SHARED AND LEARNT LESSONS FROM LISBON

Designing the city and the territory from an Urbanistic viewpoint

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Synopsis

The article addresses a systematised outlook from previous experiences in teaching syllabus and programs, research, active integration with theory and practice, especially at the Faculty of Architecture [Technical] University of Lisbon, within the 3 Cycles of the EU Bologna Agreement. The roles of Education, Research and Practice are to be referred in the wider context of a Contemporary Culture of the City.

1. Introduction

Unexpectedly enough, spatial planning does not merely stand for *expanding* the urban onto a *passive* landscape anymore. Did it ever? Or was humanity deterministically daydreaming of it, while the tentacles of *reality* were already taking over the actual urbanization?

Although functional changes start emerging since the 70's, the last decade has proven that changes are becoming progressively faster and calling for innovative approaches, that is to say, in recouping the design from the fabrics of the *terræ* themselves; *Some authors identify these options in a three-tiered approach on* how the synaptic and conjunctive fabric that forms the basis of the current City, evolves (for instance, seminal work by Paola Viganò at the Venice School: doctoral courses by design, pivotal design and planning such as greater Paris, with Secchi and Studio 09, and theoretical developments in several references; other references could be Waldheim at the Harvard University or Joan Busquets at the Polytechnic School of Catalonia/Barcelona and Harvard University and Llop, also at Barcelona).

In an attempt to go beyond the frontiers of Planning, the approach seeks to explore the condition of these days' cities – seen as a paradoxical state of *in-betweenness* both in the territories of practice and the ones of knowledge.

These concerns have raised the need to clarify realities holding different qualities - from urban and infrastructural, from rural to what is understood as *natural* - and the vital skills to intervene accordingly in the best local interest. At the same time, societal dynamics, economic trends, job and production relocation have opened - if not enforced - questions which are often answered very differently, depending on the geographic area and, as such, on backgrounds and culture.

The article stems from a preliminary systematisation outlook from previous experiences in:

— Urban design and planning studios within the general layout of teaching programmes
— Frontier and applied research as ways of reasoning reality and look for alternative answers and
— Integration of education activities with present-day topics both in theory and practice.

While further development would still be needed, the paper seeks to explore these topics by drawing a three folded approach:

1. Contextual approaches from a cultural perspective – Planning Cultures in Europe and the role of Urbanism;
2. The field of urban design and planning education - Oriented didactics and learning strategies;
3. Education, Research and Practice - Contributing to interconnected activities in a cross-border, trans-disciplinary line; recent experiences.

The last topic will be developed in its own presentation (debate at the ISOCARP Forum of Education), thus only sketched in the concluding part of the paper, as *an open agenda* for discussion.

2. Contextual approaches from a cultural perspective

The word *Urbanismo* was born from a Spanish neologism *urbanización*, rooted in the Latin etymon *urbs,* when Cerda faces the need to invent new words to name urban phenomena, while he was designing the *Eixample* Plan for Barcelona. His theory, in 1867, would give rise to a new professional field, expressing a specific culture of building cities, with resort to an architectural lexicon, much attached to the places themselves. It was a major contribution to a paradigmatic epistemology of the city, persistent until these days in the neo-Latin speaking countries.

In the USA, *metropolitan* is the expression and aim of the Urbanism itself. And of course the core of the *City Beautiful theory*, much in line with the English common Law system, the referent to the Anglo-Saxon way of "building" cities. Only, cities would also become the most symbolic expression of the power of men, by inventing power infrastructures and machines, sky defying buildings (Chicago or New York), yet designing them as classical as possible.

Still, *Urban Design* (coined by Abercrombie and Forshaw, cfr. Shane, 2011: 9) would only appear as an autonomous professional activity after WWII, in order to fulfil the need to rebuild housing and to deal with the "car" effects on the urban. After previous attempts, Abercrombie would articulate different levels of planning, and finally implement the first urban sprawl containment tool: the green belt, on grounds made public by the force of law (1945).

