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ID 1560 | RETHINKING PLANNING CULTURES: FROM EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH TO CONCEPTUAL IMPLICATIONS

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1 INTRODUCTION

Planning cultures was for a long period of time perceived as merely an academic concept. However, in recent years, scholars have turned to evidence based research to provide a more profound understanding of the notion of planning cultures (Othengrafen et al, 2015). Notwithstanding, planning offers a plethora of topics potentially serving as windows of investigation for planning cultures. The aim of this paper is to synthesize insight from two different angles of investigating planning cultures: shrinking cities and border regions. Starting out with own research on shrinking cities and planning cultures (Pallagst et al 2013; 2016), and border regions and planning cultures (Pallagst, forthcoming), this paper introduces results and methodological frames from both realms. In particular, the author's previous research on shrinking cities made clear that planning cultures can be investigated by evidence based research utilizing the shrinking cities phenomenon. In the second part of the paper the author will make an attempt to derive preconditions from this evidence based research for a critical reflection of planning cultures, which might necessitate a rethinking of the notion of planning cultures.

2. FRAMING EVIDENCE BASED RESEARCH FOR SHRINKING CITIES AND PLANNING CULTURES

2.1 THE CONTEXT OF PLANNING CULTURES

Different institutional and cultural conditions have brought about spatial planning systems that display basic features that are essentially comparable; however, these planning systems are tailored to meet specific cultural, normative and spatial situations. Despite the growing demand for an international viewpoint in urban and regional planning discussion, 'planning cultures' is not (yet) an established research topic in the sphere of urban and regional development. However, the topic has recently seemed to be on the rise in planning debate. As demonstrated by papers and tracks at several recent congresses of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP), a considerable informal discourse about planning cultures already exists. Nevertheless, there is – on a global scale – no clear definition of the topic (Fuerst 2009).

The term 'planning cultures' is not new – it can be traced back to Selle's work about collaborative planning (Selle, 1999). Interest in the topic of planning cultures may also be fuelled by the so-called 'cultural turn in planning' (Soja, 1999; Knieling and Othengrafen, 2009b), emphasising the role of culture in spatial planning, and thus recognising the impact of culture on spatial planning's international comparative research component. In particular, the growing demand for comparative research projects in the framework established by the EU's Community Initiatives, such as INTERREG, makes clear that planning culture is a component which is deeply embedded in a nation's planning system and thus needs to be considered in comparative spatial research (Fuerst, 2009).

In recent years, two major projects have investigated planning cultures further: MIT has been at the forefront of research in this respect with the publication of an edited volume (Sanyal (ed.), 2005). In this book, Comparative planning cultures, John Friedmann (2005), who has published extensively about the changing notions of planning, sets out basic claims for dealing with planning cultures in discourse and in teaching, while at the same time acknowledging plurality. The second notable research work is the EU funded project CULTPLAN, which addresses planning cultures in the European realm, and takes the research work further in particular for discussing theoretical approaches, and suggesting a 'culturalised planning model' (see Knieling and Othengrafen, 2009a; Othengrafen, 2010). It thus becomes clear, that planning cultures is a multilayered subject facing continuing changes, some of them induced by factors such as Europeanisation, and internationalisation.

2.2 THE CONTEXT OF SHRINKING CITIES

Current debates in urban and regional studies display a rising awareness that several cities in Europe and the US have to deal with challenges of long-term demographic and economic changes leading to urban shrinkage associated with housing vacancies, underused infrastructure and other negative impacts. The issues of shrinking cities were often predominantly interpreted as effects of the 'hollowing out' processes of the urban centres, triggered by suburbanisation and urban sprawl. In contrast to such internal process assumptions, overarching globalisation pressures initiated decline in many American and European regions. Urban shrinkage and economic downsizing in structurally weak areas – e.g. in old industrialised 'rust belts' or in peripheral rural areas – are most commonly symptoms of societal transformations, that can be widely observed in Europe and in the US (Pallagst and Wiechmann, 2005).

Shrinking cities has been a stigmatised topic in planning research for a long time. The discourse in planning in Europe, in particular in Germany, has meanwhile actively taken on the issue of shrinking cities and a multitude of literature has been written on the topic (e.g. Haeussermann and Siebel, 1988; Bontje 2004; Gestring et al., 2005; Siedentop and Wiechmann 2007). In the United States, however, academic discussion has lagged behind, with only a few scholars spelling out urban shrinkage (Beauregard, 2003; Hollander et al., 2009). In view of the reality of shrinking cities on the planning agenda, one has to ask if the one-sided focus on growth in planning is over. Pallagst and Wiechmann (2005) have hypothesised that planning for shrinking cities does not work under the preconditions of urban growth, but requires a shift to a somewhat different paradigm. The challenge of shrinking cities seems to have the potential to trigger change in planning cultures.

