# Regional Design

Discretionary Approaches to Planning in the Netherlands

**Verena Balz**

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## Discretionary Approaches
## to Planning in the Netherlands

Dissertation

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by

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# Preface

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of the many people who were involved in it in direct or indirect ways.

First and foremost I want to thank my two promotors. Wil Zonneveld, my main promotor, has accompanied my work consistently, patiently, and with much empathy. Without his curiosity for my practical experience, his extensive knowledge about the key concepts and context that my work is engaged with, his openness towards my evolving positions, and his enduring trust in my abilities to substantiate these, this thesis would not have been possible. Vincent Nadin, co-promotor, has inspired many of the decisive decisions I took during the dissertation, thanks to his concise and critical comments.

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# Summary

## Introduction

In the 1980s, planning approaches in European regions have changed as a result of increasing attention to regional spatial developments and a diminishing reliance on government-led statutory planning schemes. Emerging new approaches, often called *spatial planning*, shifted the focus from planning predefined territories to the planning of spatial networks, which stretch across multiple administrative boundaries. In this specific context of spatial planning, new decision-making approaches have emerged, involving coalitions of plan actors from multiple tiers and levels of government as well as market and civil actors. In near absence of formally approved statutory planning frameworks, broad involvement became a way to legitimize planning decisions and, at the same time, amass organisational capacity for their implementation.

A decision-making approach that has gained prominence in the context of spatial planning in the Netherlands is *regional design*. Building upon a tradition of using design-led approaches in planning, expectations on the performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning are high. Regional design is thought to be an imaginative and creative practice, which leads to planning innovation. It is expected to enhance the spatial quality that planning strategies and projects produce. Regional design is also assumed to perform in governance settings. It is supposed to clarify political options, forge societal alliances, and remove conflict around planning solutions during early moments of decision-making and speeding up their implementation in this way.

Despite these high and varied expectations, an in-depth understanding of the interrelations between regional design and spatial planning is not yet achieved. The rich body of professional writing on regional design in the Netherlands is often focused on single practices. It is fragmented. The body of scholarly writing dedicated to regional design is small and has deficiencies for this reason. A particular knowledge gap is caused by a one-sided perspective on the performances of regional design. Most existing analyses focus on the expected impacts of regional-design practices on planning decisions. Various theoretical notions on spatial planning and governance are used to assert these expectations. A reversed approach, in

which the impact of aspects of prevailing planning frameworks on design practice is of concern, is missing. Performances of regional-design practice are often considered disappointing and sometimes even averse, due to this lack of in-depth understanding.

## Research aims and questions

In consideration of the above sketched background, the main aim of this research is to develop a more comprehensive understanding of interrelations between regional design and spatial planning. There are three secondary aims. This research seeks to first integrate notions from various domains and fields for an enhanced trans-disciplinary understanding of regional design. Whereas many Dutch regional design initiatives refer to multiple objectives simultaneously, it remains unclear how regional design-led approaches influence planning decisions. A second sub-aim of the research is to develop a distinction of regional-design practices in relation to spatial-planning frameworks and to improve the prediction of key performances based upon this distinction. It remains also unclear how planning frameworks influence the performances of design. A third sub-aim is to arrive at an enhanced understanding of key aspects of spatial-planning frameworks that determine performances. Aims and secondary aims are reflected in the following research questions:

**How do the interrelations between regional design and spatial planning influence the performances of design?**

— What are key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning? How can these key performances be analysed?
— What aspects of spatial-planning frameworks influence the performances of regional design? How can these aspects of spatial-planning frameworks be analysed?

## Research approach

Regional design is a collaborative social practice, which involves a multitude of actors, and has a concern about the complex built environment. Expectations that are triggered by the practice are divers and have rarely been studied comprehensively. The above research questions were therefore investigated by means of an exploratory case-study analysis, which is an appropriate research methodology to stabilize and detail propositions in a context of uncertainty. In the first in-depth single case-study key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning were investigated. A second multiple case-studies analysis was used to compare interrelations between regional-design practices and spatial-

planning frameworks. The study enhanced a greater understanding of the aspects of frameworks that influence the divers performances. Analysed regional-design practices were selected by their principle concern about urbanisation, a relation with Dutch national spatial plans, and their prominence in the Dutch planning discourse. All practices were developed between the mid-1980s, when regional design first appeared as a distinguished discipline in the Netherlands, and the 2010s, when the most recent Dutch national plan that could be considered at the time of this dissertation was published. The majority of empirical analyses was based on publicly available policy documents. Particular attention was given to geographic representations. Besides drawing on empirical evidence, the analysis involved a continuous process of theory formation, which used notions from the fields of architecture and urban design, spatial planning and territorial governance. Results of the exploratory case-study analysis were published in the form of peer-reviewed book chapters and journal articles. The content of these publications that form the Chapters 3 to 7 of this thesis, is summarized below.

## Chapter 3 – From concepts to projects: Stedenbaan, the Netherlands

Chapter 3 was earlier published as a co-authored chapter in the book Transit Oriented Development: Making it Happen (Balz and Schrijnen, 2009). The chapter presents an initial review of a regional-design practice that was conducted between 2005 and 2007 by South Wing Studio (*Atelier Zuidvleugel*). This was a publicly funded policy institute concerned with regional spatial planning and design in the Southern part of the Dutch Randstad region. In the chapter, it is argued that the practice has contributed to establishing the *Stedenbaan* project, a regional transit-oriented development strategy, on the political agenda of governance arrangements in the region. It was decisive to involve plan actors in building the argument for the strategy. This observation has led to the initial proposition of this dissertation: that regional design is an argumentative practice that performs in planning decision-making.

## Chapter 4 - Regional design in the context of fragmented territorial governance: South Wing Studio

Chapter 4, earlier published as a co-authored journal article in European Planning Studies (Balz and Zonneveld, 2015), presents results of an in-depth single case-study analysis that answers the questions: what are key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning?, and how can these key performances be analysed? The chapter first establishes a theoretically grounded analytical framework that positions regional design in the context of *spatial concepts*. Spatial concepts are perceptions of geographies that actors pursue during planning

decision-making. It is argued that regional design assists in the building of arguments for spatial planning interventions through structuring the reservoirs of analytical knowledge and normative values that these concepts incorporate. As in the initial review of regional design, the South Wing Studio's contribution to the formation of the *Stedenbaan* strategy is under investigation. The empirical analysis identifies performances in the form of shifts in policy argumentation from analytical verification to the normative validation of the strategy. The research also highlighted a pragmatic use of design. Analysis showed that design argumentation involved a strong consideration of capacities of actors for planning in territories. Insights led to an adaptation of the original analytical framework: spatial concepts became perceived to have not only an analytical and normative dimension, but also an organisational one.

## Chapter 5 - Transformations of planning rationalities: Changing spaces for governance in recent Dutch planning

The second multiple case-studies analysis in this dissertation sought to answer the following questions: what aspects of spatial-planning frameworks influence the performances of regional design?, and how can these aspects of spatial-planning frameworks be analysed? Chapter 5 of this thesis, first published as a co-authored journal article in Planning Theory & Practice (Balz and Zonneveld, 2018), presents one part of this analysis. Building upon the earlier established notions on dimensions of spatial concepts as a context of regional design, as well as additional theoretical notions on in particular argumentative planning, it is first argued that the ambiguity of spatial concepts shapes room for interpretation in spatial-planning decision-making and thus influences territorial governance. In the main empirical section of the chapter, spatial concepts that have been used in Dutch national plans between the 1980s and the 2010s are assessed on their degree of ambiguity. Analysis led to a detailed and critical reading of the transformations of spatial rationales that were used to justify Dutch national spatial planning over time. On a theoretical level, the chapter proposes a methodological approach to investigate such changes. It contributes to the discussion on how governance responses to the use of geographies in planning decision-making can be explained.

## Chapter 6 - Regional design: Discretionary approaches to regional planning in the Netherlands

Chapter 6, earlier published as a sole-authored journal article in Planning Theory (Balz, 2018), presents the overall outcomes of the multiple case-studies analysis and addresses the central proposition of this dissertation: that regional design is a form of discretionary action and is meant to qualify spatial planning guidance by means

of reflecting upon its implications for particular regions. Building upon the earlier established analytical framework and additional notions from design theory, it is first argued that, depending on the ambiguity of premediated spatial concepts, regional design proposals have fundamentally different interrelations with these concepts. They either are a refinement of analytical knowledge, normative values, and territorial instructions that concepts incorporate, or a challenge to these reservoirs of meaning. Performances of regional design differ consequently. Regional design either evolves as a pragmatic approach where actors commonly operationalise an agreed-upon planning framework by applying it to a particular spatial situation or forms an advocacy where actors disagree on a premediated framework and use design proposals to call for its revision. These findings are supported by an analysis of interrelations between four regional-design practices and the earlier mentioned analysed spatial concepts. In the discussion section, the relevance of insights for Dutch national planning is reviewed. Theoretically relevant results concern the use of regional design in the realm of spatial planning. It is concluded that regional design mediates between a collaborative and strategic rationale of spatial planning through its engagement with both, general and specific perceptions of regions and areas.

## Chapter 7 - The institutionalisation of a creative practice: Changing positions and roles of regional design in Dutch national planning

Chapter 7 was earlier accepted for publication as a co-authored chapter in the forthcoming book *Shaping Regional Futures: Designing and Visioning in Governance Rescaling* (Balz and Zonneveld, 2019). It investigates the organisational implications of perceiving regional design as a form of discretion. In discretion, there is a distinction between discretionary action, which criticises existing rules, and discretionary control, which determines if criticism should lead to a revision of rules. A distance between actors with roles in these functions is required to enhance legitimacy and accountability. In the empirical section of the chapter, the distinction is used for an analysis of a broad range of regional-design practices that were used in Dutch national spatial planning during the period between the 1980s and 2010s. The analysis elaborates who initiated practices, who conducted design, and who judged the quality and relevance of design outcomes for planning decisions. In addition, the analysis identifies patterns in the institutionalisation of regional design by the repetition of practices, adoption in formal policies and enshrinement in dedicated organisations. The chapter demonstrates how institutionalisation has facilitated a shift from using regional design as a form of advocacy, oriented at nurturing a critical public audience of planning, to one of pragmatic use, oriented at the implementation of projects of national importance. The conclusions emphasize a need for discernible roles in regional-design practice when it is used in discretion.

## Conclusions

Spatial planning is expected to pay more attention to spatial development in particular situations than statutory planning does. Regional design is the exploration of plausible spatial development on high, regional and supra-regional levels of scale. The conclusions of this thesis build upon the recognition that spatial planning and regional design share an interest in spatial development. It forms the common ground of interrelations between practices. Spatial concepts are perceptions of geographies that are used in spatial-planning decision-making. Being composed of an analytical, normative and organisational dimensions, concepts allow for the building of spatial planning rationales. When positioned in the context of concepts, regional design proposals structure the reservoirs of meaning that these dimensions incorporate by arguing for intervening in particular spatial situations. The first conclusion in the thesis is that regional design is a form of analytical, political and organisational reasoning. As such, it performs through changing the analytical, normative and/or territorial foundations of spatial-planning decisions. Second, the ambiguity of premediated concepts strongly influences the performances of regional design. Room for interpretation that ambiguity establishes defines whether a designed imaginary future is a pragmatic refinement of concepts that exist prior to design practice or a form of advocacy that challenges these. These notions imply that regional design resembles discretionary action, meant to qualify spatial planning guidance by means of reflecting upon its implications for particular regions and areas. When perceiving regional design as such discretionary action, relations between involved actors becomes a critical issue: actors who initiate and conduct practices on the one hand, and those who judge the relevance of design outcomes for rule-building on the other need to operate on a distance to each other. Such distance enhances legitimate and accountable decision-making.

This dissertation has evolved as an exploratory case-study research. Its first and most important outcome is in the above listed notions: on (1) key performances that regional design has in the realm of spatial planning and on (2) aspects of spatial-planning frameworks that influence these performances. Through building an analytical framework that assesses these propositions, it contributes to an enhanced understanding of interrelations between regional design and spatial planning.

A second outcome of the thesis is the results of the empirical analysis which is centred on the use of regional design in the realm of Dutch national spatial planning between the 1980s and 2010s. It is argued that the institutionalisation of practices has favoured a rather one-sided, pragmatic use of regional design. As a result, distances between actors with roles in discretionary action and control became undiscernible. The criticism that the thesis poses is meant to inform reflection on

the involvement of regional design in Dutch national planning. It calls for a more comprehensive, accountable and legitimate future use. There are limitations to critical positions. The empirical analysis took account of a selection of regional-design practices only, notably ones with a principle concern about urbanisation. The analysis also does not fully consider the Dutch national government's additional and less pragmatic efforts to stimulate good regional-design practice, e.g. through providing funding for academic research and publications that critically discuss the use of regional design.

A third outcome of this dissertation is the recommended directions for future research. The thesis argues that regional design equals discretion and thus attempts to mediate between generally accepted and applicable spatial planning principles and spatial rationales linked to problems in particular local situations. An enhanced understanding of such attempts first requires a more sophisticated assessment of how perceptions of geographies transform as they are used – how ambiguous spatial concepts turn into detailed designs and vice versa. The ambiguity or softness of spatial-planning frameworks is a prominent issue in scholarly discussion on how spatial planning evolves in a context of decentralisation and deregulation. However, there are no benchmark methodologies to detect such ambiguity or softness. The thesis developed an analytical approach to deduce the ambiguity of geographic perceptions from the amount and relative degree of detail of notions in their analytical, normative and organisational dimensions. It requires further validation. Scholars in discretion have highlighted the importance of professional organizations in controlling rule-building. On the grounds of these notions, this thesis argues that the role of regional design professionals in spatial-planning decision-making requires deeper understanding. In particular the values and norms that professionals pursue need more attention. Due to a tradition of using design-led approaches in the realm of planning, regional design is a frequently used practice in the Netherlands. However, similar approaches occur in other (European) countries, albeit in a less prominent and visible way. As planning systems and cultures differ in countries, a comparative perspective on these may lead to a deeper understanding of not just the practices themselves, but also of ways how spatial development finds attention in spatial planning elsewhere. An implicit proposition developed is that flexibility, in the form of ambiguous geographies, relates to the creativity of planning and its ability to find novel and innovative solutions to problems on the ground. This proposition calls for a broader integration of theoretical knowledge about planning and design.

# Samenvatting

## Inleiding

In de jaren tachtig veranderde de aanpak van planning in Europese regio's als gevolg van toenemende aandacht voor regionale ruimtelijke ontwikkelingen en een afnemende afhankelijkheid van door de overheid geleide statutaire ruimtelijke ordening (*statutory planning*). In de nieuwe benaderingen die toen werden toegepast, vaak 'ruimtelijke planning' (*spatial planning*) genoemd, verschoof de focus van het plannen van vooraf gedefinieerde gebieden naar de planning van ruimtelijke netwerken die zich uitstrekken over meerdere bestuurlijke grenzen. In deze specifieke context van ruimtelijke planning ontstonden nieuwe besluitvormingsmethoden, met coalities van actoren uit meerdere lagen en overheidsniveaus alsook markt- en maatschappelijke actoren. Omdat er vrijwel geen formeel goedgekeurde kaders voor regionale ruimtelijke ordening waren, werd brede betrokkenheid een manier om planningsbeslissingen te legitimeren en tegelijkertijd te zorgen voor voldoende organisatorische capaciteit voor de implementatie ervan.

Een besluitvormingsaanpak die in de context van de ruimtelijke planning in Nederland een prominente plaats heeft gekregen, is het zogenoemde 'regionaal ontwerp' (*regional design*). Regionaal ontwerp bouwt voort op een traditie van een ontwerpgestuurde aanpak in planning, en de verwachtingen voor deze aanpak ten aanzien van de resultaten op het gebied van ruimtelijke planning zijn dan ook hoog. Regionaal ontwerp wordt beschouwd als een praktijk waarin plaats is voor fantasie en creativiteit, hetgeen leidt tot innovatieve planning. Naar verwachting zullen planningsstrategieën en -projecten met deze aanpak een hogere ruimtelijke kwaliteit opleveren. Er wordt verondersteld dat regionaal ontwerp ook werkt in bestuurlijke situaties. De aanpak zou politieke opties verduidelijken, leiden tot maatschappelijke allianties en conflicten rond planningsoplossingen in een vroeg stadium van besluitvorming bezweren, zodat ze sneller kunnen worden geïmplementeerd.

Ondanks deze hoge en uiteenlopende verwachtingen is er nog geen diepgaand inzicht in de onderlinge relaties tussen regionaal ontwerp en ruimtelijke planning. De omvangrijke professionele literatuur over regionaal ontwerp in Nederland is vaak gericht op afzonderlijke gevallen en niet op het bredere plaatje. De weinige wetenschappelijke literatuur over regionaal ontwerp die voorhanden is, bevat hiaten,

met name als gevolg van een eenzijdig perspectief op de resultaten van regionaal ontwerp. De meeste bestaande analyses richten zich op de verwachte impact van regionaalontwerppraktijken op planningsbeslissingen. Er worden verschillende theorieën over ruimtelijke planning en bestuur gehanteerd om deze verwachtingen te bevestigen. Wat ontbreekt, is een omgekeerde benadering, waarbij de impact van aspecten van bestaande planningskaders op de ontwerppraktijk wordt bekeken. Door dit gebrek aan diepgaand inzicht worden resultaten van regionaal ontwerp vaak als teleurstellend en soms zelfs als averechts beschouwd.

## Onderzoeksdoelen en -vragen

Met het oog op de hierboven geschetste achtergrond is het belangrijkste doel van dit onderzoek een vollediger begrip te ontwikkelen van de onderlinge relaties tussen regionaal ontwerp en ruimtelijke planning. Er zijn drie secundaire doelen. Met dit onderzoek trachten we allereerst begrippen uit verschillende domeinen en vakgebieden met elkaar te integreren voor een beter vakoverstijgend inzicht in regionaal ontwerp. Terwijl veel Nederlandse initiatieven voor regionaal ontwerp naar meerdere doelstellingen tegelijk verwijzen, blijft het onduidelijk wat de daadwerkelijke invloed is van regionaal ontwerp op planningsbeslissingen. Een tweede subdoel van het onderzoek is een onderscheid te ontwikkelen tussen praktijken voor regionaal ontwerp in relatie tot kaders voor ruimtelijke ordening, en op basis van dit onderscheid de belangrijkste resultaten beter te voorspellen. Het blijft ook onduidelijk hoe planningskaders de resultaten van ontwerp beïnvloeden. Een derde subdoel is te komen tot een beter begrip van de belangrijkste aspecten van de ruimtelijkeordeningskaders die de resultaten bepalen. Doelen en secundaire doelen komen tot uiting in de volgende onderzoeksvragen:

**Hoe beïnvloeden de onderlinge relaties tussen regionaal ontwerp en ruimtelijke ordening de resultaten van ontwerp?**

— Wat zijn de belangrijkste resultaten van regionaal ontwerp op het gebied van ruimtelijke planning? Hoe kunnen deze resultaten worden geanalyseerd?
— Welke aspecten van kaders voor ruimtelijke ordening beïnvloeden de resultaten van regionaal ontwerp? Hoe kunnen deze aspecten worden geanalyseerd?

## Onderzoeksaanpak

Regionaal ontwerp is een samenwerkingspraktijk, waarbij vaak een groot aantal actoren is betrokken en die betrekking heeft op de complexe gebouwde omgeving. Verwachtingen die worden opgeroepen door deze praktijk zijn divers en zijn zelden

uitvoerig bestudeerd. Bovenstaande onderzoeksvragen zijn daarom onderzocht aan de hand van een verkennende casestudy-analyse, hetgeen een geschikte onderzoeksmethodologie is om proposities te stabiliseren en te preciseren in een context van onzekerheid. In de eerste diepgaande enkelvoudige casestudy zijn de belangrijkste resultaten van regionaal ontwerp op het gebied van ruimtelijke planning onderzocht. Een tweede analyse van meerdere casestudy's is gebruikt om de onderlinge relaties tussen praktijken van regionaal ontwerp en kaders voor ruimtelijke ordening te vergelijken. De studie vergrootte het inzicht in de aspecten van kaders die de diverse resultaten beïnvloeden. De geanalyseerde praktijken van regionaal ontwerp zijn geselecteerd op het thema verstedelijking, de relatie met nationale ruimtelijke plannen in Nederland en hun belang voor het Nederlandse planningsdiscours. Alle praktijken zijn ontwikkeld tussen het midden van de jaren tachtig van de vorige eeuw, toen regionaal ontwerp voor het eerst als een afzonderlijke methode in Nederland werd gepresenteerd, en de jaren tien van deze eeuw, toen het laatste Nederlandse nationale plan werd gepubliceerd dat tijdens het schrijven van dit proefschrift kon worden beschouwd. De meeste empirische analyses zijn gebaseerd op openbaar beschikbare beleidsdocumenten. Bijzondere aandacht is besteed aan geografische representaties. Naast het gebruik van empirisch bewijs bestond de analyse uit een continu proces van theorievorming, waarbij ideeën worden gebruikt op het gebied van architectuur en stadsontwerp, ruimtelijke planning en territoriaal bestuur. Resultaten van de verkennende casestudy-analyse zijn gepubliceerd in de vorm van peerreviewed hoofdstukken in boeken en artikelen in tijdschriften. De inhoud van deze publicaties, die hoofdstuk 3 tot en met 7 van dit proefschrift vormen, wordt hieronder samengevat.

## Hoofdstuk 3 – Van concepten tot projecten: Stedenbaan, Nederland

Hoofdstuk 3 is eerder gepubliceerd als een in samenwerking met een andere auteur geschreven hoofdstuk in het boek *Transit Oriented Development: Making it Happen* (Balz and Schrijnen, 2009). Dit hoofdstuk geeft een eerste beoordeling van een praktijk van regionaal ontwerp die tussen 2005 en 2007 werd uitgevoerd door Atelier Zuidvleugel. Dit was een publiek gefinancierd beleidsinstituut dat zich bezighield met regionale ruimtelijke planning en ontwerp in het zuidelijk deel van de Randstad. In het hoofdstuk wordt beargumenteerd dat de praktijk ertoe heeft bijgedragen dat het Stedenbaan-project, een regionale transit-georiënteerde ontwikkelingsstrategie, op de bestuurlijke agenda in de regio is gezet. Het was van doorslaggevend belang om planactoren te betrekken bij de onderbouwing van de strategie. Deze constatering heeft geleid tot de eerste propositie van dit proefschrift: dat regionaal ontwerp een argumentatieve praktijk is die een rol speelt bij planvormingsprocessen.

## Hoofdstuk 4 – Regionaal ontwerp in de context van gefragmenteerd territoriaal bestuur: Atelier Zuidvleugel

In hoofdstuk 4, eerder gepubliceerd als een in samenwerking met een andere auteur geschreven artikel in het tijdschrift *European Planning Studies* (Balz and Zonneveld, 2015), presenteren we resultaten van een diepgaande analyse van een enkele casestudy, waarin de volgende vragen worden beantwoord: Wat zijn de belangrijkste resultaten van regionaal ontwerp op het gebied van ruimtelijke planning? En hoe kunnen deze resultaten worden geanalyseerd? In het hoofdstuk wordt eerst een theoretisch gefundeerd analytisch kader opgezet om regionaal ontwerp te positioneren in de context van zogenoemde 'ruimtelijke concepten'. Dit zijn geografische percepties die actoren nastreven tijdens het nemen van planningsbesluiten. Gesteld wordt dat regionaal ontwerp helpt bij het onderbouwen van besluiten door de reservoirs van analytische kennis en normatieve waarden te structureren die in deze concepten bevat liggen. Net als bij de eerste beoordeling van regionaal ontwerp wordt de bijdrage van Atelier Zuidvleugel aan de vorming van de Stedenbaan-strategie onderzocht. In de empirische analyse worden resultaten geïdentificeerd in de vorm van verschuivingen in beleidsargumentatie, van analytische verificatie naar normatieve validatie van de strategie. Het onderzoek bracht ook een pragmatisch gebruik van ontwerp aan het licht. De analyse toonde aan dat bij ontwerpargumentatie sterk rekening werd gehouden met de capaciteiten van actoren voor planning in gebieden. De inzichten leidden tot een aanpassing van het oorspronkelijk analytisch kader: ruimtelijke concepten bleken niet alleen een analytische en normatieve dimensie te hebben, maar ook een organisatorische.

## Hoofdstuk 5 – Transformaties van planningsrationaliteiten: Veranderende ruimten voor bestuur in recente Nederlandse planning

Met de tweede analyse van meerdere casestudy's in dit proefschrift trachten we de volgende vragen te beantwoorden: Welke aspecten van kaders voor ruimtelijke ordening beïnvloeden de resultaten van het regionaal ontwerp? En hoe kunnen deze aspecten worden geanalyseerd? In hoofdstuk 5 van dit proefschrift, eerder gepubliceerd als een in samenwerking met een andere auteur geschreven artikel in het tijdschrift *Planning Theory & Practice* (Balz and Zonneveld, 2018), presenteren we een deel van deze analyse. Voortbouwend op de eerder gedefinieerde begrippen over dimensies van ruimtelijke concepten als context van regionaal ontwerp, en op aanvullende theoretische begrippen over met name argumentatieve planning, wordt eerst gesteld dat de ambiguïteit van ruimtelijke concepten mogelijkheden biedt voor interpretatie bij planvormingsprocessen, en op die manier bestuurlijke samenwerking beïnvloedt. In de belangrijkste empirische sectie van het hoofdstuk worden ruimtelijke concepten die in de Nederlandse nationale plannen tussen de jaren

tachtig en de jaren tien zijn gebruikt, beoordeeld op hun mate van ambiguïteit. De analyse leidde tot een gedetailleerde en kritische interpretatie van de transformaties van ruimtelijke beweegredenen die zijn gebruikt om de Nederlandse ruimtelijke ordening in de loop van de tijd te onderbouwen. Op theoretisch niveau wordt in het hoofdstuk een methodologische benadering voorgesteld om dergelijke veranderingen te onderzoeken. Het hoofdstuk draagt bij aan de discussie over hoe bestuurlijke reacties op het gebruik van geografische beschrijvingen bij planvormingsprocessen kunnen worden verklaard.

## Hoofdstuk 6 – Regionaal ontwerp: Discretionaire benaderingen van regionale planning in Nederland

Hoofdstuk 6, eerder op eigen naam gepubliceerd als artikel in het tijdschrift *Planning Theory* (Balz, 2018), presenteert de algemene uitkomsten van de analyse van meerdere casestudy's en gaat in op de centrale propositie van dit proefschrift: dat regionaal ontwerp een vorm van discretionair optreden is en bedoeld is om richtlijnen voor ruimtelijke ordening te kwalificeren door na te denken over de implicaties ervan voor bepaalde regio's. Voortbouwend op het eerder vastgestelde analytische kader en op aanvullende begrippen uit de ontwerptheorie, wordt in de eerste plaats betoogd dat, afhankelijk van de ambiguïteit van vooropgezette ruimtelijke concepten, voorstellen voor regionaal ontwerp fundamenteel verschillende relaties hebben met deze concepten. Ofwel ze zijn een verfijning van analytische kennis, normatieve waarden en territoriale instructies die in concepten zijn vervat, ofwel ze werpen een nieuw licht op deze betekenisreservoirs. Resultaten van regionaal ontwerp verschillen daardoor ook. Ofwel regionaal ontwerp evolueert als een pragmatische benadering waarbij actoren een overeengekomen planningskader operationaliseren door het toe te passen op een specifieke ruimtelijke situatie, ofwel het is een discussiestuk wanneer actoren het oneens zijn over het kader dat als uitgangspunt wordt gebruikt en ontwerpvoorstellen gebruiken om op te roepen tot herziening van dit kader. Deze bevindingen worden ondersteund door een analyse van de onderlinge relaties tussen vier regionale ontwerpvoorstellen en de eerder genoemde geanalyseerde ruimtelijke concepten. In de discussiesectie wordt de relevantie van inzichten voor de Nederlandse nationale planning besproken. Theoretisch relevante resultaten betreffen het gebruik van regionaal ontwerp op het gebied van ruimtelijke planning. We concluderen dat regionaal ontwerp bemiddeld tussen een samenwerkings- en een strategische beweegreden voor ruimtelijke ordening, door zowel algemene als specifieke percepties van regio's en gebieden bij planvormingsprocessen te betrekken.

## Hoofdstuk 7 – De institutionalisering van een creatieve praktijk: Veranderende posities en rollen van regionaal ontwerp in de nationale planning in Nederland

Hoofdstuk 7 is eerder geaccepteerd voor publicatie als een in samenwerking met een andere auteur geschreven hoofdstuk in het boek *Shaping Regional Futures: Designing and Visioning in Governance Rescaling* (Balz and Zonneveld, 2019). Het onderzoekt de organisatorische implicaties van het observeren van regionaal ontwerp als een vorm van discretie. Bij discretie bestaat er onderscheid tussen discretionair optreden, waarmee kritiek wordt geuit op bestaande regels, en discretionaire controle, die bepaalt of kritiek moet leiden tot herziening van regels. Afstand tussen actoren met rollen in deze functies is vereist om de legitimiteit en verantwoordelijkheid te vergroten. In de empirische sectie van het hoofdstuk wordt het onderscheid gebruikt voor een analyse van een breed scala aan praktijken van regionaal ontwerp die van de jaren tachtig tot en met de jaren tien werden gebruikt in de Nederlandse nationale ruimtelijke ordening. De analyse beschrijft wie de praktijken initieerde, wie het ontwerp heeft uitgevoerd en wie de kwaliteit en relevantie van ontwerpresultaten voor planningsbeslissingen heeft beoordeeld. Daarnaast worden er patronen aangeduid in de institutionalisering van regionaal ontwerp door de herhaling van praktijken, het opnemen ervan in formeel beleid en de verankering in speciale organisaties. Het hoofdstuk laat zien hoe institutionalisering een verschuiving heeft gefaciliteerd van het gebruik van regionaal ontwerp als een vorm van pleitbezorging, gericht op het bedienen van een kritisch planningspubliek, naar pragmatisch gebruik, gericht op de implementatie van projecten van nationaal belang. In de conclusies wordt benadrukt dat er behoefte is aan waarneembare rollen in de praktijk van regionaal ontwerp wanneer dit bij discretie wordt gebruikt.

## Conclusies

Men verwacht dat bij ruimtelijke planning meer aandacht wordt besteed aan ruimtelijke ontwikkeling in specifieke situaties dan bij een statutaire ruimtelijke ordening. Regionaal ontwerp is de verkenning van plausibele ruimtelijke ontwikkeling op hoog, regionaal en bovenregionaal schaalniveau. De conclusies van dit proefschrift bouwen voort op het besef dat ruimtelijke ontwikkeling van belang is voor zowel ruimtelijke planning als regionaal ontwerp.. Ze vormt de gemeenschappelijke basis van onderlinge relaties tussen praktijken. Ruimtelijke concepten zijn geografische percepties die worden gebruikt bij planvormingsprocessen. Omdat ze bestaan uit een analytische, een normatieve en een organisatorische dimensie, maken deze concepten het mogelijk beweegredenen voor ruimtelijke ordening te ontwikkelen. Wanneer ze gepositioneerd zijn in de

context van concepten, brengen voorstellen voor regionaal ontwerp structuur aan in de betekenisreservoirs die deze dimensies bevatten, door te pleiten voor interventies in bepaalde ruimtelijke situaties. De eerste conclusie in het proefschrift is dat regionaal ontwerp een vorm van analytische, politieke en organisatorische redenering is. Als zodanig functioneert het door de analytische, normatieve en/of territoriale grondslagen van beslissingen over ruimtelijke ordening te veranderen. Ten tweede beïnvloedt de ambiguïteit van vooropgezette concepten sterk de resultaten van het regionaal ontwerp. Ruimte voor interpretatie als gevolg van ambiguïteit definieert of een ontworpen denkbeeldige toekomst een pragmatische verfijning is van concepten die ook al bestonden voor de ontwerppraktijk, of een vorm van pleitbezorging die vraagtekens zet bij deze concepten. Deze begrippen impliceren dat regionaal ontwerp lijkt op discretionair optreden, bedoeld om de richtlijnen voor ruimtelijke ordening te kwalificeren door na te denken over de implicaties voor bepaalde regio's en gebieden. Wanneer we regionaal ontwerp beschouwen als dergelijk discretionair optreden, gaan relaties tussen betrokken actoren een kritieke rol spelen: actoren die praktijken initiëren en uitvoeren, en degenen die de relevantie van ontwerpresultaten voor regelvorming beoordelen, moeten op een zekere afstand van elkaar opereren. Een dergelijke afstand zorgt voor legitiemere en meer verantwoorde besluitvorming.

Dit proefschrift heeft zich ontwikkeld in de vorm van een verkennend casestudy-onderzoek. Het eerste en belangrijkste resultaat ligt in de hierboven genoemde begrippen: (1) over de belangrijkste resultaten van regionaal ontwerp op het gebied van ruimtelijke planning en (2) over aspecten van kaders voor ruimtelijke ordening die deze resultaten beïnvloeden. Door een analytisch raamwerk te bouwen waarin deze proposities kunnen worden beoordeeld, draagt het proefschrift bij aan een beter inzicht in onderlinge relaties tussen regionaal ontwerp en ruimtelijke planning.

Een tweede uitkomst van het proefschrift wordt gevormd door de uitkomsten van de empirische analyse gericht op het gebruik van regionaal ontwerp in nationale ruimtelijke ordening in Nederland van de jaren tachtig tot en met de jaren tien. We stellen dat de institutionalisering van praktijken een tamelijk eenzijdig, pragmatisch gebruik van regionaal ontwerp heeft bevorderd. Daardoor werd er geen afstand meer waargenomen tussen actoren met rollen in discretionair optreden en discretionaire controle. De kritiek die in het proefschrift wordt verwoord, is bedoeld als basis voor reflectie over de betrokkenheid van regionaal ontwerp in de nationale planning van Nederland. We roepen op tot een uitgebreider, beter verantwoord en legitiemer gebruik in de toekomst. Er zijn beperkingen in de gehanteerde kritieke posities. In de empirische analyse is slechts gekeken naar een selectie van praktijken van regionaal ontwerp, met name die betrekking hadden op verstedelijking. In de analyse wordt ook niet volledig ingegaan op de aanvullende en minder pragmatische inspanningen

van de Nederlandse nationale overheid om goede praktijken van regionaal ontwerp te stimuleren, bijvoorbeeld door financiering te verstrekken voor wetenschappelijk onderzoek en publicaties waarin het gebruik van regionaal ontwerp kritisch wordt besproken.

Een derde resultaat van dit promotieonderzoek bestaat in aanbevelingen voor toekomstig onderzoek. Het proefschrift stelt dat regionaal ontwerp gelijk staat aan discretie en aldus bemiddeld tussen algemeen aanvaarde en toepasselijke principes van ruimtelijke ordening en beweegredenen die verband houden met problemen in bepaalde lokale situaties. Een beter begrip van dergelijke pogingen vereist allereerst een doorwrochtere beoordeling van de manier waarop geografische percepties transformeren wanneer ze worden gebruikt: hoe ambigue ruimtelijke concepten veranderen in gedetailleerde ontwerpen en omgekeerd. De ambiguïteit of flexibiliteit van kaders voor ruimtelijke ordening speelt een grote rol in wetenschappelijke discussies over hoe ruimtelijke ordening evolueert in een context van decentralisatie en deregulering. Er zijn echter geen standaardmethodologieën om dergelijke ambiguïteit of flexibiliteit te detecteren. In dit proefschrift werd een analytische methode ontwikkeld om de ambiguïteit van geografische percepties af te leiden uit de hoeveelheid begrippen en de relatieve gedetailleerdheid daarvan in de analytische, de normatieve en de organisatorische dimensie. Deze methode moet nog worden gevalideerd. Wetenschappers op het gebied van discretie hebben gewezen op het belang van professionele organisaties bij de controle van regelvorming. Op grond van deze begrippen stelt dit proefschrift dat de rol van regionaalontwerpprofessionals in planvormingsprocessen een dieper inzicht vereist. Met name moet meer aandacht worden besteed aan de waarden en normen die professionals nastreven. Als gevolg van een traditie van het gebruik van ontwerpgestuurde benaderingen op het gebied van planning, wordt regionaal ontwerp in Nederland veel toegepast. Vergelijkbare benaderingen komen echter ook voor in andere (Europese) landen, zij het op een minder prominente en zichtbare manier. Omdat planningssystemen en culturen verschillen per land, kan een vergelijkend perspectief leiden tot een beter begrip van niet alleen de praktijken zelf, maar ook van manieren waarop ruimtelijke ontwikkeling aandacht krijgt bij ruimtelijke planning elders. Impliciet ontwikkelen we een propositie dat flexibiliteit, in de vorm van ambigue geografische beschrijvingen, betrekking heeft op creativiteit bij planning en het vermogen om nieuwe en innovatieve oplossingen te vinden voor praktische problemen. Deze propositie vraagt om een bredere integratie van theoretische kennis over planning en ontwerp.

TOC

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Context

Since the 1980s, planning approaches in European regions shifted as a result of increasing attention to spatial patterns of interaction and movement on regional levels of scale, and alongside "a relative decline of the role of the state, a growing involvement of nongovernmental actors in a range of state functions, the emergence of new forms of multi-agency partnerships and more flexible forms of networking at various spatial scales" (Davoudi, 2008, p.63). Upcoming approaches, often called *spatial planning*, moved attention from the planning of predefined, contained territories to the planning of spatial networks, stretching across multiple and multi-scalar administrative boundaries. Planning that relied on generally applicable rationalities, statutory planning frameworks and authoritative planning power was challenged by planning that relied on an understanding of the specificities of regions, political consent on their desirable futures and the dedication of actors to these visions (Albrechts et al., 2003, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010, Healey, 2006, Nadin, 2007, Needham, 1988, Schön, 2005). New approaches typically involved coalitions of plan actors from multiple tiers and levels of government as well as market and civil actors. Packaging their interests in shared visions became a way to operationalise planning. Collaboration in decision-making was used to simultaneously legitimise it. In an "institutional void" (Hajer, 2003, p.175) - in near absence of generally accepted and formally approved regional planning guidance - the inclusion of many in decision-making - good governance - became a normative goal of planning in itself (Innes and Booher, 2003, Mayntz, 2004).

The Netherlands is no exception. As elsewhere in Europe, planning underwent a process of regionalisation in this country from the 1980s onward. Increasing attention to regional spatial development led to new planning agendas that emphasised the importance of places in larger, mostly economic, networks. A shift towards regionalisation coupled with deregulation, and an enhancement of development-led planning practices. Direct investment into strategic projects and

area development became a dominant way of planning (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000, Waterhout et al., 2013, Needham, 1988). Regionalisation liaised with tendencies of decentralisation, which resulted in a more equal distribution of planning power across national, provincial and municipal authorities (Haran, 2010, Salet, 2006, Salet and Woltjer, 2009, Teisman and Klijn, 2002). Regionalisation also coincided with the emergence of new decision-making approaches: "[P]lanners […] began to promote constructive ways into actively developing new perspectives for the future instead of merely relying on protective and prohibitive regulation – hence the emphasis on the word 'development'. Development planning refers […] to a more involved and anticipatory activity by collaborating public and private agencies, stimulating the likelihood of implementation, rather than public agencies setting limits by decree" (Salet and Woltjer, 2009, p.236).

Among decision-making procedures that emerged in the context of spatial planning in the Netherlands was an array of practices commonly referred to as *regional design*. Practices that gained this label differed in their spatial scope and scale. They had a varying concern about issues such as: urbanisation, the development of transport, landscape and/or water systems at the city-regional, regional, national and transnational levels of scale. Some shared characteristics justify their common label though. Practices were all anticipatory indeed, concerned with the imagination of desirable spatial development. They all sought for comprehensiveness through considering a multitude of aspects that influence the form and functioning of this development. In all practices, the production of spatial representations, maps and models, was a core activity. Although differing in the composition of engaged parties, all practices knew the involvement of design professionals and a multi-actor setting. A significant shared characteristic was their strong relation with ongoing planning, expressed in their concern about large-scale public works, formal plans and policies, and in the frequent participation of governmental actors in practices. Practices also typically raised high and often varied expectations on their performances in this planning realm.

Using design-led approaches in planning decision-making was not new in the Netherlands in the 1980s. On the contrary, such use can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century, when urban planning emerged as a distinguished discipline. By then, the Dutch designer Cornelis van Eesteren became a prominent figure in a European-wide debate on where to take the new discipline in the future (Van Rossem, 2014). In the Netherlands, in collaboration with the more analytically-minded Theodoor Karel van Lohuizen, he established design as a way to synthesise a deep understanding of spatial development with political aspirations, in the form of simple, and persuasive planning principles and to thus enhance the spatial quality of plans (Van Bergeijk, 2015, Van der Valk, 1990). However, expectations

concerning the performances of design-led approaches accumulated from the 1980s onward. When regulatory land-use planning came to be seen as an approach that "stifles entrepreneurial initiative, [and] impedes innovation" (Klosterman, 1985, p.2) regional design came to be seen as an artistic, and creative practice that bears unexpected, inspiring and inventive results; a way to mobilise "thinking capacity" in the realm of planning (Ministeries van OCW et al., 1996, p.18). When decentralisation and regional governance became issues in Dutch planning, regional design became expected to perform not only in discussion on spatial matters, but in political and organisational realms too. When efficiency became a major aspiration of Dutch spatial planning, the use of regional design in planning decision-making gained an efficiency rationale as well. The national government argued that the practice "is crucial in accelerating (administrative) processes by curbing the complexity and uncertainty that characterises contemporary tasks" (Ministeries van I&M et al., 2012, p.9, my translation). It became expected to lead to a "better, faster, and therefore cheaper process" (idem).

In parallel to these accumulating expectations (outlined in Table 1.1), the use of regional design in planning decision-making underwent a process of formalisation, in particular within the realm of Dutch national spatial planning. While the national government had first been involved in the practices incidentally from around 2000 and onward its engagement became more structural. The scope of policies aimed at stimulating architectural design practice through dedicated funding mechanisms was enlarged in the period, to include design with a concern about high levels of scale (Ministeries van OCW et al., 1996). During frequent reforms of these policies, fundable design practice became more and more thoroughly tied in with national spatial-planning agendas (Stegmeijer et al., 2012). In 2010, regional design became a mandatory moment in decision-making for large scale infrastructural projects (Enno Zuidema Stedebouw et al., 2011, Ministerie van I&M, 2010). Policy makers who promoted this formalisation assumed that interactive regional-design processes can, when employed at an early stage of implementation processes, explicate interdependencies among planning issues at different scales, facilitate discussions on these and in this way help to avoid conflict, delay and costs at later stages. In 2012, regional-design practice became associated with the set up top sector policy, a national policy aimed at an enhancement of internationally operating economic sectors (Ministeries van I&M et al., 2012). Representatives of the national government started to advertise the practice among an international audience of planners and entrepreneurs in urban development, during trade missions for instance. Under the header 'a Dutch approach', regional design came to be seen as a marketable export product.

TABLE 1.1 Expectations on the performances of regional design in spatial planning

| Expectation | Source |
|---|---|
| – Design makes unconscious knowledge explicit and thus facilitates debate. | Van der Cammen (1987) |
| – Design involves 'thinking capacity' from outside the formal planning apparatus and thus enriches planning. | Ministeries van OCW et al. (1996) |
| – Design supports the implementation of planning decisions. | Vereniging Deltametropool (1998) |
| – Design accommodates attention to the diversity of local situations in planning decision-making. | Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (WRR) (1998) |
| – Design clarifies political options.<br>– Design helps to decide on investment strategies.<br>– Design forges societal alliances. | Frieling (2002) |
| – Design facilitates reflexivity in planning decision-making. | Sijmons (2002) |
| – Design contributes to the innovation of planning.<br>– Design helps to identify conflicts around planning solutions and thus makes these manageable. | Dammers et al. (2004) |
| – Design identifies relations between plans on different levels of scale and thus enhances integral planning.<br>– Design identifies relations between physical, functional and financial aspects of plans and thus enhances integral planning.<br>– Design contributes to systematic governance through involving local, bottom-up approaches. | Provincie Zuid-Holland (2004b) |
| – Design brings the essence of regional spatial development to the foreground.<br>– Design identifies regional spatial relations and thus contributes to solutions that address complex spatial networks.<br>– Design makes use of 'free thinking space'; it facilitates a critical perspective on spatial planning and policies. | Atelier Zuidvleugel (2005) |
| – Design accommodates creativity of citizens in planning decision-making.<br>– Design enhances the quality of democratic decision-making. | Frieling (2006) |
| – Design helps to leave old patterns of thought. | De Rooij (2006) |
| – Design helps to identify relevant tasks and scales of planning.<br>– Design generates problem ownership.<br>– Design organises planning through providing insight into spatial development. | Atelier Zuidvleugel (2008b) |
| – Design generates original planning solutions.<br>– Design facilitates an in-depth understanding of planning tasks.<br>– Design enhances the comprehensiveness of planning.<br>– Design accelerates debate and thus enriches planning.<br>– Design helps to place problems on the political agenda. | Blank et al. (2009) |
| – Design contributes to the articulation of planning tasks and thus coordination.<br>– Design mobilises knowledge. | Hajer et al. (2010) |
| – Design facilitates synergetic effects of planning.<br>– Design speeds up planning decision-making. | Ministerie van I&M (2010) |

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TABLE 1.1 Expectations on the performances of regional design in spatial planning

| Expectation | Source |
|---|---|
| – Design facilitates communication and thus the creation of organisational capacity for planning.<br>– Design combines working on spatial solutions with working on organisational capacity.<br>– Design enhances the efficiency of planning.<br>– Design contributes to the definition of problems as well as the refinement of solutions to these problems.<br>– Design facilitates integral spatial-planning solutions. | Enno Zuidema Stedebouw et al. (2011) |
| – Design contributes to the sustainability of planning decisions.<br>– Design contributes to better, faster, and therefore cheaper planning processes.<br>– Design creates societal and economic added value through supporting sustainable and resilient spatial development. | Ministeries van I&M et al. (2012) |
| – Design enhances the cultural significance of planning.<br>– Design helps to unravel complex decision-making procedures. | Boeijenga et al. (2011) |
| – Design enhances the speed of decision-making through bringing conflict to the foreground. | Ministerie van I&M (2013) |

## 1.2 Problem field

The accumulated expectations that regional-design practices raise in the realm of spatial planning, and the formalisation that practices underwent in Dutch national planning since the 2000s imply that regional design and spatial planning are strongly interrelated, at least in the Netherlands. However, their performances in this realm are not well understood. Whereas many regional design initiatives refer to multiple objectives simultaneously, it remains unclear whether and, if so, how regional design-led approaches influence and improve planning decisions. This lack of sophisticated understanding has a set of reasons which are explained below.

The frequent use of regional design-led approaches in planning decision-making has led to abundant knowledge and expertise in the Dutch professional domains of spatial planning, urban, and landscape architecture design. Interrelations between practices are recognised, as a rich body of professional literature and a vivid debate among professionals shows. When to use design during planning processes is an issue in discussion, for instance. Designers plea for an open process that allows for a continuous reflection on the quality of plans by means of design (Sijmons,

2002, Dammers et al., 2004, Hajer et al., 2010). Planners subscribe to this call but with tempered enthusiasm about such open-ended decision-making: "Good for the project perhaps but a nightmare for the process" (Boeijenga et al., 2013, p. 7). Governance arrangements, which became important regional design commissioners since the early 2000s, gained critique by designers on their inability to define clear tasks, and on their lack of dedication to design output. Arrangements were also adjudged on being overly focused on their territories: "Not administrative relations, but an understanding [...] of complex spatial relationships should determine the scale of intervention. Changes taking place turn the existing layers of government at every scale into an anachronism" (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2008b, p.100, my translation). However, the rich body of knowledge, including the multiple assumptions on interrelations between design and planning that controversies in discussion imply, is underused. It has in particular not yet benefitted a comprehensive understanding of the multiple expected performances of regional design in the spatial-planning realm. Most primary and secondary professional literature is focused on single regional-design practices with a concern about distinct problems in particular regions. Only few publications consider multiple practices at the same time (see for example Boeijenga et al., 2011, Boeijenga et al., 2013, Colombo et al., 2018, De Jonge, 2008, Hajer et al., 2010). Although the writings incidentally observe assumed performances in real world settings, none is dedicated to this purpose. In particular, writings by designers take positive outcomes of regional-design practices for granted. Also, the formalisation of regional design in Dutch national planning and policies has not led to an enhanced understanding. There are only few evaluations of its impact, for instance embodied in revisions of policies (Ministeries van OCW et al., 2005), and even fewer that take a distant and scientifically grounded approach in assessment (see for example Stegmeijer et al., 2012).

Debate and literature indicate that Dutch professionals hold a rich but implicit and fragmented body of knowledge on interrelations between regional design and spatial planning and the performances these produce. In the academic domain, attention to these matters have increased. Since the 2000s, planning and design scholars have published a range of dedicated studies, mostly drawing on the Dutch experience (De Jonge, 2009, De Zwart, 2015, Kempenaar, 2017, Klaasen, 2003, Neuman, 2000, Van Dijk, 2011). In addition, a range of other studies have had a latent concern about Dutch regional-design practice, through incorporating an elaboration of cases for the purpose of an enhanced understanding of, for instance, the use of spatial visualisation, scenarios and planning concepts in planning (Carton, 2007, Salewski, 2012, Van Duinen, 2004). However, the body of scholarly writing on regional design remains to be small and has some deficiencies for this reason. The empirical base upon which knowledge builds up is narrow; writing relies on the observation of few cases only. As in professional literature and

debate, scholarly writing on design (mostly written by design scholars) tends to have a normative bias, more focused on expectations than on verifying them (for similar observation in the realm of urban design, see Marshall, 2012, Stolk, 2015). As noted above, expectations concerning the performance of design in planning decision-making are varied. They imply a broad range of links to the neighbouring disciplinary fields and subfields of planning, governance and geography too. Research into regional design tends to focus on particular links, and consequently, a limited integration of theory. A particular knowledge gap is caused by a one-sided perspective on the performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning. Most writing focuses on the impact that design practice has on planning. A reversed approach in which the impact of planning on design is investigated is missing. While the above mentioned recent research has provided important insights into how regional design influences specific aspects of spatial planning, it remains unclear whether and if so how practices are affected by their changing positions in planning and governance (for a similar notion on the integration of urban design and planning, see Gunder, 2011).

## 1.3  Research aim and questions

The above sketched situation implies that there is an abundant amount of knowledge on interrelations between regional design and spatial planning but that knowledge is implicit and fragmented: spread across professional and academic domains, and across disciplines and sub-disciplines. The main aim of this research is therefore to provide a more comprehensive understanding of interrelations, and, on these grounds, a better explanation of the variety of performances that regional design is expected to cause in the realm of spatial planning. Associated with this aim are a series of secondary aims (or requirements):

— **Positioning regional design in the academic fields of regional spatial planning and governance**: Knowledge about regional design is spread across professional and academic domains, and over a variety of disciplines and research fields. An aim of this research is to integrate notions from domains and the fields of design, regional planning and governance, for an enhanced trans-disciplinary understanding of regional design.

