

Strategic Spatial Planning Revisited:

Experiences from Europe

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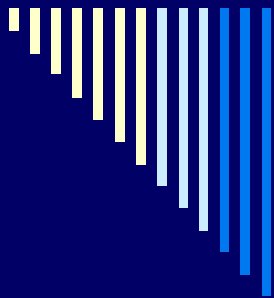
Four main questions.

- ❑ **First, what are the developments and challenges ahead?**
- ❑ **Second, what can we expect from traditional planning in this respect?**
- ❑ **Third, what planning alternative annex governance can we provide ?**
- ❑ **Fourth, what difference does ‘new’ strategic spatial planning make?**

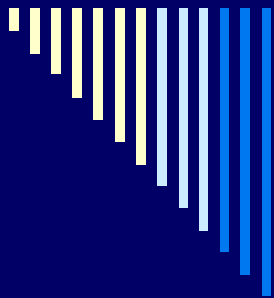


Developments and Challenges in Europe

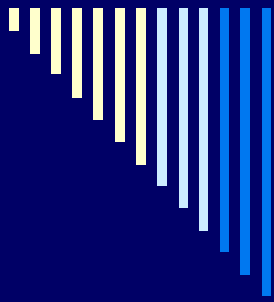
- **The growing complexity (rise of new technologies, changes in production process, crisis of representative democracy, rising energy cost, diversity, globalization of culture and the economy),**
- **an increasing concern about the rapid and apparently random (and uneven) development,**



- **the problems of fragmentation, the ageing of the population, the dramatic increase in interest (at all scales, from local to global) in environmental issues,**
- **the need for governments to adopt a more entrepreneurial style of planning in order to enhance city/regional competitiveness,**



- a longstanding quest for better coordination -horizontal and vertical-,
- a re-emphasis on the need for long-term thinking
- in addition to the traditional land use regulation, urban maintenance, production and management of services governments are being called to answer new demands (safety, diversity, competitiveness, sustainability, spatial quality)



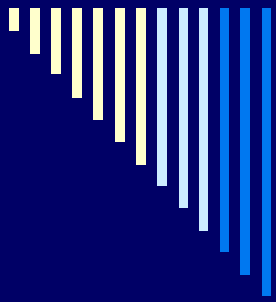
- a growing awareness that a number of planning concepts cannot be achieved solely through physical hard planning or traditional regional-economic planning
- a growing awareness that planning without implementation is futile



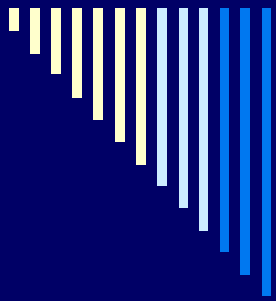
What are possible reactions?

We may consider four different types of reaction to these developments and challenges:

- reactive (the rear-view mirror),**
- inactive (going with the flow),**
- preactive (preparing for the future) and**
- proactive (designing the future and making it happen) .**



My thesis is that only the 'proactive' reaction is appropriate, as it calls for the transformative practices that are needed to cope with the continuing and unabated pace of change driven by the (structural) developments and challenges.



- **Transformative practices focus on the structural problems in society; they construct images/visions of a preferred outcome and how to implement them.**



How does transformative change occur?

NOT instant revolutions.



Changes evolve in many small ways, building a ground of understanding and experiences which, over time, eventually come together in what history may then describe as ‘a transformative moment’



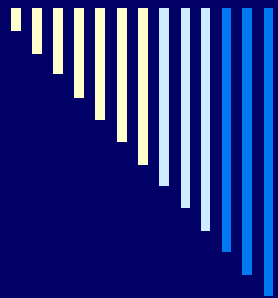
How do Planning processes get transformative power?

By developing new concepts and new ways of thinking that change the way resources are used, (re)distributed and allocated, the way the regulatory powers are exercised, the way new actors are getting involved and the way new concepts and new ways of thinking travel



What kind of products/instruments do we see to tackle these Challenges and Developments?

- ❑ Traditional land-use planning,
- ❑ master planning,
- ❑ structure planning



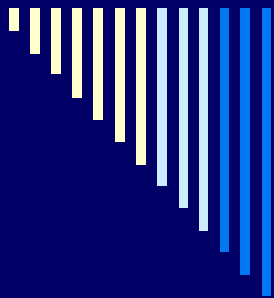
**Do these approaches provide a real answer to
the challenges and developments?**

NO!



