

PLANNING AS/AND/IN CONTEXT: TOWARDS A NEW ANALYSIS OF CONTEXT IN INTERACTIVE PLANNING

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Received: 20.11.2007

Keywords: context; interpretation;
communication; Luhmann; Foucault;
collaborative planning.

In this paper (1), we propose a revisiting of the concept of context in spatial planning, especially in the analysis of the rapidly growing sector of interactive, collaborative, communicative planning. In interactive planning projects, different stakeholders with different backgrounds, interests, negotiate a plan for an area. Communication, interpretation, and therefore the concept of context, as everything outside the actual communication that influences its meaning, become correspondingly more central to planning theory and practice. We briefly analyze the refinement of context- analysis in post- structuralist interpretation theory, and next introduce key concepts from Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory. After a brief expose on the emergence of interactive planning approaches, and a critique of modernist versions of interactive planning, we use the concepts derived from Luhmann and the post-structuralists to analyze the construction of context in interactive planning, and to analyze the planning process as a context in itself. Luhmann's complex typology of social systems and their specific modes of self-reproduction, adds greatly to the insight in the complexities of context- construction, in the separations and dependencies of the various little worlds that participate in an interactive planning process. It is argued that modernist conceptions of space and planning led to a lacking insight in real-life planning processes, and to context- insensitive plans. A reinvigorated analysis of context is proposed, as a way to increase the awareness of the realities of context-construction, and consequently to open up the possibilities for a more equitable and a more context- sensitive planning.

INTRODUCTION

Since Jane Jacobs in the early sixties, modernist planning has been criticized from many angles (Allmendinger, 2002; Hillier, 2002; Van Assche, 2004). One of the recurring critiques was that modernist plans did not take into accounts contexts that ought to be made relevant: the centralist planner

1. The author likes to thank dr. Gert Verschraegen, KULeuven, for his insightful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

was perceived to be insensitive to cultural, historical, landscape, ecological contexts, and this led to monolithic, unfriendly, undemocratic plans (Van Assche, 2007; Scott, 1998). Since the arrival of post-modernism in planning in the nineties (e.g. Flyvbjerg, 1998), the criticism has sharpened decidedly, and some of the forms of planning that were supposed to be a response to the older critiques, forms of planning with more citizen involvement, were seen to be in the same old modernist frame of mind. Certain variants of communicative, interactive, collaborative planning, where governmental and non-governmental stakeholders sit around a table to communicate and decide on a plan, were deconstructed as perpetuating some of the harmful modernist assumptions. It was said that these planners and planning theorists missed insight in the realities of the planning process, and that the results were still unfair and context-insensitive (Cardoso, 2005; Kaza, 2006; Tewdr-Jones and Allmendinger, 1998).

Given these critiques, with which we agree, and given the greater importance of interpretation and context in the recent versions of planning, we will make a case for a renewed attention for context-analysis in planning. We will investigate what happened to the concept of context in the disciplines where it originated, here labeled as interpretation theories: linguistics, semiotics, literary theory, art theory, nowadays also cultural studies. Next we introduce Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory, which constructs society as a self-reproducing system of communications. Society is seen as a multitude of social systems, interacting in a complex multi-level typology, forming contexts for anything that happens internally, and forming contexts for each other. In a consequent overview of the rise of interactive planning, we encounter Michel Foucault as another valuable critical guide in the analysis of planning and its communication.

Finally, we apply the concepts introduced earlier, in a brief analysis of the interactive planning process as a context, and the analysis of context-construction within the process.

