

a) when in the 1960s, in several countries of western Europe, people tried to introduce (with stronger ideological resistance) the methods and procedures of macro-economic governance called economic programming,³¹ many regretted that this sort of planning did not take into account any social, urban, or operational features. Many trials were developed trying to integrate macro-economic planning and physical planning at the national scale. The most obvious bridge between these two kinds of planning has been the regional splitting of national plans (called – in many countries – “regional policies”).³² In the USA,

Frisch, Tinbergen (Nobel prize winners), Leif Johansen, and many others? And in reverse, how familiar are those theorists coming from the economic point of view with the important contributions to planning theory by town planners of quality, such as Doxiades, Chapin, Perloff, and many others? With the last generous effort by John Friedmann (1987) - one of the “planning theorists” most engaged in an integrative approach (I wish to remember one of his papers of 1973), we can –as seen - to the origins, or roots, of the historical disciplines, in order to find a significant common field of analysis and to synthesise an interdisciplinary approach. But the reconstruction of the *present* status of real comprehensive planning is very poor. The important work of Nathaniel Lichfield (1997) – summarising his many years of professional experience – covers this lack, concerning however mainly the field of economic evaluation of plans, and less the inter-relationship of plans among different levels and scales.

³¹ With the French *Commissariat au Plan's* multi-year plans, the “Neddy” in Great Britain, the experiments with economic programming in Italy and Spain, and the even more advanced methods developed in the Netherlands, Norway, Belgium, Denmark, others countries, and even at the European Community scale. For a rapid appraisal of these experiences as a whole, see a paper of Albrechts (1992).

³² This was also the epoch when, to use an expression by Alonso in a paper dealing with the integration problem, the “regional science” as a “meta-discipline” was born. The title of his paper (presented in Japan in a academic meeting of “regional sciences”) was, “*Beyond Interdisciplinary Approach to Planning*” (1971).

a country with a demographic and territorial size not comparable with European countries, this integrative role has been played by *state planning*. But the cases of a real operational integration remained very rare as a consequence of the lack of a real disciplinary integration.³³

b) when in the 1960s, strategic management and planning was developed in business corporations and even in governmental agencies (local, state, and federal) under the impulse of systems analysis, engineering, and operational research, various attempts were implemented to *integrate* the methods of macro-economic planning with (at least) public expenditure and budgeting practices.³⁴ Or, at least to integrate the methods at the local government scale.³⁵

c) when in the 1970s, some governments tried to give a more generalised impulse to urban planning, which traditionally had been physical in orientation, and until that moment carried out in

³³ The example that I know better, obviously, is the Italian “Progetto 80”. But other attempts have been developed in Netherlands, in France, and in the 1970s, also in Germany, with the Federal “Raumordnungprogramme”, that later has been put aside. Some critical surveys of these experiences in Europe are in a book of Stuart Holland, ed., (entitled: “*Beyond Capitalistic Planning*”, Oxford, 1977). For the US experience see an enlightening essay by Beauregard (1992) for the “first World Conference on Planning Science”(Palermo 1992).

³⁴ It is well known that attempts were made to introduce such methods into many governmental agencies. These include the PPBS (Planning-Programming-Budgeting-System) and similar procedures for evaluation in USA, and the RCB (*Rationalisation des Choix Budgetaires*) in France. All these attempts failed, in my opinion, because of the lack of connections to macro-economic planning (and not only with a budgetary policy at the national scale, which was even missed).

³⁵ This is the case of the experimental analysis by the British IOR Group (Institute of Operational Research), which was very influential, at that time, on Faludi's methodological reflections as a good test of the benefits of an interdisciplinary acquaintance. (Friend and Jessop, 1969, 1974)

isolation and limited to land-use aspects, many attempts were made to go beyond this character and to integrate physical and industrial planning at the regional and local scale (for example the *structure plans* carried out by counties in England);³⁶

We could continue with many other cases of attempts to integrate different typologies and scales of planning that have been researched, but not (yet) achieved.³⁷ (Here they have been evoked only as well known examples of my reasoning. They deserve a more systematic and careful illustration, although very few remain, and absolutely nothing in the memory of some of our

³⁶ In respect to this experience, I conjecture that the difficulties met by the “structure plans” to become a stable operating system, are due to the fact that they were not framed in a national, multi-county scenario, capable of controlling the consistency between county design and national decisions and design.

