

The *Realrationalität* of Curriculum Development within Planning in South Africa

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ABSTRACT:

Planning curriculum are constructed in the interaction with a range of dynamic factors including politically determined national and regional priorities, market demands and vocational exigencies, current legislation, societal values, institutional obligations, power configurations at various scales, accepted pedagogic practice, and so on. In an ideal context these forces may be negotiated, and resolved as the ideal 'planning curricula'. In most cases, however, there are tensions (either explicit or implicit) that play themselves out in a subtle battle of conflicting or multiple rationalities and power interests. A normative concern for building sustainable and appropriate forms of planning education should be rooted in an understanding of the *Realrationalität* of curriculum development. What must be critiqued in a volatile and fluid context is how different rationalities, systems of value, understandings and interests interact and compete in producing the frameworks within which planners are trained.

To complicate the issue the understanding of what constitutes planning and the planner is shifting and Planning Schools can no longer lay exclusive claim to a field which now relates to areas including Housing Policy, Local Economic Development, Policy Integration, and Heritage as well as more traditional areas such as Land Management and Spatial Policy.

This paper has a threefold focus. The first is to identify the forces currently shaping planning education in South Africa (with some examples from elsewhere) - within a framework of multiple rationalities and value systems. Secondly, drawing on some contemporary strands in critical pedagogic theory and practice, the paper evaluates the way in which the planning curriculum in different Schools in South Africa is evolving. Finally, in summary the paper concludes by briefly developing a normative position on how sustainable and appropriate forms of planning education should develop that would meet the imperatives of planning to contribute to the development of more equitable and sustainable settlements within the context of multiple rationalities, practical needs and critical pedagogic enquiry.

“Most democratic discussion and negotiation is not and cannot be based on visions of a communicatively rational, consensual, harmonious outcome. Conflicting differences between different groups’ conceptions of the ‘good’ are not negatives to be eliminated but rather diverse values to be recognized in decision-processes”

Hillier J, 2003; 41

Introduction

A recent planning colloquium entitled “Cities, planning and everyday life: A north – south, south – south dialogue” held at the New Constitutional Court in Johannesburg reinforced my conceptual tenets that a number of different ‘lenses’ may be used to interpret the *business of planning* and (in the case of the direction of this paper) planning education. In particular my concern in analysing planning education has for some time now been focussed on what is being taught, for whom, by whom, how it is taught and, possibly most critical of all, what forces led to the particular curriculum that planning programmes assume. In undertaking this task I have found that very often theories become collapsed into binaries with the debates themselves become dialectical when discussing issues such as ‘north-south’, ‘informal-formal’ , ‘good-bad’ planning education, new vocationalism versus critical pedagogy and so on. These dialectics no doubt lead to lost opportunity. With this in mind it is important to contextualise the nature of planning practices in South Africa¹ that informs planning education.

This paper is aimed at engaging with the construction of planning education and the range of dynamic factors including politically determined national and regional priorities, market demands and vocational exigencies, current legislation, societal values, institutional obligations, power configurations at various scales and accepted pedagogic practice that shape planning education. In terms of this, the paper employs the lens of Realrationalität² to understand the forces and tensions that need to be understood when constructing sustainability in planning education.

¹ While the paper deals more narrowly with South Africa the concepts argued in the paper will have resonance elsewhere. The argument in the paper is not to illicit a false perception that there are more constraining issues in South Africa that are impossible to overcome, but rather that by observing the issues there may be some approaches that are of value in other contexts. This idea is reinforced later in the paper by drawing from the Aalborg case put forward by Flyvbjerg.

² This concept, borrowed from Flyvbjerg is explained later in the paper.

It is argued that in most cases there are tensions (either explicit or implicit) that play themselves out in a subtle battle of conflicting or multiple rationalities and power interests. In constructing planning education and indeed when constructing issues around sustainability in planning education. It is argued that in a volatile and fluid context, how different rationalities, systems of value, understandings and interests interact and compete in producing the frameworks within which planners are trained.

This paper is not entering the debate on whether or not sustainability should be mainstreamed or part of a general planning education. (See for example Feldman 1994). One could argue the case of including Sustainability as a core course or indeed as a specialism as in the case of say, development, gender, transportation or housing. While I do believe that these are important debates they are beyond the remit of this paper, and will be presented by other participants at this workshop.