Some Criticism of Land Use Planning

- ❑ land use plan ensures that undesirable developments do not occur, but it is not able to ensure that desirable developments actually take place when and where they are needed.
- ❑ land use plans have formal status and serve as official guidelines for implementation, when it comes down to the actual implementation, other policy fields are easily able to sabotage the spatial plans if they want.



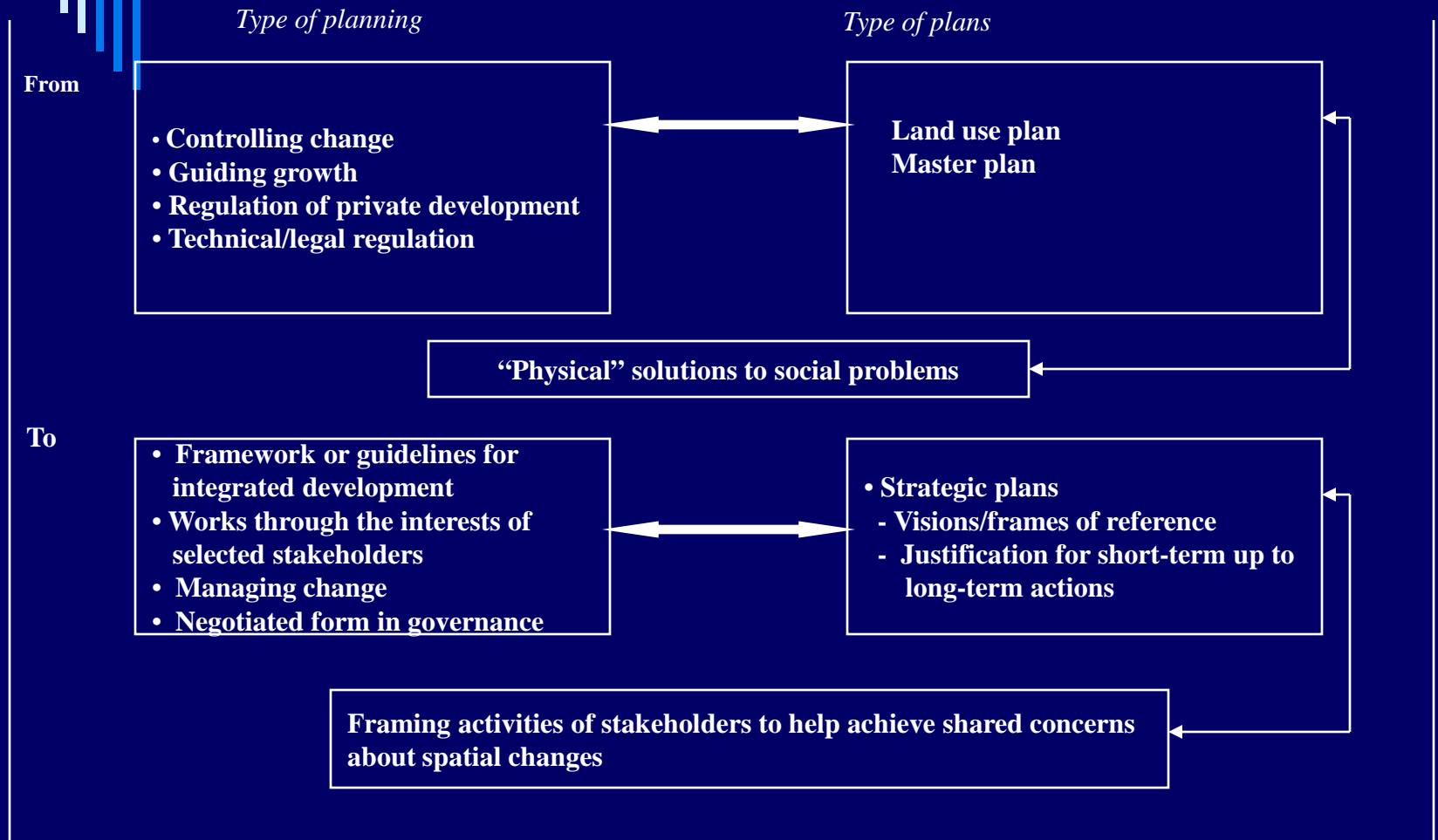
- ❑ a number of different planning concepts cannot be achieved solely through physical hard planning (land use planning)
- ❑ land use plans provide legal certainty but are rigid and inflexible and less responsive to changing circumstances.
- ❑ provide ‘physical’ solutions to social/economic problems.