³⁷ Two academic journals born in the 1960s, *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences* published by Pergamon and *Environment and Planning* published by Pion, were aimed at fulfilling the role of fostering an academic integration of planning theory. (The first included, on its editorial board, economists of the level of Ragnar Frisch and H. Darin-Drabkin, town planners such as Britton Harris, Martin Meyerson and John Dyckman, and systems analysts such as R.H. Howard and H.G. Berkman. The second had economists such as Peter Nijkamp, town planners such as Peter Hall, system analysts such as R. Quandt, etc.) But, the expectations in this direction were largely frustrated. These journals have developed their own “core focuses”: *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences* deals mainly with conventional “operational research” disciplines (even if applied to the public and social sectors), and *Environment and Planning* covers conventional “regional science” with a strong orientation towards a positive, neo-classical, economic approach and therefore with scarce interest in planning (until more recent years with the editorship of another accompanying Journal). And, I believe that this has happened, not due to the responsibility of the editors (or their respective editorial boards, of which, incidentally, I have been a member since their beginnings), but due to a lack, within the academic and professional worlds, of a real tendency towards important integrated experiences in planning.

younger colleagues).³⁸

In conclusion (to return to the thread of my initial reasoning), people should expect progress *towards an ever deeper refining and methodological integration of different kinds of planning* (in order to strengthen a general methodology of planning) which in turn could strengthen at the same time:

- a) techniques and capacity for analysis of the discipline, itself; and
- b) the applied results of the discipline, by which I mean the plans and their capacity to be implemented with a more comprehensive outcome that is more consistent with the conditions and constraints of their environment in a programming vision, rendering them more feasible.

5. The bad course of the debate

It is in this direction that one could expect the emerging "planning theory" to lead us. And, it is in this progressive direction that Faludi's expression of the theory *of* planning deserves to go.

On the contrary (and this is my thesis, which I support with much regret), a different road has been taken, one that contains a

³⁸ Soon, I hope to publish a critical survey of the more meaningful research strands which have contributed, consciously or not, to the realisation of a certain integration, either disciplinary or operative, of various fields and approaches of planning. The purpose would be to set the foundations of a new "science" or "theory" of planning. I will call this work, on which I have been working for some years, *Introduction to Planology*. To me, these words seem useful in indicating this attempt to unify, within a general historical-cultural perspective, all of the sectorial approaches belonging to the planning sciences in the last decades, and to examine their connections and the convergence towards a new unique discipline. There is a draft version of this survey, published by the Planning Studies Centre (Archibugi, 1992).

continuous flow of consideration and reflections *about* planning (does this deserve the name, *theory*?). This road leads towards a great noisy chattering about planning, its institutional constraints, its *bounded rationality*, etc. which has been dignified by someone as *post-modern*. A lot of insights have been developed, sometimes (but not always) even interesting ones, influenced by a kind of psychology and polity of behaviour by individuals, groups, communities, and institutions. I call this a sort of *politology of planning*, based essentially on the will of the people (and generally the *bad will* of these people). This is called *realism*. I resist, out of respect for the earlier efforts of Faludi and some others, calling this a *theory of planning*. Some of these considerations and reflections are based on an ingenuous background of utilitarian-type philosophy in a reduced version. Or, they are based on philosophies that are poorly and only intuitively assimilated. People have shown a preferred tendency to develop a sort of philosophy of incapacity: incapacity to implement plans, incapacity to apply appropriate future projections, incapacity to make rational decisions, incapacity to implement organisational schemes, and so on. And all this is professed as if the outcome of a peculiar wisdom. I have the impression that from all this chattering (which we continue to call planning theory) we inadvertently are singing a sort of great requiem for planning.³⁹ If I decided, after years of indecision, to intervene in the debate about the theory *on* planning⁴⁰, (a meta-debate that I hope nobody would get the idea to call pompously

³⁹ Even this paper, I agree, belongs to this kind of literature. I must confess that I am writing it with a certain uneasiness. Shortly, I would prefer to occupy myself – and it is what I have tried to do in a certain extension - in proposing something different, didactically and scholarly, on *how to prepare* and *how to manage* a plan, in terms of consistency and relationship with the outer environment, instead of engaging in meta-talk on plans.