The paper is aimed at understanding how multiple rationalities is central to the realities of the *business of planning* and is critical in constructing *planning education* and (in the case of the focus of this conference) central to the construction of sustainability in planning curricula.

The paper is divided into four parts. The first is identifying appropriate *lenses* to use and in doing so drawing from the framework of *Realrationalität*. Secondly I will outline some of the current forces at play that inevitably result in *multiple rationalities*. My third area of focus is to briefly look at theories of *critical pedagogy* which reinforce the principles of *Realrationalität*. Finally I will draw these together and identify the concerns of constructing planning the curricula of *sustainability in planning education* and how there is a need to understand the challenges of conflicting rationality.

Lenses: Focussing the Debates Around the Principles of *Real Rationality*

In searching for appropriate frameworks that can (at least in part) assist in a critical analysis of planning education within the spatial and temporal characteristics of South Africa in 2005, a range of frameworks may be adopted that (at least potentially) help to explain the nature of the *business of planning* in South Africa today. For example it is often valuable to turn to the works of the ‘multicultural theorists’ such as

Sandercock to understand the dynamics of diversity and marginalisation - and, in turn, to frame planning education around these precepts. Similarly in negotiating the realities of planning in the face of difference we can adopt a Habermasian approach and develop communicative planning approaches, drawing from the works of Forester, Innes and Healy for example.

Watson's (2002) work, however has been useful in critiquing normative theories that have inevitably emerged in the 'north' and shows how these fail to apply to the conditions we often find ourselves. These notions of rationality, mediation and negotiation often fail to absorb the conflicting rationalities, which Watson suggests run particularly deep in some contexts (Watson 2002, 2003).

The works of post – colonial theorists³ assist in understanding the way/s in which planning programmes have emerged. These are often characterised by contradictions between British Town and Country Planning Acts (at least in Anglophone African countries) inherited from a colonial past with the harsh realities of contingency planning in an array of immense adversity. Very often it is in these contexts that there is innovative, creative and 'empowering' new practices emerging that should reshape current planning theory hegemonies. These new practices often take on what may be at best a 'hybrid' practice and at worst a set of inappropriate rules, procedures and regulations that have little to do with the realities of the everyday experience of living in cities in the so called 'south'. (Harrison 2005).

There is little doubt too that the literatures produced by Lefebvre and de Certeau on 'everyday life experiences', provide planning practitioners and educators with a critique of the values associated with the 'public good' in stark contrast with peoples basic existence in their everyday life. It may well be that the kinds of life experiences in more extreme contexts are often difficult to come to terms with. Some of these everyday experiences are discussed below and certainly reinforce the principles of multiple rationalities. It is argued later in this paper that multiple rationalities are not necessarily easily mediated in the Habermasian sense of communicative rationality.

³ The works of Spivak, Said, Babha, Chandra Mohanty and Trin T Min ha have been useful in explaining and "subverting the dominance of colonialism ... in a way that recognizes the extent to which the colonized and colonizer are constituted in an engagement with one another" Harrison 2005

In this paper I have found that, like Watson in looking at planning practice, there are many forces at play in constructing planning education. The argument is that there is an inevitable problem in accepting sustainability in planning education as though it was either a neutral sphere of education or accepted as a necessary *universalist common goal*⁴ and that this will inevitably lead to either a lack of effective implementation or of using the principles as a means of continued oppression through the discourse of Planning. This *dark side of planning* (Flyvbjerg, Richardson and Flyvbjerg, Harrison, Yiftachel) is discussed later in this paper.

Specifically, within the focus of this paper, sustainability and planning curriculum are inherently viewed from a range of rationalities. Connelly and Richardson for example discuss how the introduction of “sustainable development perspectives ... shows that current procedural approaches to [Strategic Environmental Assessment) SEA, underpinned by ‘expert’ and ‘participative’ perspectives, are not likely to lead to an acceptable outcome. Because fundamental questions of value difference are not being explicitly addressed in procedural debates, certain interpretations, or ways of thinking, may come to dominate SEA practice, without the SEA community being able to consciously identify the values which it believes should *drive* assessment”. Connelly and Richardson (2005, 393).

Similarly, it is my argument that, by employing a framework of *Realrationalität*, there is a better chance of effective curriculum development underpinning environmental sustainability in planning curriculum. The planning curricula cannot ignore issues of power, the everyday, values and multiple rationalities.

