

The International Society of City and Regional Planners brings spatial planners and designers together to exchange experiences and to improve their profession. It is an honour to deliver as Past President a State of the Profession but I find it difficult. The dynamics in our profession are high and so are different developments that are taking place in different parts of the world. Gratefully I made use of several recent ISoCaRP publications. *Thirty-Five Years of ISoCaRP and the State of the Planning Profession*, edited by *Judith Ryser* (published in 2001) inspired me greatly. *ISoCaRP Millennium Report Findings for the Future with analyses and comments by Bogdan Wyporek*, (published in 2000) was of great value to me. The International Manual of Planning Practice (IMPP) and the improved publications of the last four congresses were also of great help.

Introduction

When looking at our planning profession from the bright side we see interesting work with great variety, growing diversity, more international understanding and cooperation without frontiers. But we also have to face instability, insecurity and uncertainty. In many countries people and their habitat are victims of disasters. Demolition of spatial structures and natural resources are often caused by human action. We ought to show respect to the many colleagues who are rebuilding destroyed sites under extremely difficult circumstances. Worldwide societies are changing and spatial structures are being transformed. The same holds for spatial planning. The role and position of planning in politics change. In many countries spatial policy was used as a vehicle to shape the welfare state and to improve living conditions for all. Now many governments worry about the processes of economic decline, social segregation and exclusion. They rely on market forces and restrict themselves to set conditions for problem solving. Planning becomes a vehicle for enabling private initiatives from citizens, firms and institutions, balancing different interests and managing uncertainty. But still spatial planning practice focus on ordering and shaping the physical environment for future use in societal perspective with respect for the past. As always it is a matter of continuity and change. An intriguing change is the growing mobility and movement worldwide.

Societies and their economies undergo reform

Lewis Mumford once said "Human life swings between movement and settlement". During the last decades an increase of mobility of all kind is taking place all over the world. It afflicts settlement and place. People migrate crossing borders in search of work and a better life. People travel long distances for business, social contact and leisure.

Worldwide competition is severe. Production of goods, services and knowledge are reshuffled in production of components, assemblage, distribution and management with advanced logistics on different locations. Outsourced production units settle where labour is cheap and tax facilities are modest. Decision centres and research and development units transfer to places with knowledge, high quality, dens facilities and differentiated networks. Goods are transported in huge quantities and over long distances. Information, capital and transactions flow in high speed around the clock around the world. At the regional level the separation of urban and rural life is disappearing.

Coherent areas with one social system are still the mainstream but at some places cohesion seems to diminish and social and spatial structures become more diffuse. Borderless network societies are born. Urban network regions with complex sprawl are newly defined entities. The Utrecht congress resulted in new ways of observing the network society and established new issues for the planning agenda.

Disappearing boundaries cause also flows of people and firms. Peripheral areas become central districts; central areas lose their location advantage. Scale enlargement, global outsourcing and just in time delivery has become vital for global markets. Settlement can

change quickly, industrial and business areas can dilapidate in a short time and social structures gradually can fall apart.

Regarding free time and leisure a new behaviour is arising. Entertainment, adventure and experience are added to passive and active recreation. Beside the use of place individuals want to undergo a sense of place. Pleasure is bought, the free-time industry flourishes. In addition of traditional provisions for open space this consumerism demands extensive use of land and new designs. In Gelsenkirchen we tried to give an answer to the renovation of declined industrial areas in relation to a new free time culture. Mass meetings for specific experiences also happen: religious meetings, pop concerts, sport events and world fairs are organised all over the continents. Last year we discussed the growing and complicated "pulsar" arrangements in Athens.

Individualisation and differentiation of life styles - as enduring trends- demands for specific identity of space.

Nature preservation, water management, sustainable environment and cultural heritage have become worldwide issues. The meaning of those issues for world society and universal values are constantly debated.

Instead of solid government supply of physical space new demands for space of citizens, private firms and institutions are arising. They are difficult to grasp and seem fragmented. People demand for mobility, accessibility and redefined quality of place.

How do we cope with all those changes? What is the new planning agenda? How do we come to a more effective planning in a changing dynamic world?

The planning agenda and planning issues have to be reconsidered

As I mentioned before we were accustomed to welfare state planning. The aim was ordering space, improving living conditions and a fair division of space for all taking all functions and interests into account. Emphasis was put on equality and uniformity and politics asked for comprehensive plans. Powerful governments developed land use plans with experts to reach that goal. Land use plans deal primarily with enduring settlement and fixed places.

Implementation was done by governments and those who were willing to build according to the use plans. Communities felt comfortable served and felt protected. Those admission plans had little room for unforeseen initiatives and little room for permanent adaptations. It also did not attract enough private investments. Gradually governments have limited the social-economical purposes of spatial planning to a narrow regulatory process.

Societies open up to the world; societal developments become connected with international developments. Dynamic changes of mobile societies result in permanent reconsideration of the meaning of settlements and places. A new balance is needed between city and countryside, between nature and landscape, between infrastructure and environment, between local, regional and international developments. Flexibility and quick responses are asked. Time seems to become an enemy instead of a friend.

We need to redefine planning issues. We have to understand the contemporary meaning of movement and settlement, of flows, of new regional and worldwide entities. We have to discover new location factors of the network society, modern demands on mobility and new demands on quality of place and settlement. Of course the situation in the world differs greatly and societies respond in many ways. One thing is clear: comprehensive planning with one dominant actor does not provide the answers sufficiently. Sectoral, thematic and project defined issues, problems with a short life cycle, cross border planning are added to the planning agenda. The mobile network society deals with regions and continents; social cohesion in multi cultural societies asks for other provisions. New developments have to be embedded in urban structures. This leads to a puzzling agenda. To understand what is going on is only possible by extensive cooperation with more and other disciplines.