— **Understanding performances of regional-design practices:** Whereas many Dutch regional design initiatives refer to multiple objectives simultaneously, it remains unclear whether and, if so, how regional design-led approaches influence planning decisions. A second aim of the research is to distinguish regional-design practices by their relations to spatial-planning frameworks and an improved prediction of key performances on these grounds.

— **Understanding aspects of planning frameworks that influence performances of regional design:** It is unclear if and how design informs planning decisions as expected. It also remains unclear whether and, if so, how planning frameworks influence the performance of design. Since the 1980s, the Dutch national government became increasingly engaged in regional design and the practice underwent a process of formalisation. A third aim of the research is to understand key aspects of planning frameworks that influence the performance of regional design and that explain such processes of institutionalisation therefore.

In accordance to the main aim, the main research question is:

**How do the interrelations between regional design and spatial planning influence the performances of regional design?**

In accordance to secondary aims, the sub-research questions are:

— What are key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning? How can these key performances be analysed?

— What aspects of spatial-planning frameworks influence the performances of regional design? How can these aspects of spatial-planning frameworks be analysed?

## 1.4  Results and relevance

The aspirations of the research are described above. Concrete results of it are twofold. A first result stems from empirical analyses and is a critical discussion on Dutch national planning and policies in the period between the 1980s and the 2010s. Criticism, detailed in discussion sections of chapters in this volume, concerns above all a pragmatic turn in spatial planning over the time. It is argued that this turn has diminished interest in spatial development and collaboration in Dutch

national planning (Chapter 5). More importantly (and more relevant in the context of this thesis) it is argued that this turn has led to a one-sided institutionalisation of regional design in Dutch national planning, emphasising performances concerning efficient territorial management, while neglecting others that design-led approaches were claimed to have (Chapter 6 and 7). Criticism is meant to be constructive; it establishes part of the societal relevance of this thesis. Above, it was noted that regional design underwent a process of formalisation in Dutch national planning and policies but its outcomes have rarely been evaluated. Due to an exploratory nature of this dissertation, positions presented here are not the result of an in-depth policy assessment. However, their empirical underpinning is sufficient to facilitate critical reflection on the overly high and varied expectations that are often expressed in justifications of policies. A societal relevance of this research is established by an improved understanding of the position of regional design in Dutch planning. However, regional design is not a Dutch practice only. During the conduction of the research, a series of events were organised, appealing to an international audience of professionals and scholars with an interest in the practice. This showed that planning professionals and politicians in numerous European regions experiment with similar approaches, to challenge limitations that statutory planning systems pose to addressing problems that stem from particular circumstances in regions. As in the case of the Netherlands, expectations are high and varied but rarely verified in these regions.

A second, and most important result of this dissertation is an analytical framework that identifies different interrelations between regional-design practice and spatial-planning frameworks and predicts performances of regional design on these grounds. The framework draws on design theory, in particular on notions that conceptualise design as a reflexive, social-constructionist practice. When conceived in this way, design is imaginary and also argumentative, oriented towards building rationales for solutions that improve situations in the built environment. Argumentation considers this environment as a complex, and holistic system; it is therefore exploratory, evolving during multiple synthesis-evaluation iterations (Caliskan, 2012, Cross, 1990, Hillier and Leaman, 1974, Lawson, 2006, Schön, 1988, Schön, 1992, Rittel, 1987). During explorations, rules on the interaction between imagined solutions and simplified, typological classifications of the environment are formulated: "As rules of law are derived from judicial precedents, (…), so design rules are derived from types, and may be subjected to test and criticism by reference to them" (Schön, 1988, p.183). Building upon these characterisations of design, the framework also draws on theoretical notions from the field of spatial planning. Spatial planning is acknowledged to pay more attention to spatial development in particular areas and regions than other forms of planning (Albrechts et al., 2003, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010, Faludi, 2010, Healey,

2006, Nadin, 2007, Needham, 1988, Schön, 2005, Waterhout, 2008). Theoretical notions that explain and detail how this attention is facilitated in planning decision-making received the main attention during the building of the analytical framework of this thesis. These include notions on argumentative planning, territorial governance, spatial representation, and, most importantly, spatial concepts, which are institutionalised perceptions of geographies that facilitate deliberation on how planning affects spatial development in regions and areas (Van Duinen, 2004, Zonneveld, 1991, Davoudi, 2003, Davoudi et al., 2018).

The finally built analytical framework describes regional design as evolving in a discursive dimension of these concepts. By building planning rationales in this context, it resembles discretionary practice. Discretion is, in popular terms, "the art of suiting action to particular circumstances" (The Rt Hon Lord Scarman, 1981, p.103). It aims at an improvement of rationales for action – or rules – through judging their implications for particular situations (Booth, 1996, Booth, 2007, Forester, 1987, Tewdwr-Jones, 1999). Viewing regional design as a particular form of discretion - one that is focused on geography and is proactive - has implications for the role and positioning of the practice in spatial-planning decision-making. The context of design practice in the form of institutionalised perceptions of geographies gains importance. Discretionary action is strongly influenced by the room for interpretation that premediated rules involve: their flexibility determines if such action likely evolves as a refinement of rules or as a challenge to them. Likewise, the ambiguity of preconceived spatial concepts influences regional-design practices: ambiguity determines if practices seek to detail concepts in the light of particular spatial circumstances or seek to expand them by uncovering new aspects of the environment. Performances, when understood as a change in the quality of decision-making (Faludi and Korthals Altes, 1994), can be explained by the matches and mismatches between prevailing concepts and design proposals: their shared or excluded analytical foundation, normative values and territorial actions. The involvement of actors in regional design can be qualified by legitimacy standards. In discretion, there is a distinction between discretionary action and control. When perceiving regional design as a rule-building practice, a distance between the ones who initiate and conduct design, and the ones who judge the relevance of design outcomes for planning decisions are required in accordance to this distinction.

This research relies on theories drawn from the fields of design and planning. One scientific relevance stems from combining these theories and thus addressing a gap regarding the relationships between disciplines. During theory formation, it became apparent that the gap is not a clear-cut divide between a discipline that is dedicated to management in the built environment, and a discipline with an exclusive concern about its (future) form and structure. Nor is it constituted by a

full ignorance of each other's knowledge and theories. The consideration of notions brought to the foreground that the integration of disciplines is rather hindered by a semantic disorder, a multitude of theoretical notions and observations that resemble each other but are expressed in other words or are derived from a slightly different context.

In design theory, design appears to be "a relatively simple set of operations carried out on highly complex structures, which are themselves simplified by 'theories' and modes of representation" (Hillier and Leaman, 1974, p.4). Scholars argue that if a design method is to be improved, a sophisticated understanding of these theories and modes of representation is more important than an understanding of the practices themselves. The particular scientific relevance of this thesis for the field of design is in bringing to the foreground a set of theories that have emerged in the field of spatial planning and which through their concern about geography, can enrich the discipline. Its particular relevance for planning scholars is in its contribution to the discussion on planning in a post-regulative era, where there is an enhanced attention to and consideration of the particularities of spatial contexts (Allmendinger et al., 2016, Brenner et al., 2011). Such attention and consideration of material settings and practices – the built environment and the way it is used – is central to design. Through presenting a deeper understanding of how regional design performs in this respect, this thesis appeals to scholars who seek to understand the dilemmas and conflicts that such consideration causes, the pragmatic behaviour it unleashes, or the continuous governance rescaling happening in and across regions.

## 1.5 Structure of the thesis

This research has taken the form of an exploratory case-study analysis, as will be explained in more detail in Chapter 2. Throughout the course of the research, empirical analyses and theoretical reflection have informed each other. The chapters and articles that are presented here have not been written in the chronological order that the consecutive sorting of chapters suggests but simultaneously at times. In this publication, the elements of research form four groups:

## Research approach

— **Chapter 2 - Research approach:** In this chapter, research methodologies and methods are explained.

## Key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning

— **Chapter 3 – From concepts to projects: Stedenbaan, the Netherlands:** This chapter, earlier published in the book *Transit Oriented Development: Making it Happen* (Balz and Schrijnen, 2009), presents a review of a regional-design practice that was conducted between 2005 and 2007 in the Southern part of the Dutch Randstad region. It is argued that design has contributed to establishing the Stedenbaan project, a regional transit-oriented development strategy, on the political agenda of governance arrangements in the region. The chapter documents the observations that have led to initial propositions, explored during a first round of case-study research.

— **Chapter 4 – Regional design in the context of fragmented territorial governance: South Wing Studio:** This writing, earlier published as a journal article in European Planning Studies (Balz and Zonneveld, 2015), presents results of the first in-depth case-study analysis. Also here the Stedenbaan regional-design practice was under investigation. The article first establishes an analytical framework that distinguishes performances of regional design by their impact on dimensions of spatial concepts. Performances are identified through shifts in the levels of policy argumentation. Conclusions emphasise a pragmatic use of design, and motivate an enhanced attention to the planning context of regional design more broadly.

## Regional design as a discretionary approach to planning

— **Chapter 5 – Transformations of planning rationalities: Changing spaces for governance in recent Dutch planning:** The first case-study analysis led to the proposition that existing spatial-planning frameworks - in particular the premediated spatial concepts that plan actors use for their justification - influence performances of regional design. To verify this proposition, a multiple case-studies analysis was conducted in the following. In this chapter, earlier published in Planning Theory & Practice (Balz and Zonneveld, 2018), it is first argued that the ambiguity of spatial concepts shapes room for interpretation and thus collaboration and governance. In the main empirical section of the article, spatial concepts that have been used in Dutch national planning between the 1980s and the 2010s are analysed. Next to preparing the multiple case-study analysis, the paper provides a detailed, and critical

reading of change in Dutch national planning in the period. On a theoretical level, it contributes to the discussion on governance responses to the use of geographies in planning decision-making.

— **Chapter 6 – Regional design: Discretionary approaches to regional planning in the Netherlands:** This journal article, earlier published in Planning Theory (Balz, 2018), details the central position of this thesis: that regional design is a form of discretionary action, meant to qualify planning guidance by means of reflecting upon its implications for particular regions and areas. The position is supported by an analysis of four regional-design practices and their interrelations with the earlier analysed spatial-planning frameworks. A strong shift towards a pragmatic use of regional design in Dutch planning over time is discussed in a dedicated section. In a concluding part, implications of the central position find attention. It is argued that regional design, through its engagement with particular regions and areas, brings tensions between a collaborative rationale of spatial planning and its strategic selectivity to the foreground.

— **Chapter 7 – The institutionalisation of a creative practice: Changing positions and roles of regional design in Dutch national planning:** An important implication of perceiving regional design as discretionary action is that that the involvement of actors in regional-design practice requires careful scrutiny. This chapter (Balz and Zonneveld, 2019), earlier accepted for publication in the forthcoming book *Shaping Regional Futures: Designing and Visioning in Governance Rescaling*, critically discusses the institutionalisation of regional design in Dutch national planning on the grounds of an analysis of repetitive actor constellations and the formalisation of regional design in Dutch planning and policies. Conclusions emphasise on a need for discernible actor constellations when regional design is used for the qualification of planning decisions.

## Conclusion

— **Chapter 8 – Conclusion:** In this chapter, the main results of the thesis are presented in an overview and discussed. In addition, it contains critical remarks on the case-study research and the built analytical framework as well as a reflection on the implications of findings for future work. Chapter 8 is written for the purpose of this publication only.

## 1.6 Additional remarks on this publication

Chapter 3-7 have been published as peer-reviewed book chapters and journal articles before they were taken up in this thesis document. Some adaptations of original publications were undertaken to facilitate compilation. Numbers of chapters, sub-chapters, tables and figures as well as capitalisation of headers were changed for the purpose of overview. In case original publications do not include a list of key words, these were added. English spelling, punctuation, italic scripts and quotation styles were adopted from original publications. To be able to create one comprehensive bibliography, in-text citations and references have been adopted to match the reference style that has been chosen for this publication. In few cases, the combination of references in one list required the renaming of sources, for instance, due to individual researchers being listed as authors in one publication and their organisation in another or because abbreviations were used differently across earlier publications. In a few cases, translations of non-English literature were added or edited. However, there are no cases of the underlying literature being changed. Since the draft dissertation was presented to promotors for approval in January 2019, minor parts of so far unpublished text in Chapter 1 Introduction and Chapter 8 Conclusion were incorporated in forthcoming publications. In all cases the author of this dissertation is the first author of these.

# 2 Research approach
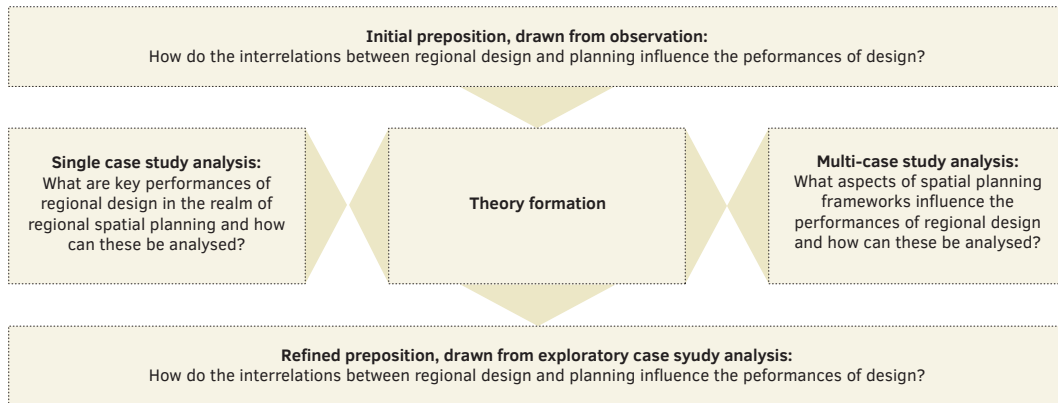


FIG. 2.1 Research design: main elements of the research

The main methodology used to answer the above-listed research questions was that of an exploratory case-study research (Figure 2.1). In this methodology the formation of hypotheses and empirical analysis inform each other during iterative steps: an initial proposition was formulated and tested through case-study analysis; results led to an adaptation of the proposition, which was tested in the next case-study round. It is important to note that exploratory case-study research does not fully verify hypotheses, but seeks to stabilise them and in this way give direction to further research (Yin, 2013, Yin, 2012). Below, the use of the methodology for this thesis is explained.

Besides using empirical case-study research for the strengthening of propositions, the dissertation also draws on theoretical notions from the fields of design and planning, as explained in the previous chapter. Its engagement with theories from different disciplines required a comparison of concepts and categories presented in fields and sub-fields. Criteria to qualify such theory formation in the social sciences is discussed below, under the heading 'theory formation'.

It is important to note that this chapter adds to the more detailed descriptions of methods in Chapters 4 to 7 and that Chapter 8: Conclusions contains critical remarks on the methodologies which have been applied.

## 2.1   Exploratory case-study research

Regional design is a collaborative and interactive social practice that includes a broad array of actors with a multiplicity of different interests. It is concerned with the built environment, which is itself a complex system. As noted in the Introduction, regional design triggers multiple expectations but its performances have rarely been evaluated. There are only a few scholarly writings that are dedicated to the topic; these elaborate upon a multitude of theoretically founded interrelations among regional design and spatial planning but draw on a narrow empirical evidence base. In such a context it is important to first detail and stabilise propositions; and exploratory case-study research is an appropriate research methodology to do so (Yin, 2013). Conditions that qualify such research include a well-motivated selection of consistent cases, suited to explore a proposition internally, and to generalise outcomes. These cases should be ones that exist prior to any exploration, be well-documented through a variety of (preferably) publicly accessible sources, and be spread over time. How these conditions were met in this research will be explained briefly below.

### 2.1.1   Selection of cases

In the Netherlands, it is common to use design-led approaches in the realm of spatial planning. As a consequence, over time there have occurred a multitude of design practices related to city-regional, provincial, national, and also trans-national planning. A first choice in this case-study analysis was to focus on interrelations between regional-design practice and Dutch national spatial plans. Aspects of these plans changed in the time period under investigation. The political colour of Dutch governments shifted, which led to different scales and scopes of planning. In 2008 the Dutch Spatial Planning Act (*Wet Ruimtelijkle Ordening*, Wro) was revised, diminishing the importance of national plans. The period between 2000 and 2012 saw an overly frequent publication of plans (in comparison to earlier); some of the plans analysed never became effective and therefore had a particular formal status. However, the principal role of national plans remained stable over time: they were consistently drawn up to guide the planning of lower levels of government and consistently did so by implying (transforming) spatial-planning rationales. One reason for choosing the Dutch national planning frameworks was their common purpose which allows for generalisation. A second reason for this choice was the rich documentation in Dutch national spatial planning. Negotiations on national plans involve multiple tiers of government, are intensive, and are (partially) a formal requirement. They find

an expression in a multitude of publicly accessible policy documents that reflect (changing) positions of plan actors (including their perceptions of geographies) and that also frequently include references to regional design.

A second important choice in this case-study analysis concerns the time period in which these investigated regional-design practices occurred: all of them evolved between the mid-1980s and the 2010s. The start of this period saw accelerating attention to regionalisation in Dutch national planning (documented in scholarly writing on planning), and the emergence of regional design as a distinguished discipline (documented in scholarly writing on regional design). While there were many regional-design practices with a regional scale before the 1980s, it was only from this time that the practice was referred to as such. The end of the period was determined by the 2012 publication of the National Policy Strategy, the most recent national plan that could be considered at the time of this analysis.

With the principal choice for a focus on Dutch national planning in the period of the 1980s to the 2010s, several rules were used to guarantee internal consistency between the regional-design practices investigated. The first rule concerned their content. Dutch national plans traditionally cover several larger thematic fields, most notably urbanisation, (transport) infrastructure, open (rural) landscapes, and water systems. Regional-design practices are used for an elaboration of developments in all fields, at times seeking to integrate them. Cases that were considered in this research had a focus on the thematic field of urbanisation and usually involved attention to transport infrastructure development. All had a concern (sometimes inclusive, sometimes exclusive) about the western part of the Netherlands, commonly known as the Randstad region. Last but not least were cases chosen by the prominence they gained in Dutch spatial planning discourse, expressed in frequent referencing to them in policy documents, professional writings, and also (partially) in academic literature. This choice has, apart from its own internal consistency, enhanced the richness of the available documentation.

During a large part of the case-study analysis, four regional-design practices gained main attention. Then, during a final stage of the research, propositions concerning aspects of spatial-planning frameworks that influence regional-design practice were tested through investigating the institutionalisation of regional design in Dutch national planning and policies. During this verification, a broader set of regional-design practices were considered, with a broader scope concerning their thematic field. In particular, practices with an interest in the development of open (rural) landscapes were also considered. Table 2.1 (below) lists all regional-design practices and planning frameworks that found attention. The ones that received core attention during the exploratory case-study analysis are highlighted.

TABLE 2.1 Regional-design practices between the 1980s and the 2010s*

| Year | Regional-design practice | Planning framework | Documentation (primary and secondary) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1984 - 1987 | **The Netherlands Now As Design (*Nederland Nu Als Ontwerp*, NNAO)** | | Van der Cammen (1987) |
| 1985 - 1986 | Netherlands River Land (*Nederland Rivierenland*), 1st Eo-Wijers competition | | Eo Wijers Stichting (1986) De Jonge (2009) De Jonge (2008) |
| 1988 | | Fourth Report on Spatial Planning | Ministerie van VROM (1988) |
| 1988-1989 | City and Land on the Slope (*Stad en Land op de Helling*), 2nd Eo Wijers competition | | Eo Wijers Stichting (1989) |
| 1991 - 1992 | Region of Streams, 3rd Eo Wijers competition | | Eo Wijers Stichting (1992) |
| 1993 | | Fourth Report on Spatial planning Extra | Ministerie van VROM (1993) |
| 1994 - 1995 | Inside Randstad Holland, 4th Eo Wijers competition | | Eo Wijers Stichting (1995) |
| 1996 | | 2nd note on architecture policy (*De Architectuur van de Ruimte. Nota over het Architectuurbeleid 1997-2000*) | Ministeries van OCW et al. (1996) |
| 1996 - 1998 | **Delta Metropolis (*Deltametropool*)** | | Vereniging Deltametropool (1998) Frieling (1998) Van Duinen (2015) |
| 1997 - 1998 | Who is Afraid of the Empty Programme? (*Wie is er Bang voor het Lege Programma?*), 5th Eo Wijers competition | | Eo Wijers Stichting (1998) |
| 1999 | | Note on policies on the preservation and use of cultural heritage (*Nota Belvedere*) | Ministeries van OCW et al. (1999) |
| 2000 | | Note on architecture policy 2001-2004 (*Ontwerpen aan Nederland. Architectuurbeleid 2001-2004*) | (Ministeries van OCW et al., 2000) |
| 2001 | | Fifth Report on Spatial Planning (*Vijfde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening*), 1st version | Ministerie van VROM and Rijksplanologische Dienst (2001) |
| 2001 - 2002 | Unbounded Movement (*Grenzeloze Beweging*), 6th Eo Wijers competition | | Eo Wijers Stichting (2002) |
| 2001 - 2002 | Studio Deltametropolis (*Atelier Deltametropool*) | | Ministerie van VROM (2003) |
| 2001 - 2002 | West Flank Delta Metropolis (*Westflank Deltametropool*) | | |

TABLE 2.1 Regional-design practices between the 1980s and the 2010s*

| Year | Regional-design practice | Planning framework | Documentation (primary and secondary) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2001 - 2002 | The Art of Gardening (*De kunst van het Tuinieren*) | | |
| 2001 - 2002 | Triangle Haarlemmermeer-Almere-Utrecht (*Driehoek Haarlemmermeer-Almere-Utrecht*) | | |
| 2001 - 2002 | Designing on Higher Level of Scale (*Ontwerpen op Hoger Schaalniveau*) | | |
| 2002 | | Fifth Report on Spatial Planning (*Vijfde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening*), 2nd version | Ministerie van VROM and Rijksplanologische Dienst (2002) |
| 2002 - 2004 | New Dutch Water Line (*Nieuw Hollandse Waterlinie*) | | Luiten et al. (2004) Luiten (2011) |
| 2002 - 2003 | Vision for the Urban Network Arnhem - Nijmegen (*Visie stedelijk netwerk KAN*) | | Urban Unlimited (2003) |
| 2003 - 2006 | Studio IJmeer (*Atelier IJmeer*) | | Koolhaas and Marcusse (2006) |
| 2004 | | National Spatial Strategy (*Nota Ruimte*), 1st version | Ministeries van VROM et al. (2004) |
| 2005 | | Note on architecture policy 2005-2008 (*Actieprogramma Ruimte en Cultuur. Architectuur- en Belvederebeleid 2005-2008*) | Ministeries van OCW et al. (2005) |
| 2005 - 2006 | Agains and with the Current (*Tegen de Stroom in en met de Stroom mee*), 7th Eo Wijers competition | | Eo Wijers Stichting (2006) De Jonge (2016) |
| 2006 | | National Spatial Strategy (*Nota Ruimte*), final version | Ministeries van VROM et al. (2006) |
| 2005 - 2007 | **Studio South Wing (*Atelier Zuidvleugel*)** | | Atelier Zuidvleugel (2005) Atelier Zuidvleugel (2008b) Balz and Zonneveld (2015) |
| 2005 - 2007 | City Line (*Stedenbaan*) | | Atelier Zuidvleugel (2006a) |
| 2005 - 2007 | In-between Space (*Tussenruimte*) | | Atelier Zuidvleugel (2007) Casabella et al. (2007) |
| 2005 - 2007 | The Nine Cities (*De Negen Steden*) | | Atelier Zuidvleugel (2008a) |
| 2006 - 2007 | Studio Brabant City (*Atelier Brabantstad*) | | Bosch Slabbers (2007) |

TABLE 2.1 Regional-design practices between the 1980s and the 2010s*

| Year | Regional-design practice | Planning framework | Documentation (primary and secondary) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2008 | | Note on architecture policy 2009-2012 (*Visie Architectuur en Ruimtelijk Ontwerp*, VARO) | Projectgroep Visie Architectuur en Ruimtelijk Ontwerp (2008) |
| 2008 - 2009 | Outside the Randstad (*Buiten in de Randstad*), 8th Eo Wijers competition | | Eo Wijers Stichting (2009) |
| 2008 | Designing Randstad 2040 (*Ontwerpen aan Randstad 2040*) | | Blank et al. (2009) |
| 2008 | | Structural Vision Randstad 2040 (*Structuurvisie Randstad 2040*) | Ministerie van VROM (2008) |
| 2010 | | Change in MIRT procedure | Ministerie van I&M (2010) Enno Zuidema Stedebouw et al. (2011) |
| 2011 - 2012 | New Energy for the Peat Colonies (*Nieuwe Energie voor de Veenkoloniën*), 9th Eo Wijers competition | | Eo Wijers Stichting (2012) |
| 2011 - 2012 | **Spatial Models SMASH 2040 (*Ruimtelijke Modellen SMASH 2040*)** | | Zandbelt & Van den Berg (2012) |
| 2011-2013 | Studio Coalstal Quality (*Atelier Kustkwaliteit*) | | Atelier Kustkwaliteit (2011) |
| 2011 - 2012 | Studio Making Projects (*Atelier Making Projects*), part of the 2012 5th International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR) 'Making City' | | Brugmans and Petersen (2012) Boeijenga et al. (2013) |
| 2011 - 2012 | Studio Zuidas City Centre | | |
| 2011 - 2012 | Studio The City of Rotterdam South | | |
| 2011 - 2012 | Studio Rhine-Meuse Delta | | |
| 2011 - 2012 | Studio The Metropolitan Landscape | | |
| 2011 - 2012 | Studio Making Olympic Cities | | |
| 2011 - 2012 | Studio 100.000 Jobs for Almere/ Making Almere | | |
| 2011 - 2012 | Studio Creating Nodes | | |
| 2012 | | National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning (*Structuurvisie Infrastructuur en Ruimte*) | Ministerie van I&M (2012) |

TABLE 2.1 Regional-design practices between the 1980s and the 2010s*

| Year | Regional-design practice | Planning framework | Documentation (primary and secondary) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2012 | | Note on architecture policy 2013-2016 (*Werken aan Ontwerpkracht. Actieagenda Architectuur en Ruimtelijk Ontwerp 2013-2016*) | Ministeries van I&M et al. (2012) |
| 2012 - 2014 | Project Studios (*Projectateliers*), part of the 2014 IABR 'Urban by Nature' | | Brugmans and Strien (2014) |
| 2012 - 2014 | Project Studio Planet Texel (*Projectatelier Planet Texel*) | | Godefroy et al. (2015) |
| 2012 - 2014 | Project Studio Rotterdam 1: The Urban Metabolism (*Projectatelier Rotterdam*), | | Tillie et al. (2014) |
| 2012 - 2014 | Project Studio Brabant City (*Projectatelier BrabantStad*) | | Floris Alkemade Architect et al. (2014) |
| 2014 - 2015 | The Cities Triangle (*De Stedendriehoek*), 10th Eo Wijers competition | | Eo Wijers Stichting (2015) |
| 2014 - 2016 | IABR Studios (*IABR Ateliers*), part of the 2016 IABR 'The Next Economy' | | Brugmans et al. (2016) |
| 2014 - 2016 | IABR Atelier Groningen: Towards a New Energy Landscape | | Hoekstra and Francke (2016) |
| 2014 - 2016 | IABR Atelier Rotterdam: The Productive City | | Francke and Ten Kate (2016) |
| 2014 - 2016 | IABR Atelier Utrecht: The Healthy City | | Vervloesem and Wessels (2016) |
| 2015 - 2016 | IABR Atelier 2050: An Energetic Odyssey | | H+N+S Landscape Architects et al. (2016) |
| 2016 - 2017 | MIRT research Accessibility Rotterdam The Hague (*MIRT-onderzoek Bereikbaarheid Rotterdam Den Haag*) | | De Zwarte Hond et al. (2017) |

## Consecutive rounds in case study analysis

Case-study analysis was conducted in two rounds of exploration: a first, single, and in-depth case study, followed by a second, multiple case-study analysis, with historical and comparative components. Both rounds are described briefly below.

During a first in-depth case study, key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning were investigated. The regional-design practice analysed was the Studio South Wing (*Atelier Zuidvleugel*), initiated in 2002 by a coalition of sub-national governments in the southern part of the Randstad. This case complies with the general criteria for the selection of cases mentioned above. All regional-design practices that were investigated during the exploratory research were well-documented in terms of final design proposals and the use of these in policy processes. In addition to such documentation, this case also included a well-documented design process. As in other regional-design practices, a broad array of actors was involved in the Studio South Wing. Interaction between them was facilitated by a dedicated communication strategy: every design step was published and open to comments by stakeholders. Publications were accessible via a Studio website until around 2015. Additional empirical material was acquired through interviews with key actors in the Studio (see Appendix A for list). Questions were semi-structured and covered two main topics, notably the initiative for the Studio South Wing (its motivation, and formation) and the approach taken by the Studio (its description, and expectations). I was involved in Studio South Wing as a regional designer. Such personal engagement may raise questions about bias and a justification for the use of such a case is elaborated below, in the section 'theory formation'. The first single in-depth case study is documented in the publications that are taken up in Chapters 3 and 4. In addition, it can also be found documented in Balz and Zonneveld (2010).

Results of the first case-study analysis raised attention about spatial-planning frameworks as determinants of performances of regional design. A second round of exploratory case-study analysis was, therefore, dedicated to identifying aspects of the frameworks that do indeed influence performances. Multiple case-study analysis was used to compare interrelations between regional-design practices and the different national spatial plans published between 1988 and 2012. The case study was prepared by making a detailed analysis of these plans. The selection of regional-design practices was informed by the general rules mentioned earlier. Practices included The Netherlands Now As Design (*Nederland Nu Als Ontwerp*, NNAO), the Delta Metropolis (*Deltametropool*), the Studio South Wing (*Atelier Zuidvleugel*), and the Spatial Models SMASH 2040 (*Ruimtelijke Modellen SMASH 2040*). In particular, the first two cases are, due to the prominence they gained in Dutch

planning discourse, well documented by professional and scholarly literature; the documentation of the work of the Studio South Wing is mentioned above; while the last case, Spatial Models SMASH 2040, complies less well to the general rules set out for cases, in particular the requirements concerning prominence. It was chosen as one of the first practices that evolved due to the formalisation of regional design in Dutch national planning. Analysis relied on primary documentation only. The second multiple case-study analysis is documented in the publications that are to be found in Chapters 5 and 6, and which are also documented in (Balz et al., 2014).

Results of the exploratory case-study analysis have led to the proposition that regional design resembles discretionary action. This perspective emphasises the importance of actor constellations in regional-design practice. A last step of the research was therefore to analyse over time the actors involved. To understand the institutionalisation of involvement, a broader set of regional-design practices found attention. The selection of these cases is explained above. Table 2.1 includes a list of the primary and secondary literature upon which the analysis drew. In addition, national policies with an influence on practices were considered. The most important among these are the Dutch architecture policy and the policy concerning decision making under the umbrella of the Long-Term Program for Infrastructure, Transportation and Spatial Development (MIRT). A publicly accessible documentation of such policies is obligatory in the Netherlands. This analysis is documented in Chapter 7.

## 2.2 Theory formation

In addition to testing propositions by means of empirical case-study analysis, this research has also used theoretical notions, acquired by means of a literature review, to support and develop them. Such theory formation in qualitative social research is vulnerable: initial concepts tend to be biased; concepts tend to accumulate over the course of theoretical reflection and to form non-transparent constructs finally. Ways to avoid such entangling are in an unbiased selection of an initial observations and data-set, a well-documented, transparent process of theory formation (including the mentioning of events that gave direction to theory formation), an adherence to the purity of theoretical notions, and the testing of such notions against alternative concepts and categories (Bendassolli, 2013, Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

### 2.2.1  Initial observation

Theory formation is rooted in an observation of an initial 'data-set' which calls for a revision or enrichment of current theories by means of a new proposition (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). The selection of both, an initial data-set and initial theoretical notions, needs to be unbiased by the subjectivity of researchers. The initial proposition of this research was that regional design is an argumentative practice that performs in spatial-planning decision-making. Theoretically, performances were first explained by interrelations between spatial representations (i.e. design proposals) and spatial concepts (the institutionalised perceptions of geographies that are used in spatial planning). The selection of these theoretical complexes was deduced from observation of the above-mentioned Studio South Wing. As noted earlier, I was involved in this practice myself, in the function of Chief Designer. Such rooting of propositions in personal experience certainly raises questions about bias. However, drawing on my personal observation as a source for theory formation can be justified. One justification is the extensive and publicly accessible documentation of the design practice. Secondly, I documented my observation prior to the formulation of theoretically grounded propositions (see Chapter 3). A final justification lies in the way in which the theories were initially selected. I am trained as an architect and built a carrier as a professional designer. When I started this dissertation my explicit knowledge about planning was minor. The theoretical notions that formed the initial starting point of theory formation were suggested, not by myself, but by scholars from the field of planning with whom I discussed my experience.

### 2.2.2  Process of theory formation

Transparent process is one important aspect that qualifies theory formation. For this reason, a brief description of the process is given below. This summary adds to documentation in the form of conference papers and the articles that are incorporated into this publication. Chapter 8 includes tables that list key concepts and notions that were finally selected for the building of the analytical framework that is the main result of theory formation.

The first selection of key theories included spatial concepts and spatial representations, as mentioned above. A literature review, guided by these key words, led to a distinction of designs by their different logics of spatial representation and their orientation towards dimensions of spatial concepts. Regional design appeared as a practice that evolves in a discursive dimension of spatial concepts and performs through the structuring of argument. This more detailed proposition

was underpinned by theoretical notions of spatial planning, in particular, notions that explain and detail how attention to spatial development is facilitated in spatial-planning decision-making. Notions concerned visions, governance, a decision-centred view on planning, and discourse. To stabilise the proposition an in-depth case-study research was carried out (see above). Results highlighted the need for attention on a pragmatic use of regional design in the realms of spatial planning and governance. They led to a further detailing of the logics of spatial representation and the dimensions of concepts distinguished earlier. Notions emphasising regional design as a form of territorial management were supported by a review of the planning literature featuring the key words identified earlier.

A search to understand pragmatic behaviour in spatial planning led to a refinement of the initial analytical framework. It also brought critical remark on the use of spatial concepts, visions, and visualisations to the foreground and thus emphasised spatial-planning frameworks as determinants of performances of regional design. In a second stage of theory formation, aspects of frameworks that influence regional design were investigated. From the outset, there was the recognition that spatial concepts incorporate reservoirs of meanings in their dimensions. During the second stage of theoretical reflection these reservoirs gained accelerated attention. They were equated with a given room for interpretation. A broad body of literature related to the notion of flexibility came under investigation. New key concepts were indicative planning, flexibility and certainty, plan-led and development-led planning, choice in argumentative planning practice and discretion. Theoretical notions on these topics were used to stabilise the assumption that room for interpretation matters for design. They finally led to a classification of spatial concepts by their degree of ambiguity and the assumption that such ambiguity confines regional design as a rule-building practice, or discretionary action. The proposition that room for interpretation informs performances of regional design was tested during a multiple case-study analysis (see above).

Theoretical notions on (regional) design were considered from the outset of theory building. They were used to underpin initial assumptions on regional design as a communicative and collaborative planning practice, the importance of spatial representations in regional design and also a relation between design proposals and institutionalised geographies. However, at this stage of theory formation a broader body of design theory came under investigation. It was used to verify that design is argumentative, a form of rule-building, and influenced by a given 'epistemic freedom'. It thus contributed to the final position that regional design, when used in the realm of spatial planning, seeks to justify planning by a consideration of its impact on local situations and that it, as such a discretionary action, either evolves as pragmatic behaviour or as a form of advocacy. Predicted related implications

were, in a last stage, supported by notions on governance and verified through an empirical analysis of the institutionalisation of regional design in Dutch national spatial planning.

For theory formation it is important that simplicity of theoretical notions is maintained. The major analytical complex that emerged during theoretical reflection concerns was (1) spatial concepts, categorised in an analytical, normative, and organisational dimension, as well as a degree of ambiguity and (2) spatial representations, categorised in an analytical, normative and organisational logic. These notions were sustained over the course of theory formation.

Theory formation is supported by discussions on concepts and categories with other scholars. During the course of the dissertation several opportunities for exchange were created. The most important of these events are listed in Table 2.2 (below). Appendix C incorporates a more detailed account of the issues that found attention.

TABLE 2.2 Exchange on regional design during theory formation

| Round table: Emerging Regional Design in an Era of Co-governance and Co-evolution | |
|---|---|
| **Date:** 10th July 2014 **Location:** Utrecht University, Utrecht, the Netherlands | **Host:** The round table discussion was organised as part of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) 2014 Annual Conference 'From Control to Co-evolution' **Organisers:** Verena Balz, Wil Zonneveld, Department of Urbanism, Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), Delft, the Netherlands |
| **Mapping the City - A Seminar on Comparative City Analysis and Mapping** | |
| **Date:** 29th October 2014 **Location:** Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (AMS) – Royal Institute of the Tropes (KIT), Amsterdam, the Netherlands | **Host:** Van Eesteren-Fluck & Van Lohuizen Foundation (EFL), the Archives of the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta) at the ETH Zürich, and the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (AMS) **Organisers:** Verena Balz, Rotterdam, the Netherlands **Documentation:** Balz (2014) |
| **Shaping regional futures: Mapping, designing, transforming!** | |
| **Date:** 14th -15th October 2015 **Location:** Oskar von Miller Forum, Munich, Germany | **Host:** Agnes Förster, Alain Thierstein, Chair of Urban Development, Munich University of Technology (TUM), Germany **Co-organisers:** Verena Balz, Wil Zonneveld, Department of Urbanism, Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), the Netherlands **Documentation:** Förster et al. (2016) |
| **Shaping Regional Futures: Design and Visioning in Governance Rescaling** | |
| **Date:** 18th -19th May 2017 **Location:** Medici Riccardi Palace, Luca Giordano Conference Hall, Florence, Italy | **Host:** Valeria Lingua, Giuseppe De Luca, Chair of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Florence (UNIFI), Italy **Co-organisers:** Verena Balz, Wil Zonneveld, Department of Urbanism, Delft University of Technology (TU Delft) and Alain Thierstein, Lukas Gillard, Chair of Urban Development, Munich University of Technology (TUM), Germany **Documentation:** Attendees of the conference contribute to the forthcoming book titled Shaping Regional Futures: Design and Visioning in Governance Rescaling (Lingua and Balz, 2019) |

3 # From concept to projects: Stedenbaan, the Netherlands

ABSTRACT    As cities tend to spread and coalesce into lower density urban regions, public transport systems are evolving from mono-centric hierarchical structures into multi-nodal horizontal networks. This evolution of metropolitan regions with a multitude of relations and dependencies require not only new forms of transport but also new methods of spatial planning. The biggest danger to an emerging metropolitan area is that of fragmented development and consequently missed opportunities. The project *Stedenbaan* strives to establish a planning context within which cities are not competitors but partners that work on diverse and complementary developments.

KEYWORDS    Regional design, transit oriented development, Randstad, the Netherlands

## 3.1   The South Wing of the Randstad

*Zuidvleugel*, literally South Wing, is the name given to the densely populated 60-by-40-kilometre area in the Dutch province of South Holland. The South Wing is part of the Randstad conurbation that has historically evolved around the Rijn delta and forms today, with Schiphol (one of the largest airports in Europe) and the harbour of Rotterdam an important link between European and global networks. The Randstad is embedded in a set of other European regions: the regions around Greater London, around Antwerp and Brussels, Lille and the Ruhr.

The Randstad is the largest and economically most important urban network in the Netherlands. However, over the last few years the Randstad's international competitive position has deteriorated in comparison with other metropolitan regions of Europe. This decline is also reflected in the economic development of the southern part of the Randstad, the South Wing. Since 2003, the South Wing Administrative Platform, a partnership of the South Holland provincial council, local and regional authorities in the area, has been carrying out extensive research into the region's problems and future prospects. This research has provided the basis for a number of coordinated operations in which the partners work together to strengthen the South Wing's internal cohesion and economic competitiveness. The South Wing Administrative Platform and the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment have developed a joint strategy for the area, which gives special attention to the improvement of infrastructural networks; both road and public transport (Bestuurlijk Platform Zuidvleugel, 2006, p.7). The urgency to improve accessibility in an area that functions as an international logistics and distribution centre has been underlined in governmental advice to the region and reports of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2007, p.102-11).

## 3.2   Regional transport in the South Wing

The South Wing area has three and half million inhabitants and one and a half million employed people, making it one of Europe's most densely populated regions. This high population density is not concentrated in one centre, but is spread out over a large area. Few places within the urbanized area of the South Wing have a higher

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density than 120 inhabitants per hectare, but on the other hand, few have a lower density than 30 inhabitants per hectare. Urbanization in the South Wing has been polycentric; there are multiple centres such as The Hague and Rotterdam, and many smaller subsidiary centres. In this respect the region differs from other metropolises such as London or Paris, which have evolved around a dominant centre with a concentration of inhabitants and jobs.

Mobility within polycentric regions depends on well coordinated, fine mesh networks. The existing infrastructural network in the South Wing largely consists of parallel motorways and railway lines. This primary network is used simultaneously by international, national, regional and local transport, and is rapidly becoming clogged. It has been pointed out that within this situation a switchover to a more extensive and integrated network in which links are differentiated according to travelled distance and types of use is needed (Ministeries van V&W and VROM, 2004, p.58).

Research showed that the predominant amount of trips in the South Wing take place within a radius of between ten and forty kilometres. This connotation led to special attention to measures accommodating these kinds of regional trips within an overall transport strategy. The strategy aspires to give regional public and private transport a position of its own right in between local, national and international connections. In 2006 the opening of *Randstadrail*, a light rail connection between Rotterdam and The Hague, has been an important first step in this direction. Preparations are under way for a next generation of projects that will help create a public transport network at regional level. *Stedenbaan* is one of them.

## 3.3 Stedenbaan

The *Stedenbaan* (City Line) will not implement new rail connections but will improve service on the already existing historically oldest rail lines within the South Wing. The *Stedenbaan* uses free capacity on three trajectories between Schiphol-Dordrecht, The Hague-Gouda and Rotterdam-Gouda. The capacity comes free since international trains will from 2008 run on a newly established high speed train corridor, the HSL line, stretching from the Belgian border to Amsterdam and thus connecting the Netherlands to Antwerp, Brussels and Paris. The extra capacity on the old rail lines will be used to improve regional transport in two ways: a more frequent intercity service will serve the large and medium stations and a more frequent 'Sprinter' service will increase service

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from four times to six times per hour and serve, beside the large stations, stations in the smaller cities, the suburban city extensions and the rural villages along the line. Together with the introduction of more modern train equipment, these improvements are supposed to lead to a metro-type service among the 34 existing and 13 potentially new stations along the *Stedenbaan* lines (Figure 3.1).



**32** Existing station areas
**2** New station areas
**13** Potentially new station areas
Influence area of other public transport systems
Urbanized areas
Province of South Holland
Stedenbaan

ATELIER ZUIDVLEUGEL

FIG. 3.1 City Line stations

The improved train service is also supposed to provide a strong stimulus for spatial development in the related station areas. The parties who have initiated the *Stedenbaan* project, regional and provincial governments and the cities of The Hague and Rotterdam, have chosen to include this effect into a development strategy for the project. This strategy of integrated spatial and network development is referred to as the dual purpose strategy. It has two objectives:

- The creation of a high frequency public transport system on the existing national rail network
- An intensification of land uses around the stations on the rail network

The dual purpose strategy rests on the assumption that transportation and spatial development influence each other. To identify the various links between urban development and the development of infrastructure networks and to expose their development potentials, will not only improve overall accessibility in the South Wing, it will also be a crucial element in formulating a growth strategy for the region. In this way the *Stedenbaan* project is supposed to have an important impact on the economic development and physical appearance of the metropolitan region, as well as its environmental, social and cultural potential (Bestuurlijk Platform Zuidvleugel, 2006).

## 3.4 Planning context

The South Wing has a complex administrative structure. Beside state, provincial and local governmental layers, a range of intergovernmental bodies with a wide variety of responsibilities exist. In the Dutch planning culture many planning and development control powers are devolved to regional and particularly local authorities. The only spatial plans that are legally binding on private parties, for example, are local land use plans. Apart from a few major infrastructure and urban projects of national importance, most urban and infrastructure developments that exceed the boundaries of a single local authority have to be initiated, developed, coordinated and managed by provincial authorities or coalitions of local authorities. These constellations of administrative and political bodies are either statutory or informal arrangements and often in partnership with private developers and other stakeholders such as transport companies. Initiatives by these groups often have to be developed through a complex process of agenda-setting and negotiation in order to find consensus among the actors. The South Wing Administrative Platform who has been establishing the *Stedenbaan* project is an example of such a hybrid coalition. It consists of political representative's of the five involved city regions, the province of South Holland and of the major cities Rotterdam and The Hague. Other crucial parties in the *Stedenbaan* project are the national rail company NS, the private development sector and the national government.

In 2005 the Province of South Holland established the *Atelier Zuidvleugel* (South Wing Studio) to focus on the spatial effects of the increasingly complex and widespread social and economic interactions within the South Wing and to facilitate discussion between the various stakeholders in the area. Apart from the parties involved in the South Wing Administrative Platform the studio is also supported by the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) and a set of research programmes.

The South Wing Studio has been asked to develop the double purpose strategy based on insight into the relations between spatial and infrastructural development into a project involving 20 cities, five city regions, one provincial council, bodies of the national government and private stakeholders.

## 3.5  Spatial survey

The mandate of the South Wing Administrative Platform to the Studio South Wing has been formulated in a request for a spatial survey of the station areas that are related to the *Stedenbaan*. The spatial survey adds to and builds up upon a series of other studies examining several aspects of the *Stedenbaan* project. The national railway company, who will run the *Stedenbaan* service, carried out a feasibility study. A study on housing offers and demands researched how the *Stedenbaan* project can contribute to the transformation of the station areas that are now, compared to Dutch averages, less multifunctional and more strained by social problems (Mattemaker and Brouwer, 2005). Another study researched the potential differentiation of station areas based on existing facilities and travel patterns (Boelens, 2005).

The spatial survey that has been accomplished by the Studio South Wing between 2005 and 2006 provides an overview of present and future spatial conditions in the station areas along the *Stedenbaan* line and reveals the opportunities for their development. The study also shows the benefits of coordinating development in the 47 existing and potentially new station areas (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2006a).

The survey was carried out in three stages, examining (a) what developments are feasible in terms of quantity, (b) what developments are most promising, and (c) what local developments are desirable in terms of their contribution to the development objectives for the South Wing region as a whole.

## 3.6  Feasible developments

As a first step, an inventory was made of the areas within the spheres of influence of the *Stedenbaan* stations that will undergo change between 2010 and 2020. This inventory was based on plans drawn up by local and regional authorities, and hence provides a widely accepted picture of the future development space around the stations (Figure 3.2).
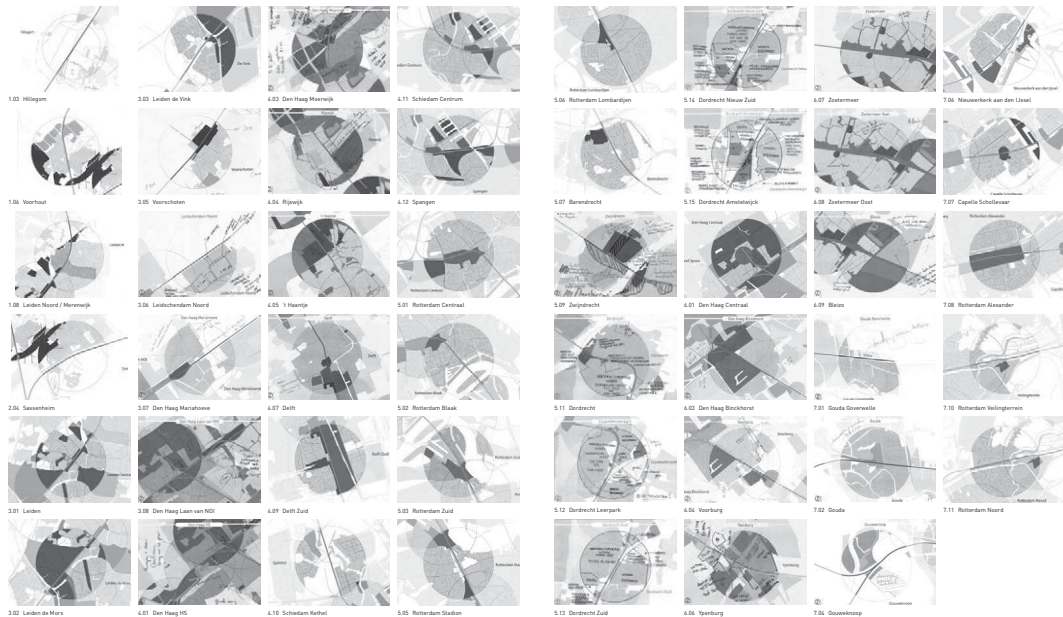


FIG. 3.2  Plans drawn up by local and regional authorities

In order to account for the high amount of cyclists in the Netherlands, the catchment area of *Stedenbaan* stations has been, fixed to a relative to international standards large radius of 1,200 m. The zones within this radius of the *Stedenbaan* stations have a combined area of 18,000 hectares, or about a quarter of the urbanised area of the South Wing. About 20 per cent of this area will be subject to development between 2010 and 2020 (Figure 3.3). The local authorities have designated many of the station areas as housing or mixed use zones. Employment zones are also projected, mainly in the form of business sites rather than single use office parks.

The results of this inventory indicated that the initial targets for new uses set by the city regions can be met in station areas. If the land is developed at the average densities already found along the *Stedenbaan* line, the area around the stations will be able to accommodate more than 40,000 dwellings and 1,000,000 square metres of office space. Besides identifying a feasible development programme, this first step provided an overview of ongoing and projected spatial transformations along the line, a crucial basis for the exchange of ideas in a development project consisting of several dispersed but interconnected locations.



Area of influence around stations
2500 ha. transformation space existing stations
700 ha. transformation space projected stations
Urbanized areas
Province of South Holland
Stedenbaan

ATELIER ZUIDVLEUGEL

FIG. 3.3  Spatial transformation areas along City Line

## 3.7 Promising developments

The dual purpose strategy is based on developing a traffic and transport concept in combination with spatial development. However, this integrated urban and network development is not just a simple equation for delivering a given number of trips and more intensive land use. Mobility networks influence a variety of spatial characteristics, such as the size of cities and towns, the intensity of functions, the degree of mixed use and the decentralization of activities (see Banister, 2005, p.7-128). In turn, spatial characteristics influence the development and use of networks.

Most of the station areas along *Stedenbaan* are, although not intensively used at present, already built up. The main uses consist of housing, employment and mixed use functions. The second step of the survey consisted of an inventory of the existing relations between spatial conditions and networks along the *Stedenbaan* line. These relations were determined using a set of indicators which describe the positions of the stations within the network and characteristics of the surrounding areas that are potentially influenced by the network: (a) the degree of access by public transport and (b) by car, (c) local densities of inhabitants and jobs, and (d) the degree of mixed use.