I should also voice unequivocally that I support the notion of environmental sustainability in planning curricula and would go as far as to argue that it should be mainstreamed into planning education. My aim however is to understand the *Realrationalität* of ‘*environmental sustainability*’, and in doing so to understand the real rationalities at play, the different values, the inherent tensions and the tensions (explicit or implicit) that play themselves out. The point is to do so in order to incorporate sustainability into planning curricula within a spatial and temporal

⁴ Brassioli defines Environmental Sustainability as “the simultaneous satisfaction of three objectives; economic efficiency; environmental protection; and social justice” Briassoulis H (890; 1999)

context, critically and argumentatively. In developing this particular frame I find that philosophically the works of Foucault assist in understanding power and rationality. In planning, the works of Yiftachel, Flyvbjerg, Richardson are useful – so too is the work of Watson in the South African context.

While one may analyse planning education as being constructed in a framework of communicative dialogue (from an Habermasian lens) it is argued that in most cases there are tensions (either explicit or implicit) that play themselves out in a subtle battle of conflicting or multiple rationalities and power interests. “Instead of side-stepping or seeking to remove the traces of power from planning, an alternative approach accepts power as unavoidable, recognising its all pervasive nature, and emphasising its productive as well as destructive potential. Here, theory engages squarely with policy made on a field of power struggles between different interests, where knowledge and truth are contested, and the rationality of planning is exposed as a focus of conflict”. This is what Flyvbjerg has called *Realrationalität*, or ‘real-life’ rationality (Flyvbjerg 1996), where the focus shifts from what *should* be done to what is *actually* done. This analysis embraces the idea that ‘rationality is penetrated by power’, and the dynamic between the two is critical in understanding what policy is about. It therefore becomes meaningless, or misleading - for politicians, administrators and researchers alike - to operate with a concept of rationality in which power is absent” (Richardson and Flyvbjerg, 2002).

Developing a critique of the discourse of curriculum construction, it therefore may be argued that any aspect of curriculum development should be rooted in an understanding of *Realrationalität*. What must be critiqued in a volatile and fluid context is how different rationalities, systems of value, understandings and interests interact and compete in producing the frameworks within which planners are trained. Richardson and Flyvbjerg for example “argue that the use of the communicative theory of Jürgen Habermas in planning theory is problematic because it hampers an understanding of how power shapes planning” The counter argument these authors pursue is one which is rooted in “asking difficult questions about the treatment of legitimacy, rationality, knowledge and spatiality” (Richardson and Flyvbjerg, 2002). In reflecting on these ideas, I recall statements made by a recent graduate from the undergraduate Planning programme at Wits University who criticised one of my

colleagues that he had failed to be taught some of the basic technical skills of planning – in particular how to go through the procedure of a rezoning or subdivision. I am forced to question the relevance of teaching development control techniques in a context where those very controls used by the *dark side of planning*, and where, at best a small minority benefited from the so called ‘public amenity’ of development control.

Realrationalität and Power: A Glimpse into the Everyday – Johannesburg, Sao Paulo? South Yorkshire? Harare? Alice Springs?⁵

What became very clear during the recent colloquium I referred to in the introductory passage to this paper, while colleagues discussed and told stories from other planning contexts (from Harare to Zaria to Beth Sheva, South Yorkshire, Hillbrow – all this during the drama of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans was unfolding) was that the ‘everyday life’ of people in cities, and indeed the everyday experience of planning professionals differed fundamentally from context to context. But, in all of this there was continued disquiet at the state of our cities, a sense of mutual learning and recognition of the wealth of practice of relevance that is emerging from the south and that these need to be developed further.

The following points are just some of the tensions which are at play, the real rationalities at work that challenge the construction of environmental sustainability in planning education.

Dated Legislation, Colonial Policies and Inherited Inadequacies

While we cannot talk of *African cities* as if they have some essential element to them, there are certainly elements that are disconcerting in relation to the gulf separating planning legislation/ policies and institutions from the realities of everyday life. While it may be critical to teach, for example the principles of development control, it is very often that very development control that is in itself an oppressive planning mechanism it has indeed resulted in planning tragedies rather than the romance associated with Planning (Harrison P. 2001).