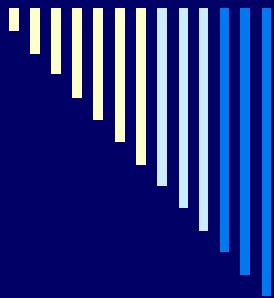


As a Reaction

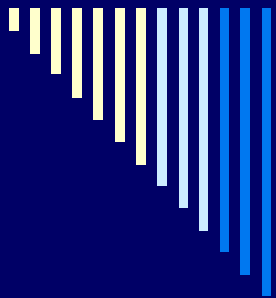
Emergence of a Revival of Strategic
Spatial Planning

From traditional spatial planning to strategic spatial planning

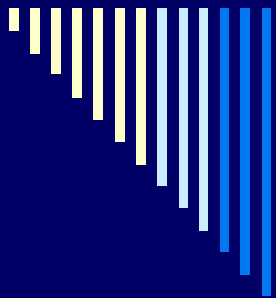




- **The objectives for embarking on a strategic spatial planning process have typically been:**
 - + to articulate a more coherent and coordinated long-term spatial logic for land use regulation, for resource protection, for action-orientation,**
 - + to combine visioning and selectivity with the very nature of urban/regional dynamics and urban/regional development;**



- + a more open multi-level type of governance,**
- + sustainability, innovation;**
- + redynamisation of city/region**



**My definition of ‘new’ Strategic Spatial Planning
contains three components:**

a what?

a how?

a why?



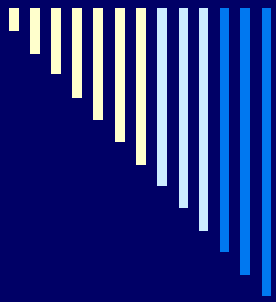
What?

Strategic Spatial Planning is a transformative and integrative, public sector led socio-spatial process through which visions/frames of reference, justification for coherent actions and means for implementation are produced that shape and frame, what a place is and might become

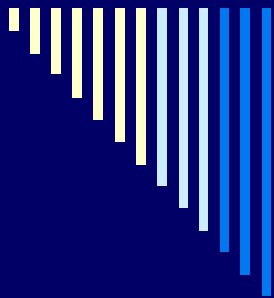


How?

- ❑ It focuses on a limited number of strategic key issues,
- ❑ it takes a critical view of the environment in terms of determining strengths and weaknesses in the context of opportunities and threats,
- ❑ it analyses problems, external trends, forces and resources available
- ❑ It identifies and gathers major actors (public and private),



- **it allows for a broad (multi-level governance) and diverse (public, private, economic, civil society...) involvement during the planning process,**
- **it creates solid, workable long-term visions/perspectives (a geography of the unknown) and strategies at different levels taking into account the power structures -political, economic, gender, cultural, ethnic-, uncertainties and competing values**
- **It designs plan-making structures and develops content, images and decision frameworks for influencing and managing spatial change,**



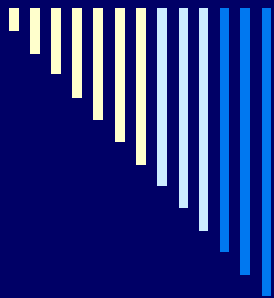
- it is about building new ideas and processes that can carry them forward, thus generating ways of understanding, ways of building agreements, and ways of organizing and mobilizing for the purpose of exerting influence in different arenas**
- it focuses, both in the short and the long term, on framing decisions, actions, projects, results and implementation (link with budget) and incorporates monitoring, feedback, adjustment and revision**



Why?

This question is related to our values:

- diversity (openness also to “the other”)**
- sustainability (in the broadest sense)**
- equity (fair use of resources and fair treatment of people)**
- quality of life (not elitist and not at the expense of the socio-cultural)**
- inclusiveness (open dialogue)**
- accountability (to the people we work for)**



Four tracks:

- one for the vision/frames,**
- one for the short-term and long-term actions,**
- a third for the involvement of the key actors,**
- a fourth track for a more permanent process (mainly at the local level) involving the broader public in major decisions.**

The tracks may NOT be looked upon in a purely linear way.

The context forms the setting of the planning process but also takes form and undergoes changes in the process.



