

ID 1738 | PLANNING THEORY, A 'DECONSTRUCTIONIST-TURN': ARE WE THERE YET?

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1 INTRODUCTION

Deconstruction' is the attractive Derridean project, which he describes as 'the opening of the future itself...'. Deconstruction destabilizes inherited concepts and traditions, towards '...what remains to be thought ...[that]... cannot be thought within the present'. Interestingly, it has established an 'awkward' interaction with the city design and planning through architecture theory and practice. It has simultaneously flirted with planning theory in reflection to the institution: 'dark side' of practice and the design-process: the planning model (see Allmendinger and Gunder 2005). However, it remained on the periphery of the developed debate.

But, like the question raised in architecture, 'what is there to deconstruct in Planning?'

Deconstruction is not a method, a critique, an analysis or a reading; there are no steps, rules or criteria to be applied to a content: theory, practice, institution etc. It essentially works from inside the content; totally dependent on the nature of this content (planning theory), author/ reader (involved actors, planner, citizen, government etc.), and contextual reality embedded in time. Deconstruction thus literally, turn things –a theory, interpretation, an object–, upside-down or the other way around by searching for a conflict in representation. They identify the structure, the inconsistencies, and the weak and missing points within the content. The content is exposed and deconstructed from inside; i.e. deconstruction hold the potential to allow planning theory deconstruct itself, to destabilize the inherited frameworks and opens the way to new interpretations and traditions.

Are we there yet?

The planning debate is literally going through a turnabout with an unidentified exist. The debate involves the disciplinary knowledge: the role of space/place, geographies and social construction; the design-process/ product: the liberal/ agonistic becoming of the city and involved citizens/ consumers; and the institution of public/ private space and the relational power within. It simultaneously, questions the city author/ reader, the role of the planner, the citizen, the institution. Furthermore, the debate is co-dependent on contextual temporality.

This paper thus explores the development of the planning model drawing on deconstruction strategies. It particularly questions the role of the city author/ reader: planner, citizen and government. This reading aims to destabilize the previous established debate, as a primary step towards a new exist.

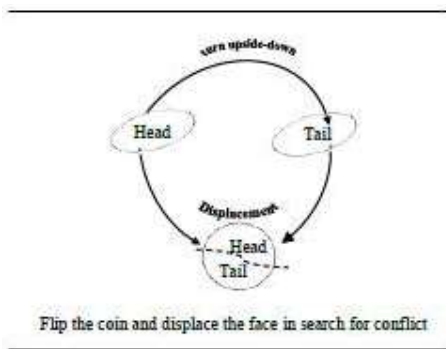
2 DECONSTRUCTION

'Deconstruction ... In French, it has both a grammatical and mechanical meaning. It means both to disarrange the construction of words in a sentence and to disassemble a machine and transport it elsewhere. It also, forms a reflexive verb [se deconstruire] meaning to lose one's own construction' (McQuillan, 2001:1)

The reading strategies of deconstruction in this paper are based on the 'five strategies' introduced by McQuillan's (2001) in 'deconstruction: a reader'. Firstly, deconstruction is not a method, or a set of rules, applied to interpretation (Lucy, 2004). These reading strategies essentially work from inside the text content. Secondly, deconstruction is totally dependent on the nature of this content. It is also, dependent on the author/ reader as they acknowledge the multiplicities of meaning and truth. Thirdly, this dependence on the content represents a trace of contextual reality and history of both content and context. The fourth strategy, deconstruction of binary oppositions, is referred to by many authors as the stages of deconstruction in general, see (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Collins et al., 2005). Binary opposition

