Shifts in strategic spatial planning? Some evidence from Europe and Australia

Louis Albrechts
KU-Leuven Isro, Kasteelpark Arenberg 51, B 3001 Leuven, Belgium;
e-mail: Louis.Albrechts@asro.kuleuven.be
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Abstract. Clear-cut definitions of strategic spatial planning are rather exceptional. Therefore in this paper I use building blocks from literature (planning and business) and my experience in practice to construct a workable normative definition of the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of strategic spatial planning. Five main characteristics (selective, relational annex inclusive, integrative, visioning, and action orientated) that constitute the hard core of the ‘strategic’ in the normative view are confronted, in a first broad scan, with nine so-called strategic plans from different planning traditions in Europe (Italy, France, Spain, the Czech Republic, Belgium, and the Netherlands) and in Australia (Perth). The confrontation highlights some hesitant shifts towards the normative view but also makes it clear that there is still a long way to go.

Introduction: revival of strategic spatial planning

In Australia the report by the Perth Metropolitan Town Planning Commission recognized the need for long-term strategic spatial planning as early as 1930. The Stephenson–Hepburn plan of 1955 is considered by many in Western Australia as the first strategic plan in Australia. In the 1960s the accent shifted to new-look strategic structure plans to facilitate long-term growth. The latter part of the 1970s saw trend-based planning pre-occupied with the coordination of land release and infrastructure investments (Freestone and Hamnett, 2000).

In a number of Western European countries, strategic spatial planning evolved in the 1960s and 1970s towards a system of comprehensive planning—the integration of nearly everything (see Perloff, 1980)—at different administrative levels. In the 1980s when the neoliberal paradigm replaced the Keynesian–Fordist one, and when public intervention retrenched in all domains (Martinelli, 2005), Europe witnessed a retreat from strategic spatial planning fuelled not only by the neoconservative disdain for planning, but also by postmodernist skepticism, both of which tend to view progress as something which, if it happens, cannot be planned (Healey, 1997b). Instead the focus of urban and regional planning practices shifted to projects (Motte, 1994; Rodriguez and Martinez, 2003; Secchi, 1986), especially for the revival of rundown parts of cities and regions, and to land-use regulations.

The growing complexity, an increasing concern about the rapid and apparently random development, the problems of fragmentation, the dramatic increase in interest (at all scales, from local to global) in environmental issues, the growing strength of the environmental movement, the need for governments to adopt a more entrepreneurial style of planning in order to enhance city competitiveness, a longstanding quest for better coordination (horizontal and vertical), a reemphasis on the need for long-term thinking, and the aim to return to a more realistic and effective method all served to expand the agenda (Breheny, 1991; Cars et al, 2002; Freestone and Hamnett, 2000; Friedmann, 2004; Gibelli, 2003; Harvey, 1989; Healey et al, 1995; Landry, 2000; Le Galès, 2002; Newman and Thornley, 1996; Swyngedouw et al, 2002). Moreover, in addition to
the traditional land-use regulation, urban maintenance, production, and management of services, governments are called to answer new demands, which imply the abandonment of bureaucratic approaches and the involvement of skills and resources that are external to the traditional administrative apparatus (Martufi, 2005). In response, more strategic approaches, frameworks and perspectives for cities, city-regions, and regions became fashionable again in Australia and Europe by the late 1980s and 1990s. (Albrechts, 1999; Albrechts et al, 2001; 2003; Hamnett, 2002; Healey et al, 1997; Lennon, 2000; Martinelli, 2005; Pascual and Esteve, 1997; Salet and Faludi, 2000).

Just as in planning, generally speaking, there are different traditions of strategic spatial planning and there is no ‘one best or one single way’ to carry out strategic spatial planning. The most appropriate approach depends to a large extent on the challenges faced, the particular (substantive and institutional) context of a place and the values and attitudes of the main actors in the process. My purpose in this paper is to interrogate some selected practices of strategic spatial planning. To what extent are the (often self-proclaimed) strategic plans really strategic? To what extent are they different from traditional spatial planning? I do this by confronting—in a broad scan—the outline of my personal, normative view on strategic spatial planning with specific examples of plans from different planning traditions in Europe and Australia. My normative view is based on a selective reading of the literature and my practical experience. I selected cases I had been closely involved with through practice or research and cases I had access to in a structured way. For Turin (Ave, 2005), Pesaro (Martufi, 2005), Bilbao (Rodriguez, 2003; Rodriguez and Martinez, 2003), Euralille(1) (Moulaert et al, 2001; 2005), Groningen (Ashworth, 2005), and Prague (Turba, 2005) I rely on the outcomes of the international seminar “Strategic spatial planning in Europe: comparing methodologies and outcomes”, Reggio di Calabria, 27 November 2003. For the ‘Structure Plan for Flanders’ (see Albrechts, 1999; 2003b) I rely on my active involvement in the process and interviews with the main actors. For the ROM(2) (see Albrechts and van den Broeck, 2004) and Perth cases I rely on written material and interviews with some of the main actors (planners, politicians, citizens, pressure groups). All plans—with the exception of Flanders—are nonstatutory.

The sheer size of the Perth Metropolitan Area, with 1600 000 inhabitants on approximately 20 000 km² and its mineral-fuelled rapid growth, marks a clear difference with the European cases.

Building blocks for a ‘new’ strategic spatial planning

There are no single, universally accepted definitions for strategy and strategic spatial planning. Various authors and practitioners use the terms differently. In a selective reading of the literature (business and planning) I look for building blocks to broaden the perspective.

Historical roots

The word strategy originated within the military context. In the Webster’s dictionary the word ‘strategy’ is revealed to have been derived from the Greek ‘strategia’, meaning generalship (Webster, 1970, page 867) and is defined as the “science and art of employing the political, economic, psychological and military forces of a nation or group of nations to afford the maximum support to adopted policies in peace or war”. In the current paper I do not dwell upon strategy and strategic planning in the military sense.

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(1) Euralille is a multifunctional complex in the heart of Lille. It includes transport infrastructure, offices, a shopping arcade, housing, hotels, cultural infrastructure, and a park.

(2) ROM: Strategic Plan for Ghent Canal Zone, Belgium. RO stands for spatial planning, M for environment.
According to Kaufman and Jacobs (1987), strategic planning in the United States originated in the 1950s in the private sector. Its roots are tied to the need for rapidly changing and growing corporations to plan effectively for and manage their futures when the future itself seemed to be increasingly uncertain (that is, strategic planning carried out by an organization for its own activities). In the early 1970s government leaders in the United States became increasingly interested in strategic planning as a result of the wrenching changes which were occurring—such as the oil crisis, demographic shifts, changing values, and the volatile economy (Bryson and Roering, 1988; Eadie, 1983). In the early 1980s a series of articles in the United States, called on state governments and local governments to use the strategic-planning approach developed in the corporate world (Kaufman and Jacobs, 1987).

