



The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Urban Studies Programme
Department of Geography and Resource Management

STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING: A DIALOGUE

by Mee Kam Ng and Louis Albrechts

16 May 2019 (Thursday)

4:30pm - 6:30pm

Rm 221, Wong Foo Yuan Building, CUHK

This paper compares and contrasts the vision and implementation of strategic spatial planning in Hong Kong, Singapore and Shenzhen. It seems that the vision of all three cities are identified by the government through a more or less 'black-box' operation, with varying degree of research support. Planning options and policy interventions in Shenzhen have been much more influenced by higher level directions, as well as a local context that offers a more flexible environment to trial and error. Influence exerted by higher level government is increasingly felt in Hong Kong though the bureaucracy seems to prefer business-as-usual 'market play' to strategic planning. The situation in Singapore is different because the city-state has developed a joint-up government culture that facilitates plan formulation and implementation. Examination of the three cities' strategic spatial plans shows that Hong Kong tends to be less prepared in terms of combating climate change and tackling socio-economic disparity; whereas Shenzhen has been very active in reinventing itself as China's ecological low carbon city though it has been rather silent on reducing socio-economic polarisation. Singapore through its focus on long-term strategic spatial planning and practical research culture, seems to be most ready to prepare its citizens to face an uncertain future.

“Challenges, Pitfalls and Opportunities in and for Strategic (spatial?) Planning”

Louis Albrechts

There is growing evidence that the problems, challenges and opportunities that our cities, city-regions and regions are facing cannot be tackled adequately by traditional spatial planning. One of the key challenges for planning in this respect is to analyze critically what type of planning is suited as an approach to deal -in an innovative/emancipatory and transformative way- with the problems and challenges developing and developed societies are facing. An expanding literature and an increasing number of practices all over the world seem to suggest that strategic spatial planning may be looked upon as a possible approach. But at the same time critical comments and reactions are raised on the theory and the practices of strategic spatial planning.

As in traditional planning, there are different traditions of strategic planning and there is no one way or best way to do strategic planning. I aim to provide some building blocks for an imaginative and inclusive strategic spatial planning. Crucial concepts in this respect are the need for transformative practices, co-production as a mobilizing practice of collective political organization and the need to revolve around the construction of visions that create real possibilities for different futures.

Free Admission

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Programme

4:30 - 4:45pm Registration and Reception

4:45 - 6:30pm A Dialogue

About the speakers

Louis Albrechts is professor emeritus of strategic spatial planning at the University of Leuven, Belgium. He was visiting professor to different parts of the world. He was the founder and editor of *European Planning Studies*, editorial board member of several international journals and chair of the first and second World Planning Schools Congresses. He was president of the Association of European School of Planning and Chair of the Advisory Board of the Global Research Network on Human Settlements (UN-Habitat HS-Net). His current research focuses on the practice and nature of strategic spatial planning, diversity and creativity in planning, planning as a process of coproduction and bridging the gap between planning and implementation. He has published 19 books, 89 chapters in books and 62 articles in international peer reviewed journals and in multiple languages. He was in charge of some 150 research projects financed by local, regional, national and international institutions. He was responsible for the Strategic Plan Flanders (area of 6 million inhabitants) and served as a scientific coordinator of the Transport Plan for the same area, besides involving in the formulation of provincial strategic plans, transborder planning and local strategic plans.

Mee Kam Ng is Vice-chairman of the Department of Geography and Resource Management, the Director of the Urban Studies Programme, Associate Director of the Institute of Future Cities, the Hong Kong Institute of Asian Pacific Studies and the Yunus Social Business Centre at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, a fellow of the Hong Kong Institute of Planners and an academic advisor of the Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design. She was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in the United Kingdom in 2016. She has completed over 30 research projects and published widely on planning, governance and sustainability issues in Pacific Asia. Her publications have earned her six Hong Kong Institute of Planners' Awards and the 2015 Association of European Schools of Planning Best Published Paper Award. She has been consultant to the United Nations, the European Union and the Municipal Government of Shenzhen. She is an associate editor of *Planning Theory and Practice* as well as editorial board member of five key planning related journals in the field. The Urban Studies Programme she directed is an Associate Member of the UN-Habitat's World Urban Campaign, promoting the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

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