THEORY FORMATION ON 'CONTEXT' IN THE HUMANITIES

The concept of context was broadened and redefined in many ways in many contexts during the 20th century (See Eco 1976 and 1991; for an overview, also Bal, 2002). Nowadays, some people have abandoned 'context', and replaced it with concepts like framing, performance, performativity, narrative, mise-en-scene (Culler 1988; Bal, 2002). Deconstruction added to the distrust of a stable context, as a 'surrounding' of a text that would produce the full meaning of a text or work of art. The older idea of context, stemming from structural linguistics and early semiotics, was deemed too rigid, too reifying, too much distracting from the dynamics of framing processes that create meaning (Bal, 2002; 133-138). The solution of imagining context as a series of receding frames, each one explaining the frame in front of it, did not take away the growing doubts among theorists on the explanatory power of the context concept. In the end, everything is context then, and the universal encyclopedia of the world (Eco, 1976) would be the only context explaining a communication entirely. In addition, it did not distinguish the very different forms of context and mechanisms of context-construction that can be observed, e.g. in the interpretation of art. Therefore the gradual replacement of 'context' in semiotics, in cultural studies, in art and literary theory, with the series of concepts referred to. For example, a narrative, in a certain iconography, can be a context for a certain painting, at the same the painting can alter the narrative and iconography if influential. The painting can at the same

time refer to the *oeuvre* or the biography of the painter, it can redress a biographical narrative of the painter's life and work. Sociological and cultural environments can be read in the painting, but the socio-cultural context of the observer will shape the way this takes place (Van Assche, 2004 elaborates the example of historicizing park designs).

In the course of the explorations of context in the humanities, it became clear to many theorists that neither the observer, reader, viewer, nor the object, text, place observed and interpreted, could account for the meanings produced by the observers and communicated by them. It also became clear that neither the intention of the author nor the background of the interpreter could fully elucidate the meaning of a work of art. In between creator and interpreter, its quasi- autonomy was recognized: a text, e.g. can mean something beyond the intention of the author, and without reference to the observer and his situated- ness. It can communicate things about the author, his time, place, culture without any intentionality. Meanings are produced because certain structures of language, literature, art are activated, transformed, played out against each other in and through the structure of a particular work of art (Vanbergen, 1986, 111-15). One can bring to mind the little kid in the classroom, after writing an essay: the kid cries out loud to the critical teacher, 'but *this* is what I wanted to say!' The text can say certain things independently.

These theoretical developments, this growing awareness of the complexity and fluidity of interpretation, implied different ideas on context. If the context is everything outside the work that influences the meaning of something (Eco, 1976), then the changing ideas on interpretation cannot but alter the concept of context. Relevant contexts are now extended in all directions, to include the author, his internal and external worlds, the text, its genres, histories, literatures, and the interpreters, their psyche, their various contexts. The interactions between text, author, interpreter, and their contexts in constructing the meaning of a text in a specific situation become immensely more intricate and dynamic. Narratology and narrative methods became widespread in the humanities, later also in the social sciences, and developed a considerable internal complexity dealing with just one of the many possible contexts determining the meaning of communication, only dealing with narrative structures (e.g. Bal, 1997). Given these developments, overly briefly outlined here, a monolithic use of the concept of context seems unwarranted nowadays.

NIKLAS LUHMANN'S VERSION OF MEANING, INTERPRETATION, CONTEXT

Niklas Luhmann, German sociologist, is the founder of social systems theory. He passed away in 1998, but his influence is still growing. We will introduce some key concepts of his theory, to enrich the analysis of context started above, and to take them to a critical analysis of interactive planning.

Luhmann since the 1980s stressed the *autopoietic or self-productive nature of social systems* (Luhmann, 1984, 1990b). Autopoiesis is the description given to the process whereby something reproduces itself from itself, from its own elements (Luhmann, 1984, 23-9). The distinguishing feature of *autopoietic systems* is thus that they produce and reproduce all their basic elements - including the system boundaries and structures - through a network of self-referential operations. There is a system in all cases where one can identify a specific kind of operation that is reproduced starting from other operations of the same kind.

In order to circumscribe a particular class of systems, such as organic, psychic or social systems, one has to distinguish the recursive (or "repeated") self-referential operation that ensures the production and reproduction of all the basic elements. Operations of this kind are, for example, thoughts, produced from previous thoughts and generating further thoughts: from their connection results the psychic system, i.e. consciousness. There is no production of thoughts outside consciousness, and consciousness exists if and as long as it is able to continuously produce new thoughts that are only its thoughts. These thoughts are indissolubly linked to the chain of operations that produced it and cannot be exported into other consciousness; in other words: one cannot enter 'the head' of another individual.