According to Mastop (1998), in northwestern Europe the first traces of strategic spatial planning date back to the 1920s and 1930s. He links strategic spatial planning closely to the idea of the modern nation-state. Strategic spatial planning is used here to direct the activities of others (different authorities, different sectors, private actors). The differences in origin and traditions between the United States and Europe reflect the historical ‘statist’ traditions of many postwar European states, which were linked to a battery of welfare-state policies (Batley and Stoker, 1991; Esping-Anderson, 1990, cited by Healey, 1997b). In Australia, until the 1990s the tradition was very much shaped by British planners imported to design the plans (Stephenson in Perth is a good example) and to implement them.

There is a huge amount of literature in the United States about the use of strategy and strategic planning in business and nonprofit organizations and a growing literature in Europe about strategic spatial planning [see Albrechts (2004) for a more elaborated account of the literature].

Quinn (1980) cited a few studies that have suggested some initial criteria for evaluating a strategy: clarity, motivational impact, internal consistency, compatibility with the environment, appropriateness in light of the resources available, degree of risk, the extent to which the strategy matches the often contradictory personal values of key figures, time horizon, flexibility, workability, focus on key concepts, and thrust and committed leadership (see also Poister and Streib, 1999). Others (Bryson, 1995; Bryson and Roering, 1988; Poister and Streib, 1999) stress the need to gather the key (internal and external) actors (preferably key decisionmakers); the need to construct a longer-term vision (Kunzmann, 2000; Mintzberg, 1994; Mintzberg et al, 1998), the importance of external trends and forces, the need for the active involvement of senior-level managers and to build commitment to plans (see also Albrechts, 1995; Granados Cabezas, 1995; van den Broeck, 1996); and the need to focus on implementation and be politically realistic. For Granados Cabezas (1995) strategic spatial planning anticipates new tendencies, discontinuities, and surprises; it concentrates on openings and ways of taking advantage of new opportunities.

Mintzberg et al (1998) and Albrechts (2004) conclude their survey of strategy-making and strategic (spatial) planning by emphasizing the fact that they should be concerned with process [for Healey (1997b) it is clearly a social process, and for Kunzmann (2000) it is public sector led] and content, static and dynamics, constraint and aspiration, the cognitive and the collective, the planned and the learned, the socioeconomic and the political, the public and the private, the vision and the action, the local and the global, legitimacy and a revised democratic tradition, values and facts, selectivity and integrativity, equality and power, and the long term and the short term.
Towards a workable normative viewpoint on strategic spatial planning

Reflecting on the challenges faced by spatial planning and relying on the experience accumulated from planning practice and a selective reading of the planning literature leads us to a normative viewpoint on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of strategic spatial planning. The normative viewpoint affirms my own values in the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of strategic spatial planning.

Strategic spatial planning is a transformative and integrative, (preferably) public-sector-led (Kunzmann, 2000) sociospatial [see Healey (1997b) for the emphasis on the social] process through which a vision, coherent actions, and means for implementation are produced that shape and frame what a place is and what it might become.

A combination of characteristics related to the ‘how’ of strategic spatial planning gives a specific colouring to the ‘what’. Strategic spatial planning has to focus on a limited number of strategic key-issue areas, it has to involve taking a critical view of the environment in terms of determining strengths and weaknesses in the context of opportunities and threats, and involves studying the external trends, forces and resources available (Bryson and Roering, 1988; Hamnett, 2002; Kaufman and Jacobs, 1987; Poister and Streib, 1999; Quinn, 1980). Strategic spatial planning involves identifying and gathering major actors (public and private), allowing for a broad (multilevel governance) and diverse (public, economic, civil society) involvement during the planning process; and creating solid, workable long-term visions or perspectives (a geography of the unknown) and strategies at different levels, taking into account the power structures—political, economic, gender, cultural—uncertainties and competing values (Albrechts, 2003a; Bryson and Roering, 1988; Friend and Hickling, 1987; Granados Cabezas, 1995; Poister and Streib, 1999; Healey, 1997a; 1997b; Kunzmann, 2000; Mintzberg, 1994; Quinn, 1980; Sager, 1994; Young, 1990). Strategic spatial planning involves designing plan-making structures and developing content, images, and decision frameworks for influencing and managing spatial change; it is about building new ideas and processes that can carry the ideas 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 (Albrechts, 1999; Faludi and van der Valk, 1994; Healey, 1997a; 1997b; Mintzberg, 2002; Mintzberg et al, 1998). Finally strategic spatial planning, both in the short and the long term, involves focusing on framing decisions, actions, projects, results, and implementation, and incorporating monitoring, feedback, adjustment, and revision (Bryson, 1995; Bryson and Roering, 1988; Faludi and Korthals Altes, 1994; Gibelli, 2003; Mintzberg, 1994; Poister and Streib, 1999). This strategic spatial planning is presented not as a new ideology preaching a new world order but as a method for creating and steering a (range of) better future(s) for a place based on shared values (see also Ogilvy, 2002).

The normative view of strategic spatial planning may seem (see Mintzberg, 1994) too broad to some people. However, the many experiences documented in planning literature (Albrechts et al, 2001; 2003; Hamnett and Freestone, 2000; Healey et al, 1997; Martinelli, 2005; Pascual and Esteve, 1997; Pugliese and Spaziante, 2003) back up parts of this broader view. The view also implies that strategic spatial planning is not a single concept, procedure, or tool. In fact it is a set of concepts, procedures, and tools that must be tailored carefully to whatever situation is at hand if desirable outcomes are to be achieved (Bryson and Roering, 1996). Strategic spatial planning is as much about process, institutional design, and mobilization as about the development of substantive theories. Content is related to the strategic issues selected in the process. The capacity of strategic-spatial-planning systems to deliver the wished-for outcome is dependent not only on the system itself, but also on the conditions underlying it (see also Mintzberg, 1994). These conditions—including political, cultural, and professional
attitudes towards spatial planning (in terms of planning content and process) and the political will on the part of the institutions involved in setting the process in motion (Granados Cabezas, 1995)—affect the ability of planning systems to implement the chosen strategies.

