

# Space and Time – Challenges for Spatial Planning

Jens S. Dangschat

(Univ.-Prof. Dr. Jens S. Dangschat, Vienna University of Technology, Department of Spatial Development, Infrastructure and Environmental Planning, Centre of Sociology, Paniglgasse 16, 1040 Vienna, Austria; jens.dangschat@tuwien.ac.at)

## 1 GLOBALISATION, INDIVIDUALISATION, ACCELERATION – CHANGES IN SPACE AND TIME

Globalisation is increasingly impacting the present age. By referring to global impact a myriad of processes considered as independent are addressed which are hardly analysed by their interrelations and penetrations: worldwide information networks, decoupling of the financial capital from productive capital („hypercapitalism“), reciprocally penetration of cultural spaces, increasing international division of labour with growing exchange of information, virtual capital flows, flows of goods, services and workers, mega-urbanism in upcoming countries, neo-liberalisation, virtualisation, individualisation, hypermobility. In this context the awareness and interpretation of spatial and temporal relations had been changed dramatically as our living spaces – landscapes, cities, squares, places, buildings, mobility, bodies – are subject of these shifts (cf. Gotsch 2002: 1). In terms of „glocalisation“ (Robertson, Baumann) territories became societal units, where the commodification and economisation of globalisation is not only to be absorbed by the local / regional means, social and ecological resources, but as well became instrumentalised as „territorial capital“ (Camagni) by an improving competition between cities, regions and national states. This results in a „hollowing out“ process (cf. Rhodes) by being on the one hand merged into bigger political-administrative units (like EU) and economic markets („Single Market“, „Euro-Country“) and on the other by an increasing independency of urban agglomerations and regions. On the temporal side the phenomenon of simultaneity of asynchrony came to existence, which is seen both as result of the penetration of different cultures, of value systems and economic regulation strategies by migrants on the one side and the opening of worldwide markets and the simultaneous presence at different places as result of medial networking on the other.

## 2 THE CHANGE OF MEANING OF SPATIAL PLANNING IN TERMS OF TIME AND SPACE

These changes were expressed in changed reflexions of time and space in the 1970s/1980s. In this context the interpretation of an „objective“ understanding of time and space was as much questioned as the understanding of time and space as being detached from its historic contexts and social relations. This changed perspective corresponded with a shift within natural and social sciences, not to aim any longer for the regularity of a spatial-temporal unlimited validity, but to understand socio-spatial phenomenon integrated in their historical becoming (Braudel; *longue durée*) and as expression of societal conditions (Lefèbvre).

How do spatial planners respond to the recent changes? Did they enlarge their marginal theoretical background by adopting new ways of reflexion? Do planners being aware about the changed discourse about space? What does this mean for the empirical methods about space and time information and the practical planning work? And: What is the understanding of time in spatial planning beyond the validity of plans, short-time, mid-time and long-time horizons of strategies and periods of prognosis?

From the view of system analysis and engineers the task of spatial planning is to produce good operating and performing settlement systems or to re-design existing ones. However, within the last two or three decades the boundary conditions had been altered fundamentally:

- a) Recently an optimal settlement system is not any longer determined by the overall concept of functional divide but by functional integration.
- b) The role of spatial planners not any longer is defined by decrees and top-down planning, but increasingly by process of moderation of interests and by the involvement of further actors from the political-administrative system, the private sector as well as from the civil society („communicative turn“, cf. Healey).
- c) New forms of social spaces came to existence by virtualisation, which are withdrawing from physical places and are interconnecting different time spaces on the global scale in a confrontative and conflictive way.

On these challenges spatial planning was reacting by a „liquefaction of the determinism of natural sciences“: Regressions were changed to „fuzzy logic“, prognoses were changed in favour of scenarios about wishful futures and normative decisions within planning were handed over to the citizens via participation processes.

These changes were attractive insofar, as they implied innovative aspects without any need to question the basic self-concept of spatial planners despite of the massive economic, technological and social changes.

Only at the beginning these system-immanent shifts were able to hide, that the impact of engineering sciences within spatial planning was weakened in favour of social sciences. The reasons can be seen in the multi-dimensional societal diversification, which results in a variety of value patterns which is expressed by heterogeneous interests and its articulations. Moreover, there happened as well a shift from a more systemic view to the experiences of the day-to-day activities. Thus, the aim for spatial planning is not anymore to optimize an ideal settlement system, but to make happen good conditions for a better arrangement of social groups in places (“Vergesellschaftung” and “Vergemeinschaftung”; Tönnies).