Strategic projects as a key to a more strategic planning

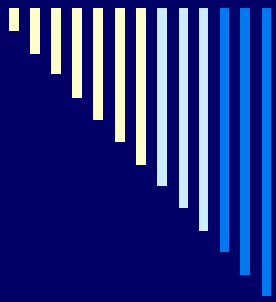
Strategic projects are projects, coordinated by public actors in close co-operation with the private sector, and other semi-public actors:

- They aim at transforming the socio-spatial, economic and cultural fabric of a larger area through punctual interventions.**
- They are transformative and integrative.**
- They are strategic in the sense that they deal with specific key- issues in an area.**

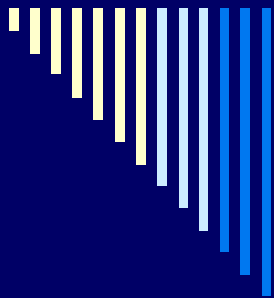


Types of projects

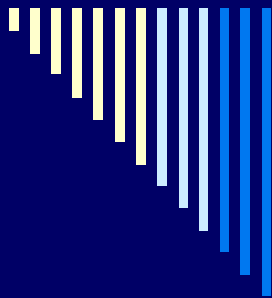
- ***First*, strategic urban projects aim to consolidate, to transform, to restructure or to reuse places in cities for new and emerging demands from public and private (individuals, economic and cultural) actors.**



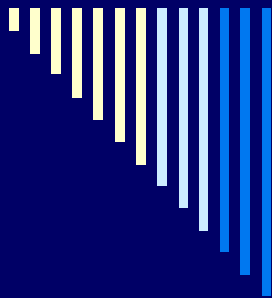
- **Second**, strategic rural projects aim to cope with new emerging functions in ‘neo-rural areas’. In post-war development, the agrarian production function gradually decreased, while new functions, such as nature, recreation, landscape conservation, water management, housing, tourism and new types of business activities became more prevalent. This development occurred in a more or less unplanned way in parallel with processes of sub-urbanization of economic activities and households.



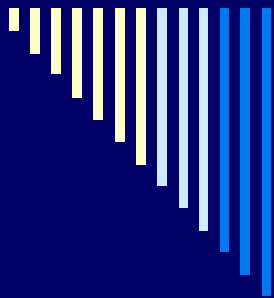
- ***Third*, strategic economic projects question traditional industrial estates and traditional location policy. Worn-out concepts of industrial parks no longer meet the current demands of an increasingly service oriented and flexible economy. Strategic economic projects attempt to re-invent and spatially redesign the concept of business parks and reconsider location of economic activities. A balanced supply policy provides an answer to availability and suitability of land for specific economic activities.**



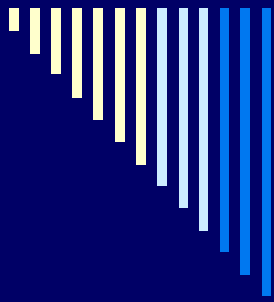
- ***Fourth: Network-like projects:*** the main reason for actors (cities, institutions, investors) to enter into such a network is that it enables them to pursue a certain goal that is common to all of them and to achieve this goal in a better and easier way through cooperation than through acting individually. Whatever can be done at the level of the network needs to involve progressively multilevel and inter-jurisdictional dimensions. Network concepts require the development of a complex governance setting throughout various institutional, political, territorial and socio-economic contexts.



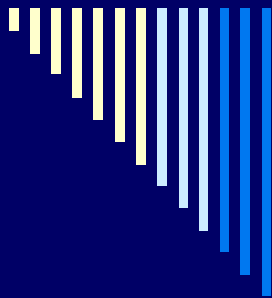
- **The basic challenge in the process of (re)activating networks-in-the-making seems to be to find out what kind of strategic issues could attract the interest and sympathy of politicians, the business community, ordinary citizens, local communities and municipalities.**



- **without these issues being presented in too antagonistic a manner, starting from the initial formulation of the issue and continuing on through the design of institutions and the arenas needed to successfully conceive, plan and implement the issue in a project. Such a project must reflect the specific politics and context of the area.**

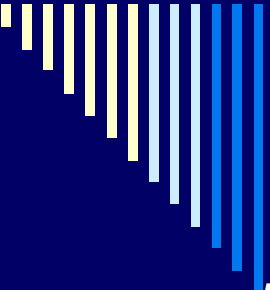


- **This context includes the history and geography. The selection of a strategic project is neither a neutral nor a random matter. From an analytical point of view, the strategic issues may be considered fairly obvious, but from a policy point of view they are definitely not. This phenomenon is common to most so-called urban networks.**



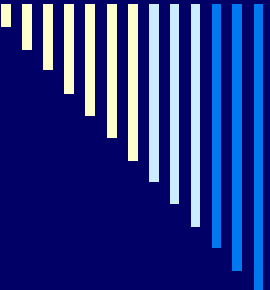
For all four types of strategic projects there is a need for socio-spatial innovation in:

- ways in which new development dynamics can be introduced in a hybrid urban/regional setting and a complex context;**
- ways to develop new challenging socio-spatial concepts;**
- ways these concepts are implemented in multi-actor and multi-level government settings.**

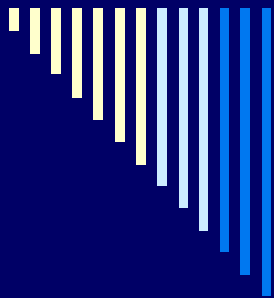


***Firstly:* a more operational framework for sustainability and quality management in spatial and spatial-economic planning:**

- understanding of the meaning of sustainability and liveability in spatial development and in planning approaches,
- how to make them operational,
- a search for criteria and indicators for evaluating and implementing them.

