

# Foreword

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A few years ago, when preparing a meeting on quality for planning education held under the auspices of the Association of European Schools of Planning, I revisited an insightful chapter on the mission and features of spatial planning written by Raphaël Fischler and Charles Hoch,<sup>1</sup> two acknowledged North American scholars whose work has highly inspired my trajectory as a planning instructor in Scandinavia. Written almost a decade ago, the chapter envisioned what planning students needed to learn to meet the challenges faced by the profession. To attain its *raison d'être*, it contended that planning education should promote 'an active, searching curiosity in the service of practical judgement' by teaching 'perception, performance and prudence' via reciprocal forms of instruction and practical learning.

While these objectives certainly continue to underpin the field of planning education at the dawn of the 2020s, planning as a field of practice has become increasingly challenged by a myriad of highly disruptive problems characterized by a complex blend of socio-spatial (e.g., rising inequality and differentiation, increased population and migration), economic (e.g., firm strategies, investment decisions, labour dynamics, technological developments) and environmental (e.g., natural resource depletion, epidemics, energy and water demands, food supply, ageing) dimensions and patterns. Far outpacing the capacity of planning to effectively comply with its hallmarks, these wicked issues and their aggravating effects place unprecedented demands on a profession that is once again standing at a crossroads reinventing itself. As John Forester rightly reminds us, planning is 'the organization of hope'.<sup>2</sup> So, if hope is to mobilize planning and its courses of action, then never before has there been greater need for a renewed pedagogical arsenal in planning education – an arsenal capable of endowing university instructors, students and communities with 'co-constructed values, knowledges, skills and competences' to address the pressing challenges of planning.<sup>3</sup>

It is in this spirit that this unique volume not only widens but also enlightens current debates on how planning education and teaching pedagogies can meaningfully contribute to a transformational shift towards urban and regional sustainability as well as a more socially just world in the 21st century. Through a brilliant exposure of contemporary pedagogical trends advanced by educa-

tionalists, as well as original and enticing pedagogical accounts developed by planning educators from different parts of the world, the chapters in this book showcase an invigorating journey exhibiting timely cases of teaching and learning for, in and with communities; innovative classroom-based competencies driven by critical engagement and reflexivity skills; and capacity building strategies for further planning education and life-long learning. At the same time, the compilation strongly contributes to bridge a dialogical gap between contemporary debates relating to transformative changes in higher education, and novel pedagogical dimensions in the specific field of planning. Beyond exposing the reader to these trends, an outstanding merit of the book is its portrayal of a new learning landscape in planning which is being gradually consolidated.

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly hampered the delivery of co-constructed learning, community-based and other new-fangled, in-class pedagogical practices, the missive and value of interdisciplinary learning and working, and of integrating co-learning, co-designing and co-working with communities unquestionably remains. In this respect, the present volume similarly contributes to provide a better understanding of how planning education endeavours to transcend disciplinary boundaries while interconnecting planning curricula and teaching pedagogies allowing students to undergo committed and fervent action-driven learning. Spatial planning is indeed required to engage with multiple and fluid frames that better acknowledge and respond to the shifting content of the real-world picture.<sup>4</sup> It is in this context that this revealing tome should comprise an essential read for planning educators seeking to foster transformational change through ‘radically new pedagogies’ aimed at addressing both old and new wicked problems.

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## NOTES

1. C. Hoch and R. Fischler (2012). Mission, goals and features of spatial planning. In B. Scholl (ed.), *Higher Education in Spatial Planning: Positions and Reflections* (pp. 16–23). Zurich: vdf Hochschulverlag AG.
2. J. Forester (1989). *Planning in the Face of Power*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
3. T. Lamb and G. Vodicka (2020). Education for 21st century urban and spatial planning: Critical postmodern pedagogies. In A. I. Frank and A. da Rosa Pires (eds.), *Teaching Urban and Regional Planning: Innovative Pedagogies in Practice*. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

4. J. Harrison, D. Galland, and M. Tewdwr-Jones (2020). Regional planning is dead: Long live planning regional futures. *Regional Studies*. (pp. 1–13) Accessed September 2020 at <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2020.1750580>