



# Exploring controversies regarding planning and spatial development in practice

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According to Van der Valk and Faludi (1997) a planning doctrine is mature if a responsible authority adopts it. In planning theory many attention has been paid to concepts that form a doctrine. The question how these concepts affect spatial development in practice is often treated as a black box. In times of collaborative development planning, implementation and plan making are interwoven and are collectively affecting spatial quality. In this light Albrechts (2006) has stressed the need for a “practicing theory”. Controversies regarding planning and the spatial development in practice characterize this research field.

What are the main controversies regarding planning and spatial development in practice? How are the activities of planners active in these two areas coupled and decoupled? Why are these activities decoupled? Why is there a need for recoupling and how can this recoupling take place? This paper focuses on practical manifestations of these controversies in planning processes. Case studies are carried out in metropolitan green areas in The Netherlands and Flanders. Central in these case studies are the way different parties and institutions are involved in making the step from concepts to changes in space.

## Introduction

Because of the restructuring of the welfare state, the call for more spatial quality, and a preferred shift from passive zoning-oriented planning systems towards more active spatial development approaches, there is a call for more insight in not only the actions of planners working on the allocation of space in visions, but also in the actions of those planners working on spatial developments in the field. This paper discusses two types of planners, the strategic planner who works with spatial concepts on the one hand and the operational developer-planner on the other hand. This paper discusses why it is important to recognize both types of planners. Spatial quality depends on both groups and the way they interact. This paper uses the concepts coupling-decoupling-recoupling to discuss the interaction, the failures to interact and the difficulties faced when attempts are made to restore this interaction.

In order to study this, literature is examined and three case studies are carried out in metropolitan green areas in The Netherlands and Flanders. The Flemish Park Forest Ghent project concerns the development of a forest near the city of Ghent. The Dutch Midden-Delfland project aims at preserving the green buffer zone between the agglomeration of Rotterdam and The Hague. In the Dutch Bloemendalerpolder project real estate developers and public parties are cooperating to develop houses on one third of the area and nature on the other two third. Central in these case studies are the way different parties and institutions are involved in making the step from concepts to changes in space.

This paper is structured as follows. First, we pay attention to different actors in planning, in particular the distinction between the strategic planner and the operational developer-planner. Second, the concept of coupling-decoupling-recoupling is briefly discussed and applied on the two types of planners. Then a paragraph discusses why the two types of planners have a tendency to decouple their activities. After that, attention is paid

to reasons why, especially nowadays, recoupling between these activities is needed. The paper concludes with discussing the recoupling of the activities of the two types of planners.

### Project plan versus strategic plan

To get insight in the activities of planners, Faludi's (2000) distinction between projects plans and strategic plans is useful. Project plans are documents that determine what actions are to be taken to reach a chosen end state. Opposite to project planning is strategic planning. From a "decision centered view of planning" strategic planning coordinates the projects and measures taken by various actors. The set of decisions taken by these actors is the object of planning. In the eyes of Faludi (2000) these plans do not contain hard-and-fast prescriptions, indeed plans are indicative and form a reference for negotiations of which the future is open. The plan has an important communicative function. It informs the various actors and facilitates learning among actors. Strategic spatial planning concerns major spatial development issues often arising at the regional and national level instead of the local level. In line with this, the evaluation criteria of the two types of plan differ. The question asked for the evaluation of project planning is whether 'the goods are delivered', in other words whether the outcome of planned action is conform to what the plans said. On the contrary strategic plans should be evaluated on their improvement of the understanding of decision makers of the present and future problems they face (Faludi, 2000).