Yet, it is possible to establish some sort of coordination between the thoughts of different psychic systems or individuals. One can communicate, and communications constitute for Luhmann a further kind of operation giving rise to another kind of system, the social system. Psychic systems and the social system share the medium of meaning. According to Luhmann, "social systems use communication as their particular mode of autopoietic reproduction. Their elements are communications that are recursively produced and reproduced by a network of communications and that cannot exist outside of such a network" (Luhmann, 1990b, 3).

Social systems - including society, the social system which encompasses all other social systems - are not based on actions or actors, but on **communication**. These social systems of communication are clearly autopoietic, for one can only create communications out of other communications and only communications can lead to new bases for making of novel communications. (Luhmann, 1992) In this sense, the social system of communication exhibits 'operational closure'. Communications produce further communications in a recursive connection, and there is no constitution of communication outside society.

Even the thoughts of individuals are external to communication, and therefore are never as such communications. Once a thought is uttered, it is no longer a mental representation but a communication whose actual status and understanding is determined by the communicative network of previous and contiguous communications. For instance, what one says or writes can be interpreted in a way which is new and independent from the intention of the utterer. The independence of the communication, e.g. the text, is here more radically asserted than with the post-modern authors referred to above.

A communication cannot be reduced to the transfer of a mental representation from a sender to a receiver. Luhmann again and again stresses this autonomy of social or communicative systems against psychic systems (human consciousness) (e.g. Luhmann, 1990a, 11-67). Social systems form autonomous realities which are dependent on (Luhmann would say "structurally coupled to") but not determined by psychic systems (or "human beings"). They consist of communications that refer to each other (self-reference) and simultaneously refer to objects, events, and so on in their environment (external reference) (Luhmann, 1984). Psychic systems or organic systems can be distinguished on the basis of their own specific operative closure and are part of the environment of social systems. This does not mean, however, that one has to argue for causal isolation between them. Luhmann argues that both psychic and social systems co-

operate within the same medium of meaning and, owing to the use of the medium of language in both systems, they 'irritate' or affect each other (Luhmann, 1984, 37-55). This has to be understood as being processes guided by reference to two different contexts or networks of such internal operations (i.e. other thoughts and other communications).

SOCIAL SYSTEMS AS CONTEXT: SELF-REFERENCE AND THE ABSENT EMBEDDING

Luhmann observes society as a number of interacting yet operationally closed function- systems: law, politics, economy, religion and so forth. Every function system is a system of communications, solely founded on self- referential processes. What makes sense, can only be produced and understood in terms that emerge within the system. Put differently, the many versions of reality produced in these systems, are on equal footing: each system provides a very specific description of the world which cannot overrule other descriptions. (King and Tornhill, 2003) In planning, different systems such as science, politics, law and economy each generate their own version of the spatial environments to be organized or designed. Every social system evolved in a specific way, leading to a specific way of defining elements of communication.

Communication requires continuation of communication, reproduction of the system. It requires minds interpreting communication, understanding, participating. Understanding of space will take place in the context of the function- systems, of organizations, in terms of conversations, all forms of social systems (Luhmann, 1984; Seidl, 2005, 23-25). Every social system constructs its own space, according to its own rules of self-organization, according to its own self-constructed hierarchy of contexts, its own way to create elements and context simultaneously. A place or an object in space becomes an object in a type of communication. A house in front of a mountain in a landscape becomes precisely that given a system- specific definition of house, mountain, landscape as elements, where all of them serve as context in turn.

The social systems produce narratives directing the signification of place, its past and future, and every narrative tends to combine structure and element, object and context; it is a specific framing of time, place, objects within a social system. The economic system will see 'lots' as relevant units in a narrative with a profit- orientation, whereas a landscape artist would not even notice the boundaries of the lots, would not see this as a relevant element for a relevant framing of the story of the place.

All social systems are environments to each other and are potentially relevant contexts to each other. At the same time, each social system frames its own reality, constructs its own relevant contexts for communication.