With the active embrace of urban shrinkage in the German planning discussion, one might speculate whether growth has come to an end as a dominant paradigm in planning – at least in this country. This aspect is striking when considering changing planning cultures; for international comparative research it is important whether this change will be a general trend, or, an aspect that is driven by local or national specifics. In the US, for instance, there is speculation that the political consensus for urban growth is diminishing (Purcell, 2000) and the author has called for a shift in paradigm when it comes to US planning for shrinking cities (Pallagst, 2007). The shrinking cities phenomenon thus offers an opportunity to investigate the principles upon which spatial planning has traditionally been based and, by this means, it may help shed light on changing planning cultures.

2.3 EVIDENCE BASED RESEARCH ON PLANNING CULTURES AND SHRINKING CITIES

In current planning debates the term ‘shrinking city’ usually describes a densely populated urban area that has on the one hand faced a considerable population loss, and is, on the other hand, currently undergoing a profound economic transformation, with some symptoms of a structural crisis (Pallagst, 2008). According to Oswalt (2006) more than a quarter of the world’s metropolises shrank in the 1990s and, notwithstanding ongoing urbanisation processes, this number will continue to increase. With growing interconnectedness both on a European and on a global scale, a significant emerging task for planning researchers is to facilitate a wide-ranging exchange on economic, social, and environmental developments. Hypothesis of the research was that the dynamics of urban shrinkage most likely trigger changes in planning paradigms, planning systems, planning strategies and planning cultures in the respective countries.

Pallagst et al investigated shrinking cities as a window for possible changes in planning cultures in the frame of the EU project PlanShrinking (2010-2015).

In order to derive a typology of planning cultures applicable for the context of shrinking cities, the authors modified Othengrafen’s culturized planning model (Othengrafen 2010) describing the general context of planning cultures towards shrinkage (see figure 1). Figure 1 demonstrates general criteria of planning culture, supported by a specific criterion for shrinking cities: shrinkage context. ‘Societal context’ displays the ‘backbone’ of a planning culture with a range of more general understandings, ‘planning context’ describes the beliefs of the planning profession, and ‘planning toolset’ refers to the methods at hand. The category, ‘shrinking context’, comprises those aspects which might trigger change in planning cultures due to shrinkage and its implications on urban development and planning reactions.

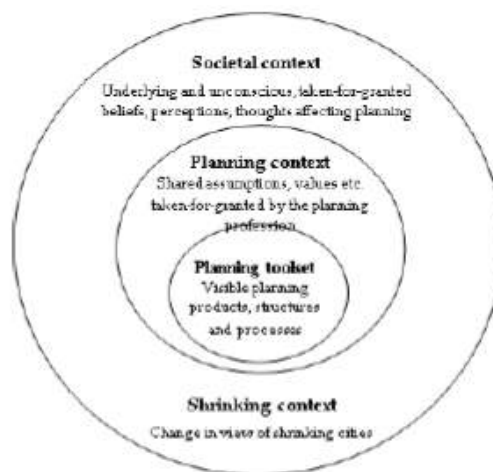


Figure 1: Facets and layers of planning culture with reference to shrinking cities
 Source: Pallagst et al 2013.

In addition, the PlanShrinking research traced several preconditions for the joint research of planning cultures and shrinking cities:

1. Both topics -- planning cultures and shrinking cities -- can be labelled emerging topics in spatial planning. Just like planning cultures, shrinking cities has been widely underrepresented in international comparative urban and regional research.
2. The shrinking city phenomenon is a multi-dimensional process, comprising cities, parts of cities or metropolitan areas that have experienced dramatic decline in their economic and social bases. Urban decline and the loss of employment opportunities are closely linked in a downwards spiral, leading to an out-migration of population (Pallagst, 2008). However, despite the fact that globalisation is a trigger for urban shrinkage, economic transformations do not affect all cities in the same way; on the contrary, shrinkage can show very different characteristics depending on national, regional and local contexts (Cunningham-Sabot and Fol, 2007). Research on planning cultures is usually attributed to a national context of a planning system – however, this also involved different levels of planning (from national to local).
3. Planning cultures serves as an academic concept which is lacking an evidence base, whereas shrinking cities is a planning challenge vividly engaging practitioners and academics likewise in search of urban or regional solutions.