Table I: Two types of plan, *source*: Faludi (1989)

	<b>Project plans</b>	<b>Strategic plans</b>
<b>Object</b>	Material	Decisions
<b>Interaction</b>	Until adoption	Continuous
<b>Future</b>	Closed	Open
<b>Time-element</b>	Limited to phasing	Central to problem
<b>Form</b>	Blueprint	Minutes of last meeting
<b>Effect</b>	Determinate	Frame of reference

### Problems when explaining activities of planners

Can this distinction into project plans and strategic planning help us to understand what roles a planner can have. In practice project plans, blue print plans, that contractors can carried out directly, are made by planning engineers often trained as a civil engineer. On the other hand strategic planners work on strategic plans. Often they are territorial planners, horizontally coordinating among sector departments. The problem is that a considerable amount of planners do not fit in with one of these two groups. We recognize that this is often the case with categorizations. Nevertheless, we saw in our case studies that many planner who are not part of one of the two groups, have the following characteristics in common. They work on a specific goal, such as protecting green metropolitan areas or creating a specific number of nature hectares. Although the object of their work is material and the goals are set in advance, this however does not mean that solutions are fixed and plans can be rolled out as a blueprint plan. Faludi (2000) stated that strategic planning on the regional and national level is more likely to need flexibility because uncertainty, conflict and the involvement of many actors make the situation complex. On the contrary, in our case studies, we saw that in practice, especially on the local level, the confrontation with financial aspects, existing rights and other legal aspects urge planners working on a specific goal, to interact with other parties and to adjust their plans. Besides, in cases of so-called project planning as the implementation of a green buffer zone between cities in Midden-Delfland, due to the long duration of the project (in this case thirty years), it cannot be said that the adoption of the project implied a closure of the future.

Because many planners fit in this description we made a categorization into two types of spatial planners: the strategic planner and the spatial developer-planner. We have decided to leave the planning engineer out of this model, because he is often not regarded a spatial planner. This categorization can help us to distinguish the different responsibilities of the two types of planners and the rules and norms that should guide their behaviors.

### The strategic planner and the operational developer-planner

In planning literature the role of the strategic planner is often discussed (see for example Healey, 1997 and Van der Valk and Faludi, 1997). In case of territorial planning the planning subject mediates the demands for space of the various sector departments. Decisions are the planning object. In this view planning is mature when the planning objects adopt it (Van der Valk and Faludi, 1997). The goal of this kind of planning is to legitimize and facilitate good decision-making. Since planning is seen as the specific form of consensus in which actors coordinate their actions and thereby make specific recourses available (Wallagh, 1994), the most important tools of this kind of planning are communicative tools. Healey (1999) describes this kind of planning as follows: "*a governance capacity to act as a strategic relational node or arena in a locality, a point of reference for many relational webs, and a locus of the development of shared understandings among the diversity of open relations in a place. This does not necessarily mean building a consensus. It could also mean*

*building public policy discourses.*” Because, in the strict sense, this kind of planning is regarded as coordination, this kind of planning is supposed to call for little or no expenditure (Priemus, 1996). The instruments for this coordinating activity are often considered to be of a non-financial nature. The instruments of the planners were primarily communicative: concepts, plans and vision documents (Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000). These communicative tools as well as the instrument of zoning are in general governed by public law. In general, planning education is based on this type of planner. With respect to the allocation of resources, the strategic planner working on visionary plans, allocates space to various sectors.

The other kind of planner is the operational developer-planner. This kind of planner takes concrete action to realize changes in space. This type of planner is often seen in practice. For this kind of planner the planning object is material, tangible space. In general, this type of planner works at a sectoral department and is concerned with coordinating activities in order to implement sector policy. The effective and efficient achievement of these goals, and in general improvement of spatial quality, is the aim of this planner. The tools for this kind of planning, such as (compulsory) purchase, often have a juridical and economical character and go with the use of financial resources. The work of this kind of planner, in comparison with the strategic planner, is ruled more by private law. Comparing the strategic planner and the operational developer-planner, the strategic planner is more conceptual and designer like, whereas the “spatial developer” is more practical.