This in turn results for spatial planning in four very relevant aspects:

- (1) It becomes increasingly important to shed a differentiated light on the analysis of social groups (against the understanding of average citizens or human beings as such);
- (2) planning means not anymore „good planning for all’, but decisions are needed to support specific social groups in favour of others who might suffer by this planning.
- (3) There is a need of reflection of a wider understanding of the impact of „time“ and „space“ and
- (4) This altogether has remarkable impacts on the idea of best-practise-transfer of interventions and criteria of evaluation.

I only will concentrate on the third aspect: the new societal aspects of „time’ and „space’.

### **3 ABOUT CHANGED PERCEPTIONS OF SPACE AND TIME IN SCIENCE AND EVERYDAY LIFE**

Within traditional spatial planning „time“ and „space“ are recognised as „objective conditions’, independent from people or social relations. Therefore, it is suitable within scientific discourses to be geared to an interpretation of „space’ and „time’ as being objective and related to a natural scientist understanding. On the contrast, Norbert Elias had argued in his work about the process of civilisation in 1939 that time and space are nothing more than an achievement of subjective construction, where people – based on their respective socialisation – relate their socio-spatial experiences to one another. Following this, in the view of social sciences an „objective’ space is not existing at all, but a plenty of subjective interpretations (cf. Hamm 1982, Löw 2000). In this case the achievements of synthesis of spatial planners and traditional geographers on the one hand are in strong controversy against ordinary people and their awareness of all-day spatiality and qualitative sociology on the other side.

#### **3.1 Changed Perception of Space**

##### **3.1.1 Container Space**

Normally spatial planning is based on a choric interpretation of space, i.e. places and territories are clearly determined on the surface of the Earth and can be defined exactly concerning their borders, sizes, and allocations. Moreover, the relation to other territories can be described exactly by distance and direction. The task of spatial planning analysis is – based on traditional geography – to describe, explain and predict the distribution of the elements of the physical space or of societal aggregates in an explicitly described territory. In this view, „space’ is an empty box for material and bodily objects, which are not interrelated functionally (in the words of Einstein: this is a container concept of space).

Moreover, spatial planning in its sovereign function acts on the assumption of territories in its administrative boundaries. For these areas official statistics are available on as much long lasting time series as possible (not to change categories or territories). Francois Perroux had named this understanding of space as trivial, which is based on the illusion that political-administrative boundaries coincide with economic interlocking and or social relations. Thus, we have to consider a paradox between spatial analysis (an analysis where we need to know more about processes between places, where a relational understanding of space should be relevant, cf. downwards), while a sovereign planning practise is bounded to administratively defined territories of responsibility. This is a basic contradiction that should be reflected more in detail and which is hardly considered in teaching and research.

### 3.1.2 The Produced Space

Contrary to the traditional understanding of space in spatial planning and its discrepancy in critical geography, urban sociology, ethnology and cultural sciences places are not interpreted as being there already for long and as element of nature, but as the result of civic and societal processes of the past and present and provided with a permanent impact. Therefore, space is more than only "... the territorial conditions or the physical environment of social relations" (Kessl & Reutlinger 2007: 7, transl. by JSD).

Following Henry Lefèbvre, social space is an area of the societal reproduction of power and interests by using it in a highly selective way by following the order of unequal power. Thus, places neither can be disconnected from its content nor from its ideological and political content. We use to look at places like they currently look like but doing so we ignore the becoming to existence of the power and ideological relations from the past periods. By discussing the aspects of time I will come back to that fact again by reflecting the meaning of „longue durée’. In the words of Lefèbvre (1976: 31) space is „... a product, which is proverbially replenished by ideologies“ and to which collective meanings are attributed. People use to transfer – for example through their settlement activities – the „absolute space“ into a complex social space – , what Lefèbvre call „spatialization“. In this connection patterns of power, of dominance and social control comes to existence and become strengthened.

With this view he clearly contradicts the interpretation of space like a container because a social space is always linked to a certain point in time, to a specific place and a social context. To clarify the aspect of reproduction of social inequalities and power relations he distinct for „spatialization“ into the well-known three elements

- everyday practices and perceptions of places – le perçu,
- representations or theories of space – le conçu and
- spatial imaginary of the place – le vécu).

These arguments are considered by Pierre Bourdieu and he put the arguments further as he explicitly assumes that placing in territories is a kind of symbolic power to demonstrate social position. As in hierarchized societies there is no hierarchy-free system of places, the acquirement of places is a direct expression and strengthening of social inequalities. Concerning spatial planning, allocation policies and logics of the real-estate sector he steps forward as he quotes: „Command over territories is one of the most privileged forms of government as the manipulation of spatial distribution ever was used to manipulate the groups themselves“ (Bourdieu 1991: 30, transl. by JSD).

