Recent trends in Sustainable Urban Planning

José G Vargas-Hernández, University Center for Economic and Managerial Sciences, University of Guadalajara, Guadalajara, Mexico
Justyna Anna Zdunek-Wielgołaska, Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology, Warsaw, Poland

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5788-9707

ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze some of the recent development of sustainable urban planning as a tool for the development of urban areas aimed to improve their economic growth, social development and inclusiveness, and to make more environmentally friendly, inclusive and safer cities. Sustainable urban planning is moving away from traditional practices towards more collaborative and participatory approaches supported by considerations of the waste management, the new methods, policies and strategies leading to governance. Finally, there are considered the limitations that the new models of sustainable urban planning are facing.

KEYWORDS
Collaborative Planning, Participatory Planning, Social Development Sustainable Urban Planning

INTRODUCTION: URBAN PLANNING

Urban areas are the places where more than half of world’s population lives concentrating population, financial resources, economic development and disrupting the ecosystems and sustainability (Mclaren and Agyeman, 2015; McCormick and Kiss, 2015; Saveriades, 2000; Abernethy, 2001).

Urban planning has been under attack and in debate for a long time and is emerging recently to reassess itself in the new context of sustainable urbanization. The aim of urban planning is to create better futures (Myers and Kitsuse, 2000). Urban planning is a decision-making mechanism to ensure sustainable economic growth, social equity and sustainable environment. Urban planning focusing on local economic development incorporate economic growth, social equity and ecological sustainability, which can be threatened by different issues in specific cases (Susilawati and Al-Surf, 2011; MEP, 2005; MEP, 2010; Al-sayl, 2013). Urban planning should be a framework for enable sustained and inclusive economic growth and opportunities, land regulation, infrastructure of services.

Urban planning is a means to address global environmental challenges by transforming the urban realm. It is related to environmental sustainability and societal equity, energy efficiency and cultural diversity through providing new values. Regarding the issues that urban planners address are socio-economic infrastructure and development, environmental sustainability urban planning for climate change; poverty reduction, urban planning for safety and security, slum prevention and upgrading, disaster and post-conflict reconstruction, among other concerns and issues. Urban planning and management can integrate climate change strategies to address environmental challenges improving local conditions. The integration of the environment in urban planning and management has economic, health and quality of life benefits by incorporating existing tools.

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Traditional urban planning is appealing because it is easy to operate on the public policy arena. However, the radical urban planning approach is more connective and incorporates cyclical progressions (Schneekloth and Shibley, 1995) and connectedness in a more complex environment with more social risks and operational pressures. Other new approaches to urban planning may contribute to changes in attitudes to environmental issues and have significant influence. The more localized the planning action becomes, the more attached should be to the sustainable development agenda.

This paper is aimed to generate new insights by investigating the sustainable cities from urban and environmental planning. Goal is to identify trends in urban planning leading to sustainability of cities. Urban planning and development strategies and policy responses are addressed, including integrated planning approaches, green and blue infrastructure, etc. City development strategies support the urban planning practices undertaken by other international programs based on urban governance involving stakeholders under the assumption that urban growth is interdependent with economic growth and can be reconciled in a participatory and sustainable planning. Sustainable planning depends on a number of methods and tools. There is not one good answer, nevertheless it is highly important is based to examine spatial and inter-sectoral relationships and include social, environmental, and economic analysis that allow to elucidate issues and problems and finally to frame future vision of development.

The urban planning system should not be isolated from critical socio-economic and environmental processes. Urban planning and management of cities may integrate responses to improve the environment and to address local impacts.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Sustainable development has become a common planning agenda (Singapore Government, 2012). Sustainable development as a contribution of urban planning is associated and integrated with sustained economic growth, social equity and inclusion and environmental protection requiring political commitment, stakeholders’ involvement and community participation. Urban planning boards were dominated by pro-growth interests vs. environmental groups in the late 70s (Molotch, 1977). Urban planning is a tool for the development of urban areas aimed to improve their economic growth, social development, and to make more environmentally friendly, inclusive and safer cities.

**Economic Growth**

Urban planning can foster economic development by promoting urban economies of scale and agglomeration, adaptation to climate change impacts, reducing use of energy, etc. Urban planning supports local economic development and coordinates the urban spatial locations and the efficient distribution of economic, social and environmental activities achieving value capture from public investments. However, some urban planning systems are not able to confront the new socioeconomic reality of the cities. Urban spatial planning is a crucial tool in attaining economic development of a city (Fainstein, 2000, 1994; Faludi van der Valk, 1994). Spatial urban planning proceeds beyond description to explanation and to include regional and local economic development models, urban land and housing market, etc.

Urban spatial planning facilitates local economic development which need to be institutionalized in coordination with representatives of stakeholders and involvement of business sectors (Metaxas, 2002). Spatial urban planning and management is a dominant strategy for local economic development. The interaction between spatial planning and economic development and social change in urban region is double-edge: Spatial planning policies, legislation and practices result of socio-economic dynamics which in turn results from spatial organizations shaped by planning policies, legislation and practices (Healey et. al., 1997, p. 4).
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