

SPATIAL PLANNING AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

This study highlights the role that spatial planning can play in achieving balanced territorial development, reducing disparities and increase territorial cohesion. Theoretical issues raised in this study argue the importance of developing policies and strategies based on the principles of sustainable development at all levels of scale.

Key words: spatial planning, sustainable development, policies, strategies

INTRODUCTION

While there are many attempts to define the concept of sustainable development the most celebrated formulation of the concept is that given by the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) in 1987:

“development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p43).

Sustainable development involves a process of change in which the use of resources, the management of investment, the general direction of technological development and changes in institutions are harmonized with both future needs and present needs. Sustainable development requires improving the integration of three interdependent dimensions of development: economic, social and environmental.

The popularity of ‘sustainability’ stems also from a simple model used to facilitate the comprehension of the term: the triangle of environmental (conservation), economic (growth), and social (equity) dimensions. Mostly, sustainable development is modeled on these three pillars (Keiner, 2005).

In recent years, alternative models to the triangle of sustainability have been proposed, such as prisms and eggs models. The ‘prism of sustainable development’ stipulates four dimensions:

- Economic dimension (man-made capital)
- Environmental dimension (natural capital), and
- Social dimension (human capital) as the base for
- Institutional dimension (social capital) (Spangenberg and Bonniot, 1998, Valentin and Spangenberg, 1999).

The Egg of Sustainability illustrates the relationship between people and ecosystem as one circle inside another. This implies that people are within the ecosystem, and that ultimately one is entirely dependent upon the other (IDRC, 1997).

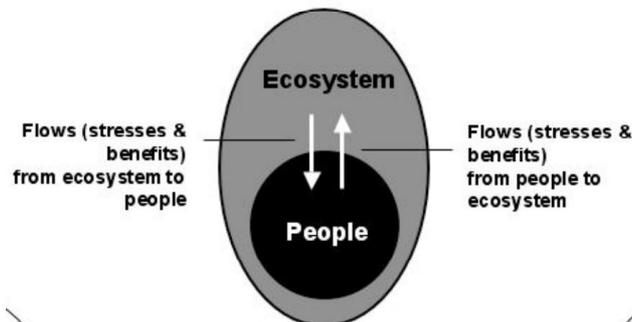


Figure 1 IUCN's egg of sustainability
(Source: IDRC 1997)

Spatial planning can be used as an instrument to coordinate socioeconomic development by preventing environmental problems and simultaneously protecting the natural environment and the cultural environment. The challenge for planning is to ensure the efficient use of limited land resources and to contribute to balanced regional business development and balanced use of resources, including natural and landscape resources, soil, water and air.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In preparation of this material have been harmoniously combined several theoretical research methods (characterization, hypotheses, hypothetical explanations of observations). But the most frequently used method in this paper is the critical analysis with deductive and inductive arguments (Windschuttle and Elliot, 1999)

THE POTENTIAL OF SPATIAL PLANNING TO CONTRIBUTE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is pervasive throughout Europe; from the highest normative and regulatory EU initiatives, to national and regional regimes, down to local policies, plans and projects (Delladetsima, 2012). Sustainable development now contributes to the formation of a common European spatial policy and in turn to the convergence of the diverse national planning systems. Through European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) (CEC, 1999), elaborated after a laborious consultation

and political process, is now being endorsed as an overall framework by member states (Faludi, 2004).

This chapter provides examples of aspects of development in which the challenges involve several sectors of society and an intersectoral solution is therefore required. The sectors involved could include service and industrial sectors, housing, the labour market, transport, tourism or agriculture. In these cases, spatial planning can coordinate the efforts of various sectors to promote sustainable development.

Regional planning and economic development development

Sustainable regional economic development relies on the competencies and strengths of a region in meeting the challenge of achieving a balanced development, reducing regional and inter-regional disparities and outlining territorial cohesion based on sustainable development principles. This requires increased cooperation between urban . Planning and extensive cooperation between cities in the form of city networks can ensure that the region's infrastructure and service functions are used more efficiently.