Drawing on existing knowledge about how spatial and network development influence each other, nine potential developments were outlined for nine typical situations found along the *Stedenbaan* (Figure 3.4). These nine potential developments can be seen as '*Stedenbaan typologies'*. They describe development opportunities that are promising since they are based on the expected impacts of the transport network on specific areas and vice versa. The nine '*Stedenbaan* typologies' are described briefly below.

— **Rural Areas:** spaces in the middle of the landscape for housing development in the countryside and recreational use.
— **Small Towns:** new housing sites close to small towns that can expand into autonomous, compact, lively, multifaceted communities set in the countryside.
— **Outskirts of Cities:** restructuring areas on the quiet, spacious and green edges of the cities; these qualities can be consolidated, enhanced and used.
— **Cities of the Future:** easily accessible and dense housing areas; can gradually expand into mixed use developments with their own identity.
— **Business Sites:** extensively used areas along the motorway to be turned into intensively used employment zones.

- **Regional Crossroads:** areas linked to one of the major motorway intersections in the South Wing; highly suitable for developing services with a supra-regional function.
- **Randstad Hubs:** not intensively used areas, but highly accessible by road and local public transport; excellent places for experimental new employment and mixed use areas.
- **Creative Cities:** urban centres accessible by every mode of transport, well suited to new urban-type dwellings and creative workplaces.
- **City Centres:** key sites, well served by every mode of public transport but less accessible by car; will have to be better designed for users of public transport.



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **APT** | Degree of access by public transport | |
| **AC** | Degree of access by car | |
| **DMU** | Degree of mixed use | |
| **DIJ** | Local density of inhabitants and jobs | |
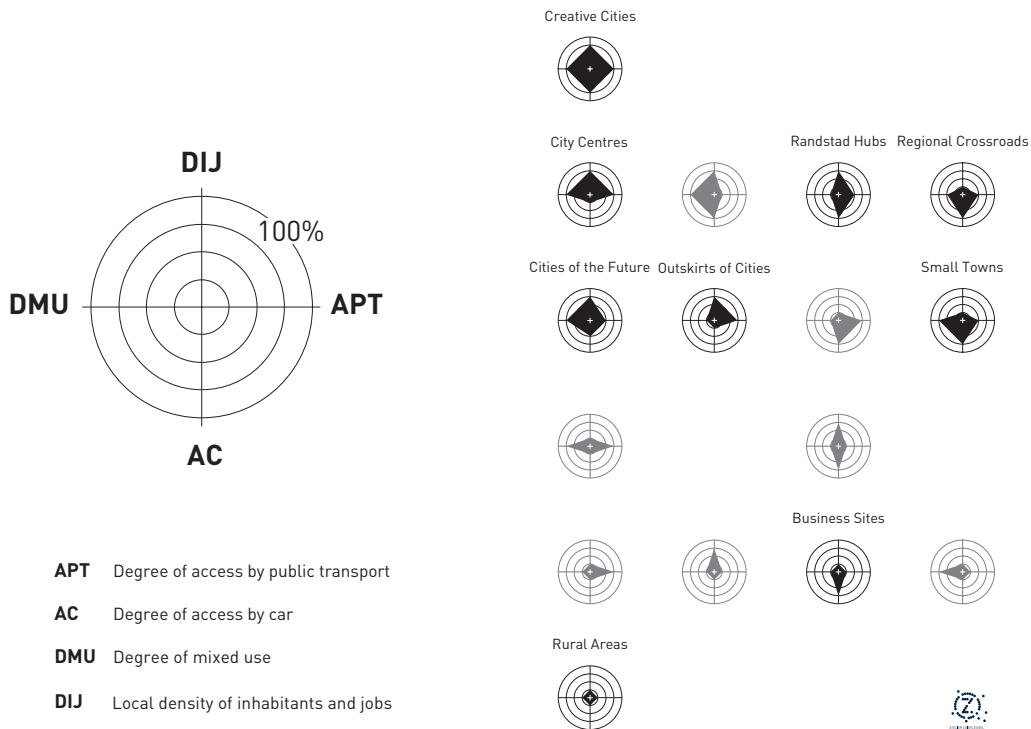
FIG. 3.4 Nine potential developments

The existing station areas often correspond closely to one particular typology. For example, the area around Rotterdam Central Station closely matches the City Centre typology; while a set of station areas that lie in open land between the large cities are more like the Rural Area typology. However, most station areas have a combination of indicators that corresponds to two or more different typologies (Figure 3.5).

The results of this analysis illustrate the existing potentialities of the stations based on the strength of their position in the network and their spatial characteristics. They also show what characteristics of the network or the station area must be changed in order to encourage a particular development.



FIG. 3.5 Overview of potentialities

## 3.8 Desirable developments

The integrated planning of urban development and network development can make use of the interactions between them not only to ensure better access within the South Wing, but also to make a broad impact on the economic development, the social and cultural potential and the physical appearance of this metropolitan area. For instance, urban sprawl and fragmentation of the landscape are caused partly

by the growth of high speed travel. The low density this creates in turn reduces the support base for services and so generates even more travel. Higher densities will make public transport viable and good multimodal access is an important characteristic and prerequisite for attractive and sustainable mixed use areas.

The coalition of public parties involved in *Stedenbaan* – over 20 local authorities, five city regions, one provincial council and central government – have set a broad range of goals for the future development of the area. Furthermore, commercial and semi public organisations are also interested in a regional coordination of local development owing to ambitions such as the broadening of markets and the therefore required differentiation of housing and working environments within a metropolitan area. Unsurprisingly, there are conflicts between some of the objectives of the various stakeholders in the region and between the different administrative levels (local, regional, provincial and national).

Following the inventory of development sites in the *Stedenbaan* station areas and the review of the potentialities, the last stage of the spatial survey explored possible aspirations for the *Stedenbaan* project. Three scenarios were used to assess how these potentialities of the local areas can be exploited to achieve the goals that are set at the level of the South Wing. The *Stedenbaan* scenarios show how local choices can support objectives at a higher scale, and therefore also show how the ambitions of the *Stedenbaan* project can steer decision making at the local level.

The nine potential developments that were described in stage two of the survey (the typologies) contribute to the higher level goals set out in the scenarios in varying degrees. At the same time the existing station areas often have conditions that correspond to more than one particular typology. In each scenario the typologies are assigned to the station areas based on their best contribution to the goal of the scenario. The scenarios are outlined below.

## The Densification scenario

This scenario is in line with the National Spatial Strategy, which states that from a traffic/transport perspective it is important to make maximum use of the potential for densification within the sphere of influence of transport hubs in order to create attractive cities and towns.

## The South Wing Network scenario

In this scenario the metropolis is not defined as a single urban planning concept, but as a coherent programmatic whole. The scenario offers maximum diversity of services and locations within given temporal and spatial constraints. The quality of the location is based on accessibility and on the sites designated for housing, recreation and employment. The main goal within this scenario is the formation of networks.

## The Sustainability scenario

The aim of this scenario is sustainable development. Great value is placed on the potentialities for densification in existing urban areas, for mixed use, and hence more sustainable, development, and which preserve the characteristic cultural landscape of the South Wing. These potentialities support densification only where it will generate passengers for public transport and not in places where it is also likely to generate a good deal of vehicular traffic.

The modelled scenarios have been explored in a multi criteria analysis. The criteria that were established are the realization of the ambition for new houses set by the city regions, the satisfaction of projected qualitative and quantitative market demands for houses and offices, the increase of diversity of housing and working environments, the increase of public transport trips, an estimated increase of car use based on the supply of regional facilities and the reliance on car accessibility per typology, the use of already built up city area and consequently the preservation of open land.

The analysis shows that in all scenarios the quantitative goals for new housing and employment sites are met. In the Densification scenario the projected amounts for housing are even doubled, however the amounts of new housing in dense urban setting goes far beyond the projected market demand for these types of housing environments. The Densification scenario also demonstrates that, if densification is the leading goal, a one sided supply of working environments develops. The South Wing Network scenario delivers a much lower volume of development in terms of square metres of floor space, but illustrates that a broad variety of both housing and employment environments can be achieved along the *Stedenbaan* line. It also demonstrates how an emerging regional public transport network can contribute to the diversification of uses. However, the high proportion of development with regional functions will generate additional car traffic. The positive effects of the Sustainability scenario can be seen in the outcomes for the environment and the preservation of open landscape. As expected, this scenario generates the least amount of car traffic.

The results of the last stage of the spatial survey create, besides inspiration for a discussion on ambitions that the project *Stedenbaan* can aspire to, the understanding of the benefits of a coordinated development of the 47 local station areas along the *Stedenbaan*. The results also make it possible to pinpoint the strategically crucial station developments. Some of the station areas show, because of their preconditions, an only small variety of potentialities. Other station areas have a broad range of choices among development opportunities and are, since these developments serve different goals, more decisive for the achievement of these goals.

## 3.9 The process

The spatial survey has been published in 2006 and forms since then content of a broad range of processes that make the project *Stedenbaan* operational. In principle these processes can be distinguished in two consecutive types. In both types the insights into the mutual impact of local and regional developments that the spatial survey provides play a central role.

The first type of processes leads to signed agreements on quantitative and qualitative goals that are aimed at by the *Stedenbaan* project. The agreements are made between authorities and organisations operating on regional or national scale levels such as the city regions, the national rail company and the national government. The spatial survey inspires these processes by defining and refining the goals that the *Stedenbaan* project can strive for. The results of the scenarios, compared to predicted market demands, demonstrate that the coordination of local spatial developments is crucial for achieving a coherent regional development. Specifically the conclusion, that the ambition for densification is not sufficient, but that the diversification of living environments is an equally important objective, gains attention in the resulting documents (Bestuurlijk Platform Zuidvleugel, 2007). The importance of the survey stems from the fact that its conclusions for the regional level are deducted from thorough research on the local conditions of the existing station areas.

A first declaration of the intention to realize up to 40,000 new dwellings and 1,000,000 square metres of new office space in station areas has been signed in 2005 by the members of the Administrative Platform South Wing. This ambition

has been confirmed by the results of the spatial survey and has consequently been adopted by the city regions. The commonly shared ambition for increasing the amount of houses and office space is crucial for the infrastructural development of the *Stedenbaan*. The national rail company NS has, since their feasibility study has indicated the requirement of additional travellers, signed a declaration of intent to increase frequency of service on the *Stedenbaan*. Other future agreements aim to stir the diversification of living environments along *Stedenbaan*, the concentration of commercial and leisure facilities around the stations, the establishing of a coherent regional park and ride system and bike storage system, the realization of four new stations and the increase of track capacity specifically on the intensively used line between Rotterdam and The Hague.

The second type of processes concerns the ongoing negotiation between the local municipalities to assign development profiles to the local station areas. In these processes the objectives that are set out for the project *Stedenbaan* are applied and finally translated into the formal spatial land use plans of the cities. In principle the municipalities tend to take their decisions about land uses according to local market demands. In a metropolitan area as the South Wing, where economical and social parties position themselves in a regional rather than a local context, this practice can become a critical factor. It leads to the repetition of types of developments, consequently a reduced support base for them and little choice amongst them. The negotiation process on quantitative and qualitative development profiles along the *Stedenbaan* line resolves the problem by steering not only for the densification of uses in the local station areas but also for more diversification of developments within the region. Private stakeholders such as large housing corporations underline the importance of this strategy and assure their support.

The spatial survey was an initial to these processes by establishing a broad understanding of the benefits of regional coordination of local developments. It contributes to the negotiation by creating an overview of potential developments in the station areas. The applied station typologies form a robust framework in this negotiation. Since the typologies are deducted from commonly acknowledged development criteria such as density, diversity and the position that a location has within the overall infrastructural network, an examination of all station areas with regards to these criteria delivers the possibility to compare their potentialities to each other. Another important base for negotiation was established through the inventory of the areas within the spheres of influence of the *Stedenbaan* stations that will undergo changes between 2010 and 2020. This research allows all municipalities to relate the results of the spatial survey back to the input that they originally gave.

The municipalities agreed in 2007 on the quantitative benchmarks for the increase of dwellings per city region. In a second phase of the discussion, starting in 2008, they will assign qualitative development profiles to the station areas. This phase of the negotiation will include next to the public sector also private stakeholders. The progress of development will be supervised by *Stedenbaan* coordinators that have been appointed by the city regions in 2007. The development of all station areas will be monitored by the project group *Stedenbaan*. A constantly updated inventory of spatial and infrastructural development will be made accessible to all involved stakeholders through an internet based interface.

## 3.10 From potentials to concrete ambitions

Western European cities have a tendency to spread and coalesce into low density urban regions. As new centralities emerge within these urban fields, public transport systems are evolving from monocentric hierarchical structures into multi-nodal horizontal networks. The *Stedenbaan* project in the South Wing of Randstad Holland contributes to the emergence of such a regional public transport network and supports a coordinated spatial development of the region. Because interaction within the region transcends traditional planning boundaries it addresses a number of questions, such as: Which developments should be planned and managed at the regional level? How much coordination among government authorities and between government authorities and market players is necessary? Which quality standards should be set and enforced at higher levels? And how can all this be organised and managed?

The spatial survey by the South Wing Studio contributes to the ongoing development of the *Stedenbaan* project and the South Wing as a whole. The first and foremost task of the survey was to put the *Stedenbaan* project onto the regional planning agenda. The survey has been published in 1,200 copies and distributed to all stakeholders. It has been repeatedly presented and discussed in many occasions and in front of a broad variety of audiences, ranging from parliament delegates, local aldermen; scientific staff at conferences to the general public. It has also been published in several national and international magazines, exhibited at the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam and has been featured in local television broadcasts. Through this publicity campaign, the project received the attention required to perpetuate the political processes that make it happen.

Synergy and commitment can be stimulated by giving all the parties, both public and private, access to the same information and basic understanding. The parties involved do not have to make rash undertakings, but can work in a situation in which plans and development programmes are continually coordinated, refined and readjusted. The stakeholders can work in a network structure whose components are flexible and can respond to new developments. A sound, flexible and transparent process is vital for a project that encompasses the metropolitan area of South Holland, involves a wide variety of actors and will take half a generation to complete.

Last but not least the study assesses the merits of the project not only for the 47 individual station locations but for the entire South Wing. It provides a broad understanding of which qualities can be achieved at the regional level by a large scale project such as *Stedenbaan*: the satisfaction of property market and transport demands within the region, the creation of a variety of complementary living and working environments that offer a wide choice and flexibility to meet changes in market demands, and development that is environmentally and socially sustainable. These qualities are rooted in and steered by the existing potentialities of both, places and network found along the *Stedenbaan* line. They are therefore credible and raise comprehension for the needs and benefits of transforming existing urbanized areas instead of accommodating spatial claims on new land.

Emerging metropolitan regions require not only new forms of transport but also new methods of spatial planning. The biggest danger to the evolution of a cohesive metropolitan area is that of fragmented development and consequently missed opportunities. The project *Stedenbaan* strives to establish a context within which cities are not competitors anymore but partners that work on the basis of diversity and complementarities. It is assumed that with this approach the South Wing can utilize its potentialities better. The Administrative Platform South Wing has made this its core objective. The strategy is thereby not imposed from higher level governmental institutions but instead involves all stakeholders, provides them with information, insights, inspiration and a platform to exchange knowledge. In this sense *Stedenbaan* is a typical product of the contemporary network society, routed in common ambitions and driven by the will to cooperate.

# 4 Regional design in the context of fragmented territorial governance: South Wing Studio

ABSTRACT    In the Netherlands, the formation of governance arrangements around planning issues that cross administrative boundaries has been assisted frequently by a design approach that is often referred to as "regional design". This is a distinctive method of policy argumentation that makes use of spatial representations of the plausible future of regions. Such representations are intended not only to indicate physical changes, but also to stimulate debate on sharing responsibilities and resources for planning tasks among planning actors. This paper contributes to a better understanding of the performance of regional design in the context of fragmented regional governance through a case study in the southern part of the Randstad in the Netherlands. We argue that regional design has contributed to institutional capacity in a complex polycentric and, looking at the governance structure, pluricentric region like the Randstad South Wing, largely by allowing for multiple interpretations.

## 4.1 Introduction: Regional design and its performance

### 4.1.1 The rise of design-led approaches in Dutch regional planning

Since the early 1990s, planning approaches in European regions have shifted as a result of the influence of emerging spatial patterns of interaction and movement, and, alongside, "a relative decline of the role of the state, a growing involvement of nongovernmental actors in a range of state functions, the emergence of new forms of multi-agency partnerships and more flexible forms of networking at various spatial scales" (Davoudi, 2008, p.63). The Netherlands is no exception. Here, a new planning approach has emerged, where ".... planners [...] began to promote constructive ways into actively developing new perspectives for the future instead of merely relying on protective and prohibitive regulation [...]" (Salet and Woltjer, 2009, p.236). The new approach has been characterized "... by a more involved and anticipatory activity by collaborating public and private agencies, stimulating the likelihood of implementation, rather than public agencies setting limits by decree" (Salet and Woltjer, 2009, p.236).

The emergence of what in more general terms is often described as strategic spatial planning has stimulated a search for processes and tools to support decision-making (Franzen et al., 2011). One approach which gained importance over the past decade was regional design. Quite a large number of initiatives have employed the design of spatial representations of the plausible future of regions in negotiations and decision- making about territorial change and spatial transformation (Hartman et al., 2011). Design processes have, for example, been used for the preparation of the Structural Vision Randstad 2040, an indicative framework for the development of the Randstad, published by the Dutch national government in 2008 (for a review of the making of this document, see Blank et al. (2009).

The aim of design-led approaches was not just to define physical interventions, but also to contribute to the creation of institutional and organizational capacity. This new development-oriented planning style calls for improved alignments between governmental agencies and societal actors. Many regional design initiatives have been taken by public authorities that have included private and civil actors (Hajer, 2005, Hajer et al., 2006). The idea was that regional design would help

spatial planning fall "on the ground", i.e. indicate territories that fit the capacities of governance arrangements and vice versa. Policy-makers also assumed that interactive design processes could, when employed at an early stage of policy-making, explicate interdependencies among planning issues at different scales, facilitate discussions and agreements on these and in this way help to avoid conflict, delay and costs at later stages (Ovink and Wierenga, 2009).

These approaches were strongly promoted by the national government. In 2008, several ministries, including the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (the names of these ministries have been changed since then), emphasized the importance of regional design as an approach to integrating spatial policies in complex, pluriform institutional settings (Projectgroep Visie Architectuur en Ruimtelijk Ontwerp, 2008). The ministry responsible for spatial planning, currently called the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, played an important role. For instance, it took the initiative in publishing a series of books called "Design and Politics" (Blank et al., 2009, Boeijenga et al., 2013, Boelens et al., 2010, Hajer et al., 2010, Ovink and Wierenga, 2009). The aim of these broadly distributed and heavily subsidized publications was to stimulate reflection on a large number of experiments carried out throughout the country. Ministerial support also went to specific design projects, one of them being the South Wing Studio.

### 4.1.2  The multiple performance of design

Although regional design has become increasingly important in the Netherlands, its use in and impact on planning processes are not yet fully understood. Whereas many regional design initiatives referred to multiple planning issues simultaneously, it remained unclear whether and, if so, how design-led approaches have influenced negotiations and decision-making on the empirical foundation, the underlying political principles or the ideas about territories that planning strategies incorporate. Under what conditions regional design has contributed to agreements on these issues (and the way they relate to each other), and therefore to institutional capacity-building, is also less understood.

One of the ways to consider these aspects of a planning strategy is according to Mastop and Faludi (1997) (Faludi and Korthals Altes, 1994) the examination of *performance*, a particular evaluation approach that has moved away from the classic means—ends scheme which only makes sense dealing with specific and well-defined operational policy or policy problem (Mastop and Faludi, 1997). The regional design

exercises which have drawn so much attention over the last few years were not simply meant to be implemented but to serve as signposts for subsequent decisions either on the level of actors (who is doing what with whom) or actions (what is to be done, when and how). In this sense, we have borrowed the performance approach from Mastop and Faludi who were seeking an evaluation approach which would match the nature of strategic spatial planning.

From a performance perspective, it is important to look at the effects of one of the fundamental characteristics of design, namely spatial representation. Authors such as Dühr (2006), Faludi (1996), Kunzmann (1996), Neuman (1996), Neuman (1998), Neuman (2010), Van Duinen (2004), (Van Duinen, 2013) and Zonneveld (2008) acknowledge that spatial representations (e.g. planning images, plans and maps) are a powerful medium in decision-making processes at the macro-scale and in complex organizational settings. These authors agree that images are open for multiple interpretations and thus act as "institution builders", as Neuman (1996, p.293) calls them. Images, in the perception of these authors, enhance the imaginative power of spatial planning and, by indicating territorial boundaries, constitute power structures and may produce agreement but also conflict.

Observing how spatial representations are used in spatial planning processes, some authors (Förster, 2009, Zonneveld, 2005a, Zonneveld, 2005b) have stressed that the objectives of their use are often mixed. The few authors who have empirically investigated the performance of design-based approaches in negotiation processes at higher levels (Carton and Enserink, 2006, De Jonge, 2009) came to similar conclusions: representations are used to indicate physical change, as well as to influence the organization of planning processes, the position and decisions of key actors in these process, and the deliberation of political norms and values. In a performance-based evaluation, the emphasis is on the latter.

### 4.1.3 The discursive dimension of planning concepts and design

In the context of regions with a high level of functional integration, strong interdependencies between places and elaborate informal governance arrangements, decision-making is a collaborative process of social construction that is intended to establish shared frameworks (Faludi, 2010, Healey, 2004). Regional design in such a context contributes to processes of framing: "selecting, organizing, interpreting, and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analyzing, persuading, and acting" (Rein and Schön, 1993).

In order to clarify the performance of regional design and spatial representations in processes of frame reflection, we relate design to the notion of planning concepts. According to Zonneveld and Verwest (2005), planning concepts describe the way that planning actors frame the spatial development and/or spatial structure of an area or locality. Davoudi (2003) has noted that planning concepts have two important dimensions. The *analytical* dimension seeks to explain spatial structures by providing a hypothesis on their formation. Such a hypothesis is derived from and supported by knowledge and information on the way that unplanned and unintended individual actions affect spatial development. The concept polycentrism, for example, provides the hypothesis that several equally ranking cities within a region tend to employ horizontal forms of cooperation. In their *normative* dimension planning, concepts are a metaphor for desirable spatial structures and are used as a guiding principle to achieve policy goals. The concept polycentrism, for example, is often used to promote cooperation among cities within regions, enabling them from a governance perspective to become less pluricentric.

When spatial representations are used in creating arguments (or in reflexive processes of learning and advocacy), one of their main purposes is to restructure the relations among the analytical and the normative dimension of planning concepts, thus linking scientific knowledge to political and ethical deliberation (Flyvbjerg, 2004). In this sense, there is a strong connection between how spatial representations function in the context of planning concepts and how textual expressions function in the context of discourse as "an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices" (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005, p.175). Spatial representations within a third, *discursive* dimension of planning concepts assist in knowledge co-production by (1) integrating analytical knowledge and (2) allocating *meaning* in politics and policy-making. Both types of representations can be investigated as *argumentations* in policy discourse.

Fischer (1995) categorizes four interrelated logics of policy argumentations on the basis of the level at which policies are discussed: (1) social choice, discussing normative core principles of policies; (2) societal vindication, discussing the compatibility of the policy with accepted political values and societal norms; (3) situational validation, discussing the relevance of a policy in the light of an analytically observable problem and (4) analytical verification, discussing the effectiveness of policies (summary based on Mathur et al. (2003), terminology adapted by authors). We applied this distinction in our case study to examine the purposes for which spatial representations were used by planning actors in different stages of design processes and whether logics of argumentations changed. The above framework is summarized in Figure 4.1.

TOC

**Planning concepts**

| Analytical Dimension | **Discursive Dimension** | Normative Dimension |
|---|---|---|
| Planning concepts provide a hypothesis on the formation of spatial structures. They are explanatory. | Planning concepts structure the contributions (arguments) of participants to a discussion. | Planning concepts are a metaphor for desirable spatial structures. They provide guiding principles and motivate action. |

**Regional Design**

- Integrates and explicates analytical knowledge.

- Allocates meaning in politics and policymaking?

**Performance**

Policy argumentation focuses on:

- Normative core principles.
- The compatibility of policies with values and norms.
- The relevance of a policy in the light of an analytically observable problem.
- The effectiveness of a policy in the light of this problem.

FIG. 4.1  Regional design in the context of planning concepts.

### 4.1.4  Unravelling the story of the South Wing Studio

The theoretical framework set out above was employed in a longitudinal single-case study to explore the multiple performance of regional design in a context of fragmented governance. For this purpose, (1) spatial representations produced in design processes were evaluated by their references to dimensions of the planning

concepts discussed above, and (2) how different spatial representations were used in policy argumentations was assessed. The case study's proposition—namely that regional design does, in the context of planning, perform in multiple ways—was explored by (3) analysing changing logics of policy argumentations.

The research was on a regional design process carried out by a design studio concerned about spatial development in the southern part of the Dutch Randstad region and funded by a governance arrangement among local, provincial and national planning authorities between 2005 and 2007. The case was considered appropriate, since when the studio was established, it was deliberately and explicitly associated with several planning processes simultaneously. Another reason to choose this case was the wide availability of documentation and information. The studio was obliged by its brief to intensively communicate with policy-makers throughout its existence. This obligation has resulted in a rich and transparent documentation of decision-making processes. In-depth information could also be obtained since one of the authors was a member of the South Wing Studio through-out its existence (2005 – 2007). We have to emphasize that it was not the original intent of this observer to conduct the sort of research presented in this paper.

The case is, more specifically, concerned with one of the several design processes that were carried out by the studio. This specific process was chosen since it was closely related to a more formal planning process, quite unlike the other design projects in which the studio was involved. This allowed the identification of a distinct set of stakeholders in the process together with an empirically based assessment of the design project in question.

Several techniques and data sources were used in the various stages of the case study. To underpin the general proposition of the exploratory research, practitioners' expectations about the regional design-led approach were identified through interviews with key actors in the arrangements. Respondents stemmed from different participating organizations. Questions were semi-structured, covering two main topics, that is, the initiative for the South Wing Studio (motivation, formation) and the approach taken by the studio (description and expectation). In addition, documents referring to the initiative (such as discussion notes, the studio's tender and briefs, and the studio's working programme) were reviewed on the expected performance of the design work of the studio.

To distinguish types of spatial representations, the scope of (or in more simple terms, the key to) consecutively produced representations was analysed. The allocation of representations to dimensions of planning concepts was underpinned by a review of design methods that were applied in the production of these representations. Further

insights were obtained through the analysis of textual descriptions in workbooks published by the studio and archive material that was made available for the research. The analysis of the use of spatial representations in policy argumentations was informed by the observations made by one of the authors of this paper, who was a member of the studio. Other information sources—namely archival data (correspondence with commissioners, presentations), an ex post evaluation of the studio's work and the results of interviews—were used to calibrate observations.

The performance of the regional design was analysed by reviewing publicly available policy documents that contain references to the design approach under investigation. Documentary evidence on changes in the logic of policy argumentations was deducted from changing policy objectives, organizations authoring documents, the status and audience of publications and degrees of formality of policies.

The remaining part of the paper is structured as follows. The following section discusses the establishment of the studio. Sections 3 and 4 are about one of the key projects in which the studio became involved—the *Stedenbaan* project, which was originally conceived as an infrastructure project but evolved into a transit-oriented development project. Section 3 is about this fundamental switch. Section 4 is about the complex governance issues that resulted from this more integrated approach towards transport and urban development. The concluding section (Section 5) returns to the conceptual framework discussed above.

## 4.2 South Wing Studio

### 4.2.1 The immediate cause: The emergence of the urban network concept

*Zuidvleugel*, literally South Wing, is the name given to the densely populated 60-by-40-kilometre area in the province of South Holland. The South Wing area has 3.5 million inhabitants and a labour force of about 1.5 million, making it one of Europe's most densely populated conurbations. These high densities are not concentrated in one centre, but are spread out across the two major cities of The Hague and Rotterdam and many smaller cities and municipalities. According to several authors

(Dijkink et al., 2001, Salet, 2006, Salet and Woltjer, 2009), the polycentric structure of this part of the Randstad Holland can at least partially be related to a high degree of organizational and governance complexity which results in rather weakly coordinated urban development.

In the early 2000s, the South Wing of the Randstad became conceptualized as one of the *Stedelijke Netwerken* (urban networks) in the Netherlands, a spatial concept which implies a desired level of spatial and organizational integration. Its introduction by the national government came after a long period in planning when the main Dutch cities were perceived as relatively autonomous entities which should develop along the lines of a compact city model. Seen from this perspective, the idea that groups of cities could form networks tied together by functional relations, physical infrastructure and connected government was rather innovative (Zonneveld and Verwest, 2005).

As is often the case, a new spatial concept such as urban networks is rather fuzzy in its content. This applies to both its empirical basis and how the concept is expected to perform in relation to concrete decision-making. Since its introduction, some have been concerned about the discursive dimension of the network concept (or: its usefulness in discursive planning practices), especially its organizing capacity in terms of stronger, more integrated regional governance. According to the director of the Department of Spatial Planning and Transport in the province of South Holland, the new concept—referred to as *Netwerkstad Zuidvleugel* (Network City South Wing) in official planning documents—was in need of refinement to effectively stimulate cooperation within the area. When he assumed office in 2002, his opinion was that the planning concept could not yet serve as a framework to support operational decision-making as it was not well understood. In his view, the South Wing was suffering from an abundance of plans, strategies and fierce competition between local planning actors and municipalities (Actor 1, province of South Holland).

Convinced that regional spatial planning in this context requires an improved under-standing of the spatial scope and scale of the concept Network City South Wing he started to lobby for *vrije denkruimte* (free thinking space). His hope was that an institution that is independent from the daily political routine and given the time to reflect would help the province as well as other planning actors to develop a regional frame of reference for decision-making. He identified three tasks to be assigned to what was later called *Atelier Zuidvleugel* (South Wing Studio: "the studio" from here on): (1) generate insight into spatial development that steers and raises the profile of regional territorial management; (2) specifically integrate the knowledge of the different planning sectors within the provincial organization about spatial development and (3) use this knowledge to design plausible futures for the South Wing region (Actor 1, province of South Holland).

His initiative was supported by the provincial executive and the provincial council (see Needham (2007) about competences). There were two contextual developments that were supportive for the claim that a regional approach towards spatial planning would become more important in the future. The first one was a general trend towards the decentralization of planning tasks promoted by several consecutive Dutch governments and emphasized in an authoritative report of the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000, NSCGP, 1999). The second trend was formed by the fundamental revision of the Spatial Planning Act which assigned a much clearer and proactive role for each of the three levels of administration, including the province (Needham, 2005, Spaans, 2006). A senior official in South Holland, looking back upon the first ideas about a design studio concluded: The Studio was intended to take a role in the transformation of the organisational structure of the province. It was asked to position the province in respect to other parties in regional spatial planning" (Actor 2, province of South Holland).

A second institution involved in setting up the studio was the South Wing Administrative Platform or *Bestuurlijk Platform Zuidvleugel* (BPZ). The BPZ was founded in 2000 to improve the coordination of urban development in the area. The members of the BPZ include the city regions in the South Wing, a number of other regional cooperation bodies, the municipalities of The Hague and Rotterdam and, most prominently, the province of South Holland. The financial and administrative resources of BPZ itself are minimal. It derives its organizational capacity predominantly from the will of its political representatives to cooperate and its success in securing national approval for projects and their funding (Dijkink et al., 2001).

The BPZ, the obvious prime protagonist of a network South Wing approach, was expected to embrace the initiative for the studio. However, right from the beginning of discussions about the formation of the studio, the partnership showed ambivalence. On the one hand, the studio was welcomed because it seemed to complement the aims of the BPZ itself (Actor 3, South Wing Studio). On the other hand, the studio was perceived to belong to the province and raised suspicion that it might enable the province to become a more powerful competitor for spatial planning tasks at the regional level. The director of the small office of the BPZ stated: "From my position at the BPZ I participate in the programming of the studio, but furthermore I don't feel that I am an owner" (Provincie Zuid-Holland, 2007, p.38, authors's translation). The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), which more or less introduced the urban network concept, embraced the initiative. The ministry was interested in supporting the diffusion of a network approach at lower levels of government (Actor 1, province of South Holland). The different aims, interests and perceptions associated with the initiative

resulted in a long preparation phase. After two years of discussions and negotiations among parties, the studio was finally set up in 2005 as an independent platform. The province of South Holland, the municipalities of The Hague and Rotterdam, the BPZ, the ministry of VROM and, at a later stage, two national knowledge networks (Transumo and Habiforum) lent their formal support to the studio. Although the province of South Holland paid the lion's share of the costs (90% of a total of €2 million), it wanted to keep its distance. The studio was led by an external urban design firm, its staff was recruited externally and it was supervised by a programme council in which all formal participants were represented.

### 4.2.2    The studio in practice

Informal notes on early discussions among the participating parties (Provincie Zuid-Holland, 2004a, Provincie Zuid-Holland, 2004b) show that from the beginning the studio was intentionally placed in the context of regional governance. Participants agreed on the governance issues that the studio was expected to address: (1) too few linkages between the many plans made for the area; (2) too little experience of and knowledge about design at the regional scale and the application of the concept network city and (3) too little attention to long-term planning objectives in plans (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2005). This shared problem perception demonstrates that the studio was instructed not only to promote the application of a network city approach at lower levels of government, but also to consciously include a multitude of local initiatives that together can serve as a "breeding ground" to make the network concept applicable and operational (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2006b, p.4).

Instructions about the scope of the work also emphasized policy integration. In the tender to external design firms, it was stated that work should relate to ongoing policy processes (only one of these was specified; see Section 3). Beyond this guideline, there was very little information on the policy issues that the studio was expected to address. The work programme, which was approved by the programme council in 2006, was written by the studio itself (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2006b). It was based on a review of policy documents from which three policy issues were extracted: (1) the integration of land-use and transport policies; (2) the position of peri-urban areas in regional urban strategies and (3) the functional integration of economic and social activities.

There was more concern about the way the studio would work. At an early stage of the initiative, the studio was characterized as a "catalyst" (Provincie Zuid-Holland, 2004a).In a later stage, this term was specified. The studio was expected

to fulfil three functions, as a discovery site (*Vindplaats*), a podium and a laboratory (Provincie Zuid-Holland, 2004b). As a discovery site, the expectation was that the studio would build up a body of knowledge and, more importantly, to infuse ongoing policy debates with this knowledge in order to move from tacit (individual) knowledge to explicit (shared) knowledge. In its function as a podium, the studio was expected, above all, to communicate through workshops and debates with experts, professionals and policy-makers. The laboratory—equated with design—was considered to be the most important function of the studio. However, notions of what an "appropriate" design method is and to what products design processes should lead remained rather vague. So the studio had to find its own way—and not without some difficulties, as will be discussed below.

As the analysis above shows, regional design in the case of the studio was perceived as a discursive practice. Spatial representations of the plausible future of the South Wing were expected—in the words of Carton and Enserink (2006, p. 166) to "assist the movement of arguments, serve as a supportive medium for sharing or distributing information and persuade actors." While the spatial scope of design projects (what to design) was only loosely described, it was clearly indicated that design processes (how to design) were to associate analytical knowledge to the interests and priorities of the planning actors involved. A critical distance, the studio's position at arm's length from day-to-day policy-making, was also carefully constructed.

The independence of the studio (its distance from the formal planning apparatus) was, however, relative. If we confront the studio practice with the content of Figure 4.1 and the preceding section, this means that the activity space of the studio was clearly demarcated in terms of the normative dimension of planning concepts as well as the sort of policy argumentations which the studio could address. The Network City concept, in spite of its fuzziness, provided guidance on the core principles of policies as well as accepted political values and societal aims. Spatial representations were to reflect on the effect and validity of policies in this framework. The hope was that reflection on both, analytical knowledge and the normative agendas of the many stakeholders in the area, would lead to agreement, i.e. an enlargement of institutional (organizational) capacity for more strongly coordinated urban development. We will come back to this in the concluding section. We will now discuss a concrete project of the studio—the *Stedenbaan* project—in order to shed light on the performance of the studio's regional design efforts.

## 4.3 Stedenbaan: First stage

### 4.3.1 The birth of the Stedenbaan project

In November 2002, the Dutch national government announced its intention to develop a new national spatial strategy, which would replace the 1988 Fourth Report on Spatial Planning. Among the issues to be addressed by the upcoming *Nota Ruimte* (National Spatial Strategy) was the improvement of public transport at the sub-regional level. Evidence provided by the Ministry of Transport has shown that growth in travel demand overwhelmingly takes place at this level. According to promoted ideas about decentralization, the cooperating bodies of the four main city regions of the Randstad as well as the (larger) Randstad wings were asked to propose measures to meet these demands.

The BPZ responded swiftly by proposing the *Stedenbaan* (City Line) project in the same year. The main objective of this project was initially to improve public transport service by increasing the frequency of trains on the three oldest rail lines within the South Wing: the lines between Leiden and Dordrecht, The Hague and Gouda, and Rotterdam and Gouda (Figure 4.2). In 2003, the province of South Holland proposed enlarging the scope of the *Stedenbaan* project by including a spatial dimension. The idea was that better public transport services would provide a strong stimulus for spatial development around stations, reducing the need for new sites for urban development elsewhere. At the same time, higher urban densities around stations would increase the use of trains, thereby making it more attractive for transport companies to invest in higher quality services. This approach became known as the *Dubbele Benuttingsstrategie* (Dual Utilization Strategy) (Platform Zuidvleugel, 2003).

In 2004, the national government included the project in the draft National Spatial Strategy and asked the various public administrations in the South Wing to substantiate its added value (Ministeries van VROM et al., 2004). This implies that there were implicit doubts about the feasibility and effectiveness of the project as well as the necessity of the national government's participation. The dominant perception within the department of Infrastructure and Water Management was that the project was just a vehicle to acquire government funding for investment in the rail infrastructure (Faling et al., 2006). In a memorandum (Ministeries van V&W and VROM, 2004, p.58) , the BPZ was asked to refute this by quantifying the potential mutual relationships between transport and spatial development.

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Meanwhile, the BPZ had invited the Dutch national railway company (NS) to become a partner in the project. The NS, although traditionally not engaged in spatial development strategies, proved to be open to negotiations. In the spring of 2005, on the basis of calculations and forecasts of travel demand (Onderwater and Holwerda, 2005), the NS indicated that a higher frequency of trains on the *Stedenbaan* lines would be feasible if a substantial number of new houses and offices in the South Wing (amounting to about 35% of the housing and 60% of the office space requirements projected for 2020) were built in the direct vicinity of *Stedenbaan* stations.



**32** Existing station areas
**2** New station areas
**13** Potentially new station areas
Influence area of other public transport systems
Urbanized areas
Province of South Holland
Stedenbaan

ATELIER ZUIDVLEUGEL

FIG. 4.2 Stedenbaan: rail lines and stations.

## The studio's first involvement: Analytical verification

*Stedenbaan* as a project had thus already started when the studio was established in 2005 (Bestuurlijk Platform Zuidvleugel, 2005). Under the umbrella of the BPZ, two committees, led by politicians from the larger municipalities and the province, were installed to take the project further. BPZ also set up a small organization for the daily management of the project. This organization, the *Stedenbaan* Steering Group, became the first commissioner of a design project given to the studio. The commission was called *Ruimtelijke Verkenning Stedenbaan* (*Stedenbaan* Spatial Inventory) and was placed in the context of the negotiations with the central government and NS mentioned above. The studio was asked to underpin the effectiveness of the spatial dimension of the project. The question posed to the studio was whether the increase in density required for an upgrade of the train service could be achieved; more specifically (as indicated by the NS) whether it is possible to build 40,000 houses and 1.2 million square metres of office space within the areas influenced by the *Stedenbaan* stations, given the fact that they are already largely built up (Stuurgroep Stedenbaan, 2005).

This commission raised a few eyebrows. Transport planners were quite sceptical about the compatibility of transport and land-use policies. Spatial planners from the province feared that the approach taken by the studio would not match very well with their way of working and might possibly even compete. Quite surprisingly— the studio was above all expected to work for the BPZ—was the fear within the management of the BPZ itself that the findings of the studio could undermine the political agreement reached between the city regions within the South Wing and the national government about the distribution of new houses across the area. In order to avoid conflict among its members, the BPZ indicated that the housing figures the studio had calculated had to be general and allocated across the South Wing as had been earlier agreed (Actor 3, South Wing Studio). So in terms of policy argumentation, the studio had to restrict itself to analytical verification (discussing the effectiveness of policies) and not even touch upon situational validation (discussing the relevance of a policy in the light of a problem) let alone societal vindication (discussing the compatibility of the policy with accepted political values and societal aims) and social choice (discussing core principles of policies). When it comes to the terminology developed for the studio, the laboratory function was, therefore, quite narrowly defined.

In a first attempt to respond to the commission, the South Wing Studio engaged in a search for analytical evidence. On the basis of an inventory of existing land uses and several calculations, the studio concluded that the potential for densification around the *Stedenbaan* stations was high, even higher than that required by NS.

This evidence was summarized in a spatial representation that classified areas around stations in terms of their potential for densification (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2006a, Chapter 2.2 for a description). Communicating the results to the city regions brought a dormant conflict to the foreground. A number of municipalities involved in the *Stedenbaan* project were not part of the statutory cooperation bodies formed around The Hague and Rotterdam such as the municipalities in the Dordrecht area. So their political weight within the BPZ partnership was less than the municipalities who were able to lean on their powerful cooperation bodies. What these "weaker" municipalities did was to use the *Stedenbaan* project as an opportunity to strengthen their importance in the regional policy network of the South Wing. They did this by objecting to the conclusions of the studio. In their view, the outcome of the work of the studio did not reflect their (sometimes higher) ambitions for densification and a more equal spread of dense living environments across the South Wing. This forced the studio to change course and address the densification issue from a normative point of view. The studio started to analyse the intentions of all municipalities regarding the future development of station areas, making use of the *Nieuwe Kaart van Nederland* (New Map of the Netherlands), showing all politically accepted future land- use plans in the country. The plans for the 42 *Stedenbaan* station areas were reproduced on postcards (Figure 4.3), which were sent to policy-makers in the 22 municipalities involved, asking them to confirm these plans or to redraw the postcard and enter into a discussion of their views.

This eventually resulted in the second spatial representation by the studio: a map (Figure 4.4). This map showed in outline the areas that municipalities had allocated for new urban land uses as well as the planned renewal of existing urban areas over the next 20 years (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2006c) (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2006b). In geographical terms, this narrowed down the earlier defined influence areas around the *Stedenbaan* stations, defined by average walking and cycling distances. At the same time, the representation abstracted from all sorts of detail assembled in the database of the studio which might interfere with the sensitive negotiations between the BPZ, national government and the NS which were taking place simultaneously.

Although the representation was shaped by an effort to integrate the different perspectives of the *Stedenbaan* project and the studio obviously aimed to proceed with caution, it initially met with opposition. At the management level of the BPZ, it raised the fear that the design proposal was still too detailed and would, therefore, stimulate all sorts of conflicts especially regarding the distribution of houses across the South Wing area. However, after initial irritations positive responses gradually gained the upper hand. It became clear that the work of the studio, specifically a next estimation of future densities based on municipal land-use plans, was instrumental in achieving an agreement between BPZ and NS: both organizations officially expressed

their will to cooperate and agreed that spatial and transport development in the *Stedenbaan* area were mutually connected (Gedeputeerde Staten van Zuid-Holland et al., 2006). In March 2006, this was laid down in a declaration of intent, which was followed up in December 2007 by a declaration of implementation (Provincie Zuid-Holland et al., 2007). The agreement—which still stands at the time of writing—is that if the BPZ can guarantee the realization of up to 40,000 new dwellings and 1.2 million square metres of new office space in station areas by 2020, the NS will increase the frequency of services on at least one of the *Stedenbaan* lines from four to six trains per hour.

In addition to this tangible impact (summarized in Bestuurlijk Platform Zuidvleugel, 2006), the design proposal had another, unforeseen political effect: it had caught the attention of a range of politicians involved in the BPZ, who started to actively promote the *Stedenbaan* project as one of their own core strategies (Actor 1, province of South Holland). The main reason for this to happen was that the design proposal produced by the studio gave the impression that the *Stedenbaan* project was already well on its way: the inventory undertaken by the studio showed that for the vast majority of station areas, development plans were already drawn up. Although most municipal land-use plans were not developed in conjunction with the *Stedenbaan* project, the spatial representation rendered a certain level of institutional capacity, i.e. a capability to move beyond mere analytical verification.

1.03 Hillegom

1.06 Voorhout

1.08 Leiden Noord / Merenwijk

2.04 Sassenheim

3.01 Leiden

3.02 Leiden de Mors

3.03 Leiden de Vink

3.05 Voorschoten

3.06 Leidschendam Noord

3.07 Den Haag Mariahoeve

3.08 Den Haag Laan van NOI

4.01 Den Haag HS

4.03 Den Haag Moerwijk

4.04 Rijswijk

4.05 't Haantje

4.07 Delft

4.09 Delft Zuid

4.10 Schiedam Kethel

4.11 Schiedam Centrum

4.12 Spangen

5.01 Rotterdam Centraal

5.02 Rotterdam Blaak

5.03 Rotterdam Zuid

5.05 Rotterdam Stadion

FIG. 4.3 Reproduction of municipal plans on postcards (selection).

Legend:

- Area of influence around stations
- 2500 ha. transformation space existing stations
- 700 ha. transformation space projected stations
- Urbanized areas
- Province of South Holland
- Stedenbaan

ATELIER ZUIDVLEUGEL

FIG. 4.4 Spatial representation assigning municipal land-use plans to the Stedenbaan project.

## 4.4 Stedenbaan: Next stage

### 4.4.1 Situational validation in the context of fragmented governance

The content of the next phase in the work of the studio aroused controversy. The *Stedenbaan* Steering Group (the official patron of the design project) opted for further detailing of the agreement between BPZ and NS through the setting up of a model to monitor local land-use development and the selection of single station areas as pilot projects—again work on a predominantly analytical level. Simultaneously, experts and political decision-makers in the BPZ stressed the need for widening the partnership in the direction of property developers and other market parties. The results of a research project commissioned by BPZ (Mattemaker and Brouwer, 2005) indicated the need for a stronger differentiation between urban environments along the *Stedenbaan* lines to correspond to future market demands.

During the first stage of the *Stedenbaan* project, the design work of the studio was driven by a clear problem definition, aim and organizational setting, whereas in the second stage of the process, the studio became more strongly concerned with the fragmented nature of decision-making in the context of regional governance. Communication—the podium function—has brought a multitude of planning actors to the foreground, each with different and sometimes conflicting objectives. In this situation, the studio made use of its relative independence. It chose, against the wishes of the steering group, to enter into a discussion about its prime *raison d'être*: reflecting on the need for regionally coordinated spatial development. This was strongly supported by senior officials of the province of South Holland, the main initiator and funding institute.

In the following stage of the design process, the studio consequently undertook efforts to shift arguments from being primarily concerned with analytical verification (Are policies effective?) to situational validation (Are the defined policy goals relevant to the problem?) (Mathur et al., 2003). The latter applied to *Stedenbaan*: "Is densification the right and only strategy given the objectives of regional authorities and partnerships?" Normative entries to this debate were available in abundance. Most prominently, the BPZ itself had promised to respond to the requests of the national government (Ministeries van VROM et al., 2005) and sought to explain how the *Stedenbaan* project could contribute to solving the main structural problems of the South Wing: a lack of economic vitality, social cohesion, accessibility and high quality housing and living environments and being threatened by unsustainable spatial development and the loss of "authentic" landscapes (Adviescommissie Zuidvleugel, 2000).

In order to change the logic of argumentation, the spatial representations were reframed. The core map, which was originally intended to show the potential for densification in individual station areas, was placed in the context of regional development:

... the *Stedenbaan* project provides in its area of influence the largest coherent transformation zone within South Holland for the coming 20 years and is thus a strong instrument for the development of the South Wing being a part of the Randstad. (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2006d, p.9)

Outcomes of earlier calculations were also given a new meaning. As mentioned above, the studio had concluded that the potential for densification in station areas exceeded the future densities required by the NS. This evidence was used to suggest that there is sufficient space and need for strategic regional planning. The initial prime arguments for regional coordination were: (1) station areas along the *Stedenbaan* line differ substantially from each other and (2) their transformation requires a consideration of market demands.

### 4.4.2   A new design proposal

In order to translate these arguments into a design proposal, the studio made use of an analytical model that has become widely known in the Netherlands in recent years: the Node-Place Model developed by the University of Amsterdam (Bertolini, 2008). The model was used to explore different scenarios for regional development: (1) the development of dense urban areas around all public transport stops, reflecting an overall densification strategy; (2) the development of diverse and complementary urban environments and (3) a sustainable approach: open landscapes are excluded from densification and new development is not likely to increase private transportation. These three scenarios were evaluated via multi-criteria analysis and visualized through a series of maps (Balz and Schrijnen, 2009). The final conclusion that the sequence of spatial representations rendered was that uncoordinated development in station areas leads to an overproduction of dense urban living and working environments within the South Wing.

In September 2006, the results of the Spatial Inventory *Stedenbaan* were published in an edition of 1000 books and distributed among a large network of planning professionals (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2006a). Until November 2007, when the studio reached the end of its foreseen term of 2 years and was dismantled, they were frequently discussed, specifically among policy-makers.

While the influence of the first phase of the design process can be clearly traced by references in policy documents as we have seen in the previous section, the performance of this second phase is less easy to identify. If we just look at written material there is only one document—albeit an important one—in which the BPZ explicitly made use of the work done by the studio (Bestuurlijk Platform Zuidvleugel, 2007). This document is entirely about ambitions for spatial development in the area of influence around *Stedenbaan* stations. In this note, the differentiation of land use around these stations on the regional level is declared to be one of the core objectives of the entire *Stedenbaan* project. However, the BPZ placed the responsibility for the realization of this ambition on the city regions. This has nothing to do with unwillingness on the part of the BPZ but with its competences as an informal platform. So the follow-up was scaled down from the level of the South Wing to lower levels of scale, specifically the city regions of The Hague and Rotterdam, which have the formal means to guide spatial development within their administrative boundaries.

At the national level, we find the clearest indication of acceptance of the work done by the studio. In the 2008 statutory Structural Vision Randstad 2040 (Ministerie van VROM, 2008), the *Stedenbaan* project was regarded as the "best case" for the integration of trans- port and land-use development in the Netherlands. This labelling has undeniably contributed to the growing reputation of the project outside of South Wing. Since 2008, similar strategies were employed in several other Dutch regions (Provincie Noord-Holland and Vereniging Deltametropool, 2013). The project also gained attention in a range of (academic) publications and presentations with an international audience. In 2012, the BPZ enlarged the scale of the *Stedenbaan* project. Under the new heading "*StedenbaanPlus*", the partnership announced that it would include not only the earlier defined public transport lines but also all the main public transport in the South Wing.