### 3.1.3 The Re-constructed Space

If you look at places with the understanding of constructivists all societal conditions – among them physical allocations – are the results of cognitive processes of individuals. Then, places are the results of two kinds of processes: a) the allocation of things and bodies in territories („placing“<sup>1</sup>) and b) by activities of construction of socio-spatial constellations by reflecting sociospatial patterns one’s learned throughout the socialisation process (cf. Löw 2001). That means that every person constructs its respective own subjective interpretation out of collectively shared places.

As these processes are not stable over time for one person, spatial planning would be overstrained to react on each subjective interpretation. Thus, it is the business of social sciences to develop socio-spatial typologies of similar processes and results of subjective construction. But then, however, spatial planning should in its analysis and strategies be based on such typologies as from my point of view the main reason for planning failure is caused by the mismatch of „objective’ and „subjective’ interpretations of socio-spatial phenomenon.

### 3.1.4 The Relational Space of Order

Following the concept of relational space, places are understood as „positioning of bodies’ (Einstein). This means, that every position in places is an expression of relations to the positions of other bodies. Here as

<sup>1</sup> Löw (2001) quotes this process “spacing”, but which is the result of another understanding of “space” and “place”. Moreover, she does not distinct between people in the street and physical structures as result of real estate investments – which should be part of “place-making” (cf. ch. 3.1.6).

well, places never can be empty (like in the interpretation of places as containers), as it only exists through the relations in space.

For spatial planning this view is important insofar, as the places, produced throughout the modern period, where marked by functional des-integration and specialisation and had been interconnected by transport, i.e. functions are put in a relational order by transport networks. A further possibility to adopt this view is to reflect on housing quarters in its relational composition – one aspect, which Peter Marcuse (1989) suggested as central for segregation analyses and which was the position of Saskia Sassen within her first and critical books about global cities. From this point of view, specific quarters always have the function to house the recent immigrants on low positions. This holds as well for almost all European cities, where from the Medieval Times onwards highly discriminated places existed which continued to hold this discriminative position until now (cf. Ipsen 1987).

Another field of practise for the relational view on places stems from mobility research within social sciences. John Urry (2007) claimed for a „mobility turn“ by criticising the traditional view on socio-spatial arrangements where people are defined via their place of homes (like in official statistics). It would make much more sense, if people are described via their mobility in territories („action space“). If you for instance consider the far-reaching and mostly wrong interpretations of the „dangerous‘ concentrations of either migrants and/or poor people, the relational concept would be much more relevant as you would know more about the social relations within the neighbourhoods and the physical and medial mobility of people.

### 3.1.5 The Societal Matrix-Space

The attempt of Läßle (1991: 194-197) is based on the concept of relational space. He developed it further to what he called „societal matrix space“, which consist of four elements:

- a. The material-physical substrate as the distribution of things and bodies within territories, which expresses the annexation of „natural space“;
- b. the related spatial system of signs, symbols and representation (i.e. two elements of Lefèbvre’s theory of production),
- c. the institutionalised and normative system of regulation – thus the dimension of market processes, but as well the administrative interventions like spatial planning (the entire aspects of production) and
- d. the societal interaction and behavioural structures (the socio-spatial practise).

Moreover, Läßle (1991: 197-198) designs micro-, meso- and macro-spaces. Micro-spaces are the immediate spaces of experience, while meso-spaces are the urban interrelations stretching from neighbourhoods, action spaces to regional working and living relations. Macro-spaces encompass national states with their specific forms of regulation, the system of international division of labour, which tie-in national states, regions and urban agglomerations. On the mesoand macro-level conflicts of regulation are applied, as societal spaces of function of different scales like economic regions, commuter zones, administrative units and areas of identification are overlapping.

However, Läßle’s attempt is lacking elements of different resources, interests and means, i.e. the aspect of social inequalities like gender, income, ethnicity, age, social milieu etc. is not considered – concerning both the allocation in the territories (segregation) as much as its symbolic outcome, which impacts the spatial behaviour. Moreover, the systems of regulation on the macro- level mostly – and over the last years – increasingly, turns out to boost social inequalities and segregation – very often with the support of spatial planning.

