

ID 117 | FROM DIVERSITY AND HYBRIDITY TO EQUALITY AND UNIFORMITY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL PLANNING STRATEGIES, RPS, IN NORWAY

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ABSTRACT: This paper is built on institutional theory and strategic planning theory, in order to grasp the two main questions: (1) How is the Regional Planning Strategy (RPS) as a new tool in the Planning and Building Act (PBA) understood and implemented in practice, and consequently how is this implementation to be understood as an institutional change of the regional planning system? (2) How is the strategic orientation understood and implemented? Strategic regional planning is institutionalized into the Norwegian planning system in a new two-step model: (a) regional planning strategy (RPS) and (b) various types of regional (strategic) planning tailored to each individual regional challenge. The basis for our analysis is a study of the implementation of the RPS in all Norwegian counties. We find that the translation, contextualization and re-contextualization of the PBA regarding how to implement the RPS is clearly diverse in 2011/12, the first time they make such documents. Even a hierarchical mode of implementation of a new element in the PBA seems to enjoy great freedom in terms of translation and re-contextualization between tiers. The implementation praxis of both central and regional government level contributes to the hybridity of the planning system by (a) the already established side-by side logics of negotiated policy development in a networked governance system and a planning authority and government logic of decision-making, and (b) by the main re-contextualization of the RPS from a planning strategy to a plan. However, the second time, in the beginning of the next election period, the variation has disappeared. The professional and political ambition or competence to oppose, to choose their own way to make RPS, seems to have disappeared.

1 INTRODUCTION

The main goals for, and the intentions behind, inserting a new tool, the Regional Planning Strategies (RPS) into the regional planning system was to make the political priorities for regional planning more targeted, and increase regional planning's efficiency and flexibility (Miljøverndepartementet, 2007–2008). These were heavily debated issues within the former PBA and its practices (cf. Falleth and Johnsen, 1996; Higdem, 2001; Asmervik and Hagen, 2001; Vike, 1995; Røsnes, 2001). Additionally it was important to establish the principle that regional elected bodies must have responsibility for the development of the region. In short, "the planning strategy shall give an account of important regional development trends and challenges, assess long-term development potentials and determine which issues are to be addressed through further regional planning" (PBA 2008). Finally, the RPSs were understood as a better instrument for implementing the central state's policies and a tool for coordination between the major planning actors of the region (Miljøverndepartementet, 2004). The inspiration for the RPS came from Denmark, Norway's neighbor country – ref Ot prop nr. 32 2007–2008. However, the Norwegian system departs from the Danish by introducing planning strategy also on the regional level, and in a somewhat different manner than the municipal planning strategies in both countries. We have not been able to find literature that provides evidence that a similar tool at the regional level is provided for in a planning-law. Therefore, we may regard the Norwegian Regional Planning Strategy and the consequences for regional planning, as unique in an international context.

Figure 1 describes the new regional planning system from 2008. The RPS is a tool defined as a strategy of the planning activities, not a plan, and now the only mandatory element in the regional planning-system. The adoption box in the top right corner is now removed; the county council now finally adopts the RPS. The mandatory comprehensive county plan has been removed and replaced by deliberate regional planning related to vital challenges defined in the RPS. The idea is to give priority to planning by necessity rather than planning by duty. The RPS shall also contain an overview of how the prioritized planning challenges will be followed up. The RPS is to be prepared in close cooperation with the municipalities, the county governor, regional state and other state bodies. The county council may also invite other

organizations and institutions to participate in the preparations of the RPS. The King's approval implies a commitment from the central government to regional planning, which influences the aim of increased efficiency of regional planning. When the approval is given, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization (MLGM), in cooperation with the other ministries, has assessed that the RPS does not counteract the central Government's goals. Moreover, equally as important, the approval commits the central and the regional state bodies to the coming planning activities. This approval was removed before the second round, but all state bodies still have to participate in and be obliged to the RPS.

