

Preface

Spatial Planning and Culture –  
Symbiosis for a Better Understanding of  
Cultural Differences in Planning Systems,  
Traditions and Practices

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Territorial development, including not only urban and regional planning but also concepts of territorial cohesion and cooperation, has become of increasing importance throughout the world, but especially Europe: economic globalisation and the challenges posed by the European integration process have led to a 'spatial turn' and a more coherent approach to territorial development such as the European Spatial Development Perspective (CEC 1999) and the Territorial Agenda of the European Union (EU 2007). In these documents the role of space as 'territorial capital' (space as an important and distinguishable local production factor) and as dimension for 'spatial justice' (space as an integrating and balancing factor) is emphasised (Faludi 2005; Davoudi 2005; Soja 2008). The repositioning of space and territory is intensified by a 'new' interpretation of the category 'space': It is no longer a neutral category as it was between the 1960s and the 1980s that is viewed as a 'container' for economic and social processes, but it is rather the result of social relations among people living in a certain area or region (territory as social constructed space) where culture and cultural influences play a crucial role.

In other terms, urban and regional planning and development are strongly rooted in and restricted to the cultural contexts or traits of a society. To view planning as a technical or apolitical activity seems to be unrealistic and is furthermore seen to be incapable of achieving planning's goals:

Instead, planners and planning systems need to be responsive to difference, to be genuinely participatory and to strive to create deliberative contexts that, as far as possible, minimise inequalities of power and knowledge. Methods of studying planning therefore also emphasize the importance of listening to planners' view of their worlds; tracing the forms of communication they use among themselves and with their publics; and understanding their ethical dilemmas. (Huxley 2000, 369)

Thus, urban and regional planning and development are to be understood and practiced differently depending on their institutional settings and cultural roots that vary significantly across countries and regions (Friedmann 2005, 29; CEC 1997). Each national or regional context is characterised by particularities of history, by attitudes, beliefs and values, political and legal traditions, different socio-economic patterns and concepts of justice, interpretations of planning tasks and responsibilities, and different structures of governance – in other terms: by its specific cultural characteristics.

In the context of the European integration process, and with regard to the European Union's objectives of a balanced, polycentric, sustainable and competitive development of its territory (EU 2007), this requires knowledge of the specific 'planning cultures' of countries or regions to promote a professional discourse of knowledge and opinions on these issues. The term 'planning culture' in this sense particularly refers to the different planning systems and traditions, institutional arrangements of spatial development and the broader cultural context of spatial planning and development. It consists of more than planning instruments and procedures; it is the aggregate of the social, environmental, and historical grounding of urban and regional planning (Young 2008, 35) describing the specific 'cultural contexts' in which planning is embedded and operates.

### **The 'Cultural Turn' and its Impact on Urban and Regional Development**

One reason for the greater awareness of cultural contexts for urban and regional planning can be found in the 'cultural turn' in the 1990s which marked a watershed in recognising the significance of culture (and also space) compared to the discussions in the 1970s and 1980s when culture specific contexts and settings among nations and regions were neglected.<sup>1</sup> But with the cultural turn, economic globalisation and other challenges such as migration and integration policies, environmental policies or climate change led to a greater awareness and recognition of both cultural and territorial contexts. Friedmann (2005), for example, argues that despite the unifying and culturally homogenising powers of global interconnections and global policies, various culturally affected ways and strategies remain to react towards the global challenges for nations or regions. As a consequence, the cultural turn emphasises the value of

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1 In the 1980s especially the worldwide trend, 'with Reagan and Thatcher in the lead, seemed to support the theory of neoclassical economists that people all over the world are the same in their pursuit of self-interests and are best served by entrepreneurial states' (Sanyal 2005, xx). Specific cultural contexts and settings among nations and regions were not recognised although the ways in which these neoliberal approaches were implemented in national policies varied widely, due to the different cultural contexts of nations, regions or places.