⁴⁰ And I felt that this Oxford conference would be the appropriate place to do that.

the *theory of planning theory*), it is because I feel a danger from this to the profession and for planning activities in general; and I feel the need to invite my colleagues to cut this useless waste of intellectual resources (which are sometime even sophisticated) and to approach students through a learning process involving know-how, methods, and, if well framed within the methods, techniques, so scarcely acquired in the past, and so important for the improvement of the implementation of plans; and further, I feel the need that *planning theory* be restored to its original role of dealing with the logical and operational frame of *any* planning approach or planning activity.

Planning theory would work much better in the neglected direction of the *integration of the approaches* (trying to bring into the discussion many type of scholars involved in many different types of planning, which presently is not the case). In searching for such an integration of approaches, planning theory could discuss how to make connections, logical and methodological, among the different *scales* of planning (suburban, urban, metropolitan, regional, national, international, global), among the different *sectors* of planning (agricultural, industrial, commercial, services, governmental), and among the different *units* of planning (communities, unions, associations, “stakeholders”, political institutions).

A planning society, especially in a pluralist society or world, cannot avoid defining the machinery through which each unit, scale, or sector makes its own planning activities consistent with the planning activities of *others*, within a less casual and disordered frame than in a non-planning society. This *non-planning society* is the object, *against* which planning activities, the planning profession, planning schools, and therefore, planning theory should be erected.

And this definition of the planning society and its operative functioning, should be the appropriate field of planning theory.

It is obvious that this (‘rational’) vision of the planning system (and how could it be otherwise) is an abstract picture that could

be founded only with difficulty in the (ex-post) reality. From time immemorial, however, planning has taken this for granted (and to return to it seems to me useless). Inherent in the concept of planning is the recognition that an ideal is not a fixed objective, but itself will change. The rational plan "can be striven for, but never achieved".⁴¹

This fact does not negate the usefulness and effectiveness of rational planning. On the contrary, it constitutes its rationale, or *raison d'etre*. And this is a point which we should avoid questioning (at least after Condorcet) when we look at the not always rational nor enlightened progress of humankind.

6. Is a positive reconstruction of planning theory possible?

To make a positive contribution to restoring a more useful and constructive theory *of* planning, of the kind above outlined, I will sketch (only in a impressionistic way), in which ambits or fields of research, in my opinion, such a theory of planning should advance. As I have said, it is a matter of determining which research fields could contribute to the *integration* of different approaches to planning, to the unification of some cognitive and analytical tools, to the development of a common language, and even lexicon, (an aspect that planning theory has also neglected), and to the co-ordination of a taxonomy among different plans and planning activities. All this, in my vision, should be the privileged task of a renovated *theory of planning*.

This also would be the way to resuscitate planning from the loquacious catalepsy into which it seems to have fallen.

⁴¹ This is how the idea of the planning activity was presented by a MIT professor, John T. Howard in the entry for *City Planning* in the Encyclopaedia Britannica in the 1930s. This quotation is taken from a work of mine on the *Theory of Urbanistics*, (forthcoming in English).

7. A guideline and agenda for research for a new general (integrated) theory of planning

These guidelines for research should look towards some *common multidisciplinary subjects* which constitute the *typical contents* for an integration of approaches.

As I have said above, I will identify these subject only by title, reserving more in depth illustrations to a special work.⁴² I think these titles, however, will be sufficient to understand what I mean by a new general frame for the successful development of planning activities.⁴³

Nevertheless, in describing some disciplines and directions of research aimed at an *integrated* approach to planning, and from there to the foundation of a unitary and integrated *corpus* of methods, knowledge, and *know-how*, it has been pointed out that some *research fields* are still, necessarily, separated from the nature of traditional disciplines, and from the object itself of research and applications. There were envisaged some *integration areas* that still have not found a precise definition, but from which it is believed that theory of planning will receive its most interesting impulses.

