Construction of a Spatial Planning system at city-level: Case study of "integration of multi-planning" in Yulin City, China

Xiaoping Zhou [a], Xiao Lu [b, *], Hongping Lian [a], Yuchen Chen [c], Yuanqing Wu [d]

[a] School of Government, Beijing Normal University, Beijing 100875, China
[b] School of Geography and Tourism, Qufu Normal University, Rizhao 276826, China
[c] Chinese Land Surveying and Planning Institute, Beijing 100029, China
[d] Shanghai Urban Planning & Design Research Institute, Shanghai 200040, China

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The construction of a spatial planning system has been identified as one of the top national agenda items in China. Several pilot cities have been put in place to experiment on "Integration of Multi-Planning" (IOMP) and explore the integration mechanism of different planning to provide practical support for spatial planning system reform. After outlining existing planning series and their relations in China, this article systematically expounds on the spatial planning disputes among Chinese departments, shows the dilemma of mismatch in planning, and, under the guidance of synergy theory, builds the spatial planning system of "unified planning" to develop common interests within the area, using Yulin City in Shaanxi Province as an example. Findings are drawn from reviewing government policies, analyzing socioeconomic and land use data, and discussing intrinsic issues before propositions are designed.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Spatial planning system is considered to be an ensemble of territorial governance arrangements that seek to shape patterns of spatial development in particular places (Nadin & Stead, 2008). The EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies (CEC, 1997) enlarged the focus to the system in operation, using criteria such as the scope of the planning system, the extent and type of planning at national and regional levels, the locus of power, the relative role of public and private, the maturity and completeness of the system and the distance between expressed objectives and outcomes (Munteanu & Servillo, 2014). And it divides traditional planning mainly into four types, including regional economic planning, urban planning, comprehensive planning, and land use planning. Social development has introduced new challenges, such as growing complexities, unbalanced development and even split,

and the contradiction between rapid development and growing environmental consciousness. Under this background, some scholars have proposed the entrepreneurial style assumption of "new" strategic spatial planning (Albrechts, 2006a,b). Traditional spatial planning focuses on the position, intensity, form, quantity, and coordination of land development in different spaces. However, the problems and challenges being faced by local areas cannot be addressed fully under the old knowledge structure and mentality. By contrast, "new" strategic spatial planning is a transformative, integrative —preferably led by the public sector—socio-spatial process through which a vision, coherent actions, and means for implementation are produced to shape and frame what a place is and what this place may become in the future (Albrechts, 2004, 2006b). Strategic spatial planning identifies and gathers major actors (public and private), and allows for a broad (multi-level governance) and diverse (public, economic, and civil societies) involvement in the planning process. This planning creates solid, workable long-term visions (geography of the unknown) and strategies at different levels by considering power structures (political, economic, and cultural), uncertainties, and competing values. Strategic spatial planning, both in the short and long term, focuses on framing decisions, actions, projects, results, and implementations as well as incorporates monitoring, feedback,

---

* Corresponding author. School of Geography and Tourism, Qufu Normal University, 80 Yantai Road, Rizhao 276826, China.
E-mail addresses: xiaopingzhou@126.com (X. Zhou), xl1030@foxmail.com, lvxiao@qfnu.edu.cn (X. Lu), hplian@bnu.edu.cn (H. Lian), 1291758750@qq.com (Y. Chen), wuyuanqing915@126.com (Y. Wu).

adjustment, and revision. The "new" strategic spatial planning approach is operationalized in a four-track approach. These tracks (Van den Broeck, 2001) can be viewed as working tracks. The first track is for the vision, the second for short and long-term actions, the third for the involvement of key actors, and the fourth for a more permanent process (mainly at the local level) that involves the broader public when making major decisions. This approach is based on four interrelated types of rationality, namely, value rationality (design of alterative futures), communicative rationality (involving a growing number of private and public actors in the process), instrumental rationality (searching for the best way to solve problems and achieve desired outcomes), and strategic rationality (a clear and explicit strategy for dealing with power relationships) (Albrechts, 2003). This "new" strategic spatial planning does not serve as a new ideology of building a new world order but as a method for creating and guiding a place toward a brighter future based on the common value concept. For instance, Dutch planning had shifted from an emphasis on physical planning and regulation towards an emerging awareness of political decision making and implementation as had planning in many other European countries (Albrechts, 2001; Janssen-Jansen & Woltjer, 2010). In review of this, there are tensions in the form of planning between a strategic and a comprehensive approach, and between the objectives of a plan to direct land use management and those related to development and to inter-sectoral integration (Todes, Karam, Klug, & Malaza, 2010).