## 4.5  Conclusions

We have seen a rise in the importance of regional design in the Netherlands in recent years, as claimed above. Despite high expectations, for many design trajectories, the results were rejected or drastically changed during consecutive stages of decision-making. In summarizing theoretical notions of spatial representations, we have shown that their use is not limited to the indication of physical change but also to debates about sharing normative principles, responsibilities and resources for

planning tasks among planning actors. In our view, this aspect is under-represented in the evaluation of Dutch regional design experiments and the purpose of this paper is to contribute to a better understanding of the performance of regional design in the context of regional governance.

To examine this multiple performance, we have related regional design to a discursive dimension of planning concepts. We assumed that spatial representations are used in processes of frame reflection by (1) integrating and explicating analytical *knowledge* and (2) allocating *meaning* in politics and policy-making. To investigate the explanatory, strategic and tactical use of spatial representations in the context of fragmented regional governance, we observed who had used types of spatial representations and for which purposes (for which logic of argumentation) in a concrete case: the *Stedenbaan* project. In this final section, we respond to our main research question: Did regional design (the reflection on planning concepts) contribute to the change of logics of argumentations, and if so, how? While analysing the *Stedenbaan* case along the lines of our theoretical framework, two stages of the design process came to the foreground. The first was concerned with analytical verification. Spatial representations referred to a single and simple hypothesis (high densities of houses and work spaces are more amenable to public transport operation and use). The evidence that was introduced was used to promote the making of a more efficient public transport system. The second stage was concerned with situational validation. Its purpose was to discuss how land-use development in station areas can help solve the problems that the national government highlighted when introducing the network city concept. Spatial representations referred to several interrelated hypotheses and several conflicting goals, most prominently the achievement of high densities versus a balanced regional market for houses and work space. By using the changing logics of policy argumentations as a measure to evaluate the performance of regional design, the work of the studio has undeniable contributed to a change of the level at which the initial *Stedenbaan* project was discussed. When *Stedenbaan* started, the project was predominantly perceived as only a transport project: an improved service on a set of public transport lines. The project is now consistently regarded as an integral transit-oriented development project on a regional scale.

In our analysis, we have also observed how governance arrangements responded to argumentations introduced by changing the scales and scope of spatial representations. Although the BPZ is an identifiable client (it has a small office and a postal address), it cannot be regarded as a clear-cut actor. In fact it is a multi-actor as well as a multi-level agency through which its members seek to speak with one voice. We have observed that the spatial representations that were introduced in stages of the design process related to the formation of different coalitions within

the BPZ and among BPZ members and other actors around these. Representations introduced in the first phase helped to stabilize the partnership among BPZ and NS. In addressing this powerful partner, the BPZ indeed spoke with one voice. The formal agreement among these partners as well as the setting up of a monitor to follow the development of land uses (number of houses and amount of working space) in station areas (land-use plans in the proximity of stations) established a semi-formal "planning space" that still constitutes the backbone of the *Stedenbaan* strategy and was crucial in sustaining the *Stedenbaan* organization over a period of nearly 10 years. In the second phase, the studio, in response to its initial commission and calls by the national governments, touched upon coordination issues. Relating land-use development to future market demands informed the formulation of a shared ambition for diverse living and housing environments. While attempting to translate this ambition into spatial planning practices, the partnership fell apart along the fault lines of administrative levels and formal resources. Specifically the province, which claimed a position in the coordination of regional urban development, came to stand on its own. We, however, also argue that this stage in the design process induced the travel of ideas. We support this notion by the references made to the *Stedenbaan* strategy in national policy documents and the reputation that the strategy gained among a broader, partially international audience. This type of performance is, however, difficult to trace and we cannot attribute it to one of the distinct moments of the design process followed by the studio. We conclude, nevertheless, that the *Stedenbaan* project constituted an additional "planning space", albeit a discursive or very "soft" one (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009b).

Taking notice of the two stages in the design process focused our attention on the spatial representation that was most influential in facilitating an upward shift in logics of argumentations. Responding to the critique of municipalities, the studio produced a policy image that represented future land-use plans. The political balance within a platform like the BPZ is easily disturbed. At the moment of making this representation, the studio could not reopen a discussion about the distribution of land uses across the five city regions in the South Wing. Figures were politically approved beforehand and, therefore, engraved in stone. Making use of our theoretical framework, the resulting representation introduced no evidence nor did it promote a normative, political principle. The spatial representation that turned out to be most decisive in the up-scaling of argumentations described the *Stedenbaan* project from the point of view of territorial management. As it gave the impression that the municipalities are willing to associate their plans with the *Stedenbaan* project, it represented organizational capacity. From the point of view of the province, this association was interpreted as capacity for coordination, whereas the BPZ interpreted it as capacity for implementation.

As we noted above, regional design in the context of the Netherlands is often expected to operationalize spatial planning (or the indicative frameworks that the different governments are obliged to introduce), that is, to indicate territories that match the institutional capacities of governance arrangements, and vice versa. In the case of the *Stedenbaan*, that proved to be a very delicate endeavour. Proceeding with extreme caution meant that the design process followed by the studio needed to be continuously able to respond to the sensitivities of institutions. Although the studio was equipped with relative independence, with the back-up of some "ambassadors" of a regional spatial planning approach, substantial financial means and the time to reflect, spatial representations were largely used to tactically confirm existing (and often hidden) territorial structures. To persistently perceive territoriality as a malleable aspect in design processes has, however, been decisive in facilitating change.

We have only a part of the story of the studio. For instance, it has undertaken other projects besides the *Stedenbaan* project (for a summary, see Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2008b). No other project has been carried out within a network of identifiable "clients" such as the BPZ, though. As a result, these other projects suffered greatly when the two main protagonists of the studio—a director and a vice-director within the administration of the province—moved to new jobs elsewhere. Their replacements were not immediately convinced of the added value of the studio formula (regional design at arm's length from day-to-day policy-making), and so there was no longer a channel through which the studio could reach administrative and political levels as easily as before. Quite a number of the studio's design products, which in themselves were interesting, sank into oblivion. The stability and quality of channels between design practice and policy-making seem to be crucial for the performance of design in a situation of complex network governance.

# 5 Transformations of planning rationales: Changing spaces for governance in recent Dutch national planning

ABSTRACT    Dutch national planning has acquired an international reputation because it provides strong planning guidance while simultaneously being responsive to the particular spatial and political circumstances of different regions and areas. Spatial concepts, like the Randstad, are important vehicles for sustaining this approach. Such concepts incorporate select spatial planning rationales that justify operational decisions. Concepts can, however, also be ambiguous, and this can allow for different interpretations and deliberations about how guidance should take effect in different situations. In this paper we assess the degree of ambiguity contained in concepts outlined in Dutch national plans between 1988 and 2012. By focusing on the dimensions of spatial concepts, and the room for interpretation these create, we demonstrate how concepts were modified to accommodate a shifting appreciation of deliberation and, as a result, collaboration and governance. On a theoretical level, we

propose a method that analyses in detail the ambiguity ("fuzzyness" or "softness") of spatial concepts. We argue that such sophisticated understandings contribute to explaining the variety of governance responses that these geographies produce in practice. On an empirical level we seek to increase understanding of change in recent Dutch national planning.

## 5.1   Introduction

The Netherlands has a long tradition of national spatial plans which set out guiding principles for planning interventions, but which are also a way for the national government to oversee the role of the different governmental tiers in planning decision-making. National plans collect knowledge about autonomous spatial development trends, set out substantive political agendas for desirable spatial development, and elaborate policy accordingly. As plan-making procedures can be extensive—often taking the form of lengthy negotiations, both in front of and behind the scenes — plans represent political consent on select spatial-planning rationales and, in this way, provide certainty for operational decisions at later stages. However, plans are also meant to facilitate decision-making. They are used to discuss the implications that guiding principles can have when applied to particular regions and places, and can be used to adapt policies on the ground. Plans, therefore, need to be flexible: Implying a too definite, unambiguous spatial logic would inherently neglect the spatial and organizational particularities of local situations and could restrain effectuation of national planning by the relevant actors. The interpretations that Dutch national plans allow for are decisive for collaboration among tiers of government, as several scholars have noted (Faludi and Van der Valk, 1994, Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000, Needham, 1988, Salet and Woltjer, 2009).

The uses of Dutch national plans sketched above are commonly described as "indicative" planning: a form of planning that does not fully determine outcomes but *frames* argumentation and facilitates negotiation among involved actors (Albrechts, 2004, Faludi, 2000). Dutch indicative planning has acquired an international reputation for the way it accommodates political consent on planning interventions; it does this by means of highly developed yet flexible spatial plans. However, recent analyses signal that this description of Dutch planning no longer holds. The most recent national plan, the 2012 National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial

Planning, incorporates only a few, decidedly detailed planning rationales (Needham, 2015). This plan seems to end half a century of "government by discussion" (we borrow this term from Dryzek, 1993p. 216) and replace it with a program of imperative project planning instead. We would argue that how this fundamental change in Dutch national planning rationales came about is not well understood.

In this paper, we investigate Dutch national plans published between 1988 and 2012. We specifically look at the *spatial concepts* that consecutive plans incorporated. Spatial concepts are perceptions of geographies that facilitate deliberation on how planning affects spatial development in regions and areas. Building on the work of scholars who have investigated the use of concepts in planning decision-making (Davoudi, 2003, Van Duinen, 2004, Zonneveld, 1991), we argue that such concepts incorporate complex repertoires of analytical knowledge, political agendas, and territorial practices from which spatial logics are then extracted. By assessing these dimensions of the concepts on their ambiguity, we identify the degree of room for interpretation that plans have provided to sub-national governments, and how this room for interpretation was shaped to influence collaboration and governance.

This paper has a theoretical as well as an empirical objective. Theoretically, we present a methodology for analysing spatial concepts in detail. Spatial planning is acknowledged to pay particular attention to spatial development and the material setting of distinct regions and places. How to involve such attention while sustaining generally applicable planning rationales has generated broader discussion in recent years. Drawing on notions from, among others, the field of political geography, ambiguous ("soft" or "fuzzy") plans are associated with increasingly varied governance in spatial planning. However, the use of such plans has also been related to the masking of political choices and overly pragmatic behaviour (Hincks et al., 2017, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010, Allmendinger et al., 2016). Our analytical framework investigates how conflicting desires for spatial selectivity and ambiguity are accommodated inside geographic perceptions. We expect that such a detailed account will contribute to a better understanding of the use of geographic perceptions in planning and for the multiple governance responses that such use produces.

The empirical objective of this paper is in seeking to find a more sophisticated understanding of recent changes in Dutch national planning. Our analysis allows us to argue that the 2012 Dutch national plan should not be seen as a watershed between two different planning approaches. Results reveal that dimensions of spatial concepts were assembled and re-assembled over time to favour a select political agenda and form of policy making. During transformations of spatial-planning rationales, room for interpretation and appreciation of governance gradually diminished.

Our theoretical framework will be dealt with in the next section, where we also elaborate our analytical approach and explain how we applied it. In the third section we present the results of our empirical research. We then continue with another section that discussing the results of our analysis, while the concluding section reflects on our empirical analysis from the perspective of our original theoretical ambitions.

## 5.2 Theoretical framework and methodology: How to analyse room for interpretation in spatial concepts

It is common to describe spatial planning as a planning approach that focuses on the specificities of spatial development (Albrechts et al., 2003, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010, Healey, 2006, Nadin, 2007). Its objective, "to articulate a coherent spatial logic for land use regulation, resource protection, and investments in regeneration and infrastructure" (Albrechts et al., 2003, p.113), has generated a considerable body of literature on spatial concepts, perceptions of geographies expressed textually in metaphors, but also through planning imagery, such as maps, drawings, and diagrams (Dühr, 2006, Faludi, 1996, Van Duinen, 2004, Zonneveld, 1989). Spatial concepts resemble discursive structures "through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices" (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005, p.175). When used in the realm of spatial planning, they facilitate deliberation on how planning affects spatial development in areas and regions (Van Duinen, 2004).

The manner in which spatial concepts are used in planning decision-making has been thoroughly investigated, particularly by Dutch scholars (e.g. Gualini and Majoor, 2007, Hagens, 2010, Van Duinen, 2004, Zonneveld, 1991, Zonneveld, 2005a, Zonneveld and Verwest, 2005). Most of their empirical analyses have focused on use in operational policy-making. These scholars have observed that spatial concepts can turn into a long-term planning doctrine based on broad acceptance of their implied spatial logics. Durable acceptance moves operational decisions beyond fundamental discussion because each time such a decision is required, key objectives and core principles are already institutionalised (Faludi and Van der Valk, 1994, Roodbol-Mekkes et al., 2012). Van Duinen (2004) has shown how spatial concepts

are used by actors: how the naming of geographies incites politically motivated claims for action. Also contained within international planning literature on the use of "conceptual ideas" and spatial concepts is a specific interest in the agency of concepts: how their mobilisation, acceptance, or rejection influence consecutive planning actions (e.g. Albrechts, 2004, Alexander, 2002, Davoudi, 2003, Davoudi and Strange, 2008, Healey, 2006).

Spatial concepts are used "with the ambition of accumulating sufficient allocative, authoritative and imaginative force to shape both the materialities and identities of particular places" (Healey, 2006, p.527). From an operational policy-making perspective, their selectivity with respect to the material world is emphasized (for a critical review of such selectivity, see Jessop, 2001). However, concepts are not only selective; they often also have a degree of "wooliness" (Davoudi, 2003, p.995), are "fuzzy" in the way they combine evidence and agency (Markusen, 1999, p.869), or "soft" in the way they relate analytical insights and political agendas to territories within which planning action could unfold (the term soft we borrow from Allmendinger and Haughton, 2012). When focusing on the ambiguity of concepts, their ability to accommodate varieties of spatial-planning rationales is emphasized as is their capacity to frame negotiations on how planning can affect development.

The importance of flexible planning frameworks for collaborative decision-making is highlighted by numerous scholars. Dryzek (1993, p.225), for instance, argues that frames are "sources of arguments that make no claim to be authoritative": they are an "open forum" (id., p. 228), required for identifying the better argument. According to Dryzek, open frames expand a planning audience bandwidth for political consent and thus the quality of democratic decisions. Faludi (1987), referring to (Friend and Jessop, 1977, p.111), argues that a "field of choice" is required for encouraging the consideration of alternative solutions and legitimating decisions. His definition of indicative planning is rooted in this argument (Faludi and Korthals Altes, 1994). Scholars who have investigated discretionary planning practices (e.g. Booth, 1996, Booth, 2007, Buitelaar and Sorel, 2010, Tewdwr-Jones, 1999) often speak in terms of *room for interpretation*. In conceptual terms, discretion is a form of decision-making that qualifies rules through a search for "leeway in the interpretation of fact and application of precedent to particular cases" (Booth, 2007, p.129). Discretion aims at an improvement of planning guidance by assessing its implications for particular situations. It requires flexibility; the possibility of making a choice between courses of action.

In summary, spatial concepts are perceptions of geographies that facilitate attention to spatial developments in the realm of spatial planning. Concepts are selective in respect to real, material settings, and practices. In this way they provide certainty

for operational decision-making. Up to a certain degree, concepts can also be ambiguous. This implies room for interpretation that encourages deliberation among actors on the implications of planning for particular spatial situations, and an improvement of planning on these grounds.

In this paper we are particularly interested in how this room is shaped so that it favours operational decision-making or collaboration and governance. To contribute to such sophisticated understanding we must first distinguish different dimensions of spatial concepts. Drawing from sources that discuss the use of geographic representation (Dühr, 2006), and spatial concepts in planning (Van Duinen, 2004, Zonneveld, 1991, Davoudi, 2003, Förster, 2009), we differentiate three dimensions: 1) Analytical dimension, where spatial concepts incorporate assumptions on the manner in which unplanned and unintended individual action affects spatial development. They provide a reservoir of analytical knowledge, which can be theoretically or empirically grounded. 2) Normative dimension, where spatial concepts are imaginations of desirable spatial development. They incorporate political values. 3) Organizational dimension, where spatial concepts indicate territories, areas wherein distinct policy measures take effect (for this definition of the term territory, see Schön, 2005). These three dimensions allow for a synthesis of analytical knowledge, political agendas, and policies and the constitution of spatial-planning rationales. To give an example: the *Randstad* concept relied on an observation of cities grouped around an open area. This observation turned into an imagination of a ring of cities around a *green heart*, motivated by a desire for spatial quality and healthy living environments, thus associating analytical knowledge with a political agenda. When the concept entered the realm of planning in the 1950s it was coupled with restrictive and prohibitive regulations, in what became the *green heart* territory.

Depending on the selection and detailing of all three dimensions, there is a certain amount of room for interpretation, as we have argued above. Actors and stakeholders are drawn in, or—alternatively—excluded. We illustrate this in Figure 5.1. The diagram on the left represents a spatial concept with ample room for interpretation: one that implies multiple and broadly defined knowledge, agendas, and policy measures. This is in contrast to the diagram on the right, which symbolizes a spatial concept with narrow room for interpretation; one that implies few and highly detailed analytical notions, agendas, and policy measures. The model assesses the degree of room for interpretation as well as how this room is modified to favour operational decision-making or deliberation and governance.
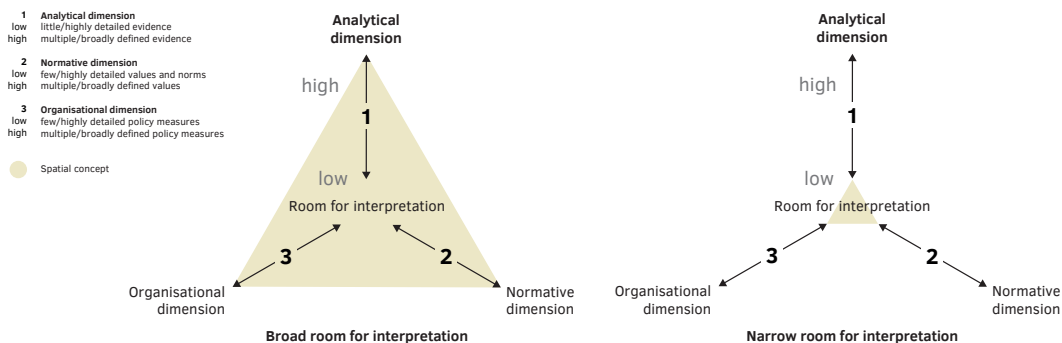
FIG. 5.1 Imaging room for interpretation

After explaining our theoretical argument and analytical framework, we now turn to our empirical approach. An important way of identifying spatial concepts is to analyse planning imagery (for the appropriateness of this form of policy analysis, see Dühr, 2005). We therefore first considered the core maps of consecutive Dutch national plans. Textual phrases mentioned in the keys of these maps provided the codes of a follow-up in-depth text analysis. Our focus was on the text contained within the national plans. In cases where this included references to other documents, these became part of our review. Dutch national plans usually refer to a set of planning issues: urbanization, infrastructure development, the development of natural landscapes and rural land, and water management. Motivated by emphasis on collaboration in national urbanization policies, we have focused on concepts that specifically address this issue, including concepts that set out interrelations between the development of urban and open land, and between urbanization and transport infrastructure development. Concepts concerning transnational spatial development, such as *international urban networks* and *foreign economic core areas*, were excluded.

To assess the ambiguity of dimensions of spatial concepts, we were particularly interested in notions related to three implied items 1) analytical knowledge; 2) political values; and 3) policy measures in specific territories. Few and highly detailed notions on knowledge, values, and measures were equated with a high selectivity and a narrowly defined room for interpretation; a multiplicity of diverse and abstract notions were equated with high ambiguity and a broadly defined room. The results gave us an impression of how the room for interpretation that spatial concepts provided was shaped. A summary of results gave us an impression of how this room for interpretation has changed over time. To support our findings, as well as our preposition on governance responses to planning guidance, we made a comprehensive review of the academic literature on Dutch spatial planning, spatial concepts, and governance in the chosen time period.

Figure 5.2 shows the national plans that were analysed. On the timeline a distinction is made between the informal preparation of plans (grey), the period of their approval by Parliament (dark grey), and the period of their application (light grey). We were interested in assented national plans—meaning plans that were approved during the legally required procedures and consequently replaced their predecessors (between 1988 and 2012 there were three such plans). Because we are interested in the subtle differences between planning rationales, we also considered two additional national plans. Around 2000, the government embarked on preparing a new (fifth) national plan and presented a draft version to the Parliament in 2002. We considered this draft plan, although it never came into effect. The Randstad Urgent program, presented in 2007, was an addition to the National Spatial Strategy. The Structural Vision Randstad 2040, a part of the program, was subjected to obligatory procedures required for national plans. We considered this plan as well, although it was simply a refinement of the, by then, current national plan. Figure 5.2 shows that national plans were subject to near constant revision during this period of considerable political instability in the Netherlands. The lightly dotted columns mark the formation of new coalition governments after the frequent national elections. The darker dotted lines concern important legal and procedural changes in Dutch national planning. We will return to these when discussing the various national plans.

Below we present our analysis of spatial concepts in the consecutive plans. In the text we describe the main differences in the ambiguity of their dimensions. In the tables we list concepts and a summary of the analytical knowledge, political agendas, and policy measures they implied.
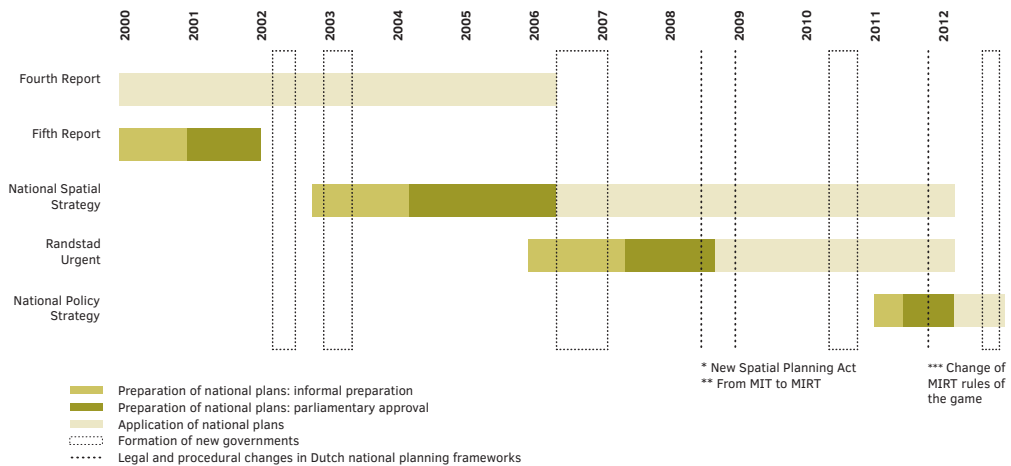


FIG. 5.2 Preparation of Dutch national plans, 2000-2012

**Room for interpretation in recent Dutch national plans**

**The Fourth Report, 1988: A starting point for analyses**

In the late 1980s, a change in Dutch national spatial planning set in. Under the influence of European market integration, a process of regionalization took off, shifting attention from national to regional planning territories and towards the economic competitiveness of regions in an international setting. The Fourth Report on Spatial Planning, published in 1988 (Ministerie van VROM, 1988), was the first Dutch national plan that reflected this change (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000, Waterhout et al., 2013, Zonneveld, 1991), albeit in a careful manner.

The Fourth Report sustained earlier planning rationales, institutionalised over decades of use. To distinguish open and rural land for the purpose of spatial quality, spatial diversity and liveability remained an important overarching spatial logic. Related concepts, combined under the heading "spatial main structure", associated the rationale with an increasingly rigid regime of restrictive and prohibitive land-use regulation. In this sense, what Faludi and Van der Valk (1994) called the Dutch planning doctrine was continued, but with a loss of some of its interpretative openness (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000). To the refined doctrine, a new "master frame" was added (id., p. 341). The spatial concepts bundled in this overarching conceptual frame referred to a new political agenda: international economic competitiveness. They introduced analytical knowledge on relations between economic functions in regions from the field of economic geography. They also sketched the first contours of a new planning approach favouring investment in particular development projects over land-use designation and regulation (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000). Under the heading "spatial development perspective", new spatial concepts were used to justify direct investment in *main transport axes*, *urban nodes*, and, most prominently, *main ports*. The seaport Rotterdam and the airport Schiphol were seen as centres in large, international economic networks (for an analysis of the establishment of the main port concept, see Van Duinen, 2013).

In the Fourth Report, consolidated and emerging planning rationales were carefully placed next to each other. New spatial concepts that favoured a relational understanding of regional spatial development, an economic agenda, and strategic

investment in particular areas appeared at the side of traditionally used concepts that favoured a morphological understanding of space, spatial quality and equality, and generally applicable regulation. The overall result (outlined in Table 5.1) was an expanded array of planning rationales and thus broader room for interpretation. Nevertheless, the national plan caused unease among planners, particularly at sub-national government level. The tight selection of highly detailed policy measures was seen as an arbitrary choice in light of the broader body of analytical knowledge and political goals. The fact that these measures were decided upon during intra-governmental negotiations among ministries, with the inclusion of a limited number of corporatist organizations behind "closed doors", fuelled criticism (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000, p.340). From the mid-1990s onward, coalitions of sub-national governments gathered to actively question the paternalistic role of the national government. They started to use the expanded repertoires of knowledge and goals in the national plan to point at regional development of national importance in their own territories (see, for instance, Van Duinen, 2015).

TABLE 5.1 Dimensions of spatial concepts in Fourth Report on Spatial Planning, 1988*

| Spatial concept | Analytical dimension | Normative dimension | Organizational dimension |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Spatial main structure (ruimtelijke hoofdstructuur), p.36 | | | |
| – City region (stadsgewest);<br>– Open area (open ruimte);<br>– Buffer zone (bufferzone). | – Density/public transport accessibility;<br>– Locational advantages/ types of transport accessibility;<br>– Differentiation of urban and open areas. | – Spatial quality;<br>– Spatial diversity;<br>– Liveability. | – Restrictive firm location policy (ABC locatiebeleid);<br>– Restrictive residential location policy;<br>– Urban renewal funding programs;<br>– Prohibitive land-use regulation in open and peri-urban areas. |
| Spatial development perspective (ruimtelijk ontwikkelingsperspectief), p.36 | | | |
| – Urban node (stedelijk knooppunt, 13);<br>– International business environment (internationaal vestigingsmilieu/Randstad);<br>– City rim (stedenring);<br>– Main transport axis (hoofdtransportas);<br>– Main port (mainport). | – Provision of services/ transport accessibility;<br>– Provision of services/size of cities;<br>– Economic performance/ transport accessibility;<br>– Performance/diversity of economic activities;<br>– Performance/agglomeration of economic activities. | – International economic competitiveness. | – Localisation of public services in priority areas;<br>– Direct investment into city-regional (public) transport infrastructure;<br>– Direct investment into national transport infrastructure;<br>– Direct investment into main port development. |

*Tables 1-5 present a summary of results from documentary analysis. Page numbers refer to the core maps that formed its starting points. The column 'spatial concept' lists the text phrases that were used during in-depth text analysis. Concepts are combined in rows to reflect their grouping in original documents. Notions on dimensions of concepts relate to these groups.*

By 1997 the disquiet had grown to such an extent that the government responded to it by considering preparing a new national plan. In 1998, a highly influential advisory on these proceedings was published by the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (NSCGP, 1999). It uncovered a mismatch between autonomous regional spatial development and ordering by the national government. Generally applicable regulation was seen to neglect specificities in regionalization, delay decision-making, obstruct the integration of sectoral policies, and lead to unfair distribution of the costs and benefits of national planning across areas and actors. An approach that imposed such regulation was also seen as failing to comply with the increasing engagement of others in planning, "reflexive governance" (id., p. 77) and, therefore, obstruct the legitimization of planning.

At the core of the Council's advice was a call for a more flexible national plan that facilitates deliberation and collaboration. The necessity of conceptual modernization for these purposes was underlined. Spatial concepts based on a generic spatial logic—prescribing planning for the entire country—were to be replaced by concepts that facilitated regionally differentiated approaches and a better-justified strategic engagement of the national government therein. New spatial concepts were to become "open" and "argumentative" (id., p. 80) to encourage deliberation. They were to enable "exploratory design" (id., p.81), a collaborative search for planning solutions on the regional level. The wish list for revisions of concepts and their implied planning rationales was long (for a review of the advisory, see Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000). As we will show in the following sections, the upcoming national plans responded in different ways.

5.3.2   ## The Fifth Report, 2002: A call for voluntary engagement in planning

In 2001, a first draft version of the Fifth Report on Spatial Planning was published by the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) (Ministerie van VROM and Rijksplanologische Dienst, 2001), and, in 2002, a second draft received ministerial approval (Ministerie van VROM and Rijksplanologische Dienst, 2002). In terms of how the normative dimension of spatial concepts in this national plan has taken shape, the difference with the previous plan is not so very large: to improve the international economic competitiveness of the country and to guarantee spatial quality (this time set out in a comprehensive list of seven sub-qualities), remained both prime goals. However, the manner in which a broad agenda was interwoven with analytical knowledge about spatial development and policies deviated quite heavily from the Fourth Report.

First of all, the analytical foundation of national spatial planning was expanded and knowledge became less instrumentally tied-in with particular spatial concepts. This is apparent when one looks at the new conceptualisation of a "national spatial main structure" in the Fifth Report. The structure consisted of three *layers*, capturing characteristics of soil and natural landscapes, main infrastructure, and urban occupation. An extensive body of analytical knowledge on how these structural characteristics (were likely to) change and influence each other served as an inspirational background for more operational concepts. Some of these concepts emphasized particular knowledge. A strict morphological differentiation between natural landscapes and urban land continued to facilitate prohibitive land-use regulation in *national parks*, for instance. However, most concepts associated with the body of knowledge (a "frame of reference" in the words of Ministerie van VROM and Rijksplanologische Dienst (2001, p.139)) referred to multiple interaction between layers, thus breaking open divisions between disciplinary knowledge and policy sectors. Specifically, the perception of urbanization was altered drastically when compared with its predecessor. Concepts promoting solitary compact cities were abandoned and replaced with the *urban network* concept. The concept, deliberately adopted from the European planning discourse (id., p. 148 and 179), referred to both a relational and morphological understanding of spatial development. It also referred to a long list of political values, including spatial quality, spatial diversity, social vitality, and economic competitiveness. Urban networks were seen to function on a higher level of scale and their planning was to involve sub-national government.

This brings us to the second main difference between the Fourth and Fifth Reports: the more ambiguous organizational dimension of spatial concepts. Overall, the new national plan placed far less emphasis on regulations (in particular those of urban land-use). Many were dropped or weakened. For instance, the concept of *red contours* was used to confine the expansion of cities but their future perimeter was no longer to be imposed but only suggested by provinces and municipalities. The most important change was in the organizational dimension of the urban-network concept. As in the Fourth Report, a set of strategic investment projects were defined on the grounds of perceived functional relations between cities. The assumption that the economic fortune of the country is highly dependent on its two main ports was almost totally erased. Instead, the station areas in the four main Delta Metropolis cities—this new metaphor for the Randstad area was chosen to underline that the traditional green/red dichotomy had become obsolete—plus Arnhem and Breda were assigned key project status. Additionally, the national government opened up discussion on a new generation of such projects. Guided by multiple theories and the observation that the layered "national spatial main structure" implied and further stimulated by regional development funding programs,

sub-national governments in the indicated urban-network territories were asked to co-operate, create proposals for regional projects and strategies, and inform national planning in this way.

The Fifth Report on Spatial Planning was the first Dutch national plan that explicitly mentioned the decentralization of planning tasks in the Netherlands. The slogan "decentralize when possible, centralize when necessary" (id., p. 266) underlined the fact that the planning principles incorporated in the document were shaped carefully to maximize collaboration between tiers of government. A broad national planning agenda was sustained. The description of the main spatial structure provided a comprehensive knowledge background, reflected in the atlas-like appearance of the first draft of the national plan, a massive hardback of over 200 pages, with dozens of maps and illustrations in its first chapters. In line with the 1998 advisory note by the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy, spatial concepts (outlines in Table 5.2) were not intended to prescribe regional planning in detail but to facilitate deliberation. Specifically the concept *urban networks* was a call for voluntary engagement of sub-national governments in national spatial planning. The national plan inspired intense experimentation and co-operation among regional actors in the following years. Exploratory (regional) design became a common practice: many initiatives engaged in a search for arguments to fill the organizational void that the government has deliberately sought to create and was asked by many to do so (Salet, 2006, Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000, Lambregts et al., 2008).

TABLE 5.2 Dimensions of spatial concepts in Fifth Report on Spatial Planning, 2002

| Spatial concept | Analytical dimension | Normative dimension | Organizational dimension |
|---|---|---|---|
| National spatial main structure (nationale ruimtelijke hoofdstructuur), p.40-41* | | | |
| – Layers (lagen): soil and natural landscapes (ondergrond), main infrastructure (netwerken), urban occupation (occupatie). | – Multiple hypothesis on dependencies among layers;<br>– Multiple evidence on development trends. | – Spatial quality (set out in 7 sub-categories) | – Indicative guidelines for the integration of national and regional sector policies. |
| City and open land (stad en land), p.11, 48-49 | | | |
| – Bundling area (bundelingsgebied);<br>– National landscape (nationale landschap);<br>– Red/green contour (rode/groene contour). | – Density of urban land-uses/public transport accessibility;<br>– Diversity of land-uses/public transport accessibility;<br>– Differentiation of urban and open areas. | – Spatial quality;<br>– Spatial diversity;<br>– Liveability. | – Indicative guidelines for land-use regulation concerning the expansion of urban area;<br>– Prohibitive land-use regulation in open areas. |
| Urban networks (stedelijke netwerken), p.11, 62-63 | | | |
| – National urban network (nationaal stedelijk netwerk, incl. Deltametropool);<br>– Regional urban network (regionaal stedelijk netwerk);<br>– Regional park;<br>– Main transport infrastructure. | – Performance/accessibility of socio-economic activities;<br>– Performance/diversity of socio-economic activities;<br>– Performance/agglomeration of economic activities. | – Spatial quality;<br>– Spatial diversity;<br>– Liveability;<br>– Social vitality;<br>– International economic competitiveness. | – Indicative guidelines for regional planning;<br>– Regional development funding programs;<br>– Direct investment in key projects;<br>– Direct investment in (public) transport infrastructure. |

* The analytical and normative foundation of the Fifth Report is documented in Ministerie van VROM and Rijksplanologische Dienst (2001, p.25-137)

### 5.3.3 National Spatial Strategy, 2006: A turn towards pragmatic behaviour

Although the Fifth Report on Spatial Planning had the impacts just highlighted, it never became an effective national plan because in April 2002 the Dutch coalition government collapsed before reaching the end of its period in office. In November 2002 a new government, now led by Christian Democrats, announced the making of a revised version of the report. The objectives of the revision were to further advance decentralization and deregulation and to simplify the national policy system by integrating national sector policies in one overall strategy (Vink and Van der Burg, 2006).

To this end, several ministries formulated their own ideas about spatial planning (with a delay caused by another fall of government in 2003 and the formation of a new one, still led by Christian Democrats). In July 2004, the Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ) published the report Peaks in the Delta (Ministerie van EZ, 2004). As the title suggests, the Ministry favoured planning engagement in economically well-performing areas to accelerate international competitiveness. According to the Ministry, this rationale had a strong empirical evidence base: research showed that internationally operating economic sectors are clustered in *economic core areas*, mostly located in the sphere of influence of major transport axes. The *main port* concept was prominently reinserted into the discourse and the port metaphor was expanded to also include *brain ports* (areas with a concentration of knowledge-intensive economic activities) and *green ports* (areas with a concentration of intensive agriculture production and greenhouses).

Within the Ministry of Transport and Water Management (V&W), the rationale that the Ministry of EZ was proposing did not fall on deaf ears: the importance attached to transport infrastructure underlined its politics. The Ministry's support for the (re-affirmed) concepts was included in the Mobility Report (Ministeries van V&W and VROM, 2004), a joint production of the V&W and the VROM Ministry. International economic competitiveness and "reliable transport" (meaning transport that is not hindered by congestion) were two of the prime objectives in this document. The combination of agendas was facilitated through a rather straightforward cartographic exercise: the map of *economic core areas*, prepared by the Ministry of EZ, was overlaid with a map of main transport lines. This led to the selection of a limited number of *main transport axes* as well as to priorities in the improvement of these.

The new concepts were combined with those of the draft Fifth Report by the Ministry of VROM and the resulting scheme was presented as the final version of this national plan in 2006, albeit with the new name National Spatial Strategy (Ministeries van VROM et al., 2006). The way in which it was prepared is reflected in its list of authors: for the first time, a national plan was not written and published solely by the Ministry of VROM, but by the above-mentioned Ministries of EZ and V&W also. The new "national spatial main structure" in the plan consisted of a complex mixture of the concepts that these Ministries had promoted: *economic core-areas* and *ports* (entries of the Ministry of EZ), *main transport axes* (entry of the Ministry of V&W) overlapped with *urban networks* (entry of the Ministry of VROM, adopted from the Fifth Report). The national urban network *Randstad Holland* (in the Fifth Report called *Delta Metropolis*) was, for instance, intersected with three *economic core areas* (the Utrecht region, a *North wing* and a *South wing*) and six *ports*.

The map of the national spatial main structure represented the different spatial concepts and their related territories as softly sketched clouds. However, concepts were far less ambiguous than their spatial representation suggested. Specifically, their organizational dimension was refined thoroughly and selectively. The principle of refinement was a distinction between two categories of national planning responsibility, a "responsibility for the system" and a "responsibility for results" (id., p. 25). The former meant that the national government provides procedural support in such a way that others, such as provinces, municipalities, and private-sector actors, can act out their roles in regional policy-making appropriately. The latter meant that the government is fully responsible for the outcomes of policies, predominately consisting of direct investment in key projects, area development, and transport infrastructure. The distribution of concepts across these two categories became a highly sensitive political issue, as we shall see.

Although the afore-mentioned economic-leaning concepts were directly related to the government's responsibility for results, the urban-network concept, whose normative dimension included economic competitiveness, was not accounted for. From the 17 national and regional urban networks of the Fifth Report, the National Spatial Strategy sustained only the six national ones, and these were associated with national responsibility for the system. Once more the central government used the concept to call for voluntary engagement of sub-national governments in the planning of the urban-network territories but engagement now became less rewarding in financial terms (few regional development funding programs were prolonged) and more regulated in procedural terms. It was indicated who was to become involved in urban-network partnerships (provinces were to take a leading role, for instance) and agreement among sub-national governments on particular issues (e.g. the distribution of new houses) was made a condition for national support. The national government increasingly served as a court of appeal, approving or rejecting project proposals. However, an association of the urban network concept with "responsibility for the system" implied that interpretations were not assessed on a spatial logic anymore (their reference to the broad body of analytical knowledge about spatial development and political values that the concept still incorporated) but on their compliance with procedural requirements mainly (for an outline description of concepts in the National Spatial Strategy, see Table 5.3).

| Spatial concept | Analytical dimension | Normative dimension | Organizational dimension |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| National spatial main structure (nationale ruimtelijke hoofdstructuur), p.40-41* | | | |
| – Layers (lagen): soil and natural landscapes (ondergrond), main infrastructure (netwerken), urban occupation (occupatie). | – Multiple hypothesis on dependencies among layers;<br>– Multiple evidence on development trends. | – Spatial quality (set out in 7 sub-categories) | – Indicative guidelines for the integration of national and regional sector policies. |
| City and open land (stad en land), p.11, 48-49 | | | |
| – Bundling area (bundelingsgebied);<br>– National landscape (nationale landschap);<br>– Red/green contour (rode/groene contour). | – Density of urban land-uses/public transport accessibility;<br>– Diversity of land-uses/public transport accessibility;<br>– Differentiation of urban and open areas. | – Spatial quality;<br>– Spatial diversity;<br>– Liveability. | – Indicative guidelines for land-use regulation concerning the expansion of urban area;<br>– Prohibitive land-use regulation in open areas. |
| Urban networks (stedelijke netwerken), p.11, 62-63 | | | |
| – National urban network (nationaal stedelijk netwerk, incl. Deltametropool);<br>– Regional urban network (regionaal stedelijk netwerk);<br>– Regional park;<br>– Main transport infrastructure. | – Performance/accessibility of socio-economic activities;<br>– Performance/diversity of socio-economic activities;<br>– Performance/agglomeration of economic activities. | – Spatial quality;<br>– Spatial diversity;<br>– Liveability;<br>– Social vitality;<br>– International economic competitiveness. | – Indicative guidelines for regional planning;<br>– Regional development funding programs;<br>– Direct investment in key projects;<br>– Direct investment in (public) transport infrastructure. |

*The analytical and normative foundation of the Fifth Report is documented in Ministerie van VROM and Rijksplanologische Dienst (2001, p.25-137)*

A diminishing interest in collaborative spatial planning was expressed in the revision of the urban network concept. It was also reflected in the way in which "spatial quality" was conceptually accommodated. Creating and preserving such quality across the country remained an objective of national spatial planning, but the agenda was refined and associated with additional divisions of responsibilities. In the Fifth Report, a variety of spatial qualities was seen to emerge from an intricate interplay among structural spatial characteristics. The new strategy was much more modest in this respect. Now, the central government only felt responsible for a "basic spatial quality" (id., p. 25). For the national core planning territories, few desirable outcomes from interaction between layers were selected for the assessment of project proposals by sub-national governments. For areas beyond these territories three standards were defined: 1) basic legal quality defined by environmental law; 2) procedural quality embodied in obligatory environmental-assessment procedures; and 3) financial quality, to prevent the transfer of negative consequences of development to others. Besides implicitly questioning the political relevance of

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most of the concepts in the Fifth report, this revision had explicit consequences for concepts perpetuating the urban/rural dichotomy in the periphery of economic agglomeration. They were sustained but deliberation beyond legal dispute was devolved to sub-national governments.

To sum up: the National Spatial Strategy was a revision of the Fifth Report on Spatial Planning by a new government with a new political colour. New concepts rationalizing a select choice of direct investment in infrastructure and economic development were added. In the revision of earlier concepts, a highly pragmatic approach was employed. Their array of political values was kept intact, as well as their broad analytical foundation. The main changes concerned the organizational dimension of these concepts: they were detached from a direct national responsibility for outcomes. From a decentralization perspective, this retreat of the national government appears to be a sound development. In terms of public finance, the picture is different, however. In the Netherlands, more than 95% of taxes are collected centrally (OECD, 2014). The national government's focus on investment in (infrastructure) projects perpetuates the dependency of sub-national governments on the national one, as observed by Salet (2006, p.975): "Coalitions at all levels lobby for infrastructural interconnections within the various territorial scales and all know that, in the coming 15 years, only one such major investment has a chance of becoming reality. Governance coalitions turn out to be ruled by pragmatic and opportunistic sets of options rather than by coherent action strategies."

### 5.3.4 Randstad 2040 and Randstad Urgent, 2008: Two types of planning spaces

The manner in which the national government allocates taxpayers' money to spatial projects became a sensitive political issue (this was already the case even before the National Spatial Strategy was assented to). In March 2005, concern about weakly underpinned investment decisions found an expression in a Parliamentary resolution calling for improved justification through long-term strategic planning (Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2005) . Owing to another collapse of government in July 2006, a response to the resolution was substantially delayed. It was not until February 2007 that a new government, still led by Christian Democrats, announced 1) a reform of the process protocol for the allocation of infrastructure funds and 2) a new planning framework confined spatially to the Randstad region (for an advisory report on this matter, see OECD, 2007) .

The first issue, the reform of infrastructure funding allocation, took shape through a profound change in the Long-Term Program for Infrastructure and Transportation (MIT) in 2008. The highly regulated procedure for investment in infrastructure from this moment on would be accompanied by considerations about the impact of spending on spatial development. MIT became MIRT where the R stands for "space" (*ruimte* in Dutch) (for a review of this change, see Zonneveld and Spaans, 2014).

The manner in which the second issue was taken up needs some explanation. The Ministry of V&W was struggling with delays in the implementation of projects, supposedly due to administrative fragmentation. Delays were seen to be specifically problematic for the development of the Randstad area, economically the country's most important region. To counteract fragmentation, the Ministry established the Randstad Urgency program. Its main intention was to prioritize projects from the many proposals that crowded the Ministry's project books since claiming infrastructure funds became a common form of inter-governmental collaboration (for an analysis of the program, see Busscher et al., 2013). The Ministry of VROM— possibly fearing being side-tracked—inserted a particular project into this program: the Structural Vision Randstad 2040 was to establish guiding principles for long-term spatial planning and in this way influence future planning decisions (Ministerie van VROM, 2008).

The spatial concepts that the Ministry of VROM incorporated in this vision (outlined in Table 5.4) reiterated many of the rationales of national spatial planning since the late 1980s. Concepts, most prominently the concept *metropolitan parks*, enriched the green-belt vocabulary, under the heading "interaction between green, blue and red". Concepts such as *urban region* revived compact city rationales. To enhance regional accessibility, the vision borrowed the analytical concept of *daily urban systems* from economic geography. On the grounds of empirical knowledge about travel patterns and business relations, it was concluded that the Randstad was composed of two such urban regions: a *Southern* and a *Northern Randstad*, thus confirming the earlier defined *economic core areas*. To "strengthen what is internationally strong" it advocated six economic *top functions* in the region (the former main and green ports were among them). The development of *main transport axes* was to improve the external accessibility of the Randstad.

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| Spatial concept | Analytical dimension | Normative dimension | Organizational dimension |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Interaction between green, blue and red (wisselwerking groen, blauw en rood), p.86-87** | | | |
| – Metropolitan park (metropolitaan park); <br>– Green housing environment (groen woonmilieu). | – Urbanization/accessibility of open spaces; <br>– Housing demand. | – Spatial quality; <br>– Spatial diversity; <br>– Environmental sustainability. | – Indicative guidelines for long-term planning of peri-urban and open areas; <br>– Research (verkenningen). |
| **Strengthen what is internationally strong (wat internationaal sterk is, sterker maken), p.95-96** | | | |
| – Top function (top functie), incl. (inter)national port network, Schiphol hub, green port, knowledge centre, international city of justice, peace, and safety; <br>– (Inter)national connection ((inter)nationale verbinding). | – Agglomeration/specialization of economic sectors; <br>– Performance of economic activities/accessibility. | – International economic competitiveness. | – Indicative guidelines for long-term planning of economic sectors and (inter)national transport; <br>– Direct investment in transport infrastructure (ongoing MIRT projects). |
| **Vital, sustainable cities and regional accessibility (krachtige, duurzame steden en regionale bereikbaarheid), p. 104-105** | | | |
| – Southern /Northern Randstad (zuidelijke/noordelijke Randstad); <br>– Urban region (stedelijke regio); <br>– Urban living environment (hoogstedelijk woon- en werkmilieu). | – Densities of inhabitants; <br>– Densities of jobs; <br>– Added value of economic activities in areas. | – Spatial quality; <br>– Spatial diversity; <br>– Social vitality; <br>– Economic vitality. | – Indicative guidelines for long-term planning of inner cities and regional transport; <br>– Research (verkenningen); <br>– Direct investment in key projects (ongoing MIRT projects). |

The Structural Vision Randstad 2040 is the first formally approved Dutch national plan dedicated to the west of the country. Because of this focus, it was able to set out the many spatial concepts it incorporated with a relatively high degree of detail. Each concept implied a cluster of political goals linking environmental sustainability (climate-change resilience in particular), spatial quality, social vitality, and economic competitiveness in intricate ways. Moreover, the makers of Randstad 2040 could rely heavily on prior empirical knowledge, as the ample references to extant research show. Earlier studies and advisory reports, accomplished for a variety of purposes, were re-used to create a broad yet detailed reference base of concepts. However, the organizational dimension of the concepts —their implied policy measures—remained largely undefined. Concepts were associated with few ongoing policies and projects of national importance, that were, in the main, at the responsibilities of the Ministries of V&W and EZ. Most were associated with a need for further elaboration in terms of research as well as collaboration. To structure future partnerships, the vision identified several types of "societal alliances". Actors from public, private, and civil domains were asked to become voluntarily involved in the planning of the Randstad region for the benefit of "people, planet and profit" (id., p. 15).

As noted above, the Structural Vision Randstad 2040 was part of the Randstad Urgent program. While the Ministry of VROM designed its long-term planning guidance the Ministry of V&W continued to select projects of national importance to be funded in the near future. The Randstad Urgency program, including the Vision, did not substitute the National Spatial Strategy; the program was only meant to operationalize the national plan. From the perspective of conceptual reform, however, it issued an important signal. It accelerated the distinction between two types of national-planning responsibility that the National Spatial Strategy had introduced, and illustrated what this meant for decision-making. On the one side, the Ministry of V&W created a list of stand-alone projects with little common argument (Busscher et al., 2013) and then moved them under the purview of the highly regulated MIRT program. Conceptual underpinning (justification by means of a spatial logic) was deemed unnecessary. On the other, the Ministry of VROM engaged in intense public debate on appropriate spatial planning (for a review, see Blank et al., 2009). Almost the entire body of previously used spatial concepts, including their repertoires of analytical knowledge and political values, was activated for this purpose. It was shown that "responsibility for the system" implies intense reflection on multiple interwoven planning rationales. However, it was also shown that no concrete policy action was attached to such reflection. Room for interpretation was sustained but had become unpractical.

### 5.3.5  National Policy Strategy, 2012: One imperative plan

The long-term Structural Vision Randstad 2040 had a very short life. In July 2008, a new Dutch Spatial Planning Act, under Parliamentary review since 2002, became effective. This new law upheld the role of national plans in Dutch planning but made them less dominant. For the purpose of subsidiarity it required not only the national government but provincial and municipal governments as well to present structural visions which were then made self-binding (Buitelaar, 2010).

The enforcement of the Act obliged the national government to publish a new national plan. It responded to this obligation, albeit with some delay. The crisis in financial markets and another fall of government slowed down delivery. A new government, now led by centre-right Liberals, was only formed in October 2010. The first action of this new government was to organize itself more efficiently, and for this purpose the two Ministries of VROM and V&W were merged into one: the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (I&M). In September 2011 the first draft of the National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning was published, and in March 2012 the final version substituting the National Spatial Strategy and the Structural Vision Randstad 2040 became effective (Ministerie van I&M, 2012).

Similar to earlier national plans, the National Policy Strategy introduced a "national spatial main structure", bundling spatial concepts into one overarching framework. The structure incorporated a number of *urban regions with a concentration of top sectors*, geographically resembling the *economic core areas* that the Ministry of EZ had introduced in 2004. Their boundaries ("elastics", as they were called in the hallways of the Ministry of I&M at that time) circumscribed locations of economic activities (*top sectors*) whose development was to foster the country's international economic competitiveness. To the selection of sectors in the Structural Vision Randstad 2040, ten new ones were added. Analytically the *top sector* concept relied on knowledge about system innovation and the development of international markets (HCSS and TNO, 2011). In its organizational dimension it was associated with integrated area development in few priority areas and relied largely on non-spatial policies, such as tax incentives, trade agreements, and investment in research and development (Ministeries van EZ et al., 2011). Under the heading "possible new connection in the main transport network" accessibility became a more independent agenda in comparison with earlier national plans because it was equated with reliable transport and effortless travel for transport users only. The impact of transport development on urbanization found little consideration. A detailed analytical model to measure the cost of travel was introduced. It became the most important instrument in identifying a need for investment into new transport infrastructure.

