



The Ashgate Research Companion to Planning Theory

Conceptual Challenges for Spatial Planning

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At a time of potentially radical changes in the ways in which humans interact with their environments - through financial, environmental and/or social crises - the raison d'être of spatial planning faces significant conceptual and empirical challenges.

This Companion presents a multidimensional collection of critical narratives of conceptual challenges for spatial planning. The authors draw on various disciplinary traditions and theoretical frames to explore different ways of conceptualising spatial planning and the challenges it faces. Through problematising planning itself, the values which underpin planning and theory-practice relations, contributions make visible the limits of established planning theories and illustrate how, by thinking about new issues, or about issues in new ways, spatial planning might be advanced both theoretically and practically. There cannot be definitive answers to the conceptual challenges posed, but the authors in this collection provoke critical questions and debates over important issues for spatial planning and its future.

A key question is not so much what planning theory is, but what might planning theory do in times of uncertainty and complexity. An underlying rationale is that planning theory and practice are intrinsically connected. The Companion is presented in three linked parts: issues which arise from an interactive understanding of the relations between planning ideas and the political-institutional contexts in which such ideas are put to work; key concepts in current theorising from mainly poststructuralist perspectives and what discussion on complexity may offer planning theory and practice.

Contents

Introduction, Jean Hillier; Part 1 Conceptual Challenges from Perspectives on Spatial Planning: Introduction, Patsy Healey; Governance, space and politics: exploring the governmentality of planning, Enrico Gualini; Informality and the politics of planning, Ananya Roy; Coexistence; planning and the challenge of indigenous rights, Richard Howitt and Gaim James Lunkapis; Problematizing planning: critical and effective genealogies, Margo Huxley; Is this how it is, or is this how it is here? Making sense of politics in planning, Wytske Versteeg and Maarten Hajer; Role conflict: planners torn between dialogical ideals and neo-liberal realities, Tore Sager; Enhancing creativity and action orientation in planning, Louis Albrechts. Part 2 Conceptual Challenges for Spatial Planning Theory: Introduction, Jean Hillier; Cities and nations, Manuel DeLanda; Modulation of singularities - a complexity approach to planning competitions, Joris E. van Wezemael; Community enterprises: imagining and enacting alternatives to capitalism, J.K. Gibson-Graham and Jenny Cameron; Trouble with nature: 'ecology as the new opium for the masses' Erik Swyngedouw; Urbanity, (neo)vitalism and becoming, John Pløger; Necessary dreaming: uses of utopia in urban planning, David Pinder. Part 3 Conceptual Challenges for Spatial Planning in Complexity: Introduction, Jean Hillier; Governance and planning: a pragmatic approach, Niraj Verma; Coping with the irreducible uncertainties of planning: an evolutionary approach, Luca Bertolini; Cybernetic spatial planning: steering, managing or just letting go?, Nikos Karadimitriou; Strategic navigation in an ocean of theoretical and practice complexity, Jean Hillier; Index.

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