cultural diversity. From the point of view of urban and regional development, it becomes obvious that this diversity also has a spatial component, bringing together the 'cultural turn' and the 'spatial turn', the latter having been a subject in economical sciences since the 1990s (Krugman 2002). This explains that each area or region has its own culture, its own institutional context, its own traditions, values and attitudes which provide solutions different from those of other places (Dear 2000, 2). Together with postmodern ideas and concepts, this underlines the heterogeneity of social groups, the pluralism of values and the significance of difference. Culture is no longer necessarily seen as a general or universal concept, but it is also recognised as pluralistic, fragmentary, ambivalent, dynamic and reflective.

Together, the 'cultural turn' and the 'spatial turn' can be seen as basis for an increasing awareness for the concepts of space and territory in times of globalisation, with its cultural contexts and social consequences. The awareness of culture and cultural aspects has already been reflected in global governance policies, such as the UN Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the UN Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity or the UN Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. These programmes and declarations have in common that they aim at enhancing the role of culture in national (planning) policies, recognising the knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity and strengthening intercultural dialogue and skills.

Besides, 'development thinking in the last decade has experienced a cultural turn' (Radcliffe 2006, 2). The failure of certain projects, in particular huge infrastructure projects, during the 1970s and 1980s has led to a change of policies in the 1990s, for example, those of the World Bank. Since then the World Bank has incorporated 'strong rationales for planning perspectives and opportunities that are based on culture' (Young 2008, 2). In other terms, the focus of the World Bank's development policy has tried to integrate local and regional traditions, practices and habits (intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual routines) more intensively.

### **Cultural Variety as Principle: The Role of Culture for the European Integration**

For Europe, with its 27 member states and many further partners, the awareness of culture and cultural contexts is of high importance. Europe's cultural heterogeneity and diversity on one hand is a burden and a challenge for a common policy, on the other hand it is seen as an 'indispensable feature to achieve the EU's strategic objectives of prosperity, solidarity and security' (CEC 2007, 3).

The basis for the action of the EU in the field of culture lies in the EU Treaty (EU 2008). Article 167 (the 'culture chapter') states that:

The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common heritage to the fore.

Action by the Union shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action  
....

The Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe.

The Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under the provisions of the Treaties, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures ....

This article, which was introduced into the Treaties in 1992 for the first time, recognises the EU's cultural diversity as one of its greatest assets. In this context, the EU interprets culture, amongst other things, in an anthropological way:

Culture lies at the heart of human development and civilisation. Culture is what makes people hope and dream, by stimulating our senses and offering new ways of looking at reality. It is what brings people together, by stirring dialogue and arousing passions, in a way that unites rather than divides. Culture should be regarded as a set of distinctive spiritual and material traits that characterize a society and social group. (CEC 2007, 2)

This also finds its expression in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 but even more in the European Commission's *Communication on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World* (CEC 2007), which was approved in 2007. The European agenda for culture proposes the first-ever comprehensive European strategy for culture, aiming amongst other things at the recognition of cultural diversity and the promotion of intercultural dialogue.

The role of culture can also be found in programmes of international collaboration in the field of spatial planning and development, which have been practiced since the 1990s in cross-border and transnational contexts (e.g. INTERREG, URBAN, URBACT etc.). These EU programmes and initiatives have the aim of helping Europe's regions in forming partnerships on joint projects. They have been designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion throughout the EU by fostering a balanced development of the continent through cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation.

All these different programmes and initiatives highlight the role of culture in the European integration process. This again, shows the necessity of analysing the ‘cultural contexts’ of the programmes in which spatial planning and development are embedded and operate, to organise these programmes, as well as the European integration process, successfully.

