

# Universalism in planning education: Toward an interactive pedagogy

**Hooshang Amirahmadi**

*The author is Associate Professor and Director of the Middle East Program, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Department of Urban Planning and Policy Development, USA. His book The Iranian Economy Since the Revolution is scheduled to be published by the State University of New York Press in 1990.*

## Introduction

The old debate over the applicability of planning education in Developed Countries (DCs) to the situations in Less Developed Countries (LDCs) will most likely receive new impetus from three major recent developments:

- First, if trends of the last several decades are any indication, demand for planning and planners in LDCs will continue to grow at a considerably higher rate in the coming years. Pressure on existing institutions in LDCs to supply more planners will increase. The problem of "brain drain," i.e. the flight of LDCs' planners to DCs, can be expected to continue, exacerbating the pressure. Prospects for any significant expansion of educational facilities in LDCs in the foreseeable future are dim at best. LDCs will continue to suffer from the lack of adequate resources including funds for higher education, universities, research facilities, experienced faculty, and relevant planning curriculum and publications. LDCs would, therefore, continue to rely on DCs for education of their planners in years if not decades to come.
- Second, thanks to advancements in transportation and communication technologies, human relations and problems have internationalized to the extent that quite frequently planning for apparently local issues would have to incorporate international considerations. This has created new pressure for universalization of planning methods and theories. If experiences in other fields, e.g. development economics, are any indication, DCs will take the initiative to universalize planning education on the basis of their own experience. In the face of cultural and developmental diversities among nations, such "naive universalism" (WARD, 1967) could lead to disasters for LDCs and cross-national understanding.
- Finally, there is the growing demand for increasing sophistication of planning education and research emanating from the growing pressure for an interdisciplinary approach to development issues (KUKLINSKI, 1971). Again, DCs are in a more advantageous position to lead the movement as they already have in a number of fields, including political economics and anthropology.

For LDCs to benefit from such development a delicate balance has to be reached in the level of sophistication. Otherwise, and in the absence of adequate infrastructure to support interdisciplinary education and apply highly sophisticated planning knowledge, LDCs could end up in the same situation as they are today with respect to technology: bought and transferred under strict conditions and applied by the monopolist seller.

Therefore, planning educators concerned with applicability of DCs planning education to LDCs will have to advance the kind of pedagogies that would also allow for training of a larger number of students from LDCs and make them partners in the universalization and sophistication of planning education and research.

After examining the most common objections to DCs planning education for students from LDCs, proposals to remedy the problem, and the recent quests for the universalization of planning education, this paper proposes an interactive pedagogy and discusses the means needed for its implementation, various ways it might be implemented, and the kind of impact we might expect.

Specifically, by bringing together students and teaching materials from different nations with common problems and aspirations but with diverse cultures, views, and development qualities, an interactive approach helps combine diversities and similarities in comparative formats, thus facilitating learning through contrast and comparisons as well as mutual influence. It also allows for reduction in number of DCs/LDCs-specific courses by combining them in fewer classes thus making more resources available to all students, particularly to those from LDCs. Moreover, the approach integrates LDCs into the movement for universalization and sophistication of planning education and research, contributing to a more even development of knowledge and mutual understanding among nations.

## Objections to DCs providing planning education for LDCs

The most common objections raised against planning education in DCs for students from LDCs center around differences between the two worlds, claiming irrelevancy of DCs curriculum. Specifically, because such programs are tailored to the socio-economic, political, cultural, and physical conditions, behavior and needs of DCs, they only partially meet the reality in LDCs (OBERLANDER, 1982; DIKE, 1979; ZETTER, 1980; RICHARDSON, 1980; HEALEY, 1980). For example, DCs planning programs and universal concepts are based on the assumptions of

reasonably competitive market mechanisms, stable politics, evolutionary changes, and rational decision-making. None of these assumptions fully fit realities of DCs which are largely characterized by monopolistic economic behavior, violent changes, and unstable politics. Differences in historical experiences with economic, social, political, and cultural developments are even more notable.

At a more specific level, it has been shown that the content of planning programs in DCs are closely aligned with the needs — though not necessarily interests — of the business community. Krueckeberg (1985), for example, has indicated that planning education in the U.S. today is facing mounting "pressure...to be technically stronger, less scientific, and more entrepreneurial in both style and substance," as a result of which "a new emphasis on planning in and with the private sector" is "emerging." Therefore, writes Harvey (1985), "planners are ... taught ... to have some sympathetic understanding of the problems that face the private producers of the built environment." He then mentions the landlord interests, the managers of financial institutions, and the downtown business interests as examples of such private producers. The gradual shift of planning programs away from physical toward social sciences over the last two decades or so (KRUECKEBERG, 1985; RODWIN, 1981) may be equally explained by the shift in the nature of development processes in which capital has been the main participant. Emphasis on land-use planning in the 1950s, for example, coincided with the postwar reconstruction and spatial restructuring of capital in DCs and with import-substitution industrialization in LDCs. Both developments demanded planners with design capabilities. Recent emphasis on socio-economic planning might also be explained by changes in requirements of capital for economic restructuring and social balance in DCs and LDCs. Equally, current demand by a growing number of scientists, educators, and policy makers for universalization of planning education emanates in part from increasing internationalization of capital and its needs for cross-cultural communication and cooperation. Despite the alignment, however, planning education and thus planners have grown increasingly critical of the business community and of capitalist state planning which tends to benefit capital (FAINSTEIN and FAINSTEIN, 1985).