Table II: Two types of planners

	<b>Operational developer-planner</b>	<b>Strategic planner</b>
<b>Planning object</b>	Material	Decisions
<b>Basic activity</b>	Developing space	Allocating land in vision
<b>Evaluation criterion</b>	“Goods delivered”, spatial quality	Decision making improved
<b>Tools</b>	Financial and juridical	Communicative (and zoning)
<b>Interaction</b>	Continues	Continues

## The operational developer-planner disputed

In the literature the planner is characterized as a relational node, a place to facilitate the development of shared understandings (Healey, 1999). In this way of thought the operational developer-planner is often not seen as a (proper) planner because he is not independent and he implements goals set beforehand. For example Healey (1999) stated that because of the *democratic deficit*, new and more interactive relationships among governance, citizens and businesses should be introduced. In this way the work of the strategic planner, the coordination of the demands for space, is supposed to facilitate, complement or even replace the work of democratically legitimized institutions. The operational developer-planner does not fulfill this function. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to consider the operational developer-planner, executing a predefined goal, a proper planner. First, it is interesting to consider the way the role of the operational developer-planner is legitimized. The work of the operational developer-planner is not less legitimate than the work of the collaborative planner. The position of the operational developer-planner fits in with the widely accepted idea of the “trias politica”, the separation of powers between an executive, a legislative and a judiciary. In our modern democratic states, planners that work as civil servant are considered to work for the executive power and are not considered to be part of the legislative power. In other words, they should not be involved in the making of decisions. They should execute them. Decision-making is, after all, the task of democratically elected bodies (often assisted, however preferably not replaced by strategic planners). The reason to discuss this is not that we consider the strategic planner or the operational developer-planner more just than the other, we only want to show that for both type of planners there are different ways to legitimize their actions.

Besides that there are various reasons why we consider the operational developer-planner a planner. First, many people expect planners to improve spatial quality. For this, the implementation by the operational developer-planner is a crucial success factor. Second, in practice, many educated planners work as “spatial developer” planner on the implementation of democratically legitimized goals. Third, planning is shifting from a passive regulative approach towards a more implementation-led and development-led approach (Albrechts, 2006 and Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000). In this development-led approach planners have the role of the operational developer-planner. Because of all this we consider the operational developer-planner to be a planner.

## The two types in practice

In our case studies we saw various examples of these two types of planners. For example, in the Park Forest Ghent project, strategic planners were involved in creating the concepts and the rough zoning for a forest near the city of Ghent. In this case, planners from the Flemish government coordinated the spatial demands from the agricultural sector and the forestry sector on a general level (Van Herzele, 2006). The interactive planning process for the Bloemendalerpolder shows that a design orientated strategic planner can also work at the regional level. In this case strategic planners facilitated the public-private partnerships (PPP)-negotiations by drawing plans of the various possibilities to combine the development of houses with the development of nature in the

area (Van Rij, 2007a). In both cases also operational developer-planners were active. In the case of the Park Forest Ghent project, planners from the Flemish land agency made an inventory of the economically vital farmers and the older farmers that will be more willing to sell their farms. This information was used for the making of the detailed plans for the area. The forest was planned at the region with the older farmers and the green vistas at the land where the vital farmers could continue their agricultural activities. In combination with the making of detailed plans, planners from the Flemish land agency started negotiations with farmers about the take over of their ground lease. At the same time operational developer-planners from the forestry agency started negotiations with estate owners. In the Bloemendalerpolder process operational developer-planners represented the Dutch government service for rural land management in the negotiations with the real estate developers.

The way both type of planners think about farmland and the decay in agriculture illustrate the fact that the two kinds of planners have different conceptual backgrounds. Strategic planners speak of ground that will become vacant (*vrijkomende landbouwgronden* in Dutch (for example Hulsman, 2007)). By this, they mean that since there is no need for agricultural zones in the future, they can plan a new type of land use, as nature conservation, on these areas. Quite often the idea is heard that since this land will become vacant, it will be most likely that nature will develop on these areas. An operational developer-planner on the other hand does not speak of “ground that will become vacant” and he does not expect that nature will develop autonomously. He thinks this because this land, especially in the Dutch metropolitan area, has a high price even when farmers do not regard it to be good land for farming anymore. Unlike strategic planners, during their daily work, operational developer-planners are confronted with the fact that in order to protect green metropolitan areas, money and regulation is needed to acquire land, develop new green land uses on this land and maintain this areas (Van Rij, 2007b).

