

# Catching Reality in Flight for Strategic Planning

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# Introduction (1)

- **„Catching reality in flight“**
  - „The driving assumption behind process thinking is that social reality is not a steady state. It is a dynamic process. It occurs rather than merely exists...Human conduct is perpetually in a process of becoming. The overriding aim of the process analyst is to catch this reality in flight.“ (Pettigrew 1997, p. 338)
- **„Catch me if you can...“**
  - „No sooner do people make some sense of the world than that sense is out of date.“ (Weick 2001, p. 356)

# Introduction (2)

- **Aim of the presentation**

- To argue that more „true“ process studies in planning research could be beneficial
- Present outline (!) of a research process model for strategic planning

- **Structure of the presentation**

- Why Do Process Studies for Strategic Planning?
- How to Do Process Studies?
- The example of REGKLAM
- Conclusions

# Why do Process Studies? (1)

## ■ **Strategic Planning**

- ... is distinct from strategic planning a la Ansoff
- Process is crucial to organize and analyze planning. But: There are no simple process recipes

## ■ **Strategic Spatial Planning**

- Some consensus: vision-driven, action-oriented, relational, ...
- Albrechts (2004): strategic planning considers diverse rationalities
- Healey (2007, p. 21): planning episodes, governance processes, and governance cultures

# Why do process studies? (2)

## ■ **Tension between**

- *Organizing* a planning episode for outcomes of practical relevance
- *Analyzing* a planning episode for outcomes in accordance with standards of scientific quality

## ■ **Different ways for dealing with tensions**

- Accept tension (good, but not enough)
- Temporal separation (one after the other; as a consequence, *process studies are needed*)
- „Spatial“ separation (multi-level solution)
- New synthesizing concept (nice, but difficult to achieve)

# Why do process studies? (3)

## ■ Variance studies

- Fixed entities with varying attributes
- Generality depends on uniformity across contexts
- Time ordering among independent variables is immaterial
- Emphasis on immediate causation
- Attributes have a single meaning over time

## ■ Process studies

- Entities participate in events...
- Generality depends on versatility across cases
- Time ordering of events is critical
- Explanations are layered ...
- Meaning changes

Source: after Van de Ven 2007, p. 150

# How to Do Process Studies? (1)

- **Some sources of inspiration and key messages**
  - „Theory with practice“ (Balducci & Bertolini 2007)
    - Avoid overemphasizing consensus or distance between practitioners and researchers; organize for innovation
  - „Engaged scholarship“ (Van de Ven 2007):
    - Balance problem formulation, theory, models, methods, and problem solving
  - Research process model for (comparative) case studies (Eisenhardt 1989)
    - Move from more open research to closure to formulate *new* strong theory
    - Combine qualitative and quantitative methods, multiple investigators with different roles

# How to Do Process Studies? (2)

- **Research phase model** – outline for a large trans-disciplinary research project with the challenge to broaden the initial agenda (single case study) to find innovative solutions for regional development (Hutter et al. 2009)
  - Phase I „Joint problem orientation and (re-) building the agenda“
  - Phase II „Theory-, model-, and method-driven research“
  - Phase III „Synthesis and problem solving“

# How to Do Process Studies? (3)

- **Phase I „(Re-)Building the Agenda“**
  - Emphasis on *organizing* planning; leadership, memory and teams are crucial for „catching reality in flight“ in case of a shifting, unstable agenda
  - Identify (possibly) important concepts and models; relations between episode and processes
  - Reflect about governance cultures
- **Phase II „Theory, Models, and Methods“**
  - Parallel processes of organizing and analyzing retrospectively and prospectively
  - Theory-, model- and method driven process research (e.g, Langley 1999, Van de Ven 2007)
  - Diverse methods for analysis of cultures

# How to Do Process Studies? (4)

## ■ **Phase III „Problem solving“**

- Emphasis on retrospective analysis
- Systematic comparison with (different) literatures
- Discussions of practitioners and researchers in informal and formal contexts

## ■ **Some open questions**

- Specific form of qualitative and quantitative methods in Phase II (e.g., form of interviews)
- Comparative analysis of „sub-units“ (Yin 2003)
- Find ways to enhance cross-case analysis (if possible because of research conditions)

# An example - REGKLAM (1)

- **Large trans-disciplinary project about climate change adaptation in urban region**
  - **REGKLAM** = Developing and Testing an Integrated Regional Climate Change Adaptation Program for the Region of Dresden
  - Budget: Approximately 11 Mio. EUR
  - Funded by Federal Government
  - Duration: 2008-2013
  - Work about strategic planning in REGKLAM is in Phase I; planning will face the challenge to change to Phase II (planned structural change)