Old issues still remain on the agenda. In developing countries there is plenty of land, but a lack of resources, legal frameworks, knowledge and skilled people. Habitat and employment of the underprivileged remain extremely important issues. The spatial structure of vital but uncontrollable metropolises has to be improved. In developed countries old urban systems

have to be adapted for multicultural population, new economical systems and modern behaviour.

Old issues and new issues: it means continuity and change through time of social structures, cultural differentiation and spatial patterns. It means thorough observing, good listening and intensive interaction.

More actors are joining the planning scene

Now market forces, NGO's, institutions and interest groups ask their share in spatial planning and demand attention for specific circumstances. Governments of states, regions and municipalities are no longer in a powerful position to set the planning stage. Corporate actors demand involvement in planning processes to put their stamp in an early phase of planning. New coalitions arise with ever changing partners. Civic societies, social, cultural, environmental and political movements want to become involved in planning policy. We talk of "stakeholder" and "shareholders". Supply of functional space is replaced by demand of opportunities. Number of actors involved with spatial planning has increased. Private actors like developers and citizens play a growing part in decision making. Eventually citizens form a counterforce. The more actors there are the more communication is needed. Managing communication is a new challenge for the planning profession. The Cancun congress was devoted to the theme how to make public participation more effective.

Planning tools, products and means don't cope with the change

Means are not always effective. Legal frameworks in many countries cannot cope with the high dynamics of urban changes. Procedures are not flexible and slow. To raise and direct investments for public cause in space is sometimes very hard. Knowledge and skill is not always available. Sometimes there is an overload of information, which keeps us away from acting. Intelligent overviews of information and simple concepts might cross the bridge. Improvements in some countries should be directed on planning action and realisation: land use policy, building control, property registration and transaction. In other countries deregulation and flexibility are necessary to gain effectiveness in planning.

New planning tools are invented: project planning, interactive planning, strategic planning, communicative planning, network planning etc. The desire is better implementation, earlier involvement of actors, the participation of citizens, more ideas and creativeness of all involved. A better control by citizens and the citizens as countervailing power is also wanted. Beside admission planning sometimes new instruments are needed to give development planning more room. Those practices have to be formalized in a democratic way. IMPP has proved to be a fantastic informative instrument to compare legal frameworks, planning procedures and planning practice in many countries. Professionals could use it to advise their legislative government institutes for legal adaptations.

Planning methods have to be improved

In the past a scientific approach in planning was dominant. "Survey before plan" was the normal functional way of planning that resulted in comprehensive plans for a far future. Town designers and physical planners played a front line role. After more involvement of citizens - especially with urban renewal processes- planning was adapted. Emphasis was put on people's engagement and decision making processes for the near future. Politicians with the help of social workers and process managers set the stage. Now governments cannot handle implementation processes alone with so many private and institutional actors involved. Strategic or interactive planning has come into sight. Interactive planning is an opportunity for combining forces and means. Even it extracts hidden financial means, unexpected knowledge and creative ideas. Interactive planning assembles new actors around the planning table. Strategic planning tries to optimize means and aims. It tries to come to agreement on combined input. Combined action is primarily the output. An important phase is the selection of the right actors. Considerations and negotiations as an interactive way of working have to be managed. Strategic planning makes use of concepts, which gives an opportunity to have a long time framework for detailed and fragmented action. The role of

government changes: mediating and moderating with modesty is more fruitful than acting in a powerful position. Often governments make use of private consultants. The role and position of planning practitioners differentiates accordingly. Sometimes we serve private firms, sometimes NGO's, sometimes citizen's organisations, institutions and sometimes governments on all levels. Strategic planning and interactive working have proved to be more effective in implementation. It is flexible, supportive and innovative.

Altogether spatial planning has become more differentiated, challenges have increased. The role and position of planners is manifold and often modest.

In terms of design we surpassed from modernism, via "small is beautiful", to postmodernism. In terms of process we shifted from "what do we want, how will we do it and who is doing the job?" to "who will do the job, how will they do it and what will be the result?"

Planning and education

Let me make a special remark on the relation between practitioners, research and education. At universities our colleagues have very much their own agenda. Many publications deliver interesting analysis, overviews of spatial developments and planning. They deliver models and theoretical new ways of planning. What I miss is criticism on planning practice. Planning practitioners do not give enough time to present their cases for education and research. The distance between the practising and academic world has grown too much. The two worlds could profit more from each other.

How are we doing?

It is nearly impertinent to answer that question. But if I may: we perform reasonably well but we can always do better: in skill, behaviour, knowledge and results. ISoCaRP offers an important platform to present our practice, to criticize and to challenge each other and learn from each other to become better. To quote *Karl Otto Schmid*: ".....if urban planning is in an advanced stage of sophistication and if the chances for centrifugal forces and for confusion are equal to those for integrated approaches towards adequate action, one thing is clear- our profession is very much alive and as exciting as ever."

My term as president ended this year in January. It was an inspiring time full of learning. I thank you for your confidence and hope I served you as promised. I thank all members of the Executive Committee for their enthusiasm, cooperation and friendship; I thank Secretary General *Milica Bajic Brkovic* for the intensive, intelligent and warm hearted cooperation; I thank the Secretariat, especially *Judy van Hemert*, for their loyal support and I wish the new President *Alfonso Vegara* all the best. Next year I will be among you again.