⁵ Highlighting stories from Johannesburg are not meant to provide an image of despair or necessarily of hope – some of the issues faced in Africa may be more extreme than elsewhere but, as Flyvbjerg indicated in his study of Aalborg, “most people interested in politics know one or more ‘Aalborg stor[y]’” (Flyvbjerg 319, 2003)

These tragedies (or examples of the dark side of planning) can be traced this from the racial zoning legislation in South Africa to the current Operation Restore Order in Zimbabwe (which has some of it's' legitimacy based on the Town and Country Planning Act)⁶. In other circumstances it is, for example, difficult to comprehend how buildings in the middle of Johannesburg's Inner City can literally be hijacked.

South Africa can certainly be proud of the sophisticated and democratic legislation in place, based on a Constitution deeply grounded in Human Rights. However, when opportunist slum lords identify newly arriving migrants into the city at taxi ranks and offer these 'refugees' a 'home' in an empty building, with an en mass invasion , there has to be some disjuncture.

Histories of Oppression

In a context where, under apartheid different zoning legislation for different race groups left its continued spatial legacy, it is virtually impossible to develop one common land use management system. It is particularly difficult to identify a land use system which does not discriminate, which is common which is negotiated for the 'public good'. It is clear that within this context there are different rationalities at play, there are different understandings of what the *public good* is and there are real rationalities at work.

In a study I conducted together with a non governmental organisation, where a community of disenfranchised farm workers (more like peri urban small holdings) cooperatively bought one of the small holdings, the local (white) community made the purchase near impossible based on *environmental sustainability* arguments – while in

⁶ According to Southern African Poverty Network (SARPN) the Zimbabwe Government did not “reform the colonial-era Regional Town and Country Planning Act or the Housing Standard Act. This effectively placed local authorities in an impossible situation as these Acts require municipalities to service plots with infrastructure prior to land allocation for self-help building. It further requires local municipalities to ensure strict compliance with minimum standards prior to authorizing occupation. The norms and standards contained in these Acts, which were applied by the colonial regime as instruments of apartheid, include individual connection to water supply and water-borne sewage for high-density low-income neighbourhoods, previously known as African Townships. Water-borne sewer systems, which are particularly costly to build and to maintain, are not only unrealistic in the present economic circumstances, but are not required of medium and low density areas occupied by middle and high-income segments of the population which are authorized to use on-site sanitation and septic tanks. Similarly, the prevailing building codes and standards are also unrealistic and exceed standards currently used in several developed countries”. SARPN (2005, 25)

fact the land use of the existing (white) community of small holdings was not necessarily appropriate to the bio zone and yet the (black) community wished to invest in *sustainable co-operative agriculture*.

It is important to note, however, that the rapid and relatively smooth transformation of South Africa over the past ten years has been nothing short of miraculous. The relatively conflict free, transformative change bears witness to a well negotiated, albeit contested, settlement together with a committed and intensive programme to reconstruct South African society. This should not be underestimated in tracing the real rationalities that became highlighted during the ‘healing’ processes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission amongst a range of other ‘outing’ of the multiple rationalities in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s.

Contradictions in a Globally Competitive City

The priorities of the planning system at the present time in South Africa remains one of reconstruction – however this often contradicts with principles of economic growth. A good example of this contradiction is the city positioning Johannesburg as a “World Class African City”. There have been many outspoken critics of this notion, firstly critiquing the essentialising of the notion of ‘African cities’, secondly, that this global competition is fundamentally flawed (and sounds very similar to the goals of any other city is trying to achieve) and thirdly and possibly most critically is what this means for the urban poor, where there are large areas of inner city regeneration which some critics suggest is flawed as it marginalises the poor and fundamentally contradicts social justice.

Histories of Traditionalism

In Nigeria, in the city of Zaria or in the villages of Molepolole or Serowe in Botswana for example, where there has been a traditional system of land use, can there be the meshing of a ‘democratic’ system of planning while ensuring the implementation of some basic services? What of people’s everyday experience of spending all day fetching water for the household due to inherent problems of service delivery. How do we construct sustainability into these multiple rationalities? How do we explore the implications of such phenomena?

When attempting to appreciate the everyday life experiences of say a back yard shack dweller in Alexandra north east of Johannesburg (and surrounded by some of Africa's wealthiest real estate), and the household decision to locate in absolute squalor, or to locate on the banks of the Jukskei River with threat of flooding, cholera and typhoid, does the city have any option but to remove the informal settlements, but why move people 40 km away? All of these complicate the conundrum of legislation and policy and the employment of an educational framework that fails to account for the *Realrationalität*.