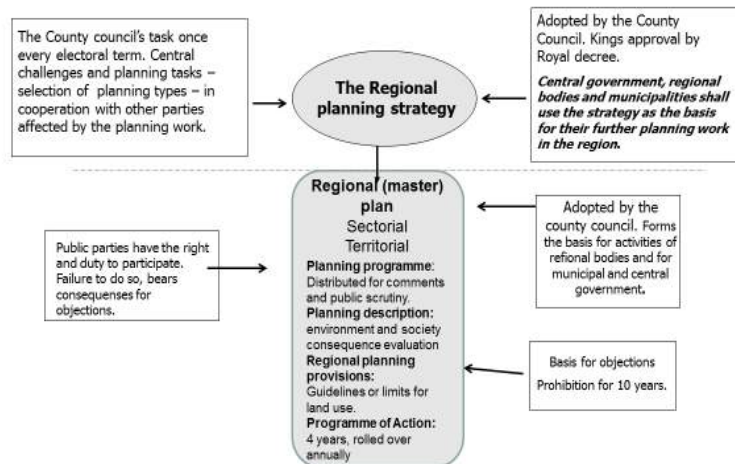


Figure 1: The Regional Planning System of Norway (Higdem, 2012).

The data is based on the study of these documents: (1) the PBA of 2008 with changes, preparatory work to the act and the guidance material to the RPS; (2) the all RPSs developed in 2011/12 and 2015/16, and the case papers following the discussion and the adoption of the RPS; (3) the “National Expectations of Local and Regional Planning” and the central state’s letters of final approval to each RPS. We have also done some interviews with planners. In order to classify the RPSs, we have developed a criteria-list. A completed list for the RPSs in all counties are enclosed.

2 IMPLEMENTATION BY CONTEXTUALIZATION AND TRANSLATION

Our analyze is built on institutional theory and strategic planning theory, in order to grasp the two main questions: (1) how is the RPS as a new tool understood and implemented in practice, and (2) how is the strategic orientation understood and implemented? As a point of departure, we use the concept of regional planning doctrine (Friedman & Weaver, 1979), where planning systems are composed of a certain type of procedural praxis as well as a certain type of substantial orientation. The PBA is overall attributed to sustainable development as a main ideological or value assumption – as to the regional substantial orientation of planning. The result of planning is consequently supposed to make societal development more sustainable. Secondly, the procedural orientation in the PBA is (a) oriented towards the regional (and local) elected councils as the planning authority and actors; and (b) the RPS is institutionalized in the PBA as a new procedural praxis where the focus is on the strategic perspective, in order to develop a more flexible and political focused regional planning. Since the RPS is to be co-developed between public actors at different tiers and levels, there clearly are situations of multi-level governance and networks in the RPS. It is also possible to include civil actors and interests in the development of the RPS, as a networked multi-actor system, addressed by both planning and institutional scholars (cf. Healey, 1998; Sagalyn, 2007; Bevir et al., 2003; Rhodes, 1991; Sørensen and Torfing, 2007). As such, we initially argue that the planning-system is a hybrid system comprising different, but side-by-side logics of steering and directing (Mahony and Thelen, 2010).

Institutionalizing a new regional planning model in the PBA as a new praxis of the regional and local planning authorities, is clearly a top-down hierarchical process. In Norway, the first interpretation stage is derived from the Danish model of municipal planning strategies by reforming it to the concept of RPS, as a “master version” (Røvik, 1998). In this top-down chain of translation within a hierarchical structure, there is

presumably limited freedom of translation. There will be room for local adjustments, according to Røvik, but the central government (in this case) may develop mechanisms to control the implementation. The chain of interpretation will develop sequentially as a stimulus-response situation, where the contextualization of a model will proceed in steps from one hierarchical level to another. The possible translators are multiple even in a hierarchical public order (Røvik, 1998; Hardy et al., 1998). Hence, ideas and discourses about how this new element of RPS is to be understood and handled in praxis will presumably take many forms, will be contextualized, and even re-contextualized (Røvik, 1998) into a new framework at several stages. The room for regional contextualization and interpretation will not least depend on the central government's management and control mechanisms, as the "National Expectations of Local and Regional Planning", and the final approval. In addition, the RPS does influence how the regional planning system is perceived and how it works in practice as a further regional institutionalization of a certain regional planning practice. This implies that we may find diverse forms of RPSs and hence forms that may add to the hybridity of the regional planning system of Norway.

