Planning Theory

This doctoral course will focus, and critically examine, some of the major strands within planning theory. It consists of five literature seminars, one open guest lecture and a concluding text seminar. The course starts with an introduction to the genealogy of planning theory, focusing on how its development can be understood as linked to different knowledge traditions. The following four seminars will focus some of these knowledge traditions and how they can be used to analyse current changes in both planning theory and practice. Building on an extensive literature the course will address questions such as: What constitutes a relational perspective of space and place? And what are the consequences of such geographies? We then move on to examine current political rationalities. How can the shift in governing from strong welfare states to a more neo-liberal governing be understood? What role does the planning professional play in such a shift? Having outlined this relation we move on to explore the economic perspectives implied by such a shift. What are the implications of current economic objectives for planning? And for democracy? Finally, we turn our focus towards radical alternatives. How do planning deal with new multiple publics? And what are the implications of the above mentioned and on-going changes for the goals of planning? These, and other questions, will be critically examined during the course.

6/9 Course Introduction: The genealogy of planning theory
Assistant professor Maria Håkansson

26/9 The relational geographies of urban planning and regional development
Assistant professor Jonathan Metzger

18/10 Power and politics in planning theory and practice
Assistant professor Kristina Grange

8/11 Planning theory – economic and public policy perspectives
Professor Folke Snickars

Date to be confirmed, Open guest lecture
Professor Jean Hillier

29/11 Citizens, insurgency and the goals of planning
Assistant professor Karin Bradley

20/12 Final text seminar
Karin Bradley, Kristina Grange, Maria Håkansson, Jonathan Metzger, Folke Snickars
The genealogy of planning theory, and planning practice, are closely intertwined with the notion of knowledge. Knowledge, though in different forms, is (often) presupposed to guide action and secure outcomes of planning. Accordingly, planning research had been focusing on producing knowledge for planning, i.e. knowledge to base planning activities on, but also knowledge about planning, i.e. the preconditions for planning practice, including the relation to assumptions of knowledge and knowledge-use. The latter can be as well more or less evaluations of projects, as made in a critical, reflexive tradition. The question of what constitutes relevant or valid knowledge in planning situations can thus be seen as a contested subject. The generation of a knowledge base, used as a foundation and also legitimization for planning practice, is therefore always a complex process in which competing interest often attempt to influence the framing of what is to be considered relevant and applicable knowledge in relation to a specific situation or planning episode, and further how this knowledge is to be interpreted and translated into action.

The development in planning theory and the different stands in the theoretical field are accordingly also linked to different knowledge traditions. We can find a variety of philosophical and ideological, practice oriented and purely theoretical starting points and development lines in the development of the theoretical field. As planning theory grasp or touched upon many scientific disciplines, sometimes mixed and combined, an orientation in the genealogy becomes important to understand the own position as researcher.

Set-up and preparations for the first and last seminar
This first seminar will introduce the course and all practicalities. Then we move on to a brief overview of the planning theory field, introducing a question to be prepared for the last seminar in the course: your own typology. In the readings for this seminar, several different typologies can be found, but represent a few out of many. Some of the many are related to the object of planning, others relate to methods and so on, but here we focus on typologies of traditions of thought. In the article by Allmendinger, you can see how he place himself into the (a specific) field. The literature for this seminar is only the first station in your journey, so throughout the course, reflect on how you, at this stage of your PhD-project, relates your work to the respective traditions and fields discussed. In the final hand-in (December), you are expected to, in text and diagram, show your position as you perceive it. That also means that you should include other traditions you might base your work on. It is for example possible to illustrate by central writers, disciplines and so on. Reflect on the background of traditions, how well different thinkers/theories you are inspired by can be combined due to their position and so on. You will get specific preparations to each seminar, relating to each specific theme, so this is to be seen as the overarching question to keep in mind all along the course.

Seminar Assignment
The discussion at this first seminar, and thereby your preparation, will be directed towards the concept of knowledge in planning. You are supposed to write a 3-4 pages
reflection, anchored in the readings, on how knowledge is discussed and related to action in the texts. Can you find divergences or are there a consistent tradition represented in this selection? What are the reasons for discussing knowledge, and knowledge action, for the authors? What kind of arguments and theoretical framework(s) are used to underpin the discussions? How can the texts be related to planning practice? How does the reading relate to your own research? For this first seminar, you are not expected to read text by other students in beforehand, but are welcome to do so. The organising of the seminar will be made in an activating mode.