In this section, a first summary reference to them will be

⁴² I refer again to the *Introduction to Planology (first draft, Rome 1992)*, in which critical illustrations of different cultural and scientific strands that have lead to the conception of an integrated and unified approach to planning have been identified. I also examine the articulation of the contents of Planology, in general, and its evolutionary relationship with others disciplines and with the fields and strands on which it is based.

⁴³ For many years, in co-operation with a group of colleagues and friends, I have been working to build a treatise on *general planning* (hoping to have time ahead to achieve it) epitomising systematically principles, criteria, and methods of planning at different scales and facets of community life. I believe that the best way to move towards the improved performance of planning as a new discipline (planning science or planology) is to give a systematic outline of its foundations.

made and a first schematic description given. This is done with the conviction that research guidelines towards *planological integration* must necessarily be compared with these *areas*, in some way or another; and that only by pursuing these guidelines will it be possible to assure the positive development of planning theory.

It is better to start from the consideration that when approaching the problem of *integration* of the different disciplines which are at the basis of a *Planning Science (or Planology)*, an abundant quantity of studies and theoretical reflections have already been developed. However, given their specificity of approach, they still didn't develop an integration of these several study areas. The articulation of these study areas will be described in the following sub-sections.

7.1. Integration between conventional economic accounting and social accounting⁴⁴

This study area includes both the aspects of surveying and quantification of phenomena, and those things connected to their dynamic simulation. The lines which compose it follow:

⁴⁴ We are aware that in the origins of economic accounting related to the nation-wide system, this accounting has also been called *social accounting*. (See especially the preferred language of Richard Stone (1959 and 1967) and the *Department of Applied Economics* at the University of Cambridge several years ago). But, since the conventional denomination of that accounting has become *economic* or *national*, we prefer to reserve the expression *social accounting* for the new attempts to create an integrated accounting system outside the national accounting system, capable of reaching the *non-economic* (or as I would prefer, the *non-monetary*) phenomena of welfare. By this, I mean that they are not measurable with the help of actual or simulated prices of the *market*, but rather through *other* indicators of output or of utility. (See for these aspects my: *The Associative Economy*, Macmillan 2000).

1. the *theory of social indicators* - in which we look at the ways we can measure objectively or subjectively, the needs, the well-being, the preferences, the demands, the aspirations, and the objectives (of people, groups, communities, and public authorities);
2. the *forms and techniques of "extension" of conventional economic accounting* which grasp a measure of well-being and *development* not expressed by the latter (new accounting systems of well-being, to be agreed upon);
3. *modelling* used to link (using transitional matrices) *social objectives and their measurements, with accounting systems* (conventional or *new*).

7.2. *Integration between socio-economic planning (and accounting) and technological forecasting and planning*

This direction is composed of the following lines:

1. the updating (and the methods connected to this) of the *matrix systems and models of conventional input-output accountancy* with regard to the technological forecasts;
2. *integration of technological matrices with professional matrices of the labour factor*;
3. methods of interaction and of *evaluation of interactive relationships between technological forecasting and socio-economic planning* (technological planning).

7.3 Integration between socio-economic planning (and accounting) and territorial and environmental planning (and accounting)

This aspect covers the multiple aspects of the interrelationships between the spatial and *physical* factors of development and the *non-spatial* and *non-physical* factors of the same. Amongst the most prominent lines for this direction are:

1. the *modelling of the component of the spatial accessibility to economic well-being*;
2. the *translation of environmental values into the terms of socio-economic values (and of economic accounting)*;
3. the *measurement and evaluation of environmental and urban quality (environmental indicators and the urban effect)*;
4. *construction methods of matrices of the demand and supply of territory*;
5. integration of "*territorial accounting (usage values and dis-values) and accounting of transport (cost-benefit for firms and for users)*).