DCs planning programs are also geared, in part, to the short-term and immediate needs of various social groups and communities in DCs to quickly fix their many slowly changing problems. Consequently, long-range planning and the rapidly changing situation in LDCs receive little attention, and planning education becomes limited to training "quick-fix" technocrats and "detached advisors." Most programs are thus primarily concerned with teaching their students (e.g. via computer techniques) how to help a particular client solve its specific, immediate problem. While technical and specialized education in planning has to continue and receive emphasis, disciplinary approaches and areal specializations should not become so dominant as to allow for only limited interdisciplinary and cross-national study and generalization. Students should also be taught about problems of historical-structural relations, political economy, and cultural diversities at national and international levels with a view to an increasingly universalizing future.

Theoretical education is equally problematic in most DCs programs. Although a lot of theories are taught, their relation to methods and policies remains

largely obscured (BEAUREGARD, 1981). Indeed, they are often taught by different teachers in separate courses and with minimal reference to their practicality or relevance to LDCs. As a consequence, critical thinking receives little attention for it can only be encouraged by unification and mutual influences of theory and practice, as well as through contrasting arguments emanating from perceptual differences among those in the classroom. It is pleasing that recent research has indicated pronounced "expansion of substantive interest within the planning programs" and an equally impressive "diversity" of course offerings and teaching techniques (NIEBANCK, 1987). Such developments must be further encouraged.

However, the factor most seriously hindering education of LDCs students in planning programs of DCs relates to the considerable perceptual differences that exist between their largely "experiential knowledge" and the more or less abstract mainstream Western literature concerning LDCs. I have demonstrated this point, along with factors responsible for it and educational implications that follow, in another paper on planning education (AMIRAHMADI, 1988). In a nutshell, the culture-bond, Western experience-centered literature does not incorporate perceptions held in LDCs and course formats do not allow for the experiential knowledge of LDCs students to find adequate expression in the classrooms. As a result, communication of knowledge and experience as well as mutual understanding between LDCs and DCs is hindered, leading to a rejection of DCs education by LDCs students. The perceptual differences reflect the uneven development of socio-economic conditions and human knowledge at a world scale, as well as cultural diversities. Unless we modify our pedagogy to allow for incorporation of such differences in the curriculum, students from LDCs will continue to feel lectured at and alienated. This important problem should most concern us and introduce an alternative interactive approach to planning education.

## Past remedies and the quest for universalism

Proposals to remedy irrelevancies of DCs planning education for application to LDCs have ranged from modifying planning curricula in universities of DCs to establishing planning schools in LDCs (OBERLANDER, 1962; ZETTER, 1980; DIX, 1980a; RODWIN, 1981; PERLOFF, 1969 and 1957; UNRISD, 1969; AMIRAHMADI, 1987). Most advocates of establishing planning schools in LDCs question the validity of both encouraging LDCs students to come to DCs for planning education and the applicability of such an education to the particular socio-economic, cultural and political conditions in LDCs. Many of those who come remain, exacerbating the brain drain problem, and the differences between the two worlds are so great as to make any adaptation of planning curriculum in DCs to the needs of students from LDCs difficult. The transfer of DCs planning curriculum, in any form, to LDCs is also unacceptable (ZETTER, 1980). The better approach is, they insist, to expand planning education "at home" and design a program of study tailored to the specific needs of LDCs (OBERLANDER, 1962; ZETTER, 1980). A good deal of space in the literature is therefore devoted to ways of expanding planning programs in LDCs and identifying a suitable curriculum, particularly its content (FRIEDMAN, 1967; PERLOFF, 1969 and 1971; KUKLINSKI, 1971; DUNHAM and HILHORST, 1970; RODWIN, 1981; AMIRAHMADI, 1987).

While attempts to establish and expand planning programs in LDCs, tailor-made to their specific needs, should be supported, constraints facing such efforts should not be underestimated. Specifically, LDCs lack adequate resources, and the political support for planning remains insufficient. It is not surprising that after three decades of continuous efforts to expand planning programs in LDCs, little has been achieved (DIX, 1980b; RODWIN, 1981; TETTEH, 1980; EPA, 1977). Before hopes could be raised for an adequate planning program in LDCs, steps should be taken to increase usable resources of LDCs. This will involve such big tasks as correcting the existing international imbalance by giving support to the demand for a New International Economic Order (BHAGWATI, 1981) and increasing political support for planning by educating the politicians about its benefits. Such support is needed for effecting a change in national priorities away from excessive spending on defence toward transferring more funds to higher education (AMIRAHMADI, 1987). These and other reasons should make us skeptical about any significant change in the extent and quality of planning education and research in LDCs in the near future.