As Yiftachel states (1998) "Most accounts of planning neglect to explain its frequent applications for purpose of (deliberate) social control, as expressed in the oppression of peripheral groups". In the context of many parts of Africa, as in parts of Latin America, Asia and Palestine, as possibly was the case in New Orleans the peripheral groups form the vast majority of the population. To employ universal notions of sustainability, of social and environmental justice and economic efficiency without understanding power will lead to (at best) ineffectual legislation or (at worst) oppressive rules which will merely exacerbate the problems.

The 'Public Good'

"Planning's theoretical and professional discourse has therefore tended to concentrate on its capacity to contribute to the attainment of well-established societal goals, such as residential amenity, economic efficiency, social equity, or environmental sustainability. Far less attention has been devoted to a regressive aspect of planning: its ability to advance goals of an opposite nature, such as social oppression, economic retardation, male domination or ethnic marginalisation". Yiftachel 2; 1998.

Planning legislation and policy have in most cases reacted to some crises – in the case of South Africa and no doubt in many other instances these have been a result of political crisis – often using planning tools to reconstruct space (Mabin and Smit, 1997) and inevitably from a sense planning as an idea of value (Campbell H 2002) of ensuring 'public good'.

Often planning policies and planning education alike are 30 years old, based on a set of colonial notions of *public good* mirrored by a context of informality, where social

networks are stronger than the local authority implying difficulty in developing a set of negotiated, mediated consensus based on some form of rationality. This does not however mean that we can throw up our hands and ‘give up’ – rather there is a need to meet the challenges, this happens through struggle, through a thorough understanding of the differing rationalities and knowing that no matter what the outcome *power* is at play.

Institutional Demands

Similarly in constructing planning curricula in the context of South Africa (and no doubt elsewhere) given a very diverse student demographic profile there is an interesting set of challenges which are at once before us. Many years ago for example I came upon a student who was most disturbed that the set of regulations he had to learn insisted that corrugated iron was for roofs when in fact his experience of corrugated iron was that entire houses were built of this versatile material. While issues of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and urban-rural background, and first generation academic, language are difficulties in all circumstances, these are often a matter of scale. In the South African institution for example it is not unusual for a student to have come from a rural background where the first introduction to a city is on arrival to University where English is not the first language where commonly held beliefs are foreign. Within this context narratives of close relatives/ communities/ families suffering the effects of HIV and Aids are not uncommon. Teaching approaches cannot make any assumptions and it has been an ongoing ideological battle in our institutions of balancing teaching in a context of overcoming the long history of racist oppression and cultural hegemonies. How then does one begin to develop a curriculum which will relate to the students life experiences. Notions of ‘remedial’ teaching continue to permeate some of the conservative teaching staff, while others draw from teaching and learning techniques which attempts to provide mutual respect, of cultural inclusion of constructing curriculum around student’s life experiences.

Bringing this back to the core of this paper the question is how do we, as educators, construct an educational programme that can allow for the various social meanings given to ‘sustainability’.

And, mirrored against this are the ongoing demands being made to ensure student throughput as the institution becomes more pressured by the state. The planning institutions on the other hand are also making demands, sometimes of a different nature – wanting to have ‘instant’ planners who are able to undertake a vast range of planning skills such as EIA’s rezoning and be experts at the current policies while our aim often is to ensure broad and critical thinkers and generalist planners, not experts at current central pieces of legislation such as Integrated Development Plans (IDP’s).

Multiple rationalities in the form of institutional constraints, equity targets, capacity of staff in the institution, the inability to produce knowledge in a context of scarce resources and national priorities are all informing the way in which we construct, change, adapt, and restructure our teaching.

The ongoing pandemic of HIV/Aids, relentless environmental degradation, increased distance between the rich and poor, global competition (often in conflict with more welfarist approaches such as reconstruction and development), a housing backlog exacerbated by rapid urbanisation, “the context within which planning graduates ... have to operate is significantly different from resource rich countries” Diaw K, Nnkya T J, Watson V (2001)

While it is often assumed that all of these aspects can be negotiated, the starting points, the embedded cultural differences and the burdens of an oppressive past negate easy lists of deliberative communication:

“Habermas also continues to disregard the particular problems relating to identity and cultural divisions as well as the nondiscursive ways of safeguarding reason that are being developed by so-called minority groups and new social movements”. Richardson and Flyvbjerg (2002)

“Within this context, the challenges faced by planners are significantly different from before. One of the most important is that of operating within a system of local government which has changed its role from administration and control to development and (in theory at least) to taking forward development issues in partnership with NGO’s and with communities which may not be well organised ... contexts in which divisions run deep” (Watson).