3 STRETIC PLANNING (STP) – RETURNED IN A NEW VERSION, OR ALWAYS BEEN THERE?

The RPS itself is not a strategic plan, but we would argue that it is expedient to regard RPS as a partial strategic plan, STP. There is an increasing European interest in strategic spatial planning (cf. Faludi, 2000; Albrechts, 2004, 2012; Friedmann, 2004; Healey, 2007, 2009; Balducci et al. 2011; Gallent and Morphet, 2010; Albrechts and Balducci, 2013; Gunn and Hillier, 2013; Mäntysalo et al., 2015; Schmidt and Well [eds.], 2016); Van den Broeck, 2013). The STP has to some extent had a subordinate and fuzzy position, both as practice and in relation to other planning theories. A typical presentation of the praxis situation of STP in the EU countries is:

“Revival of Strategic Planning – In a number of western European countries strategic spatial planning evolved in the 1960s and 1970s towards a system of comprehensive planning—the integration of nearly everything—at different administrative levels. In the eighties when the neo-liberal paradigm replaced the Keynesian-Fordist one, and when public intervention retrenched in all domains (Martinelli, 2005), Europe witnessed a retreat from strategic spatial planning fueled not only by the neo-conservative disdain for planning, but also by postmodern skepticism, both of which tend to view progress as something which, if it happens, cannot be planned (Healey, 1997). Instead, the focus of urban and regional planning practices shifted to projects (Secchi, 1986; Motte, 1994; Rodriguez & Martinez, 2003), especially for the revival of rundown parts of cities and regions, and on land use regulations. (Albrechts, 2009).”

The same picture is confirmed when we turn to planning theory. Most of the classical books and journal articles, from the '70s up to the 2000s deal with strategic planning to a rather small extent (Hudson, 1979; Allmendinger, 2009). One striking example is that the planning theory “Bible” from 1996, Explorations in Planning Theory (Mandelbaum [ed.], 1996), consisting of over 500 pages with 25 different contributions of planning theory, has hardly given strategic planning any attention at all. Another example is that STP is not mentioned at all in the frequently used SITAR-model (Hudson, 1979). By the turn of the '90s, STP got a renaissance in practical planning. The EU launched many STP processes, such as the ESDP – European Spatial Development Perspective – document in 1999, a legally non-binding document forming a policy framework for all tiers of public administration with a planning responsibility. Now in the 2000s, the EU has developed, adopted and implemented a number of other strategic documents. There seems to be a general perception in planning research that we are about to see a new style of strategic planning; i.e. a combination of traditional and new approaches to planning of sustainable development, regional development and “new” regional politics based on the contemporary development of critical thinking and practical experiences in Europe (cf. Newmann, 2008; Albrechts, 2006a, 2006b; Healey, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Albrechts and Mandelbaum, 2001; Tewdwr-Jones, 2012; Xu & Yeh, 2011).

In Norway, however, the STP has been present without any interruption, both in the field of practice (Kommunal- og regionaldepartementet, 2001; Kommunal- og arbeidsdepartementet, 1997) and in the theory debates (Amdam and Veggeland, 1998, 2011). By 2015, the central government defined the counties' paramount task as the strategic and direction-setting function related to regional planning (Kommunal- og moderniseringsdepartementet, 2015). STP has since the '70s increasingly been used

synonymously with long term societal planning locally and regionally. In this sense, the Norwegian STP situation seems to be more similar to that of the United States, cf. Kaufman and Jacob's classic journal article from 1987 (Kaufman & Jacobs, 1987) where they claim that STP had been a part of planning education for decades, and that most practitioners trained as planners view the approach as "old wine in new bottles".

Even though strategic planning has not been given that much attention in the mainstream practice and theory debate, it is a concept that over the years has attracted many different definitions and interpretations. Strategic planning has, to a varying degree, been widely used in the business sector, and therefore continuously influenced the public sector (cf. Albrechts, 2001; Dimitrou and Thompson [eds.], 2007; Vasilevska and Vasic, 2009; Bryson, 1988). Luigi Mazza has therefore concluded, with the following sigh of the heart "If strategic planning is everything, maybe it is nothing" (Mazza, 2013). In our opinion, Patsy Healey's definition from 1997 assimilates in a good manner many of the definitions that abound in planning theory (Healey, 1997): "A social process through which a range of people in diverse institutional relations and positions come together to design plan-making processes and develop contents and strategies for the management of spatial change." An opportunity for "... building new ideas ... and about building processes that can carry them forward." Vasilevska and Vasic (2009) underlines that a new strategic planning will not represent a return to comprehensive planning, since the STP must contain priorities and strategic choices. This understanding of STP coincides with the Norwegian RPS concept. It expresses an ambition to renew the well-meaning comprehensive planning model to models more characterized by flexibility and ability to think and act politically and strategically in collaboration with others.

