

# A Taxonomy for Planology

From: F. Archibugi, 'Introduction to Planology: The Paradigm Shift in Social Sciences'  
4<sup>th</sup> draft, Rome, 2000. Chapter 6. (still to be completed)

## 1. A Taxonomical Organization for Planology

The evolution towards planology, which has been described until now, legitimises a comprehensive and taxonomical organization of the *methods of study and research*, which belong to the subject area of planning sciences.

It is no longer a case of gathering in new circumstances, under the generic title of *Planning Science*, large pieces or parts of different disciplines, but rather of gathering and articulating the material and the subject according to a (*sui generis*) "system" or "taxonomy". For this purpose the "Planning Studies Centre" has promoted the Planning Science Information System (PSIS) in order to respond to the need to reunite according to an appropriate *taxonomy* an adequate scientific documentation which is still largely dispersed, but is now organically converging towards an increasingly uni-disciplinary and meta-disciplinary direction.

The main objective of the PSIS is to equip the different study areas that have converged in planology with an information system that should bear a unified and integrated approach to planning itself.

In this work (i.e. 'Introduction to Planology: a Paradigm shift in Social Sciences', Rome 2000), the unifying criteria have been determined according to which all the materials that, under different titles, can and must come into a complete classification of planology, can be organized.

A complete description of the information system created by the Planning Studies Centre can be found in a special sheet reproducing a "Classification System" (see Planning Studies Centre, 1987).

At the moment it is useful to mention the fact that the entire subject has been articulated into 14 "study-sectors" and several "sub-sectors" (see link on PSIS website to '**Taxocode**').

The 14 "study-sectors" respond to certain practical requirements to classify real documentation in a system not far from the new approach of planology but they also reflect a minimum of traditional range in which the real titles of research and books can be located.

All this produces a general classification (of which only the first and second digit is reproduced) of the matter that, except for the first three study sectors, distributes planning studies according to a rather traditional and sectorial criterion (Consumption, Labour, Finance, Environmental, Regional, Transport, Technology, Industry, Social Services, and so on, Planology).

One however must not forget that all the factors and "strands" that have pushed many traditional approaches to converge towards integration - interdisciplinary at first, then multidisciplinary and finally meta-disciplinary - (and which we tried to represent graphically by means of the Map) are factors which we have tried to take into account mainly in sector n.1 of the system, that of *Planology in general* and, to a lesser degree, in sectors 2 and 3, those of *Planometrics* and *Social Accounting*.

It is in fact in these three sectors that the majority of the "strands" (see link on PSIS website to **Map of Planology**), which can be considered the closest antecedents of the planological approach, are to be found.

We gave in more detail (see chapter 2 of 'Introduction to Planology') a description of the themes (and problems) of *General Planology* (which constitutes the first *Study sector* of the 14 sectors in which, as already mentioned, the PSIS has been articulated).

Planology in general, therefore, *in nuce* encloses all the other sectors, which represent "vertical" articulations or specifications of it.

This sector assumes, in the whole of the PSIS classification system, particular value in as much as it summarizes the unifying logic of the whole system. In it is covered - at the level of theoretical elaboration - the same itineraries, disciplinary and interdisciplinary, according to which other sectors of the taxonomical classifications system develop (with more specific attention to the individual sectors of application).

It was therefore necessary and appropriate to articulate and consolidate as a priority this fundamental section of the whole system.

The articulation of Sector 1 - *Planology, in general* - has been re-examined and perfected several times and its focus - though not completely definitive - has been particularly laborious since to reach an organic formulation of planning science it has not been possible to base oneself on any consolidated paradigm. It has been necessary, on the other hand, transcending the borders of the individual disciplines, to establish first of all the lines of integration which lead - at the level of theoretical formulation - to the "neo-discipline" of planology; and - at the level of operational practices - to the entire set of the procedures inherent in *general planning*.

The classification system obviously does not limit itself to considering the themes which narrowly correspond to this proposed theoretical line, but rather is pre-disposed in such a way as to be able to take into account also the disciplines from which planology draws its origins and the effective forms of planning developed historically.

