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Spatial development



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In recent decades, the focus in spatial planning has shifted increasingly to its development function. This leads to new forms of stakeholder cooperation and spatial constellations, which frequently focus on functional rather than territorial distinctions. Spatial development has generated numerous instruments to expand the existing range of instruments of formal spatial planning.

1 Definition of terms

Spatial development (*Raumentwicklung*) is the umbrella term to describe various spatial processes and is used partly as a synonym for ▷ *Spatial planning (Raumordnung)* in the traditional sense of a normative concept for the supra-local and superordinate regulation and planning of space and its related processes and institutions as well as for ▷ *Spatial planning (Raumplanung)* in the broader sense as the intersectoral, integrative coordination of demands for the use of space. In English terminology, there are similar overlaps between ‘spatial development’, ‘spatial planning’ and ‘land use planning’ (cf. Hall/Tewdwer-Jones 2010). Spatial development relates, as the first component of the term suggests, to ▷ *Space* and includes various levels of scale or action, which extend from the municipal to the regional and federal state tier, as well as to the national and supranational level. It also relates, as the second component of the term indicates, to *development*, which could be understood in the descriptive, analytical or normative sense. From a descriptive point of view, it retrospectively describes the development of a space over a given period of time, or prospectively outlines potential future development paths based on forecasts or scenarios (▷ *Forecasting*; ▷ *Future scenarios*). The normative perspective, on the other hand focuses – through plans, strategies or concepts – on a target situation, which is to be achieved through the future development of the space concerned. With regard to the allocation of functions to the different levels of scale, ▷ *Urban development*, ▷ *Regional development* and federal state development (▷ *Federal state spatial planning, federal state development*) amount to concrete, specific elaborations of spatial development at the municipal, regional and federal state level. At the national level, spatial development is part of the comprehensive spatial planning function of the federation (▷ *Federal spatial planning [Bundesraumordnung]*); at the level of the European Union (EU; ▷ *European Union*), ‘European spatial development’ has become an established European field of action (▷ *European spatial development policy*). In some instances, similar terms are used: for example ▷ *Urban development planning* or regional development planning or urban and ▷ *Regional management* are used in a comparable way to designate development tasks and their implementation.

2 Theoretical assessment

A critical analysis of the historical, political and semantic contexts in which the term is used can contribute to a better understanding of the concept of spatial development. The following section will focus firstly on the use of the term *space* during the era of National Socialism in Germany and the later development of the notion of space on an international level, and secondly on the discussion of the term ‘development’ and the underlying notion of normative spatial development.

The term ‘space’ has been in common use in Germany since the end of the 19th century; in the mid-1920s, the term *spatial planning* was coined in expert circles (cf. Istel 2000). However, the instruments of spatial planning were usurped by the aggressive and dehumanising spatial expansion policy of the National Socialists and thus remained, according to some authors, ‘discredited for a long time after the Second World War. References to “space” (*Raum*) and “spatial”

(*Räumliches*) in the political arena were still considered revisionist in the early 1980s¹ (Lippuner/Lossau 2010: 110).

Recent decades have seen an intense debate about space-related issues on an international level. This discussion was triggered in part by \triangleright *Globalisation* processes, which gave rise to the discussion of a process of space-time compression (cf. Harvey 1989), which in turn leads to economic and social relationships being reflected in changed spatial and temporal reference points and to an interconnectedness of local and global issues ('glocalisation'). In cultural studies and the social sciences, this gave rise to a 'spatial turn', which indicated a changed relationship between space and society. This ascent of the new notion of space is, however, unsatisfactory, as it suggests a causal link between social issues and physical aspects, thus leading to an overly critical naturalisation and determinism of social action (cf. Hard 1999; Baecker 1990), or it departs from the concept of 'space as a container', without explaining at the same time the related territorialisation of social relations. Various discursive, semiotic and practical-theoretical approaches explore ways out of this 'space trap' by attempting to 'define the construction of space as the practice of spatialising non-spatial aspects'² (Lippuner/Lossau 2010: 111; for different concepts of space in this regard cf. Löw 2001; Werlen 2007; Läßle 1991; Bourdieu 1998).

The theoretical underpinnings become even more relevant due to the association of the concept of space with normative aspects of spatial development. Development can be defined as 'a bundle of positively charged, normative processes, which occurred in some regions, but not in others'³ (Ziai 2010: 400). Here we must distinguish between evolutionary processes of social change and targeted political interventions. The term *development* is subject to a range of criticism, including the positive normalisation or the underlying interpretation matrix and the problem of the trustworthiness of external expertise (cf. Cowen/Shenton 1996; Kößler 1998; Ziai 2004).