### **Purpose of this Publication**

Despite the increased cooperation in the field of urban and regional development across the European Union and various European planning processes and documents as the European Spatial Development Perspective (CEC 1999) or the Territorial Agenda (EU 2007), it is obvious that the term ‘planning’, with reference to urban and regional planning and development, is understood and practiced differently in the European countries. Depending on the particular perception and practice of urban and regional planning, the French term ‘aménagement du territoire’, the German *Raumordnung* or *Raumplanung*, the Dutch *Ruimtelijke Ordening* and the Spanish *urbanismo* do not necessarily share the same understanding of planning or pursue compatible objectives, models, strategies and instruments, due to different cultural contexts (CEC 1997, 23; Friedmann 2005, 31).

Urban and regional planning are influenced by culture through manifestations in history or by contemporary developments and via tangible and intangible ways. As a result planning systems and traditions, development processes in cities and regions, planning concepts and decision-making are always influenced by cultural contexts and the cultural background of the people involved in planning processes. Different perceptions and meanings of space, as well as different understandings of planning, planning systems and processes, affect the Europe-wide collaboration of actors. Even within a national context, cultural differences between regions can be found, but in cross-border or transnational activities especially there can be great contrasts in terms of the planning traditions and decision-making of collaborating countries and regions. To identify the cultural influences on spatial development and to use the European cultural diversity for the development of the European territory, contemporary comparative studies on urban and regional planning and development inevitably have to recognise the impact of culture. It is no longer acceptable to deal with spatial planning and development as a nationally isolated issue because the global interconnections and the EU integration policies have to be considered.

This publication recognises the need to study the relations between cultural variety and planning practice on a regional scale in Europe. The objective is to analyse the relations between different perceptions and meanings of space, specific planning traditions and philosophies, and cultural rules, norms, traditions, and values on the one side, and the practice of regional

planning and development on the other side. All contributions in this volume aim at contributing to the European integration process by gaining a better understanding of the role of culture for spatial planning. According to Breulliard and Fraser (2007, xiv):

the emphasis of the work however is not to describe what is happening in each country's professional practice but to compare practice and to examine in more depth the nature of the similarities and differences which arise, with a view to achieving a better understanding of the rationale ... behind each.

The objective of this volume is to develop a theoretical basis and conceptual framework for a systematic analysis and comparison of different planning cultures (planning models and practices related to an institutional and social context) on the basis of a consistent system of criteria. This may contribute to achieving a better understanding of the relationship between the cultural context (including the specific socio-economic patterns and related cultural norms, values, traditions, and attitudes) and spatial planning as an operative instrument of territorial policy. By combining cultural studies, social sciences and planning theory it is also intended to enrich the discussion about the use and the application of theories in planning research. To achieve these aims, the contributions of this volume consider the following main research questions:

- Analysis of planning practices: are there significant variations in urban and regional planning and development practices? Do such variations arise from differences in planning cultures, meaning the (historical) 'collective ethos and dominant attitudes of planning regarding the appropriate role of the state, market forces, and civil society in influencing social [and spatial] outcomes' (Sanyal 2005: xxi)? Which social practices in a society influence the dominant planning culture?
- Analysis of culture: how can culture be defined or what is the role of culture in planning and development processes? How are planning cultures formed? What are the core cultural traits which distinguish planning models and practices in different countries or regions? In which way do they differ from each other? Which influences do different sets of political, administrative and legal traditions, socio-economic patterns and structures of governance have? Are 'notions of social efficiency, social justice, and moral responsibility redefined to suit the needs of the changing global economy' (Sanyal 2005, xxii)?
- Analysis of theoretical (planning) approaches: how can these empirically classified cultural traits be ascertained theoretically? Which criteria are useful to describe and identify planning cultures? What could a consistent system of criteria look like and how can 'planning culture' be operationalised for comparative studies? Can elements of

cultural theories and social sciences be transferred to the field of spatial planning and development?

- Analysis of convergence or divergence of planning cultures: how does the continuous process of European integration with its social, political and technological changes affect planning models and practices in European member states and how do they structure institutional responses? What are the affects on planning models and practices?