When for example examining the US and the German planning realms, it becomes apparent that they offer very specific yet different planning cultural settings (most different systems). While the US planning culture has been labelled ‘market oriented’ (Pallagst, 2007), the German one offers a more elaborate multi-level planning system, often criticised as being inflexible (Heemeyer, 2006). In an earlier publication on planning in the US, the author argued that a paradigm shift is taking place in planning from ‘growth-centred planning’ to ‘shrinking smart’ (Pallagst, 2009).

Case-study analyses carried out by the author and her team focused on exploring documentation, archival records, and planning documents regarding planning and rebuilding activities in selected case study cities. A stakeholder-based analysis (by means of 6 qualitative interviews in each city with e.g. city government staff, land bank staff, housing companies, and NGOs, on site investigations, and a workshop with select interviewees in the year 2012) aimed at gathering in-depth knowledge about experiences with applying strategies to steer the development of shrinking cities. These investigations were looking into the process of shrinkage, and possible changes in planning strategies and thus planning cultures. In addition, the authors further investigated the case of Flint in the year 2014 with specific focus on aspects of the new master plan of the city. The reason for the choice of Flint was – among other aspects – the new place type category ‘green innovation area’ introduced in the master plan. This investigation was facilitated by an on-site visit and qualitative interviews with 8 stakeholders (land bank staff, city government staff from various departments, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, NGOs).

The following research questions were investigated:

- Which are the trajectories of shrinkage in the case study cities?
- Which actions were taken in terms of planning for decline?
- How is the implementation of these measures taking place?

2.4 LESSONS LEARNED FOR PLANNING CULTURES FROM INVESTIGATING SHRINKING CITIES

It turns out that shrinkage is indeed challenging existing planning cultures in a way that planning paradigms are shifting from growth centered planning towards more realistic and sustainable development paths.

The cases investigated demonstrate that industrial transformation affects manufacturing towns to a large extent, inducing unemployment, housing vacancies, and population losses – the usual downward spiral. What is striking is that the attitude towards shrinkage seems to change: when looked at the types of strategies to cope with shrinkage, most cities found their way past the phase of ignoring shrinkage and are in an intermediate state of maintaining the urban fabric and actively planning for a smaller and more sustainable type of urban development, where greening and right-sizing play a role. The downward spiral

could potentially be turned into new perspectives for the cities. Among these are new visions and possibly also employment perspectives, mostly in the frame of right-sizing, greening, or leveraging substitute industries.

For many shrinking cities it is a fact that planning has changed to a dramatic extent from growth as the main focus to reusing abandoned land and managing vacancies. Redeveloping vacant land is probably the main opportunity for shrinking cities to adapt to past and future challenges. This might be facilitated by right-sizing, strengthening the urban core, green infrastructure, and substitute industries.

All in all, the PlanShrinking research suggests that due to the large amount of economic, social and urban fabric related problems, shrinking cities seem like the new labs for experimenting with planning under crises and changing conditions.

3 INVESTIGATING PLANNING CULTURES AND BORDER REGIONS – A FIRST ATTEMPT

3.1 SHIFTING THE EVIDENCE BASE: WHY INVESTIGATE BORDER REGIONS IN TERMS OF PLANNING CULTURES?

The author's previous research on shrinking cities made clear that planning cultures can be investigated by evidence based research utilizing the shrinking cities phenomenon. Nonetheless, planning offers a plethora of topics potentially serving as windows of investigation for planning cultures – one of them being border regions. Research by Sorensen (2015) further underpins this argumentation: He suggests that planning cultures might change when faced with as he calls it “critical junctures of institutional change and innovation in planning systems” (Sorensen, 2015: 33). One of these critical junctures might be the context of border regions.

Tus the aim of the following part is to shift the window of investigating planning cultures from the evidence base of shrinking cities towards the realm of border regions. The following paragraphs will make a first attempt in order to derive preconditions from shrinking cities research for the field of border regions.

3.2 SOME THOUGHTS ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PLANNING FOR BORDER REGIONS

Border regions are areas of high spatial relevance for many European countries like e.g. Germany with borders facing nine neighboring countries. In general, planning conditions and planning requirements are in flux due to new spatial challenges like demographic change, migration flows, and EU requirements in line with territorial cohesion. The situation is growing in complexity in a cross border setting as different planning systems and different planning styles come together in border regions.

Planning as a discipline has been shaped – among others - by the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) representing topical discourses among planning scholars throughout Europe. On its website, AESOP declares:

‘To us planning is a tool to promote and manage change with a spatial approach. It is also a tool for the preservation of the environment and our cultural heritage. The core of this task is to conduct planning activities in such a way that society benefits and that economic, environmental, social and other goals are met’ (Association of European Schools of Planning, 2014).

