

THE EVOLUTION OF PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON PLANNING CONCEPTS, EDUCATION AND PROFESSION[□]

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ABSTRACT

Shifts of planning thoughts in the academia from the rational tradition towards new directions that was witnessed in the decade of 1980s, seemed to have more serious attention in this era of globalization. In order to delineate the future directions of planning theories, education, and profession, this article tries to review some of the major philosophical thoughts and their influence on the development of planning thoughts, education, and profession.

Theocentrism, utopianism, positivism, rationalism, and phenomenology are five major philosophical thoughts which have shown through history fundamental influence in setting the directions of planning thoughts, education, and profession. They are discussed in this article.

I. INTRODUCTION

By the end of 1980s, the development of planning thoughts came face to face with the issue of globalization. Questions that have been asked in addressing the status and prospect of planning education and profession with respect to the issue of globalization have brought us to an ambiguous situation.

This article aims to observe the evolution of philosophical thoughts (world views) and their influence on planning theory, education and profession. It was believed that changes in planning traditions from frontier tradition ("planning as a societal guidance") to recent tradition ("planning as a social mobilization") were driven by the changes in world views. These changes further brought about consequential changes in concepts of planning education and profession.

Theocentrism, utopianism, positivism, rationalism, and phenomenology are five major

philosophical thoughts which had shown through history fundamental influences in setting the directions of planning thoughts, education, and profession. Utopianism with its credo of social, economic, and physical equilibrium had brought the world from a chaotic situation to an idealistic situation. Positivism, which came later, was believed to be the umbrella of the emergence of blueprint planning tradition. Rational Comprehensive Planning which emerged in 1960s was noted to have a root in the philosophy of rationalism. The philosophy which was considered to be the umbrella for recent planning thoughts (e.g. plural planning) is phenomenology with its characteristics of non-duality and encouraging pluralism.

II. THEOCENTRISM

Theocentrism was recognized as the umbrella of the emergence of theocracy. The pillars of this system of power were religion dog-

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mas and power of monarchy. Theocentrism came into existence after the decline of polytheism (Wibisono, 1982). Under the power of theocracy, human community was ruled by absolute monarchs and priest dictators through a military system.

2.1 The Influence of Theocentrism on Planning Concepts

The influence of theocentrism on planning thoughts appeared in the tradition of "Authoritarian Planning" (Whittick, 1974). Planning in this tradition has a role to strengthen the power structure of monarchy. Urban setting or built environment articulated the interests of government, army, and bureaucracy. Every avenue became a parade ground. Planning paid no attention to the importance of market, shopping center and village. On the other hand, public open space, parks, boulevard, and garden were essential for this tradition of planning.

London, Paris, Versailles, Beijing, Amsterdam, Rome, Yogyakarta, and Surakarta are examples of cities which came into existence through Authoritarian Planning tradition. These cities have similar characteristics: long street and boulevard, grid pattern of layout, monotonous facade, open space and big plaza, monument, and symbol of power.

2.2 The Influence of Theocentrism on Planning Education and Profession

In the era of authoritarian planning tradition, planning was an activity belongs to only some small number of people. They could be priests or people who gained privileges from the monarchs. In this era, planning was an elite profession. There is no formal education yet. Planning skills were delivered through apprenticeship.

In the 1980s, coinciding with the rapid growth of industrialized cities of Asia, authoritarian planning thoughts emerged in the discussions of planning education and practice. The discussions implied the importance

of conserving and preserving the historical areas and buildings of Asian cities. UNCRD (United Nations Center for Regional Developments) had paid much attention in this area through researches, publications and financial support for some conservation and preservation projects. Some Asian planning schools explicitly delivered courses on planning history and paradigms (include authoritarian planning), and urban conservation and preservation.

III. UTOPIANISM

Utopia, a term coined by Sir Thomas More (1516) meaning "no where land" is a view to depict a desirable pattern for future living (Meyerson, in Blowers, et.al; 1974). Utopia seemed to have roots on the philosophy of humanism and naturalism. Humanism was believed to be the foundation of the so called "social utopia" and naturalism was believed as a source of the birth of "physical utopia". The basic believed of social and physical utopia was, as what Meyerson stated:

"Most of the creators of social utopia believe that man will be happier, more productive, or more religious - or 'better', according to some moral criterion, if the institution of the society are altered. Most of the creators of physical utopia imply that men will be healthier, more orderly, more satisfied, more inspired by beauty - better in some other way, if the physical environment is appropriately arranged" (Meyerson, *ibid*, p.9).

3.1 The Influence of Utopianism on Planning Concepts

The influence of utopia on planning thoughts appeared in the birth of 'city planning' tradition, particularly in English speaking countries. City planning comprehensively and methodologically clarifies what social and physical utopias depict the future of humanity. The influence of utopia on planning concepts could be seen in the works of Robert

Owen with his city of New Harmony, Indiana, founded in 1824. The city of Victoria designed by James Silk Buckingham, an English manufacturer, was another example of physical utopian planning. In the 20th century, utopian planning could be found in the works of Frank Lloyd Wright (with his 'Usonia' city) and Le Corbusier (with his scheme for Paris, devised shortly after World War I).