INTERACTIVE/COLLABORATIVE/PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

On a different note: the rise of interactive/ collaborative/ participatory planning. We briefly sketch the growing importance of new decision-making situations in planning where a multitude of stakeholders confront each other. Various interests, various worldviews and languages collide in the new arenas for interactive planning. Interactive planning, participatory planning, collaborative planning, became more and more prominent in planning theory since the nineties (Allmendinger, 2002; Healey, 1997; Innes

and Booher, 1999; Sanoff, 2006, for parallel developments in design theory). It seems that planners rediscovered the citizen, a species on the verge of extinction. The change in perception in planning theory went along with a broader shift in policy studies and public administration, from government to 'governance', mostly forms of indirect steering involving more citizen participation (e.g. Dryzek, 2000).

Together with the crumbling belief in centralized planning and direct steering, faded the belief in the planner's superior knowledge of society and its ideal spatial organization (Van Assche, 2004; Scott, 1998; Soja, 1997). Instead of indirectly telling the people what is good for them, by means of plans and spatial regulations that are devised in a central administration, and imposed on them, many planners became aware that central steering does not really work very often, and on a positive note, that the local knowledge of citizens can enrich the plans for an area (Tewdr-Jones and Allmendinger, 1998; Kaza, 2006, 255-60). The citizens need to be taken into account because they would otherwise oppose the plans too much, because they can improve the plans, because the new ideas on governance were gaining acceptance.

Patsy Healey, an influential Newcastle planning professor, promoted in the nineties the concept of collaborative planning (e.g. 1997). She argued for a communicative turn in planning, ditching the old modernist ambition of centralized planning, working towards a scientifically defined optimal spatial organization. At the same time, her Habermas-inspired ideas were criticized: ideas on communication- situations where all stakeholders can sit together without any detrimental power- differential, situations where everyone can speak up, without any fear, where all voices are heard equally and weighed fairly, spaces where the best argument will win in the end, according to some sort of implicit or explicit multi-criteria analysis (Derived from Habermas, 1981). Knowledge will be made available to all parties, and the planners' role is seen as the role of a mediator.

Many authors criticized the modernist assumptions of these procedures. Armed with Foucault and other constructivists, the entanglement of power and knowledge was pointed at, the best argument denounced as a myth, the fair representation of stakeholders doubted (e.g. Flyvbjerg 1998; Cardoso, 2005; Huxly and Yftachel, 2000). Then there is the traditional suspicion on the part of many citizens towards planners. Planners can redefine their role in a more modest manner, but many other stakeholders in a collaborative planning process will assume that there is a hidden 'progressive' planning agenda. The planner, more time and knowledge available, and a considerable influence on the process design, can in practice be much more than a humble mediator (Forrester, 1999, is encouraging in this respect).

A post-modernism mostly based on Foucault, was welcomed with hesitation in the planner's world (Flyvbjerg, 1998; Allmendinger, 2002; Van Assche, 2004; Cardoso, 2005; Hillier, 2002). With it came the ideas of social construction of reality, of the mutual construction of power of knowledge, the concept of discourse (Systematized in Foucault, 1970). Foucault gave planners tools to conceptualize the ideas of citizens on space as discourses, and to see their own way of thinking about space and its organization as a discourse. The discipline of planning, with its convoluted struggle for independence and professional/ academic recognition, became slowly aware of the fragility of its scientific claims (Compare Scott, 1998, for the starting point of this process). Fewer and fewer people believed in

the existence of an optimal spatial structure, in the existence of scientific tools to get there. More and more people started to see these modernist conceptions of planning as myths. Fewer and fewer people also believed that bringing people together for power-free, rational conversations, would be a realistic, fair and interesting way out.

Many critics of Habermas' ideal communication situation (Habermas, 1981), and the interactive planning processes derived from it (e.g. Healey, 1997; Innes and Booher, 1999; even Sager, 2005), would point out the regretful absence of many constitutive *contexts* in the image of the enlightened table conversation (Cardoso, 2005; Van Assche, 2004, 2007; Hillier, 2002). Foucault pointed out that knowledge and its application, are inextricable from power-structures and -differentials. He and others reminded us that the institutional contexts (entailing roles for planners and scientific experts) cannot be overlooked (e.g. in Foucault, 2003). There are the histories of participants, organizations, institutions, processes, that frame the actions and thoughts of the participants.