Within the past decade, it has been interesting to observe the many directions in which the concept of ‘planning’ and the construction of planning curricula have developed in South Africa to deal with these issues – this will be documented in another paper which I am in the process of preparing. Some interesting aspects however can be summarised as follows:

- Restructuring of Higher Education Institutions has led to Planning programmes sometimes sitting in odd combinations with Engineering, Architecture and in one case a school of Public Management and Planning (with an exceptionally strong Environmental management focus)
- Most Undergraduate programmes are generalist in nature and some schools have responded to the market and societal forces of having a specialist stream within a generalist programme
- There is a continued add on of environmental sustainability
- New legislation is going to necessitate planners involvement, knowledge and skills in the direction of sustainability

This section has highlighted the multiple rationalities, permeated with tensions of the realities of the context. The Realrationalität of the concerns of planning in the South African context, the myriads of life experiences and the different interpretations of the realities illuminate the need to be cautious of developing curricula which fails to take into account the colonial history, oppressive planning legislation traditional values, notions of the public good, the institutional demands and the forces impinging on peoples everyday lives.

Following on from this the next section aims to show that in a similar vein the development of curricula and in this case the development of curricula of planning education for environmental sustainability is permeated with multiple rationalities – complicated by diversity, marginality, demands of the state, the institution, the world of work and inappropriate curricula.

Some Contemporary Strands in Critical Pedagogic Theory and Practice.

“Critical pedagogy asks how and why knowledge gets constructed the way it does, and how and why some constructions of reality are legitimated and celebrated by the dominant culture

while others clearly are not. Critical pedagogy asks how our everyday commonsense understandings – our social constructions or ‘subjectivities’- get produced and lived out. In other words, what are the *social functions* of knowledge” McLaren P (2003, 72).

Similarly there are many authors who have written about difference and critical pedagogy (Trinh T Min ha, bell hooks, Torres, Giroux). Gore takes further the debates around issues of ‘feminist pedagogy’ which delves into the meanings given to *power* and in particular *empowerment*.

Within a very similar framework to that of applications of *the everyday, post-colonial theory and Realrationalität* in Planning Theory, these philosophical trends have become embedded in theories around the construction of knowledge. The works of McLaren and Giroux are particularly useful, and without repeating the frameworks or lenses discussed above in relation to Planning, suffice to say that the same frameworks or lenses can be applied to the epistemology of knowledge.

McLaren for example, in adopting the Habermasian concept of *emancipatory knowledge* states that “emancipatory knowledge helps us to understand how social relationships are distorted and manipulated by relations of power and privilege”. While the theory does continue with a communicative approach (rather than *Realrationalität*) it does have resonance with the developments in Planning Theory and in particular with understanding how power plays out in the construction of knowledge. In short then some of the issues that need to be considered in the construction and production of planning education include:

Issues of New Vocationalism, State Intervention and Critical Pedagogy

The issues pertinent here is how knowledge is produced for whom, by whom? Skinner (1999) in adopting a Marxist argument to some extent argues that “nothing can stand in the way of the ideology of the marketplace and the educational policies and approaches [which] are being put in place to support it”. Certainly in South Africa the rate of neo liberalist policies support this tendency. Skinner goes on to argue that the nature of the new cross field outcomes (in South Africa – and from my observations

this is certainly the case elsewhere) is an extraordinary ambivalence between serving the interests of commerce and government. She states that “to identify and solve problems using critical and creative thinking’ may involve (depending on your point of view) either an active commitment to solving the problems of society or competence in dealing with commercial problems” Skinner (1999). Without elaborating here, it would appear that there are multiple rationalities at play here – with, in the case of professional planning programmes, a further value interest in the form of the Planning Councils/ Institutes.

Hague, in his critiques of Planning Education in the United Kingdom is also concerned with issues of conflict and power in Planning Education. He has indicated how it is not surprising that “[the] universities (who now faced financial penalties from government if they failed to reach their target levels of entry) also created other new courses in fields deemed to be in consumer demand – e.g. In the environment area ... [S]ome of these – especially the environment ones were targeting the same pool of applicants from which undergraduate planning courses were recruiting” Hague C, (2002, 12). There are a number of issues here that should alert us in terms of constructing environmental sustainability programmes (whether as part of planning programmes or not). Most obviously is that of whose interests are being served in the rolling out of programmes in a market driven political economy.