The term ‘spatial’ brings into focus the ‘where of things’, whether static or dynamic; the creation and management of special ‘places’ and sites; the interrelations between different activities in an area; and significant intersections and nodes within an area which are physically colocated (see also Healey, 2004). The focus on the spatial relations of territories allows for a more effective way of integrating different agendas (economic, environmental, cultural, social and policy agendas) as these agendas impact on places and also allows for translating territorial development into specific investment programmes and regulatory practices (Albrechts et al., 2003; see also Wilkinson and Appelbee, 1999). Strategic frameworks and visions for territorial development, with an emphasis on place qualities, diversity, and the spatial impacts and integration of investments, complement and provide a context for specific development projects. They also carry a potential for a ‘rescaling’ of issue agendas down from the national or state level and up from the municipal level. The search for new scales of policy articulation and new policy concepts is also linked to attempts to widen the range of actors involved in policy processes, with new alliances, actor partnerships, and consultative processes (Albrechts et al., 2001; 2003; Healey et al., 1997). Moreover, a territorial focus seems to provide a promising basis for encouraging levels of government to work together (multilevel governance) and in partnership with actors in diverse positions in the economy and in civil society (Albrechts, 1999; Furst, 2001; Kunzmann, 2001).

Traditional spatial planning is basically concerned with the location, intensity, form, amount, and harmonization of land development required for the various space-using functions (see CEC, 1997; Chapin, 1965; Cullingworth, 1972). The motivations for embarking on a strategic spatial planning process vary, but the objectives have typically been to articulate a more coherent and coordinated long-term spatial logic for land-use regulation, for resource protection, for action-orientation, for a more open multilevel type of governance, for introducing sustainability, and for investments in regeneration and infrastructure.

The normative viewpoint produces a quite different picture from traditional planning in terms of plans (strategic plans versus master plans or land-use plans), type of planning (providing a framework versus technical or legal regulation), and governance type (government-led versus government-led-but-negotiated form of governance).

Below I confront elements of the normative view with (so called) strategic plans in Europe and Australia.

Confrontation with selected strategic plans
The efforts underway in many parts of Europe and Australia to produce strategies for cities, city-regions, and regions (Albrechts et al., 2001; 2003; Freestone and Hamnett, 2000; Hamnett, 2002; Healey et al., 1997; Martinelli, 2005; Pascual and Esteve, 1997; Pugliese and Spaziante, 2003; Salet and Faludi, 2000; Searle, 2003) reorient spatial planning from the passive and restrictive towards the promotion of actions and projects. Planning becomes more strategic, it creates a context for development and enhances development rather than granting permits. Often these efforts involve the construction of new institutional arenas within structures of government which are themselves changing.

The following sections present the five characteristics of the normative view I consider essential (that it is selective, relational-annex-inclusive, integrative, visioning, and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Size (km²)</th>
<th>Strategic spatial planning authority</th>
<th>Lead institutional actor</th>
<th>Date of planning process</th>
<th>Critical issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilbao</td>
<td>352 000</td>
<td>Basque government and Diputacion de Bizkaia</td>
<td>Bilbao Metropoli 30</td>
<td>1989–1993</td>
<td>Transforming Bilbao to the economic, financial and cultural capital of the ‘Atlantic Arc’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesaro</td>
<td>90 000</td>
<td>Municipality of Pesaro</td>
<td>Municipality of Pesaro</td>
<td>2001–ongoing</td>
<td>Quality and innovation, sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euralille</td>
<td>1 090 000&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Société Anonyme d’Économie Mixte (SAEM)</td>
<td>SAEM</td>
<td>mid-1980s–1990</td>
<td>Urban and economic redynamization of the metropolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turin</td>
<td>2 000 000&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Municipality of Turin</td>
<td>Associazione Torino Internazionale [International Association of Turin]</td>
<td>May 1998–February 2000</td>
<td>Transforming Turin into a European metropolis; city of activities and know-how; quality of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>1 210 000</td>
<td>Prague city hall</td>
<td>Strategic spatial planning department</td>
<td>11 January 1993–May 2000</td>
<td>Integration of Prague into European structures; innovation and skills of labour; housing; sustainability; shift to polycentricity; quality of city administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flanders</td>
<td>5 990 000</td>
<td>Flanders region</td>
<td>Planning team</td>
<td>1992–1997</td>
<td>Revitalization of cities, protection of open space, focus on implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groningen</td>
<td>175 000</td>
<td>Department for planning and economic affairs</td>
<td>Department for planning and economic affairs</td>
<td>1977–2001</td>
<td>Improvement however interpreted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>1 600 000&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>State of Western Australia</td>
<td>Department of planning and infrastructure</td>
<td>1 January 2003–7 July 2004</td>
<td>Urban containment, public transport, sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROM</td>
<td>7300&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Flemish government (through the governor of the province as commissioner of the Flemish government)</td>
<td>Steering committee</td>
<td>1993–ongoing</td>
<td>Uncertainty about the role of the port; liveability of residential areas; heavy pollution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Metropolitan area.
<sup>b</sup> Euralille is a project in the Lille agglomeration.
<sup>c</sup> Part of the Ghent agglomeration of 3 001 000 inhabitants.
action oriented)—from my reading of the literature and my personal experience—for strategic spatial planning confronted with nine strategic spatial planning cases see table 1 for an overview of the cases).

Selective
Whereas comprehensive planning is pervasive, reaching to most if not all problems and attempting to integrate nearly everything (McLoughlin, 1977; Perloff, 1980; Wilson, 1989), strategic spatial planning is selective and oriented to issues that really matter. Indeed, budgetary constraints and a lack of institutional capacity make it 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, aims, and aspirations.

Euralille and Groningen are very specific cases. Euralille can be considered as a complex of economic functions (Moulaert et al, 2001). It includes a multimodal transport infrastructure, offices, a shopping arcade, housing, two hotels, a cultural infrastructure and an urban park. Over 24 years (1977–2001) Groningen focused on a multimodal transport infrastructure and on a number of ‘hallmark’ public buildings. The plans in both Euralille and Groningen had a substantial physical impact on the built environment. Bilbao, Pesaro, and Turin are (or were) structured around a (large) number of critical issues. In Bilbao the revitalization strategy was structured around eight ‘critical issues’ or policy areas reflecting the strengths and weaknesses of the metropolitan economy: investment in human resources; development of advanced services; mobility and accessibility; urban and environmental regeneration; cultural centrality, coordinated management of public and private sectors; and social action (Rodriguez and Martinez, 2003). In Turin the selected strategic axes (to integrate the metropolitan area in the international system; to build metropolitan government; research and training to be treated as a strategic resource; to promote entrepreneurship and job places; to become a city of tourism, commerce, sport, and culture; and to improve quality of life) were considered instrumental for the city’s ambition to become a truly European metropolis, clearly integrated with the rest of Europe, and ready for another shift in its rich history. In Pesaro the strategic plan consists of a considerable number of projects in six strategic areas ranging between attracting enterprises, becoming a city of culture, city promotion and internationalization; promoting information and new technology; local welfare; and territory (locus for the integration of different policies). Although Prague’s and Perth’s strategic plans were quite similarly constructed around topic areas and key strategic priorities, they focused on almost all spheres of their functioning and were rather close to comprehensive planning as defined earlier. The Flemish cases (especially the ROM and to a far lesser extent also the structure plan for Flanders) are (or were) selective and focus (focused) on critical issues (for the ROM: accessibility of the port infrastructure, economic development opportunities, environmental quality, image and landscape, and liveability; for the structure plan for Flanders: revitalization of urban areas, infrastructure, protection of open space, and the economy).