In addition to constraints facing efforts to establish and expand planning programs in LDCs, advocacy of adapting planning education in DCs to the needs of LDCs also gains its legitimacy from other sources. The number of LDCs planning students in DCs programs is increasing and not all what they learn in these societies is irrelevant. After all, LDCs students are not passive receptacles of ideas they get exposed to in DCs. Most of the time they screen them consciously and carefully and make their choices to accept or reject them on the basis of personal interests or those of their nations (MILLER, 1967; AMIRAHMADI, 1987).

Personal gains *could* indeed be tremendous as they are in most cases. LDCs students' research and writing abilities improve considerably. They learn to look at things differently, to be more cautious and less overly optimistic, and to recognize that solutions are not easy or ready-made. They become professional in their field of specialization and learn to think more globally as they interact with different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. They gain, among other qualities, a broader outlook and greater depth of insight in their field, more systematic thinking and planning, new attitudes toward work and colleagues, awareness of the importance of time and schedules, widened professional contacts, and confidence in their competitive ability. They also learn to be more aggressive and assertive in achieving their career objectives (AMIRAHMADI, 1987). Clearly, positive behavior is not all that they acquire. Their cautiousness could be inculcated with pessimism and cynicism and some might become self-centered, individualistic, and acquisitive.

The danger for LDCs, of course, lies in the risk of losing a significant number of their skilled planning manpower to DCs. This is why the problem of brain drain must receive urgent attention and added significance. Educators must join concerned policy makers and politicians in their support for national and international regulations and incentive schemes to limit the free flow of skilled manpower across international borders despite implications of such measures for personal freedom (HAMADA, 1981; ZAHLAN, 1981; KAO 1980; BHAGWATI, 1977). But, we should not defer our call for adapting DCs planning education to the needs of LDCs until after such measures are adopted. What is, however, even more important than the urgency for such a

call is the *kind of adaptation* that should be brought in DCs programs.

Under colonialism, the West pursued what Ward (1967) has termed "naive universalism" in international education: "the uncritical belief that mankind is destined to be Westernized in due course." This was to be accelerated by Westernization of education in colonies and dependencies along disciplinary categories. Such an education would produce, wrote Macauley, the British politician-educator, in his famous "Minute" on education in India in 1835, "a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect" (WARD, 1967). Colonialism rightly feared cultural diversity and thus attempted to create a world after its image: a Westernized world. Only then could the direct political force over colonies and dependencies be eased and gradually replaced by more reliable socio-cultural means of control. Thus, naive universalism aimed at cultural assimilation. But, before the strategy was able to realize fully the hoped-for assimilation, it led to self-assertion of LDCs and turned into its opposite — a more politicized cultural diversity.

The concept of modernization in the post-colonial era also reflected a similar naive universalism and assimilation policy, although it fascinated intellectuals more than imperialists. The fact that neocolonialism was not based on application of direct political force in the oppressed nations made it the most indifferent to cultural diversity. This attitude, along with a growing sense of limitation and self-consciousness induced in DCs due to self-assertion of LDCs, led to a change in their approach to international education: the strategy of assimilation yielded to one of adaptation (WARD, 1967). More specifically, the naive universalism of the colonial era turned into its opposite in the post-colonial period in the form of a dual program of education, one for DCs and another for LDCs. Introduction of area studies and interdisciplinary education also dates back to this development. This first revolution in international studies was pioneered by American educators and "grew out of American concerns with national security and insecurity" (FERNEA, 1987; WINDER, 1987).

The newly created field of planning, the new approach meant chopping existing programs into two unequal pieces and devoting the smaller portion to education of LDCs students. The so-called international programs or areas of concentration so created soon became isolated enclaves within the planning departments: they had their own faculty, courses, in a few cases a small budget, and sometimes lecture series; and faculty members and students not involved with international studies hardly even noticed their existence, except of course in departmental brochures or when they had to take core required courses. They were isolated not only from the mainstream life in the department and the larger university community but also from the object of their studies, LDCs. A few students, books, articles, faculty travel and research, and conferences were the only links between the enclaves and LDCs. Neither the relevant literature from LDCs nor their students' views were incorporated into the curriculum. The interdisciplinary revolution thus became confined within the narrow space given to international studies.

The strategy of compartmentalizing international education into area studies and concentrations continues today, though with much weakened political and ideological support. Since the late 1960s, however, limited attempts have been made by a few educational institutions, including planning schools, and individual educa-

tors to integrate the enclaves into their larger programs. A variety of means were used but introduction of "comparative" courses emerged as the primary policy tool. In most cases, however, such courses have remained restricted to comparing development policies of a few LDCs with each other or at best, and only on rare occasions, with policies in DCs. Moreover, differences in views, cultures, and life style between LDCs and DCs and their impact on policy differences remains largely irrelevant to comparative classes. Few faculty members also crossed the border into or out of the enclaves taking their views and teaching materials to students from both worlds. Any significant strategy change depended on financial support from public and private institutions for international education. Sufficient support was not forthcoming and began to diminish in the mid 1970s (WINDER, 1987).