This definition shows that planning today is deeply embedded in society and culture. When looking at the specific realm of border regions, planning in this particular setting is facing additional challenges arising from the cross-border situation, which are:

1. Different planning traditions and planning cultures: planning cultures are assumed to be congruent with nation states, but even within nations there might be various planning

cultures. In turn, border regions are accommodating multiple planning cultures which have brought about different planning styles and different planning tools.

2. A lack of cross-border knowledge on planning processes and planning tools: planning practitioners are operating in their specific administrative setting, be it a local entity (planning office of a community or district,) or a regional body. As planning across the border is operating under different conditions and is bringing about new legal or operational changes on an infrequent basis, keeping up with the evolution of planning is a challenge in itself, and this is often not at the heart of the planners' day-to-day work.
3. Different governance styles: Operating and implementing planning is in line with national governance styles, and usually on a formal basis planning is intertwined with existing legal frameworks entrusting planning competencies to governmental bodies. This means that for some planning tasks there is no matching counterpart on the other side of the border.

But even when there are wide-ranging challenges, usually at the same account opportunities come up. For the specific situation of planning for border regions these are:

- In terms of the fact that planning has the potential to adapt: The opportunity of bridging cultural gaps by reaching out across planning cultural boundaries.
- In terms of conceptualizing planning: The chance of creating (although not always implementing) joint territorial visions for parts of or the entire border region.
- In terms of governance: The possibility of building strong partnerships and networks which in turn help to enhance the flow of knowledge between cross-border planning realms.
- In terms of planning's implementation: The ability to create, explore and apply new tools specifically tailored to the situation of border regions.
- In terms of the supranational (EU) level: The prospect of becoming testing labs for the grand European scheme of territorial cohesion

The ability and the willingness to collaborate across borders can be seen as a specific European learning process (Platzer, 1993). Growing economic interdependencies trigger the creation of new inter- and supranational levels of cooperation. In line with the proclaimed Europe of the regions, which has been a European paradigm since the 1990s (Irmen, 1992), the role of the nation state might become less relevant in border areas, however, the border region as a territorial entity becomes a prominent feature of territorial development.

Nevertheless, in terms of their spatiality, border areas are not necessarily realms of homogeneous conditions, but they might display spatial bottlenecks and challenges such as: polarized economic, social and demographic development, gaps in traffic and transportation (in particular transit), social requirements and infrastructure needs in terms of education and health care.

These challenges might be severe, putting the quality of life in border regions to a test, which might in turn lower the regions' attractiveness in economic, social and environmental terms. This is where planning comes into play as a discipline with the potential to steer, guide, and collaborate in terms of and actors in terms more livable development paths.

However, based on their distinctive planning traditions, countries involved in cross border planning have their very own planning systems. These usually operate on different administrative levels, and specific actors operating on these levels have the competency to fulfil planning tasks and deliver planning artefacts, be it actual plans, zoning codes, strategic documents, or visions (Pallagst, forthcoming).

Planning operates in quite different administrative systems, with a mismatch in institutions and formal planning documents. Based on planning cultural characteristics we encounter the following:

- Different local and societal conditions.
- Different legal framework.
- Different planning and administrative levels.
- Different graphics.
- Different scope.
- Different actors.

- Different plan content.

Some of these differences in planning tools will be demonstrated in this thematic issue by the article for the greater region by Bechtold et al, showcasing relevant topical examples of planning documents of the Greater Region.

Yet, all over Europe the complexity of planning for border regions is aggravated by planning tools which are supplied in a cross border mode, such as project funding tools (e.g. INTERREG), governance tools (e.g. EGTCs), monitoring tools (e.g. GIS in border regions), policy tools (e.g. ESPON), and visioning and development tools (e.g. regional development concepts). This compilation shows that in border regions, several planning tools exist, covering a wide range of planning activities. At this respect the question might come up, if border regions display a planning system, maybe even a planning culture of their own? But, as long as there is no formal competency for planning which reaches out across existing national borders, all planning activities remain in the sphere of informality.

An in-depth comparative analysis of planning tools cannot be delivered at this point, as this paper's purpose is addressing research requirements rather than investigating cross-border planning styles. In this respect, a research frame will be suggested in the following part.

3.3 PRECONDITIONS FOR A RESEARCH FRAME FOR PLANNING CULTURES IN A CROSS-BORDER CONTEXT

In a first attempt to conceptualize planning cultures and border regions, the author suggests a research frame (see figure 2) derived from the facets and layers of planning culture in terms of shrinking cities (see figure 1). This research frame (figure 2) adds the border context as a new component to the planning cultural context.