## **Outline of the Book**

Cultural diversity is the main characteristic but also a challenge for a multiple community such as the European Union. By analysing and understanding this cultural variety, and in particular the impacts of culture on urban and regional development, this volume tries to contribute towards a better understanding of Europe and the European integration process. All contributions aim at identifying cultural influences on spatial development and, through a conceptual framework and a systematic comparison, to enable professionals and scientists as well as practitioners to value and to make use of the European cultural diversity in the field of urban and regional planning for the common development of the European territory.

### *Planning Culture – Theoretical Approaches*

The first part of the volume sets the frame for all the following contributions by presenting and connecting cultural theories and planning theories to develop a concept of an analytical model that explains the influences of culture on planning procedures and practices in a comparative perspective.

Hans Gullestrup, in his contribution ‘Theoretical Reflections on Common European (Planning-) Cultures’, presents a theoretical and anthropological approach for a better understanding of the concept of culture. To analyse the complexity of culture, Gullestrup distinguishes a horizontal and vertical dimension of culture. The horizontal dimension of culture consists of immediately visible cultural traits and is completed by the vertical dimension, i.e. the analysis of the fundamental legitimating cultural traits which will create a deeper insight into the culture observed. In conclusion, Gullestrup presents common European values as well as remarks and recommendations regarding the transferability of the analytical model for analysing planning practices and cultures.

In his contribution ‘Planning Cultures En Route to a Better Comprehension of Planning Processes?’, Dietrich Fürst approaches planning culture as a scientific concept. Referring to theoretical concepts of political, public administration and organisational sciences, he presents research results with regard to spatial planning systems but, at the same time, underlines a lack

of comparative studies about influence of culture on planning practices. He stresses that attitudes, beliefs and values of individuals and groups as well as their interactions within societies are becoming more important for the comparative analysis of planning practices. He concludes that the discussion on cultural differences in planning could improve planning practices if it was translated into learning devices helping to understand and deal with cultural diversity.

According to the contributions of Hans Gullestrup and Dietrich Fürst, the following chapter, 'En Route to a Theoretical Model for Comparative Research on Planning Cultures', by Joerg Knieling and Frank Othengrafen, presents a theoretical model to encourage a scientific and systematic comparison of planning cultures on the basis of a consistent system of criteria. The outlined 'culturised planning model' is able to consider and decode cultural phenomena of planning not only on the visible 'surface' (horizontal) but also on a 'hidden' (vertical) level. By introducing the dimensions of (1) 'planning artefacts', (2) 'planning environment' and (3) 'societal environment' the model allows the systematic and comprehensive analysis and comparison of planning cultures. In this context, the 'culturised planning model' includes possible interrelations between cultural and (postmodern) planning theories to explain the influences of culture on planning procedures and practices. The model and its (analytical) cultural dimensions describe a culture-based planning paradigm which provides the framework for the analysis and description of the various planning cultures in the following contributions.

### *Planning Cultures in Northwestern Europe*

Following the theoretical derivations the next contributions describe attributes of planning cultures and practices of Northwestern European member states. Friedhelm Fischer starts by describing the German planning culture in his contribution 'How German Is It? Planning Cultures and Different Types of Government – An Essay in Epistemological Eclecticism'. He identifies some of the important cultural origins of the German planning traditions and cultures by means of analysing the Prussian virtues (e.g. punctuality, modesty and diligence, rule of law, obedience to authority, reliability and the focus on (scientific) theories as basis for decision-making) and their consequences for the contemporary German planning system and culture. He also explains the relation of the tradition of a belated political modernisation and radicalisation to the tradition of an issue-related or result-oriented culture of decision-making.

In their contribution 'Planning Culture in Austria – The Case of Vienna, the Unlike City', Jens Dangschat and Alexander Hamedinger underline the 'shift from government to governance' in Vienna. In this context, they particularly focus on the spatial impacts of the clientelist relationship between local government and citizens, the high concentration of decision-making

processes in the administration and within the extended structure of the ruling Social Democratic Workers Party, the Austrian form of cooperatism (*Sozialpartnerschaft*), and on the provision of services of general interest to the public.