INTERACTIVE PLANNING, SOCIAL SYSTEMS, CONTEXT CONSTRUCTION

Let's take a look at planning systems and interactive planning processes as context for decisions and ideas on space. A planning system, as the sum of interacting organizations influencing spatial organization, can create its own unifying/unified discourse, and it is the place of birth of a number of competing planning discourses (Van Assche, 2004). The actors that are involved in shaping spatial organization, are marked by their own discourses, their own rationalities, their own framing of the landscape (Innes and Booher, 1999; Huxly and Yftachel, 2000). Every actor is steeped in several social systems, and can -as an organization- be a social system in itself. Interactions between actors, their adaptation to each other and to the strategic situation in the planning game, will lead to changes in their framing of place, of planning, and often of self: the identity of a landscape architect, her typical framing of places, will result from an evolutionary adaptation to other players, and result from a history of previous games in the planning arena. This is true for long-term games in a planning system, it also holds true for the shorter perspective of an interactive planning process.

We can say that in the interactions between planning actors, the roles of these actors are produced, and consequently their way of framing space, their way of defining what would be relevant contexts, and what would be context-sensitive in a plan, what not. Their interpretations are shaped in the game, and in each actor's performance there, while, conversely, the course of the game is partly determined by these performances. Understanding context-sensitive planning and design, requires an understanding not only of the narrative constructions among the 'users' of a place, but also of the system organizing space, including the competing discourses belonging to competing roles (Van Assche, 2007). Since in planning the multiplicity of ideas is always a multiplicity of interests, planning is necessarily an arena for power games (Hillier, 2002; Flyvbjerg, 1998), where some lose and some win. In the political games that are part of the organization of space, it is impossible to produce a narrative for a given space, and a plan, that will be entirely consistent, entirely convincing and entirely context-sensitive for everyone (Hillier, 2002; Kaza, 2006).

In the previous paragraphs, we paid attention to the interactive planning process, as a context for the plan-production. We highlighted the dynamic aspects of this context: the series of meetings and other communications has a history, acquires an identity in that history. The roles of the players are partly defined in that history (Seidl, 2005). At the same time, the game is determined by various features of the participants: skills, knowledge, communication style, resources, positions. Then there is the institutional embedding of the planning process: where is it located, how is it organized, temporalized, by whom, what kind of resources are connected to this process, to its possible outcome?

Abstract people with quantifiable and transparent desires, sitting around a generic table in an empty room, talking to similar and similarly rational people, and coming to a consensus by means of deliberation and the best arguments. That would be the neutral context of interactive planning as it is traditionally depicted from a modernist perspective. Since Foucault and his fellow-poststructuralists, we know that the context is not neutral, not a background against which the deliberation plays. A variety of contexts frames the site where discourses can meet. The *mise-en-scene* in the theatre of the planning process is often overlooked, mistaken for a natural surrounding.

So, we know a bit more about the process as context. But what about the micro-processes of context-construction within the planning process? Every actor brings a different culture to the table, a different construction of what is relevant in a place, a different idea of what would be relevant contexts to refer to in a plan. We will bring Luhmann in now, and would like to repeat our earlier assertion: all social systems are environments to each other and are potentially relevant contexts to each other. At the same time, each social system frames its own reality, constructs its own relevant contexts for communications.

Luhmann's potential contributions in this field can only be touched upon briefly. At this point, we try to show his added value in the analysis of context-construction in planning. Luhmann's concept of a multitude of operationally closed social systems as/in each other's environment, brings about a much more complex view of context-construction. Function systems, organizations and even interactions (conversations) are social systems in Luhmann's view, operationally closed, autopoietic systems of communication. At every level, social systems are environments for each other.