The situation is rapidly changing however. In most recent years, political, ideological and financial support in DCs, the U.S. in particular, has been mounting for a new approach to international education and research (WINDER, 1987). The compartmentalizing strategy seems to be running its course and may well be negated by its opposite, a more unified approach. Specifically, DCs are again poised for another move toward universalism in international education. The quest to "extend the concept of interdisciplinary studies beyond the parochial interest in Western civilization to include other civilizations" and for "global interdisciplinary studies" seems to be gaining increasing popularity (FERNEA, 1987). This would complete the dialectical cycle of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, standing for naive universalism, dualism, and what I shall simply call, following Ward (1967), universalism, respectively. The new universalism would strive toward a better management of both the existing diversities among nations and the growing internationalization of human relations, problems, and aspirations. It would not be confined to the capitalist world. Socialist countries will be also drawn into the process as they have already been to some extent.

My conviction that this will happen is rooted in and reinforced by a number of factors.

- First, the emerging one-world system of unevenly developed and culturally diverse but highly interdependent nation-states is the factor most demanding a sophisticated universal approach to international education and research. Thanks to developments in communication and transportation technologies, nations have been drawn increasingly closer to each other and their interactions universalized. International specialization (or division of labor) and the uneven distribution of usable resources at a world scale have provided additional impetus for intensified socio-economic and political relations and interdependence. Globalization of capital and its preconditions for accumulation have indeed occurred simultaneously with expanded geographic differentiations (SMITH, 1984). All these have led to similar development problems and approaches throughout most of the capitalist world, making inter-capitalist cooperation indispensable. An effective management of these diversities, similarities and interdependencies calls for intelligent and informed choices and decisions which could only be made by individuals with deep cross-cultural understanding and profound insights in international issues.

- Second, if international capital, its colonial and imperial varieties alike, has been responsible for the deepening disparity and diversity between LDCs and DCs, the

adaptationist (compartmentalizing) strategy has institutionalized it, hindered cross-cultural communication and mutual understanding, and further monopolized knowledge development in DCs. The resulting increased international illiteracy, mutual distrust and misunderstanding among nations have led to growing foreign policy failures particularly in DCs and have weakened potential for global cooperation and endangered world peace and political stability in LDCs. The present crisis in international relations is primarily rooted in the increasing diversities amidst the growing universalism and the failures of foreign policies to manage the contradiction. The declining U.S. global hegemony since the early 1970s, following a series of dollar and economic crises, coupled with the rise of Soviet power and Japanese capitalism, have made the West even more sensitive to, and conscious of, a more sophisticated foreign policy which in turn requires a more sophisticated international education and research.

- Third, considerable perceptual differences exist between the largely experiential knowledge of LDCs students and the more or less abstract mainstream Western literature on social sciences and humanities, including planning and development. The gap reflects the uneven development of capitalism and human knowledge at a world scale, as well as cultural diversities among nations. Whatever its causes, the perceptual gap has been accentuated by the adaptationist strategy and is becoming a serious obstacle to education of LDC students in DC institutions. Specifically, it has led to a rejectionist attitude among these students, resulting in a tendency to resist learning even concepts and techniques that could be beneficial to their countries (AMIRAHMADI, 1988). Reinforced by a number of other factors such as foreign policy disasters in DCs, the rejectionist attitude would endanger the hopes for any future communication of knowledge and experience as well as mutual understanding and cooperation between LDCs and DCs.

- Fourth, as human problems and aspirations for development have partly internationalized, the dividing lines between various theoretical and strategic positions have become somewhat blurred. The emergent shared areas of mutual agreements and understandings have increased the chance for cross-conceptual and cross-cultural acceptability and co-operation. Admittedly, localism and nationalism continue to persist, international differentiation still remains a distinctive character of the present world, and we are by no means near "the end of ideology." The expanding shared theoretical and practical areas, it must be emphasized, represent only aspects of international diversities that have converged to create a common basis for a more universal solution to the problems of humanity.

- Finally, the quest for universalism grows out of a new consciousness and conviction that the world community represents "a dialectic of polarity, one in which unity and diversity are redefined as simultaneous and necessary poles of the same essence — the humanity," and that "while the differences of traditions, of cultures, of languages, of arts, should be protected and preserved, the interrelationship and unity of the whole should at the same time be accepted" (ANSHEN, 1971). The practice of this new awareness demands unification and integration of human knowledge of the world by means of universalized education, for the present incoherence of human relationship is a direct result of the past disintegrative educational and knowledge-communication processes.

To sum up, the growing universalism along with the increasing diversities among nations, the failure of foreign policies to manage the contradiction and the consequent crisis in international relations, and the new consciousness for world peace and integrative education are the main reasons for the increased need of nations for mutual understanding and cooperation and these call for genuine universalism in international education and research. Instead of attempting to assimilate diversities, as under naive universalism in the colonial era, or avoid and perpetuate them as under adaptationism in the neocolonial period, the new universalism should globalize teaching materials by creating universal concepts reflecting shared international realities and by developing a pedagogy capable of teaching such concepts and integrating diversities with universal aspects of the study subject. The pedagogy along with the universalized concepts would, hopefully, help create a common language and thus would facilitate communication of scientific as well as popular knowledge among nations. This development would not necessarily negate cultural or intellectual pluralism. On the contrary, it should promote them by bringing them face to face.