divides 'conceptual material' into a pair of binary terms, e.g. west/ east, masculine/ feminine. These binary pairs are dependent on each other for meaning through 'difference': a fixed 'either/ or' relation (Collins et al., 2005; McQuillan, 2001). However, these binary pairs are not opposites in reality; they are not equal; the first term is usually 'privileged', which is traditionally associated with masculinity (McQuillan, 2001). The deconstruction of this binary thus involves two steps; reversing the binary and displacing the binary oppositions so as not to 'involve binary logic at all' through 'this thing called *différance*' (McQuillan, 2001:13, 19). *Différance* displaces the stable either/ or relation with the dynamic oscillation between neither/ nor and both/ and relations. Accordingly, it deconstructs this hierarchy through the simultaneous presence of two conflicting ideas, thus destabilising the notion of 'fixed' meaning and creating potential for alternative interpretations (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). The fifth strategy embraces the margin, which denies the proposed representation and brings the marginal to be the centre. Deconstruction is thus interested in the marginalised set of binary oppositions, which is called the cornerstone. The cornerstone is considered the first stone, which is not at the centre and upon which the whole structure of a representation is built. However, it is defective and that makes it unstable. The reader's task is thus to find the cornerstone which will readily deconstruct the structure of the proposed representation (McQuillan, 2001). At the same time, the subversion of the hierarchy between centre and margin blurs the peripheries of the content. The centre escapes the boundaries and is thus located both inside and outside the content, which further destabilises the established representations (Derrida, 2001 [1978]; McQuillan, 2001:20).

In summary, deconstruction reading strategies literally, turn things –a theory, interpretation, an object–, upside-down or the other way around by searching for a conflict in representation. They identify the structure, the inconsistencies, and the weak and missing points within the content. The content is exposed



and deconstructed from inside. A visual metaphor of deconstruction using a flipping coin is presented in Figure 1. A coin has two faces a head and a tail. The head usually carries an image, a national representation e.g. the queen's head and the tail carries the coin value e.g. £1. In this figure, a coin with head up is turned over, so the tail is face-up. Simultaneously, head and tail are displaced in a search for a conflict and potential new representation of a coin (Abdelwahab, 2013)

Figure 1 The coin as a metaphor for deconstruction

Subsequently, by reflecting on the deconstruction strategies as a reading event, a number of themes can be identified, which are working in the background of these strategies and which help to relate them together. These themes are represented in three sets.

The first set constitutes:

- A rejection of a transcendental truth which exists outside the discourse
- Reading the discourse as a reality, a representation of reality, and beyond this reality
- A rejection of the obvious or the expected reading (the traditional) which denies the potential differential reading, the unexpected
- Deconstruction is already inscribed inside the discourse
- Deconstruction is ascribed to 'the experience of the impossible'; the impossible is that which opposes the expected potential, rather than the possible. Deconstruction is impossible in a sense; it is yet to happen unexpectedly, differing from the tradition.

The second set considers the (construction) of the discourse:

- The discourse is inscribed in the context, and vice versa through the concept of 'trace', every term holds a trace of the reality, its representation and what is beyond
- The discourse is constructed through sets of binary oppositions,
- Centre/ margin of the discourse which highlights the centre and excludes the margin
- Binary representations are included in the discourse

- The discourse revolves around centre/ margin; while metaphysics considers the centre and its de-centring; deconstruction is more interested in the margin
- Binary opposition representations follow the discourse, reality, representation and beyond reality; metaphysics is concerned with the representation of the reality, 'facts of life'; deconstruction is concerned with binary opposition which metaphysics missed, beyond the reality representation and which is disguised through binary opposition

The third set considers the de.construction of the discourse, embracing the margin, the cornerstone, différance and the trace:

- The centre/ margin hierarchy is deconstructed
- The centre is displaced through the supplement; it escapes the discourse and simultaneously is inscribed inside the discourse to demonstrate the impossibility of its construction
- The margin is displaced through the cornerstone; the defective stone on the margin of the discourse which is responsible for the construction and deconstruction of the discourse
- Deconstructing the discourse binary oppositions through différance and trace
- Différance promotes ambiguity over the well-defined; it implies a continuous change of the binary terms through time and space; once you define a term it changes;
- The trace blurs the boundaries between the binary opposition sets; each a term holds a trace of the other, as well as all the other terms it is not (Abdelwahab, 2010, forthcoming).