## Decoupling

By nature, planning deals with multiple sectors. As Healey (1999) states, many sectoral policy communities, with their focus on particular functions or topics such as economic development, housing and agriculture, have developed as isolated bastions. Because of that, there is an accelerating policy rhetoric that calls for more integration between policy arenas. Theory on coupling, decoupling and recoupling (Van Eeten and Roe, 2002) deals with this issue. The central idea of this theory is that in complex situations characterized by different interests, parties and management goals, there is a broad recognition to couple those various different interests, parties and management goals. However, the initially valid recognition that issues are so interrelated that they should be dealt with as one, often ends up in decoupling at the program, agency and professional level. Programs operate on their own, with professionals often trained in separate disciplines. Decoupling, while achieving short-term reduction in complexity and turbulence and increasing stability and effectiveness, ends up with undermining the very optimizing process that drove the initial coupling. This decoupling generates pressure to recouple. According to this theory on recoupling this recoupling can only be realized if it fits in with the actual situation and context dynamics (Van Eeten & Roe, 2002).

In principle this theory is about decoupling between functions and services looked after by various policy sectors. Because this paper deals with the activities of the two types of planners and the interaction between them, we do not use the concepts coupling-decoupling-recoupling to discuss coupling between these functions and services. We use these concepts to discuss the interaction between strategic planners and operational developer-planners.

Considering the different goals and positions of these two types of planners, decoupling between strategic planners and operational developer-planners is likely to take place. This decoupling often coincides with decoupling between plan-making and implementation, with decoupling between territorial planning departments (where most of the strategic planners work) and sector departments (where most operational developer-planners are employed) and decoupling between pure strategic planning and more project-like planning. However these categories do gradually shade off into each other. For example planners working for a territorial planning department, in times of spatial development planning can work as operational developer-planners. In accordance with ideals developed during their study, planners can see themselves, as a neutral strategic planner, while in fact they work as an operational developer-planner on predefined goals. Likewise, working on the implementation of a plan, an operational developer-planner like a strategic planner can work as a mediator between two parties with a demand for a specific area.

## Decoupling in practice

There are many examples of the decoupling between the strategic planner and the operational developer-planners. Albrechts (2006) stated that in many models, often made by strategic planners, on planning processes, project planning, executed by operational developer-planners, has been considered unproblematic and remained a black box. This is a sign of the gap between strategic planners and those scholars that work on theories about their work on the one hand and the work of operational developer-planners on the other hand. Besides, as Albrechts (2006) explains, planners, in general strategic planners, tend to criticize decision-makers and implementers, in other words operational developer-planners, for deviating from “their” plans. Strategic

planners blame operational developer-planners for being pragmatic and opportunistic, for making planners' ethics subordinate to economic and juridical forces. For example in the Flemish case strategic planners argued that because of the national forestry shortage especially near cities, an operational developer-planner considering the ownership rights of farmers, should not change the plans for a city forest. In the Bloemendalerpolder operational developer-planners are criticized for selling the green area between cities to real estate developers in order to cut down on governmental budgets for green areas.

On the other hand, as stated earlier, operational developer-planners blame strategic planners for making unrealistic plans that represent what we wish for instead of what we can make space look like. In that case the visions of the strategic planner are blamed for being exercises in "banalization" and "woolly thought" (Albrechts (2006) discussing Borja & Castells, 1997). Operational developer-planners are often confronted with plans made by strategic planners, which cannot be implemented due to a lack of budgets and the unwillingness of landowners to execute the plans. For example in the Park Forest Ghent project a plan was made that included forests, green vista's, nature areas, recreational roads and viaducts to cross the cities ring-road. Together with this, budgets for forestation were reserved by the forestry agency. Unfortunately budgets for most other parts of the area have not been reserved yet. It is not sure whether they will be made available in the future.

## Reasons for decoupling

For the decoupling between the strategic planner and the operational developer-planner a number of good reasons exists. In succession we discuss specialization, effectiveness, legitimacy and creativity. In order to make complex and turbulent policy situations surveyable, specialization takes place. Problems are arranged into projects. Specialized departments deal with aspects of these projects. These departments have different goals and responsibilities. As a consequence also the planners working for these departments have different goals. This has a positive effect in the way that these departments look after their goals. By doing so, in the discussion among departments, a balanced policy solution can be found. A policy goal for which no particular department is made responsible is often not looked after very well. As a consequence, not only between different sector departments, but also between sector departments and territorial planning departments, between operational developer-planners and strategic planners, decoupling takes place. This effect is strengthened by the fact that professionals at these departments are often trained in a different way. This special training is needed in order to be able to cope with the difficulties planners face. For example a designer needs other skills than a development cost-calculator or a process-manager.