The analysis of scientific modalities, and of the channels of reflection and thought, through which we have passed from each of the traditional disciplines to the neo discipline of planology (a sort of pre-history of planology itself), will be the object of subsequent examinations in the sphere of the PSIS.

## **2. Generalities on the new disciplinary paradigm**

The first sub-sector we meet, in the taxonomic articulation of Planology (1.0) is above all dedicated - as in all the other Sectors of the taxonomic Plan - to generalities.

It includes - besides manuals, which are few given the embryonic state of the new discipline - references to the activities of various institutes and centres of research and also to bibliographies, indexes, and automatic information systems.

The subject of manuals is a very important and delicate point. In fact only when there are Planology manuals will one be able to say that the new discipline has really consolidated itself. And only when there is a large awareness of the need to give to the emerging hotchpotch of material relating to planning in its various fields a manual-type systematisation, will such manuals enter into circulation.

Although it's true that "clothes don't make the man", the proof that a new way of understanding the planning process as a whole in its various fields and levels, will be shown by an attempt to collect in systematic form - as only a manual can do - the entire subject matter.

The crucial part of a manual is that concerning the functioning of the subject - how it works. This part, which cannot help but be also the longest, is that which should teach - and it is here that we find the essentially didactic function of a scientific discipline aimed at action and decision - how to construct a plan and how to manage it.

A manual could also be accompanied (at the beginning or the end or with special insertions during the course of the text) by general comments, information, and reviews of the historical precedents and most important moments regarding the discipline as also the debate concerning these. All this would increase the knowledge of the operator and widen the cognitive field. However, the function of a discipline is also that of simplifying the material born from free but disordered experimentation - both operative and theoretical - and to give to it the capacity to transmit and allow “know-how”.

In short, only when we have a sufficient number of manuals will we be able to say that Planology has in fact consolidated itself.

It is pointless to say that the idea of a “manual” does not have quantitative limitations. The matter may be so extended as to consist of numerous coordinated volumes which however follow an organized whole. But for this to happen it is necessary that this coordinated whole, or taxonomic index of the subject, exists. It is with this problem in mind that the job of structuring the PSIS has been carried out in its 14 sectors and - above all - in the articulation of sector 1.

### **3. Historical precedents and relationships ex post with the base disciplines**

Sub-sector 1.1 of the PSIS is thus dedicated to the studies (and the works that concern them) we have mentioned: information on and the review of the origins of Planology, its historical precedents, its more or less successful past experiments, etc.

Thus also sub-sector 1.2 is dedicated to the study of the relationship between the root or basic disciplines and Planology itself (already mentioned in Chap. 1 of ‘Introduction to Planology’). This study naturally has an “historic” dimension aimed at the examination of what relationship was developed in the past and which disciplinary roots Planology has fed on. It is a matter therefore of a valuation ex post which will serve to widen the awareness of new scholars, and the curiosity of older ones. Some would call all the studies and reflections aimed in this direction a *meta-disciplinary* activity. It cannot but increase the knowledge and critical spirit of scholars and operators. But if it is pushed too far, without at the same time a corresponding deepening of know how aimed at a new way of operating, then this meta-disciplinary activity will risk suffocating this latter requirement - for which it should function - and will risk becoming somewhat useless.

However, one has already mentioned (in par.1.6 of Chap 1 of ‘Introduction to Planology’) the connections between Planology and the base disciplines via the strands that have been identified in Map 1.

In the Chap.2 I have tried to illustrate the principal strands (included in Map 1) that converge in Planology, but in an order that could be consistent with the PSIS taxonomy (see link on PSIS website to ‘**Taxocode**’).

It is in fact necessary to clarify that if up until now (in Chap.1 of ‘Introduction of Planology’) Planology has been presented as a bunch of strands of research which converge toward Planology, in sector 1 of the PSIS (as in the PSIS as a whole) there will be given a more static representation of Planology; the exposition will be articulated in a hierarchic (tree-like) fashion: as expressed in the **Taxocode** tables (see link on PSIS website).

In fact, the PSIS attempts to respect the need to follow a certain taxonomy in the subject and follows a certain criteria; at the same time it recognises and classifies the subject according to cultural formations that have arisen spontaneously in the cultural disciplinary evolution and in the operating experiences of planning.