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Modellregion Dresden

## REGKLAM - Modellregion Dresden

Daten: ATKIS VG250 © BKG 2008  
GISCO 2005, ESRI ArcMap 2005,  
GfK Macon 2003  
Karte: A. Olfert, S. Witschas (IOER)  
April 2009



# An example – REGKLAM (3)

## ■ **Project partners**

- IÖR – Leibniz Institut für ökologische Raumentwicklung
- TU Dresden- z. B. BWL, Meteorologie, Baukonstruktion
- TU Bergakademie Freiberg (TU BAF)
- IfT – Leibniz-Institut für Troposphärenforschung
- LHD – Landeshauptstadt Dresden
- DGFZ – Dresdner Grundwasserforschungszentrum
- SEDD – Stadtentwässerung Dresden GmbH

## ■ **Numerous associated partners**

- z. B. SMI, SMUL, RPV OE/OE
- z. B. IHK Dresden, LfULG, LTV
- Business organizations, ...

# An example – REGKLAM (4)

- **Overall structure: Modules and Sub-modules**
  - Module 1: IRCAP [IÖR]
  - Module 2: Scenarios [TUD]
  - Module 3: Options for Adaptation [TU BAF]
    - Urban structures [TUD]
    - Water systems [TUD]
    - Land use (agriculture, forestry) [TUD]
  - Module 4: Project management [IÖR]
  - Regional Co-ordination Office [LHD]
  - Advisory board

# An example - REGKLAM (5)

- **Integrated Regional Climate Change Adaptation Program (IRCAP)**
- Informal planning instrument (1st Draft October 2010)
- Part I Framework
  - „Leitbild“ for climate change adaptation
  - Political strategy, implementation issues, institutions
- Part II Strategic issues
  - Urban structures and form (+ green/open spaces)
  - Issues related to water systems
  - Biodiversity and nature conservation
  - Risks and opportunities for economic development (including agriculture, forestry)

# An example - REGKLAM (6)

- **Organizing strategic planning (in Phase I)**
  - Assumption: high „structural and relational embeddedness“ (Jones & Lichtenstein 2008)
  - State of work (07/2008-07/2009)
    - Inter-disciplinary IRCAP-planning-team
    - Co-ordination office crucial for continuous communication
    - Informal co-operation at the level of single projects
    - Informal network development
    - Working groups of practitioners and researchers
    - Different workshops (e.g., „IRCAP-Workshops“)
    - Regional Forum No. 1: 200 participants, but only few politicians
  - Organizing enables project partners to broaden the initial agenda of REGKLAM

# An example - REGKLAM (7)

- **Analyzing strategic planning (in Phase I)**
  - Identify (possibly) important concepts and models for analyzing relations between episode and processes, e.g.,
    - „Temporal embeddedness“ (Jones & Lichtenstein 2008) as one key learning problem of strategic planning that is tailored to context and existing planning instruments in the region
    - „Political strategy“ (Tils 2008) to identify ways of bridging arenas of planning and politics for knowledge transfer and exchange
  - Preparing for change to Phase II
    - Continuity in communication between practice and science
    - Discontinuity in research work (more methods, models,...)

# Conclusions

- **Process studies are important** for considering how strategic planning (*as process*) develops and influences governance processes
- Large trans-disciplinary projects like REGKLAM are an **opportunity** to realize process studies for strategic planning (sufficient resources, continuous communication with practice, ...)
- However, such projects may also produce only modest results due partly to management problems (e.g., lack of common orientation) and lack of scientific discipline; considering a **research phase model** might help here (for an alternative see Huxham & Vangen 2005)

# Store

# Healey 2007, S. 21

- Three levels of governance performance
  - Specific episodes:
    - Actors (roles, strategies, interests)
    - Arenas (institutional sites)
  - Governance processes:
    - Networks and coalitions
    - Discourses and practices
  - Governance cultures:
    - Range of accepted modes of governance
    - Range of embedded cultural values
    - Formal and informal processes of critique through which governing processes are rendered legitimate

# Jones & Lichtenstein 2008, S. 236ff.

- Temporal embeddedness „refers to the time-oriented markers that ... decision-makers use to demarcate and organize their activities“
  - Chronological pacing
    - e.g., deadlines, contracts
  - Event-based pacing
    - e.g., milestones
  - Entrainment-based pacing
    - e.g., place-specific pacing in regional networks