The deficit of Läßle’s theory can be overcome by a direct relation of the societal matrix space with the reproduction of social inequalities on the one hand by a-spatial social processes (allocation in fields of societies – cf. Bourdieu) and on the other hand by the application of the structure- habitus-practise reproduction formula of Bourdieu in producing socio-spatial inequalities. Thus the production and reproduction of space takes place as part of the perpetuation of sociospatial inequalities through processes of discrimination over a long period, which form the so called „habitus of places‘ (cf. Dangschat 2007).

### 3.1.6 The Space of Placemaking

The term „place-making’ is used in different manners (cf. Schümann 2006: 6-7) – which ranges from pure design aspects of urban designers and architects to the use of collective commons. For our concern the position of Patsy Healey is interesting, as her understanding of placemaking represents the recent understanding of planning culture which is framed by a broad range of governance arrangements. In her understanding placemaking consists of place-bound activities, based on the co-operation of different stakeholders, which aims to improve the quality of place and the quality of life as a common good. As a result of the extension of social diversity the range of expectations to concrete places is widening. Additionally the use of space is becoming more heterogeneous as well and single places are increasingly physically and by media interrelated, which results in a multiple interwoven network of places (cf. the idea of relational space): „It varies according to the relationship within which it has significance. ... Conception of „place“ are social constructs, interweaving the social experience of being in a place, the symbolic meaning of qualities of a place and the physicalness of the forms and flows which go on it” (Healey 2001: 269). Thus, the attempt of placemaking of Healey is based on the idea of relational space, equipped with categories of Läßle with a specific awareness of respective subjective construction of places.

## 3.2 **Changed Perception of Time**

### 3.2.1 The Objective Time

We all have learned throughout our socialisation that information about time is clear and explicit, as homogeneous, linear time as chronometers and calendars allows us to think. While in ancient times calendars were the results of the curiosity of natural scientists and first clocks a monument of manual skills, the organisation of a modern, heterogeneous complexes like recent cities need to be based upon a „objective“ system of time, which guarantee an order of industrial work, opening hours of institutions like schools, hospitals, public administrations and shopping facilities as much as the organisation of public transport. A differentiated division of labour, an administration of a bigger municipality imply, that the processes are embedded in clear time structures. This became as important for each of us that clocks at bell towers or the implementation of clocks in public places are not sufficient anymore so that everybody wears the own clock at his/her wrist.

### 3.2.2 The Historical Time

The traditional historical time follows as well such a positivist and clear regime, to give the periods of the past like durations of dynasties, date of birth and death of important persons, begin and end of wars, building styles or traditions of thinking a clear order. On a linear time bar everything of historical interest is marked and ordered in a before and after, which has to be learned by every pupil in all countries as element of a good general education.

### 3.2.3 The „longue durée

We are following the same logics with phases of planning cultures, of the duration of master plans and by implementing prognosis and scenarios. However, what cannot be shown by this attempt, is the societal meaning of the different durations of impacts of historical events – the *longue durée* (as Braudel called it) of thoughts, inventions, values on the one hand and buildings, technical infrastructure and landscapes on the other.

The shift of perspective from the objective description of events alongside as clear defined scalar of time to the societal impact of events is made by new forms of historical sciences. Based on the „model of multiplicity of societal times“ by Maurice Halbwachs and Georges Gurvitch Jacques Le Goff (1990: 50) has claimed to establish a scientific chronology, „... which is ordering historical phenomenon by their duration of impact within the history, and not by the date of implementation.“

From the sociological point of view these general thoughts must be added by a reflection of socio- spatial diversities of response times to be able to analyse the hegemonic powers which enables persons or institutions to superimpose and achieve the own ideas, ideologies and settlement structures against these of the others. Adopted for spatial planning, urban design and architecture this attempt would allow an analysis of the duration of the impacts of guidelines, decrees, and interpretations about socio-spatial phenomenon like segregation and the obsession of social mix.

### 3.2.4 The Subjective Proper Time

An even stronger element of relative view on time is the aspect of „subjective proper time“, which allocates events within the context of individual remembering like „since about ten years‘, „last autumn‘, yesterday‘, „some hours ago‘ or „tomorrow‘, „next days‘ or „in summer‘. All of us know that positive events seem to pass by too early, while unpleasant events seem to last for ever. On the other hand we all know the excuse „sorry, I had not time for that‘, which only expresses that we had to do other things or were not too much interested to do the expected things. However, what is the relation of subjective time to spatial planning? Beside the fact that spatial planners are as well ordinary people (and thus looking at time in their subjective way – like your feeling about the length of my presentation), different logics of time to be needed for planning process from the point of view of investors, the planning administration, the citizens and politicians, who want to demonstrate a progress in the periods before elections.