4 THREE ANALYTICAL ELEMENTS FOR ASSESSING RPS – FRAMING, STORYTELLING AND CO-PRODUCTION

When we in this paper use strategic planning theories in our RPS analysis, we do this by picking out two main elements of STP, namely framing and storytelling. These two elements contribute to different STP focuses, but also overlap; storytelling is not least an effective framing activity. The RPS is a tool of political direction setting within a networked governance perspective. It is therefore appropriate to link the concept of meta-governance (Sørensen and Torfing, 2005, 2007) to the understanding. The RPS and concept of strategic planning may add to the understanding of storytelling. Framing is also linked to the degree of the central government's ability or wish to direct the counties' limits of translation in the implementation process of the RPS, as described by Røvik (1998). When a problem is framed in such a way that a particular planning activity becomes the logical solution, this framing is a strategic activity. It draws up the mental map for planning, and enables particular policy issues to be managed (Dewulf et al., 2009).

We are facing many different framing processes within RPS. One main framing process is PBA, both the relevant sections and the guidance booklet on the RPS (Miljøverndepartementet, 2012). Another is the "National Expectations to Local and Regional Planning" (Miljøverndepartementet, 2011). The regional planning authorities also conduct their own framing processes by adding their own professional and political assessments and priorities into the RPS about what should be considered as the main regional development trends and vital challenges, long-term development potentials and goals, which issues are to be addressed through further regional planning and implementation. Thus, both national and regional planning authorities have explicit framing ambitions (Rein and Schön, 1993). This fact that planning practice reflects the context of power relations, as well as carrying power itself, is termed by Healey "embedded framing" (Healey, 1997). RPS, like strategy planning in general, revolves around inviting stakeholders to rewarding and stimulating dialogues about the present and the future of the region. Framing performs a narrative function, which is crucial for planning and policy (Jensen et al., 2013; Laws and Rein, 2003; Healey, 1997; Mäntysalo et al., 2015). All participants in the RPS-processes participate actively, though not always intentionally, in construction of specific frames. It is a goal for regional planning authorities through sense making, to draw up mental maps for planning, and enable particular policy issues to be managed (Dewulf et al., 2009). In this sense, framing can also have a mediating role, as it can build bridges between the numerous regional planning actors and their preferred actions (Laws and Rein, 2003). However, framing may also trigger conflicts; both RPS and STP are fundamentally political processes.

Throgmorton (1992:17) emphasizes that good planning is “... persuasive storytelling about the future, and that planners are future-oriented storytellers who write persuasive texts that other people read (construct and interpret) in diverse and often conflicting ways.” Storytelling is both a model of the way planning is done, and a model for the way planning could or should be done. Storytelling is an important aspect of everyday planning practice (Van Hulst 2012), whether intentional or not (Asmervik and Hagen, 2001). We choose to understand and analyze RPSs as storytelling – about the past, the present and the future, about vital challenges, who should participate in the planning process, and in what manner. Storytelling is a planning method that needs to be developed in praxis, through praxis (cf. Flyvbjerg, 1991; Hillier, 2002; Healey, 2009; Throgmorton 1992). Planning fundamentally revolves around the successful use of language – the oral, the written, the maps and images (Hellspong, 1992, 1995; Ramirez, 1995a, 1995b; Asmervik and Hagen, 2001).

Storytelling is closely linked to key planning concepts like dialogical planning, collaborative planning, and communicative planning (Healey, 1997; Forester, 1999; Sager, 2013; Harper and Stein, 2012). These concepts and related theories are obviously also relevant in the analysis of RPS. Patsy Healey (2006b:542) has introduced the concept relational complexity to focus on how complex and demanding dialogue and cooperation in strategic planning can be: “‘Relational complexity’ is therefore decidedly not ‘comprehensive’ in its approach. It needs to be highly selective, focusing on the distinctive histories and geographies of the relational dynamics of a particular place. It may recognize borders and cohesions, but also the tensions, exclusions and conflicts which these generate.” As long as RPS is a new procedural praxis characterized by multi-level governance and networked multi-actor system (Bevir et al., 2003; Veggeland, 2003; Higdem, 2015; Higdem and Sandkjær Hanssen, 2014), relational complexity appears to be a useful analytical concept, both for the storytelling, and hence also for RPS.

Another appropriate concept introduced into the strategic planning by (Albrechts, 2012) is coproduction. The term has been used for many years in different contexts and in different intellectual traditions, from coproduction in the delivery of services to coproduction as a political strategy (Mitlin, 2008). It underlines the importance of inviting citizens and grassroots organizations for a more substantive engagement (Le Galés, 2002; Higdem, 2014). It goes right to the core of both RPS that all public bodies and all community organizations both should and must participate and contribute to more innovative and transformative practices (Albrechts, 2006a).