**Literature (chronological order)**

- Rydin, Y (2007) Re-Examining the Role of Knowledge within Planning Theory *Planning Theory* 2007; 6;52

**26/9, 13.00-17.00**

**The relational geographies of urban planning and regional development**

Room 4055, Drottning Kristinas väg 30, KTH

*Seminar leader: Assistant professor Jonathan Metzger*

*email jonathan.metzger@abe.kth.se*

A fundamental difference between urban/regional/’spatial’ planning and other genres of policy intervention and public management is the incessant focus on the ‘where of things’ – the effect of spatial localizations, patterns and relations – i.e.: geography. Contemporary developments in the discipline of human geography challenge traditional Euclidean perceptions of space and particularly the exclusive relevance of hierarchically ordered formalized state spatialities. Instead, a much ‘messier’ spatial world is conceptualized, composed not only of neatly ordered or nested ‘Russian Doll’-type of recognized spatialities, but also consisting of partially overlapping networks of more or less ‘fuzzy’ and ‘soft’ spaces of various inclinations and natures (social, natural, political, cultural, economic, etc.). What consequences does such a ‘relational’ perspective of space and place imply for how we perceive the challenges, possibilities and challenges of planning project and the craft of planning?

_Some of the questions that will be discussed in the seminar are:_

1) How can we conceptualize ‘spaces’ and ‘places’? Why is this an important question for planning?
2) Which are some of the taken-for-granted common-sense assumptions about space and place that dominate contemporary planning practice and research?
3) How do the ‘material’ and ‘discursive’ dimensions of space and spatiality interplay?
4) How does planning contribute to the development of spatialities?
5) How do planners work with ‘scales’ and ‘networks’ in their practices?

Seminar assignment
Using the texts below, reflect upon the spatialities and spatial(izing) practices involved in your own research topic, staying attentive to both ‘material’ and ‘discursive’ aspects/practices – and particularly the interplay between material/discursive in the enactment of spatialities. Further, also reflect upon how your own research practices may – wittingly or unwittingly – enforce and/or challenge certain enactments of space and spatiality. Hand in 3-4 pages 1,5 spaced, times new roman 12 p. before the seminar.

Literature

18/10, 13.00-17.00
Power and politics in planning theory and practice
Room 4055, Drottning Kristinas väg 30, KTH
Seminar leader: Assistant professor Kristina Grange
email kristina.grange@abe.kth.se

A shift in governing modes, often described as a shift from governing through a strong welfare state to more neo-liberal governing, is increasingly leading to new conditions for planning. This seminar focus on how such a shift can be understood, and what consequences can be seen for planning as well as for planners. It does this firstly through a theoretical analysis of what constitute and distinguish “the political” from “politics”. Secondly it will unravel some of the rationalities and techniques for governing subjects through “self-governing” and “at a distance”. The increasing use of mechanisms of audit, through goals, targets, measurements, in combination with the implementation of webs of accountability and authority, all contribute to make the actions and judgment of professional agents governable. Such mechanisms are often presented as “techniques for restoring trust”, although what they implicitly presuppose is “a culture of mistrust”. Finally, the seminar will focus on different examples of how
power and politics play out in planning practice today. In order to contribute to the third section, each participant will prepare and at the seminar present an assignment analysing power and politics in their research topic.

Questions that will be discussed in the seminar are:
1) How can ‘the political’, on the one hand, and ‘politics’, on the other, be conceptualized?
2) What characterizes current changes in modes of governing?
3) Which are the mechanisms for governing ‘at a distance’?
4) What role does the professional play in such a shift?
5) What implications does the above have for planning?

Seminar assignment
Read the literature. Analyse, with the help of the questions identified above, how power and politics play out in your own research topic. Hand in a draft, 3-4 pages, before the seminar.

Literature

8/11, 13.00-17.00
Planning Theory - Economic and Public Policy Perspectives
Room 4055, Drottning Kristinas väg 30, KTH
Seminar leader: Professor Folke Snickars
email folke@infra.kth.se, mobile 070-9107909

The aim of the seminar is to provide an introduction to planning theory, in particular dwelling on the economic and public policy perspectives. At the end of the seminar students will have knowledge about the basic concepts of planning as they are formulated in different academic disciplines. They will know the major theoretical contributions in economics, political science, futures studies, strategic corporate planning, and of course spatial planning. They will have knowledge about the planning theory contributions to contemporary planning issues at different spatial levels. Particular attention will be given to the metropolitan level.