Sustainable urban development

Spatial planning contributes through new urban planning theories as *smarth growth*, to achieving balance in urban development between using undeveloped land versus reusing old urban sites and promoting compact urban development.

Transport and the environment

There is a strong relationship between different aspects of urban form and sustainable transport (the relationship between transport infrastructure and employment development, the impact of a range of urban form features on petrol consumption, and the impact of road layouts on pollution levels. An appropriate location strategy can rationalize transport and thereby contribute to reducing transport-induced environmental impact (ME, 2001).

Tourism

Spatial planning contributes to developing tourism so that it promotes the protection of the landscape and conservation of cultural environments and encourages local employment. Planning policies mission is to harmoniously integrate tourism development among other values of the area, setting limits and maintaining the quality of the environment.

Biodiversity

Spatial planning can manage appropriate land use to ensure that nature and biodiversity is protected and promoted. This can contribute to integrating nature protection into the planning of agriculture, forestry, hydrographical exploitation, road infrastructure development and installations in the open country.

Spatial planning is a complex process in which relationships between fundamental elements at different levels of approach are put face to face with decision makers. A different way of relating the planning styles is featured schematically through a cube, the so called 'four dimensional "hypercube" of territorial approach'. This cube makes it possible to assess results on three different geographical levels (macro, meso, micro). By using this cube, it becomes possible to combine the different styles of spatial planning with different ways of governance. Every possible mix between its three scales is possible, offering a huge array of planning styles. The ESDP also played a role in this as a catalyst, facilitating a turn which was attempted, towards the comprehensive integrated approach to spatial planning.

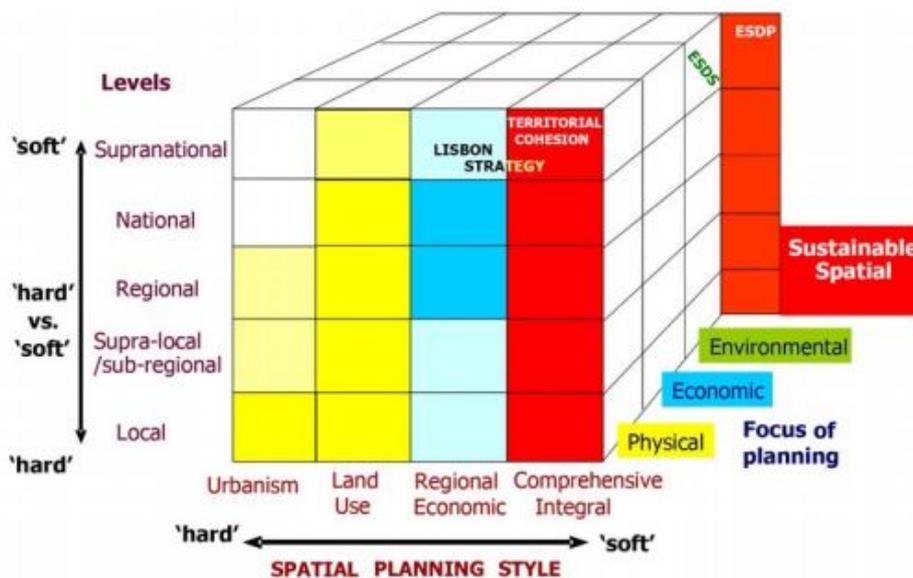


Figure 2 Options for Spatial Development Planning
 (Source: Farinós, 2006, ESPON project 2.3.2, *Governance of Territorial and Urban Policies from EU to Local Level*, Final Report)

A major role in optimizing spatial planning process is played by governance. The involvement of public or private actors, residents, citizens can take various forms, depending on the method used to designing projects and/or development strategy of the territory.

Governance can be seen as a way to improve defects and problems on more traditional governmental methods, even though has its own limits or open new matters.