The heritage of the rational-comprehensive planning tradition still affects most cases and is, apparently, difficult to overcome. However, comprehensiveness, as the integration of nearly everything, is at odds with my normative view of strategic spatial planning. If it is wanted that spatial planning plays a role in spatial processes and has an impact on the quality of places, an enforced emphasis on selectivity is inevitable.

Relational-annex-inclusive
Whereas most traditional spatial planning involves relying on a ‘Euclidian’ concept of space and place and focusing on objects and form, strategic spatial planning involves
aiming for more relational concepts of space and place and focusing on relations and processes (see Friedmann, 1993; Graham and Healey, 1999). Indeed, the way we see and know a place and the way we act in it are socially constructed; that is, moulded in social relations with others and through these relations embedded in specific contexts. All relational webs have points of intersection, or nodes, which provide the arenas where actors meet (see Healey, 1997a). Arenas create formal ‘places’ where new approaches, concepts, ways of acting, and ways of valuing are introduced, discussed, understood, and, possibly, transformed. The access of citizens and groups to arenas influences what issues will be discussed, the ways issues are discussed, and who participates in the discussion. Class, gender, race, and religion do matter in terms of whether citizens are included in the process (Young, 1990). Some citizens have the knowledge, the skills, the power, and the networks to be able to influence or even steer planning proposals and policy decisions. Others lack the means and the cultural codes to participate in the system. Their voices have hardly any impact on decisions. In the wake of a crisis of representative democracy and a demand to transform the state, in ways that will serve all of its citizens and especially the least powerful, pluralist democratic tendencies are developing. Citizens claim a role in the political system (see Mathews, 1994). The purpose of this claim is to promote structural change in order to improve the individual and collective potential, to respond to problems, needs, and challenges, and to take active part in the processes of planmaking, decision-making, and implementation aimed at solving problems and realizing visions and potentials. Through the involvement of citizens (and especially weak groups) in socially and politically relevant actions, some degree of empowerment, ownership, or acceptance is sought for these citizens (see Friedmann, 1992). This leads in many places to a pervasive struggle between pluralistic democratic tendencies, in which new ways to decide on public action are sought, ways which are more inclusive of interests of a wide range of actors, more open to new options and opportunities, more broadly discursive and more personally and publicly satisfying (Innes and Booher, 2003) on the one hand and technocorporate tendencies on the other. The latter, very often linked to traditional spatial planning, involve seeking to keep control over the management of a territory using tools of technical analyses and management, following standardized rulebooks or recipes of conventional collaboration between government, major business organizations, and trade unions (see Albrechts, 1999; Healey, 1997a).

In all nine cases actors have been identified (see table 2). They range from main interest groups—such as banks, chambers of commerce, trade unions, associations of entrepreneurs, universities, environmental organizations, private firms, transport authorities, and experts—to regional and local authorities to citizens’ associations. A breakdown of the participants—662 in total—in Prague shows that 54% came from the public sector, 18% from the private sector, 10% from universities and research institutes, 5% were foreign experts, 4% came from civic associations and foundations, 2% from hospitals and churches, and 1% from the press. Different techniques were used: in Prague workshops, together with preparatory work, expert assessments, and a certain involvement of citizens; in Turin a development forum for public and private institutions developed into the Association of Turin International, work teams in Pesaro, city forum, liaison teams and working groups in Perth, project teams of civil servants and mixed working parties in the ROM, a cooperative model involving sector departments and traditional end-of-the-line public involvement in Flanders; and consultations with discussion partners (public and private) in Groningen. In Groningen, the technocratic approach polarized the viewpoints and led to a rather unusual compulsory ‘corrected’ referendum that, with an unprecedented turnout, overwhelmingly voted down the project.
Table 2. Type of actors involved in the main governance structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arena</th>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Pressure groups</th>
<th>Key actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilbao</strong></td>
<td>Bilbao Metropoli 30</td>
<td>Basque and county governments; 30 town councils; universities; utilities; port authority; public transport</td>
<td>Banks; chamber of commerce; media; professional and consumer organizations; foundations; IBM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pesaro</strong></td>
<td>Urban Center</td>
<td>Province government; region government; municipalities of Pesaro, La Spezia, Trento; University of Urbino</td>
<td>Experts; professional organizations; cultural, economic, and third sectors; banks; foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Euralille</strong></td>
<td>SAEM</td>
<td>4 main cities; 1 bordering municipality; department government; regional government; Communauté Urbaine de Lille</td>
<td>3 national banks; 2 regional banks; 3 chambers of commerce; and industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turin</strong></td>
<td>Associazione Torino Internazionale</td>
<td>Municipality of Turin and 21 other municipalities; city departments; province government</td>
<td>Association of entrepreneurs; retailers; builders; trade unions; charities; banks; universities; environmental groups; church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prague</strong></td>
<td>Strategic spatial planning department</td>
<td>City departments; national ministries; city hall; state agencies; hospitals; academy of science; mayors of city boroughs; universities</td>
<td>Firms; banks; church; press; foreign experts; nonprofit organizations; insurance companies; civic associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flanders</strong></td>
<td>Cooperative model</td>
<td>Minister of Planning; regional sectoral departments; regional advisory councils; planning experts; planning department</td>
<td>Planning team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Groningen</strong></td>
<td>Service planning economy Dialogue with city</td>
<td>Public housing; public transport; municipal council</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce; Trade associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perth</strong></td>
<td>Dialogue with city</td>
<td>Minister of planning; State Planning Commission; experts from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure; local governments; Landcorp; Perth Transport Authority</td>
<td>University experts; development industry; housing industry association Western Australia Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROM</strong></td>
<td>Steering committee</td>
<td>2 mayors; aldermen; governor of province; port authority; national railways; regional and provincial high-ranking civil servants</td>
<td>Private firms; Sidmar, Volvo, Honda; chamber of commerce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Semipublic.
b Association of agencies working in the sustainability area.
The involvement of a considerable number of actors may provide a flavour of democracy. The Perth case illustrates this. The Minister of Planning in Western Australia took the initiative to open up the strategic spatial planning process for the Perth Metropolitan Area through a big event, the 'Dialogue with the City'. The official rhetoric is that the people have spoken, but reality looks different. After the very successful one-day event (with some 1100 participants), the process was taken over by an organizational structure comprising an implementation team, liaison teams, and working groups. Several interviewees pointed out that the people selected for the implementation team, the liaison teams, and the working groups were almost exactly those who previously had easy access to the plan-making and political decisionmaking processes. The involvement of large numbers of, but all in all selective, actors gnaws on the constitutional system of territorially based representative democracy. On the other hand, histories—in Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Australia—of centralist, corporatist, and 'clientelist' policy style in which closed and nontransparent networks, composed of members of dominant pressure groups and executive politicians, play an important role point to the weakness of traditional representative democracy. This is confirmed in an interview with a former Premier of Western Australia. He points to “an immense political interference”, and witnesses that “various kinds of pressure groups achieve major changes to the plans”.