In relation to trends toward New Vocationalism, Marshall states that “if Foucault is correct, what are needed in response to neo-liberalism (and this new vocationalism) is increased vigilance, and an increased imagination and inventiveness, for there is a complex problem space brought into play by such neo-liberal reforms. We need at least, some form of critical social theory and some definition of critical theory which is not narrowly exclusive”. (J D Marshall, 1997, 8)

The challenges for constructing planning/ sustainability programmes thus requires critical enquiry into who is producing the programme, for what purpose and in whose interest? Different interests need to be made real.

Diversity, Multiculturalism and Equal Opportunity

Here there needs to be critical engagement in understanding the implications of diversity, race, class, gender, sexuality, language, ethnicity, rural/ urban, religion and issues around marginalised grouping⁷.

It is important however, to understand diversity from a particular stance – in quoting from Trin T Min-ha, McLaren states that “to make a claim for multiculturalism is not “in the words of Trinh T. Minh-ha (1991) ‘to suggest the juxtaposition of several cultures whose frontiers remain intact, nor is it to subscribe to a bland melting pot type of attitude that would level all differences. [The struggle for a multicultural society] lies instead, in the intercultural acceptance of risks, unexpected detours, and complexities of relation between break and closure” (McLaren 1994, 206).

I have argued that in South Africa particularly innovative interventions have been made in terms of overcoming the legacies of apartheid education and in dealing with diversity “This issue of diversity of learners entering the University is compounded by the legacy of apartheid education. Initiative in dealing with this has promoted a myriad of interpretations and innovative responses in teaching and learning strategies.

⁷ I was fortunate in attending a Centre for Education in the Built Environment Special Interest Group CEBE (SIG) workshop at Cardiff University in 2003 where I met and interviewed Dory Reeves who is both a practitioner and academic. Together with other academics such as Huw Thomas they have explored Equal Opportunity (EO) in Built Environment practice and education. They are especially concerned with issues of Built Environment curriculum that overcomes oppression. Dr Reeves put forward the following interesting contribution as part of developing consciousness in EO together in an interview with a colleague.

- Establish clear terms of reference which ensure that diversity is understood as a means of achieving equality.
- Ensure that there is commitment from the top of the organisation and the commitment is public and vociferous.
- Ensure that it is clear who is accountable for diversity and equality.
- Work on achieving ownership of the issue and recognise that this may necessitate bringing in an outside consultant to facilitate change.
- Talk the issue through with colleagues and address any concerns they may have
- Provide effective training not just information. Encourage people to look at the value base of their practice and to see things differently.
- Help people think through what they can do at a team level in terms of how their work contributes to the promotion of equality through the diversity approach.
- Make equality visible in the mainstreaming agenda.
- Identify how policy is contributing to the promotion of equality. Reeves (2004,24)

Issues such as Educational background, cultural assumptions, linguistic competence, political experience... (Dison and Rule 1996, 83) are some of the concerns which are being addressed in a range of disciplines, within a range of institutions, both within and outside of the mainstream teaching curricula” (Klein G 1997).

The main point here is that the curriculum needs to incorporate a deep understanding of difference if we are to develop more appropriate programmes. There is a need to construct programmes around students own life experiences and to employ alternative teaching methods and principles such as constructivist⁸ pedagogic practice and/or Problem Based Learning⁹ amongst other innovative ideas in the discourse of ‘academic development’.

Post Colonialism, Neo Colonial Curricula and Agency from the ‘South’

“Under colonialism, most African countries inherited not only urban and regional planning systems from their colonial masters, but planning education systems as well” (Watson, 13). Curricula development in this context is an area of intense debate around issues of: how knowledge is produced, who is producing the knowledge, how is the knowledge that is being produced in contexts such as ours being relayed to the world, and how do we intensify our agency within these critical debates. This is currently driving some initial forces of developing networks and knowledge sharing amongst colleagues in other parts of Africa and in Brazil.