As Waterhout et al. (2013, p.146) noted, when the "neo-liberal minority coalition took office in 2010, everything pointed towards a complete abolition of planning at the national level. (S)patial planning in all its manifestations, even when it aims to facilitate economic development, is judged a hindrance for the freedom of individuals and companies." This observation is confirmed by our review of spatial concepts incorporated in the National Policy Strategy (outlined in Table 5.5); the plan was indeed stripped of most of the spatial logics that had guided earlier Dutch national planning. The national government was to act only if national interests were at stake, and these interests have been kept to a bare minimum. Where the plan remained to have spatial implication, argumentation was confined by highly detailed policy measures. Objectives (e.g. the preservation of cultural heritage) were linked to existing (mostly European) law and regulation, further removing planning decision-making from the site of informal negotiation among governments to the site of courts and administrations. Planning decision-making on integrated area development (predominately invoked by investment into transport infrastructure) was moved under the MIRT programme, whose procedures had become more detailed in January 2009. Involving stakeholders, sub-national governments among them, became mandatory during early decision-making stages. Involvement was to identify any potential conflict around national projects early and in this way accelerate the speed of implementation. A room for interpretation was sustained in this way. However, it allowed for discussing options in transport development only.

TABLE 5.5 Dimension in spatial concepts in National spatial Strategy, 2012

| Spatial concept | Analytical dimension | Normative dimension | Organizational dimension |
|---|---|---|---|
| National spatial main structure (nationale ruimtelijke hoofdstructuur), p. 64-65, 32, 39, 40, 42, 54, 56 | | | |
| – Urban region with a concentration of top sectors (stedelijke regio met een concentratie van topsectoren);<br>– Top sector (topsector) (15). | – Specialization of economic sectors/capacity for innovation and growth on international markets. | – International economic competitiveness. | – National structural visions for integrated area development (MIRT);<br>– (Non-spatial policy measures*). |
| – Possible new connection in the main transport network (mogelijke nieuwe verbinding hoofdnet). | – Transport cost (accessibility indicator, see p. 39). | – Reliable transport/effortless travel. | – Direct investment in transport infrastructure (MIRT). |
| – Natural/cultural heritage. | | – Cultural and natural qualities. | – (Inter)national/European law and regulation on the preservation of cultural and natural heritage. |

*Policies are set out in Ministerie van EZ (2011).*

## 5.4  Discussion

The 2012 National Policy Strategy is acknowledged as having been a stark move in Dutch planning, from indicative to imperative, and to represent a break in a long tradition of collaborative planning decision-making (Needham, 2015, Waterhout et al., 2013). Our review of the differences in the ambiguity of dimensions of spatial concepts (summarized in Table 5.6 below) led us to a detailed reading of this move.

The ongoing liberalization of European markets caused an increase of attention to economic competitiveness in an international setting in Dutch national planning in the late 1980s. To facilitate this, new spatial concepts were added to ones that had been consolidated over a decade of use. The new concepts were first used to prioritize investment in few priority areas. In the context of a broadened normative and analytical scope of planning, however, these straightforward operational decisions elicited criticism from planners. Discontent about weakly justified national spatial selectivity grew into a call for conceptual modernization in the late 1990s. A new generation of spatial concepts was to enhance regionally differentiated planning approaches and strategic engagement of the national government therein. The new concepts were also meant to be 'argumentative', so as to not prescribe regional planning precisely but to be more open to interpretation and support collaboration among the various tiers of government in this way.
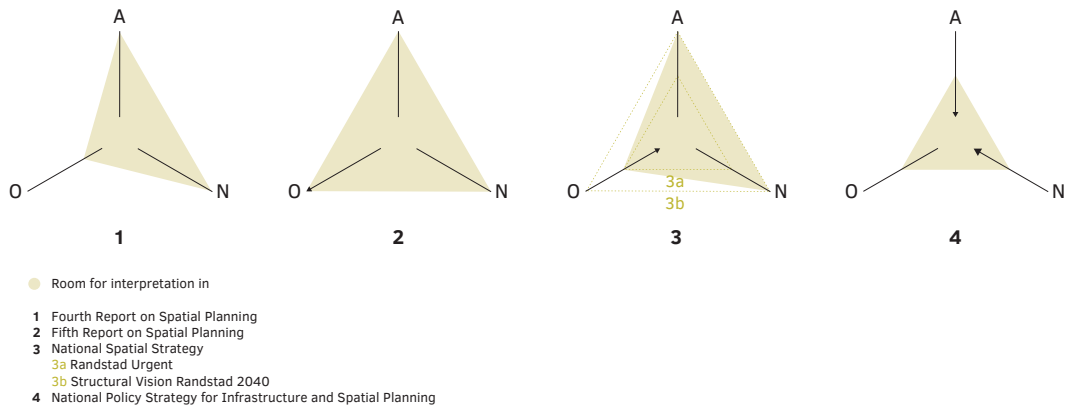
FIG. 5.3 Dimensions of spatial concepts in Dutch national plans, 1988–2012

With hindsight, what looked like an experimental phase, an overly frequent publication of national plans has occurred since 2000. One observation drawn from our analysis of these plans is the gradual shrinkage of room for interpretation that conceptual reform implemented. When focusing on dimensions of spatial concepts, stages in confinement can be distinguished (Figure 5.3). During a first stage, room for interpretation increased substantially. In particular the urban network concept, taken up in the 2002 Fifth Report, implied a broad political agenda, a fuzzy landscape of analytical knowledge about spatial development, and a multitude of divers and ambiguous policy measures. Sub-national governments in "soft" territories were to use these repertoires to formulate projects and strategies of national importance on their own initiative. During a second stage, new concepts were added while earlier ones were retained. It seemed that the 2006 National Spatial Strategy opened up an even broader room for interpretation. However, the organizational dimension of the concepts was selectively revised. Some concepts remained ambiguous in this dimension, continuing deliberation about what national planning guidance means when applied to particular regions. Others were firmly associated with projects of definite national importance. The distinction between concepts by their organisational implications was accelerated by the 2008 Randstad Urgent program. The core program focused on the implementation of infrastructure projects. The Structural Vision 2040, possibly in itself a critique on the emerging form of infrastructure planning, revived a multitude of concepts. In conjunction, these expanded room for interpretation once more. However, in their organizational dimension, the concepts were associated with continuing research and argumentation, nothing more. Spatial planning was rendered as a discussion on the distant future with no concrete action to be attached to it. During a third stage,

this argumentative branch of planning was simply dropped. What remained was an inflexible, imperative planning scheme underpinned by largely non-spatial rationales and with very little room for interpretation.

Our observations raise some points for discussion. First of all, they allow us to argue that the transformation of spatial planning rationales in Dutch national planning over the time period was mainly facilitated by pragmatic behaviour. When considering the political agendas and the analytical knowledge that spatial concepts incorporated, there was relative stability up until 2012. Changes in the room for interpretation were, above all, implemented through a re-coupling of these ambiguous repertoires with increasingly detailed policy measures in ever more confined territories. One explanation of this development is an interest in decentralization (formalised in the 2008 new Spatial Planning Act). However, change had implications beyond the devolution of responsibilities. As our analysis reveals, the re-coupling worked in parallel with favouring a distinct normative agenda (international economic competitiveness). In this sense, the gradual migration of room for interpretation from the national to the lower levels of government was politically selective. Also, the growing dominance of a distinct form of planning ("infrastructure planning") cannot be fully explained by the benefits of decentralization. Last not least, our results show changing preferences for forms of decentralization. Over time, dimensions of spatial concepts were shaped to favour a form in which governmental tiers each focussed on their own, select spatial planning rationales over a form in which tiers engage in deliberation on the implications that shared rationales can have when applied to particular regions and places.

TABLE 5.6 Room for interpretation in Dutch national plans, 1988-2012

| Conceptual complex | Analytical dimension (A) | Normative dimension (N) | Organizational dimension (O) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Fourth Report on Spatial Planning, 1988: a backdrop for analysis** | | | |
| Spatial main structure. | Land-use characteristics, urbanization/transport accessibility, differentiation of urban and open areas. | Liveability, spatial quality, spatial diversity. | Restrictive and prohibitive land-use regulation in urban and open areas. |
| Spatial development perspective | Performance/transport accessibility, diversity and agglomeration of economic activities. | International economic competitiveness. | Direct investment into transport infrastructure and main port development. |

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TABLE 5.6 Room for interpretation in Dutch national plans, 1988-2012

| Conceptual complex | Analytical dimension (A) | Normative dimension (N) | Organizational dimension (O) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Fifth Report on Spatial Planning, 2002** | | | |
| National spatial main structure | Multiple dependencies among structural spatial characteristics (layers). | Multiple goals, combined under the header 'spatial quality'. | Indicative guidelines for the integration of sector policies. |
| City and open land | Differentiation of urban and open areas. | Spatial diversity. | Land-use regulation in peri-urban and open areas. |
| Urban networks | Multiple functional relations in regional socio-economic development. | Spatial quality, spatial diversity; liveability, social vitality, international economic competitiveness. | Indicative guidelines for regional planning, regional development funding programs, direct investment in key projects, integrated area development and transport infrastructure. |
| **National Spatial Strategy, 2006** | | | |
| National spatial main structure: Layer structure of the Netherlands | Multiple dependencies among structural spatial characteristics (layers). | Basic spatial quality (legal, procedural, financial standards). | (Environmental) planning law and regulation. |
| National spatial main structure: urban networks | Multiple functional relations in regional socio-economic development. | Spatial diversity, liveability, international economic competitiveness. | Few indicative guidelines for urban land-use planning, regional development funding programs, procedural requirements for co-operation. |
| National spatial main structure: economic core areas | Multiple and divers functional relations in regional economic development. | International economic competitiveness, reliable transport. | Direct investment in key projects, integrated area development and transport infrastructure. |
| **Structural Vision Randstad 2040, 2008** | | | |
| Interaction between green, blue and red; Strengthen what is internationally strong; Vital, sustainable cities and regional accessibility. | Multiple and divers dependencies among structural spatial characteristics, functional relations in regional socio-economic development. | Spatial quality; spatial diversity; social vitality; economic vitality, international economic competitiveness. | Multiple indicative guidelines for long term regional planning, research, (ongoing MIRT projects). |
| **National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning, 2012** | | | |
| National spatial man structure | Performance of economic sectors, transport costs. | International economic competitiveness, reliable transport/effortless travel. | Direct investment in transport infrastructure and integrated area development under the MIRT program, (inter) national/European law and regulation. |

## 5.5 Conclusions

In this paper we have argued that spatial concepts are discursive structures that allow for the construction of planning rationales by incorporating analytical, normative, and organizational dimensions. Based on notions of the importance of choice in argumentative planning practices, we were particularly interested in the selection and detailing of these dimensions assuming that their ambiguity shapes room for interpretation and thus collaboration and governance.

There are no proven measurements of the ambiguity of spatial concepts. We needed to rely on rough estimations of change in their repertoires of analytical knowledge about spatial development, political agendas, and policy measures. We underpinned our preposition that room for interpretation shapes governance responses theoretically. In our empirical analysis we mentioned responses where literature on Dutch planning provided insights. A consistent empirical tracing of responses would have gone far beyond the scope of this paper. Despite limitations, our analysis does allow for conclusions concerning our theoretical ambition: a more detailed understanding of the use of ambiguous ("fuzzy" or "soft") geographic perceptions in the realm of spatial planning.

Our exploration allows us to argue that the dimensions of concepts that we distinguish gained attention in the formulation of planning guidance; that they were used to practice planning control. While spatial concepts were sustained as metaphorical entities, their analytical, normative, and organizational dimensions were (re-)considered apart. Revision appears as a careful crafting of conditions for discretion: concepts were shaped to not just operationalize planning guidance but also to foster or restrict deliberation on the implications that guidance has when applied to particular spatial situations. "Soft" planning frameworks are associated with a variety of governance responses, as we noted in our introduction. Our detailed tracing of how conflicting desires for spatial selectivity and ambiguity are accommodated inside geographic perceptions indicates that these responses are foreseen and are built into the spatial imaginaries used in the realm of spatial planning.

In applying our analytical framework to the Dutch case, we recognized the importance of sudden political and organizational changes, for instance in the form of a new government with a different political colour, as well as legal and procedural change. Nevertheless, across these events we noticed a faint but discernible logic that explains the consecutive revisions of national plans by an enduring attempt to

couple a preferred political agenda with a selected form of policy-making. This logic became apparent through assuming that spatial concepts allow for the construction of planning rationales because they are composed of an analytical, normative, and organizational dimension. In this context, the transformation of concepts appears as an assemblage, a process of association of these dimensions of geographic perceptions, perpetuated by their ambiguity.

We do not suggest that such assembling ended in 2012 in the Netherlands. A new Dutch national plan, replacing the National Policy Strategy, was due to be published while this paper was being written (Ministerie van I&M, 2017). Objectives set out for the National Environmental Planning Strategy are ambitious, as is often the case at the beginning of a new round of national plan-making in the Netherlands. The plan is supposed to integrate a greater variety of sectoral interests, revive collaboration among levels and tiers of government and civil society, and make planning rules (specifically those regarding environmental law) simpler and more effective. Discussion on how to combine a preference for detailed operational planning rationales with a desire for collaboration and governance seems to continue. From the perspective of our analytical framework such continuation is comprehensible. A spatial logic built into geographic perceptions cannot be ambiguous and select at the same time. To have spatial imaginaries support both broadly agreed-upon and effective planning requires reflexivity: continuing deliberation on how implied general planning rationales relate to problems in particular local situations and vice versa.

## Disclosure statement

## Notes on contributors

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# 6 Regional design: Discretionary approaches to regional planning in the Netherlands

ABSTRACT     In recent decades the Netherlands has seen an increase in the use of regional design-led practices in national indicative planning. Despite this, the interrelations between design and planning decision making are not well understood and attempts to involve the expertise and ambition of designers in planning have had unclear outcomes. This paper elaborates on the role and position of regional design in indicative planning. It is argued that design in this realm resembles discretionary action, implying that design both influences, and is influenced by, prevailing planning rationales. An analytical framework is developed on these grounds and applied to a set of regional design initiatives that evolved in the context of Dutch national plans between 1988 and 2012. Significantly, the analysis reveals forms of discretional control that shape the creative design practice, of particular importance being the flexibility of planning guidance and the resulting room for interpretation. In theoretical terms, the article contributes to the discussion of how design – as an explorative search for solutions to problems in a particular spatial context – and design theory can contribute to an understanding of the multiple planning experiments emerging in this post-regulative era.

**Introduction**

Dutch national planning is plan-led, meaning that the government predefines desirable spatial outcomes and uses these determinations to take planning decisions. However, to view Dutch planning as entirely shaped by national plans would neglect the flexibility of such planning guidance. Plans by the national government usually incorporate outline planning agendas and principles only. Sub-national governing bodies use the freedom given: they formulate development proposals that fit the particularities of their territories and then present these to the central government, which judges proposals on their merits. Such 'indicative' planning practices, in which decisions are legitimised by negotiated interpretation of planning guidance, have a long tradition in the Netherlands.

Similarly, design - as an explorative search for solutions to problems in the built environment - is an important and stable component of planning in the Netherlands. To imagine design solutions for particular areas and to use these to influence planning guidance is a long standing practice, which can be traced back to the emergence of urban planning in the early 20th century, with Van Eesteren as its most important founding father (for his reflection on design and planning, see Van Eesteren, 1948). Design practice is positively associated with both innovation in, and operationalisation of, national planning. Since the 1980s, in the context of decentralization and deregulation, design has also come to be seen as a practice that contributes to the formation of governance around projects and strategies, as well as tempering any conflicting political and territorial interests that arise. However, the position and role of design in indicative planning are not well understood. As a result, attempts to involve the professional expertise and value schemes of designers in planning decision making continue to have unclear outcomes.

This article discusses the interrelations between design and planning. It is argued that design, when used in the realm of indicative planning, aims to improve planning guidance by assessing its implications for particular situations. In this way, design practice resembles discretionary action  - an attempt to look beyond generally applicable rules when making decisions. This preposition implies that design is an integral part of planning, a practice that informs and is informed by prevailing planning rationales. The dialectic is developed against a background of literature on design, spatial planning, spatial representation and spatial concepts. The result of theoretical reflection is an analytical framework to distinguish design practices by their discretional agency. The framework enables us to identify if practices are intended to refine or challenge planning guidance. It also reveals forms of

discretional control. In particular it highlights how, in the context of collaborative planning decision making, the flexibility of planning guidance and the resulting room for interpretation are important determinants in the role of creative design practice.

The article is structured in four main sections. In the first section, the analytical framework to interpret relations between regional design practices and planning is developed. In the second, this framework is applied to four well-known regional design initiatives that evolved in the context of consecutive Dutch national plans since the mid-1980s. The analysis reveals that flexibility in Dutch national plans reduced over this period. It is shown that, in this context of diminishing room for interpretation, the role of design in the making of planning decisions changed: initially, it was a practice that criticised national plans from an extra-governmental perspective; it then worked to collaboratively define national planning with various levels of government, and then further transformed into a practice that challenged national plans on behalf of the national government. Design shifted from a practice operating on its own initiative, with the attention of a broad audience, into a procedure made mandatory by the national government, who acted as both a sole initiator and sole audience of designs. In the third section, observations from this analysis are summarised and the institutionalisation of regional design in Dutch planning is critically reviewed. The fourth, concluding part of the paper discusses the theoretical foundation of the analytical framework and further questions it raises.

In theoretical terms, the analytical framework and article are based on a combination of planning and design theory, thus enhancing understanding between fields (for a lack of such understanding see Gunder, 2011). Its planning-theoretical ambition is to contribute to an increased understanding of planning in a post-regulative era. Observation indicates that planning in the context of flexible planning guidance enhances attention to particular spatial contexts (Allmendinger et al., 2016, Brenner et al., 2011). Such a consideration of material settings and practices – the built environment and the way it is used – is central to design. Against this background, the article emphasises the capacity of design theory to contribute to an understanding of variations in regional planning and governance, under differing institutional circumstances (Mayntz, 2001).

## 6.2 Understanding regional design in the context of planning: An analytical framework

### 6.2.1 The use of spatial representations in regional design

Few scholarly writings are dedicated to regional design and many of these build upon the seminal work of a small number of authors from the fields of architecture and urban design (Hillier and Leaman, 1974, Rittel, 1987, Schön, 1983, Schön, 1988). These authors describe design as a reflective and argumentative practice, oriented towards the improvement of the built environment. Design has a holistic orientation also. It is an attempt at a comprehensive understanding of spatial development, a search for integral solutions that consider dependencies among parts. Since the built environment is a complex system, the act of designing is unlikely to evolve in a linear manner from problem definition to solution. It is more likely to be explorative, evolving during multiple synthesis-evaluation iterations and steps in which problems and solutions are explicated, comprehended, reflected upon and adapted.

However complex, the built environment itself plays an important role in design. Design theorists argue that "design is a relatively simple set of operations carried out on highly complex structures, which are themselves simplified by socially constructed 'theories' and modes of representation" (Hillier and Leaman, 1974, p.4). Schön (1988, p.183) suggests that design evolves in a 'design world' - a designer's subjective perception of material settings. A designer simplifies his or her perception of these settings in to types, or 'generative abstractions' (id.). When considering possible design solutions, these abstractions lead to the recognition of matches and mismatches: the designer learns how well certain solutions fit particular settings. In this way, design may be both a process of elaboration and a process of discovery. Imagined solutions may lead to a refinement of types, a more detailed account of material settings. They may also help the designer to reveal new aspects of the built environment and define new types (Schön, 1988). From the testing of solutions against types, rules are deducted: "As rules of law are derived from judicial precedents, (…), so design rules are derived from types, and may be subjected to test and criticism by reference to them" (id., p.183).

Images of the built environment are a central media in design (Rittel, 1987). Maps, diagrams and models facilitate the 'conversation with the situation' that constitutes design (Schön, 1985, p.49). Specifically in the spatial planning literature, the use of geographic imagery has also gained attention. Such imagery is frequently related to subjective perceptions of material settings and practices used in decision-making (e.g. Dühr, 2004, Faludi, 1996, Neuman, 1996, Thierstein and Förster, 2008, Van Duinen, 2004). Images are seen to be socially constructed, relative expressions of what different actors find important and what they are willing to neglect (Davoudi and Strange, 2008). When associated with interpretative planning, visualisations turn into spatial representations (Davoudi, 2012). These representations have 'agency' (id., p. 438), intentionally generating meaning by drawing on repertoires of existing symbols for the purpose of politics and planning.

Writings on the utilisation of such spatial representations in planning processes distinguish three main logics that span multiple disciplines, notably an analytical, normative and organisational logic (Dühr, 2004, Förster, 2009, Van Duinen, 2004). When representations have an *analytical logic*, they are associated with (invariable) scientific knowledge about material spatial settings and practices. The *normative logic* of representations evolves against the background of political values and norms wherein representations portray desirable planning outcomes. Such representations are often seen to be persuasive - to advocate future development and also to promote appropriate planning action in light of this - hence the focus of much (academic) attention to visions in spatial planning (e.g. Albrechts et al., 2003). However, when distinguishing know-why (the values and norms that motivate planning) and know-how (the action derived from such motivation), the *organisational logic* of spatial representations appears. Here, a representation shows a territory, it "relates to a concern with regional impacts and incidences of policies and the question of how specific local and regional entities (territories) are affected by those policies" (Schön, 2005, p.391).

In this way, regional design can be seen to expose analytical knowledge, normative convictions and territorial interests when developing solutions for the built environment. A design proposal may be utilised for a single purpose or may also assemble notions and compose a more intricate story line about what, why and how to intervene. Van Dijk (2011, p.141), who theorised regional design as a form of storytelling, notes that regional design "deserves to be seen as an attempt to prepare the regional perceptual foundations of eventual decisions, and be applied as such." However, this does not evolve without context. In the few scholarly writings on regional design, there is agreement that it is often a collaborative and interactive practice, involving a broad array of planning actors (De Jonge, 2009, Kempenaar et al., 2016, Van Dijk, 2011). In such an 'arena of struggle' (Faludi and Korthals Altes,

1994, p.405), it is likely that design proposals produce matches and mismatches not only in the mind of the individual designer but also with 'pre-existing stories' (ibid.) - institutionalised perceptions of geographies that stabilise prevailing planning practices (see also Brenner et al. (2011), on the reflexivity of assemblage urbanism).

## Design in the context of spatial concepts

It is common to describe spatial planning as a strategic planning approach that pays more attention to the particularities of the built environment than statutory planning does (Albrechts et al., 2003, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010, Healey, 2006, Nadin, 2007, Needham, 1988, Schön, 2005). Its objective, "to articulate a more coherent spatial logic for land use regulation, resource protection, and investments in regeneration and infrastructure" (Albrechts et al., 2003, p.113) has generated a considerable body of literature on 'spatial concepts' - the 'pre-existing stories' and institutionalised geographies mentioned above. Faludi (1987) and Needham (1988), theorising the emergence of spatial planning in the Netherlands, argued early on that a form of planning that allocates planning resources to some areas while others are omitted, requires a shared understanding of spatial development. They saw explicit (and negotiable) relations between what they called a 'spatial order' (autonomous spatial development, motivated by social action) and 'spatial ordering' (intervening in spatial development) as a precondition for any approach to strategic spatial planning. Empirical analysis verified their argument. It was shown that Dutch national planning in particular relied on a generic spatial logic, a 'planning doctrine', that was repeatedly used to justify more detailed operational decisions (Faludi and Van der Valk, 1994, Roodbol-Mekkes et al., 2012). Investigations into Dutch 'planning concepts' (Van Duinen, 2004, Zonneveld, 1991) brought similar patterns to the fore. They also indicated that operational planning relies on a set of relatively stable spatial concepts: core guiding principles and related core planning tasks, articulating presumptive planning rationales, which are explored when they are applied to more specific situations.

Such spatial concepts in planning have a well-established importance in the Netherlands (for more recent writing see e.g. Hagens, 2010, Van Duinen, 2015, Westerink et al., 2013) but are also recognised elsewhere (Davoudi, 2003, Graham and Healey, 1999, Richardson and Jensen, 2003). Investigations into the use of relational geographies in collaborative planning contributed to a growing recognition that perceptions of space and place are selectively used by governments "with the ambition of accumulating sufficient allocative, authoritative and imaginative force to shape both the materialities and identities of particular places" (Healey, 2006, p.527). A critical review of these geographies has shown that such concepts are

used to perpetuate prevailing planning regimes and the political interests behind these (e.g. Massey, 2011, Brenner, 1999, Jessop, 2012). In governance theory, certain perceptions of space (and time) are associated with institutions. They are used in order to "(…) stabilise the cognitive and normative expectations of (…) actors by shaping and promoting a common worldview as well as developing adequate solutions to sequencing problems, that is, the predictable ordering of various actions, policies, or processes over time (…)" (Jessop, 2001, p.1230).

Davoudi (2003) observed the use of the polycentrism concept, which had become widespread currency in European spatial planning by the mid-1990s. She noted that the concept had several dimensions. This can be generalised to spatial concepts as a whole: the *analytical* dimension provides knowledge on how unplanned individual action affects spatial development; from the *normative* dimension, a concept is a metaphor for desirable spatial structures and also includes a guiding principle to achieve a policy goal; the final, *organisational* dimension of concepts reflects prevailing territorial control. Davoudi (2003) showed how the concept of polycentrism was transformed from a descriptive and analytical tool to a wide-spread prescriptive and normative agenda. As it was applied to a multitude of situations in EU member states, it turned into an 'ideal type', "despite a lack of common definition and empirical evidence about its desirability, effectiveness, or the potential for its alleged success being replicated elsewhere by policy intervention" (id., p.996). The concept continued to be used, not as a deterministic rationale, but as a collection of notions from which planners derived logics that fitted the spatial particularities of situations and arguably also their political preferences and territorial interests.

From these notions, a model of an interplay between regional design and spatial concepts (as key elements of planning guidance) appears. Design solutions for particular regions are framed by an institutionalised repertoire of notions from which decisions about what, why and how to plan are derived. Design may be a form of analytical reasoning (referring to the analytical foundation of concepts), a form of political action (referring to a normative planning agenda), or a form of organisational reasoning (referring to prevailing territorial control) (see Figure 6.1 (a) below). As highlighted earlier, design theorists argue that design - the testing of solutions against simplified abstractions of the built environment - may be a process of elaboration or of discovery. When assuming that design evolves in the framework of spatial concepts, it may be used to refine these: deducing solutions from a given choice, an institutionalised repertoire of meanings (see Figure 6.1 (b) below). Conversely, a hypothetical, or imagined solution may help the designer to uncover new aspects of the built environment. It may be inductive, being used to challenge or enrich prevailing spatial concepts and the array of rationales that these incorporate (see Figure 6.1 (c) below).
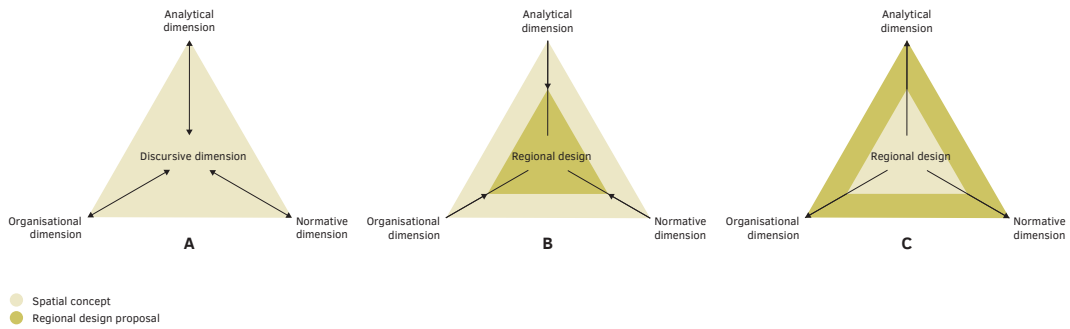
FIG. 6.1 Interrelations between spatial concepts and regional design. **A)** dimension of spatial concepts: framing reasoning in planning decision making; **B)** regional design as a process of elaboration: refining spatial concepts; **C)** regional design as a process of discovery: challenging spatial concepts.

<table>
<tr><td>○</td><td>Spatial concept</td></tr>
<tr><td>●</td><td>Regional design proposal</td></tr>
</table>

6.2.3     ## Positioning design in the realm of planning

The notions above differentiate regional designs by their relation to the spatial concepts used to stabilise and perpetuate prevailing planning guidance. The study of spatial concepts in planning is not an easy task to accomplish. As Davoudi (2003) has shown, concepts change while being used for the planning of particular areas. In this sense, it is difficult to distinguish concepts from their interpretation. The use of concepts also varies according to regional planning regimes and cultures in countries (Nadin and Stead, 2008). In some European countries, regional planning relies on narrowly defined statutory planning guidance. In many countries regional planning evolves in a 'gap'(Allmendinger et al., 2016, p.1), an 'institutional void' where "there are no clear rules and norms according to which politics is to be conducted and policy measures are to be agreed upon" (Hajer, 2003, p.175). Concepts, in the context of 'gaps' and 'voids', rely not on a select and detailed empirical evidence base but on a fuzzy landscape of theories (Davoudi, 2006, Markusen, 1999). They incorporate not specific operational goals but vaguely defined political agendas. Spatial concepts then do not encompass specific policies, projected upon clearly defined administrative territories by governmental authorities who hold the sole power for planning, but general measures, projected upon softly defined regions by governance arrangements who (often temporarily) share such planning power. When concepts are seen to frame decision-making, the degree of flexibility opens up room for interpretation. Despite being difficult to trace, such room for interpretation is decisive for the position of regional design in the realm of planning. What (Rittel, 1987) calls 'the awesome epistemic freedom' in design is built into a planning system.

In his reflection on a designer's way of reasoning, Rittel (1987) notes that design solutions are derived from argumentation but that such argument is always incomplete. The built environment is composed of multiple dependent parts. During the design process a designer continuously chooses to focus on some dependencies, taking a distinct path in reasoning while leaving others unexplored. His or her choices are based on arguments, but are not derived from them: "Looking at the various pros and cons, the designer has 'made up his mind'. How this happens is beyond reasoning" (Rittel, 1987, p.5). Multiple choices constitute 'epistemic freedom' on which design thrives (ibid.). They turn design into a creative practice but also into a practice of doubt, wherein the designer pragmatically searches for acknowledged constraints that limit choices and releases him/her from responsibility: "What the designer knows, believes, fears, desires enters his reasoning at every step of the process, affects his use of epistemic freedom. He will - of course - commit himself to those positions which matches his beliefs, convictions, preferences, and values, unless he is persuaded or convinced by someone else or his own insight" (id., p.6).

These notions imply that being given room for interpretation informs not only the nature of argumentation in design but also its collaborative rationality (Graham and Healey, 1999, Healey, 2006, Healey, 1999). Design then is an elaboration of multiple beliefs, convictions, preferences, and values that actors pursue. Giving broad room for interpretation entails that design is a collaborative search for planning solutions, by means of negotiation on convictions (although with the risk of overly pragmatic behaviour). Narrow room for interpretation entails that design and planning decision making evolves through confrontation (at the risk of conflict).

### 6.2.4    Summary: Design as discretionary behaviour

In Figure 6.2 (a), the 'room for interpretation' within which design may evolve is defined by the multiplicity of choices that prevailing planning guidance incorporates. The room for interpretation –likewise a 'field of choice' (Faludi and Korthals Altes, 1994, Friend and Jessop, 2013), 'a field of argument' (Dryzek, 1993, Fischer, 2007) or 'a field of positions' (Rittel, 1987) - has been extensively discussed in planning and design theory. The most detailed notions of how such choices influence the making of planning decisions stem from the field of planning law and discretion. Discretion is a form of decision making, concerned with "making choices between courses of action" (Booth, 2007, p.131). What distinguishes discretion from other forms of decision making is the importance of rules therein. Discretionary action aims to bend rules, it is a search for "leeway in the interpretation of fact and the

application of precedent to particular cases" (Booth, 2007, p.129). In normative terms discretion is associated with an improvement of rules through a judgement of their implications for particular situations.

The degree of flexibility or ambiguity within rules is seen to be decisive for the way that discretion is exercised. Discretionary action in the context of imperative instructions, select and detailed rules, is likely to be inductive - it challenges rules by alternative reasoning. In the context of flexible guidelines, multiple and ambiguous rules that allow for multiple interpretations, discretion is practiced in the form of policy argumentation (Tewdwr-Jones, 1999, p.245) - a consideration of multiple "other schemes of values" to legitimise decisions, as Booth (2007, p. 136) notes. It is deductive, meant to refine rules. The selection and degree of detail within rules inform the nature of decision-making. They also inform constellations among actors. Imperative instructions are likely to have a clearly identifiable author and 'court of appeal' which exercises discretionary control in case of discretionary action by others. Flexible guidelines imply a collaborative rationality. They are inclusive, but also result in unclear arrangements of who exercises discretionary action and who exercises discretionary control.

The amount of room for interpretation is central to how design practices are embedded in planning (see Figure 6.2 (b)). It defines if design is meant to be a practice that assists in the collaborative production of planning spaces, is deducted from an outline agreement on planning agendas and principles, is at the risk of overly pragmatic behaviour, or is challenging planning from the outside, at the risk of conflict. Several questions arise, regarding the flexibility of planning guidance, the relationship between design practices and this guidance, and actors involved. Below, these questions are further defined and used to discuss a series of exemplary regional design initiatives that evolved in the context of Dutch indicative planning between the late 1980s and the 2010s, a period when the flexibility of national planning guidance fluctuated widely under the influence of deregulation and decentralization.
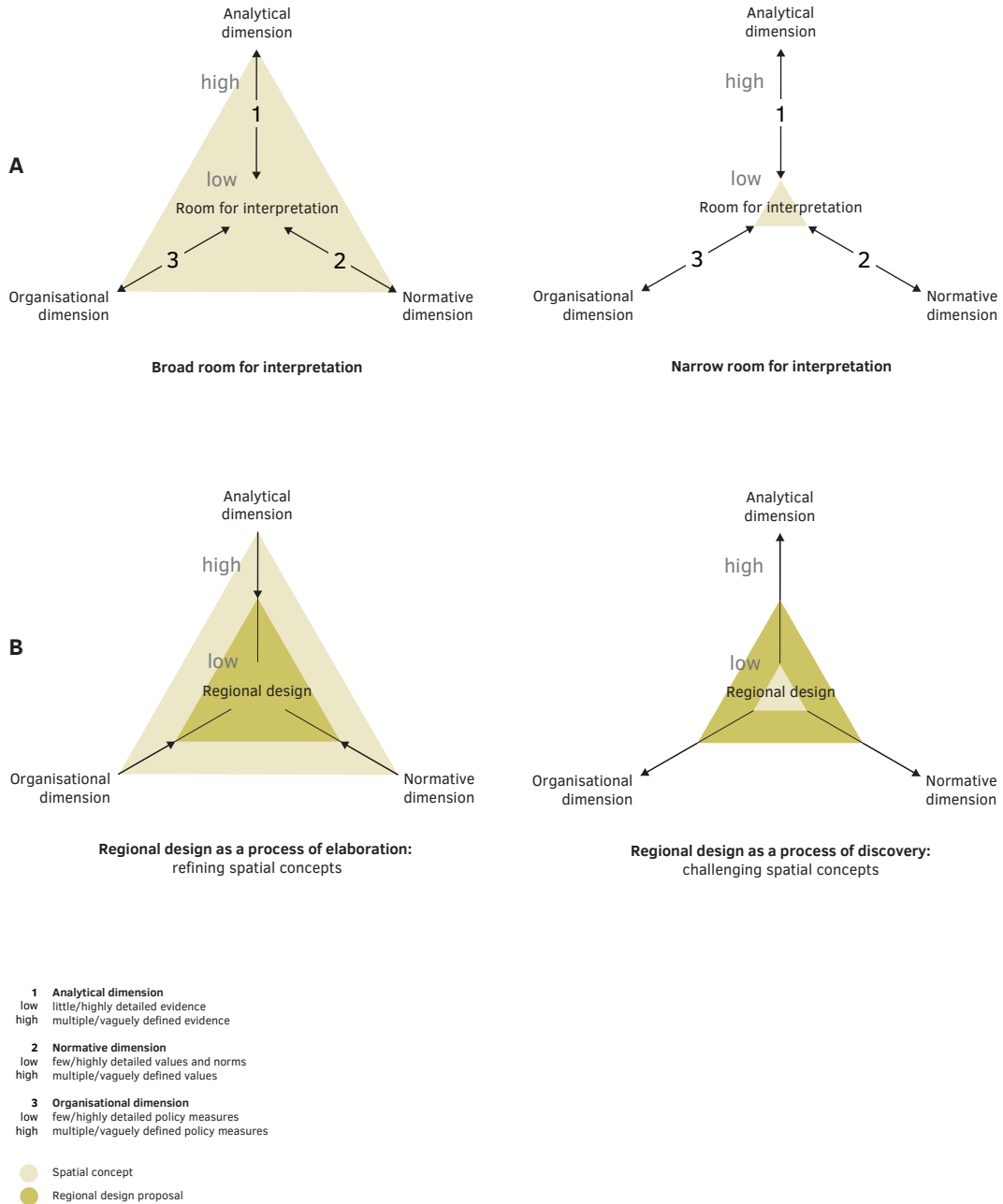
**A**

high
1

low
Room for interpretation

3                    2

Organisational
dimension

Normative
dimension

Analytical
dimension

**Broad room for interpretation**

high
1

low
Room for interpretation

3                    2

Organisational
dimension

Normative
dimension

Analytical
dimension

**Narrow room for interpretation**

**B**

Analytical
dimension

high

low
Regional design

Organisational
dimension

Normative
dimension

**Regional design as a process of elaboration:**
refining spatial concepts

Analytical
dimension

high

low
Regional design

Organisational
dimension

Normative
dimension

**Regional design as a process of discovery:**
challenging spatial concepts

| | |
|---|---|
| **1** | **Analytical dimension** |
| low | little/highly detailed evidence |
| high | multiple/vaguely defined evidence |
| **2** | **Normative dimension** |
| low | few/highly detailed values and norms |
| high | multiple/vaguely defined values |
| **3** | **Organisational dimension** |
| low | few/highly detailed policy measures |
| high | multiple/vaguely defined policy measures |

○ Spatial concept

● Regional design proposal

FIG. 6.2 Flexibility of planning guidance/room for interpretation as context for regional design. **A)** flexibility of planning guidance, **B)** regional design in the context of planning guidance.

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## 6.3 Exemplary Dutch regional design initiatives

Above, an analytical framework to differentiate regional design practices by their relation to planning guidance was introduced. The framework raises three questions concerning the role and position of regional design in the realm of indicative planning: What is the flexibility of planning guidance? Are design proposals meant to challenge or refine guidance? Who are the authors and audiences of design? Below, the framework is used for an analysis of exemplary regional design initiatives that evolved under the influence of four consecutive national planning frameworks, published in 1988 (as a backdrop for analysis), 2002, 2004 and 2012. The four planning frameworks are briefly analysed to identify the spatial concepts they incorporated. From an analysis of their dimensions, the degree of room for interpretation is deduced. Regional design initiatives that emerged in the context of these frameworks are examined for their references to the identified spatial concepts, as well as the way that these references have been combined for the purpose of discretion.

The analysis of the flexibility of planning guidance is based on a review of publicly available policy documents, most importantly the national plans themselves. Plans include maps which set out planning principles in overview. Spatial concepts mentioned in the key of these maps were selected by their concern about urbanisation. They provided the basis for a system of coding used for in-depth documentary analysis. Text and additional maps in reports and secondary policy documents (referred to in core documents) were reviewed for their analytical knowledge, normative goals and policy measures associated with concepts. Changes in the flexibility of planning guidance were deduced from the amount and relative degree of detail in evidence, goals, and policy measures given in plans. Findings were supported through a review of academic literature on Dutch indicative planning, spatial concepts and governance over time. The choice of regional design examples was guided by the prominence that practices gained in Dutch professional discourse on the role of regional design in national planning. The analysis of regional design initiatives is based on various written and drawn material including regional design products (maps and other visualisations). This material was reviewed for references to spatial concepts, analytical knowledge, normative goals and organisational implications. In addition, authors (involved in design initiatives and/or the making of design proposals) and audiences (who commissioned designs and/or to whom designs were presented) were identified. Results on the discretionary agency of design practices were supported by a review of professional and academic writing on the particular design initiatives.

## Episode 1: Designerly critique on national policies

The most well-known Dutch spatial concept is the Rim City *(Randstad)*, invented during the building of the Dutch welfare state in the 1950s. In its original form and in conjunction with its counterpart, the Green Heart *(Groene Hart)*, the *Randstad* was considered to have a distinction between rural and urbanised areas, resulting in a vision for a just and healthy distribution of land-uses across such zones, forming territories to which restrictions and regulations applied. The "urban-rural dichotomy" (Van Duinen, 2004, p.49) behind the concept remained a dominant planning rationale for decades (Faludi and Van der Valk, 1994, Roodbol-Mekkes et al., 2012). However, in the 1980s, in anticipation of European integration, new spatial concepts emerged in the realm of Dutch national planning. In their analytical dimension these concepts relied on observations of regionalization and theories of functional relations from the field of economic geography. In their normative dimension, they referred to economic competitiveness. In their organisational dimension they sketched the first contours of a new way of planning, favouring investment into strategic development over designation and containment by means of land-use regulation (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000).

The Fourth Report on Planning, published in 1988 (Ministerie van VROM, 1988), was the first national planning framework that reflected these new rationales (Lambregts and Zonneveld, 2004, Zonneveld, 1991), albeit in a careful manner. The report used both old and new spatial concepts, neatly set apart in two groups: a 'spatial main structure' *(ruimtelijke hoofstructuur)*, re-iterating the principles of land-use regulation and a 'spatial development perspective' *(ruimtelijke ontwikkelingsperspectief)*, introducing new principles of strategic spatial planning. The report received criticism nevertheless, particularly from lower levels of government. Provincial and municipal governments accepted the new analytical knowledge and agenda but were highly critical of the organisational implications that were deduced from these. Increasingly imperative regulation and the selection of a few projects of national importance were seen to be overly rigid and arbitrary choices in the context of an increasingly broader selection of planning rationales. Sub-national governments also criticised the national government for the overly paternalistic role it took in the late 1980s. The fact that these policies were promoted informally within national governmental departments and by new actors with unclear positions in the political structure, only accelerated criticism (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000).

In the mid-1980s several regional design initiatives expressed similar worries. A prominent one among these was called The Netherlands Now As Design (*Nederland Nu Als Ontwerp,* NNAO). It was initiated by a handful of individuals, among them

planners and designers. Its purpose was to produce a public exhibition on Dutch urban and regional design, to be held in 1987 (for a summary, see Van der Cammen, 1987). To prepare this exhibition, an elaborate, three-year long design process was conducted. Overarching societal trends were taken from analysis by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (NSCGP) and their spatial impact was imagined in the form of four alternative futures for the Netherlands. Projections were evaluated for their impact on ecology, energy supply, housing and labour markets, amongst others. What they would mean for the development of four typical Dutch regions, with different degrees of urbanisation, was imagined and typical measures to address development were illustrated in more detail. Designs were to 'revitalise the political debate' on planning, as Frieling (2006, p. 10) a prominent member of the NNAO initiative, noted in retrospect (see also Salewski, 2012). They demonstrated that spatial patterns, deducted from different societal trends, can be desirable to variable extents, depending on differing political stances, and that the appropriateness of planning measures varies accordingly. In this way they illustrated publicly that deciding on measures is not just an administrative task, accomplished inside the government, but a political practice of public importance.

The NNAO initiative evolved in an extra-governmental domain, as did other design initiatives at the time. Initiatives were instigated by individual professionals, with support from their professional institutes and a few governmental policy institutes. They were meant to reiterate the important role that the design profession traditionally had in Dutch planning. To design was seen as an indispensable way to bring emerging spatial development to the foreground and debate planning decisions on these grounds. Design practices were a form of quality control for national planning guidance, evaluating it from the outside. This function changed in the period after, when decentralization became an important issue in Dutch national planning and sub-national governments became involved in regional design.

6.3.2   **Episode 2: Designing national planning, by local governments**

The rigidness of national planning guidance caused worries not only among professionals and local governments. From the mid-90s onwards, the national government itself started to raise concerns. In 1998 the NSCGP summarised these accumulated concerns. Reflecting on the possibility of a new Fifth Report on Planning, it identified a fundamental mismatch between an analytical understanding of spatial development patterns, normative planning agendas and operational policies. It concluded with an influential call for the modernisation of decision-making structures through more open planning protocols and new spatial concepts: "The basic

principles of spatial planning and the way in which these have been elaborated into practical concepts face radical problems (…). In the Council's view, the challenges being posed for the deliberation structure require the latter to be reviewed" (NSCGP, 1999, p.74). Collaboration among levels of government became an important issue. New 'argumentative' concepts that could simultaneously guide and enhance involvement in planning were asked for (id., p. 80). However, exactly how such collaborative spatial concepts should look remained unclear for the time being.

A famous Dutch regional design initiative took shape during this period of debate. The initiative was rooted in the work of a group of professors in planning and urban design at several Dutch universities. Starting in 1996, under the header 'The Metropolitan Debate' (*Het Metropolitane Debat, HMD*), these experts engaged in reflection on regionalization in the Netherlands, with specific attention to the *Randstad* region. An elaborate design process, conducted by students, researchers and professional designers, imagined alternative futures for this region. During public debate on these proposals, the 'urban-rural dichotomy' behind the old *Randstad* concept was publicly dismantled. Its empirical foundation was critiqued, for example on its ignorance of uncontrolled sprawl in the Green Heart and its neglect of the delta landscape structure, interwoven with both urban and rural land. Observations of emerging regional development patterns were used to stress the embeddedness of the region in European and international networks as well as a need for regionally coordinated planning in such a context.

The products of the HMD design exercise were a range of critical readings of the classic *Randstad* concept. One of these framed the *Randstad* as a Delta Metropolis (*Deltametropool*), envisaging partnerships among municipalities in the region (for reviews of this process, see e.g. Lambregts and Zonneveld, 2004, Salet, 2006, Van Duinen, 2015). In the mid-1990s, such a coalition - among politicians from the four large *Randstad* municipalities - was already in existence, in response to a perceived lack of attention from national planning to the persistent economic under-performance of these municipalities. They took up the Delta Metropolis design and brought it to the national government. With these local governments associated with the design, it evolved from a critique of the analytical and normative foundation of the *Randstad* concept, into a proposal for the organisation of planning in the region. The design circumscribed a territory to be managed by the group of local governments, who had volunteered to co-ordinate the planning of the region on behalf of the national government.

In 2002 an initial version of the Fifth Report on Planning became available (Ministerie van VROM and Rijksplanologische Dienst, 2002). This report, which remained a draft due to political turmoil, was the first Dutch national report to explicitly foster

decentralization (id., p. 260). Concepts favouring land-use regulation and investment into strategic development were both sustained, as in the Fourth Report. However, in contrast to the Fourth Report, the organisational dimension of spatial concepts became open to interpretation. In particular, 'urban networks' (*stedelijke netwerken*) figured prominently as a concept to facilitate decentralization. A landscape of information was associated with the concept, concerning functional relations within and among regions, accessibility and diversity of social and economic activities for instance. An array of goals was also attached to it, most importantly those of international economic competitiveness and vitality, a social norm. In its organisational dimension the concept was a request for active engagement of sub-national governments in national planning. Emerging regional governance arrangements were given the benefit of the doubt. The national government hoped that they would have the ability to autonomously and effectively act on the particular problems in their regions.

The Delta Metropolis initiative was taken up in the report as one such 'urban network' and inspired a period of optimism among Dutch regional planners and designers. It became not only a planning but also a design precedent. Advocates of the Delta Metropolis had promoted their ideas not only in professional and academic circles but also in the hallways of public offices and on political podia (Van Duinen, 2004, Van Duinen, 2015). The act of designing came to be seen as a way to clarify political options and forge governance alliances around design proposals. Design practices that resembled the Delta Metropolis in their composition of participants emerged. Designers, groups of experts, planners and politicians engaged in collaboratively exploring problems within their regions and presented solutions to the national government. The 'urban network' concept was a near to empty canvas. The broad analytical notions on regional spatial development, the many values and norms and the open call for involvement of sub-national governments in national planning, turned nearly any design proposal by sub-national governments into a refinement of the national planning guidance.

### 6.3.3 Episode 3: Designing national planning, on behalf of the national government

The Fifth Report was a highly flexible planning framework. The room given for interpretation was deliberately broadened to encourage the voluntary involvement of sub-national governments in national planning. The following national report, the so-called Spatial Strategy (*Nota Ruimte*), first published in 2004, restricted this flexibility again (Ministeries van VROM et al., 2004) .

The Spatial Strategy was a revision of the Fifth Report but incorporated new spatial concepts nonetheless. To align national policies across various sectors, it was preceded by several policy documents in which the ministries of economic affairs (EZ) and transport (V&W) set out their ideas about spatial organisation. The final strategy included these ideas in the form of new (and revived) spatial concepts. The 'urban network' concept, the central entry of the ministry of housing, spatial planning and the environment (VROM) in the Fifth Report, came to lie next to 'economic core areas', 'main transport axis', 'main ports', 'brain ports' and 'green ports', promoted by a coalition among the ministries of EZ and V&W. As the names already suggest, these new concepts relied strongly on theories from the field of economic geography and emphasised economic competitiveness.

Taken together, the pre-existing and new spatial concepts created a landscape of multiple planning rationales, seemingly broadening the flexibility of national planning guidance. This impression was deceptive though, since concepts were re-ordered and selectively refined in terms of their organisational implications. The new concepts by the ministries of EZ and V&W were immediately associated with direct investment into national projects. Only the 'urban network' concept, the contribution from the ministry of VROM, remained associated with negotiation and collaboration among governments at different levels. Furthermore, only five out of the 17 'urban networks' in the Fifth Report were continued. Collaboration was refined by a prescription of policies for sub-national governments to work with. Among these policies, the possible provision of funding for infrastructure projects became the most important incentive for collaboration. In addition, the national government started to regulate decision making processes in the soft 'urban network' territories. Provinces were to take a leading role in regional governance arrangements, for instance. As another example, specific analytical knowledge about regional spatial development (e.g. insights into regional accessibility generated by a national survey) was to be considered when formulating potential projects of national importance.

A regional design initiative that emerged in the context of the Spatial Strategy was Studio South Wing (*Atelier Zuidvleugel*). The studio was concerned with the southern part of the *Randstad* region, the so-called South Wing (*Zuidvleugel*), as one of the core economic areas that the Spatial Strategy identified. The studio was initiated by the province of South Holland in 2002 but only took up work in 2005: the scope of the studio was extensively discussed among governments in the region which caused delay. Eventually, a range of partners from municipal and city regional authorities participated. The long negotiations on the scope of the studio led to a brief being given to it. Designs were to investigate the usefulness of the 'network city' concept, exploring the region by means of the - admittedly vague - theories and values it incorporated. Attention was focused on managerial concerns. The many existing

local plans in the region were to receive specific attention: design was to deliver insights into how these plans might obstruct or catalyse the emergence of a 'network city' and produce comprehensive regional strategies that integrated these insights. During the two-year existence of the studio, a set of such strategies were designed, for example for integrated public transport and land-use and for integrated urban and rural development (for a review, see Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2008b, Balz and Zonneveld, 2015). Projects were presented to the national government who was also a member of the advisory board.