Planning potentially influences and connects a wide range of issues, behind which are mostly diverse and conflicting interests. Nevertheless, planning has a political nature, which means a choice must be made. So, the development of spatial planning cannot be understood without reflecting on a broader societal development context (CEC, 1997; Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000). As some scholars argued, spatial planning is not an independent phenomenon but more as a product of diverse forces, such as internal forces generated by the institutional and cultural traditions (Booth, 2005; Vries & Broeck, 1997), the external forces in the light of neo-liberal globalization framework (Healey & Williams, 1993; Hudalah & Woltjer, 2007). The broad outlines of current thinking are expressed in the Global Planner's Network document on 'Reinventing Planning', which sees planning as promoting integrated, inclusive and participatory development, in contrast to past technocratic and narrowly physical planning approaches (Farmer et al., 2006). The Romanian planning system has gone through an intensive and turbulent process of change, which is embedded in a wider restructuring of a relatively new democratic State after the dismantling of the former communist bloc (Munteanu & Servillo, 2014). Within the urbanism tradition, planning regulation of Europe is mainly undertaken through rigid zoning and statutory plans, while laws at the regulatory level are numerous, substantive and detailed (Giannakourou, 2005). The transition from land-use regulation to spatial planning has been seen in recent years as being of fundamental importance for the UK government in implementing its sustainable communities agenda (Hincks, 2010). Because of its function as a switchboard for sustainable development objectives (Biesbroek, Swart, & Knaap, 2009), spatial planning is high on the political agenda as a mechanism for creating sustainable communities (Shaw & Lord, 2009). Cities are the outcome of individual spatial decisions that interact with each other (Wang, Han, & Lai, 2014). So, inclusive and effective stakeholder participation is at the heart of the reformed UK spatial planning system (Baker and Coaffee & Sherriff, 2007). At the same time, the Italian spatial planning has been characterized by a series of attempts at modernization in the last decades, with the introduction of innovative instruments, changes in governance processes, attribution of competences at different administrative levels, legislative reforms

and even partial changes in the National Constitution (Servillo & Lingua, 2014).

In addressing the topic, this paper refers the "spatial planning system" to a set of connected planning and related things that operate together for shaping patterns of spatial development in particular places. According to the structure-directing, most spatial systems in developed countries could be divided into three categories: pyramid-shaped, network-based, and free-style (Cai & Gao, 2013; Cai, Wang, Lu, Han, & Li, 2014). The pyramid-shaped spatial planning systems are single hierarchical systems. Regarding this category, only one spatial planning exists on one level to guide the spatial development strategy within the region. This system is adopted by the United Kingdom, Germany, and Switzerland (Lin, Chen, & Wei, 2011). A network-based parallel system, as implemented in Japan, may provide an alternative option, but this system only has two series, namely, Territory Integrated Development Plan and land use planning (Cai, Chen, Song, 2014b; Lin et al., 2011). The United States is the representative of free-style spatial planning system. Before 2000, there is no unified national spatial planning system in the United States, and the state-level planning system composed of city planning, land use planning, etc. is established according to their own actual situation in each state. Since 2000, spatial planning system in United States started stage in integrated planning for regional sustainable development (Liu, Fan, & Li, 2013), marked by "America 2050". The reform of some third-world countries shows another picture. For example, in the 1990s, Zambia amended its national spatial planning and land development legislations. However, the reform process had several wrong assumptions, including widespread support for the repeal and rationalization of the current legislation, availability of reliable data on how the planning system worked, and that the reform could change the planning culture of the country. Therefore, Zambia was challenged as to how they should perform their planning at different scales. The case of Zambia shows that under the present conditions, a comprehensive, all-at-once approach to planning law reform may not be appropriate; instead, an incremental approach must be adopted (Berrisford, 2011). Another study from South Africa shows that the spatial planning of the country faced several challenges, including institutional coordination and alignment, physical and socio-economic integration, and understanding the space-economy of cities, spatial planning, and sustainability (Plessis, 2014).

Spatial planning system in China differs from other countries in terms of politics system and rapidly changing economic. Spatial planning system in mainland China is gradually formed from scratch, and gradually formed by the territorial planning, main functional area planning, land use planning, and city planning, etc., which dominated by different branch of governments. Because of the advantages to ensure the professional depth, each government sector makes and implements its specific planning under professional expertise. Thus, being the feature act as multisector-led, fragmented planning compilation and implementation system, it is likely to cause severe dislocation in spatial governance. Chinese scholars have recently begun to investigate the construction of a spatial planning system, focusing specifically on its necessity and strategic requirements (Lin et al., 2011; Tian & Zhao, 2015; Wang & Liu, 2012; Wang, Wu, & Chang, 2008; Yang & Liu, 2011). However, these scholars have no clear idea about how this system must be constructed. Wang and Liu (2012) (Wang & Liu, 2012) proposed a more explicit reconstruction strategy and framework, that is, the existing General Land Use Planning is upgraded to integrate spatial planning by using the National Economic and Social Development Planning as the guidance planning. As special planning, other major planning must be transformed and its function positioning redefined to build an integrated and coordinated spatial planning. Given