All cases are mere top-down processes with a varied (for example, ‘Dialogue with the City’ in Perth or the participatory practices in Pesaro) but all in all—with the exception of Pesaro—mostly traditional contribution from the civil society. Most cases seem to deal with ‘average’ citizens. In Perth, within ‘Dialogue with the City’, special sessions were held with Aboriginal people, non-English-speaking people, and young people. None of the projects has incorporated a real ‘cultural’ politics of differences (see Sandercock, 1998) into the planning of its city or city-region. The projects have not provided answers towards multicultural citizenship, the age of woman, the elderly, the poor, the ethnic, and other minorities.

Integrative
Whereas most traditional spatial planning focuses on integrating objects and functions, strategic spatial planning focuses on process too. Traditionally, there has been little or no vertical and horizontal integration between the different levels and parts of government, which has often resulted in fragmented approaches, costly duplication of efforts, and in only rarely achieving the potential synergies. Reality is usually compartmentalization in different departments and agencies which compete with each other for power rather than cooperate to tackle issues. Horizontal integration stresses collaboration, coordination and the building of working relationships that span departmental and agency boundaries and policy areas. Vertical integration offers the potential to tease out causal linkages between global, national, regional, metropolitan and local change, while also taking account of the highly diverse outcomes of such interactions. The dialectic between shifts in institutional sovereignty towards supranational regulatory systems and the principle of subsidiarity, which entails the rooting of policy action in local initiatives and abilities, illustrates the embeddedness of territorial policymaking in multiple institutional domains and interaction arenas which blur the meaning of hierarchical settings in the development of policies (see Gualini, 2001). That implies that many problems no longer comport with the established systems of politics, administration, management, and society (see Hajer and Wagemaa, 2003). Cities and regions themselves have become aware of how fluid their boundaries are. They see the ties between interaction, cooperation, and results.
In Bilbao the focus is on the regional and county level, horizontal linkages among different institutional and private agents, and cooperation between public-sector firms and large regional capital groups. The link with the local level—the municipality of Bilbao—is missing, and apparently the EU is mainly looked upon as a source of finance. Prague and Turin mainly focus on horizontal links at a metropolitan level, while Groningen does the same at the local level. Pesaro engages a dialogue with neighbouring municipalities and stresses the need for cooperation among different institutional levels of government as well as the different realms of management. In Perth the government of Western Australia takes the initiative and approves the plan. It cascades down to the local governments through the local government liaison team, working groups, and the Western Australian Planning Commission. There is no link with the federal level. In the ROM project, leading politicians of the local governments, the governor of the province, and an advisor to the Minister of Planning are all represented. As they are all respected members of the socialist party a clear ‘red line’ from bottom to top has been established. The Flanders plan is mainly at the central level with occasional links to the provincial and local level.

New arenas that could enhance (partial) integration were created in Bilbao (‘Bilbao Metropoli 30’, ‘Ria 2000’), Lille (Société Anonyme d’Économie Mixte—SAEM), Prague (Strategic Spatial Planning Department), Turin (Associazione Torino Internazionale), Pesaro (Urban Center within the city as a “place of thinking, stimulation, coordination”), Flanders (cooperative model), the ROM (first the steering committee and, since 2003, Provag, a new legal construction—with representatives of the Port Authority, the municipalities, and the province—that manages finances and commissions actions), and Perth (implementation team with liaison groups and working groups). In Groningen the existing planning department provides the arena for the integration. In the SAEM the most important cities are represented as well as the ‘Département’, the ‘Région’, the ‘Communauté Urbaine de Lille’, the financial world, and the Chambers of Commerce. The objectives of the SAEM are the definition and the financial management of the project, the promotion and development of the railway stations, and the coordination of the building sites. In Bilbao “Bilbao Metropoli 30” was created to promote, to coordinate, to give continuity, to follow up, and to revise and update the plan. It replaced the initial institutional leadership of the regional-level and county-level administrations. ‘Ria 2000’ was set up as consortium to carry out integrated transport, urban development, and environmental projects within the Metropolitan Area of Bilbao. Despite its status as a private company with public capital and its basically allotted role, ‘Ria 2000’ acts as a public agency with significant capacity to determine planning functions, as it takes decisions over priorities for intervention, use of land and other properties, and management of public funds to develop initiatives (Rodriguez and Martinez, 2003). And, although traditional regulating instruments are still the legal reference, the new dynamics of application, execution, and management have had the effect of reducing the importance of these as mechanisms for city planning. In this way ‘Ria 2000’ has gradually relegated the traditional planning departments to subordinate level, taking over an increasing number of powers related to urban revitalization, including the management of the most emblematic operations and projects in the city and the metropolitan area (Rodriguez and Martinez, 2003, page 193). This leads to a certain ‘privatization’ of planmaking and a subsequent lack of political accountability; both must be questioned. In Flanders, institutionalization of a new discourse took place through a merger of the project team and the planning department. For the ROM project, the incorporated project association ‘Provag’, created in 2003, manages an ‘area envelope’ fed with money from different departments.
Integration, in its most primitive and cynical form, is exceptionally represented through one person—Mauroy in the Euralille case. He was the supreme political entrepreneur [see also Caro (1974) on Moses] able to ‘integrate’ key actors around the Euralille project. As prime minister he became instrumental to the signing of the French–British agreement on the Chunnel, and to changing the (national) law, so that it was possible to build on military land. His privileged relationship with the Préfet de Région was instrumental in convincing the Chirac government to approve the arrival of the TGV in Lille city centre. The presidency of ‘Lille Métropole’ gave him a strategic position to make the project move. His relations with the financial world contributed to the climate of trust necessary to launch the projects (Moulaert et al, 2005). The role of Mauroy illustrates the significance of committed leadership for the success of large-scale strategic spatial planning (see Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Kets de Vries, 2003).