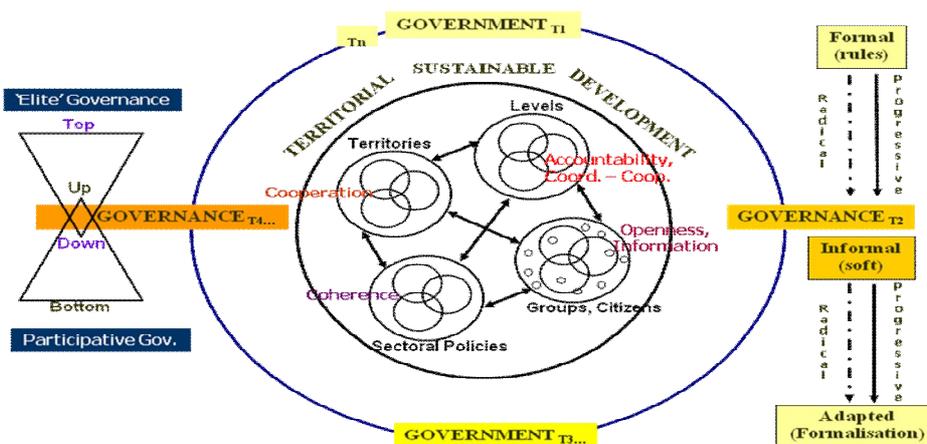


Figure 3 Options for Spatial Development Planning
 (Source: Farinós, 2006, ESPON project 2.3.2, *Governance of Territorial and Urban Policies from EU to Local Level*, Final Report)

The spatial planning concept in Romania is connected to the main European documents in this field.

This is materialized by studies, plans, programmes and projects that harmonize, at territorial level, the economic, social, environmental and cultural policies in order to ensure the sustainable development of various country regions, in terms of space.

In accordance with Law 350/2001, the spatial planning activity is carried out on the entire Romanian territory based on the principle of hierarchization, cohesion and spatial integration at national, regional, county, city and commune level, creating the appropriate framework for balanced development and sound use of territory and accountable management of natural resources and environmental protection(MDRT, 2010).

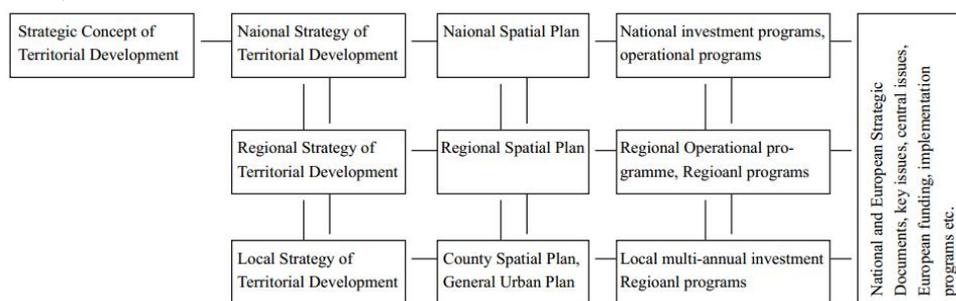


Figure 4 Relationship between strategic, spatial, and urban planning in Romania.
 (Source: Petrișor, 2010)

Development plans and development strategies in Romania integrated guidelines set by the European directives for achieving sustainable development.

CONCLUSIONS

The evolution and historical roots of territorial planning in Romania had influences from different spatial planning systems (german theories of spatial organisation, soviet model of huge central planning institutions, influence of the French DATAR experience and finally by ESDP influence in the idea of networking).

Spatial planning is used to create solutions that are bound to specific geographical territories. Sustainable development cannot solely be achieved at the local level. Spatial planning enables various territorial dimensions to be considered: local, regional, interregional and global. Spatial planning as an instrument creates solutions that target specific geographical territories while the solutions are integrated with solutions in other larger or smaller territories (ME, 2001).

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