Modern would then become a sort of urban Esperanto, by promoting functionalism, sometimes indifferent to local singularities and cultures. In the urgency of the post war, *modern* becomes *normal* – an easy way to build fast commuting cities – suburbs became suburbia, a mere stereotype of once beautiful urban ideals. Sometimes a caricature of what city and citizenship should mean. After WW II and in a period marked by successive crises, the end of the *Cold War*, Cartesian and Rationalist as fundaments in the Modern unity would be inevitably discarded. From the 70's onwards, the Post-"something" starts leading: post-Industrial (D. Bell, 1967), Post City Age (Melwin Webber, 1967), *Posturbain* (Françoise Choay, 1970), Post-modern condition (Lyotard and Harvey), amongst others.

Vattimo would state the acceptance of what is human, ephemeral, and erroneous. Jürgen Habermas would focus on communication, the public realm, and everyday life. The European political reconfiguration after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and its enlargement start introducing a new era, introducing a current conjuncture that put emphasis on:

— Neoliberal models, namely in the government of cities (ex: London)
— Regional separatisms leading to cultural differentiation (ex: Spain)
— Post-secularization exacerbation (ex: Islamic Spring from 2010, amongst others).

In Urbanism two main paths would unfold thereon:

— Post-industrial with concrete functional and configuration effects - regional
— The Postmodern aesthetics – sometimes too local.

Generally speaking, from there after *Urbanism* would mean the same as *Urban Design*. Urban and Regional Planning, conversely, would take over the leading role in the functional and pragmatic development of the urban, thereby unintentionally designing Cities,

with much loss to the public realm diverse qualities, the perception of citizenship and diversity, only recently recouped.

This would occur either from an entrepreneurial or real-estate position, in line with *strategic planning* ideas, or from a *sectorial perspective* (e.g. infrastructures), to where the welfare state would start retreating, mostly acting at the regional level.

Grounds and Backgrounds

One of the most recurrent questions in this broad field of work lies in the necessity - required by the dialectic between actors coming from different backgrounds (scientific fields and complementary actions) which share the same object – to bring some light into the differences between Urbanism and Urban Planning. While substantive, there is no final answer in sight, since different scientific viewpoints have been leading to different understanding and really is of course somewhat complex.

In this case, the arguments lay from the urban point of view. The other perspectives are unquestionably relevant; however this approach holds on to resources which are often dismissed, even if they are the roots of the urban development itself, such as place, people and their ways of living – their cultures and landscapes.

It is undeniable that human beings, their societal structures, the development of their activities from the most elementary (driving a car, for example) to most complex involving manifold activities and infrastructures (e.g. an airport) unfold in:

i) Space, with dimensions and characteristics materiality conditioned by their own conditions, and

ii) A time span, with its own rhythmic of events and circumstances.

In addition to dynamic contours and flows, difficult to determine in these terms, people live in an environment determined by their own physicality, as well as by the surrounding territory, designing cultural roots, the content of the landscapes, traditions and customs.

In the case of Southern Europe, the attachment to place is particularly important, thus, expressed in various forms. City is understood as a value of permanence that unsurprisingly extends to landscapes of various hues.

With this starting point, Urbanism stands for a particular way of seeing, analysing, designing the territory. Formal acknowledgment by the EU (European Communities, 1997)

follows, and is followed by several authors after, the idea of a broad and diverse systemic framework with regard to the city.

The need to connect the characters of the territory with the process of intervening in it, by resorting to specificities of the urban lexicon and how this impacts on planning was also examined in the research project *Super Cities - Sustainable Land Use Policies for Resilient Cities*, offered an opportunity to clarify some of these aspects in an integrated perspective (Pinho, P. et al 2011; Morgado, S.& Dias, L., 2013) based on documents of the European Union and renowned experts (et al, 2010, EC 1997 and 1999, among others).