5 RPS DOCUMENTS FIRST AND SECOND ROUND

The two main dimensions of how the counties have implemented the RPSs are (1) whether, or to what degree, the counties have complied with the PBA’s provisions of the RPS, and (2) whether, or to what degree, the counties have addressed, answered and complied with the National Expectations of the RPS. Table 1 shows the implementation status for the first round with RPS. The two dimensions (axes) constitute (1) the “master model” of how a RPS is to be understood and implemented – the procedural and model side, and (2) the substantial side, meaning the central governments expectations’ of what policy themes the RPS shall encompass and assess. In the scheme below, the two dimensions are the two axes that form the four-field table below (Table 1). Accordingly, the two axes make four possible adaptations when implementing the RPS. Complying with the law’s provisions are the law-abiding counties, whereas the disobedient deviate, or have vital shortcomings, from these. On the “National Expectation” axis, the loyal are counties that address, answer to, comply with national policy, and are loyal to it. The independent are those that contextualize the national policy expectations within their own regional context and frame of interpretation and translation. Consequently, four different types of adaptations occur. We have denoted the four types as follows: the challengers, the loyal, the heretical and the translators. There are different degrees and sorts of adaptations within each main type, since there is a continuum along both axes. Consequently, the four types are ideal types. There are RPSs in each group, which illustrate the vast diversity of implementation practices in this first round in 2011/12. The combination loyal/disobedient we have denoted as the challengers; they challenge what the RPS is meant to be according to the PBA and the guidance booklet, even though they are loyal to the national framing when it comes to the National Expectations. In this category, we find four counties. The loyal are the counties that comply both with the law and with the National Expectations. We have classified six counties as loyal. These RPSs are executed “straightforwardly” without, for different reasons, challenging national state policy or national framing. However, we find that there are many forms of loyalty. For instance, a county may be loyal to the

National Expectations but simultaneously raise critical questions to these and demand a closer dialogue with the central government.

Planning and building act (PBA)	The disobedient	The law-abiding
National expectations		
The loyal	The challengers: 4 counties	The Loyal: 6 counties
The independent	The heretical: 2 counties	The translators: 6 counties

Table 1: RPS first round 2011/2012. The counties four types of adaptations to implementation

The translators are the independent/law-abiding ones, meaning that the execution of the RPS is according to the PBA-framing, but they are independent from the National Expectations. Their picture of the actual challenges for the county are more influenced by their own analyses and understandings, by their own framing, rather than the National Expectations. An example from two counties in the middle of Norway may illustrate that translation is the dominant view regarding the National Expectations. By way of introduction to this view in the RPSs, they refer to the Government Cabinet's own directive stating: The Government Cabinet has in earlier directives on regional planning, stated that the goals and directions the central state points at will not be equally important in all counties and municipalities. Therefore, the main issues for the county and municipal planning are the counties and the municipalities own policy. Thereafter the counties interpret the power of direction of the National Expectations, and the counties' own legitimate execution of discretion as follows: The Government Cabinet therefore expects that those who participate in the planning processes develop good comprehensive solutions in a regional and local perspective. Consequently, the Cabinet paves the way for local and regional competence represented by the local and regional political bodies and the elected representatives to practice the necessary discretion, and provide for local and regional added value.

The independent also tend to offer the central government policy advice or demands based on their assessment of the regional development challenges ahead. The policy recommendations come on issues where the central state holds the authority, such as policy means and measure for agriculture, fishery or employment.

The heretical, which comprise only two counties, comply neither with the PBA's provisions of a regional planning strategy nor with the National Expectations. They define their own political and planning methodological reality. The challengers and the heretical share a characteristic, which is to develop a strategic plan (STP), rather than a strategy of the regional planning to come (RPS). Six of 18 counties continue a planning praxis where the county council develops a regional policy for central areas (or themes). We also experience examples where central actors such as the county politicians, the county as an organization, the municipalities and the regional partnerships utilize the goals and strategies of the RPS as a planning document in their own planning (Bråtå et al., 2014; Higdem and Hagen, 2015). The two types separate on a central provision of the PBA; the challengers have also worked out an overview of which plans are to be made during the four-year period to come, which is a planning strategy.