But, as Jacob Canter (1967) pointed out: "The larger question is whether our institutions (in the U.S.) can create and teach from (such) a body of knowledge." After about twenty years, this "larger question" still remains valid. The field of planning is particularly disadvantaged to develop such a common language and the requisite pedagogy to teach it because of its interdisciplinary nature and underdeveloped status. Most existing universal planning concepts, e.g. growth pole, urbanization, economic space, and comprehensive planning, are either imported from various related disciplines or are advanced on the basis of DC experience and reality. Equally inadequate is the existing comparative literature: it is limited in volume and mostly offers only a juxtaposition of view, processes, and causes rather than exploring what they share and where they diverge. Thus, neither universalism nor diversity is adequately explained in the existing planning literature. Yet the future of planning as a field of study and its global acceptability lies in its ability to respond adequately to the growing quest for a better grasp of international diversities and for the inevitable transition from diversity to universalism.

However, thanks to advancements in science and technology, as well as in international scholarship since the 1960s, we are today in a better position to develop the kind of knowledge Canter called for. Research and writings on various aspects of internationalization of human material conditions, social relations, and aspiration for development and peace have increased to an unprecedented level over the last two decades. Voluminous publications and audio-visual materials on various cultures and cross-cultural issues are also readily accessible throughout the world. Classrooms are now more culturally mixed than at any time in human history, and educators are not always from the same cultural background as their culturally diverse students. We need to use these and other available resources to develop the requisite knowledge using appropriate epistemology.

While conceptualization of internationally shared realities and debate over the related epistemological issues are becoming popular with planning educators — as they have been with educators in such related disciplines as architecture, economics and geography for

several decades now — only scant attention is being paid to developing the requisite pedagogy to teach it. This shortcoming is crippling not only planning education and therefore practice but also the continued development of a more adequate common language for theoretical planning. The interactive method proposed in this paper should help initiate serious thinking about the requisite pedagogy, improve existing comparative education and research in planning, and consequently foster the creation of internationally acceptable universal concepts. It should also facilitate the task of integrating diversities into education of universal concepts and thus speed up the inevitable transition from diversity to universalism. The proposed framework is tentative, incorporates suggestions of a general nature, and represents, needless to say, views of an educator rather than an educational planner or expert. My primary concern is to indicate certain means needed for interactive education, ways they should be used, and the types of impact we may expect.

## Toward an interactive pedagogy

Interactive pedagogy is a mode of education which combines knowledge and experience as well as perceptual *differences and shared* views among nations in a common format and thus facilitates international education and cross-cultural communication. The two inseparable aspects of an interactive education may be conceptualized as means of education and as educational relations. They combine and interact to produce and reproduce a variety of effects which we shall collectively call universal education.

The means of education in an interactive pedagogy includes such educational assets as are needed in any educational process: money, educational institutions and programs, faculty and students, literature and research facilities including libraries, audiovisual devices, supporting physical structures, writing tools, academic associations and the like. We shall refer to human elements as actors and to all other materials as instruments. The seemingly passive instruments are interposed among the more active actors to produce and reproduce universal education. As this happens, the actors and instruments are also transformed. Actors in planning education are caring individuals intensely interested in the field for social criticism, practice and change, and committed to high standards in research and education as well as long-term decisionmaking and strategic thinking. They include but are not limited to teachers and students of many levels of schooling (undergraduate, master, Ph.D), trainees, citizen participants (community leaders, policy makers, ordinary citizens), clients of services, and special target groups, all of whom participate in planning education on an equal opportunity basis (CPE, 1987). Educational instruments should facilitate a comprehensive understanding of specific planning issues and promote planning as an interdisciplinary field concerned with education in logic and strategic decisions, the theory of practice, management of planned change, communication skills, social practice and responsibility, sensitivity to resources, organization and design, empowerment of the ordinary citizens, strength in diversity, among others (CPE, 1987).

What, however, makes interactive pedagogy unique is its concern with the *mix* of the educational means, particularly those of the actors and the literature including audio-visual materials. Specifically and as a principle of interactive education, such means must be

drawn from both DCs and LDCs and embody internationally *shared and diverse* qualities. A mixed faculty/student body and educational instruments along with such qualities as cultural pluralism, perceptual as well as conceptual diversities and similarities, differences in experience and life-style, and the complex views various nationals hold about each other are considered indispensable assets in an interactive education. Inclusion of a truly comparative literature, i.e. the literature which focuses on both similarities and differences among nations, is particularly required in universal education. When brought into a single format, the shared and diverse qualities should combine to produce intense and insightful interactions among the participants.

Educational relations are a complex of mechanisms which facilitate and give expression to interactions among the means of education, particularly the actors, and thus help to implement interactive pedagogy. The most important mechanisms include:

- an appropriate common format;
- a combined comprehensive-interdisciplinary-specialization approach;
- a critical-historical methodology;
- learning about and from differences;
- adaptability to circumstances; and,
- out-of-class socialization.

These and other mechanisms should be designed to reinforce each other's impacts and generate universal education.