If we look more closely at the purposes for which the new arenas were created we must conclude that apart from Perth, Turin, and Pesaro (survey, listening, discussion) they are merely managerial (Euralille, Bilbao, the ROM, Prague) and functional (Flanders). That means that the integration is indeed partial and that only specific (mainly economic and governmental) lenses, contexts, and attitudes are taken on board. Moreover the cases point to the danger of a privatization of planmaking (see Bilbao), a lack of political accountability of the newly constructed arenas (all cases), and a restricted vertical integration (most cases).

Visioning

A vision visualizes—in words and pictures—what a place could be or should be in the future. Traditional spatial planning provides a detailed picture of some desired (or, for modernist planners, the predicted) end state to be achieved in a certain number of years. Although, in some systems, provision was made for review, the philosophy behind traditional spatial planning was heavily oriented towards the concept of the fixed master plan (see Hall, 1992). Strategic spatial planning requires thinking creatively about possible (and desirable) futures and how to get there. To construct visions for the future we need both the solidity of the analysis that seeks to discover a place that might exist, and the creativity of the design of a place that would not otherwise be. The creation of a vision must be conceived as a conscious and purposive action to represent values and meanings for the future to which a particular place is committed. Without the normative, we risk adopting a pernicious relativism where ‘anything goes’ for the future (see Ogilvy, 2002). The vision must be placed within a specific context (economic, social, cultural, political, or power), a specific place, a specific time, and a specific scale in relation to specific issues that are of interest and within a particular combination of actors. The context provides the setting for the process but also takes form and undergoes changes in the process. To avoid naive utopian thinking and to avoid visions being just exercises in ‘banalization’, ‘woolly thought’, and pseudolegitimation for a number of measures and projects connected only on paper (see Borja and Castells, 1997), visions must be rooted in an understanding of the basic processes that shape places. This must be done recognizing conditions of power, inequality, and diversity. Whose vision is created remains a basic question to be asked.

The Prague strategic plan formulates key strategic priorities but it is not so clear how they merge into a coherent overall vision for the city. Bilbao aims to reestablish its role as the dynamic, financial, and service capital for the so-called Atlantic Arc region and to transform it into nothing less than a ‘global city’. Rodriguez and Martinez (2003, page 187), argue that this rather overstated vision reveals the extent to which strategic spatial planning has been stripped of any pretension of playing a substantive role in the
process of metropolitan regeneration and remains more and more at the level of ‘idealized modelling’. The ambition of Turin is along the same lines—namely, becoming a fully European metropolis. In its strategic plan, Pesaro launches ‘Pesaro, city of quality’. This implies a clear statement against any notion of a purely quantitative growth approach and, in contrast, the need for sustainability, a balanced use of resources and social cohabitation. And in its strategic plan, Euralille is created to position the city as a stepping stone between the influential metropolitan areas of Paris, London, and Brussels in a way that it could become an overspill area for ‘European’ Brussels. The Flanders vision, ‘Flanders open and urban’, aims to reverse the trend of sprawl. The objective for the ROM-project was to develop an integrated vision concerning the future of the area based on three lenses and three types of interest supported by different groups: (1) economic development (port authority, chamber of commerce, city, private sector), (2) spatial quality (city, population, and action groups), and (3) environmental quality (city, province, population, environmental action groups, different environmental authorities). Besides the integrated vision, an implementation programme for actions and the realization of political stability in an extremely negative political environment became important issues for ROM. Possibly as a result of a longstanding and often innovative but technocratic planning tradition, Groningen is very realistic in its ambition. Within series of interrelated plans, the aim is to restructure the city according to changes in lifestyle and spatial behaviour. Perth develops a vision of a more dynamic, organic, and interactive city: the city the citizens want. Some 1100—in part selected—participants took part in the ‘Dialogue with the City’. They were confronted with four carefully selected scenarios prepared by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. All four scenarios focus on growth. And this growth was never questioned. Plenary speakers in favour of urban containment and public transport were meticulously selected. According to some participants in the ‘Dialogue with the City’ event, the four scenarios were not presented in an ‘objective’ way. It was made clear in the presentation that ‘the base case’ (in which additional population and housing spreads outwards from the existing urban areas into traditional-style suburbs) and ‘the compact city’ (in which all growth is around the key urban centre within an urban growth boundary, with little development in regional centres or outward spread) were not supported. While the difference between ‘the regional city’ (in which additional population and housing is within a limited set of regional centres on train lines and other major public transport routes) and ‘the network city’ (in which additional population and housing grows within centres, along activity corridors that connect major centres with frequent public transport, with parallel transport corridors for trucks and faster car movement) was not clear at all. The two latter scenarios are more or less in line with the main previous plans [for example, the Stephenson – Hepburn plan (1955), the corridor plan (1970), and the Metroplan (1990)].

There are problems most plans in creating, a sense of realism or overcoming commonplaces, platitudes, and woolly thought in their visions (see Bilbao). All plans embrace some unspecified notion of sustainability but in none is growth questioned as such.

**Action oriented**

Traditional spatial planning is concerned with the production of plans as a reaction to problems, and challenges or just as a reaction to something a place wants to achieve. Strategic spatial planning is not just a contingent response to wider forces; it may also become an active force in enabling change. Strategic spatial planning relates to action, to implementation—things must get done! This relationship is seen as the pattern of
purposes, policy statements, plans, programmes, actions (short-term, medium-term, and long-term), decisions, and resource allocation that defines what a policy is in practice, what it does, and why it does it—from the point of view of various affected publics (Bryson and Crosby, 1992, page 296). This stresses the need to find effective connections between political authorities and implementation actors (officers, individual citizens, community organizations, private corporations, developers, and public departments) (see Albrechts, 2003b; Hillier, 2002).