The normative justification of development requires an interpretation matrix, which specifies whether a space is more or less developed, as a basis for determining whether there is a need for development strategies and projects. Economic growth and the gross domestic product are mostly considered to be benchmarks and targets. However, it has become clear that this approach in itself cannot satisfy the demand for \triangleright *Sustainability*; instead, social and ecological objectives as well as intergenerational perspectives must be taken into account (cf. *WBGU* [German Advisory Council on Global Change] 2011). Moreover, development cannot be considered a neutral or technical term; it is highly political and thus dependent on stakeholders and interests.

In addition, spatial development is mostly to be stimulated through external expertise. This means that experts and consultants are involved and relied upon as persons of trust (trustees), and they initiate or support development processes and projects that should contribute to achieving the normative specifications. This relationship of trust in the development process is based on the assumption that the interests of the external experts coincide with those of the local stakeholders and that both have similar perceptions for the future of the space to be developed.

1 „nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg nachhaltig diskreditiert [...]. Politische Bezüge auf Raum und Räumliches galten noch zu Beginn der 1980er Jahre als revisionistisch“

2 „die Konstruktion von Raum als Praxis der Verräumlichung von Nichträumlichem zu fassen“

3 „ein Bündel von miteinander verknüpften und normativ positiv aufgeladenen Prozessen [...], die in einigen Regionen stattfanden und in anderen nicht“

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However, neither of these assumptions are consistent with reality, as they ignore conflicts of interest and the disadvantages of individual stakeholders in regard to their ability to articulate and access the resources of power.

The theoretical discussion of space and development demonstrates that spatial development issues create complex challenges. The understanding of the problems and approaches of spatial development differ fundamentally depending on the underlying concept of space; furthermore, depending on the notion of development, superficially plausible objectives may upon closer examination prove to be motivated by ideology and interests to a high degree. In addition, the function and work of 'external development facilitators' may appear ambivalent.

3 From spatial planning to spatial development

Since its inception, spatial planning has been perceived to have both a regulatory and a development function. Especially in metropolitan areas, the focus has often been on coordinating land-use conflicts through regional planning and ▷ *Urban land-use planning*. This regulatory task was also associated with predominantly sovereign and hierarchical actions on the part of the state and municipal authorities.

After a range of experience with participatory urban development processes was gained in ▷ *Urban planning* (▷ *Participation*) from the 1970s, in the 1980s a change occurred in ▷ *Regional planning* in the direction of regional development and regional management. Some federal state spatial planning bodies have also expanded their understanding of their responsibilities in a comparable manner. This was triggered in part by a lack of steering powers on the part of regional planning vis-à-vis local authorities and sectoral planning authorities (▷ *Spatially-relevant sectoral planning*) and in part by the growing notion in many regions (▷ *Region*) that they themselves could play a more active role through endogenous or independent regional development. This was reflected in various development programmes offered by a number of ministries and gave rise to forms of cooperation with various public and private participants in relation to what were at times unusual spatial sections.

Formal responsibility for regional development cannot be clearly identified, as the range of issues is broad and each regional situation is specific to that region. Individual regional planning agencies have taken the initiative already early on and expanded the field of regional development - in addition to their original function of regional planning (e.g. Havelland-Fläming, Neckar-Alb, Stuttgart or Western Palatinate). In some places, for example in Brandenburg or Baden-Württemberg, this gave rise to concurrent competences with other stakeholders. In other cases, the initiative helped to recalibrate the relationship between regional planning and regional development, for example when the regional development strategy in the Western Palatinate region was used at the same time to trim down the regional plan.

4 Instruments of spatial development

In practice, a descriptive approach to spatial development is reflected, for example, in the spatial planning reports (*Raumordnungsberichte*) at the federal level as well as in some federal states and regions. At the local authority level, too, there are scattered reports on urban development or certain space-related fields of action, e.g. settlement (▷ *Settlement/settlement structure*) and ▷ *Housing* or ▷ *Open space*. These reports describe the status of spatial development to date (▷ *Reports on urban and spatial development*). In part, considerations and recommendations for future development are derived from the descriptive instruments, as a kind of preparation for the normative set of instruments.

There is a diverse set of instruments for normative spatial development. This comprises both the formal instruments of spatial planning, such as urban land-use planning, regional planning or federal state spatial planning, as well as informal instruments that have no direct, binding effect for subsequent action (cf. Table 1). At the federal level, the informal character is reflected in the ‘Concepts and Strategies for Spatial Development in Germany’ (*Leitbilder und Handlungsstrategien für die Raumentwicklung in Deutschland*), which replaced the Spatial Planning Policy Guidelines (*Raumordnungspolitischer Orientierungsrahmen*) of 1993, and which were adopted in 2006 by the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning (*Ministerkonferenz für Raumordnung*) and updated in 2016. They must be understood as a common development strategy of the federation and the federal states, but do not contain any planning specifications (▷ *Guiding principles for spatial development*).