In developing oppositional rationalities Skinner questions whether or not “education can be made to promote the democratic transformation of society, or whether it can only be functional for existing systems” – Modernist knowledge production, she argues, has been based on providing power structures to maintain the status quo – that education has a political agenda which is based on a positivistic epistemology with teaching methods that are behaviouristic “a known stimulus will provide a desired

⁸ Drawing from the works of Vygotsky, s ‘social constructivist theory’, the theories range from ideas of learners actively constructing knowledge in attempts to make sense of their world to processes of interpretation that lead to understanding or knowledge (Coburn W W)

⁹ Problem based learning employs, amongst other tools the ‘utilisation of real world problems’

learning objective within clearly understood parameters of knowledge”. In response to this she argues for critical enquiry into the construction of education. Skinner J (1999).

Harrison has pointed to a growth in theorists from the ‘south’ and has argued that this is an exciting development that will in itself challenge the production of knowledge and its’ relevance for us. “We are still looking through the glass dimly but perhaps for the first time planning academics in South Africa are confronting the context of our cities, within a framework that engages with African realities. The very recent work of Vanessa Watson on ‘the usefulness of normative planning theories in Africa’ and ‘interpretations of place and territory in African cities’, and Mark Oranje’s work on ‘African identity and planning’ is taking planners closer to a awareness of what it might mean to be a planner in African cities. I would also like to mention the important ongoing work and influence of individuals including Richard Tomlinson, Alan Mabin, and Lindsay Bremner ... which is helping us interpret the city in different ways, and is challenging many of the modernist assumptions upon which urban planning has been based. I don’t think that I am too optimistic in my hope that we are on the verge of a conceptual breakthrough, which will provoke creative new planning responses. It is a conceptual breakthrough that will take us ‘to the edge of reason’ (Harrison P 2002).

In conclusion then the importance of ‘south’ agency together with an understanding of the dynamics of diversity linked to critical thinking about the power of state, capital and interest groups need to draw out the conflicting rationalities inherent in the construction of planning / sustainability programmes.

Can Realrationalitat Provide Normative Proposals for Planning and Sustainability in Our Curriculum?

The short answer is no. However, I would argue that what the frame of *Realrationalität* provides us with is an awareness of the rationalities at play and that there will always be issues of power and that this is not in itself good or bad.

My argument goes further – that, as an analytical tool, *Realrationalität* provides us with a constant critical awareness – a way to look differently at how curricula is constructed, how is it constructed for whom by whom and for what purpose. Some of the key issues to emerge from this paper are that when developing sustainability in planning education we need to take a view from critical pedagogy and difference. We need to understand context, the everyday and the multiple rationalities at work. We need to question the discourse of ‘sustainability’ as we need to question the discourse of ‘planning’.

We need to understand the institutions within which we operate and the communities they ‘serve’. We need to question how the power of ‘planning sustainability’ is constructed and how as educators and as practitioners we are able to meet the imperatives of planning that contributes to the development of more equitable and sustainable settlements within the context of multiple rationalities, practical needs and critical pedagogic enquiry.

We need to reflect on the potential of the ‘dark side’ to envelope planning education: to allow it to serve interests of particular ideology, serving narrow interests in a short sighted immediate and reactionary manner. There needs to be reflexive and contextualised understandings of the ways in which Environmental Education is taught – different lenses of say postcolonial theory, the everyday and multiple rationalities that emerge from these. We need to deconstruct “the imbedded nature of social control in the very emergence, institutionalisation and practice of urban and regional planning” Yiftachel 9; 1998

We will be forced in time to develop intellectual frameworks that emerge from the south and which address the realities of the south. Realrationalität which dominates

'real world' and planning politics will require constant questioning around previously accepted universals. Flyvbjerg (2000)

According to Flyvbjerg, "for Foucault the "political task" is to criticize the workings of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent: to criticize them in such a manner that the political violence which has always been exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them" from Flyvbjerg after Chomsky and Foucault "human nature: Justice versus power". In relation to sustainability in planning education one cannot assume that sustainability is neutral and/ or independent. Indeed it is in itself embedded in power within a web of Realrationalität.

'...The responsibility of planning analysts is *not* to work toward the possibility of "fully open communications". It is to work instead toward the correction of *needless* distortions, some systematic and some not, that disable, mystify, distract and mislead others: to work towards a political democratisation of daily communications' (Forester 1989, 21).

In conclusion there is a growing field of planning theorists and practitioners from the south who are developing and engaging with the real rationalities and real politics. To reiterate, what this perspective offers is a contribution to the debate and an awareness of the Realrationalität in the construction of sustainability in planning education. This exciting development will continue to inform the way/s in which sustainable planning enters and mediates planning curricula at the different institutions.

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