The seminar will be based on a recent research paper developing a planning theory for the knowledge economy written by Folke Snickars. Excerpts from three other texts also belong to the reading materials. In Hans Westlund’s book the overview of planning perspectives on social capital which is the most important. Jonathan Gruber gives a modern overview of the field of public policies versus market solutions. The text by Ed Glaeser focuses the attention on the future of the metropolitan regions. It is intended to work as an inspiration for the planning theoretic discussion in the seminar.
Seminar assignment

In preparation for the seminar the whole or parts of the books and research papers will be studied. Participants are to write down reflections in conjunction with three to five questions related to the texts. The reflective texts should comprise between 3-4 pages with normal line spacing. The texts will contain reflections on the texts rather than reviews on the contents. It is possible but not necessary to provide the reflections in relation to the topic of the thesis work.

Literature


Discussion questions

At the seminar one person per question will be asked to provide an introduction. All participants should participate in the ensuing discussion. They should have studied the reflections of the other participants before the seminar. To pass this element of the course written text plus seminar participation is demanded. In case of absence from the seminar five questions need to be treated to pass this course element.

*Question 1:* A number of theoretical arguments for the need for planning perspectives on public policy in general and economic policy in particular can be put forward. Which of them are most relevant today given globalization, technological change, and urbanization?

*Question 2:* We have witnessed the fall of the planned economy – is this observation really valid? How could the unexpected events in the global economy have been forecasted via theoretical analysis? What relevance does this analysis have for global governance issues?

*Question 3:* The Hans Westlund book has a theoretical analysis of the economic system and economic planning with a scientific base. Is his model applicable in a market economy? What happens to his analysis a knowledge producing society?

*Question 4:* My own basic scheme of planning theory was not developed with regional planning in mind but rather for planning activity at large. What are the challenges to apply the scheme to regional planning? Note the trend towards more power to the regions in Europe.

*Question 5:* What relevance can the Jonathan Gruber text have for the planning questions at the regional level? What is the connection between that text and the general theoretical analysis? Note that Jonathan Gruber has become a leading academic in the field of health care – an important part of planning and policy in the aging society.

29/11, 13.00-17.00

Citizens, insurgency and the goals of planning

Room 4055, Drottning Kristinas väg 30, KTH

Seminar leader: Assistant professor Karin Bradley

email: karin.bradley@abe.kth.se
The goals of planning have traditionally been formulated in terms of “serving the public interest” and “securing good and equal living conditions for all”, i.e. acting as a counterweight to market forces and the interests of specific (strong) groups. However, given the cultural and socioeconomic diversification of many cities and regions, it has become difficult to define and strive for a singular public interest; rather planning must deal with multiple publics. It has also been acknowledged that planning needs to account for the interests of future generations as well as non-human beings. To complicate it further, it has also been claimed that planning should not be a counterweight to the market forces, but rather support the interests of the market, and if not, the argument goes, the city will lose out in the global economic competition. This means that contemporary planning practice is facing heterogeneous and conflicting claims regarding whom planning should be for and what the goals ought to be.

During the heydays of post-war planning, the planning bureaucracy had a certain authority to it and could get major plans through rather swiftly. However today planners face more unruly citizens – plans often get rejected, there are protests using social, economic and/or environmental arguments, alternative proposals are formulated by well-organized groups whilst other societal groups remain disengaged, coupled with a growing distrust of the planning apparatus as such. The focus of this seminar is to discuss how planning practice and theory is dealing with these multiple publics and claims, outright insurgency as well as more discrete tactics.

**Seminar assignment**

Using the texts below analyse what role citizen support and contestations play in your own research topic. Whose interests are being served in the cases you study? What are the public reactions? Or lack of reactions? How might this be rethought, criticised or developed in light of the insurgent planning theory of Friedmann, Sandercock, Davidoff or Hou? Hand in a text of 3-4 pages before the seminar.

**Literature**


**Course administration and registration**

To apply for the course you hand in a written assignment (maximum one page), in which you describe why you want to take the course, and in what way it can contribute to developing your research. Submit your paper to: Kristina Grange, grange@kth.se, no later than 2012-08-01. Maximum number of accepted PhD students is 16. Students from Urban and Regional Studies at KTH will have priority.

Kristina Grange  
Director of Doctoral Studies  
Urban and Regional Studies, KTH, SE-100 44 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 790 92 41, Email: grange@kth.se