Table 1: Select instruments of normative spatial development

Action level	Formal instruments	Informal instruments
City, town	Preparatory land-use plan Binding land-use plan	Urban development strategy 'Lokale Agenda 21' (Local Agenda 21) concept Urban marketing Inner city strategy Neighbourhood management International Architecture Exhibition
Region	Regional plan/ Regional spatial planning programme	Regional development strategy Regional management REGIONALE/International Architecture Exhibition Regional conference or similar Regional cooperation
Federal state	Federal state development plan/ Federal state spatial planning programme	Federal state development strategy 'Conference on the Future' or similar International Architecture Exhibition
Federation	Spatial development plan (pursuant to section 17 of the Federal Spatial Planning Act [<i>Raumordnungsgesetz, ROG</i>], not applied to date)	Guiding principles and action strategies for spatial development in Germany
EU		European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)

Source: Compiled by the author based on Fürst 2010 and Priebis 2013

At the state level, there are scattered informal strategy documents on federal state development in preparation for formal federal state spatial planning. Alternatively, some federal state spatial planning authorities conduct 'Conferences on the Future' to explore pending challenges and conceivable development options prior to the formal planning process. The regional and local

authority levels have given rise to a particularly diverse range of informal instruments for spatial development in recent decades. Here, the instruments range from local authority and regional development strategies through to ‘Workshops and Conferences on the Future’, up to a variety of organisation forms for informal collaboration in cities, peri-urban areas (▷ *Relations between cities and surrounding regions*), urban regions (▷ *Urban region*) and ▷ *Rural areas*. These are used within the existing political and administrative framework; sometimes, new means of cooperation are formed, so called ‘soft spaces with fuzzy boundaries’ (Allmendinger/Haughton/Oosterlynck 2013), which transcend administrative boundaries and focus their collaboration on functional criteria, such as commuter and cultural areas, or the spreading of clusters (▷ *Cluster*).

5 Conclusions and reflection

The normative notion of spatial development points to a shift in the focus of traditional spatial planning (*Raumordnung*). While the focus was for a long time on the regulatory function, the attention is now increasingly on developmental responsibilities. This is not a matter of either/or; it rather reflects a changed interplay between the regulatory and developmental functions, as indicated by the recommendation that policymakers should retain a veto option (*‘Schatten der Hierarchie’* [The shadow of hierarchy], Kilper 1999) in the implementation of regional development measures to ensure that interests for the common good (▷ *Common good*) can prevail over potential individual interests.

The informal component of spatial development requires the stakeholders involved in spatial planning to change their perception of their role. They have to abandon their formally enshrined, hierarchical power position in favour of striving for the benefits to be had through cooperation and find their place as a player in a network of equal partners. The extent to which this succeeds depends on various factors, e.g. on a person’s individual knowledge and skills in relation to the legal framework conditions (the right of initiative in regional planning) as well as on stakeholders’ access to the necessary personal and financial resources.

In recent decades, spatial development has seen incisive changes, which evolved primarily from the shift in scale towards neighbouring, cross-border and supranational cooperation. Here, too, the informal components of normative spatial development are now playing a greater role, as the primary concern is to agree on shared objectives and cooperation based on trust. The discussion about ‘soft spaces’ points in this direction and indicates that stakeholders in spatial development are confronted with the challenge of having to find new constellations of partners and flexible spatial sections and of accepting them as cooperative action spaces. Spatial development in this regard can – especially in the European border areas – assume an important role if it is able to overcome the existing borders through processes of cooperation and thus to contribute to European integration (▷ *Cooperation, cross-border*).

But also in most urban regions, the cooperation between cities and peri-urban regions is far from satisfactory. Just as collaboration in the metropolitan areas in the 1920s provided a crucial impulse for the establishment of spatial planning at the time, it could contribute in the coming years to a further advancement of spatial development in the face of numerous pressing and still unresolved issues. At the core of this are issues such as the sustainable development of settlements and open spaces and a sustainable, appropriate level of ▷ *Mobility*; demographic

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trends (▷ *Demographic change*), in particular ▷ *Migration and integration* (▷ *Integration, social and ethnic*); as well as ▷ *Climate protection* and ▷ *Climate change adaptation* and the associated 'great transformation' of the urban-regional metabolism (cf. *WBGU* 2011, 2016).

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