In two cases (Euralille and Groningen) the implementation—building of the project—actually took place. In Bilbao similar actions have been taken (for example, the museum, the metro) but not as a result of the strategic spatial planning process. These actions evolved out of a new awareness about the need to ‘do something’ about urban decline. They were not strategic in the sense that they were analyzed, conceived, proposed, and discussed in the context of strategic spatial planning. Both of them were negotiated and approved even before the plan was presented (personal communication with Rodriguez). In Prague and Turin the implementation took place through the actions of different sectors and private actors. In Prague each priority had its political guarantor and each programme had its own expert guarantor. The process of implementation was monitored on an annual basis and evaluated in the form of a monitoring report. In this way an indirect link could be made with the budget. In Flanders, implementation was often understood as merely making a new generation of land-use plans. In Perth an implementation team was created which was closely linked to the Western Australian Planning Commission, the liaison teams, and the working groups. In the ROM case the implementation agencies became strongly involved in the plan. In Flanders the programme document forms a synthesis of the analytical work (diagnosis, scenarios, and strategies); the project dossier includes the project ideas and represents the operational dimension of the propositions put forward in the programme document. For each project the main dimensions are or were: the aim, the current features of the problem, its future configuration, the economic and social impact, the feasibility, the identification of actors, the synergies with other projects, and the time schedule, as well as the financial resources.

Differences are very obvious: in Euralille and Groningen the emphasis is on physical construction and most of the projects have actually been built. In Prague, Bilbao, the ROM, Flanders, Pesaro, and Turin the proposed actions are much more diverse (including new policies, strategic projects, change of existing plans, training, and marketing, institutional design). In none of the plans is an explicit link to the budget made.

Some initial reflections
As the spectrum of the cases is very broad and their context (in the broadest sense: political, economic, social, cultural, institutional, historical, scale, and place) and the information I rely upon are so different, a categorization of the plans is not realistic, and is even dangerous. What can be done is to point to differences between traditional spatial planning and strategic spatial planning. I do this—in a very uneven and exemplary way—against the background of the normative view—the five characteristics—strategic spatial planning.

Euralille and Groningen are rather closed plans and take the form of a blueprint. Consequently they must be considered as (strategic) projects rather than strategic spatial plans.
Selective
Comprehensiveness, as a main characteristic of traditional spatial planning, in its ideal form called for the integration of nearly everything: economic, political, social, physical and environmental analysis; multilevel territorial analysis; ‘sectoral’ or functional analysis; and planning over different time horizons (Perloff, 1980; see also Friedmann, 1987). The move away from the direct regulation of land use, a clear reference to the (limited) resources available, the fact that a shortage of public funds needs to be made up for by giving the private sector a bigger role, and the focus on concrete actions all force strategic spatial planning to be more selective and to be focused on issues that really matter to citizens. But the longstanding tradition of comprehensive planning means that selectivity is only very slowly and reluctantly being taken on board.

The reluctance to accept selectivity is fully reflected in the example cases. Euralille and Groningen obviously consisted of a major set of projects. Only the ROM project is highly selective. In the Bilbao, Turin, and Pesaro cases a considerable number of projects, policies, and programmes were drafted. The plans for Prague and Perth touched on most if not all policy problems. Flanders provided a frame of reference for sector policies and a large number of specific policies.

Relational-annex-inclusive
In most traditional spatial planning the focus is clearly on producing a plan, and public involvement is mainly end-of-the-line. In strategic spatial planning the plan is just one vehicle amongst others with the purpose of producing change. As spatial planning has almost no potential for concretizing strategies, strategic spatial planning involves relevant actors needed for their substantive contribution, their procedural competences, and the role they might play in acceptance, in getting basic support, and in providing legitimacy.

If we look at the cases we notice that most newly constructed arenas (Euralille, Bilbao, the ROM, Flanders, Groningen, Prague, and Perth) are ‘corporatist’, in that major players from local, regional, and national governments, and representatives from the business community—with their ways of seeing, knowing, and acting—run these arenas. The systems of meaning and the values of ordinary citizens, and particularly of minorities, get hardly a voice.

The ‘distorted’ inclusiveness of the Perth case illustrates that there is still a long way to go. On the one hand we have the discourse of the ‘Dialogue with the City’, on the other hand we have the facts. In interviews, planners from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) described their role in the process as “the use of technical skills” “to monitor the internal consistency of the plan within the margins set by physical characteristics (such as water catchment areas and mountains)” and the statutory scheme, which offers limited opportunities for change. A close look at the positions that the DPI holds proves that its actual role in the process is much more diverse and influential. Indeed, the DPI occupies a very prominent place in key institutions: the Western Australian Planning Commission, the implementation team, and the working groups (all nonelected bodies). Moreover, the DPI was responsible for setting the context and the agenda: they provided the basic material, formulated the four scenarios, presented these scenarios to the larger public, clearly showing a preference for two of them, they chaired and set the agenda for the most important working parties and coordinated all of them, and they wrote the draft strategic plan on the basis of the observations made by the participants in the one day event. Due to time pressure there is very little time left to discuss the draft with (and to get feedback from) the community liaison team, the local government liaison team, the industry liaison team, and the six working groups. Planners from the DPI “hardly expect any substantive comments
from this feedback”. Moreover, a former premier of Western Australia, in an interview, pointed to different roles for the main rhetoric and for concrete projects: “the planners are responsible for the rhetoric but as soon as specific projects are on the agenda the political class (state and local) takes power at the expense of the (state) planning department”.

When the planning process and its rhetoric and projects get disconnected, powerful (technical, political, economic, and cultural) actors may have free play and have an uncontrolled impact.

**Integrative**

From way back, ‘being integrative’ was one of the strengths of traditional spatial planning. This tradition must be cherished and combined with views from policy sciences. Strategic spatial planning asks for selectivity and integration at the same time. At one level ‘integrative’ seems to contradict ‘selectivity’. At another level, it presupposes selectivity; in other words, integration is carried out from a specific point of view. Integration takes place mainly in newly created arenas.

The ROM case and, even more, the Flanders case, clearly illustrate that, contrary to traditional spatial planning, the focus in strategic spatial planning is directed more towards the process. In the Flanders case the process of ‘discourse structuration’ and its subsequent ‘institutionalization’ became more important, perhaps, than the plan as such (Albrechts, 1999; 2003a; 2003b; Albrechts and van den Broeck, 2004; see also Hajer, 1995). The structure of framing ideas was shifted by a gradual merger of the project team with the planning department in Flanders. In this way a substantial permanent cell, who shared a stock of values, knowledge, information, sensitivity, and mutual understanding, and who were fully persuaded of the new ideas of the strategic plan were installed in the planning department. The planning department drew upon this intellectual capital (Innes et al, 1994) in its control function and its collaborative efforts to reframe ways of thinking. The new discourse thus became institutionalized, embedded in norms, ways of doing things, and attitudes and practices, and provided a basis for more integrated structural change. It spread and travelled through an array of provincial-government and local-government arenas, sector departments, and consultants. Similarly in the ROM project lengthy and open discussions within the steering committee (with leading politicians—local, provincial and a link to the minister of planning—high-ranking ‘central’ civil servants, and the main actors from the port and—global—industry) produced trust and a store of cultural resources through which meanings, shared values, and knowledge were created, and which allowed for a more integrative approach. But these two processes took five to seven years and contrast sharply with the very short processes in Pesaro, Turin, and Perth. In these cases time is much too short to build the trust and understanding needed for such a process. A major challenge in all cases was the elitist character of the arenas.