In the composition of participants, Studio South Wing resembled earlier initiatives that had emerged around the year 2000, such as Delta Metropolis and its successors. However, in other aspects it differed. The national government took a more important role therein, as both author and audience. It was part of the advisory board of the studio, as mentioned above. It also provided funding and important knowledge and expertise. While earlier initiatives emerged around distinct problems in regions, this studio was in search of such problems. An exploration of the region through the lens of the 'urban networks' concept was to provide "insights into nodes, crucial relations or indispensable switches, where missing projects undermine a cohesive overall structure for the purpose of optimal provincial governing" (Provincie Zuid-Holland, 2004b, p.2, my translation). It was also to define projects of national importance. In light of the refinement of national planning guidance, design became above all a claim for national funding.

### 6.3.4    Episode 4: Designing national projects, on behalf of the national government

In July 2008, a new Dutch planning act became effective and obliged government at all levels to formulate new planning guidance that complied with the procedural requirements set out in the act. In 2012, the national government responded to the obligation (with some delay): the National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning became available, replacing all earlier national frameworks (Ministerie van I&M, 2012). The National Policy Strategy was authored by a new ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (I&M), the product of a fusion of the ministries of VROM and V&W in 2010. It differed substantially from all previous national plans, due to the spatial logics it used. Only a few planning rationales were extended, retaining economic competitiveness in a normative sense and the provision of infrastructure projects in an organisational one (Needham, 2015). A thoroughly evidence-based method to measure accessibility was used to identify new links in transport networks. Specialised economic activities also remained important,

through a concept called "urban regions with top sectors" (id., p. 28). Analytically the concept relied on observed concentrations of specialised economic sectors whose development was to advance the competitive position of the Netherlands internationally. However, in its organisational dimension, the concept was associated with largely non-spatial policy measures such as tax incentives.

The National Policy Strategy incorporated few spatial concepts and had little room for interpretation by sub-national governments. Instead it consisted of a catalogue of national projects, most of them concerning investment into infrastructure. A new perspective on decentralization was employed: the new spatial planning act equipped sub-national governments with more planning power. Regional planning (and the related decision making) was now to take place at lower levels of government. However, decision-making procedures for national infrastructure projects required the participation of government at all levels and in this way incorporated the seeds for new rounds of negotiations, under the roof of the so-called MIRT programme.

MIRT is the long-term investment programme for transport and spatial development that allocates national funds to large scale infrastructure projects through highly regulated procedures. Since 2008, projects under this programme have had to consider not only an improvement of transport but also spatial development. Advice to the government at the time had indicated that the realisation of projects was being delayed by conflict between the many affected stakeholders. The advice led to a revision of decision-making processes. Regional design became a mandatory requirement. It was assumed that such design practices can, when employed at an early stage of implementation, explicate interdependencies among planning issues at different scales, facilitate discussions and agreements on these and in this way, help to avoid conflict, delay and costs at later stages. With the increasing number of national projects included in the National Policy Strategy, the MIRT programme, and thus also regional design, grew in importance.

The design of Spatial Models SMASH 2040 (*Ruimtelijke Modellen SMASH 2040*), conducted in 2012, was associated with this new obligation to employ regional design (Zandbelt & Van den Berg, 2012). The acronym SMASH stands for Structural Vision Main Port Amsterdam Schiphol Haarlemmermeer (*Rijksstructuurvisie Mainport Amsterdam Schiphol Haarlemmermeer*), a framework detailing national planning for the area around Schiphol International Airport, and one of the projects of national importance identified in the National Policy Strategy. The SMASH design exercise was commissioned by the ministry of I&M to investigate (infra)structural change in the area. It was conducted by an individual urban design professional. During a series of workshops, representatives of sub-national governments in the area, private parties and experts commented on evolving design proposals. There were three alternative

futures presented for the region, reflecting on three pre-defined main tasks in the area, notably an improvement of accessibility, the expansion of Schiphol and the satisfaction of housing demands. The impact of each alternative was illustrated, showing implications for water management systems, housing and working environments, energy schemes and environmental law. Designs were to stress-test the proposed national infrastructure project. The multiple interwoven arguments they brought forward can be understood as a critique, challenging the restricted scope of national planning. However, when compared to earlier regional design practices, this challenge took place in a highly controlled environment in which the national government predefined a project, the region that may be affected by it, the main problems and tasks in implementation and also both commissioned and judged it.

6.3.5    ## Discussion

Above, a set of regional design initiatives that evolved under the influence of four consecutive Dutch national planning frameworks were analysed using the new analytical framework. The framework assumes that design in the realm of planning resembles discretionary action. Such discretionary action aims to improve planning guidance by judging its implications for particular situations. From this perspective, design is an integral part of planning, a practice that informs and is informed by prevailing planning rationales. Analysis by means of the framework allows for a detailed account of these interrelations. Figure 6.3 below presents the results of the analysis in overview.

The first observation drawn from this analysis concerns planning guidance. In the period between 1988 and 2012, the Dutch national government provided four planning frameworks. During a seemingly experimental phase, the flexibility of each one differed, reflecting different ideas about collaboration among levels of government in national indicative planning. Differences in the degree of room for interpretation were mainly the result of modifications to the organisational dimension of planning guidance, demonstrating a pragmatic approach to collaboration. The Fourth Report on Planning (1988), contained a broad array of new spatial concepts, but it was the national government that decided upon the organisational implications. The Fifth Report on Planning (2002), broke away from this paternalistic role for national government, including concepts that were highly open to interpretation in all their dimensions. To enhance the involvement of local actors, earlier imperative instructions about 'what should be done' turned into broad suggestions for what 'could be done' (in the terminology of Tewdwr-Jones, 1999, p. 245, that is borrowed from the UK context here). Later plans, published from the mid-2000s onward, became more select and detailed in their prescription of specific policies again.

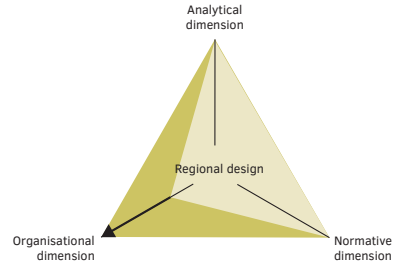| Flexibility of planning guidance | Role of regional design in planning decision making | |
|---|---|---|
| **Fourth Report on Planning, 1988**<br><br>Planning guidance relies on multiple and vaguely defined analytical knowledge/political goals, few and highly defined policy measures (direct investment, land-use regulation). | **The NNAO initiative, 1985 – 1987**<br><br>Design demonstrates that different development trends and political goals require different policy measures. Design challenges national planning from an extra-governmental position.<br><br>**Authors:** Individual design and planning professionals, supported by representatives of planning agencies and professional institutes.<br>**Audiences:** A general public, national government. |  |
| **Fifth Report on Planning, 2002**<br><br>Planning guidance relies on multiple and vaguely defined analytical knowledge/political goals/policy approaches (direct investment, land-use regulation, voluntary coordination). | **Delta Metropolis initiative, 1996 – 1999**<br><br>Design deduces a need for regional co-ordination in a distinct territory from multiple development trends and political goals.<br>Design refines national planning on behalf of local governments/creates planning precedent.<br><br>**Authors:** Individual design and planning professionals, involving municipal governments.<br>**Audiences:** A general public, national government. |  |
| **National Spatial Strategy, 2004**<br><br>Planning guidance relies on multiple and vaguely defined analytical knowledge/political goals, few policy approaches (direct investment, coordination). | **South Wing Studio, 2005 – 2007**<br><br>Design deduces projects of national importance from multiple development trends and political goals.<br>Design refines national planning at the request of the national government.<br><br>**Authors:** Provincial and municipal governments, design professionals, supported by the national government<br>**Audiences:** national government. |  |
| **National Policy Strategy, 2012**<br><br>Planning guidance relies on few and highly defined analytical knowledge/political goals/policy measures (direct investment). | **Spatial models SMASH 2040, 2012**<br><br>Design explores the implications of national projects by referring to multiple analytical knowledge, political goals and policy measures.<br>Design challenges national planning on behalf of the national government.<br><br>**Authors:** National government, design professionals, under consultation of municipal and provincial governments.<br>**Audiences:** national government. |  |
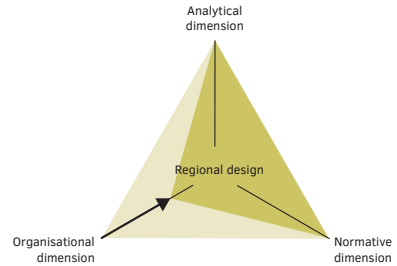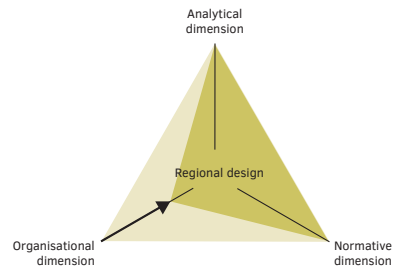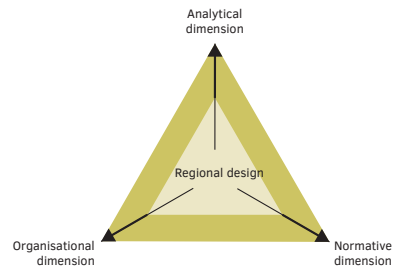
Spatial concept    Regional design proposal

FIG. 6.3 Interrelations between design initiatives and Dutch national plans over time

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Direct investment into projects of national importance became a dominant form of planning, as in the National Policy Strategy of 2012. The few concepts that this plan included were also highly select and detailed in their analytical and normative dimension. Regional planning and decision-making was largely devolved to lower levels of government.

In the context of diminishing flexibility and diminishing room for interpretation, the role of regional design in decision-making changed. Indeed it reflected, through its discretionary action, shifts in the flexibility of guidance. Author-audience constellations changed alongside. First, design was a practice that criticised national plans, from an extra-governmental perspective, for a neglect of the political dimension of planning, as the example of the NNAO initiative shows. Then, in the context of the highly ambiguous planning guidance in the Fifth Report, design turned into a practice to collaboratively refine national planning with various levels of government. This was exemplified by the Delta Metropolis design initiative. When planning guidance then became oriented towards projects of national importance, design practices followed, as the South Wing studio example demonstrates. Finally, in the context of the National Policy Strategy and the MIRT programme, design became a mandatory requirement in decision-making on national projects. As the SMASH example shows, design became a practice to purposefully challenge these projects. The national government became the commissioner of such critique as well as its sole receiver. This most recent institutionalisation of regional design in Dutch national planning does not reflect the distance between authors and audiences, or between discernible actors in action and control, which qualifies discretion.

## 6.4  Conclusions

There is a tradition of using regional design in Dutch indicative planning. Expectations concerning the impact of design-led approaches on planning decision making were and are usually high. Design is thought to mobilise thinking capacity; it is seen to be an adventurous and inventive endeavour. To reflect on spatial development is to enhance the technical quality of planning strategies and projects. Since decentralization and deregulation became issues in Dutch planning, design is now also expected to perform in political and organisational settings. It is expected to clarify political options, forge societal alliances, remove conflict around planning solutions early on and thus speed up implementation.

The analytical model developed here, reflects these multiple expectations: design may challenge or refine planning, it may be oriented towards political values and norms, towards the analytical foundation of planning and/or towards organisational planning measures in territories. However, the model implies that the impact of design is not only determined by the design solutions themselves but also by concurrent planning guidance. The dialectics between design and guidance suggests that design may be an inherently discretional practice. When viewing design as a form of discretion, it is the prevailing planning rationales that define whether an imaginary future is a relevant interpretation of fact or an arbitrary fantasy; a precedent to be considered in future planning decisions, or a negligible incident.

Discretionary approaches within design aim to improve planning guidance by assessing its implications for particular situations. The testing of this preposition has revealed that there may be strong interrelations between planning and design. In particular, the flexibility of planning guidance and the resulting room for interpretation are determinants. Giving broad room for interpretation in planning guidance may inspire a collaborative and creative search for problems and innovative planning solutions, but at the risk of a loss of operational planning guidance and overly pragmatic behaviour. Narrow room for interpretation almost inevitably turns designs into criticism, with the risk of conflict. As the examples above show, the Dutch national government has sought to resolve this dilemma by positioning design in a highly controlled organisational environment where the government itself is a facilitator of design and a court of appeal. However, such institutionalisation of discretionary practice (a form of meta-governance in fact) raises concerns about its ability to legitimise planning decisions. More broadly, it shows that it is important to consider the authors and audiences of design as they relate to planning. If design practices are to be discretionary action, as is the case in Dutch indicative planning, they must evolve at a distance to the formal planning apparatus.

The analytical model that was used for analysis here is based on a combination of planning and design theory. A search for similarities among theories has resulted in the recognition that the built environment itself is the most common denominator across fields. The model recognises that perceptions of geography are composed of analytical knowledge, normative agendas and notions of territorial control. Spatial concepts that stabilise prevailing or institutionalised planning practices incorporate such perceptions. Design assembles a selection of notions for a distinct planning purpose in a particular area. Both the use of concepts and design have agency in constructing perceptions of the built environment. This notion calls for a more intricate understanding of how perceptions of material settings transform as they are used – how spatial concepts turn into detailed plans and vice versa.

Planning-theoretical reflection has revealed that planning in a post-regulative era, in the absence of clearly defined planning rules and institutions, pays increased attention to specific spatial development. Such attention has led authors to distinguish between policy-making, which concerns the resolution of predefined problems in predefined territories, and planning as a political practice, which includes the formulation of problems in areas that are yet to be defined. Analysis here has shown that roles of design practices in planning decision making vary. Varieties may be the outcome of incidental experiment. However, observation indicates that they may also be the result of more structural attempts to balance pragmatic and political planning approaches, which calls for an increased understanding of the performance of design-led approaches in planning decision making.

## Funding

# 7 The institutionalisation of a creative practice: Changing roles of regional design in Dutch national planning

ABSTRACT  This chapter discusses the organisational setting of regional design in the realms of spatial planning and territorial governance. As a starting point, it argues that rules on how imagined design solutions function in an abstract, simplified 'planning world' are an important regional design product. When focusing on these rules, regional design practice resembles discretionary action. As such, it aims to improve planning decisions by judging the implications of planning frameworks when applied to particular situations. This implies that the involvement of actors in design practice requires careful consideration. As in any form of legitimate rule-building, a critical distance between those who initiate practices and conduct design, and those who judge the quality and relevance of design outcomes is essential. On the basis of these considerations the chapter investigates regional design practices that occurred between the 1980s and 2010s in the context of Dutch national planning. It shows how they transformed from being a form of professional advocacy, criticising

planning, into a practice that was pragmatically used to implement a national planning agenda. The chapter concludes by discussing this institutionalisation of a creative practice in the Netherlands, reflecting upon the implications of these outcomes for territorial governance in particular.

## 7.1  Introduction

The 'region' – especially the metropolitan region – has become a central focus of spatial planning in recent decades. There is a range of pressing societal problems that spatial planning seeks to deal with which do not occur locally but are instead found at higher levels of scale. Functional, socio-economic relations, embodied in transport and mobility patterns, traverse the boundaries of single administrations. Recently, due to the rising societal and political importance attributed to environmental sustainability and climate change, the accommodation of flows of water, energy and waste, for instance, has become encapsulated in planning agendas. These flows, as well as the spatial developments they cause, are quintessentially regional or even multi-scalar.

The regionalisation of spatial planning has several critical consequences. One important effect lies in what Hajer (2003, p.182) calls a loss of 'territorial synchrony'; that is an increasing mismatch between autonomous spatial development processes that produce societal problems and the scales and scopes of territorial governing. The result is what Hajer identifies as an 'institutional void' (*idem*, p.175): a lack not just of effective and efficient politico-administrative structures but also of institutions that hold the knowledge and deeper cultural understanding required for appropriate responses. What one might call the 'inertia' of statutory planning further perpetuates the void. To find, promote, legitimise, and formalise generally-accepted, regional spatial planning rules and norms is a highly complex, often contentious and therefore time-consuming affair. Since regions differ, such rules and norms are likely to lead to an unequal distribution of the costs and benefits of planning across areas, thus often rather accentuating mismatches between societal problems and governing structures than resolving them.

One coping strategy for the loss of territorial synchrony involves taking the geographical scope of spatial problems as the point of departure and letting this inform the creation of more provisional governing structures (De Vries and

Zonneveld, 2018). Such an approach (embodied for instance in the formation of non-statutory metropolitan regions) entails what Allmendinger and Haughton (2010) call 'soft spaces.' These are malleable territories with a temporary spatial fix, established by informal and often voluntary networked governance arrangements. Addressing regionalisation in this way is not unproblematic, however. Such governance does not equate to representative democracy, giving rise to legitimacy issues. Another problem lies in accountability. Network governance is often shaped by overly-pragmatic behaviour, hidden political agendas and a wish to sustain the status-quo of power relations (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010). Soft space planning – with all its positive connotations concerning territorial synchrony – is a fragile construct that can easily be crushed by powerful and hegemonic interests. Just like any form of planning, it requires mechanisms that expose and justify action.

This chapter takes the position that regional design in the Netherlands (and possibly also elsewhere) has emerged as an approach that seeks territorial synchrony – alignment between the geographical scope of spatial problems and comprehensive territorial governing – by addressing the above-mentioned deficiencies of soft space planning. It does so by exploring matches and mismatches between imagined solutions to particular problems, on the one hand, and planning frameworks that are employed by governing actors on the other. Whilst planning strives to establish generally applicable rules and norms, regional design seeks to assess their spatial, political and organisational impact on the ground. In this sense, it is a critical reflection used to justify governing based on its contribution to the resolution of real problems affecting communities in particular regions and areas. Building upon this understanding of regional design as a discretionary action, we argue that design can only thrive in situations characterised by a certain distance between actors in design practice and the formal planning apparatus. In particular, an accountable distance between those who design and those who determine the relevance of design outcomes for revising existing rules and norms is required.

The chapter explores this necessary distance, taking the use of regional design in Dutch national planning as a case-study. This exploration has three main sections. The first section supports the understanding of regional design as discretion, by means of concepts from the fields of design and planning theory. The second section contains an empirical analysis and discusses the organisational setting of design practices in Dutch national planning since the mid-1980s. It investigates who took design initiatives, how design briefs and commissions were related to existing planning frameworks, who engaged in making design products and who acted as a 'court of appeal.' Based on observed repetition of practices, as well as their formalisation in policies and policy-making procedures, we identify three consecutive periods in the institutionalisation of regional design in Dutch national planning. The

empirical section is followed by a discussion on the implications of this analysis for Dutch national planning. The last section comes back to the starting point, reflecting on the added value of regional design in planning and governance, and how its contribution to territorial synchrony can be further enhanced.

## 7.2 Perceiving regional design as a discretionary planning practice

Design activity is a daily routine, deeply rooted in human behaviour (Lawson, 2009, Rittel, 1987, Van Aken, 2007). It decides the best possible next steps to take, by means of imagination: "All designers intend to intervene into the expected course of events by premeditated action. All of them want to avoid mistakes through ignorance and spontaneity. They want to think before they act" (Rittel, 1987, p.1). In daily life, design draws on individual experience and intuition. When a body of expert knowledge is used, the practice turns into a professional one. Architecture, urban and regional design all involve expertise on multiple facets of the built environment and the intricate factors that determine the course of its development. The way that this professional practice evolves is most precisely articulated in the fields of architecture and urban design. In these fields, design appears to be a process of argumentation oriented towards desirable, valuable spatial change. Design thinking is said to engage with holistic wholes and complex interdependencies among parts, which turns the practice into an exploration of problems by means of imagined solutions (Caliskan, 2012, Cross, 1990, Hillier and Leaman, 1974, Hillier et al., 1972, Moughtin, 2003, Schönwandt et al., 2011). Instead of a linear problem-solution path, design argumentation follows one of 'conjecture and refutation,' as Caliskan (2012) noted, referring to Popper (1957). The building of arguments involves creativity and ingenuity, luck and also doubt (Cross, 2004).

To argue for change, a designer imagines design solutions while simultaneously imagining the world around him or her. The latter is a process of abstraction that leads to the recognition of 'types': simplifications of real, material settings sited between general, abstract categories and highly specific ones (Caliskan, 2012, Hillier and Leaman, 1974, Schön, 1988). Such simplification is instrumental in design because it enables a designer to take account of matches and mismatches between an imagined design solution and the context within which the solution is expected

to perform (Schön, 1988). The sorts of conclusions drawn during iterative design processes can be threefold. Firstly, the testing of solutions against types of real-world settings (the 'design world,' as it is called by Schön (1988, p. 182)) may lead to the modification of a design solution. Secondly, it may also lead to a changing appreciation of this design world: "The transaction between familiar type and unique design situation is a metaphorical process, a form of seeing- and doing-as, in which a designer both transforms a design situation and enriches the repertoire of types available to him for further design" (idem, p.183). Whatever conclusions there are, they rely on recognition of the interdependence between imagined solutions and perceptions of the environment. A third sort of conclusion or design product is implicit in this recognition of interdependencies – the rules that are deduced from testing the imagined solutions against the types that constitute the design world.

Compared to the literature on architecture and urban design, there is relatively little scholarly writing on *regional* design and thus few notions on communalities between practices. What literature there is, however, suggests that regional design is often situated in a context of spatial planning or, to use the above terminology, a 'spatial planning world.' Multiple theories and modes of representation from the field are used to explain concrete, tangible regional design outcomes and also their less tacit influence on decision-making. The literature shows that regional design is particularly intertwined with what Davoudi *et al.* (2018) call 'spatial imaginaries' (see also Van Duinen, 2004). Indeed, the relevance of regional design solutions is frequently explained by references to dimensions of collective spatial concepts or 'geographic ideas,' for example: the knowledge of spatial development that they imply (Klaasen, 2003), the imagery that represents them (Neuman, 1996, De Zwart, 2015), the concepts, doctrines and discourses that rationalise them (Van Dijk, 2011), the planning and governance routines that put them into practice (Balz and Zonneveld, 2015, Kempenaar, 2017), and the power structures that sustain them (De Jonge, 2009). Regional design practices are concerned with highly diverse situations in regions, and often refer to multiple dimensions of the spatial imaginaries that underlie the spatial planning frameworks in place. The multiple references that unique practices assemble hinder our understanding of them as one unified approach. However, when grasping regional design practices as a form of rule-building that evolves in the context of preconceived planning frameworks, the following generalisations about the interrelations between regional design and spatial planning become theoretically plausible.

Schön (1988, p.183) compared design processes to legal procedures: "As rules of law are derived from judicial precedents, … so design rules are derived from types, and may be subjected to test and criticism by reference to them. … [A] designer's ability to apply a rule correctly depends on familiarity with an underlying type, by reference to which the designer judges whether the rule 'fits the case'

and fills the inevitable gap between the relatively abstract rule and the concrete context of its application." This perception of design as rule-testing bears a resemblance to *discretion* that is, in popular terms, "the art of suiting action to particular circumstances" (The Rt Hon Lord Scarman (1981, p. 103), who famously promoted legal discretion in the UK). Discretion, evolving in the context of generally accepted law or regulation, is a search for "leeway in the interpretation of fact and the application of precedent to particular cases" (Booth, 2007, p.129). It aims to improve rules by judging their implications for particular situations. Understanding regional design as a form of discretionary action (proactive and focused on geography) has implications for the role and positioning of the practice in planning decision-making (for an elaboration of the argument, see Balz, 2018), in particular its organisational setting within institutionalised decision-making routines.

Design theory places an emphasis on the 'epistemic freedom' of a designer, which lies in the "logical or epistemological constraints or rules which would prescribe which of the various meaningful steps to take next" (Rittel, 1987, p. 5). With discretion, the 'room for interpretation' that rules provide in the first place – their flexibility – is a central issue because the choices built into rules determine the discretionary nature of local responses. When there are many choices, discretionary action will likely constitute a refinement of rules based on their application to particular situations; when there are few choices, on the other hand, such action will likely challenge rules and call for their revision (Booth, 2007). Depending on the number of choices, decision-making likely evolves in the form of policy argumentation, with a strong collaborative rationale, or else in the form of more contentious dispute (Booth, 2007, Tewdwr-Jones, 1999). When assuming that regional design is a form of discretion, what in design theory is called 'the relative abstract-ness' of contextual geographies equally predefines the performance of design practices. The ambiguity of these geographies determines if proposed design solutions are either likely to (1) be deduced from premeditated ideas about the built environment, or (2) uncover new aspects, and thus confront the existing ideas. Scholarly literature indicates that regional design is often a collaborative effort involving experts, planners, politicians and designers (De Jonge, 2009, Kempenaar, 2017, Van Dijk, 2011). These distinctions imply that collaboration differs in the light of given choices or degrees of freedom: it may entail pragmatism, where actors commonly work to operationalise a shared spatial imaginary, or it may be a form of advocacy where they pursue different ideas about the imaginaries that constitute the existing 'spatial planning world,' and are thus divided by controversy and conflict.

An equivalence between regional design and discretion not only leads to a distinction in the collaborative rationales of regional design practice, but it also brings the different roles of design actors to the foreground, as well as the relations between them. One

critical implication of all this lies in the power of the regional design commissioner, the party who frames design tasks and thus provides room for interpretation (or epistemic freedom) in the first place. By formulating problem definitions, policy agendas or design briefs, the commissioner pre-determines the outcomes and performance of practices as outlined above. Room for interpretation in preconceived rules also predetermines the relations between commissioners and the 'authors' of design proposals – those who engage in the making of design proposals. Whilst in a pragmatic use of regional design both are united by shared spatial imaginaries, they are divided by them in cases where design is used for advocacy. Last but not least, the equivalence between regional design and discretion implies a need for judgement. In discretion, there is a distinction between discretionary action – the constitution of precedent, or the interpretation of rules on the ground – and discretionary control, which involves judging whether discretionary action should indeed lead to rule reform. In legal and administrative practice the quality of discretion is accommodated, like any legitimate rule-building, by transparency and accountability. In organisational terms, the distance between a court of appeal and those who seek exemption is essential. Actors need to be free to define objectively whether an imaginary future is a relevant interpretation of fact or an arbitrary fantasy; a precedent to be considered in future planning decisions or a negligible incident.

In the foregoing, we have explained our perception of regional design as a discretionary planning practice. Below we investigate the implications of this perception by analysing the organisational setting of regional design practices that occurred in the Netherlands between the 1980s, when regional design first appeared as a distinguished discipline in the country, and the 2010s. The main focus of this analysis is the constellation of actors involved: those who initiated design practices and formulated briefs or commissions, those who engaged in the making of designs and those who also judged the outcomes. To provide insight into their motivation for involvement we also pay brief attention to regional design commissions and products, as well as to the expectations that the practices raised beforehand. For the sake of consistency, this analysis focuses on practices related to Dutch national spatial planning. All the practices chosen involved the national government as a commissioner, advisory and/or court of appeal.

There is widespread recognition that the use of design-led approaches in spatial planning decision-making is relatively mature in the Netherlands (Neuman and Zonneveld, 2018). This maturity, reflected in part by the frequent use of practices, allows us to take an institutional perspective on the use of regional design in Dutch national spatial planning. Institutions are "social practices that are regularly and continuously repeated, that are linked to defined roles and social relations, that are sanctioned and maintained by social norms, and that have a major significance in the social structure" (Jessop, 2001, p. 1220). Following this definition, we identify

practices that gained prominence in Dutch planning discourse over time, were repeated, adopted in formal policies or else have become enshrined in dedicated organisations with distinct roles in regional design practice. This institutional perspective, in conjunction with our perception of regional design as a discretionary planning practice, has led us to identify three particular periods in the use of regional design in Dutch national planning. These are presented below in three separate sub-sections. Each starts with a brief description of the aspects of spatial planning frameworks that played a role in regional design practices at the time. We then identify the organisational settings of practices that, in our view, set precedents for others to follow. In the final part of each sub-section we discuss the characteristics of those practices and demonstrate institutionalisation.

## 7.3 Institutionalisation of regional design in Dutch national planning

### 7.3.1 The 1980s to late 1990s: Regional design as professional advocacy

The use of design-led approaches in planning was not a new phenomenon in the Netherlands in the 1980s. On the contrary, their use built upon a long tradition that can be traced back to the emergence of urban planning during the early 20th century. When urban planning appeared as a discipline to address the explosive growth of European cities, the Dutch planner and designer Cornelis van Eesteren became a distinguished figure in a Europe-wide debate on where to take the new discipline in the future. As a member (and chairman of the fourth) *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM), van Eesteren sought to consolidate calls for the realisation of a radical, utopian social program with calls for the consideration of the complexities and evolutionary change of existing cities in planning discourse (Van Rossem, 2014). As a Dutch design practitioner, he engaged in making a series of highly influential urban plans – the most famous being the General extension plan (AUP) for Amsterdam – in close collaboration with the more analytically-minded Theodoor Karel van Lohuizen (Van der Valk, 1990).

Their common work established design as an evidence-informed search for the essence of spatial structures and also as a practice that turns such insights into simple and persuasive guiding planning principles (Van Bergeijk, 2015, Van der Valk, 1990). Design, as the production of such principles, has become deeply embedded in Dutch planning practice since then. However, it was not until the 1980s that regional design appeared as a particular strand of design, in the context of broad discontent with Dutch national planning (Balz and Zonneveld, 2018). The early 1980s were a period of deep economic recession. Planning, which had turned into an overly-rigid system largely relying on prohibitive and restrictive land-use regulation, was accused of restricting economic development, specifically by neglecting emerging entrepreneurial, development-led initiatives on the ground. Furthermore, it was perceived to be inward-looking and locked in self-involved procedural complexity. This was because its main emphasis was on administrative reform, expanding the bureaucratic appartus with projected high costs but unclear benefits (Den Hoed et al., 1983).

The first and most prominent example of regional design initiatives in this period was titled 'The Netherlands Now as Design' (*Nederland Nu Als Ontwerp*, NNAO). The initiative, officially launched by the dedicated NNAO Foundation in December 1984, was taken up by individual planning and design professionals. It was also supported by the Dutch town planning institute (*Bond van Nederlandse Stedebouwkundigen*, BNS), a non-governmental organisation called Architecture Museum Foundation (*Stichting Architectuur Museum*), the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid,* WRR) and an organisation representing Dutch building industries (Van der Cammen, 1987). NNAO's motivation was rooted in unrest surrounding the rigidity and introverted character of Dutch national planning, as outlined above. In particular, it was driven by dissatisfaction regarding the recurring government's neglect of regionalisation and the impact that had on the different regions and areas (Hemel, 2013, Salewski, 2012). The NNAO initiative was set up to organise a public exhibition to pillory neglect and was prepared using a carefully staged, three-year design process. In the first instance, robust regional spatial development trends were analysed by experts. In the second instance, these trends were associated with four major political streams (socialism, liberalism, Christian democracy and a self-invented stream developed from trends in technological innovation). The scenario technique was used to illustrate the willingness of political parties to act upon development. In the last instance, these four scenarios were turned into 'images of the future' (*toekomstbeelden*), portraying development in national and regional territories as well as 32 so-called 'design fragments,' each imagining the local spatial interventions that the scenarios could lead to (Figure 7.1). Together these renderings of plausible spatial outcomes, accomplished by experts and professional planners and designers, were to indicate the political weight of planning decisions (De Zwart, 2015).
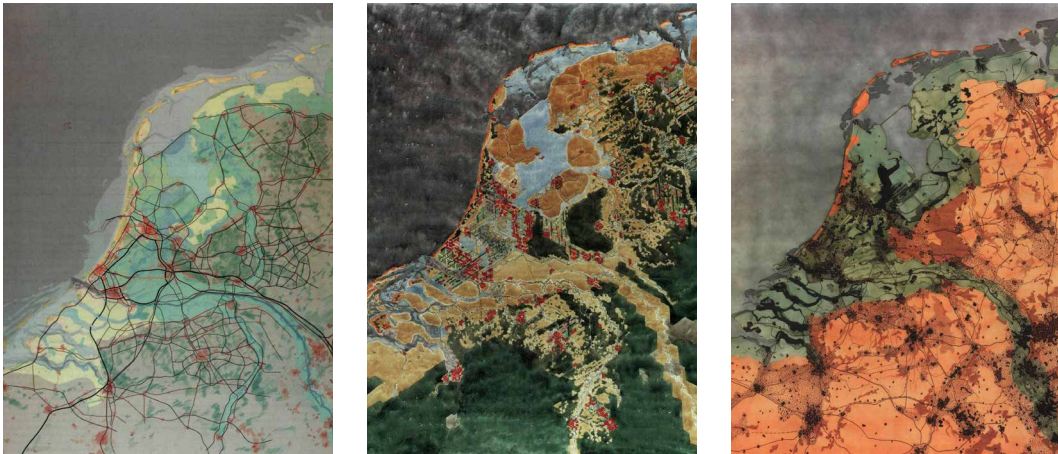
FIG. 7.1 The Netherlands Now As Design (NNAO): Scenarios discussing the impact of societal trends on the spatial development of the Netherlands, from Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/NNAO, elaborated by (from left to right) H. de Boer and T. Koolhaas (Dynamisch scenario), H. Bakker and W. Hartman (Kritisch scenario) and J. Heeling, H. Bekkering and H. Lörzing (Zorgvuldig scenario)

A second prominent regional design initiative that occurred in the 1980s was taken by the Eo Wijers Foundation, set up in 1985 by members of BNS and the association of Dutch garden and landscape architects (*Bond van Nederlandse Tuin- en Landschapsarchitecten,* BNT), in collaboration with national and provincial planning agencies. The organisation was named after a former director of the National Spatial Planning Agency (*Rijksplanologische Dienst*, RPD) who advocated, like the NNAO initiative, the consideration of regional spatial development in planning decision-making by means of design. To develop (and maintain) professional expertise on these matters, from the outset the foundation organised frequent design competitions, generally every three years. Over time, design briefs were formulated to reflect changing trends in planning approaches (De Jonge, 2008, De Jonge, 2016). The first brief asked designers to identify innovative guiding principles that enhance the characteristic spatial structures of four typologically different Dutch river landscapes whilst simultaneously adapting them to new functions and uses. Its overall aim was similar to that of the NNAO initiative. Regional designs were to bring regionally-differentiated, spatial-planning approaches to the foreground by considering spatial development on the ground, and to thus inspire national spatial planning (De Jonge, 2009, Eo Wijers Stichting, 1986).

In terms of their organisational setting, these two early regional design practices shared a set of characteristics. Both were established by non-governmental actors and both were deliberately placed outside the formal planning apparatus.

Their framing, embodied with references to prevailing planning approaches, was self-imposed. Both sought to challenge the rigidity of national planning by advocating more attention to the particularities of regions. Although appealing to different audiences (the general public in the NNAO case, and design and planning professionals in the Eo Wijers case) the judgement of designs was separated from the framing and conduction of design tasks. Both practices also shared a similar appreciation of design. Van der Cammen (1987, p.10, our translation), a prominent member of the NNAO organising committee, claimed: "Artists bring the unconscious to the conscious and in this way create meaning from the meaningless. Conscious action is … highly determined by our ability to position behaviour in a cultural-historical perspective which not only includes the past but also the future." He saw design as a serious effort to create such consciousness, as a base for planning. A depiction of regional design as an artistic and inspiring practice can also be found in the Eo Wijers initiative, albeit with a stronger (and growing) emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness in practice (De Jonge, 2008).

Advisory boards and individual members of the national government participated in the first regional design initiatives. A more structured engagement of the government came about in the mid-1990s, with an expansion of the scope of its policy to stimulate architecture design. This policy was first introduced in 1991, to enhance the quality of building across the country, nurture public concern about it and enhance the competitiveness of Dutch professional designers in an international context. In 1996 urban design, landscape architecture and infrastructural design were added to the professional practices that were seen to deserve public support (Ministeries van OCW et al., 1996). More ministries became involved and a set of institutes was associated with the policy, among them the Netherlands Architecture Fund (*Stimuleringsfonds voor Architectuur*, SfA). This was founded in 1993 to set out more detailed funding calls and award funds to design proposals and initiatives. The SfA gained much freedom in facilitating the new focus on design at "higher levels of scale" (idem, p.14). Policy guidelines merely indicated that fundable practices had to address the 'cultural dimension' of the built environment, 'spatial quality' and stimulate a diversification of approaches on the grounds of regionalisation, decentralisation and policy-sector integration. Funding was linked to a few substantive design tasks (e.g. the integration of infrastructure, natural and urban development). Above all it was to stimulate the reflexive capacity of design, by means of exhibitions, competitions and publications. The NNAO was mentioned as having inspired this approach to the construction of critical stances towards planning. It was noted that similar practices are difficult to forecast, due to the creative nature of design. The policy agenda was deliberately kept broad to "create room for new opinions and ideas" (idem, p.18). Design was to "mobilise thinking capacity" so "to enhance policy-making later on" (Ministeries van OCW et

al., 1996, p.18). In a review of the impact of these early policies, the Netherlands Institute for City Innovation Studies (NICIS) noted: "In fact, a policy of 'soft institutionalism' … was used which – mostly unintentionally – has increased not only the quality, but also the competitiveness of the industry" (Stegmeijer et al., 2012, p.55, our translation). Policies were seen to have enhanced design expertise on the 'supply side' as well as the quality of commissions and the 'demand for such expertise' (idem).

## Early to mid-2000s: Regional design as a governance practice

In the late 1980s and early 1990s planning approaches in the Netherlands, as in other European countries, shifted as a result of the increasing importance of regions in the liberalising European market economy. Upcoming approaches shifted attention away from the planning of formally bounded territories towards the planning of regional spatial networks that stretched across multiple, multi-scalar administrative boundaries. As in other European countries, decentralisation became a more prominent issue in Dutch national planning, resulting in an enhanced appreciation of regional governance (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000, Salet, 2006, Salet and Woltjer, 2009). To facilitate change the earlier, narrowly-defined spatial-planning frameworks were expanded in both their spatial and organisational scope (Balz and Zonneveld, 2018). In response to these changes, sub-national governments started to form partnerships, on a voluntary basis at first. As will be shown below, some of these became engaged in regional design, thus triggering the emergence of a new generation of practices.

The first Dutch regional design practice that reflected these new planning approaches emerged in the mid-1990s and was concerned with the Randstad region. It was initiated in academic circles when a group of professors at the universities in Delft and Amsterdam set up a discussion platform to denounce the neglect of regional spatial development in national spatial planning once more. The discussion, called The Metropolitan Debate (*Het Metropolitane Debat*, HMD), was led by means of design proposals, largely undertaken by students within design studios at universities (Frieling, 1998). The proposals exemplified desirable futures for the region, promoting in particular the integration of urban and open land as well as internationalisation. On the HMD platform, the proposals were used to challenge the rigidity of national planning and also to discuss alternative governance-led approaches. As with earlier initiatives, the HMD sought a broad, public outreach: ideas were debated not only within academia but also in the public arena. Beyond that, planners and politicians at subnational levels became a targeted

audience in an attempt to create broader organisational support for novel ideas about spatial development and planning. Frieling (2002, p.494 ff), a key figure in the HDM initiative, noted retrospectively: "The designs made … expectations visible, publicly debatable and subject to planning and decisions on investment priorities." He emphasised that these designs were made not only to foster the consideration of spatial development in planning and politics but also to 'forge societal alliances' (Frieling, 2002). In 1998, after two years of lobbying efforts, a group of local governments in the Randstad embraced one of the designs, called the Delta Metropolis (*Deltametropool*), and presented the idea to national government as a much-needed alternative for the long-lived Randstad/Green Heart doctrine (Van Duinen, 2015). They used the proposal to call for more sector integration in the national planning for the Randstad region and also to advocate their greater autonomy in spatial planning.

In the same year, 1998, the co-operation that had emerged around the Delta Metropolis design was consolidated in the Delta Metropolis Association (*Vereniging Deltametropool*, VDM, an organisation still existent at the time of writing) (Vereniging Deltametropool, 1998). In 2001, the Delta Metropolis was adopted by the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (*Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en het Milieu*, VROM). It became one of the national 'urban network' territories that the Fifth report on spatial planning – a new national plan then in the making – had laid out in order to facilitate regionalisation and regional governance (Ministerie van VROM and Rijksplanologische Dienst, 2001). Possibly inspired by this precedent, at least four practices resembling the Delta Metropolis then emerged from 2002 onwards: Studio IJmeer 2030+, conducted between 2003 and 2006 and concerned with integrated spatial development in the greater Amsterdam region (Koolhaas and Marcusse, 2006); the Arnhem-Nijmegen Node project, concluded in 2003 and considering such integration around the two eastern Dutch cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen (Urban Unlimited, 2003); the Design Studio Brabant City, dedicated to development around Den Bosch, Eindhoven, Breda and Tilburg (Bosch Slabbers, 2007); and the Studio South Wing, conducted between 2005 and 2007 and concerned with a region approximating the highly urbanised part of the South Holland province (Figure 7.2) (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2008b).
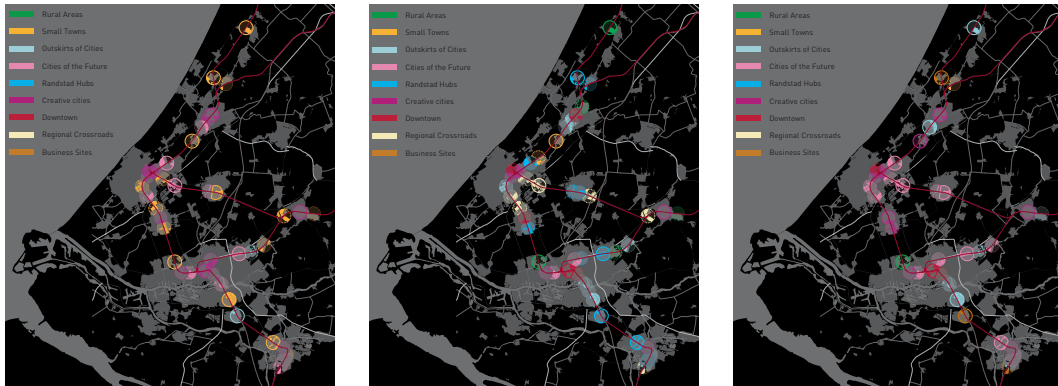
FIG. 7.2 Studio South Wing: Scenarios discussing the impact of regional planning agendas on transit-oriented development in the South of the Dutch Randstad region, from Atelier Zuidvleugel (2006a).

When considering their organisational setting, these four successive regional design practices shared characteristics with their Delta Metropolis precedent. Most remarkable is the strong involvement of coalitions of sub-national governments in practices. Design products were created during collaborative processes, led by one or several design professionals, and involved a broad array of experts, politicians, planners, market parties and civil organisations in "design dialogues" (De Jonge, 2009, p. 180). The 'studio' setting, facilitating communication and exchange between participating actors during workshops, excursions and panel debates, became a common format. Communalities between practices are also found in their shared main expectation. The capacity of regional design to 'forge societal alliances,' to contribute to effective regional governance, became a key proposition (Balz and Zonneveld, 2015). The brief to the Studio South Wing expressed this expectation in an exemplary way: "The studio is a machine to make an inventory of the relevant projects, plans and programs on local, regional and supra-regional levels of scale; to denominate the relations among these (horizontal); to define nodes and gaps; to distil a hierarchy from this (vertical)" (Provincie Zuid-Holland, 2004b, p.2, our translation).

However, an examination of their organisational set-up also highlights the differences between the Delta Metropolis regional design practice and its successors. As already mentioned, the Delta Metropolis design proposal became an 'urban network' of national importance in the fifth Dutch national spatial plan. Besides the Delta Metropolis, the plan had identified a range of other such networks across the country, calling upon local governments to develop regional project and strategy proposals to foster integrated regional spatial development. Sub-national governments were expected to act in unity and to coordinate their plans and actions (Balz and Zonneveld, 2018). The later regional design practices mentioned above were a response to this open call. Governance arrangements adopted the broad

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national urban-network agenda, as is evident from the many references to the concept in design briefs. Regional design was used to reflect on how this agenda could best be operationalised in the light of the particularities of each region. These practices thus had a different relationship with Dutch national spatial planning in comparison to the Delta Metropolis design approach. As we have seen, this approach challenged the rigid dichotomy between a (red) Randstad and a Green Heart. The later practices sought the refinement of a national spatial plan that was more flexible. Consequently, the role of the national government changed. The national government was an addressee of criticism in the Delta Metropolis regional design practice. Through framing the later design initiatives with its soft urban-network concept, it became also a commissioner in these, albeit in an indirect way. The national government's engagement in regional design practice was predominantly informal. However, as the Ministry of VROM was a co-funding body of practices and/or a member of the boards that advised and supervised them, in some cases engagement also took more formal shapes.

When comparing this new generation of regional design practices to the earlier ones, which we called 'professional advocacy,' a clear shift towards pragmatism can be identified as their common characteristic. The examples show that regional design practice started to play a more important role in the implementation of Dutch national planning policies. This tendency was also reflected in revisions of the architecture policy mentioned earlier. The third version of the policy, published in 2000 and entitled 'Designing the Netherlands,' had already identified ten 'large projects' that were to be explored through design (Ministeries van OCW *et al.*, 2000). Among those projects with a regional scope, one was concerned with the impact of a future international rail connection, another with increasing the aesthetics of highway infrastructure, and a third with developing the cultural-historical landscape around the Dutch Water Line, a former military defence (for a review of this national project, see Luiten, 2011). Furthermore, the Delta Metropolis had become a 'large project' that was to be explored through design. For this purpose, a coalition of ministries set up their own design studio called the Delta Metropolis Design Studio (*Ontwerpatelier Deltametropool*) (Ministerie van VROM, 2003). Four well-known design professionals were invited to engage in a search for the identity of the Randstad region, its 'unity in diversity,' and also to reflect on the role of regional design in spatial planning.

In the fourth revision of the architecture policies, published in 2005 (Ministeries van OCW et al., 2005), the relationship between 'fundable' design practice and national planning became even stronger and more formalised. The new policy note was published not as a stand-alone document but as an extension of the National Spatial Strategy, a 2006 revision of the Fifth report by a new government of a more

centre-right political agenda (Ministeries van VROM et al., 2006, see also Zonneveld and Evers, 2014). Under the header 'an action program,' funding for design practice was thoroughly linked to the implementation of this plan. Of the ten 'large projects' few were maintained. Projects that were added were more strongly associated with ongoing national policies, most importantly the Belvedere policy which targeted cultural heritage, and the Room for the River programme (*Ruimte voor de Rivier*) (for an analysis of this programme see Rijke et al., 2012). Fundable design was now to be engaged with 'best practice' in the application of these policies and programmes, often within clearly predefined project boundaries. The assessment of funding also became more regulated. The note criticised the way earlier design funding schemes were evaluated and judging the success of future design practices became an obligatory part of assessing national spatial planning (Stegmeijer et al., 2012). A particular trajectory, entitled 'Elaborating professional commissioning,' was set up to investigate effective organisational formats in design practice. An independent board advising the national government on architecture policies was enlarged, where previously the Chief Government Architect of the Netherlands (*Rijksbouwmeester*) had fulfilled this task on his own. In 2005 the Board of Government Advisors (*College van Rijksadviseurs*, CRa) was established, adding two professionals with expertise in landscape architecture and infrastructure design respectively. Altogether expectations regarding the contribution of design to national planning changed: whereas it was initially seen as an approach that inspires planning through constructive criticism, the 2005 action programme portrayed it as an approach that first and foremost enhances the efficiency of national planning.

### 7.3.3 The 2010s: Regional design as a governmental practice

While the early 2000s produced a strong emphasis on collaborative spatial planning in the Netherlands, from the mid-2000s onward, enthusiasm for involving the subnational government in national planning diminished. The National Spatial Strategy published in 2006 indicated the further decentralisation of planning tasks and responsibilities, albeit not through greater co-operation between levels of government but rather by minimising the involvement of national government in regional planning. The national planning agenda was slimmed down too, in particular through diminishing interest in 'spatial quality.' The integration and simplification of national sector policies had to be facilitated by combining ministry strategies and merging their organisation. Planning instruments were also sorted out. Under the purview of this plan and its successor – the 2012 National Policy Strategy (Ministerie van I&M, 2012) – direct investment into (largely infrastructure) projects became virtually the sole spatial planning tool (Needham, 2015). This had a particular impact on regional design practice.
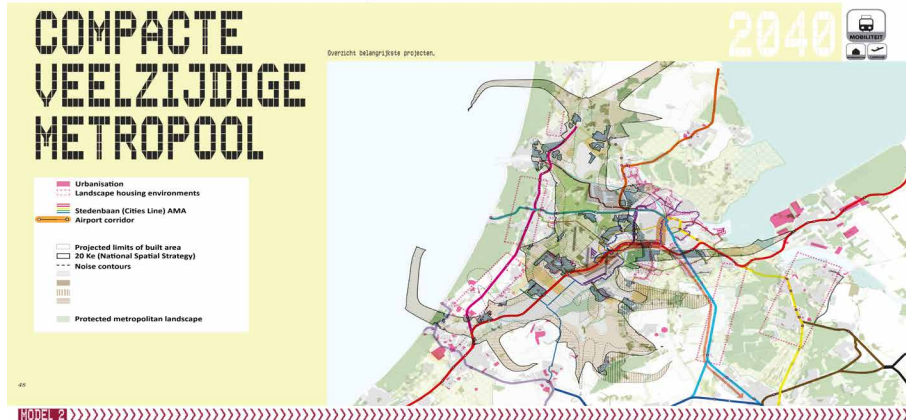
The Long-Term Program for Infrastructure, Transportation and Spatial Development (MIRT) is dedicated to the distribution of the Dutch Infrastructure fund (*Infrastructuurfonds*) and the implementation of nationally-funded infrastructure projects. Since 2008, it has been revised several times (for an analysis of this process Van Geet et al., 2019). In 2008 it became compulsory to consider the spatial impact of new infrastructure, thus in fact turning MIRT projects into integrated area-development projects. In 2010 the MIRT 'rules of the game' were adjusted, with strong implications for the role and position of regional design in Dutch national planning: it became mandatory to employ the practice during early stages of decision-making (Ministerie van I&M, 2010). The adoption of design in the highly regulated MIRT procedure had an efficiency rationale regarding the length and complexity of decision-making. The expectation was that design would help to identify proactively the multiple effects of infrastructure change, to identify potential conflicts early on and thus to avoid delays due to ongoing political discussions and battles in judicial courts at later implementation stages. Commenting on the new position of regional design in the MIRT procedure, the then acting Director-General for National Spatial Planning noted that "the complicated decision-making process had run aground because certain things had been overlooked in the early stages of planning. … [If] you don't do your homework beforehand you'll have trouble through the whole planning process" (Blank et al., 2009, p.29). Shortly after becoming an obligation, a manual for regional design practice was published by the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (*Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu,* I&M), successor of the former ministries of VROM and Transport and Water (*Verkeer en Waterstaat,* V&W) (Enno Zuidema Stedebouw et al., 2011). It contained detailed instructions on how to use design for different purposes during MIRT procedures. These included the refinement of problem definitions, the identification of preferred solutions as well as the investigation of their spatial and organisational implications. Prescriptions were meant to help funding applicants – usually governance arrangements in predefined so-called MIRT regions – in defining how design will be used during decision-making since it had become compulsory to indicate such use in bids.