'Environment' is one particular form of context in systems theory. An interaction (conversation) is autopoietic, therefore self-referential, and a context for whatever happens in the conversation (Luhmann, 1984,125; Seidl, 2005). At the same time, the interaction can take place in the context of an organization, in turn an autopoietic social system. The interaction will borrow elements from the organizational system, and that system will set certain parameters and give a certain direction to the interaction (Seidl, 2005; Hernes and Bakken, 2002). At the same time, both interaction and organization will participate in the reproduction of several function systems, each of them with a specific autopoiesis (Brans and Rossbach, 1997; Dunsire, 1996). An interaction in a planning department can be defined by an agenda set in the department as organization, it can deal with economic, legal and esthetic issues, therefore participate in the reproduction of the economic, legal and artistic function systems.

The operational closure of each system turns it automatically into an important context for the communications taking place in it. Every system produces the world internally, including an image of systems in its environment, created according to its own distinctions and programming (King and Tornhill, 2003; Hernes and Bakken, 2002). Coupling between systems at one level -e.g. different organizations- and between systems at different levels -e.g. interaction and organization- allows for a very refined mutual adaptation, yet every adaptation will be one to the internally constructed version of the environment. In other words, the systems and features of systems that become relevant contexts for a given system, are internally determined there, by the system-specific autopoiesis.

In a given conversation, interaction, the programs, ideas, procedures, values, of other systems can suddenly appear and vanish again (Seidl, 2005). People, psychic systems, participating in conversations, can also participate in organizations and function systems without actually being part of it. Luhmann sometimes uses the word interpenetration for the relation between psychic systems and social systems (Luhmann, 1990b). Both assume each other, both are operationally closed. A psyche is autopoietic, reproduces itself based on previous thoughts. A primary context of thought is thought. The only access to other people's thoughts is through communication, via social systems that is. Other people as context, can only be reconstructed via social systems, according to the logic of social systems. Social systems are therefore an essential context for psychic systems. In an interactive planning situation, stakeholders observing each other shape the images of the others, their positions, etc. via their interpenetration with social systems.

Because of a specific interplay of basic distinctions and programming, in an environment of other social and psychic systems, every social system will produce its own image of space, its own image of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities at a certain place. Other types of knowledge will be activated to assess a place, to come up with projections and improvements for it. In other words: the social system frames its own space, and borrows from/ interprets certain scientific, moral, esthetic, legal, organizational, conversational, environments in order to interpret/ construct a certain place and its futures.

In an interactive planning process, this insight brings forth many things. One consequence is that a real consensus is illusory, since the interpretations the stakeholders have of each other's position and of the consensus, will never be identical (Similar observations from other perspectives in Miller, 2002; Tewdr-Jones and Allmendinger, 1998; Van Assche, 2004). Another consequence is that in an interaction the contexts that are made relevant for a given space and its future, will shift constantly. These shifts appear because of embeddings of the interaction in and linkages with a multitude of social systems, each of them activating different contexts, and because of the games played out between these systems, many of them trying to impose their discourse, their relevant contexts on the others. (And only understanding the others through and via their own discourses; Dunsire, 1997) Another implication is that every social system, according to Luhmann, necessarily marked by specific blind spots (Luhmann, 1984; Hernes and Bakken, 2002) will fail to observe parts of the reasoning and valuation of the other systems, of their framing of space. This in turn implies that a perfectly transparent communication is impossible (Seidl, 2005; Luhmann 1990a), and it means that perfectly

context-sensitive plans, plans that are sensitive for the framings of all the systems, are impossible as well.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we revisited the concept of context in planning, in particular because planning is moving decidedly in the direction of interactive, collaborative, communicative planning. Communication between various governmental and non- governmental actors entails a more central role of interpretation, and the idea of context was always central to interpretation theory. Another reason to re- investigate 'context' was a by now common critique of the modernist variant of interactive planning, the critique that it is not aware of its own context.

It turned out that in post-structuralist interpretation theory, context is mostly replaced by a number of other concepts, like framing, narrative, performance, *mise-en-scene*. We argued that besides the cultural theorists explicitly talking about context, two other figures prove very useful to refine the analysis. First of all Michel Foucault, and his insights on the convolutions of power and knowledge in science and government. Secondly, Niklas Luhmann and his social systems theory, seeing society as an operationally closed and self- reproducing system of communications. The operational disconnect between social systems and individual people sheds a different light on the construction of context, e.g. on the framing of places by various stakeholders.