After a documented study of metropolises in their urban, environmental and socio-economic contexts, planning systems were also analysed: i) the specificity of urbanism as Southern Europe, with the example of Portugal, ii) Sweden as distinctive in terms of inclusive, integrated approach, iii) economic and regional perspective in the Netherlands, and iv) management of land use as a strategic tool in Turkey. This study allowed understanding some relationships between policies and options contained in agreements signed within the European Union and their respective impacts when transferred into national legislation (Morgado & Dias, 2013)

This approach allowed as well for a contextualization of the role of Urbanism within the Faculty of Architecture of the [Technical] University of Lisbon and the pivotal role of *design* in the syllabus of the three cycles of Bologna Programs (Bachelor, Master, Doctor).

TIME FRAMEWORK ACCORDING TO PERIODS OF PLANNING

	Ideas for the Metropolis; Key topics	Main urban developments
Fordist | Industrial Models Modern City	**Physical Planning , Formal Urbanism: Modern and Garden City Concepts**	
	Urban Expansion Port and Railway development Green Belt Concept /Rural Transition Housing development Metropolitan centralities and land uses Key infrastructures and centralities	Sprawl
Post–fordist | Post-industrial Models Knowledge and creative based economies	**Strategic Planning, Plan-Process approach: urban requalification and regeneration concepts**	
	Metropolitan corridors and ecological network Urban requalification, heritage and sustainability	Sprawl, Shrinkage
ESDP (Postdam, 1999) Sustainability; Polycentricism; knowledge infrastructures	**Resilience-oriented planning concepts and policies: multi-level, flexibility, adjustment capacity [translation of our attributes into the planning tools each case raised]**	
Lisbon Strategy (Lisbon, 2009) Territorial Cohesion and Competitiveness	Metropolitan centralities and sustainability Metropolitan Ecological Network, Environmental and risk assessment, Shrinkage prevention – mixed land uses and higher connectivity and multimodal networks	Sprawl, Shrinkage, Polycentricism
Strategic Planning → Territorialism Integrated Systems Giving evidence to a territorial body; *Planning is Spatial* (Pain, 2010)		

Source: Morgado, S (2010)

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3. The field of urban design and planning education - Oriented didactics and learning strategies at the Faculty of Architecture, Lisbon

The Faculty of Architecture at the [Technical] University of Lisbon (further information available at www.fa.utl.pt), offers teaching programmes in line with its design-oriented structure based in Architecture, Urbanism and Design

Since 1992, this understanding would be translated into the creation of new degrees, in the fields of Urbanism and Design, as well as MSc Programmes that would later adapted be and further reviewed, following the *Bologna Agreement*. These actions represented an innovation in the context of national Architecture and Urbanism, allowing the school to become a pioneer in the pedagogical, scientific and scholarly in these areas, as well as in the schools' of architecture panorama, even internationally speaking.

Current programs have been updated, according to national legislation and accreditation procedures by the National Agency (A3ES) and renewed version are to be introduced already from September on, in 2013/14.

Teaching Programs in Urbanism

In the context of cultures, Urbanism is a relevant agent of the expression an expression of societies culturally advanced, in the change of the territory. Therefore it is recognized as a fundamental activity and constitutes a privileged object of study and in the history of contemporary thought.

Also for these reasons, it is relevant material for research and education in the most prestigious schools of architecture, particularly in Brazil, France, England, Spain and the United States of America, among others.

Under the scope of the *Bologna Agreement* and its due implementation, the Faculty of Architecture offers teaching programs in Urbanism in its 3 cycles.

Therefore Bachelor and Masters Degrees form a single body. At the end of the 1st cycle, students receive a bachelor's degree in architectural studies, with direct access to the 2nd cycle of expertise in the field of Urbanism.

Upon its completion they may apply to be granted the professional title, under the conditions established by the Architects National Professional body (Ordem dos Arquitectos

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Portugueses), since the syllabus of the programme is organized in accordance with European Directive 2005/36/EC

In its various profiles - in which Urbanism is included - the teaching of architecture, supposes a didactic founded in the conception of space and its various design dimensions: spatial, aesthetic, technological and cultural. In particular, the Master in Architecture with specialization in Urbanism is not an exception.to this. In the Architectural and Urban Design Studios, topics range from the metropolitan perspective to urban design and architecture, mixing relevant issues – public space, resilience, demographic challenges, and so forth - nationally and internationally speaking.