- 
- ***Secondly:* governance in multi-actor and multi-level policy settings. Contemporary policy settings nearly always imply a complex mutual dependency of actors.**

A broadening of the arsenal of instruments and tools available for reaching agreements, conflict management and implementation. We need to explore innovative instruments (see collective spatial agreements), needed to enhance the capacity for implementation.

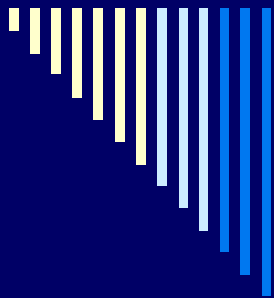


- ***Thirdly:*** identification and critical analysis of all technical, legal, financial, organizational and property factors influencing the concrete realization of different types of projects. A creative search for proper instruments, tools and means for project development:
 - exploring the current technical tools and instruments applied in strategic projects;
 - identifying foreign learning experiences;

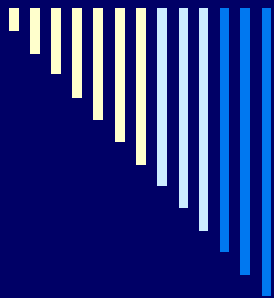


What is the difference that ‘revised’ strategic spatial planning makes?

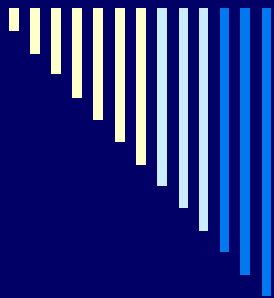
- **A first difference is related to time. It means that time flows from the ‘invented’ future, which challenges conventional wisdom, toward and into the experienced present. This means inventing a world that would otherwise not be. New strategic planning ‘creates’ a future environment, but all decisions are made in the present.**



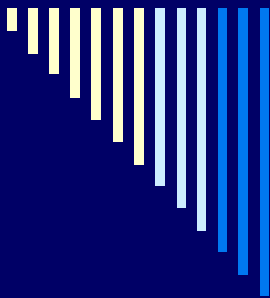
- **Second, this ‘created future’ has to be placed within a specific context (economic, social, political, cultural, power), place, time and scale regarding specific issues and a particular combination of actors. It provides the setting for the process but also takes form, undergoes changes in the process.**
- **Third, new strategic planning is centered on the elaboration of a mutually beneficial dialectic between top-down structural developments and bottom-up local uniqueness.**



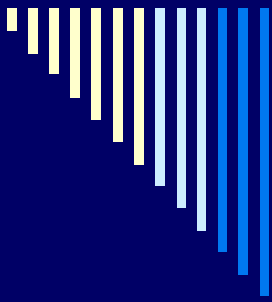
- **Fourth, new strategic planning is selective and oriented to issues that really matter. As it is impossible to do everything that needs to be done, ‘strategic’ implies that some decisions and actions are considered more important than others and that much of the process lies in making the tough decisions about what is most important for the purpose of producing fair, structural responses to problems, challenges, aspirations (diversity, sustainability, equity, spatial quality...).**



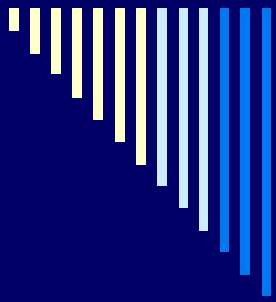
- **Fifth, new strategic planning is about joint decision-making and integrated action. Space may provide a more effective way of integrating agendas and actions at different levels of governance and for integrating actors.**
- Spatial planning as spatial governance?**



Sixth, new strategic planning relates to implementation. Things must get done! This is seen as the pattern of purpose, policy statements, plans, programs, actions (short, medium and long-term), decisions and resource allocation (hence the link to the budget) that defines what a policy is in practice, what it does, and why it does it – from the points of view of various affected publics.



This stresses the need to find effective connections between political authorities and implementation actors (officers, individual citizens, community organizations, private corporations, private corporations and public departments).



THANK YOU