Another reason why decoupling between the strategic planner and the operational developer-planner is needed, is the consideration that the strategic planner would not be taken seriously as an independent mediator among various demands for space, if he would be financially involved and would have an interest of his own. As Hajer and Zonneveld (2000) stated: the idealist notion here was that strategic planners' effectiveness (through integrality) would put in jeopardy were they to have own financial recourses. This brings us to another reason why the work of the strategic planner and the operational developer-planner is often decoupled. This reason is legitimacy. The plans of the strategic planner have an effect on the position of many actors. Here the state imposes power on individuals. In some cases, planning decisions have a positive effect on an individual. Preferably these positive planning effects outnumber the negative effects. Nevertheless, in some cases, an individual is supposed to bear a small burden due to decisions needed in the general interest. Having these powers the planner should use them impartially. He should design what is best in the light of overall spatial quality. On the other hand, to be effective and efficient a good operational developer-planner should use land ownership as a tool. As a consequence, for legitimacy reasons, the work of the strategic planner and the spatial developer-planner needs to be decoupled.

Besides that, another reason why the strategic planner and the operational developer-planner often chose to work separate, is creativity. The strategic planner needs creativity to elaborate on his concepts and visionary plans. In order to get new ideas, the strategic planner preferably is not bothered with potential restrains. For example if a designer would start with the land ownership situation in his mind, he, most likely, will not come up with refreshing new ideas as the Ecological Main Structure (a Dutch network connecting important nature areas). All in all there are various reasons why the function as strategic planner and as operational developer-planner are often not combined and people with these tasks work separately.

## Reasons for decoupling in Dutch practice

A classical example of decoupling in the Dutch situation is the difference in the way strategic planners and operational developer planners speak about "ownership-led planning" (*Eigendomsplanologie* in Dutch). For strategic planners "ownership-led planning" is a curse; one should not plan in favor of one owner (especially not when that owner is the state itself) at the expense of another owner. Spatial characteristics should lead planning, not ownership situation. On the other hand, if an operational developer-planner does not buy land at a low price, before plans have been made public, he cannot put the plans made by strategic planners into practice. When asked what mattered in the negotiations with private parties about the combined green and built-up development in the Bloemendalerpolder, civil servants, operational developer-planners, stated that it had been essential that

public parties owned land in the area. Otherwise it would have been less likely that the Dutch government service for rural land management would have been invited to the negotiations. Although in the Netherlands the possibilities under public law to steer spatial developments are being improved (De Wolff, 2007), landownership will continue to be an important tool for realizing preferred spatial development. All in all a good operational developer-planner should be aware of the ownership situation, whereas the strategic planner should not take ownership situation into consideration. With respect to legitimacy their position is different. As a consequence, in some respect, their work needs to be decoupled.

In our case studies we have also seen that in order to be able to be effective, operational development-planners did not want to be bothered too much by the strategic ideas of the strategic planner. A reason for this can be that in the Netherlands expected changes in zoning plans can influence the price of land. In case land will be used for urban developments, land-prices are higher than in case land remains in an agricultural or nature zone (see for example Cheshire and Sheppard, 2004 and Korthals Altes, 2000). As a consequence an operational developer-planner, buying land for a specific policy goal such as recreational metropolitan green areas, might prefer not to be aware of the fact that the policy might be changing. Because, in that case, the land price he should have to pay might be higher than he is paying. Too much knowledge of often changing policy goals could make negotiations more difficult for him. These examples show that both the strategic planner and the operational developer-planner have their own reason to keep a certain distance.

### Need for recoupling

Despite the earlier discussed reasons why the two type of planners tend to decouple their activities, there is an, at this moment growing, need for recoupling. This paragraph describes the policy changes that caused this. First, we discuss how policy made by sectoral departments with an aligning interest has changed. Then we pay attention to the change from a passive zoning-oriented planning system towards a more active spatial development approach. After that we go further into the idea that “money from the market” should be used for improving quality of space. Before all this, we will discuss the call for recoupling motivated by the idea that planners should be more successful in improving spatial quality.

