

***Place and Role of Geography in New Urban and Regional Planning
Literature with Emphasis on Iran***

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Literature on Urban and Regional Planning changes rapidly and related disciplines such as Geography need to determine their specific place in new condition. Harvey believes that goals of field rely on geographer's personal philosophy and attitude to life, thoroughly. So, many of these philosophies are which provide different views on the nature of Geography for us and then, we cannot prescribe single philosophy for Geography as a field. This study relying on definition of geography as regional knowledge offers a conceptual framework and common language to describe role of geography in urban and regional planning. Geographical literature in connection with urban and regional planning has been encountered two main problems which can be classified in two categories: internal and external. The first of which is that various books with different topics are included in academic curriculum, resulting to confusion of students. Usually, Students do not provide an appropriate response to question "Why they read diverse collection of books and courses?" and are not able to communicate between Geography and urban and regional planning. Also, occasionally, new branches in geography make it the more fragmentary but it is necessary to remain a place for regional geography in Geography. The second problem is that unfortunately, other practitioners and specialists in urban and regional planning have not appropriate understanding on academic task, nature and position of geography in urban and regional planning. Besides these, why we attend to Hartshorne's philosophy of Geography is development of new approaches in Urban and Regional Planning which correspond with this philosophy in our country aptly.

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Methodology

Using available library resources and theoretical approach, paper was organized in three main sections: the first part is on the philosophy and objective of regional geography, the second section discusses modern attitudes in urban and regional planning and the third section makes relationship between geography and Planning with an emphasis on Iran.

Results and Discussion

Assuming that planning literature has been made little attention to practical methodology of participate, paper suggests action research approach as a democratic process concerned with developing practical knowledge in the pursuit of human purpose, by considering condition of our country, in which role of learning through individual and collective experiences about a certain area and use of action learning is emphasized which results to promote individual and collective capacity for collaboration and collective knowledge production. This approach requires an agreement on diversity and differences in perceptions and experiences about relationships between phenomena in one area and attempts to make new meaning of word through discourse process and finally to make common knowledge in a particular area through social action. While assuming that reduction planet Earth to gas, liquid and solid sectors is unrealistic and abstract classification, Regional Geography signifies its distinction and unity place as a field of knowledge in study of characters of areas as determined by the multiplicity of elements which, in interaction with each other give a specific character to an area and man and whatever is significant for him is criteria to select phenomena varying through area in a particular area. With these criteria, many unnecessary phenomena can be removed from study while the importance of studies does not reduce. Certainly, to understand what is significant for man living in an area, attempt to perceive people values and experiences is inevitable. So, we can expect as possible as comprehensive understanding of a given area. Regional geographers believe that no one permits to call himself geographer without having a specialty in a given region. In this context, geographer can understand a specific area and interrelation among variable phenomena within it more comprehensively than do some specialist related to urban and regional planning.

Conclusion

New trends in urban and regional planning emphasize on knowledge acquirement directly which necessitate change in decision-making process in planning from up-to-down to bottom-to-up process. Consequently, this change highlights participation importance and individual and collective values, interests and experiences in urban and regional planning. Although there have been written many about participation, unfortunately this literature has not provided practical methodology for participation because of their little attention to “learning” significance. Participation includes different individuals and groups with different values and interests. Some of them have high knowledge and information about a specific area and some have not. This may, in turn, jeopardize equal participation in decision making. Accepting significance of participation, geographers, besides planning task, must seriously engage to train civil society

because of their comprehensive understanding in a given region to increase capacity of social participation in regional and urban planning through training and promoting agreement between different social interests. In fact, they create an environment that facilitates continuous learning. When people were acquired proper perception on environmental, social and economical values in specific region, approaches such as action research provide practical solution for planners to use individual experience in planning process.

Keywords: Regional Geography, Urban and Regional Planning, Participation, Learning, Iran.

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