...My deconstruction can only happen once because it is unique to the singular moment of affirmation, which is the event of my reading...So, my reading (or deconstruction) is nothing more than a matter of placing myself within the operation of the text and being part of that operation (the text's own self-deconstruction) for the singular duration of my reading (McQuillan, 2001:26-7).

3 MODE(S) OF PLANNING

'Derrida (1981, 1997) reminds us that one trouble with Western thought is its propensity to privilege one side of a binary opposition, when in effect most things are not absolutely black or white, but somewhere in between an 'undecidable' grey' (Allmendinger and Gunder 2005, p.88)

The reading of the different modes of planning in this paper draws on Walter Schonwandt's book (2008), 'Planning in Crisis? Theoretical Orientations for Architecture and Planning'. I am particularly interested in the concept of 'constructs' introduced in his book that addresses the gap between theory and practice in planning. 'Constructs' thus represents a third term in between the binary 'theory/ practice'. The latter thus dominated the debate on planning as a widely-accepted representation of an inherited conflict. However, the concept of 'constructs' involves another binary beyond the representation of 'theory/ practice'. Schonwandt (2008, p.x) introduces two constructs, 'constructs Of planning' and 'constructs In planning'. The first informs us 'of' 'concepts, propositions, contexts, conceptual core ...descriptions' of planning; whereas the latter informs and directs the process in planning. Constructs are thus 'bearers of our knowledge', 'the conceptual core' of planning that simultaneously 'guide our actions in planning'. Accordingly, the binary 'theory/ practice' in planning is displaced through the concept of 'constructs' of/ in planning. It is worth noting that he rejected the idea of 'ready-made constructs' to be applied to planning, these constructs are rather dependent on the planning context. He thus continues to identify the various aspects of planning through the concept of 'constructs' as: the role of the planner; the public interest – citizen; politicians – governance; power and resources distribution; knowledge and content; and lastly the planning process or procedure for action.

In this instance, the 'obvious representation' of planning through the binary theory/ practice is rejected in favour of the 'other' representation, constructs of/ in planning. Deconstruction is thus questions the new binary, is this binary a cornerstone on the margin that opens-up the planning debate for deconstruction, or is it simply another binary representation at the centre.

'The rational model of planning is the source and inspiration for most of the other models, which are either a modification of the rational model or a reaction to (or against)' (Schonwandt, 2008, p.3)

Furthermore, Schonwandt (2008) introduced seven modes of planning: the rational, the advocacy, neo-marxist, equity, social learning and communicative action, the radical, and the liberalistic model of planning. He thus emphasises the dependency between these models and the rationalist model. This helps to raise the question, is the rationalist model the logo-centre of the planning debate? '...logo-centrism constructs or centres, sense and meaning, around the identity of these terms [binary oppositions] while disguising un-resolvable tension between them' (McQuillan, 2001, p.12). Accordingly, these models represent a series of binary oppositions; where in each the rational model is the privileged term: rational/ advocate; rational/ radical and so on. Significantly, the planning debate has reflected this interest in the rationalist model as a privileged term, for example see (Kunzmann 2014, Mantysalo 2014, Albrechts and Balducci 2014, and Abdelwahab and Serag, 2017).

At the same time, deconstruction is totally dependent on the nature of this content, author/ reader, and context. This dependency thus acknowledges the multiplicities of meaning and truth in this content. Consequently, our argument – deconstruction reading – works from within planning, the rational model logo-centrism, content, author/ reader and context (Abdelwahab and Serag 2017). Significantly, this interest in the 'rational model' reflects an inherited 'tension' between the various involved actors in planning: planner, citizen, and government, involving power relations and resources limitations. We shall thus explore the development of the role of these actors as authors/ readers in planning.