3.2 The Influence of Utopianism on Planning Education and Profession

Under utopianism, planning was viewed as 'total control' (Faludi, in Healy, et.al., 1982), meaning to control the future pattern of social institutions of men and their physical environment. Planning should guide the transformation of society from a chaotic situation (caused by industrial activities) to a better situation. The stress of utopian planning is more on 'what might be' than 'what it is' (Riesman, 1947; in Meyerson, ibid, p.11). Planning, then, was learned in a prescriptive manner. Students were encouraged to develop their own thinking, sensitivity to catch the problem, ideas and imagination. Planning school under this utopian view focused on city planning or city design. The tutor or a senior planner must be a charismatic man who had very broad knowledge and always remembered by his followers (Sudrajat, 1993).

Planning profession under utopianism belongs to elite group of society who has power to transform society to what they desire. Planning had become an elite profession.

IV. POSITIVISM

Through history, the 19th century was recognized as the century of positivism. Developments and growth in this century were contributed by the works of positive science. Auguste Comte (1798-1857), the one who was known as the father of positivism, defined the word positive as: real, clear, toward

the better future, useful and fixed. According to him, the positive era is led by industrialist and scientists. The basic belief of positivism was rooted in *Law of Three Stages* of August Comte, as observed by Wibisono (1982):

"The law stated that the human mind, both as an individual and as a totality, as well as a society, developed through three stages: the theological or fictive stage, the metaphysical or abstract stage, and the positive or real stage... The positive stage, represents a phase in which man has progressed even further. He is capable of thinking positively or in a 'real' sense, based on the knowledge he has garnered, which he has developed in a positive manner through observations, experiments and comparisons" (Wibisono, 1982:121).

4.1 The Influence of Positivism on Planning Concepts

The influence of positivism on planning thoughts could be seen in the works of: (1) Patrick Geddes with his planning doctrine; (2) Thomas Adam with 'The Regional Plan for New York and Its Environs'; (3) Patrick Abercrombie with 'Greater London Plan'; and (4) British planning legislation of 1947.

Under positivism paradigm, planning was viewed as 'object-centered' (Faludi, op.cit, p.83). Planning was an area of expertise for studying some object which need serious attention and immediately led to direct and straight action. Thus, planning should have an image of being fixed and clear. Plans should be clearly and easily implemented without any changes in the implementation process. It was similar to the works of engineering with 'blueprint' in nature. Planning was undertaken by authorized agencies of government.

To understand the object, planning required multi- or interdisciplinary participation. Survey research was required for preparing a plan (survey before plan). Thus, planning

context of globalization. However, at this moment, we do not want to discuss the definitions and concepts of globalization further. We just take some issues of globalization that have brought us to an ambiguous situation. We are facing paradoxical situations such as: (i) market and capital forces vs. political power; (ii) state control vs. market control; (iii) global values vs. local values; (iv) economic growth vs. environmental issues; (v) people-centered development vs. top-down development. Under these issues and accompanied by the abandonment of the rational comprehensive model of planning, it is time, that planning thoughts, education and profession were asked fundamentally to search for new directions.

The above issues of global paradoxes make us realize that the role of 'communication' in the future planning practice is very critical. Through 'communication', the two prongs or dualism of planning directions could be bridged. Future planning should initiate local values, participation and accommodate critical judgment by the community, while providing a place for global values.

The new direction of planning education anticipating the critical role of studying 'communication' seemed to have attention since the 1980s, as observed by Klosterman (1992). According to him, the perspectives of 'phenomenology' of Edmund Husserl and 'critical theory' of Jurgen Habermas were very important to the future planning academia. The exploration of new theoretical perspectives like: (1) mediation and negotiation, (2) advocacy planning, (3) social learning, (4) social mobilization, (5) strategic planning, (6) planning ethic, and (7) empowerment, reflect the important of 'communication' and 'plural values' to be studied in planning schools.

Milroy (1991) explicitly suggested five themes of his concepts on future planning education and profession. The first theme, according to him, was the importance of "language" in planning education and prac-

tice as a way of shaping discussion and as a way to recreate shared meaning. The second theme was "relationship" between the readers and the writers of plan, accounts of "dialogue" about the public interest. The third theme was the importance of "thereness" in empirical and observable forms for matters of social understanding. The fourth theme was the importance of promoting "reflective theory" than "objectifying theory", meaning that "local theory" is more important than "grand theory". The fifth theme was about the importance of realizing and promoting "plurality" and "differences". Here, as he quoted Mandelbaum, lay the importance of "open moral communities" in which members came to the public process of planning with their own stories of their communities.

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