### **An appropriate common format**

Design of a *common format* is the first important step. It should bring faculty, students and teaching materials on a specific topic from DCs and LDCs into a single educational process, classroom or outside, and thus break the many walls that have been erected between education of students from DCs and LDCs: between programs, courses, classes, teachers, educational resources, theories, and concepts among others. The format should also allow for various modes of student participation including class discussions, presentations, short critical papers, and group projects. It should facilitate and expand what Paul Niebanck (1987) has called "collaboration" in planning education which should be generated "within courses, between courses and the world of practice, between planning and other educational programs," and "between planning programs in different institutions of higher education." Interactive pedagogy particularly demands that such collaborative efforts go beyond national borders and include both DCs and LDCs. Existing studios, comparative courses, practicums, cell groups, simulations, and colloquiums might be utilized as beginning formats for more effective ones to gradually emerge. Whatever the format adopted, it may not be generalizable from one topic to another, but must be modified before it becomes portable to another situation or topic.

### **A combined comprehensive - Interdisciplinary - specialization approach**

Interactive pedagogy calls for a cross-national and cross-ideological *comprehensive and interdisciplinary* planning education without compromising its purposeful issue orientation to human problems at local levels. Educational materials are drawn from a variety of disciplines, fields of practice, and world views covering as

many cultures as possible from both LDCs and DCs. This horizontal expansion of planning education should complement the vertical expansion of the growing substantive interests in the field: "reaching behind the obvious, revealing underlying patterns for understanding, and reliable guides for practice" (NIEBANCK, 1987). The pedagogy, however, takes the horizontal-vertical expansions beyond their immediate effects to discover similarities and differences among disciplines and nations on topics focused. This would allow for a *comprehensive-interdisciplinary specialization* as opposed to the present narrow specialization. A course on zoning in the U.S., for example, could draw its understandings from a variety of related disciplines and include theoretical, practical and institutional experiences with the topic in the U.S. as well as in other nations including LDCs. What would these countries have in common with the U.S. and where would they diverge and why? Are there any transferable diversities? How can we generate universal concepts on the basis of shared and diverse but transferable experiences? Are non-portable diversities rooted in legitimate cultural differences or cross-cultural barriers? These and other similar questions could have tremendous impact on students specializing, for example, in U.S. zoning issues. At the least, it helps students overcome the powerful forces of inertia and enables them to think toward new alternatives concerning matters of policy and institutional arrangements. A course designed in an interactive format should also attract students not specializing in zoning issues but who want to learn about zoning on a comparative basis.

### **A critical - historical methodology**

Interactive pedagogy is best implemented within a *critical-historical* framework. The framework empowers education to create a dialogue between objective conditions and subjective developments and grasp planning phenomena in terms of their appearance and essence, unity and opposition, continuity and change, similarity and diversity, and interconnection, and isolation. It thus forces education to move beyond mere descriptions and understanding of phenomenal forms to reach the essential relations and causal networks hidden at deeper conceptual levels. The framework also helps reveal pros and cons of various views by empowering the participants with logic and education through contrasts, comparisons and mutual influence. Historical method, in particular, allows for a factual and chronological explication of changes over time in issues, knowledge and practices of different nations, investigates their interconnections, and increases commitment to progressive changes. Critical method, on the other hand, strives to find fault and merit in them, and subjects them to careful analysis and judgement. Constructive criticism should lead to formation of a perceptual crisis and anxiety in the minds of the participants, leading to significant changes in the character of the educational relations.

### **Learning about and from differences**

Significant differences exist among nations, between DCs and LDCs in particular, in such critical areas as language, culture, living style, points of view, and perceptions. It is the responsibility of all participants, particularly educators, to be sensitive to these differences and the danger that misconceptions might cause for conceptual advancement and mutual understanding. Along with diverse and tremendous opportunities to

learn in and from DCs, such differences constitute the objective basis for interactive education in planning. Using a variety of linguistic, symbolic, graphic, spatial and oral presentation techniques (LIM, 1986; GARDNER, 1985), the interactive approach helps differences be adequately expressed, heard, and fully understood with deep sympathy and constructive criticism. It also assists educators to create interest among students to learn about and from their differences. For these to happen, interactive pedagogy helps distinguish between legitimate national-logical differences and arguments from illegitimate cross-cultural misunderstanding and prejudiced stereotypical branding. The latter have to be eliminated while the former are valuable assets in universal education. The impact on students could be far-reaching. As the pros and cons of their views are revealed and their self-awareness improved, students will begin to screen them: abandon some, preserve others, and synthesize many more with the ideas to which they are exposed in the interactive process, thus elevating them to a higher level of sophistication. This will help them become more pragmatic conceptualists capable of comprehending knowledge as a synthesis, applying it, and evaluating its consequences.

### **Adaptability to circumstances**

*Adaptability* to circumstances of educational process is equally important in universal education. To adapt means to be flexible, democratic, and respectful of opposite views. Adaptability also requires that boundaries of universalizing program and class discussions be left open and methods of teaching as well as focus be changed once they become unacceptable and/or unproductive. By helping participants build relationships among themselves and between themselves and their professional concerns, interactive pedagogy promotes adaptability in education. The receptive environment so created encourages intense dialogue, interaction and competition, leading to tremendous classroom dialectics and even tensions. After all, science is the product of tensions within men and women, among peoples, and between them and nature.