Whose vision is created remains a basic question to be asked?' (Albrechts and Balducci, 2014: 18, 21).

To start with, in the 'rational planner' is the '... the expert who relies on the objectivity of 'professional expertise' to do what is in the Public's best interest' (Schonwandt, 2008, p.5). They worked directly with the government, and were expected to 'hold' the power to implement their 'rational' designs. Although, they worked on behalf of the citizen; the citizen was 'marginalised' from the planning process. Accordingly, we can recognise the first binary that considered the planners' affiliation towards government/ citizen, and the government is the privileged term. The 'advocate planner' thus turned this affiliation binary upside-down. The planners work for the citizen, offering their expertise, to support the citizen's needs, particularly the 'disadvantaged' groups who lack 'power'. Furthermore, the advocate creates a conflict in the presence of the planning affiliation to the government. The advocate planner works within the government; however, they escape this boundary, and operate from outside to reach out to the citizen. At the same, the planning debate recognised the heterogeneity of groups of interests, 'social, ethical', and so on.

Significantly, the neo-Marxist planner lost their power to become 'a handmaiden' of the government. The planners held a rather 'ambiguous' role as 'mediators' between the different groups of interests. The government/ citizen binary is thus displaced through the government/ planner binary. The 'equity planner' thus re-instated themselves inside the government, to work with 'like-minded' personnel, to approach the 'disadvantaged' groups. The government/ planner's binary was further reinforced through the radical model. Not only the planner stepped outside the government presence, they joined the 'other' side, the citizen groups. The planner thus lost their 'power' of expertise, and re-instated the government/ citizen binary, '... a particular us, who are not them' (Verran, 2001, p.38). The planner's loss of power was further emphasised in the liberal model; 'the use of resources in the service of planning is thus seen as a necessary evil, to be avoided whenever is possible' (Schonwandt, 2008, p.17). Simultaneously, it became evident that the different citizen groups, particularly the 'disadvantaged' lacked 'power' rather than expertise. The planner's role no longer involved the protection of these 'disadvantaged' social or physical settings, but rather the protection of the citizen's 'freedom of action' as well as 'undesirable consequences produced'. In summary, the liberalistic model thus supported two binaries: citizen/ government, and citizen/ planner. Later, Schonwandt (2008) highlighted three main theories in planning today: the communicative/ collaborative, the post-modern and the post-structuralist. The difference between these three theories and the seven models of planning is a significant transformation in the content and knowledge from the technical and positivist rational model to the post-structuralist, post-positivist theories today. It is worth noting the recurrence of the communicative-turn in both classification, which is simultaneously 'a model of communicative rationality' in place of the 'rational model' in planning. This raises another question about the displacement of the logo-centre of the planning debate as the communicative-turn.

This brings about the post-positivist planning the shift towards ‘...co-productive form of governance’ (Albrechts and Balducci, 2014:22). Co-productive governance recognises ‘power struggles and missed opportunities’ in the previous models (Van den Broeck et al. 2013: 326); and thus, both involves and empowers the citizen in the process; it basically constitutes the citizen, government, and the power-relations between them. However, co-productive governance doesn’t transfer the government power to the citizen. Power is recognised as a relational value that shapes the institutional practices and processes, and is simultaneously shaped by the perception of the citizen’s role in the institution. Furthermore, the citizen is not identified an independent point in the city, they are being constructed in space and time; ‘...certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses and certain desires [in the city] come to be constituted as ... [citizens]’ (Foucault, 1980: 98). And the government is not a ‘political institution’ but the processes and practices – the relations – to the citizen; how the institution perceives and instantaneously shapes the governed, citizen and city (Townley, 1993).

The preliminary binary citizen/ government is thus, displaced by citizen-government relations (involved actors); and two binaries are introduced actor/ content, and actor/ context. The boundaries of these binaries are instantly blurred through the concept of the trace that recognises the inscription of each term in all others, as discussed in the previous section. Simultaneously, it recognises ‘... the fragmentation and multiplicities of the actors’. (Albrechts and Balducci, 2014:17).