In planning literature spatial quality has received increasing interest (see for example Healey, 1999). The link between strategic spatial planning and spatial quality is topic of discussion (Albrechts *et al.*, 2003). A key problem is that often plans made by strategic planners are not put into practice because a proper link with the world of operational developer-planners is not made. In such cases, plans made by strategic planners are not executed due to juridical problems or financial problems that could have been foreseen by “spatial-developer”-planners. For example landowners do not have the same ideas on preferred spatial developments as planners, plans are not in accordance with environmental norms, or there is a mismatch between plans and budgets. With a better coupling between strategic planners and operational developer-planners, these problems could have been coped with in an early stage of the projects.

One reason why there is a growing need for recoupling between the activities of strategic planners and operational developer-planners is that the old way of coupling is in decay due to the restructuring of the welfare state. Sectoral department with an aligning interest leave more room for the market. As a consequence, territorial planning departments have fewer opportunities to coordinate though these sector departments. Now that this old kind of coupling is fading away, a new kind of coupling is needed. New ideas about the restructuring of the welfare state, governance and the network society do not only have an effect on sectoral departments’ policy, also planning policy itself is changing. Hajer and Zonneveld (2000) have stated that as demands for developments cumulated, a passive zoning-oriented planning system was considered to be insufficient. Therefore they pled for a more active spatial development system of planning. Spatial development planning has started from the premise that spatial quality requires new procedures that allow for a more active involvement with changing socio-spatial processes. In that way the network society demands a more direct coupling of, on the one hand, the conceptual technologies (plan, maps, vision documents made by strategic planners) that have always characterized strategic planning, and on the other hand, implementation strategies and financial instruments, the tools of operational developer-planner. As Hajer and Zonneveld (2000) stated, this coupling of concepts and investment power is mend to enhance the effectiveness of the planning system.

In line with the restructuring of the welfare state, in the field of planning, financial matters and private financing are becoming more important. For example, since the Fourth, Report on Physical Planning Extra (VINEX), published in 1990 (VROM, 1990), it is official Dutch national policy to encounter PPP. In general it is the idea that private parties contribute financially to PPP-projects (Koppejan, 2005). In this light, the idea that planning could and should generate it’s own money, according to concepts on “money from the market” (Van der Veen & Janssen-Jansen, 2006), is becoming more and more popular. In line with this increased interest for financial matters institutional economic concepts as property rights, transaction costs and clubs, receive more and more attention in the planning community (see for example Alexander (2001), Buitelaar (2004) and Webster & Lai (2003)). However, this growing role of financial matters and private financing in planning is not without difficulties. In the Netherlands planners educated in the strategic planning tradition have put foreword ideas about new, market oriented planning institutions. Unfortunately many of these strategies are likely to fail

because they do not fit in with the juridical system or economic principles determining everyday-life in practice. To improve this kind of institutions, the visionary point of view from those strategic planners should be combined with the knowledge in the heads of spatial developer-planners of existing juridical and economic systems and the possibilities to change them.

### **Need for recoupling in Dutch practice**

In the Netherlands, the traditional way in which coupling between strategic planners from the ministry of spatial planning and operational developer-planners from sector departments took place is losing its strength. For long, the spatially integration of policy sectors, such as Transport & Public Works, Agriculture, Nature Management and Housing has been an important aspect of spatial planning (Priemus, 1996). The restructuring of the welfare state has had a considerable impact on the way these sector departments operate (Korthals Altes, 2007). For example in the case of the national housing policy, the State leaves more room for the market. This movement threatens the work of planners. For example there is less of a guarantee that new housing projects will be realized at locations (and densities) that are favored by the planning agency (Hajer & Zonneveld, 2000). As a consequence there is a need for a new kind of coupling.