Examples of regional design practices under the MIRT programme include Spatial Models SMASH 2040 (*Ruimtelijke Modellen SMASH 2040*), conducted in 2012 and discussing alternative infrastructure solutions for the Amsterdam-Schiphol Airport-Haarlemmermeer region (Figure 7.3) (Zandbelt & Van den Berg, 2012) and the 2017 MIRT study Accessibility Rotterdam The Hague (*Bereikbaarheid Rotterdam Den Haag*) which elaborated preferred infrastructure change in the Metropolitan Region The Hague-Rotterdam (MRDH) (De Zwarte Hond et al., 2017). The role of the national government differed in these two practices. In the SMASH design practice, it was the sole commissioner because its corresponding territory was projected to become the subject of a national structural vision.
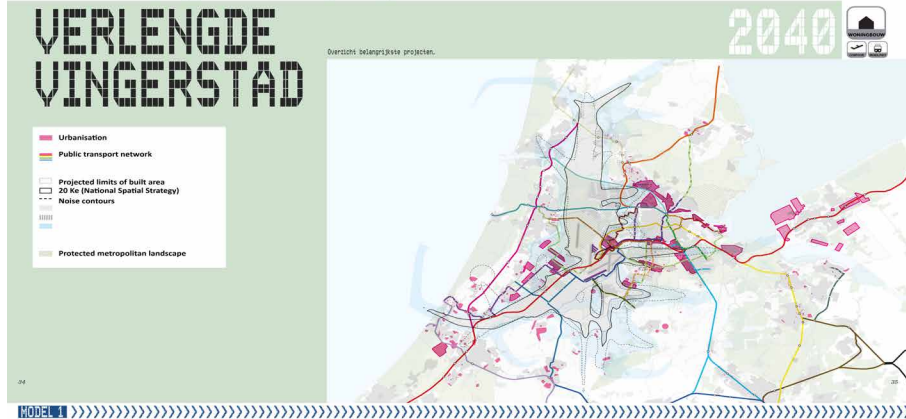
FIG. 7.3 Spatial Models SMASH 2040: Scenarios discussing interrelations between national infrastructure projects and policies by decentral governments in the Amsterdam–Schiphol Airport–Haarlemmermeer region, from Zandbelt & Van den Berg (2012).

The study into MRDH, which lacked this status, was commissioned by the Ministry of I&M in collaboration with governance arrangements in the South of the Randstad. There were similarities in their briefs that included, next to MIRT objectives, multiple references to relevant operational sector policies of both national and subnational government. The design processes also exhibited resemblances. Led by individual design professionals, they involved experts, different ministries, subnational governments, private and civil actors in workshops, expert sessions, panel discussions and also surveys. Their aim was to prepare for Administrative Consultation MIRT (*Bestuurlijk Overleg,* BO MIRT) where the Ministry of I&M, who until 2017 held the sole responsibility for the distribution of the Infrastructure Fund, was to judge the outcomes.

The Ministry of I&M thus embraced regional design as a practice that can help to speed up the implementation of national projects, formalising it under the MIRT programme in 2010. In the same period, the ministry followed a similar rationale when becoming engaged with the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR). Since its first edition in 2003 the IABR has been funded by the SfA. The fifth edition, entitled 'Making Cities,' had a particular interest in the implementation of design proposals, especially by means of collaborative and participatory planning (Brugmans and Petersen, 2012). Next to projects that illustrated the tangible outcomes of such approaches on 'test sites' in Brazil, Turkey, and the Netherlands, its programme incorporated a distinct branch called Studio Making Projects (*Atelier Making Projects*). The studio was initiated and programmed by the Ministry of I&M, in collaboration with the IABR curators (among them the Director-General for National Spatial Planning). Seven projects were selected for elaboration, all tied in with ongoing national policies. Ministries, other actors with a stake in the projects and design studio supervisors (the latter acting on behalf of the IABR) all became co-commissioners of the professionals selected to develop design proposals for these projects (Boeijenga et al., 2013). The organisational structure around the studio was complicated and deliberately diffuse. The IABR catalogue explained that such diffusion was necessary to meet the two-fold objective of the biennale: to enhance the implementation of projects and, at the same time, appeal to broader research and public interest. The explanation concluded: "So not just double commissioners but also – deliberately – double hats. Welcome to the world of Making Projects, because this will increasingly be the way things are done. Fewer and fewer projects will exist just because they have been started; we can no longer afford to do so. Changing coalitions, connecting interests and joining forces are all part of making a project" (Brugmans and Petersen, 2012, p.42).

The aforementioned regional design practices vary, especially when considering their addressees: a formally appointed commission to judge infrastructure project proposals in the case of MIRT regional design practices; exhibition curators and a

critical public audience in the case of the IABR design studios. Their main similarity is the firm position that the Ministry of I&M took as a regional design commissioner, alongside its role in 'courts of appeal'. Funding for regional design practices via the architecture policy was reduced at the same time: the production of art should comply more with market mechanisms in the future it was argued (Ministerie van OCW, 2011). In 2012, the SfA was merged with other public institutes in the cultural sector to form the Creative Industries Fund NL. In the same year, a new update of the architecture policy was published (Ministeries van I&M et al., 2012). Fundable design efforts were to contribute to the implementation of a national vision on the preservation of cultural heritage, the quality of decision making in MIRT procedures, and the implementation of innovative projects by means of design dialogues under the framework of IABR. A brief paragraph summarised expectations on the performance of funded regional design practices. They were associated with the creation of spatial quality and added societal and economic value as well as innovation. At the same time, they were also expected to deliver a 'better, faster and therefore cheaper process' (idem, p.9).

7.3.4    ## Discussion

In theory, regional design appears to be testing how imagined local solutions for problems caused by autonomous regional spatial developments can function within a world of planning that is composed of geographic ideas, spatial imaginaries and spatial concepts. Above it was argued that in this testing regional design functions as a form of discretion: it aims to improve planning rules by judging their implications for particular situations. It was further argued that, when employing regional design as a form of discretion in spatial planning, the involvement of actors requires scrutiny: a distinction and distance between those actors who initiate practices, conduct design, and judge the quality and relevance of design outcomes for the revision of rules is essential, as in any other form of legitimate and accountable rule-building. Drawing upon this argument, the organisational setting of regional design in Dutch national planning between the 1980s and the 2010s was analysed, as well as its institutionalisation through repetitive use and formalisation in policies and organisations.

The results of the analysis show that the Dutch national government has become increasingly caught up in regional design practice, during three, at times overlapping, stages. When regional design emerged as a distinct discipline within spatial planning in the 1980s it was professional designers and planners who first used the practice to challenge Dutch national planning. Supported by their long-established professional associations and policy advisory institutes (operating on

behalf of but separately from government), they called upon the public to help them express their discontent about national planning. Although the national government was criticised, it embraced the approach via its architecture policies and channelled grants towards design as a critical reflection on governmental planning.

Distance between professional and governmental realms diminished when decentralisation and governance became prime issues in Dutch national planning. In the mid-1990s, the Delta Metropolis design practice was the first to involve sub-national government in the making of a regional design proposal. By adopting the practice as a precedent, the Ministry of VROM gave rise to a generation of comparable practices. The 'design studio' emerged as a format for collaboration, engaging a multitude of actors from different levels and sectors of government and civil and private organisations in the setting out of regional design tasks, the making of designs, and judgement of their implications. The national government still had one distinct role in the Delta Metropolis practice, namely to act as a kind of court to which lower levels of government could appeal. From the mid-2000s onwards it diversified its engagement with the design studios. It remained an important judge, but also started to participate in the framing and running of design practices in particular via its 'urban network concept' policy.

During a third stage, it strengthened its role as a regional design commissioner. From 2000 onwards, funding for regional design practice became ever more tied to projects of national importance, which themselves became increasingly refined in terms of their scale and scope. In 2010 regional design became a mandatory practice in the highly regulated MIRT programme. Two years later the Ministry of I&M became an important commissioner of regional design at the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam. In the same year, funding for regional design became dedicated to these two national programmes. Sub-national government remained involved in the production of designs, however its role became largely confined to that of a co-designer.

Above, it was noted that the 'room for interpretation' that rules provide in the first place is important for discretion because the choices built into the rules determine if discretionary action is likely to be a refinement of the rules or a challenge to them. It was argued that a similar distinction can be applied to regional design practices. Depending on the ambiguity of premediated spatial imaginaries, they tend to evolve either as a form of advocacy or else play a pragmatic role in their operationalisation. Our empirical analysis based upon this distinction reveals that since the early 2000s the national government developed a preference for a pragmatic, instrumental use of regional design for planning decision-making. This is reflected in attempts to unite actors under the umbrella of nationally important projects. It is also reflected in

expectations about the performances of regional design. Design was first primarily understood as an artistic and inspiring practice that builds a cultural understanding of regional spatial planning and unleashes 'thinking capacity.' Implementation could come later on, it was argued. During later stages, regional design was expected to perform as a form of territorial management above all, aiming at the formation of societal alliances, the acquisition of organisational capacity, the speeding up of decision-making and, in this way, the reduction of non-coordination costs. To employ regional design for pragmatic reasons is certainly a legitimate choice. However, criticism regarding the institutionalisation of regional design in Dutch national planning can also be raised.

One such criticism concerns the re-occurring actor constellations in regional design practices. In any use of regional design, a distance between actors with different roles is required to enhance legitimacy and accountability. When used in the operationalisation of planning, design commissioners and designers are bound by their agreement on a preconceived design task. Discretionary control gains importance in considering, for instance, the implications of conflicts that regional design can bring to the foreground. By occupying a strong role in both the formulation of design tasks as well as the judgement of design outcomes, the national government has refrained from being truly open to critique.

A second criticism concerns the overly high expectations about the performance of regional design. A pragmatic use of regional design focuses on easing the implementation of national projects, as noted above. However, pre-existing performance expectations were not dropped when the use of regional design in Dutch national planning changed: in a highly pragmatic setting shaped by the commissions and actor constellations described above, design also remains to be seen as an adventurous and inventive practice that can bear unexpected, and inspiring results.

A final criticism concerns public support for regional design practice, particularly as provided via the national government's architecture policy. This policy was first dedicated to the creation of a critical spatial planning audience. The nurturing of what was early on called a 'cultural-historic perspective' on planning, or a broader awareness of 'spatial qualities,' has faded away into the background – a rather unfortunate development.

## 7.4  Conclusions

In the introduction to this chapter it was argued that regional design, through its close resemblance to discretion, may contribute to territorial synchrony: an alignment between societal processes that produce problems and opportunities in particular situations, politico-administrative structures that effectively and efficiently address these problems and opportunities, and cultural adherences that explain the appropriateness of action through shared knowledge and understanding. The analysis presented here indicates that Dutch national government has, to some extent at least, shared our argument: that regional design practice can help to fill the institutional void that results from a lack of synchrony. It employed regional design for an enhanced understanding of its planning implications on the ground, in both cultural and practical terms. Over time, it used practices to enhance an understanding of its planning – to create a conscious and critical public that appreciates it. The Dutch government also used regional design practices to accelerate efficiency and effectiveness. When assuming that regional design can indeed assist territorial synchrony, not just in the Netherlands but also elsewhere, a more sophisticated understanding of its performance in spatial planning and territorial governance is required.

Our analysis reflects a particular perspective on regional design: design forms a discretionary practice that assists planning decision-making. Taken from this perspective, two uses of regional design should be distinguished, each with different outcomes: design can be used as expertise that translates a holistic understanding of spatial development and planning into comprehensive, refined planning action on the ground, or it can be used as a more adventurous practice that challenges planning frameworks with unexpected results and surprises and thus expands existing planning frameworks. In theory, these two uses and their outcomes are highly dependent on the choices or 'room for interpretation' that are provided beforehand. Choices predefine the different uses. They also influence the type of collaboration in design practice.

The conceptualisation of regional design as discretionary action emphasises an institutional perspective on practice. This means that actor constellations come to the foreground as an important determinant of the quality of regional design. Distance between those who formulate designs (including the design commissioner, as we have argued) and those who judge the relevance of design outcomes for the revision of rules and norms is particularly required in order to create the legitimacy and accountability of rule-building. In governance and planning theory there is a

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distinction between governance that follows a collaborative rationale, based on the appreciation of a broad involvement of actors ('good governance'), and governance that is oriented towards the resolution of real problems on the ground. The latter rationale requires strategic selectivity which in turn often incites conflict, overly pragmatic behaviour, and political hidden agendas regarding the rules and norms on which plans are based. Regional design, providing there is distance between actors who pursue different roles in practices, can function as a powerful tool to connect these two governance domains. A precondition for its contribution to territorial synchrony is a recognition of the tensions that exist between these domains.

Table 7.1 below lists actors who were involved in the regional-design practices that were analysed in chapter 7. In alignment with the analytical approach that is pursued in this chapter it shows (1) who initiated design practices and formulated briefs or commissions, (2) who engaged in the making of designs and (3) who judged the outcomes. Table 7.1 is taken up in this thesis only.

TABLE 7.1 Actors in Dutch regional design practices between the 1980s and the 2010s

| Year | Regional design practice | Regional design initiators/ commissioners | Regional designers | Regional design audiences/courts of appeal |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1984 - 1987 | The Netherlands Now As Design (*Nederland Nu Als Ontwerp*, NNAO) | NNAO Foundation, involving individual planning and design professionals, supported by the Dutch Town Planning Institute (BNS), the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (NSCGP), Architecture Museum Foundation, an institute representing Dutch building industries | Planning and design professionals, in collaboration with experts | Public audience, national government |
| 1985 - 1986 | Netherlands River Land (*Nederland Rivierenland*), 1st Eo-Wijers competition | Eo-Wijers Foundation (individual members of associations of professional designers and planners (BNS, BNT), supported by national, provincial and municipal planning agencies, other foundations, private parties | Design professionals | Jury: planning and design professionals, experts |
| 1988-1989 | City and Land on the Slope (*Stad en Land op de Helling*), 2nd Eo Wijers competition | Eo-Wijers Foundation | Design professionals | Jury: planning and design professionals, experts |
| 1991 - 1992 | Region of Streams, 3rd Eo Wijers competition | Eo-Wijers Foundation | Design professionals | Jury: planning and design professionals, experts |
| 1994 - 1995 | Inside Randstad Holland, 4th Eo Wijers competition | Eo-Wijers Foundation | Design professionals | Jury: planning and design professionals, experts |

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Actors in Dutch regional design practices between the 1980s and the 2010s

| Year | Regional design practice | Regional design initiators/ commissioners | Regional designers | Regional design audiences/courts of appeal |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1996 - 1998 | Delta Metropolis (*Deltametropool*) | Association Delta Metropolis (Individual design/planning professionals, in collaboration with the municipalities/ eldermen of The Hague, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht | Design and planning professionals, in collaboration students | Public audience, national government (Ministry of VROM) |
| 1997 - 1998 | Who is Afraid of the Empty Programme? (*Wie is er Bang voor het Lege Programma?*), 5th Eo Wijers competition | Eo-Wijers Foundation, in collaboration with NOORD XXI Foundation | Design professionals | Jury: planning and design professionals, experts |
| 2001 - 2002 | Unbounded Movement (*Grenzeloze Beweging*), 6th Eo Wijers competition | Eo-Wijers Foundation | Design professionals | Jury: planning and design professionals, experts |
| 2001 - 2002 | Studio Deltametropolis (*Atelier Deltametropool*) | Ministry of VROM, Chief Government Architect of the Netherlands | Design professionals, supported by a lead designer, involving (international) experts, societal organisations, policy makers during plenary sessions and through individual critical reflection | Ministry of VROM |
| 2002 - 2004 | New Dutch Water Line (*Nieuw Hollandse Waterlinie*) | Steering group National Project New Dutch Water Line, involving the Ministry of LNV, provinces, municipalities and water boards | Design professionals, involving provinces, municipalities, land owners, water boards, interest groups and experts during workshops and debate | Steering group National Project New Dutch Water Line, National government |
| 2002 - 2003 | Vision for the Urban Network Arnhem - Nijmegen (*Visie stedelijk netwerk KAN*) | Regional governance arrangement, involving municipalities and provinces | Design professionals | |
| 2003 - 2006 | Studio IJmeer (*Atelier IJmeer*) | Municipality of Almere | Design professionals, involving municipalities, societal organisations and expers during workshops | Municipality of Amsterdam, national government, regional governance |

Actors in Dutch regional design practices between the 1980s and the 2010s

| Year | Regional design practice | Regional design initiators/ commissioners | Regional designers | Regional design audiences/courts of appeal |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2005 - 2006 | Agains and with the Current (*Tegen de Stroom in en met de Stroom mee*), 7th Eo Wijers competition | Eo-Wijers Foundation, in collaboration with regional plan actors | Design professionals, professionals in building industries, in collaboration with experts | Jury: planning and design professionals, experts |
| 2005 - 2007 | Studio South Wing (*Atelier Zuidvleugel*) | Regional governance arrangement, involving municipalities, the province of South Holland, and the Ministry of VROM | Design professionals, involving experts, municipal and provincial government (planners and politicians), artists, policy institutes, private parties, civil organisations and the public during workshops, expert sessions, excursions, exhibitions and debate. | Regional governance arrangement (forming a dedicated programme council), national government |
| 2006 - 2007 | Studio Brabant City (*Atelier Brabantstad*) | Regional governance arrangement, involving the province of North-Brabant, municipalities, and the Ministry of VROM | Design professionals, involving the province of Brabant, municipalities, and experts during studio sessions | Regional governance arrangement, national government |
| 2008 - 2009 | Outside the Randstad (*Buiten in de Randstad*), 8th Eo Wijers competition | Eo-Wijers Foundation | Design professionals | Jury: planning and design professionals, experts |
| 2008 | Designing Randstad 2040 (*Ontwerpen aan Randstad 2040*) | Ministry of VROM | Design professionals, supported by the Government Advisor on Infrastructure, involving subnational government, and experts during sub-design studio sessions | Ministry of VROM, Ministry of V&W |
| 2011 - 2012 | New Energy for the Peat Colonies (*Nieuwe Energie voor de Veenkoloniën*), 9th Eo Wijers competition | Eo-Wijers Foundation | Design professionals | Jury: planning and design professionals, experts |
| 2011 - 2012 | Spatial Models SMASH 2040 (*Ruimtelijke Modellen SMASH 2040*) | Ministry of I&M | Design professional, involving the ministries of I&M, EL&I, BZK, OCW and Defence, provinces, regions, municipalities and private parties, and experts during design studio sessions | Ministry of I&M |

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TABLE 7.1 Actors in Dutch regional design practices between the 1980s and the 2010s

| Year | Regional design practice | Regional design initiators/ commissioners | Regional designers | Regional design audiences/courts of appeal |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2011-2013 | Studio Coalstal Quality (*Atelier Kustkwaliteit*) | Regional governance, involving Delta Commission (responsible for the national Delta programme), provinces, municipality of The Hague, and experts | leiding: H + N + S Landschapsarchitecten, in collaboration with professional designers, planners, experts, stakeholders ('coast community'), students at the Department of Urbanism, TU Delft and Faculty of Wageningen University, | Regional governance, Ministry of I&M (Delta Commission) |
| 2011 - 2012 | Studio Making Projects (*Atelier Making Projects*), part of the 2012 5th International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR) 'Making City' | International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR), Ministry of I&M, involving other ministries, municipalities, provinces, and societal organisations in sub-commissions | Design professionals, supported by studio supervisors, involving ministries, municipalities, provinces, societal organisations and experts during studio sessions | Ministry of I&M, curator IABR, the public |
| 2012 - 2014 | Project Studios (*Projectateliers*), part of the 2014 IABR 'Urban by Nature' | IABR, Ministry of I&M, involving municipalities, provinces, and water boards in sub-commissions | Design professionals, involving municipalities, provinces, societal organisations and experts during studio sessions | Ministry of I&M, curator IABR, the public |
| 2014 - 2015 | The Cities Triangle (*De Stedendriehoek*), 10th Eo Wijers competition | Eo-Wijers Foundation | Design professionals | Jury: planning and design professionals, experts |
| 2014 - 2016 | IABR Studios (*IABR Ateliers*), part of the 2016 IABR 'The Next Economy' | IABR, Ministry of I&M, Board of Government Advisors, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), involving municipalities, and regional governance arrangements (consortia of public and private parties) in sub-commissions | Design professionals, involving municipalities, governance arrangements and experts during studio sessions | Ministry of I&M, curator IABR, the public |

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TABLE 7.1 Actors in Dutch regional design practices between the 1980s and the 2010s

| Year | Regional design practice | Regional design initiators/ commissioners | Regional designers | Regional design audiences/courts of appeal |
|------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 2016 - 2017 | MIRT research Accessibility Rotterdam The Hague (*MIRT-onderzoek Bereikbaarheid Rotterdam Den Haag*) | Ministry of I&M, municipalities, province of South Holland, governance arrangement Metropolitan Region Rotterdam The Hague (MRDH) | Design professionals, involving experts, and governance arrangements during studio sessions, expert sessions, debate, and surveys | Ministry of I&M |

# 8 Conclusions

To design for the purpose of planning was not new when regional design emerged as a distinguished discipline in the 1980s in the Netherlands. On the contrary, to imagine solutions for particular areas and to discuss these for the purpose of planning has been a long-standing tradition that can be traced back to the emergence of urban planning in the early 20th century. However, when spatial planning emerged as a new, more collaborative and anticipatory planning approach in the last decades, expectations concerning performances of design in planning decision-making increased. Design came to be seen as a practice that not only improves the spatial and technical quality of plans, but also enhances planning innovation, clarifies political agendas, forges societal alliances and raises the efficiency of planning through timely consideration of conflicts that planning may cause in societal and political domains. Since the 1990s, regional design underwent a process of institutionalisation in Dutch national planning. The practice became repetitively used and was formally embedded in planning procedures.

Despite more varied expectations and institutionalisation, interrelations between regional design and spatial planning are not well understood. As a result, the performances of regional design are difficult to predict and consequently, often disappointing. Therefore, this research has sought to conceptualise interrelations between regional design and spatial planning. It aimed at an enhanced explanation and prediction of performances. The main research question was: how do the interrelations between regional design and spatial planning influence the performances of regional design? Answers to this question were sought through case-study research. During two consecutive rounds of exploration, two perspectives were taken. During a first in-depth case-study, key performances of regional design were analysed. During a second multiple case-studies analysis, the contextual determinants of these performances were investigated.

Detailed results of this dissertation are embodied in Chapter 3 to 7 of this publication. Below, these outcomes are summarised in order to form one coherent line of argument. Theoretical notions, which were considered during the research but were not mentioned in earlier publications of the chapters in the form of journal articles and book chapters, are added. The chapter also contains a critical reflection on the research approaches that were used. A dedicated section summarises the implications of findings for future research.

# Key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning

There are multiple expectations concerning the performances of regional design in spatial-planning decision-making. Concepts explaining and predicting these expectations are however, incomplete. This research sought to build an analytical framework that corresponds to this knowledge gap. During a first in-depth case-study, the performances of regional design were investigated. The questions addressed were: what are key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning, and how can these be analysed? The answers to these questions are presented below. A first section summarises theoretical notions that were found to be the most relevant for explaining different performances. In a second section, the key performances that were identified during theory formation and case-study analysis, are listed. A final section is dedicated to additional results from empirical research. It lists outcomes that have influenced the second round of case-study exploration.

## Facilitating attention to geographies in spatial planning

Prohibitive and restrictive land-use control, embodied in statutory planning frameworks and exercised by government, has long been the primary means of planning in the Netherlands and elsewhere. In the 1980s, when development started to agglomerate in regions with privileged positions in expanding economic networks, this form of planning came to stand under critique though (Klosterman, 1985, Sager, 2011, Waterhout et al., 2013). It was seen to "stifle entrepreneurial initiative, impede innovation, and impose unnecessary financial and administrative burdens on the economy" (Klosterman, 1985, p.2). A change in planning style set in, "a shift away from distributive policies, welfare considerations, and direct service provision towards more market-oriented and market-dependent approaches aimed at pursuing economic growth and competitive restructuring" (Waterhout et al. (2013, p.143) referring to Swyngedouw et al. (2002)). A higher appreciation of market forces unlocked planning reforms across Europe, leading to a range of approaches that were commonly called *spatial planning* (Albrechts et al., 2003, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010, Faludi, 2010, Healey, 2006, Nadin, 2007, Needham, 1988, Schön, 2005, Waterhout, 2008). Spatial-planning approaches differ across countries with different planning systems, and cultures in decision-making (Commission of the

European Communities (CEC), 1997, Nadin and Stead, 2008, Waterhout, 2008). They also share characteristics: "Compared with previous regulatory land-use planning approaches, [spatial planning] is distinctive for: encouraging long-term strategic visions; providing the spatial dimension to improved integration across a range of sectoral plans and activity; supporting `balanced' approaches to sustainable development; and improving engagement with stakeholders and the public" (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010, p.803).

Spatial planning is expected to pay particular attention to spatial development, in comparison to regulatory planning (Albrechts et al., 2003, Albrechts, 2004, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009a, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010, Faludi, 2010, Healey, 2004, Healey, 2006, Nadin, 2007, Needham, 1988, Schön, 2005, Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010). In planning-theoretical terms, this recognition has caused a search for an increased understanding of how such attention is facilitated in spatial-planning decision-making. One important strand of investigation focuses on the use of geographic imagery. It brings to the foreground that spatial representations, in words and images, are meaningful and purposefully employed by plan actors to inform the behaviour of other, related actors (Davoudi, 2012, Davoudi and Strange, 2008, Dühr, 2003, Dühr, 2004, Dühr, 2006, Faludi, 1996, Graham and Healey, 1999, Jensen and Richardson, 2003, Neuman, 1996, Thierstein and Förster, 2008, Van Duinen, 2004, Förster, 2009). Based on writings on the utilisation of spatial representations in planning processes, three main logics can be distinguished (Dühr, 2004, Förster, 2009, Moll, 1991, Van Duinen, 2004). When representations have an *analytical logic*, a theory on or observation of spatial development is referred to; a spatial representation is associated with (invariable) scientific knowledge about material settings and practices. The *normative logic* of representations evolves against the background of political values and norms; representations portray desirable planning outcomes. In an *organisational logic* a representation shows a territory, wherein planning action unfolds.

Davoudi (2012, p.438), referring to Fischler (1995, p.23), notes that the term 'representation', "differs from a positivist understanding of visualisation as a communication system. It emphasises the interdependence between: 'the symbolic structure that frame what is being said, written and shown during planning processes and the political structures that frame interactions during those'." The recognition that spatial planning draws on shared spatial imageries has led to a second strand of investigation into how attention to spatial development is facilitated in spatial-planning decision-making. 'Framing' is a key concept here. A 'frame' is a "perspective from which an amorphous, ill-defined, problematic situation can be made sense of and acted on" (Rein and Schön, 1993, p.146). When geographies are used for the framing of policy argumentation, they reassert the "cognitive and normative

expectations of […] actors by shaping and promoting a common worldview as well as developing adequate solutions to sequencing problems, that is, the predictable ordering of various actions, policies, or processes over time" (Jessop, 2001). In planning literature, geographic frames are often termed spatial concepts (or planning concepts). These concepts are acknowledged to resemble discourse (Van Duinen, 2004), as "an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices" (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005, p.175). Building upon existing notions on the use of concepts in spatial planning (Davoudi, 2003, Davoudi, 2012, Davoudi et al., 2018, Gualini and Majoor, 2007, Hagens, 2010, Healey, 2004, Markusen, 1999, Richardson and Jensen, 2003, Van Duinen, 2004, Zonneveld, 1991, Zonneveld, 1989, Zonneveld and Verwest, 2005), analysis has brought to the foreground that spatial concepts, when used as framing devices, have several dimensions. In an *analytical* dimension, a spatial concept explains spatial development by providing knowledge on how unplanned individual action affects development. In a *normative* dimension, a concept is a metaphor for desirable spatial structures and is also a guiding principle to achieve a policy goal. In an *organisational* dimension of concepts, prevailing territorial control is reflected. In conjunction, these dimensions allow for the composition of arguments on what, why and how to plan. They establish a fourth, *discursive dimension* in which spatial representations of regional design proposals, composed of corresponding logics, operate.

Among design scholars, there is broad agreement that design is an argumentative practice, oriented towards the improvement of the built environment (Hillier and Leaman, 1974, Rittel, 1987, Schön, 1988, Schön, 1983). Design also has a holistic orientation. It is an attempt at establishing a comprehensive understanding of spatial development, an explorative search for integral solutions that consider dependencies among parts. Designers "work with models as means of vicarious perception and manipulation. Sketches, cardboard models, diagrams and mathematical models, and the most flexible of them all, speech, serve as media to support the imagination" (Rittel, 1987, p.1). To argue for change, the designer imagines design solutions but simultaneously envisions the world around him or her. The latter is a process of abstraction that leads to the recognition of *types*: simplifications of real, material settings, sited between highly general, abstract categories and highly specific ones (Schön, 1988, Hillier and Leaman, 1974, Caliskan, 2012). Such simplification is instrumental in design: "By invoking a type, a designer can see how a possible design move might be matched or mismatched to a situation" (Schön, 1988, p.183). Conclusions drawn during iterative design processes can be twofold: the testing of solutions against abstract perceptions of real-world settings – the "design world" as Schön (1992, p.3) calls these perceptions – may lead to the modification of a design solution. It may also lead to a changing

appreciation of this "design world" (idem). When assuming that spatial concepts constitute such a 'spatial-planning world', interrelations between regional design and spatial planning come to the foreground.

### 8.1.2 Performances of regional design in a discursive dimension of planning concepts

The above notions on design, in combination with notions on how spatial development is considered in the realm of spatial planning (outlined in Table 8.1), have led to a first position concerning interrelations between regional design and spatial-planning frameworks. In this position, regional design as an argumentative practice, performs in a discursive dimension of spatial concepts. In order to identify ways how plans influence decision making, Faludi and Korthals Altes (1994, p.405) distinguish a 'technocratic' from a 'sociocratic' way of planning. In technocratic planning, government safeguards the public interest by means of a ready-made plan. In a sociocratic approach, the views of other actors are considered: "[a]uthorities are not the only ones called upon to act in the 'public interest' and not above other actors either. This leaves room for negotiations" (Faludi and Van der Valk, 1994, p.405). In a technocratic way of planning, the influence of plans is judged upon the 'conformance' between implemented planning decisions and the earlier onward determined plans. In a sociocratic way of planning, the 'performance' of plans is in the outcome of negotiation and deliberation: in agreement among actors, and the change of mind that the formation of such consent requires. When taking this definition of *performance* as a starting point, a set of key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning can be distinguished.

— **Regional design assists in the building of spatial-planning rationales.** A first general performance of regional design in the realm of spatial planning is in the building of spatial-planning rationales. Above, in Section 8.1.1, it was noted that spatial concepts incorporate analytical, normative and organisational notions. When regional design is seen to operate in a discursive dimension of spatial concepts, it assists in the structuring of these existing reservoirs of meaning, in the face of a particular spatial problem. Such structuring of knowledge, values and norms - the building of story lines and narratives - gains considerable attention in literature about regional design (Hajer et al., 2010, Van Dijk, 2011, Hajer et al., 2006). In the realm of spatial planning, structuring corresponds to its objective "to articulate a more coherent spatial logic for land use regulation, resource protection, and investments in regeneration and infrastructure" (Albrechts et al., 2003, p.113). In both realms, persuasive logics are associated with learning and the willingness of actors to become engaged in planning.

— **Regional design challenges or refines spatial-planning rationales.** As highlighted above, design theorists argue that design - the testing of solutions against simplified abstractions of the built environment - may be a process of elaboration or of discovery. When assuming that design practice is framed by spatial concepts, the practice may be used to refine these concepts through deducing solutions from an institutionalised repertoire of meanings. Conversely, a hypothetical or imagined design solution may help the designer to uncover new aspects of the built environment. Design practice is then inductive: it is used to challenge or enrich prevailing spatial concepts and the array of rationales that these incorporate.

— **Key performances stem from matches and mismatches in analytical, political and organisational dimensions.** A more detailed set of performances can be presumed through the distinction of logics of spatial representations and dimensions of spatial concepts. According to these, design may be a form of analytical reasoning (referring to the analytical foundation of concepts), a form of political action (referring to the normative planning agendas that concepts imply), or a form of organisational reasoning (referring to forms of territorial action and control concepts suggest). In the introductory chapter of this thesis, it was noted that the expectations on the performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning are varied: design is likewise expected to contribute to the spatial, technical quality of plans, the clarification of political options as well as enhanced territorial management. The analytical framework explains these different performances by the matches and mismatches that designs produce in the context of premediated perceptions of geographies that frame policy argumentation. Depending on these congruencies, design proposals refine or challenge the analytical foundation of spatial concepts, the normative agendas that they incorporate or the policy-making that they suggest for territories.

**TABLE 8.1**  Theoretical notions used to identify key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning

| Design theory | |
|---|---|
| **Design is an argumentative practice.** | |
| – Design has a normative orientation towards change and improvement.<br>– Design has a holistic orientation. It is concerned about wholes and interdependencies among parts.<br>– In a context of uncertainty, design is exploratory. Instead of following a linear problem solution logics, argumentation evolves during iterations, repetitive rounds in which solutions are developed, comprehended, reflected upon and adapted.<br>– Design follows a process of 'conjecture and refutation'. The building of argument involves creativity and ingenuity, luck, and also doubt. | (Caliskan, 2012, Cross, 2001, Hillier and Leaman, 1974, Lawson, 2009, Rittel, 1987, Schön, 1983, Schön, 1992, Schönwandt and Grunau, 2003, Cross, 2004, Van Aken, 2005). |
| **Designers work with representation.** | |
| – Designers work with representations of the built environment to support the imagination. | (Lawson, 2009, Rittel, 1987) |
| **Abstract representations of the built environment are used to test design solutions.** | |
| – To argue for change, the designer imagines design solutions but simultaneously imagines the world around him or her. The latter is a process of abstraction that leads to the recognition of *types*: simplifications of real, material settings, sited between highly general, abstract categories and highly specific ones.<br>– Simplifications of real, material settings are used to test solutions.<br>– Testing may lead to adaptations of solutions or to a changing appreciation of environments. | (Caliskan, 2012, Hillier and Leaman, 1974, Schön, 1988). |
| **Planning theory** | |
| **Planning has a normative orientation.** | |
| – Planning has a normative orientation. It seeks to sustain environmental resources, to distribute these in an even and fair way, to temper unintended external effects that stem from individual or group action, and to improve the information base for democratic decision making. | (Klosterman, 1985) |
| **Spatial planning pays particular attention to spatial development.** | |
| – Spatial planning is oriented towards the long-term, the integration of sectoral plans and activity, and the involvement of stakeholders in planning decision-making.<br>– Compared to other (regulatory) planning approaches, spatial planning pays particular attention to spatial development. | (Albrechts et al., 2003, Albrechts, 2004, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009a, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010, Faludi, 2010, Healey, 2004, Healey, 2006, Nadin, 2007, Needham, 1988, Schön, 2005, Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010). |
| **Spatial representations are geographic imagery that is purposefully used by plan actors.** | |
| – Spatial representations, in word and image, are socially constructed perceptions of the built environment.<br>– Spatial representations are expressions of what different actors find important and what they are willing to neglect.<br>– Spatial representations have agency, they are purposefully employed by plan actors to inform the behaviour of other, related actors.<br>– Spatial representations draw on repertoires of existing symbols. | (Davoudi, 2012, Davoudi and Strange, 2008, Dühr, 2003, Dühr, 2004, Dühr, 2006, Faludi, 1996, Graham and Healey, 1999, Jensen and Richardson, 2003, Neuman, 1996, Thierstein and Förster, 2008, Van Duinen, 2004, Förster, 2009) |

**TABLE 8.1** Theoretical notions used to identify key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning

| The use of spatial representations has an analytical, normative and/or organisational logic. | |
| --- | --- |
| 1) When representations have an analytical logic, they depict spatial development and are associated with (invariable) scientific knowledge about material spatial settings and practices.<br>2) When representations have a normative logic, they portray desirable planning outcomes and are associated with political values.<br>3) When representations have an organisational logic they show a territory and are associated with forms of territorial management. | (Dühr, 2004, Förster, 2009, Moll, 1991, Van Duinen, 2004). |
| **Spatial concepts are institutionalised perceptions of geographies.** | |
| – Spatial concepts are perceptions of geographies that are used for the purpose of planning.<br>– A frame is "a perspective from which an amorphous, ill-defined, problematic situation can be made sense of and acted on" (Rein and Schön, 1993, p.146). Spatial concepts are geographic frames.<br>– Spatial concepts resemble discourse as "an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices" (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005).' | (Davoudi, 2003, Davoudi, 2012, Davoudi et al., 2018, Gualini and Majoor, 2007, Hagens, 2010, Healey, 2004, Markusen, 1999, Richardson and Jensen, 2003, Van Duinen, 2004, Zonneveld, 1991, Zonneveld, 1989, Zonneveld and Verwest, 2005) |
| **Spatial concepts are composed of an analytical, normative and an organisational dimension.** | |
| 1) In their analytical dimension spatial concepts provide a reservoir of analytical knowledge.<br>2) In their normative dimension spatial concepts incorporate a reservoir of political values.<br>3) In their organisational dimension concepts incorporate a reservoir of policy measures that can take effect in territories.<br>– Through being composed of these dimensions, spatial concepts allow for the construction of spatial planning rationales. | (Davoudi, 2003, Markusen, 1999, Van der Valk, 2002, Van Duinen, 2004, Zonneveld, 1991) |
| **Performance of plans is in their impact on decision-making.** | |
| – The conformance of plans is in their effective implementation.<br>– The performance of plans is in their impact on decision-making. Performances are in learning and/or a change of minds of actors. | (Faludi, 1987, Faludi, 2000, Faludi and Korthals Altes, 1994, Mastop and Faludi, 1997, Needham, 1988) |

## Additional results from case-study analysis

The initial in-depth case-study, presented in Chapter 3 and 4, drew on analysis of the South Wing Studio (*Atelier Zuidvleugel*), a regional-design practice that was conducted between 2005 and 2007 in the southern part of the Dutch Randstad region. The study investigated how the practice contributed to the formation of a regional transit-oriented development strategy for the area around the cities The Hague, Rotterdam, Gouda, and Leiden. The empirical analysis contributed to the formation of the analytical framework summarised above. It also generated results that shaped the second stage of the overall research, which investigated the influence of spatial-planning frameworks on performances of design. These additional results are briefly described below.

— **Pragmatic behaviour in regional design processes.** Empirical analysis revealed that pragmatic behaviour by plan actors strongly influenced the regional design process under investigation. The most influential spatial representations discussed the investigated regional transit-oriented development strategy from the point of view of territorial management. The broadly defined and various normative, political agendas of governance arrangements in the region gained considerably less attention. When they stood in the way of operationalising planning in particular areas, they were transformed to match managerial concerns.

— **A critical distance from the planning apparatus**. The regional-design practice under investigation was above all used to operationalise spatial planning; to indicate territories that match the institutional capacities of governance arrangements, and vice versa. This proved to be a very delicate endeavour. The design process followed by the studio needed to continuously respond to the sensitivities of actors. Considering these sensitivities during the design processes became decisive in facilitating change. The relative independence of the studio, its position at arm's length from daily policy making, greatly supported the endeavour.

— **The importance of dedicated regional design actors.** The independence of the studio allowed for the mediation between the interests of actors. Analysis also brought to the foreground that the stability and quality of relations between actors in design practice and policy-making were crucial for the performance of design as well. The design project under investigation had identifiable 'clients' within its fragmented governance setting and enjoyed the support of main protagonists within the provincial organisation. Other projects by the studio that lacked such links to the more formal spatial-planning apparatus seemed to have performed less well in spatial-planning decision-making.

## 8.2 Aspects of spatial-planning frameworks that influence the performances of regional design

In design theory, design practice appears to be "a relatively simple set of operations carried out on highly complex structures, which are themselves simplified by 'theories' and modes of representation", as Hillier and Leaman (1974, p.4) note. These scholars argue that, if a design method is to be improved, a sophisticated understanding of these theories and modes is more important than an understanding of the practices themselves. The South Wing Studio case study led to a distinction of key performances of regional design in the realm of spatial planning. An important additional result of the study was the recognition that the planning context of regional design - in particular spatial concepts that frame spatial-planning decision-making - is a crucial determinant. Therefore, the ways these frameworks influence regional-design practice were investigated during a second multiple case-studies analysis. The questions addressed were: what aspects of spatial-planning frameworks influence the performances of regional design, and how can these aspects of spatial-planning frameworks be analysed? Below, theoretical notions that were found to be most relevant for answering these questions are summarised first. In the following sub- section, influential aspects of frameworks, deduced from theories and confirmed by case-study analysis, are presented. A third sub-section summarises additional results from this case-study. It lists theoretical concepts that gained relevance during empirical analysis but were not further explored as part of this thesis.

### 8.2.1 Regional design as a rule-building practice

As noted above, design is an argumentative practice. To argue for change, the designer imagines design solutions but simultaneously imagines the world around him or her. Simplifications of real, material settings, situated between highly general, abstract categories and highly specific ones are used to test imagined design solutions (Caliskan, 2012, Hillier and Leaman, 1974, Schön, 1988, Schön, 1992). Such testing leads to the recognition of matches and mismatches: the designer learns how well certain design solutions fit particular settings. Conclusions drawn from testing can be reflected in the modification of a design solution or in a changing appreciation of the "design world" (Schön, 1992, p.3). Another design product - one

that is often overseen in practice - is in the interdependencies between solutions and their perceived context. From the testing of solutions against types, rules are deducted: "As rules of law are derived from judicial precedents, […], so design rules are derived from types, and may be subjected to test and criticism by reference to them" (Schön, 1988, p.183).

Design scholars emphasise that design thrives on rich knowledge about a particular situation, constituting what Rittel (1987, p.5) calls 'epistemic freedom' (see also Caliskan, 2012). In the context of such freedom, design solutions are derived from the argumentation on how a design solution functions within its context but the argument is inevitably incomplete. The designer considers a broad body of knowledge from a variety of fields, decides upon paths to go, and leaves thereby others unexplored: "[T]here are no logical or epistemological constraints or rules which would prescribe which of the various meaningful steps to take next" (Rittel, 1987, p.5). Freedom facilitates creativity, "ingenuity, and luck" in design argumentation, as Caliskan (2012, p.279) argues, referring to Popper (1957, p.7). However, design scholars also note that overly abundant freedom produces doubt and that this, in turn, leads to a search for constraints that diminish available choices and thus, the responsibility for solutions that a designer holds (Cross, 2004). These notions imply that the abundance of choices built into premediated simplifications of material settings is an important condition of design. Such abundance of choices built into frameworks is also an issue in planning theory.

Performances of plans are defined as the impact that plans have on decision-making: in learning and a change of mind of actors, as was noted above. The related decision-centred evaluation approach is associated with a broader "argumentative turn" in planning theory and practice (Forester and Fischer, 1993, p.1). During this turn, plans came to be seen as tools that not fully determine planning output, but as temporary, malleable compromises between actors: a "drifting cloud" (Friedmann and Gross, 1965, p.39), or "a fleeting summary of current knowledge, expectations and goals" (Faludi and Korthals Altes, 1994, p.405). Planning approaches related to this turn - including collaborative, communicative and participative approaches, amongst others (e.g. Forester, 1980, Friedmann, 1969, Healey, 1997, Healey, 1999) - share a concern about the quality of decision-making, a reliance on an interpretative rather than a positivist premise, and a social constructionist perspective, in which "the social and political life under investigation is embedded in a web of social meanings produced and reproduced through discursive practices" (Fischer, 2007, p.101). All approaches embrace pluralism by recognising different world views that exist in societies. All acknowledge conflict that results from such diversity, and deduce a need for communication, collaboration and negotiation from this acknowledgement. All also recognise a need for 'framing' in policy

argumentation. Frames involve what is likewise called a 'field of choice' (Faludi and Korthals Altes, 1994, Friend and Jessop, 2013), 'a field of argument' (Dryzek, 1993, Fischer, 2007) or 'a field of positions' (Rittel, 1987). Such frames define core values and outline norms to allow for the consideration of competing arguments and the making of strategic choices, without letting arguments go astray (Dryzek, 1993).

Choices built into flexible frames are required in argumentative planning. More broadly, they are also an important determinant of planning approaches. As is the case in argumentative planning, a high degree of flexibility in planning guidance is positively associated with negotiation, collaboration and governance, as shown in distinctions between, for instance, 'indicative' and 'imperative' planning (Faludi and Korthals Altes, 1994), between 'development-led' and 'plan-led' planning' (Buitelaar et al., 2011, Munoz, 2010) and, more broadly, between planning approaches that provide for either 'discretion' or 'certainty' (Tewdwr-Jones, 1999). In the realm of spatial planning, the flexibility of planning frameworks is also associated with the particular attention which this planning approach pays to the geographies of regions and areas. In this realm, flexibility is required to facilitate a recognition of diverse spatial circumstances and the making of strategic locational choices.

Faludi (1987) and Needham (1988), theorised the emergence of spatial planning in the Netherlands early onward. They note that a form of planning that allocates planning resources to some areas while others are omitted, requires negotiable relations between what they call a 'spatial order' (autonomous spatial development, driven by social action) and 'spatial ordering' (intervening in spatial development). They argue that too definite relations would neglect the spatial and organisational particularities of local situations and cause conflict between actors. Allmendinger and Haughton (2010) investigated spatial planning in the context of a 'regional gap', characterised by only softly defined planning guidance. They observed that such flexibility contributes to the "tempering of national and local concerns" during the formation of strategies to address real problems in particular spatial situations 'on the ground' (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010, p.807). They (and others with them) conclude that softness built into premediated territorial conceptions allows for their adaptation to distinct spatial circumstances (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009b, Allmendinger et al., 2016, Brenner, 2004, Faludi, 2013, Hincks et al., 2017). That the softness – or ambiguity - of geographies plays a role in spatial planning is also recognised by scholars who investigate spatial concepts (Davoudi, 2003, Davoudi et al., 2018, Markusen, 1999). These scholars note that concepts have a more or less fuzzy analytical foundation - they rely on a select and detailed empirical evidence base or on a landscape of theories - and incorporate more or less clearly defined normative values - broad agendas or operational goals. Analysis shows that these attributes are transformed while concepts are employed by actors with

an interest in particular situations. Depending on evident spatial circumstances, political preferences and territorial interests, concepts are used as a descriptive and analytical tool or as a prescriptive and normative agenda (Davoudi, 2003). As the application of spatial-planning frameworks to particular situations are influenced by the flexibility of frameworks, the tailoring of concepts to particular situations is conditioned by their ambiguity.

## 8.2.2 Regional design as a form of discretion

Discretion is, in popular terms, "the art of suiting action to particular circumstances" (The Rt Hon Lord Scarman, 1981, p.103). It evolves in the context of predefined rules, and is concerned with "making choices between courses of action" in this context (Booth, 2007, p.131). Discretionary action is a search for "leeway in the interpretation of fact and the application of precedent to particular cases" (Booth, 2007, p.129). It aims at an improvement of generally applicable rules through a judgement of their implications for particular situations. Initial outcomes of this dissertation have shown that regional design assists in the building of spatial-planning rationales by either challenging or refining spatial concepts with imagined design proposals. The above mentioned theoretical notions on regional design as a rule-building practice, and the importance of choices for design, argumentative and strategic spatial planning, as well as the use of spatial concepts (outlined in Table 8.2) imply that regional-design practices resemble discretionary action: that practices, when used in the realm of spatial planning, seek to proactively qualify spatial-planning decisions by means of imagined, place-based solutions. The equation between regional design and discretionary action allows for the involvement of these notions in the detailing of interrelations between regional design and spatial planning. It brings a set of aspects of spatial-planning frameworks to the foreground as plausible determinants of the performances of regional design.

— **A given room for interpretation is a determinant of regional design.** Design scholars note that epistemic freedom, built into preconceived types of environments, matters for design argumentation. Planning scholars with an interest in decision making emphasise the flexibility of planning frameworks as an important determinant of both, collaboration and strategic spatial-planning decision-making. Spatial concepts involve a degree of ambiguity to allow for their interpretation 'on the ground.' In discretion, *room for interpretation* - the choices that premediated rules incorporate - is a central issue. Without these choices, discretionary action can, by definition, not evolve (Booth, 2007). On the grounds of these notions, it can first be argued that the choices built into premediated spatial concepts are an important

context for design. The empirical analysis in this thesis shows that in regional-design practice, such room for interpretations can be embodied in a variety of types of 'frames': it can sit in broadly defined institutionalised spatial concepts, with which designers are expected to work, or in the more detailed geographies that concrete regional design commissions pose. In whatever form room for interpretation is presented, it requires attention as a determinant of regional design performance.

— **Room for interpretation determines if regional design is pragmatic or evolves as a form of advocacy.** Choices for action built into rules are required for discretion. Their abundance determines how discretion evolves, as scholars who have investigated discretion in the realm of (spatial) planning have noted (e.g. Booth, 1996, Booth, 2007, Buitelaar and Sorel, 2010, Tewdwr-Jones, 1999). These scholars argue that discretionary action, when evolving in the context of multiple choices, likely leads to a refinement of rules. Conversely, such action likely leads to the challenging of rules when it evolves in the context of few choices. Design theorists argue that design - the testing of solutions against simplified abstractions of the built environment - may be a process of elaboration or of discovery. On the grounds of these notions, it can be assumed that the room for interpretation that designers are provided with, determines if design will likely be deductive - elaborating premediated geographies - or be inductive - discovering new or new features of geographies. In more fundamental terms, these notions imply that regional design, depending on premediated choices and constraints, either evolves as pragmatic behaviour or as a form of advocacy.

Empirical analysis of regional design practices in this thesis shows that expectations concerning their performances in spatial planning are various: design is seen to be an artistic practice that generates new, inspiring ideas and a practice that enhances the operationalisation of spatial planning. The above argument implies that these performances are influenced by a given room for interpretation built into spatial-planning frameworks, the ambiguity of spatial concepts in particular. The argument also implies that performances are mutually exclusive because a spatial logic cannot be challenged and refined at the same time.

— **Room for interpretation informs collaboration and governance in regional design.** It is common to describe governance arrangements as social bodies that involve intricate networks, composed of multiple and multi-level, horizontal and vertical relations among public, private, and civil actors (e.g. in Ansell, 2000, Booth, 2005, Hooghe and Marks, 2001, Jessop, 2004). Arrangements form temporary political entities, which continuously re-constitute themselves while demands for governing arise from above, below or beside (Ansell, 2000, Jessop, 2001, Jessop, 2004). The involvement of governance arrangements in spatial planning has different purposes.