In most traditions of spatial planning, planning policy documents involve a symbolic representation of the territory in the form of icons, diagrams and maps. In her contribution 'Visualising Spatial Policy in Europe' Stefanie Dühr shows that the visualisation of spatial policy is deeply rooted in a planning culture: a cross-national comparative analysis of the cartographic and symbolic representations of spatial policy in Germany, Great Britain and the Netherlands illustrates significant differences in the understanding of planning in different European countries affecting the content and design of 'policy maps'. The contribution concludes by discussing practical implications for visualising spatial policy in future cooperation processes of transnational spatial planning.

### *Planning Cultures in Eastern Europe*

Due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the former Eastern Bloc the analysis of planning culture in countries which used to belong to one of these 'groups' seems to be very promising to examine possible shifts in planning practice that have taken place recently. In his contribution 'Remarks on the Features of Lithuanian Planning Culture' Eugenijus Staniunas, amongst others, deals with the inconsistency and different perceptions of planning culture. By showing important facts and features of the planning cultures in Lithuania – e.g. the non-existence of an education for and profession of planners, numerous changes in spatial planning law, the lasting influence of former attitudes of the Soviet Union and the continuing problem of illegal construction – the chapter outlines the logical inter-relations between ideologies and planning practices and illustrates tendencies of the contemporary planning culture of the Baltic States.

Veli-Pekka Tynkkynen examines 'Planning Rationalities among Practitioners in St Petersburg, Russia – Soviet Traditions and Western Influences', analysing how the planning discourse in Russia has changed since the collapse of the Soviet Union. He concludes that, although planning seems to 'borrow' from the Soviet paradigm the idea of overarching instrumental rationality, including affording a superior position to planning professionals and neglecting aspects of democracy and sustainability, the present planning discourse in St Petersburg also underlines that urban planning and development is performed and led by powerful developer corporations in an extremely incremental manner. It is illustrated in this context that in Russia both planning and planning studies resemble Soviet times and that the gap between theorising and 'Realpolitik' remains wide.

Violeta Pușcașu's objective in her contribution 'The House of Many Different Ages' is to build an argument for the diversity of the components in Romanian planning in an expository manner. Therefore, she introduces the image of 'the house of many different ages', a model of describing the Romanian planning culture by means of its cultural and historic traditions. She emphasises the administrative institutions and territorial levels of administration in which former and new levels and structures coexist, the normative level which displays a simple and discontinuous legislative synopsis, the opposable political context with direction and rhythm shifts, the external influences of proximity (former USSR versus EU, the Balkans versus the West) and the weak local planning culture and theory, where the consistent and hermetic Western theory reaches with difficulty.

### *Planning Cultures in Southern Europe*

After various national and regional planning cultures and practices of Northwestern and Eastern Europe have been analysed, Part 4 presents some prominent features from Southern Europe. By showing features of the planning cultures in Italy Luciano Vettoretto outlines some interrelations between ideologies and planning practices. In his contribution 'Planning Cultures in Italy – Reformism, Laissez-Faire and Contemporary Trends' he describes recent changes in Italian planning culture, especially the impact of the European Union's key principles on the technical and administrative culture of local authorities that have overcome the sectoral and hierarchical orientation of public policies and spatial planning. Furthermore, he underlines the importance of the traditions and principles of 'reformism', 'patronage' (clientelism), and 'familism' for the understanding of planning practices in Italy.

The contribution 'Planning Culture and the Interference of Major Events, The Recent Experience of Athens' by Konstantinos Serraios, Byron Ioannou and Evangelos Asprogerakas gives a brief revision of the fundamental cultural features and spatial standards of Athens metropolitan area and the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004. Against the background of the administrative structure, institutional framework and planning instruments, the interference of the planning of the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004 as well as the post-Olympic use of these venues are presented and analysed. The authors evaluate the yields, potential detrimental effects and unexploited opportunities of the Olympic Games for Athens' metropolitan area and its inhabitants on the basis of regional and urban planning practices.