### 3.2.5 The Simultaneity of Asynchrony

The term „simultaneity of asynchrony‘ is used very often in the recent past, but with a broad differentiation of understanding. On the one hand it is about the intersection of time and space, which – following Albert Einstein – describes the fourth dimension of TimeSpace. On the other hand it is claimed, that by the acceleration of speed of spatial mobility, „space“ is absorbed. Another understanding of that term hints to the fact that international migration of people, cultural patterns and values, of information and a worldwide net of communication is leading to the fact that in one place experiences are meeting which originally stems from different phases of societal or economic development. Richard Florida argued in his books for a concept for improving creativity and innovation by talents, tolerance and technology, which improves economic competitiveness, but which on the other hand as improved diversity for an increasing number of people is producing a too big challenge which increasingly results in excessive demands. Under the conditions of competitive urban and regional developments we as spatial planners are requested, to support the general diversity management by a supportive planning in „creative quarters“ but as well in socially and physically „problematic“ quarters. Diversity management clearly is a term which is political correct and allows local and regional politicians to implement strategies, but what is the normative aim for integrating the diversity within the asynchrony – anything goes for whom and for what?

In contrast to the surprising reflexion whatever can happen within the „anything goes‘ of postmodernism, Niklas Luhmann (1990: 123) pointed out to understand „time“ as aspect of a social selective construction, which needs to develop a compelling theory by which it would be possible, to correlate variations in the social structure with those of the time structure, and – this needs to be added – as well with a spatial structure.

## **4 CHALLENGES FOR SPATIAL PLANNING**

After a long tour d‘horizon I‘m coming back to the challenges for spatial planning – what does this mean for us as spatial planners in different roles? First of all a spatial planning, based on theories and methods, which by their own intention are a-spatial and time-less like micro-economic modelling, allocation modelling and most of the mobility modelling, the 2-, 3- and 4Dpresentations and most of the GIS practises – seems to be outdated. These reflections are independent of a specific socio-spatial-timely impact constellation and are contradicting paradoxically the need for tailored planning solutions for specific places.

One of my interpretations why spatial planning often obtains so little attention, why positively intended ideas for planning practise often are not accepted is rooting in the fact, that the „objective world“ of planners is opposed by a plenty of non-understood subjective interpretations of recent socio-spatial realities and those in the future. The success of mediation was too little to establish a joint understanding between these „worlds“. Planners too often are lacking a necessarily understanding of different forms of „good“ life, as much as outside the planning world there is a lack of understanding of the time needed for planning processes, of the need to argue in objective categories and models.

What is needed to do? First of all the representation of socio-spatial phenomenon by restricting official statistics is to challenge. Most of the information needed to explain the variety of attitudes and behaviour within increasingly heterogeneous societies is dramatically lacking. The claim for proper information that fits modern theories of social inequalities is improving the exploration power of behavioural models.

However, this improvement still persists us to stay in a dead-end road of thinking – to follow this image: We are speeding up while driving in a dead-end road instead of making an u-turn.

But, where to go then? Which stimulation we as spatial planners can expect from social sciences first of all to set the first steps towards a better analysis of social spaces and to improve at least planning in a more proper way? The attempt of Patsy Healey clearly exhibits a good way to integrate different forms of understanding of „space“ beyond the container space which still is the dominant form throughout spatial planning. But she as well – like Dieter Läßle – based her reflections without any systematic sensitivity for social inequalities which does not only reflect different interpretations of living, but results through segregation process in spatial concentrations. Contrary to Healey, Läßle keeps an eye on the macro level of regulation regimes and thus the conditions of the production of places, which is very relevant for spatial planning norms and processes.

Concerning the theoretical background of spatial planning of non-objective spaces and times from human geography and urban sociology, a comparative analysis of socio-spatial phenomenon makes almost no sense (beyond a sheer description). While comparing different territories at the same point of time you only get snapshots of socio-spatial processes (i.e. the existing amount of segregation) with different spatial and temporal reach. Even the attempt of developments within phases of socio-spatial development remains dubious, as this is based on an objective understanding of linear times.

Moreover, in spatial planning as much within the recent governance-research there is a pressure to detect good-practise examples which might be transferred into another socio-spatial situation. Following my presentation, this attempt is senseless until nothing is said about the values of the actors, social networks, local culture of planning and meaning of the challenge. The dominant niveau of reflexion of time and space does not allow to consider these kinds of transfers.

I hope, I did not confuse you too much by my reflections, but were able to raise some little arguments to reflect our routines of analysis and practical planning. I wish REAL CORP 2013 all the best and interesting debates and knowledge transfer within the workshops,

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