4 DECONSTRUCTION IS ALREADY THERE? ARE WE?

‘The very condition of a deconstruction may be at work, within the system to be deconstructed; it may be already located there, already at work, not at the centre but in an excentre, in a corner whose eccentricity assures the solid concentration of the system, participating in the construction of what at the same time threatens to deconstruct’ (Derrida and De Man, 1989:73)

Deconstruction, is not a defined framework of analysis or interpretation to be applied to a text, theory, any content. Simultaneously, is already at work in the text, not in its centre but on the margin; i.e. deconstruction is already there in ‘planning’ theory and/ or practice, working on the margin, deconstructing the content, its inherited ‘ideas and practices and its traditions of debate’ (Healey, 1997, p.7). Our task, as deconstructionist reader, is thus to ‘trace’ the work of deconstruction in the content of planning. In this paper, we have reflected on a few instances of deconstruction at work, through the binaries of government/ citizen, government/ planner, planner/ citizen, and so on. Simultaneously, we traced a few ‘displacements’ in the discourse of the planning. However, this is yet an early stage-exploration that opens-up the way to further explore deconstruction and planning. It would be of a highly-added value to explore the development of the various planning aspects, approach their deconstruction reading. This should thus be complemented by a deconstruction reading of planning theory that recognised the displacement of the rational model through the communicative-turn.

I would wholeheartedly embrace Wigely’s (1989) conviction that not only architecture is intrinsically influenced by deconstruction, but also deconstruction, and resonate in planning.

‘Consequently, deconstruction does not simple survive architecture [planning]’ (Wigely, 1989)

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T02 | PLANNING EDUCATION: BUILDING UP SPACES OF DIALOGUE FOR PLACES OF DIGNITY

CO-CHAIRS: KRISTINA NILLSON; ANDREA FRANK; ARTUR ROSA PIRES

The recent years of economic decline and uncertainty, and growing migrant and refugee streams are leaving their mark in today's society. Municipalities and public service provision are afflicted by government imposed austerity measures. Moreover, the often unexpected influx of considerable numbers of new inhabitants (migrants/refugees) in many European cities creates growing conflicts in land use planning, discontent of existing residents and often increased social segregation. Effects are touching both rural villages and sprawling metropolitan agglomerations alike and are becoming visible in many respects. The task of planning in such circumstances is extremely challenging. With scarce resources, political pressures and often limited time for decision-making and solution development, how can and should planners for example steer the creation of or protect truly public, safe open spaces with high quality amenities for all, and accessible and affordable housing? New strategies, practices and approaches will need to be explored and developed, and planning educators will have to prepare students for working in a dynamic, contested, and uncertain environment where actions need to be negotiated amongst affected stakeholder groups and their interests. How are educators integrating issues of space, dialogue and self-respect, pride, and respect into their teaching? Planning need to be able to develop innovative and locally responsive (economic) development strategies without however, losing sight of issues and opportunities provided by global societal challenges (healthy food, climate and environmental challenges, etc).

This track invites papers and presentations reporting on:

- innovations in planning education, e.g., working collaboratively with communities, NGOs, vulnerable groups and practitioners;
- cutting-edge, experimental pedagogies involving technology-assisted, interdisciplinary and/or international teaching aimed at preparing students for today's and tomorrow's planning challenges;
- innovative planning modules, short courses, programs, particularly focusing on space/place, dialogue and dignity in a variety of contexts;
- planning modules that prepare students to wider European and global planning challenges while keeping local interests and conditions in mind, i.e. modules that "marry" local context-specific planning with global awareness and foster international and multicultural competencies;
- planning modules that focus on innovative economic development strategies in the context of economic austerity / decline.

All authors and presenters are expected to take a critical, reflective stance relating their work to pedagogical and/or social & planning theories.