Inclusion may follow a collaborative rationale; governance is then justified by a recognition and appreciation of plurality, and aspires good democratic decision-making (Healey, 2003, Innes and Booher, 2003). Another governance rationale is related to 'governing': the resolution of societal problems that occur in particular situations (Mayntz, 2004). In this more politically motivated involvement of actors, the recognition of distinct problems and the operationalisation of planning in the face of these problems play an important role. Mayntz (2004) notes that these two governance rationales co-exist in planning practice. However, other authors argue that the strategic selectivity, which is required for the recognition of problems in particular areas, is likely to produce conflict and thus may stand in the way of harmonious collaboration (Brenner, 2004, Friend and Jessop, 2013, Jessop, 2001). That the two governance rationales are not easy to combine is also recognised by scholars in discretion. These make a distinction between discretion by means of collaborative policy argumentation, and by means of more confrontational processes. They argue that the former process is likely to occur in the context of softly defined policy guidance where discretion is pragmatic. The latter process is likely to occur in the context of rigid law or regulation where discretion is a form of advocacy (Tewdwr-Jones, 1999, Booth, 2002, Booth, 2007).

Scholars who have elaborated on regional design, often appreciate its collaborative nature (Kempenaar, 2017, Van Dijk, 2011, De Jonge, 2009). Empirical analysis conducted for this thesis has shown that the employment of regional design in spatial-planning decision-making is indeed frequently motivated by the inclusion of multiple actors. The equivalence between regional design and discretionary action implies, however, that collaboration requires scrutiny. The notions above indicate that governance in regional-design practice differs depending on room for interpretation in premediated rules: collaborating actors are either united by broadly defined, shared perceptions of the built environment, or are separated by a more narrowly and therefore, more operationally defined perceptions. As is the case in governance practice, networked actor constellations in regional-design practice may be difficult to unravel. However, unravelling is required to identify possibly hidden political agendas, overly pragmatic behaviour, or unaccountable ways to influence decision-making procedures (see e.g. Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009a, Jessop, 2004). Such unravelling is also required to predict and assess the performances of regional design in the realm of cooperation.

— **Distances between actors with different roles in regional design qualify the performance of regional design in spatial-planning decision-making.** An equivalence between regional design and discretion not only leads to a distinction in the governance rationales of regional-design practices but also implies a need to distinguish roles in their conduction. In discretion, the ones who hold responsibility

for premediated rules, who seek to bend these rules, and who judge if such search has indeed built sufficient argument for rule-revision need to be separated, in order to guarantee accountability and legitimacy. One implication of a similar division of actors in regional design lies in the power that is attributed to the design commissioner: the actor who frames design tasks and, in this way, provides room for interpretation or epistemic freedom. By formulating problem definitions, policy agendas or design briefs, the commissioner predetermines the outcomes and performance. Room for interpretation in preconceived rules also determines the relations between commissioners and the 'authors' of design proposals – those who engage in the making of design proposals. In a pragmatic use of regional design both commissioners and authors, are united by shared spatial imaginaries. When design is used for advocacy, it will be more likely that these actors are divided.
An equivalence between regional design and discretion finally stresses a need for discernible judgement. In discretion, there is a distinction between discretionary action – the constitution of precedent, or the interpretation of rules on the ground – and discretionary control: the assessment whether discretionary action should lead to rule reform. For the qualification of discretion in organisational terms, a distance between those who compose a 'court of appeal' and those who seek exemption is essential. In regional-design practice, actors who judge whether a design proposal is a relevant interpretation of premediated spatial-planning rationales or a negligible incident need to be independent from both, commissioners and authors of design, to be able to come to objective conclusions.

Empirical analysis of regional practice here has shown that actor constellations in regional design have changed substantially over time. The practice was first used by professionals, to criticise Dutch national planning. It then turned into a governance-led and finally a government-led practice, with a highly pragmatic rationale. Distances between roles of actors gained critical remarks in Chapter 6 and 7. Changes in the organisational set-up, however, underscore that these organisational constellations around regional-design practice are an important aspect that influences the performances of regional design as a legitimate and accountable decision-making practice.

**TABLE 8.2** Theoretical notions used to identify aspects of spatial-planning frameworks that influence regional design

| Design theory | |
|---|---|
| **Design involves rule-making.** | |
| – During design processes simplifications of real, material settings are used to test design solutions. From of the testing of imagined solutions against abstract perceptions of the built environment, rules are deducted: "[a]s rules of law are derived from judicial precedents, (…), so design rules are derived from types, and may be subjected to test and criticism by reference to them" (Schön, 1988, p.183). | (Caliskan, 2012, Schön, 1988). |
| **'Epistemic freedom' influences design practice.** | |
| – Design argumentation thrives on epistemic freedom, constituted by rich knowledge about a particular situation. This freedom constitutes the creativity of design processes.<br>– In the context of such freedom, design solutions are derived from argumentation on how a design solution functions within its context but argument is inevitably incomplete.<br>– Overly abundant choices turn design into a practice of doubt. Doubt causes pragmatic behaviour: searches for acknowledged constraints that limit choices and release the designer from responsibility. | (Caliskan, 2012, Cross, 2004, Rittel, 1987). |
| **Planning theory** | |
| **Choices built into 'frames' facilitate involvement in argumentative planning.** | |
| – Argumentative planning relies on an interpretative premise, and a social constructionist perspective.<br>– In argumentative planning different world views that exist in societies are acknowledged. A need for communication, and negotiation is deduced from this diversity.<br>– A frame is "a perspective from which an amorphous, ill-defined, problematic situation can be made sense of and acted on" (Rein and Schön, 1993, p.146). Frames are required for the consideration of competing arguments in policy argumentation.<br>– The amount of choices built into frames determines the planning-audience bandwidth for political consent and thus the quality of democratic decisions. | (Dryzek, 1993, Faludi, 1987, Faludi, 2000, Faludi and Korthals Altes, 1994, Fischer, 1995, Fischer, 2012, Forester, 1980, Forester and Fischer, 1993, Friedmann, 1969, Hajer, 1995, Healey, 1997, Healey, 1999, Innes and Booher, 2003, Mastop and Faludi, 1997, Needham, 1988, Rein and Schön, 1993, Throgmorton, 1993, Throgmorton, 2003, Tewdwr-Jones, 1999) |
| **The flexibility of planning frameworks is an important determinant of planning.** | |
| – Planning frameworks incorporate degrees of flexibility.<br>– A high degree of flexibility is positively associated with negotiation, collaboration and governance.<br>– A low degree of flexibility is positively associated with certainty and the predictability of planning outcomes. | (Buitelaar et al., 2011, Faludi and Korthals Altes, 1994, Munoz, 2010, Tewdwr-Jones, 1999) |
| **Choices built into spatial-planning frameworks allow for the recognition of spatial diversity.** | |
| – The flexibility of spatial-planning frameworks facilitates a recognition of spatial diversity.<br>– The amount of choices built into frameworks influences strategic spatial selectivity: the making of strategic locational choices.<br>– A high degree of flexibility ('softness') is positively associated with the responsiveness of planning to real problems 'on the ground'. | (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009b, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010, Allmendinger et al., 2016, Brenner, 2004, Faludi, 1987, Faludi, 2013, Hincks et al., 2017, Needham, 1988). |

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| TABLE 8.2 Theoretical notions used to identify aspects of spatial-planning frameworks that influence regional design |  |
|---|---|
| **Spatial concepts have different degrees of ambiguity.** |  |
| – Spatial concepts have a more or less fuzzy analytical foundation.<br>– Spatial concepts incorporate more or less clearly defined values(broad agendas or operational goals).<br>– Spatial concepts embody more or less soft territories and forms of territorial control. | (Davoudi, 2006, Markusen, 1999, Davoudi et al., 2018). |
| **Discretion seeks to qualify rules through assessing their implications for particular situations.** |  |
| – Discretion is a form of decision-making that evolves in the context of predefined rules. In this context, discretionary action is a search for "leeway in the interpretation of fact and the application of precedent to particular cases" (Booth, 2007, p.129).<br>– Discretion is "the art of suiting action to particular circumstances" (The Rt Hon Lord Scarman (1981, p.103). It seeks to qualify rules through assessing their implications for particular situations.<br>– Discretion requires flexibility; room for interpretation in rules provides for the possibility of making a choice between courses of action.<br>– 'Discretion has organisational/institutional implications, as it defines "who decides and with what degrees of freedom, about the way in which the system legitimates the power to act" (Booth 1996, 132). | (e.g. Booth, 1996, Booth, 2007, Buitelaar and Sorel, 2010, Tewdwr-Jones, 1999) |

## 8.2.3 Additional results from case-study analysis

The multiple case-study analysis presented in Chapter 5, 6, and 7 has investigated aspects of spatial-planning frameworks that influence performances of regional design and how these aspects can be analysed. As the initial in-depth case-study analysis, research has, besides contributing to the analytical framework that was summarised above, delivered some additional results. Below, theoretical concepts that gained relevance but were not fully explored during analysis are briefly discussed.

— **Creativity in regional design:** Design scholars note that design in the context of abundant epistemic freedom or a broad room for interpretation produces doubt that leads to a search for constraints limiting the number of available choices: "What the designer knows, believes, fears, desires enters his reasoning at every step of the process, affects his use of epistemic freedom. He will - of course - commit himself to those positions which matches his beliefs, convictions, preferences, and values, unless he is persuaded or convinced by someone else or his own insight" (Rittel, 1987, p.6). Empirical analyses revealed pragmatic behaviour in regional-design practices, in particular, when these evolve in the context of ambiguous spatial-planning frameworks and complex governance settings. In planning literature, overly pragmatic behaviour in such settings is associated with a wish to sustain existing political agendas and power structures (see for instance Allmendinger

and Haughton, 2009a). In the above presentation of main results of this thesis, it was therefore argued that design practice needs to separate actors with different roles. Such separation likely also influences creativity. What design professionals have called a "free thinking space" (Atelier Zuidvleugel, 2005, p.7) may affect the emergence of innovative planning solutions.

— **'Assemblage-thinking' in regional design:** The analytical framework presented here relies on the assumption that regional design includes the building of spatial-planning rationales. How such rationales evolve receives attention by a number of planning scholars. Observation of urbanism approaches reminded them of 'assemblage thinking,' where planning is the outcome of rather spontaneous association of occurring action on the ground with generally applicable frameworks (Allmendinger et al., 2016, Brenner et al., 2011, Cochrane, 2012, Jones, 2009, Massey, 2011, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009a). Empirical analyses here has focused on the matches and mismatches that regional design proposals produce in the context of spatial-planning frameworks. The analyses indicate that resulting decisions were often not based upon carefully constructed rationales but indeed the product of spontaneous, at times difficult to objectively explain reflexivity, or 'assemblage thinking'.

— **Meta-governance in regional design:** Meta-governance, as defined by Jessop (2004), is in attempts to control planning decisions not by means of deliberating substantial issues but by controlling decision-making procedures. Such control involves measures that "deploy […] organizational intelligence and information", "provide rules for participation", "organize negotiations" and install a "court of appeal" (idem, p. 13). The engagement of the Dutch national government in regional-design practice investigated in this thesis appears to have been motivated by such attempts at times. It can therefore be concluded that the concept of 'meta-governance' is relevant for a deeper understanding of regional design in the realm of spatial planning.

— **Values and norms of regional design professionals:** In discretionary practice, multiple forms of discretionary control exist. Booth (2007, p.136) distinguishes controls that are "external to the administration and the political decision-making process" (including elections in voting, judicial review, and public participation) and "internal controls" (including negotiation within administrations). By referring to Adler and Asquith (1981, p.13), he also points at controls that are "exercised through professional affiliation" and "by reference to 'esoteric professional knowledge" (idem, p. 136). He notes that professional organisations, when they engage in discretionary control, claim to have special expertise, and distinguish themselves through a "code of conduct", ethical principles and core values

(idem, p. 139). Empirical analysis of regional-design practice in Dutch national planning has identified such core values and norms of regional design professionals, for instance in their continuing referencing to 'spatial quality' and their consistent use of imagery. It can be assumed that the self-conception of the professional community has informed regional-design practice and its performances.

## 8.3 Reflection on the research approach

### 8.3.1 Remarks on the assessment of the use of regional design in Dutch national planning

This research has used regional-design practices and Dutch national spatial-planning frameworks as empirical material for the building of an analytical framework. Next to conclusions concerning this framework, Chapter 5, 6 and 7 include critical discussions on the way how regional design was used in Dutch national planning over time. A set of remarks are important for an understanding of this criticism.

One critical stance taken in this thesis addresses the rather one-sided use of regional design in Dutch national planning in the period between the mid- and late 2000s; it was argued that institutionalisation has strongly favoured pragmatic use back then. It is important to note that during analysis there was an account of also less pragmatic engagement of the national government with regional design: besides using practices for the implementation of its agenda and projects, the government has also taken initiatives to stimulate use more broadly. In 2004, the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (*Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer*, VROM) established a chair at the University of Utrecht, to elaborate a critical review of (Dutch) spatial planning. In 2009, it set up a chair entitled 'Design and Politics' at the Delft University of Technology, to critically assess interrelations between the two issues. Under the same banner – Design and Politics – members of the ministry edited a series of books, in collaboration with a host of external co-editors (for the first volume, see Ovink and Wierenga, 2009). In 2012, the stimulation of 'top sectors', a selection of Dutch internationally operating economic sectors, became an important objective of Dutch national planning. Regional design, as part of a creative industries cluster, was casted as a typical Dutch export product that was to be advertised among possible commissioners

worldwide, during a range of Dutch trade missions for instance. The involvement of Dutch planners and designers in the US initiative Rebuild by Design, concerned about the aftermath of the hurricane Sandy along the USA North-Eastern coast, can be seen as a precedent of this engagement (Ovink and Boeijenga, 2018). These efforts can be perceived as pragmatic too, seen their relation with the Dutch 'top sector' policy. However, they also contributed to the resolution of pressing societal problems elsewhere.

For an understanding of criticism, it is also important to reiterate that the analysis here focused on regional-design practices that were mainly concerned with urbanisation. As described in Chapter 2, this thematic focus was chosen to guarantee internal consistency between the investigated cases. As a result, little attention was given to regional-design practices that addressed other fields in Dutch national planning since the 1980s, notably the development of open (rural and natural) landscapes and water systems. A range of practices related to these fields was briefly reviewed in the empirical analysis of the organisational setting of regional design in Dutch national planning in Chapter 7. However, the concern was only with actor constellations, therefore the interrelations between practices and Dutch national planning over time cannot be identified.

Observation allows one to assume that regional-design-led approaches to decision-making in the different thematic fields of Dutch national planning share certain characteristics. As regional-design practices with their main concern for urbanisation, practices focused on other development have gained prominence in the wider Dutch spatial planning discourse. The Stork Plan (*Plan Ooivaar*), the winning entry to the 1st Eo-Wijers competition in 1986, has for instance contributed to the debate not only on the integration of agriculture, ecological, and landscape development but also on a new, more adaptive planning approach (De Jonge, 2009). As design practices dedicated to urbanisation, practices in other fields – in particular water systems – underwent a process of institutionalisation in national planning since the mid-2000s. Institutionalisation is reflected in, for example, the Dutch national Delta Programme, which was initiated in 2010, and the 2006-2019 national programme Space for the River (*Ruimte voor de Rivier*) (Rijke et al., 2012). Both programmes accommodated design-led approaches to planning decision-making via dedicated organisations and procedures. Programmes facilitated a series of design studios and procedures to assess the design quality of projects that fell under their purview. Experts on design practices addressing themes other than urbanisation confirm the importance of Dutch planning frameworks for an explanation of the performance of design (see e.g. Meyer, 2009, Sijmons, 2002). Some also share criticism on an overly pragmatic use of design in Dutch national planning since the mid-2000s (see e.g. Luiten, 2011).

However, besides commonalities between regional design practices in the different thematic fields of Dutch national planning there are also apparent differences. Design practices concerning landscape and water systems usually rely less strongly on knowledge from the disciplines associated with urban studies (emphasising regions as a "setting for social practice" or a structure that accommodates "socio-economic functional relations", as Paasi (2000, p. 5) argues), and more strongly on knowledge from the discipline of landscape architecture. This latter knowledge emphasises a morphological perception of regions; one where they are perceived as an "object" or a "living organism" (Paasi, 2000, p. 4). Another important difference is in the values and norms to which design with a concern about landscape and water systems refer. Outline observations indicate that the ones that were used in the realm of Dutch national planning since the 1980s shared a comparably higher appreciation of 'spatial quality' and – naturally – more explicitly embraced the very urgent agenda of water safety in the Netherlands. In organisational terms they appear to have addressed other national government sectors, different implementation instruments, and/or particular planning decisions.

Some of the regional-design practices that this dissertation discussed in-depth were explicitly dedicated to transcending the thematic fields or sector boundaries that Dutch national planning usually employs (the Delta Metropolis design discussed in Chapter 6 among others). Some spatial concepts adopted in Dutch national plans had similar purposes (the conceptualisation of three layers, capturing characteristics of soil and natural landscapes, main infrastructure, and urban occupation, adopted in the 2002 Fifth Report on Spatial Planning is an example here). However – seeing the importance that the framework developed here gives to contextual conditions and the above-sketched notions on differences in the context of regional design practices – the criticism of the way in which regional design was used in Dutch national planning over time, pursued in this dissertation, cannot be transferred across the thematic fields that national planning implied.

For an understanding of criticism, it is finally important to note that empirical analysis focused on a particular time period. It has brought to the foreground that the use of regional design has shifted in accordance to shifts in Dutch national planning, in particular changes in the collaborative rationale of spatial-planning frameworks. At the time of concluding this dissertation, a new Dutch national plan is scheduled to be published in 2019 (Ministerie van I&M, 2017). As was the case earlier, this plan may influence the use of regional design in planning decision-making and may make some of the criticism expressed here obsolete. Overall, it is important to note that criticism is meant to, above all, inspire reflection on the role and position of regional design in spatial planning.

## Remarks on the analytical framework

Results of this dissertation are summarised above, in Section 8.1 and 8.2. In conjunction, these results contributed to the formation of an analytical framework that identifies interrelations between regional design and spatial planning and predicts performances of regional design in this realm on these grounds. A set of critical remarks on this frameworks are mentioned below.

Firstly, it is important to emphasise that the framework employs a particular social-constructionist perspective on both, design and spatial planning. Schön (1988, p.183) argues that "the idea of design worlds is inconsistent with an objectivist point of view, according to which things are what they are independent of our ways of seeing them. […] From a constructionist perspective, the seeming objectivity of a consensual design world is not a given but an achievement, a product of the work of communicative inquiry." Similar notions concern decisions that are the outcome of policy argumentation in the realm of planning. The term 'region' did not gain a clear-cut definition during research, because also these are seen to be mental constructions: the outcome of negotiated disciplinary, managerial and political stances (Jones and Paasi, 2013, Paasi, 2000, Paasi, 2010, Paasi, 2012, Amin, 2004). Through its social- constructionist perspective, the framework does neglect particular design knowledge that stems from studying the tangible form of the built environment.

The analytical framework developed throughout this research is meant to identify matches as well as mismatches between spatial rationales in design proposals and spatial concepts. It distinguishes (1) spatial concepts by their analytical, normative and organisational dimensions and their degree of ambiguity, and (2) spatial representations by their analytical, normative and organisational logics. Second, it is important to note that it was at times difficult to maintain the framework during empirical research, as analyses relied on a set of qualitative methodologies that know little precedent. Images of regional design proposals and spatial plans were important objects of analysis. Titles and keys of maps were used as codes in consecutive text analyses. However, this approach is not fully validated. Dühr (2005) notes that there is no benchmark to analyse policy text and graphic expression in conjunction. The method used to investigate the 'ambiguity' of spatial concepts is also not supported through earlier application. As described in Chapter 6, ambiguity was deduced from the amount and relative degree of detail in analytical evidence, normative goals, and policy measures. As these issues are interwoven in planning rationales, it was at times difficult to unravel them. Last but not least, it was challenging to identify performances which are, as was noted above, in a changing mind of actors. A variety of ways to detect such change is elaborated in planning

literature. Change is seen to become apparent through, for instance, shifting levels in policy argumentation (Fischer, 1995, Fischer, 2007), the way how information moves from one policy making arena to another and triggers learning (e.g. Nadin and Stead, 2008, Colomb, 2007), in different language, rhetoric and drama (Throgmorton, 1993, Throgmorton, 2003), the formation of discourse coalitions, and discourse institutionalisation (Hajer, 1995, Hajer, 2002, Hajer, 2006). Although each of these performances is assigned with dedicated methodological prescriptions, in practice, it remains difficult to trace them, as they often remain implicit, and are spread over time. A lack of proven guidelines for assessing changing ideas about geographies in performance research posed a particular challenge to this dissertation.

A final critical remark concerns the interrelations between regional design and spatial-planning frameworks. As was noted earlier, regional design has a holistic orientation; it considers multiple interdependencies between different parts of the built environment. Spatial planning strives for comprehensiveness: the integration of sectoral plans and activities as well as the consideration of interests of multiple actors. In reality, interrelations between distinct regional-design practices and spatial-planning frameworks are therefore composed of a multitude of matches and mismatches between regional-design and spatial-planning rationales. Thus, practices trigger a multitude of performances at the same time. The analytical framework presented here relies on categories that order these rationales and performances by their analytical, normative and organisational concerns. While this rough ordering serves the main aim of this thesis - a comprehensive understanding of interrelations between regional design and spatial-planning frameworks and a positioning of regional design in the realm of spatial planning on these grounds – it neglects single matches and mismatches that regional design proposals produce, and therefore, more detailed performances.

## 8.4    Directions for further research

Regional-design practices differ in their spatial scope and scale, have different relations to premediated spatial-planning frameworks and involve various actors with various roles. Efforts to understand them as one unified approach that performs in the realm of spatial planning seem vain. However, this research has attempted to do so, by detailing and stabilising propositions concerning interrelations between regional-design practice and spatial-planning frameworks. The outcome of

exploratory case-study research is more detailed and stable propositions. Results presented in Chapter 4 to 7, and summarised in Section 8.1 and 8.2 above, point at issues that require further research. Below some of these issues are highlighted to form broader research directions.

This thesis argues that regional design efforts, when used in the realm of spatial planning, share characteristics. They commonly emerge from discretionary attempts to mediate between generally accepted and applicable spatial-planning rules and strategies to solve problems in particular local situations. The analytical model that was developed for the analysis of such mediation is based on a combination of planning and design theory. A search for similarities among theories has resulted in the recognition that the built environment itself is their most important common denominator. The model recognises spatial concepts as institutionalised geographic ideas or spatial imaginaries that hold reservoirs of meaning. Regional design assembles a selection of notions from these reservoirs for a distinct planning purpose in a particular area or place. Both the use of concepts and the use of design, have agency in constructing perceptions of the built environment. This notion calls first for a more sophisticated understanding of **how perceptions of material settings transform as they are used**: how abstract spatial concepts turn into detailed designs and vice versa.

To understand how geographic perceptions transform requires a deeper understanding of who is involved in such transformation. The model presented here argues that design is a form of discretionary action. This stance enhances attention to the institutional settings of regional design. Allmendinger and Haughton (2010, p.807) argue that the "tempering of national and local concerns […] high-lights the importance of professional discretion and the role of the planning policy community as a force for change within modern governance, working alongside and as an integral part of diverse policy networks and coalitions, working from existing institutional and governance practices and cultures to create new ones." Scholars in discretion also highlight the importance of professional organisations in rule-building. They note that these organisations influence decisions through the values and norms they pursue. On the grounds of these notions and findings of this thesis, it can be proposed that **the role of the regional-design community in spatial-planning decision-making** requires deeper understanding. As noted above, there is a rich body of professional knowledge and expertise in the Dutch professional field of regional design. This practical knowledge presents an underused reservoir for such understanding.

In Dutch planning, there is a tradition of finding political consent, which has led to a broad variety of argumentative and collaborative planning practices, such as regional design. A rich Dutch design experience found an expression in multiple organisations

that exercise, support or control regional design. Repeated practices also led to conventions in the use of regional design. For example, it is broadly understood that a design proposal is not necessarily made to be implemented; that it may as well just portrait a brief moment in decision-making, meant to perpetuate reflection solely. Regional design is used also in other (European) regions, in the realm of spatial planning. As planning systems and cultures differ in countries, so may the design institutions. A comparative perspective on these institutions may lead to a deeper understanding of not just the regional-design practices themselves, but also of **how spatial development finds attention in spatial planning elsewhere.**

Faludi (2013, p.1312) notes that "territory can no longer be understood as a fixed entity enveloping all major aspects of social and political life but rather as the object of negotiation and compromise, open to multiple and contested interpretations. […] Spatial planning is then about inserting imaginative visions into the on-going reconstruction of the spatial fabric of life, including the plurality of territories which this implies." An implicit proposition developed here is that flexibility, in the form of ambiguous geographies, influences the creativity of planning approaches and thus, their ability to transgress preconceived, seemingly fixed perceptions of spatial organisation. The proposition is inspired by design theory where design is described as a process of elaboration and of discovery. Although many planning efforts involve expectation on creative solutions and innovation on the ground, **ways how to accommodate creativity in planning approaches** gains only marginal attention in planning theory and research. The proposition calls for improved methodological approaches to asses degrees of ambiguity of geographies or, more broadly, the flexibility (or softness) of spatial planning and governance frameworks. The proposition also calls for a broader integration of planning and design theory.

# 9 Epilogue

This dissertation investigated regional-design practices that evolved in the context of Dutch national planning frameworks in the period between the 1980s and the 2010s. Questions concerned whether and how practices influenced these planning frameworks, and the extent to which practices were influenced by shifts that frameworks underwent over time. The main aim of the dissertation was to develop an enhanced understanding of interrelations between regional design and spatial planning, so the performances of regional design in the spatial-planning realm can be better anticipated.

The personal motivation of this dissertation lies in my professional experience as a regional designer. I am trained as an architect and gained experience as an urban designer during my early professional carrier. In 2005, I became Chief Designer at South Wing Studio (*Atelier Zuidvleugel*), a publicly funded think tank which was asked to explore regionalisation and planning in the Southern part of the Dutch Randstad region by means of design. I was used to feeling doubt while designing buildings, public spaces and neighbourhoods. In the meantime, I learned from design theory that it is natural for a designer to doubt. The built environment is an intricate, complex system; there are always a multitude of alternative paths to use during a search for good solutions. However, doubt was accelerated in regional-design practice, due to its concern about large-scale areas and costly public works, and its position in a multi-actor and highly political setting. Every design step accomplished became intensely debated. Every step generated surprises, unforeseen reactions; encouraging at times, discouraging at others.

Was it worthwhile to doubt? To engage in the design of a region of which, admittedly, nobody knew what it was and if it even existed? To imagine plans for a far and uncertain future? To challenge visions that others have posed with new visions, without being able to fully underpin critique? To envision regional projects and strategies, which were as likely to unleash controversies and governance fragmentation as agreement? When given the opportunity to reflect on these initial questions I had in an academic setting, I embraced it.

My questions led me to the field of planning where I figured that the answers to my questions must lie. I expected to find straight forward and rational approaches to making my knowledge explicit through ordering, analysing and evaluating it.

I discovered a gap between the disciplines of design and planning instead. The gap was composed of separate academic discourses and literature. At times it was also reflected in the prejudice of scholars working in each of the two fields. The gap was not a clear-cut one. It was rather constituted by a semantic mess: a multitude of theories and observations, resembling each other but expressed in other words or being derived from a slightly different context. The multiple notions that I found turned this research into yet another exploratory search, one that resembles a design process in fact.

I mention this background for a set of reasons. First, it is important to note that I engaged in this dissertation as a novice in planning. I have sought to understand the theoretical notions and concepts that I engaged with in depth. However, such depth may not have been fully reached at times, due to my background. As noted in Chapter 8, this research employed a set of methodologies that lack benchmarks. I needed to set up procedures myself and I was concise and meticulous in following them. However, it is important to note that I partially relied on my practical experience when establishing these approaches. Finally, my choice for an exploratory research may not only have been inspired by a lack of concepts that explain the situation that I encountered. The choice may also have been motivated by my personal experience in and preference for 'designerly thinking'.

Was it worthwhile to doubt? During my excursion into planning theory, I came across the notion that the practice of doubt is central to democratic systems. Although this may be painful, it is essential to sustain democracy.

# List of interviewees South Wing Studio

During a first stage of this dissertation, key performances of regional design were investigated through an in-depth analysis of South Wing Studio. A series of interviews with key actors in the studio contributed to this analysis. Table App.A.1 lists respondents of the interviews. Interview questions were semi-structured, and covered two main topics, notably the initiative for the South Wing Studio (motivation, formation) and the approach taken by the Studio (description and expectation).

TABLE APP.A.1  Respondents interviews Studio South Wing

| Nr. | Position during South Wing Studio | Role in Studio South Wing |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Head of the Department Spatial Planning and Mobility (*Directeur Ruimte en Mobiliteit*), Province of South-Holland; Director Structural Vision Almere 2030+, Municipality of Almere | Initiator of the studio, member of the advisory board |
| 2 | Head of the Department Spatial Planning and Housing (*Afdelingshoofd Ruimte & Wonen*), Province of South-Holland; Director for National Spatial Planning (*Directeur Nationale Ruimtelijke Ordening*), Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) | Initiator of the studio, member of the advisory board |
| 3 | Head of the Spatial Planning Department, Stadsgewest Haaglanden; Programme Director City Line (*Programmadirecteur Stedenbaan*), Administrative Platform South Wing (*Bestuurlijk Platform Zuidvleugel*, BPZ) | Commissioner of studio projects |
| 4 | Head of the Transport Department (*Afdelingshoofd Verkeer en Vervoer*), Province of South-Holland; Head of the Department Spatial Planning and Mobility (*Directeur Ruimte en Mobiliteit*), Province of South-Holland | Responsible for the dissemination of results after the conclusion of the studio |
| 5 | Director South Wing Studio (*Ateliermeester*) | Director of the studio |

# Detailed information on documentary analyses

Table App.B.1 provides an overview of policy documents that were used for analysing Dutch national planning during the period between the 1980s and 2010s. Spatial concepts and spatial representations were important theoretical complexes in this dissertation. As a result, maps that were used in national spatial-planning decision-making were an important object of analyses. The process of how analyses were conducted is described in Chapter 4, 5, and 6. The row 'maps' in Table App.B.1 lists the page numbers of maps that were considered in the course of the research.

List of national policy documents considered in the analyses

| Year | Document name | Maps |
|------|---------------|------|
| 1958 | – Werkcomissie Westen des Landes. (1958). *De Ontwikkeling van het Westen des Landes*. Den Haag: Rijksdienst voor het Nationaal Plan (RNP). | p. 1 |
| 1960 | – Ministerie van VROM. (1960). *Nota inzake de Ruimtelijke Ordening in Nederland*. Den Haag: Staatsdrukkerij en Uitgeverijbedrijf. | Bijlage: Ruimtelijk structuurschets |
| 1977 | – Ministerie van VROM. (1977). *Derde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening. Deel 2: Verstedelijkingsnota, Deel 2d: Regeringsbeslissing met Nota van Toelichting*. Den Haag: Staatsuitgeverij. | |
| 1983 | – Den Hoed, P., Salet, W. G. M., & Van der Sluijs, H. (1983). *Planning als Onderneming*. The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij. | |
| | – Ministerie van VROM. (1983). *Structuurschets Stedelijke Gebieden 1983*. Den Haag: Staatsuitgeverij. | p. 72, p. 73 |
| 1988 | – Ministerie van V&W. (1988). *Tweede Structuurschema Verkeer en Vervoer. Nota Verkeer en Vervoer. Deel I De Strategie*. Den Haag: SDU uitgeverij. | p. 31 |
| | – Ministerie van VROM. (1988). *Vierde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening: Op Weg naar 2015. Deel d: Regeringsbeslissing* [Fourth Report on Spatial Planning]. Den Haag: SDU uitgeverij. | p. 22, p. 26, p. 28, p. 36, p. 133, p. 142, p. 172 |
| 1993 | – Ministerie van VROM. (1993). *Vierde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening Extra. Deel 4: Planologische Kernbeslissing Nationaal Ruimtelijk Beleid* [Fourth Report on Spatial Planning Extra]. Den Haag: Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer (VROM). | p. 65 |
| 1994 | – Salet, W. G. M. (1994). *Om Recht en Staat: Een Sociologische Verkenning van Sociale, Politieke en Rechtsbetrekkingen* [About Law and State: A Sociological Investigation of Social, Political and Juridical Matters]: WRR. | |
| 1996 | – Ministeries van OCW, VROM, LNV, & V&W. (1996). *De Architectuur van de Ruimte. Nota over het Architectuurbeleid 1997-2000*. Den Haag: Ministeries van Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschappen (OCW), Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer (VROM), Landbouw Natuurbeheer en Visserij (LNV) en Verkeer en Waterstaat (V&W). | |
| 1998 | – Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (WRR). (1998). *Ruimtelijke Ontwikkelingspolitiek*. Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers. | |
| 1999 | – Ministeries van OCW, LNV, VROM, & V&W. (1999). *Nota Belvedere. Beleidsnota over de Relatie Cultuurhistorie en Ruimtelijke Inrichting*. Den Haag: VNG uitgeverij. | |
| 2000 | – Ministeries van OCW, VROM, V&W, & LNV. (2000). *Ontwerpen aan Nederland. Architectuurbeleid 2001-2004*. Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers. | |
| | – Werkgroep Vijfde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening. (2000). *Notie van Ruimte: Op Weg naar de Vijfde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening. Verslag bij het Onderzoek*. Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers. | |
| 2001 | – SER. (2001). *Vijfde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening. Advies over de Vijfde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening 2000/2020*. Den Haag. | |
| | – Ministerie van VROM, & Rijksplanologische Dienst. (2001). *Ruimte Maken, Ruimte Delen: Vijfde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening 2000/2020. Vastgesteld door de Ministerraad op 15 December 2000*. Den Haag: Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer (VROM). | p. 31, p. 39, p. 47, p. 111, p. 115, p. 147, p. 177, p. 189, p. 229, p. 230, p. 278 |

TABLE APP.B.1 List of national policy documents considered in the analyses

| Year | Document name | Maps |
|---|---|---|
| 2002 | – Ministerie van VROM, & Rijksplanologische Dienst. (2002). *Ruimte Maken, Ruimte Delen. Vijfde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening 2000/2020. PKB Deel 3, Kabinetsstandpunt.* Den Haag: Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer (VROM). | p. 10, p. 40, p. 48, p. 62, p. 78, p. 118 |
| 2003 | – Ministerie van VROM. (2003). *Ontwerpatelier Deltametropool* [Design Studio Delta Metropolis]. Den Haag: Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer (VROM). | |
| 2004 | – Ministerie van EZ. (2004). *Pieken in de Delta. Gebiedsgerichte Economische Perspectieven.* Den Haag: Ministerie van Economische Zaken (EZ). | p. 10, p.30, p. 52, p. 56, p. 60, p.62, p. 66 |
| | – Ministeries van V&W, & VROM. (2004). *Nota Mobiliteit: Naar een Betrouwbare en Voorspelbare Bereikbaarheid.* Den Haag: Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat (V&W) en Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer (VROM). | p. 33, p. 38, p. 53, p. 54, p. 60 |
| | – Ministeries van VROM, LNV, V&W, & EZ. (2004). *Nota Ruimte. Vastgesteld in de Ministerraad d.d. 23 april 2004.* Den Haag: Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer (VROM). | |
| 2005 | – Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal. (2005). *Geïntegreerd Beleidsdebat over de Ruimtelijk-economische Ontwikkeling in Nederland: Motie van het Lid Lemstra C.S..* Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers. | |
| | – Ministeries van OCW, VROM, LNV, V&W, EZ, Def, & BZ. (2005). *Actieprogramma Ruimte en Cultuur. Architectuur- en Belvederebeleid 2005-2008.* Den Haag: Ministeries van Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschappen (OCW), Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer (VROM), Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Visserij (LNV), Verkeer en Waterstaat (V&W), Economische Zaken (EZ), Defensie (Def) en Buitenlandse Zaken (BZ). | |
| | – Ministeries van V&W, & VROM. (2005). *Uitvoeringsagenda van Nota naar Mobiliteit.* Den Haag: Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat (V&W) en Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer (VROM). | |
| | – Ministeries van VROM, LNV, V&W, & EZ. (2005). *Nota Ruimte, Deel 3A: Aangepast Kabinetsstandpunt naar Aanleiding van Behandeling in de Tweede Kamer.* Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers. | p. 18, p. 24, p.39, p. 55, p. 66, p. 72, p. 156 |

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**TABLE APP.B.1** List of national policy documents considered in the analyses

| Year | Document name | Maps |
|---|---|---|
| 2012 | – College van Rijksadviseurs (CRa). (2012). *De Techniek van het Verbinden.* Agenda 2012-2016 - Werkprogramma 2013. Den Haag: College van Rijksadviseurs. | |
| | – Ministerie van I&M. (2012). *Structuurvisie Infrastructuur en Ruimte: Nederland Concurrerend, Bereikbaar, Leefbaar en Veilig* [National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning]. Den Haag: Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu (I&M). | p. 14, p. 32, p. 34, p. 39, p.42, p. 46, p.54, p. 56, p. 64-65, p. 70-71, p. 72, p. 74-75, |
| | – Ministeries van I&M, OCW, BZK, EZ, & Def. (2012). *Werken aan Ontwerpkracht. Actieagenda Architectuur en Ruimtelijk Ontwerp 2013-2016* [Working on the Power of Design. Action Agenda Architecture and Spatial Design 2013-2016]. Den Haag: Ministeries van Infrastructuur en Milieu (I&M), Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschap (OCW), Binnenlandse Zaken en Koningsrelaties (BZK), Economische Zaken (EZ) en Defensie (Def). | |
| | – Ministerie van I&M. (2012). *MIRT Projectenboek 2013*. The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers. | |
| | – PBL. (2012). *Ex-durante Evaluatie Wet Ruimtelijke Ordening: Tweede Rapportage* [Ex-durante Evaluation of the New Spatial Planning Act, Second Report]. Den Haag: Uitgeverij Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (PBL). | |
| | – Stegmeijer, E., Kloosterman, R., & Lupi, T. (2012). *Bouwen op een Sterk Fundament: Een Tussenevaluatie van het Architectuurbeleid* [Building upon a Strong Basis: Intermediate Assessment Architecture Policy]. Den Haag: N. I. P. 31. | |
| 2013 | – Ministerie van I&M. (2013). *Making Projects.* Den Haag: Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu (I&M). <br>– Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie. (2013). *Beleidsplan 2013/2016.* available online at http://stimuleringsfonds.nl/, accessed 01.01.2016. | |
| 2014 | – OECD. (2014). *Territorial Reviews: Netherlands 2014*. Paris: OECD Publishing. | |
| 2016 | – PBL. (2016). *Verkenning Omgevingsopgaven voor de Nationale Omgevingsvisie.* Den Haag: Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (PBL). | |
| 2017 | – Ministerie van I&M. (2017). *De Opgaven voor de Nationale Omgevingsvisie [*Tasks for the National Environmental Planning Strategy]. Den Haag: Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu (I&M). | |
| | – Ministeries van I&M, EZ, & BZK. (2017). *MIRT Overzicht 2018.* Den Haag: Ministerie van I&M. | |

# Reflecting on regional design

As noted in Chapter 2, under the sub-header Process of theory formation, the building of propositions requires continuous reflection during theory formation. During this dissertation a set of opportunities have been created to discuss regional-design approaches to planning with scholars and practitioners. Table 2.2, taken up in Chapter 2, lists these opportunities in brief. Below discussions led during events are summarised. Texts are adopted from the respective programmes of events. All texts are authored or co-authored by the author of this thesis. In case documentation of discussions is available, these are referenced below.

## Round Table at the AESOP conference 2014: Emerging regional design in an era of co-governance and co-evolution

*10th July 2014, University of Utrecht, Utrecht, the Netherlands*

Many recent planning reforms across the world have led to shifts in planning regimes, often seeking to balance statutory plan-led with development-led approaches. The wish to simultaneously create and respond to future development opportunities has inspired new planning modes with normative and persuasive agenda-setting approaches, often involving many actors. In various countries, including the Netherlands, regional design, the imagination of spatial metaphors and the 'art' of making spatial representations, has emerged as a powerful tool in capacity- and consensus building for regional development. On occasion of the 2014 AESOP conference this practice will be discussed in a round table session. The central question will be concerned about the role that regional design has in planning.

Investigations of practices that resemble regional design in various European countries indicate that they share characteristics. Regional design takes place in a multi-actor setting and aims at the allocation of institutional capacity for development. Analyses however also indicate that regional design is sensitive towards specific institutional settings and planning systems. Dutch regional design

cases have, for instance, been strongly influenced by the flexibility of indicative planning frameworks and the room for interpretation that governments provide through these. A brief comparison of practices in various countries makes also apparent that imaginations of possible futures may have different orientations. They may seek for capacity, depending on planning systems and cultures, in professional, political and/or administrative domains.

The organisers of the round table invite scholars from various regional-metropolitan settings with an interest in planning, design, visualisation and governance. The main aim of the round table is to compare experiences and knowledge on emerging regional design practices in countries and to reflect on the performance of such approaches under differing planning regimes. More broadly the discussion seeks to enhance attention to a practice that often evolves in the shadow of formal planning but does, through rendering distinct development desirable, influence important planning decisions nevertheless.

## Mapping the city - A seminar on comparative city analysis and mapping

*29 October 2014, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (AMS) – Royal Institute of the Tropes (KIT), Amsterdam, the Netherlands*

The Van Eesteren-Fluck & Van Lohuizen Foundation (EFL), the Archives of the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta) at the ETH Zürich and the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (AMS) are organising a seminar on the mapping of cities on 29th of October 2014 in Amsterdam. The seminar will be held on occasion of the publication 'Atlas of the Functional City. CIAM 4 and Comparative Urban Analysis', which presents results of research into the comparative city analysis and maps exhibited at the fourth CIAM congress in 1933. The seminar Mapping the City invites scholars and speakers with an expertise in both, former and contemporary approaches to the imagination, representation and visualization of cities. Its intention is to provide a platform for an exchange of knowledge and critical reflection on contemporary mapping practices.

When a group of European architects and planners prepared for the CIAM congress in 1933 they felt that their field of expertise requires new definition. In search for responses to European-wide tendencies in social and economic policies and paradigmatic technological change they engaged in a common city analysis. Guided by shared ideas about spatial organisation, they mapped a broad range of cities and city regions, with the aim to raise attention for comparable challenges that political

and technological transformations produced across Europe. As the Atlas of the Functional City shows, they delivered not only a compilation of beautiful maps of 34 European and colonial cities in 18 countries but also, as authors argue, a new and influential approach to planning.

Essays included in the Atlas of The Functional City examine the CIAM 's working methods: they investigate the ideological aspects incorporated in maps, portray thematic mapping as an analytical tool, point at problems of abstraction, selection and interpretation in modernist mapping, analyse the visual language of the CIAM 4 maps and examine differences in the creation and use of maps under differing institutional circumstances in countries. In conjunction the research shows that it was not 'big data', detailed geographic information about specificities and evolutionary tendencies in distinct cities, which turned their operation into a success. Instead the mapping operation became influential through a purposeful reduction of issues, through abstractions that left room for interpretation and discretion, through a strategic combination of references to analytical evidence, political values and administrative practices and through multiple associations of visualizations with emerging international cultural practices, evoked through a carefully constructed graphic language.

Which rationalities informed the production and use of maps in 1933? What were, in retrospect, the benefits and pitfalls of the comparative city analysis developed at the fourth CIAM congress? And how do these insights relate to insights into contemporary mapping practices? During the seminar these broader questions will be discussed under three guiding themes, which build up on the observation of three tendencies that influence the imagination, representation and visualization of cities today, notably (1) the opening up of sources of information and an associated a shift from government to governance in planning (2) a growing importance of scale dynamics in regional and supra-regional spatial development and their influence on the design of cities and (3) the emergence of new communication technologies and media, resulting in a new language to exchange knowledge and ideas about the organization of cities and regions. Results of discussions will be published on several fora, with the purpose to enhance critical reflections on the mapping of cities.

Documentation of results: BALZ, V. E. 2014. Notes on Mapping the City. *Documentation of the seminar 'Mapping the City' convened on 29 October 2014 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.* Amsterdam: Van Eesteren-Fluck & Van Lohuizen Foundation (EFL).

## Shaping Regional Futures: Mapping, Designing, Transforming!

*14th-15th October 2015, Oskar van Miller Forum, Munich, Germany*

The aim of the conference Shaping Regional Futures is to investigate the performance of regional design: the way how the imagination and envisioning of spatial futures of regions enhances institutional capacities for planning on regional and supra-regional levels of scale. In numerous European regions planning professionals and politicians experiment with regional design approaches to challenge limitations that statutory planning systems pose. Practices in these regions vary highly. In other European regions regional design hasn't been applied yet – but actors there curiously observe the efforts taken elsewhere. Despite the broad interest in practices, few lessons have been drawn from experiments. Knowledge about how such shaping of regional futures contributes to organizational, political and societal support for the implementation of strategic development projects and policies with a scale and scope larger than that of single cities is fragmented and rarely shared across regions.

The conference 'Shaping Regional Futures' is a joint initiative of the Delft University of Technology and the Munich University of Technology. It is an occasion to compare different regional design strategies in European regions, to discuss dimensions of these practices and to clarify their performance. The conference builds up upon on-going research and teaching activities at universities and their respective networks. It invites eminent scholars and practitioners from the fields of planning and urban/regional design and from several European regions. The conference provides a platform for dialogue between planning research and practice and stimulates learning processes across European regions.

The conference is organized in three sessions. The first session investigates a conceptual framework to identify the performance of regional design. The second session discusses academic notions on regional design and the challenges faced in teaching complex issues related to the regional scale. During the third and last session, case studies of regional design practices in Europe are presented by experts engaged in these practices. This session is used to discuss the relevance of regional design. The concluding plenary session gives room for the comparison of the lessons learnt from each of the three case studies. The conference closes with a public panel discussion on the spatial future of the Munich Metropolitan Region including key players from politics as well as public administration.

Documentation of results: FÖRSTER, A., BALZ, V., THIERSTEIN, A. & ZONNEVELD, W. 2016. The conference 'Shaping Regional Futures: Mapping, Designing, Transforming!' A documentation. Munich/Delft.

## Shaping Regional Futures: Design and Visioning in Governance Rescaling

*18th-19th May 2017, Medici Riccardi Palace, Florence, Italy*

The conference Shaping Regional Futures: Designing and Visioning in Governance Rescaling discusses the role of regional design and visioning in the formation of regional territorial governance. The conference aims at an increased understanding of how practices, engaged with the imagination of possible futures, support the creation of institutional capacity for strategic spatial planning at regional scales.

Governance rescaling in spatial planning is about shifts in organisational and institutional structures that are the result of a search for efficiency, effectiveness and legitimation in planning. Such processes of rescaling take place in many European countries and find different expression: the amalgamation of municipalities, the definition of new urban/metropolitan authorities and the emergence of new commitments to co-operate in planning, for instance. Rescaling of governance has generated considerable debate, particularly in metropolitan regions, leading to a wide set of questions. Who is best equipped for regional planning? How can planning actions across administrative boundaries be motivated? How can they be legitimated?

Regional design concerns the imagination of spatial solutions for problems in particular regions and the use of these visions, even in the form of metaphors, for planning purposes. Both processes are deeply engaged with specific spatial environments and their distinct geographies. Both processes have territorial implications. They challenge formal planning by leading to the definition and re-definition of boundaries, often around non-statutory areas.

Focus of the conference Shaping Regional Futures is the role of designing and visioning in processes of governance rescaling. It investigates two prepositions: 1) by recognising and understanding spatial dynamics within metropolitan regions, regional design and visioning, connecting administrative boundaries; 2) the imagination of possible spatial futures through regional design and visioning contributes to shared planning agendas which seek connect broader planning objectives with concrete spatial interventions.

Discussion around these two prepositions is expected to lead to a more profound understanding of how design, visioning and governance rescaling are interrelated. Practices of regional design and visioning differ across European regions depending on planning cultures and planning systems as well as shared histories of regional governance and capacity building. This is why the conference seeks a comparative perspective: a variety of governance rescaling processes and of design and visioning practices are discussed.

Documentation of results: LINGUA, V. & BALZ, V. E. 2019. *Shaping Regional Futures: Designing and Visioning in Governance Rescaling*, Springer International Publishing (forthcoming).

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# About the author

I studied Architecture at the Technical University in Berlin, Germany, and the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, USA. My studies in the United States were supported by grants from the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, the United States Information Agency, and the Illinois Institute of Technology. My graduation thesis, which tested a particular industrial design-support computer programme on its usefulness for urban design, was judged excellent.

Between 1999 and 2005 I was employed at Maxwan Architects and Urbanists, and Crimson architectural historians, Rotterdam, the Netherlands. As an urbanist and senior urbanist at these firms I participated in and led urbanism projects of various levels of scale in several European countries. From 2005 to 2008 I was Chief Designer at Atelier Zuidvleugel (South Wing Studio), a publicly funded policy institute concerned with regional planning and design in the southern part of the Dutch Randstad region. In this position I became acquainted with developing and carrying out innovative regional-design strategies in complex multi-actor governance settings. Projects I initiated and led have had as their main concern transit-oriented development and the integration of socio-economic and spatial development in the region. I am the principal author of a number of books that document these projects, as well as co-author of a book that reviews South Wing Studio's regional design practice.

Since 2009 I have been an assistant professor and teacher at the Department of Urbanism, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology. The main focus of my research is on the use and performance of regional design-led approaches in planning decision-making. My work on this topic has been published in international peer-reviewed journals and academic books. As a research team leader I have initiated conference sessions and co-organized international conferences dedicated to the Department's core interest in regional design. My engagement has contributed to the building up of an international network of researchers with interest and expertise in this emerging theme. In addition to regional design, I also have expertise on spatial planning, Dutch national planning, regional policy, territorial governance, and European Cohesion Policy. I have built up and applied this knowledge during my participation in a broad range of publicly funded research projects. Besides participating as a researcher and national expert in such projects, I have contributed to the acquisition of research grants

from, among others, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), and acquired funds for my own research projects. As a teacher I am involved in the Bachelor and Master of Architecture, Urbanism, and Building Sciences programmes. Besides being a course coordinator, lecturer, design tutor, and mentor on individual courses, I am also co-coordinator of the third quarter of the MSc Urbanism track, entitled 'Spatial Strategies for the Global Metropolis', and studio coordinator of the MSc Urbanism graduation studio 'Planning Complex Cities'.

Since 2008 I have had my own firm. As an independent researcher and designer I provide consultancy on regional spatial planning and design. I frequently co-operate with design firms, in particular OOZE architects, Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

# Regional Design

Discretionary Approaches to Planning in the Netherlands

## Verena Balz

This thesis elaborates on the role and position of regional design in spatial planning. Building upon the argument that design in this realm aims to improve planning guidance by judging its implications for particular situations, the thesis develops an analytical framework for an enhanced understanding of how design both influences, and is influenced by, prevailing planning rationales. The analytical framework is applied to a set of regional design initiatives that evolved in the context of Dutch national plans between 1988 and 2012. Significantly, the analysis reveals aspects of spatial planning frameworks that shape the performances of design practice, of particular importance being the flexibility of planning frameworks and the involvement of actors in initiating, conducting and judging design. In theoretical terms, the thesis contributes to the integration of planning and design theory. The societal relevance of this dissertation evolves against the background of an increasing use of regional design-led practices in Dutch spatial planning since the mid-1980s.

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