### **Out-of-class socialization**

Interactive pedagogy does not restrict education to schooling (ILLICH, 1971). It involves students more fully in the intellectual life of the university and of the larger society. This is promoted by increased socialization outside the classroom and by participation in various out-of-class modes of education including field research, internships, conferences, consulting work and contact with citizen groups. Socialization is particularly important because planners are at the point of articulation between knowledge and action, theory and real world, and among various social groupings, geographic spaces, and academic disciplines. As such, they must learn to facilitate formation of solidarity within and among different interest groups.

### **Conclusion**

Universal education is the purpose to which interactive pedagogy is directed and its final product. A more satisfactory definition of "universal education" is yet to emerge. For our purpose, however, the term stands for a *collection of effects* that are produced in an interactive education as the various walls erected between education of students from DCs and LDCs begin to break. Such effects are numerous, varied, interrelated, and may not be the exclusive products of interactive educa-

tion as opposed to other kinds of pedagogies. The effects also vary in terms of time horizons and significance, and are produced in many different substantive forms. Allusions have already been made to many of them including the most significant effects of generating internationally acceptable universal concepts by integrating diversities and shared views among nations in a common format and promoting cross-cultural understanding and, consequently, global cooperation and world peace by increasing international dialogue. By integrating LDCs in the movement for universalization and sophistication of planning education and research, the approach would contribute to a more even development of science and technology. Interactive pedagogy also promotes education beyond schooling and mere training of technocrats and practitioners. It socializes education and the participants in the interactive process, generates inquisitive minds and dialectical thoughts, and encourages critical thinking, collective creativity, and historical understanding, all of which are indispensable for promotion of democracy as well as learning significant facts about international perceptions and relations, including the problem of LDCs domination by DCs. Moreover, the comprehensive knowledge produced by interactive education will help expand the already interdisciplinary scope of interactive pedagogy and lead to a more informed practice for the betterment of human society.

Despite all these and other needs for and advantages to be gained from interactive education in planning, the approach as defined in this paper remains at an incipient stage in most universities of DCs and is almost completely alien to educators in LDCs. As planners and educators of students from diverse cultures, we have particular responsibility for advancing interactive pedagogy. The problem of relevancy of DC planning education for LDC students perplexes our tasks; and yet we must accept responsibility to educate and train an increasing number of them each year. Moreover, the universalizing forces alluded to above have led to globalization of many human development problems and relations around the world, making interactive education indispensable for increased global understanding and thus for promotion of international cooperation and better management of world affairs and peaceful coexistence. The existing comparative courses hardly fill the gap. The literature and other teaching materials offer only a juxtaposition of different views, causes, or processes rather than an indepth exploration of what is shared internationally and what yet remains unique to many nations. Moreover, most comparative courses are reduced to listing readings on experiences of various countries in syllabi which students are then asked to read in isolation from each other. The general apathy is largely rooted in the belief that LDCs and DCs are too dissimilar in terms of their development issues to be combined in any other common format. This view fails to appreciate dissimilarities, differences or diversities as assets in a learning process involving various cultures. In questing for the universalization of planning education we not only need to integrate diversities and similarities but must make LDCs partners in such a process if a more internationally balanced universalization and sophistication of the field is desired. These are all formidable tasks and their accomplishment will no doubt require significant expenditures of intelligence, time and energy.

Finally, in introducing such a project, two principles have to be followed:

- First, participation in a project for universal education is voluntary except for those who wish to *specialize in it*. Students specializing in other subjects might be required to take a few core courses on universal education, while specializing students would have to complete the program designed for the purpose.

- Second, universal education is an *incremental* process and skepticism may prevail for a long time because of historical experience with international education, cultural diversities, and pressure of job market for specialization, among others. Unwise acceleration is unhealthy and could lead to rejection of universal education by both DCs and LDCs students. Transition to the new pedagogy, therefore, needs to be implemented in stages and with utmost caution and care. For the beginning, however, available resources should be channelled toward the development of a more general framework for interactive education gradually going beyond the one advanced in this paper.