Aspects to be considered within the border context touch base on three levels related to time, offering potential for further research are the following

1. Historical traces:

How do path dependencies manifest themselves in planning in a border context, in particular in terms of the question in how far planning in border regions has already adapted. This ties in with Sorensen's (2015) plea for historical institutionalist analyses of comparative planning contexts.

2. Status quo:

Which challenges in terms of space and governance do border regions have to face in their respective setting? Which planning instruments/tools/strategies are applied and implemented, and what is their spatial impact?

3. Future development:

In how far is the border context contributing to a knowledge transfer or exchange among planning professionals in the border context? How can we effectively leverage potentials of policy diffusion?

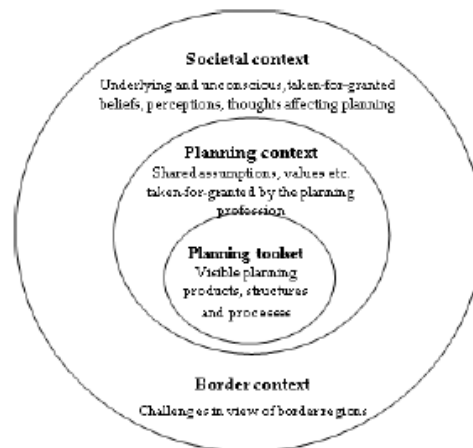


Figure 2: Facets and layers of planning culture with reference to border regions
 Source: Own design based on Pallagst et al., 2013.

4 CONCLUSIONS

What can we learn for planning cultures in the context of border regions? Compared to the shrinking cities research, which usually draws on comparative approaches between cities not necessarily in close proximity to each other, the border context is different. Here, areas from at least two countries form a regional setting, which enhances complexities for the realm of planning cultures to a wide extent. Moreover, not only different planning cultures, but also different planning systems, and a multitude of different planning tools and different stakeholders collide.

This has most likely implications for existing planning tools, but additional challenges arise from the fact that in the particular realm of border regions, new cross border planning tools are cropping up, almost shaping a planning system of their own. In this particular context, the question arises, what the status of these tools will be, and what kind of interdependencies arise between them and the set of national planning tools. And, more pronouncedly, if there is potential to shape a border regional planning culture of its own. With many border regions existing along Europe's regions, the evidence base is there, now research on planning cultures needs to follow.

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ID 1572 | REVISITING THE CONCEPTS OF SCALE AND RESCALING IN RELATION TO THE EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT : Seeking to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the processes of rescaling in European macro-regional strategies, this paper aims to develop and test a conceptual framework to explain the underlying processes of rescaling. In an attempt to draw on the conceptual gateways in the main debates of scale and rescaling, we observe a mismatch with empirical observations on how stakeholders construct scale. As a result of a structured literature review, and based on empirical observations in the Danube region, we suggest that the key to understanding rescaling processes is the conceptualization of scale as a construct, constantly contested through multiple dimensions. Drawing upon recent developments within planning literature arguing for a co-existence between relational and territorial spaces and our empirical information, the paper suggests a multidimensional conceptualization of scale of four dimensions: (i) regulatory/jurisdictional; (ii) funding/resources; (iii) knowledge/values and (iv) network. We argue that scales consist of four co-existing dimensions which have impacts on social and economic relations as well as policy-making. Through the analysis of the Danube Region example the paper concludes that processes of rescaling often occur indirectly. We observe that case stakeholders make use of networks and knowledge at the macro-regional level in order to influence decisions in the funding and regulatory dimensions of the national and EU level.

KEYWORDS: scale, territoriality, rescaling, EU macro-regions, Danube Region, transport, navigation

1 INTRODUCTION

European macro-regional strategies aim to address common “functional challenges” and coordinate policy responses across multiple countries (EC 2013). Starting with the development of macro-regional strategies for the Baltic Sea (2009) and the Danube Region (2011), they have subsequently evolved to form a key aspect of European cooperation. Situated between the EU and the nation states, writings from several scholars in human geography, planning and political studies have started to discuss the rescaling of spatial policies in the wake of ongoing European integration (FALUDI 2010, STEAD 2011). Macro-regions have not generally extended political decision-making competences, despite their influence and role in recent policy-making. As macro-regional activities affect existing governance arrangements in more complex ways than representing a new political scale, the paper examines which processes of rescaling in EU policy making can be identified in the case of European macro-regions. Second, the paper questions how scalar constructions influenced by macro-regional activities can be explained. In analysing the various processes of rescaling and the ways stakeholders shape scalar structuration, we faced the challenge to