The aim of Susanne Prehl and Gul Tuçaltan's contribution 'Coping with the Era of Change – Planning and Decision-making under Globalisation in Turkey: The Case of French Street Urban Transformation Project, Istanbul' is to examine the effect of globalisation and neoliberal policies, and the related interdependent variables of economy, technology, society, politics,

administration and space, on planning and decision-making processes in Turkey. By means of selected urban development and regeneration processes in the city of Istanbul, the authors show how Turkish planners and decision-makers cope with the influences of globalisation and with changes of related ethical and cultural values.

### *Interdependencies between European Spatial Policies and Planning Culture*

Planning cultures are not only affected by endogenous (national or regional) practices, rules and developments but also by exogenous frameworks or developments. Spatial planning in Europe, for example, is undergoing an incremental process of Europeanisation. In their contribution 'The Impact of Europeanisation on Planning Cultures', Bas Waterhout, Joao Mourato and Kai Böhme argue that Europeanisation consists of processes of construction, diffusion, and institutionalisation of formal and informal rules and norms, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated into national and regional contexts under the influence of their cultural contexts. They explore the question of whether the Europeanisation of spatial planning as such also leads to changing planning cultures in Europe. They go on to consider where these changes in planning systems may lead – to convergence or even to a European planning culture.

Roel During, Rosalie van Dam and André van der Zande focus on the present EU ideology and policy that recognise cultural variety as an important characteristic of Europe. In their contribution 'A Missing Link in the Cultural Evolution of the European Union: Confronting EU Ideology with INTERREG III Practice Concerning Cultural Diversity' they show that the desired synergy between maintaining cultural diversity and simultaneously achieving economic and political development in practice is to some extent a 'fairytale'. By analysing and evaluating EU policy and ideology on the one side and (culturally manifested) INTERREG practices on the other side, the chapter provides answers to the question of whether the EU really is respecting and supporting the cultural diversity of its constituting regions and if the regions recognise the grounding cultural aspects of their planning practice.

Simin Davoudi's contribution 'Territorial Cohesion, European Social Model and Transnational Cooperation' aims at providing a deeper understanding of the concept of territorial cohesion by tracing its roots in the two influential but different planning cultures and traditions of France and Germany and by positioning it in the wider debate on the European social model. She suggests that the concept can be interpreted as the spatial manifestation of the European model but that, at the same time, the application of territorial cohesion as a spatial concept is likely to be fragmented and diverse, due to the diversity of the national planning systems and their underlying social philosophies and cultural values.

## Conclusions

The goal of this volume is to give a systematic and comprehensive introduction to the enduring phenomenon of culture and its impact on contemporary spatial planning and development practices. Against this background Dominic Stead and Vincent Nadin argue in their concluding contribution ‘Planning Cultures between Models of Society and Planning Systems’ that the characteristics of spatial planning systems and practices are embedded in wider models of society. They review the parallel dynamics of models of society and typologies of planning systems and identify the level of correspondence between them. Drawing on evidence from various European countries presented in the chapters of this volume they show that many planning systems are undergoing similar types of changes although the underlying cultural context, the model of society and the nature of the planning system are quite different. The extent to which these changes in planning systems lead to convergence is also considered.

In the final chapter, ‘Planning Cultures in Europe between Convergence and Divergence: Findings, Explanations and Perspectives’, Joerg Knieling and Frank Othengrafen summarise the different approaches to and elements of planning culture on the basis of the culturised planning model (see earlier contribution of Knieling and Othengrafen). On basis of the (theoretical) distinction between ‘planning artefacts’, ‘planning environment’ and ‘societal environment’ they summarise whether and to what extent cultural phenomena are considered and decoded in planning practices.

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