After a brief expose on the emergence of several forms of interactive planning, and a Foucauldian inspired critique of the more modernist and less context-sensitive versions, we focused finally on the analysis of context-construction in interactive planning processes. We distinguished between the analysis of the process as a context and the construction of context in a process. Luhmann's concepts allowed us to enrich the analysis of that aspect of context-construction, whereas Foucault proved most useful in the analysis of the process as context. Without repeating all the findings here, and while acknowledging that our approach to context-analysis can be carried much further, we argue that the revisiting of context produced new insights into interactive planning.

It seems clear that both aspects of the context-analysis (process as context and context-construction in the process) point at the need for an increased reflexivity in interactive planning processes. Our proposed context-analysis can help furthering such reflexivity. This can help in becoming more aware of the fairness/unfairness, the democratic content of a particular planning process. In addition, such an increased awareness of the various relevant framing processes can help planners and other stakeholders in working towards context- sensitive planning, thus undoing harms done by a history of modernism in planning. A reinvigorated and refined analysis of context construction, might lead to a return of historical, cultural, ecological, landscape contexts in the plans, forms of contexts that were deemed irrelevant for quite a long time. All this in the understanding that it is theoretically and practically impossible to produce completely fair and consensus- based plans. As it is impossible to activate all imaginable contexts in a plan, or a median context that would appease all stakeholders, making them all feel at home in the imagined space of the plan.

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Alındı: 20.11.2007

Anahtar Sözcükler: bağlam; yorum; iletişim;
Luhmann; Foucault; collaborative planlama.

BAĞLAMI VE BAĞLAMSALLIĞI PLANLAMAK: ETKİLEŞİMCİ PLANLAMADA YENİ BİR ÇÖZÜMLEMEYE DOĞRU

Bu yazıda, mekan planlamasında bağlam kavramını yeniden gündeme getirerek, hızla büyümekte olan etkileşimci (*interactive*), işbirlikçi (*collaborative*), iletişimci (*communicative*) planlama yönelişlerindeki çözümleyici yaklaşımlar tartışılmaktadır. Etkileşimci planlama projelerinde farklı birikimi ve ilgisi olan paydaşlar, bir alanı planlamak için fakir alışverişinde bulunurlar. İletişim, yorumlama ve dolayısıyla hem bağlamın kavramsallaştırılması hem de onun anlamını etkileyen gerçekil iletişim, planlama kuramı ve pratiği açısından merkeze oturmaktadır. Bu yazıda bağlam çözümlemesi (bağlamsal-çözümleme) tartışması, art-yapısalcı yorumlama kuramı açısından incelenmekte ve ardından Niklas Luhman'ın toplumsal dizge kuramına uygun anahtar kavramlar geliştirilmektedir. Etkileşimci planlama yaklaşımlarına kısa bir açılım yapılarak etkileşimci planlamanın modernci çeşitleri eleştirilmekte, Luhman'dan ve art-yapısalcılardan çıkarsanan kavramlarla etkileşimci planlamada bağlamın kuruluşu ve bir bağlam olarak planlama sürecinin kendisi çözümlenerek incelenmektedir. Luhman'ın toplumsal dizgeler üzerine karmaşık tipolojisi ve kendilerini yeniden üretme süreçlerine ilişkin modellemeleri, bağlam kurmanın karmaşıklığının anlaşılmasına, etkileşimci planlama sürecine katkı ve katılımında bulunan küçük dünyaların ayrılaşmasının ve karşılıklı bağımlılıklarının anlaşılmasında yararlı olmaktadır. Modernci mekan ve planlama kavrayışlarının gerçekil planlama süreçlerine yakından bakmayı zorlaştırdığı ve bağlama duyarsız planlara yol açtığı savunulmaktadır. Bağlam kuruluşunun gerçekliği konusunda uyarıklık sağlamak açısından yeniden canlandırılmış bir bağlam tartışması önerilmekte, sonuçta daha eşitlikçi ve daha bağlam-duyarlı planlama olasılıklarının bu yolla elde edilebileceği savunulmaktadır..