The education need to become an Architect, relies on the acquisition of a diverse set of skills, mainly established from an increasing complex vertical structure were Studios are fundamental. It is in this perspective that the group of Design Studios establishes trends and general characteristics, but also defines expertises in the fields of Architecture and Urbanism. Didactics result to experimental methods, encouraged by the development of monitored assignments, individually or in small groups, stimulated by the proximity to the teaching team.

Further to the professional level granted by the Master, an important effort towards an up-to-date life-long education was made. The Doctoral Program in Urbanism (which evolved from traditional individual supervised processes) and post-graduate programs, urbanism related, that may vary according to audiences and panoramas (e.g. Advanced Studies Programs in Portuguese Urban Culture or in Computation applied to Architecture, Urban Planning and Design, amongst others) have been introduced with very positive results so far.

Master of Architecture with specialization in Urbanism (1st + 2nd Cycles)

This profile has as main objectives a strong background in architecture with specific practical and theoretical focus on Urban and Architectural Design, as well as Urban Planning. Professionals with training in this area find opportunities ranging from architecture and urban planning offices and private companies to municipalities and other public bodies such as universities.

The 4th year curriculum is the preferred grade to resort to international programs and protocols of exchange (such as Erasmus, Smile, others), aspect that the implementation of the new Bologna cycles intensified. As such the 2nd cycle plays a key role, both in the progress of program and in its external visibility. The Design Studio courses play a

fundamental role in the coordination and liaison with the *corpus* of each semester, according to the character of each scientific field.

Recent experiences have shown some interest in deepening work started at an earlier stage (e.g. at the 4th grade), in order to complete the Final Thesis (which may assume the form of a detailed Design Assignment or a written research). Thus, the 5th grade is pivotal to the access to the profession after the successful assessment of the Final Assignment. This must show autonomy, ability to develop intellectual challenge, and skills to frame a complete and complex exercise in terms of maturity and scientific criticism.

Doctoral Program in Urbanism (3rd Cycle)

The University [Technical] of Lisbon, via Faculty of Architecture grants the degree of Doctor in Urbanism and holds the responsibility for implementing the program leading to it. The 6 semester's program corresponds to 180 ECTS.

The Doctoral Program in Urbanism would be approved in the Scientific Council in 2007 with a view to registration in DGES - Directorate General of Higher Education, which would occur in 2008, under the n. º R / B-AD -63/2008, in the context of the creation of the three Bologna cycles. Nowadays the Faculty offers 3 different Doctoral Programs in its main fields: Architecture, Urbanism and Design. The Faculty form also part of networked doctoral programs, with other institutions.

The Program in Urbanism, promotes the spatial and cultural qualities of the City, its reciprocity with the land uses, dynamics, and social groups. This allows providing training that is specific, complementary and not overlapping with other Doctoral Programs, in urban-related fields, such as Social Sciences or Engineering in other Faculties and Universities. Doctoral Programs with a specific dimension in the fields of social sciences, environment and infrastructure, widely recognized, follow different methodologies with the aim of representing and explaining various facets of the same object: the City nowadays.

4. **An open agenda**

Education, Research and Practise go together well in the experimental environment that have be fostered in these programmes, by triggering new agendas, but also by including consistent backgrounds and know-how.

As such, while teaching syllabuses always try to include up-to-date topics, they are usually framed by mature theoretic research and stakeholders are called to draw attention

and provide technical assistance to the Design Studios process (e.g. the bi-univocal involvement of municipalities and the classes).

Sometimes, singular events are organized in the form of workshops to intensify the debate and brainstorming around a specific issue. That has been the case of several ones, such as the workshop "from splinters to Parks", (available at: http://metropolis.fa.utl.pt/metropolis.htm) organized at the Faculty of Architecture, last May with the endorsement of the ISOCARP.

A steady network of colleagues from different Universities, the cooperation of different institutions and stakeholders, but above all the enthusiastic participation of the students allows drawing a preliminary positive assessment.

Other experiences will follow soon.

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