Besides, the Dutch provinces changing role in planning illustrates this need for recoupling between strategic planners and operational developer-planners. For long the provinces have been working on strategic plans. The provinces were responsible for the making of strategic *streekplannen* (Faludi, 2000). As part of the passive zoning-oriented planning system, provinces supervised the municipalities. With respect to operational developer-like activities municipalities implemented the national housing policy and the Dutch government service for rural land management (that was at that time under direct guidance of the ministry) implemented rural spatial changes. Recently this has changed (Korthals Altes, 2007). In line with ideas about decentralization and regional integration the provinces are considered to be the layer of governance responsible for spatial development planning. In the light of the change from a passive zoning-oriented system towards spatial development planning, under the new planning law, provinces will not have the task to approve the binding zoning plans of municipalities any more. Instead they should become a *regisseur* of regional spatial development projects. In line with this policy, the provinces have set up new projects. To the core of these projects is the idea that the development of profitable new land use types such as houses should finance costly land uses such as green areas. In practice, not surprisingly, provinces are facing difficulties. For example in the Bloemendalerpolder they found out that the amount of money that can be spent on green development is rather limited. Due to the new challenging task for the provinces, the provinces need to professionalize the area development aspect within their organization (Korthals Altes, 2007). In other words the new provincial role as an area *regisseur* demands for recoupling of the extending knowledge of the strategic planner and the knowledge of the operational developer-planner.

### **Concluding: how to recouple**

Traditionally Dutch planning was based on a combination of a passive zoning-oriented planning system on the one hand, and planning in order to facilitate development on the other hand (Korthals Altes, 2007). As a consequence two types of planners have been active. The strategic planner independently mediates between the various sectors in order to make a plan for the division of space over the various sectors. The operational developer-planner takes concrete action to realize changes in space. Although this dichotomy in planning styles has been recognized as an essential element of Dutch planning practice and there is a notion that good planning requires a combination of both (Siraa et al., 1995, p. 29), a fruitful coupling between the strategic planner and the operational developer-planner does often not take place. Reasons why both strategic planners and operational developer-planners can do a better job when they work separately are specialization, effectiveness, legitimacy and creativity. Despite these reasons there is a growing need for recoupling. This recoupling is needed for the improvement of spatial quality. Besides that policy made by sectoral departments with an aligning interest has changed and as a consequence traditional coupling between strategic territorial planners and sectoral operational developer-planners needs revision. Also the change from a passive zoning-oriented planning system towards a more active spatial development approach and new ideas about “money from the market” have created a need for recoupling.

In our case studies there have been examples of successful recoupling. For example, the Bloemendalerpolder planning process is set up according to the “design and calculate”-principle. During every process round public and private parties combine the drawing of plans with calculating the land development costs. In this way, not only public and private parties learn about each other’s opinions, core values and (financial) position also strategic planners and operational developer planners exchange knowledge. This knowledge exchange is supported by the set up of knowledge centers and by the hiring of people with another background.

In this way recoupling is not just a matter of taking other decisions. First this recoupling should fit in with the systems of the mutual actors. Both types of planners should respect each other’s position, goals and values. In line with findings from Korthals Altes (2007) this recoupling requires cultural change. In general, in

the Netherlands, planning education is centered around the strategic planner. Because practice demands for the skills of the operational developer-planner, knowledge about landownership, finance and implementation institutions should get a more important place in the academic curriculum. Last but not least, appropriate legislation is needed to facilitate the work of both strategic planners and operational developer-planners. Authors like Hajer and Zonneveld (2000) have pled for new legislation to facilitate the work of the operational developer-planner. We plead for legislation that makes a clear distinction between the work of the strategic planner and the operational developer-planner. New legislation should facilitate the work of both types of planners. Depending on the specific role a planner adopts, this legislation should facilitate the planner or protect the rights of others. These legislation should aim at making public parties better equipped, speeding up the negotiation process and protecting private parties from over-asking public parties. In this way operational developer-planners can acquire land while strategic planners can independently coordinates the spatial demands of the various sectors. In this light also a balance needs to be found between necessarily changes in institutions and the fit between new institutions and existing juridical and economic system. In the Netherlands, at this time, new legislation will become operative to cope with these problems. Hopefully the future will show us that a proper balance has been found.

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