**Visioning**

Visioning, in the way it is used in this paper, is a clear reaction against a future that extrapolates the past and maintains the status quo. With visioning we have to focus on ‘what could’ and ‘what ought to be’. At the end we have to come back to what ‘is’ to present ideas, concepts that are solid, workable, and of testable value.

If time is used statically (as is often the case in traditional spatial planning) plans express states of the place at one or more points in time. They take forms which could be described as end-states, or blueprints (see Solesbury, 1974). In strategic spatial planning a dynamic vision is ‘constructed’ and time flows from a ‘created’ future, which challenges conventional wisdom, towards and into the experienced present and invents
a world that would otherwise not be (Mintzberg et al, 1998; Ozbekhan, 1969). This means that over time those involved in the strategic-spatial-planning process must stay abreast of changes in order to make the best decisions at any given point. The process must involve managing, as well as planning strategically.

In most of the cases a lot of emphasis is put on analysis (mainly strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats)—that is, a focus on what ‘is’. In most of the cases, planners are at ease with extrapolated future(s) but struggle with the design of elaborated and internally consistent future(s) that do not exist.

**Action oriented**

As mentioned before, in traditional spatial planning, plans are often looked upon as the final product. It is often presupposed, implicitly at least, that once a plan has been accepted it will be realized of its own accord. Strategic spatial planning is focused on change and involves considering planning as just one of the instruments that can be used to provoke or to manage change. Traditional spatial plans are judged in terms of conformance, strategic spatial plans in terms of performance (see Mastop and Faludi, 1997).

The physical result of planning is obviously most tangible in Euralille and Groningen simply as projects. The impact on the urban tissue is also very prominent in Bilbao but the strategic-spatial-planning process and the projects have become disconnected. So the emblematic projects (the Guggenheim museum and the metro) are not so much a result of strategic spatial planning as of a new commitment on the part of the regional-level and county-level authorities to invest in the city and to promote urban regeneration (personal communication with Rodriguez, 2004). According to interviews held in the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (Western Australia) the 1955 Stephenson–Hepburn plan (Stephenson and Hepburn, 1955) and the 1970 Corridor Plan (Metropolitan Planning Authority, 1970) influenced the shape of the city in that they contributed to a (slight) increase in the density of development and an increase in the emphasis on public transport. In Flanders and Prague the performance of the plan is most noticeable in the discourses at the lower planning levels and in the sector plans. In Prague, plan performance is linked to: political and expert ‘guarantors’, a list of the institutions involved, organizational requirements, an indication where the money should come from and a time schedule. Through the ROM process, decisions were reversed and it became possible to influence answers to specific problems. The Italian cases are too recent to talk about any real impact.

The conclusion is that—apart from the strategic projects of Euralille and Groningen—a link between strategy and (physical) project hardly exists.

**Epilogue**

To respond to problems and to help achieve shared concerns about spatial changes I constructed a normative view on strategic spatial planning and selected five main characteristics. The rationale of the normative view is to frame—in a fair way and with respect to diversity—activities of actors and to intervene more directly in space and place. The normative view includes a plea for a shift towards a more hybrid democracy, for a type of planning that expands practical democratic deliberations rather than restricts them, and that encourages diverse citizens’ voices rather than stifles them; that directs resources to basic needs rather than to narrow private gain; that uses public involvement to present real political opportunities, learning from action not only what works but also what matters. This is in line with elements of the ‘new orthodoxy’ in policy sciences and communicative planning (see Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003; Healey, 1997a; Innes and Booher, 2003). The normative view on strategic planning
aims to counteract current tendencies of others (sectors, politics) who bypass spatial planning.

Although most cases demonstrate a shift from traditional technocratic statutory planning (away from regulation of land use) towards a more collaborative and (albeit selective) actor-based approach, they all still have a considerable way to go before meeting the characteristics I consider crucial for strategic spatial planning. Apart from the ROM, there were problems in all cases with selectivity. Although most cases involved a considerable number of actors, the Perth case clearly illustrates that, even with the best intentions, this may lead to a socially exclusive process in which links and networks of a variety of elites play a key role [Swyngedouw et al (2003) came to a similar conclusion in their analysis of large-scale urban development projects in Europe]. Visioning varies from 'more of the same' to hesitantly adopting issues for structural change. New discourses travel with varying success to different—governmental and sectoral—levels. Apart from Groningen, Euralille, and to some extent also Bilbao, the focus is more on the framing of subsequent actions than on the actions themselves. Explicit links with the budget are lacking everywhere.

Governments play a different but considerable role in all cases. In Perth the Minister of Planning in Office (interview, 2004) pointed to the changing role of the State Government of Western Australia: “there is a move away from the government as arbitrator towards the government as facilitator of common ground.” All plans at the city level or city-region level have fixed boundaries which are at odds with a more relational approach. In just three cases the level of government matches with the planning level: Flanders with the regional level, and both Groningen and Euralille with the city level. Notwithstanding different forms of cooperation in Perth the state government dealt with the metropolitan level, in Bilbao the regional-level and county-level governments dealt with the city, in ROM the Flemish-level government deals with a conglomerate of municipalities and the harbour. In Pesaro, Turin, and Prague a process of rescaling arenas took place from city level to urban region (a level that encloses the core city and some surrounding municipalities), with the challenge being to create a territorial governance system at this level. This highlights the tensions that occur between the well-known scale and related government structure of a nested hierarchy from large to small or from top to bottom, and scale in terms of the reach of relationships in time and space (see Albrechts and Liégeois, 2004; Healey, 2004). A clear example of this challenge is found in Perth Metropolitan Area where the State of Western Australia took the initiative and approved the plan but the development was controlled mainly on an ad-hoc basis in twenty-seven local authorities.

All in all, there is still a long way to go to reach the standards of the normative view. Moreover, this view requires a wide range of skills and expertise which go well beyond those of the traditional planners, embracing value, communicative, technical and power concerns.

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