

Track 5 - Planning in multicultural societies

Track Chairs:

Francesco Lo Piccolo

Huw Thomas

The aim of this track is to explore the potential for, and constraints on, fashioning planning theory and practices which attempts to support more just social arrangements, particularly – but not exclusively - those which are associated with the promotion and sustaining of a multi-cultural society. We anticipate, and hope for, a variety of papers and sessions. A list which is by no means exhaustive would include papers/sessions exploring political/ethical issues and concepts; others considering issues of social justice in relation to gender, age, impairment, social class, sexual orientation and so on; and others considering multi-culturalism.

In relation to the latter we take as our starting point the existence in contemporary Europe of a wide variety of cultural communities (i.e. groups of people having distinctive sets of values, beliefs and - to varying extent - social practices, which are important to their members' sense of identity worth and well being). Some of these cultural communities may, of course, be built around values and ways of life which are so anti-social as to make them unworthy of toleration or support, but – in any case and as a matter of fact – contemporary society is divided into a fragmented and diversified archipelago of minority and plural groups. We view these groups as socially constructed – i.e. as dynamic social phenomena whose boundaries shift over time, and whose salience in the lives of members and non-members varies over time and place: this view emerged within the debate on new social movements, highlighting the role of social and cultural elements in social changes, individual and collective actions and the organizational processes of local communities (Giddens, 1991; Melucci, 1989; Laraña et al., 1994). Yet, at any given time, European life is characterized by a complex mix of cultural communities. How then are we to plan in a way which recognizes the importance of different identities and ways of life?

In contemporary debates about multiculturalism a number of approaches to, or models of, a multicultural society have been discussed (Taylor, 1992; Kymlicka, 1995; Alibhai-Brown, 2000). Their implications for planning have only partially been explored, and discussions of these matters within professional practice are not always well informed. This track looks for contributions which will address the planning commitments in a multicultural society and the planning implications of the different models of multiculturalism. The problems arising from this might be tackled in various ways changing from time to time from either repressive, or discriminatory to tolerant, inclusive or dialogical-communicative.

A key purpose of the track is to provide a basis for a discussion of the prospect of a planning practice which can foster social justice in circumstances of social diversity. One aspect of this is examining the governance frameworks

within which planning is conducted (including juridical frameworks and traditions). While we anticipate that many contributors will explore some of these concerns in relation to Europe, we also welcome discussions which focus on other parts of the world, and particularly welcome papers which address track themes through exploring connections between European and non-European experiences and circumstances.

References

- Alibhai-Brown, Y. (2000) *Who Do we Think We Are?*, The Penguin Press, London
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and self-identity*, Stanford University, Stanford.
- Kymlicka, W. (1995) *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Laraña, E., Johnston, H., Gutfield, J. (Eds) (1994) *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity*, Temple, Philadelphia.
- Melucci, A. (1989) *Nomads of the present*, Temple, Philadelphia.
- Taylor, C. (1992) *Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition"*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.