## Bibliography

- AMIRAHMADI, H. (1988), "From diversity to universalism: Contribution of comparative approach to planning education for less developed countries," in Bish Sanyal (ed.), *Understanding Through Contrasts: One-World Approach to Planning Education for Developing Countries* (London, Plenum Press).
- (1987), "Planning education for the Third World: Problems and prospects," paper presented at the International Conference on Spatial Thinking in Economic and Technical Education, October 10-18, 1987, Cracow-Lodz, Poland.
- ANSHEN, R.N. (1971), "World perspectives — What this series means," in Illich (see below), pp. 169-181.
- BEAUREGARD, R. (1981), "The alienation of planning students," paper presented at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning Annual Conference, Washington, DC.
- BHAGWATI, J.N. (ed.) (1981), *The New International Economic Order: The North-South Debates* (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press).
- CANTER, J. (1967), "American higher education for students of the developing world," *Higher Education* (see below), pp. 29-38.
- CPE (Conference on Planning Education) (1987), "Listing guide to Conference Proceedings" (and the seven accompanying tapes), March 27-30, University of California, Santa Cruz.
- DIKE, A.A. (1979), "Misconceptions of African urbanism: Some Euro-American notions," in R.A. Obudho and S. El-Shakhs (eds.), *Development of Urban Systems in Africa*, (New York, Praeger), pp. 19-30.
- DIX, G. (1980a), "Planning education for developing countries: A review and some proposals for a policy," *EKISTICS*, vol. 47, no. 285 (Nov./Dec.), pp. 396-403.
- (1980b), "Two conferences on planning education: Liverpool 1977 and Tunis 1980," *EKISTICS*, vol. 47, no. 285 (Nov./Dec.), pp. 443-449.
- DUNHAM, D.M. and J.G.M. HILHORST (1970), "International education for regional planning in developing countries," *Development and Change*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 45-50.
- EPA (Education for Planning Association) (1977), "Planning education for developing countries," Reports nos. 1 & 2 (London).
- FAINSTEIN, N.I. and S.S. FAINSTEIN (1985), "Is state planning necessary for capital? The U.S. case," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 9, no. 4 (December), pp. 485-507.
- FERNEA, E.W. (1987), "Presidential address," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, vol. 21, no. 1 (July), pp. 1-7.
- FRIEDMAN, J.R. (1967), "Education for regional planning in developing countries," *Papers of the Proceedings of the Workshop in Regional Development Planning, Institute of Social Studies* (The Hague). Also in *Regional Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 131-138.
- GARDNER, H. (1985), *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligence* (New York, Basic Books).
- HAMADA, K. (1981), "Taxing the brain drain: A global point of view," in J.N. Bhagwati (ed.), *The International Economic Order: The North-South Debate*, op. cit., pp. 125-144.
- HARVEY, D. (1985), *The Urbanization of Capital: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press).
- HEALEY, P. (1980), "The development of planning education in the UK and its relevance as a model for other countries," *EKISTICS*, vol. 47, no. 285 (Nov./Dec.), pp. 416-420.
- HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL FLOW OF MANPOWER: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD, Proceedings of the National Conference, April 13-14, 1967, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
- ILLICH, I. (1971), *Deschooling Society* (New York, Harrow Books).
- KAO, C.H. (1980), *Brain Drain* (China, Mei ya).
- KRUECKEBERG, D. (1985), "The tuition of American planning: From dependency towards self-reliance," *Town Planning Review*, vol. 56, no. 4, pp. 421-441.
- KUKLINSKI, A.R. (1971), "Education in regional planning," in D.M. Dunham and J.G.M. Hilhorst (eds), *Issues in Regional Planning*, (The Hague, Mouton), pp. 28-43.
- LIM, Gill C. (1986), "Development of interdisciplinary course in planning using task-performance oriented teaching method," Mimeograph (Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Illinois).
- MILLER, P.A. (1987), "The posteducational careers of American-educated students from the developing countries," *Higher Education*, op. cit., pp. 53-62.
- NIEBANCK, P.L. (1987), "Planning education: Unleashing the future," paper submitted to the *Journal of the American Planning Association* (July).
- OBERLANDER, H.P. (1962), "Planning education for newly independent countries," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 116-123.
- PERLOFF, H.S. (1957), *Education for Planning: City, State and Regional* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press).
- (1969), "Regional planning in less-developed countries," in M.M. Hufschmidt (ed.), *Regional Planning: Challenge and Prospects* (New York, Praeger).
- (1971), "Education for regional planning in less developed countries," in D.M. Dunham and J.G.M. Hilhorst (eds.), *Issues in Regional Planning*, op. cit., pp. 15-27.
- RICHARDSON, H.W. (1980), "The relevance and applicability of regional economics to developing countries," *Regional Development Dialogue*, vol. 7, no. 1 (Spring), pp. 57-78.
- RODWIN, L. (1981), *Cities and City Planning* (New York, Plenum Press).
- SMITH, N. (1984), *Uneven Development* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell).
- TETTEH, A. (1980), "Third World experience in education for planning: Africa," *EKISTICS*, vol. 47, no. 285 (Nov./Dec.), pp. 436-440.
- UNRISD (1969), Programme IV-Regional Development, Training in Comprehensive Regional Development and Planning (Material for Discussion) (Geneva, UNRISD/69/C.3, GE).
- WARD, F.C. (1967), "From manpower to mankind (The West and the rest)," *Higher Education*, op. cit., pp. 39-45.
- WINDER, R.B. (1987), "Four decades of Middle Eastern study," *Middle East Journal*, vol. 41, no. 1 (Winter), pp. 40-63.
- ZAHLAN, A.B. (ed.) (1981), "The Problematique of the Arab Brain Drain," in A.B. Zahlan (ed.), *The Arab Brain Drain* (London, Ithaca Press for the United Nations), pp. 1-19.
- ZETTER, R. (1980), "Imported or indigenous planning education: Some observations on the needs of developing countries," *EKISTICS*, vol. 47, no. 285 (Nov./Dec.), pp. 410-415.