Most important, however, to this direction as a whole, is *the general problems of integration between economic planning and physical planning*. This question is considered one of the constituent pillars of the theory of planning in general

7.4. Integration between socio-economic planning and institutional organisation and negotiation

This direction intends to cover the multiple aspects of the interrelationships between conditions, constraints, objectives of an institutional type, and the technical-economic feasibility of the plans. More generally, it will look at the social limits to rationality of the planning process. Amongst the various lines of

research can be listed:

1. the in-depth *examination and accounting disaggregation of the flow and economic-financial transactions between institutional "sectors" (agents) in economic accounting;*
2. the *analysis of the conditions connected to the behaviour of the sectors and of the institutional agents concerning flows (savings, investment, access to the capital market, fiscal levy, psychological effects of transfers, etc.) in connection with the processes and objectives of planning;*
3. *new forms of work and consumption* (forms of auto-production and auto-consumption, non-profit economy, etc.) which are non-commercial and non-profit making and their role in the formation and distribution of "informal" income.

7.5. Integration between socio-economic planning through political co-ordination and information system

In this direction we can place all the research, of diverse shape and typology, that takes into account the *interdependence between technical contents of the processes and of the methods of planning and the procedures of political decision*, connected to the different types of existing public and administrative legal systems. In particular, the research activities forming a part of this direction can be grouped along the following main lines:

1. the examination of "*technologies*" for *political evaluation of plans and of "rational" choice* (cost-benefit analyses in its various aspects, follow-up analyses of the objectives, optimisation techniques, multi-objective and multi-criteria analyses, etc.);
2. *methods of non-institutional participation of citizens (and users) in planning processes;*
3. *strategic planning* including institutional methods of political

procedure of socio-economic planning (relationships between government and parliament, relationships between public powers and *social* powers, relationships between different levels, sectorial and territorial, of public powers, etc.) and planning bargaining.

My conclusion is that, only after realising that the theory of planning must march in these multiple directions, can we say that the theory of planning exists and is useful.

8. Concluding remarks

Recently the planners community - particularly that (still badly defined) of the *planning theorists*, has been stimulated to pay attention to the “ethical” aspects of the profession. However a dichotomy between ethical approaches and epistemological approaches of planning has been proposed which, to me, does not seem to be correct.

In a book rightly considered as an occasion to pay attention to the ethical aspects of profession, which includes the papers collected by Hu Thomas and Patsy Healy on the “Dilemmas of Planning Practice”, the key concept of "validation of knowledge" is introduced (even in the subtitle of the book)⁴⁵. And in the preface the editors assert:

“Validation [of knowledge] did not seem to be an issue troubling our planners very greatly. This could either because they have confidence in their basic knowledge; or, it could be because British planners have long ceased to worry about having a knowledge-base and are far more concerned about being able to operate effectively. "how do I do...?" has replaced, "What do I know? as the question which excites (or worries) planners".

⁴⁵ Thomas and Healy (1991).

I would like to consider this remark very fitting with my remark about the dangerous trend taken in planning theory; in essence: too much room for "how do we do" problems and too little room for "what do we know" problems. And I would like to add more room to "what do we know about our needed know-how" problem. This last question should become, in my opinion, the core of the next planning theory.

Of course, it is an epistemological approach. But it is, at the same time, a deontological problem, i.e. an ethical problem, professionally intended. Many other important ethical problems (I prefer call them "value" problems) concern planners along with the other members of any community. But we must not confuse the (epistemological or deontological) problems of planners with any other social and community problems concerning the entire society and the kind of constitution it prefers or achieves. If personally, and in general terms, I am persuaded that there does not exist any kind of scientific progress (advancement or findings) totally independent from historical social, institutional, and even "partisan" values or interests – it still seems to me very important to keep a *technical* approach to our professional role, as in the educational teaching, just to safeguard intellectual honesty and respect of true and free opinions, and to realise a superior capacity to achieve results from a general point of view.

And the first thing that needs to be "generalised" is the *planning know how*, i.e. planning theory.

To confuse planning theory with any other sort of social theory risks to de-professionalise planning. It means to forsake and discredit planning as a profession, and to intone (maybe even with charming and delightful songs) its requiem.

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