Our research gives us a completely different implementation picture for the second RPS round, four years later. It seems that all counties choose to be loyal to both the law and the national expectations. Most of the counties have made well written and well-designed documents which do not oppose to anything at all; not when it comes to political content, not when it comes to planning and governance processes. The most eye casting is a professional and political cleverness, a sort of streamlining. There is no visible resistance in the RPS-documents against laws and national expectations. There are few examples of bold and surprising analyzes and political goals. At the same time, both legislative texts and National expectations are basic vague; it is not difficult to write texts that not are provocative. The counties seem to choose an adaptive non-confronting strategy where they use those parts of the national texts that politically suit them best? One exception is Oppland County that use one RPS page to formulate counter-exceptions to the government.

6 THE RPS PROCESSES FIRST AND SECOND ROUND

We find, both in the first RPS round and the second, that all counties overall comply with the PBA regarding how the RPSs are worked out, meaning the processes of developing the RPS. However, our data show that the counties strive to meet the expectations of parallelism, as the guidance booklet recommends. Parallelism implies that the county and the municipalities develop their planning strategies simultaneously in an open and reciprocal cooperation. Our findings, in short, indicate that there is a reasonably good level of communication and interaction between the county, the regional state bodies and the local municipalities regarding the development of the RPS. As we have pointed out earlier, the central government frames the RPS in terms of the PBA and the National Expectations. From then on, the national state bodies take no part in the RPS development. As Langset and Nilsen (2013) have also found, developing the RPS simultaneously and interacting with the municipal planning strategies is a task that few, if any of the counties are able to execute. In this matter, the coherence between county and municipal levels is weak.

When analyzing the letters of final approval from the first RPS round, we find that the dialogue between county and the central level is missing in the process, even in cases where the county's RPS either challenges national policy or criticizes lack of national coherence between goals. In addition, our data suggest that dialogue is missing between the different ministries in the process. At the central government's level, the letter of final approval seems to be constructed as a relay without inter-ministry coordination, which could have made the approval more coherent. As a by-product, the ministries might achieve coordination on some issues. It is too early to catch up in our research the consequences of replacing final approval with mandatory dialogue.

The RPSs are storytelling documents that essentially are political texts and to a limited extent juridical texts. The legal aspect was severely weakened in the first round in that the central government approved all RPSs, also the RPSs from the heretical counties. When the Central Government chooses not to use the policy instrument to invalidate a RPS, their remaining possibility is to convince all RPS participants through different storytelling methods that they should obey the national government signals? Our research question is, have the PBA, the guidance material to the RPS and the National Expectations functioned as persuasive storytelling (Throgmorton, 1992)? The loyal and the translators might probably answer yes, the challengers and the heretical no. This indicates that if the central government wants greater impact, it must improve its storytelling skills, its rhetorical competence (Hellspång, 1992, 1995; Ramirez, 1995a and 1995b; Pålshaugen, 1995). Therefore, it seems unwise for the national state to reject dialogue in the RPS process? However, it might be wise to replace final governmental approval with mandatory dialogue for the regional state agencies.

The storytelling recognition is equally important for regional planning authorities and all those who participate in the RPS work in each county. It is all about convincing through dialogue about what the key trends and challenges are, what the long-term development potentials are, how these should be addressed through further regional planning, and finally the choice of planning process. Obviously, the PBA, the National Expectations and the dominant planning theories and models are concerned with dialogue, co-development, co-production, et cetera. We have so far not studied this closely. However, we notice that many counties have had broad, inclusive RPS-processes, characterized by an aim to take collaborative responsibility for their own regional development. At the same time, the regional planning authorities and the regional societies challenge the national state authorities to participate with more commitment. We have discovered many good attempts to independent storytelling in many RPSs in the first RPS round. Not at least among the translators, the challengers and the heretical. The second round RPSs are characterized, as mentioned earlier, with pedagogical documents and broad dialogical processes. The ambitions is clearly that many ought to read, understand, be convinced and join the follow-up processes.

7 THE MODEL OF STP – THE MODEL OF RPS

When comparing the RPS and the STP, we rely on the following 7-stage model (Sorkin, Ferris, and Hudak; 1984): 1. Scan the environment. 2. Select key issues. 3. Set mission statements or broad goals. 4. Undertake external and internal analyses. 5. Develop goals, objectives, and strategies with respect. 6. Develop and implement plan to carry out strategies. 7. Monitor, update, and scan. The RPS has a 3-stage

model, cf. PBA § 7-1: (1) Give an account of important regional development trends and challenges. (2) Assess long-term development potentials and goals and determine which issues are to be addressed through further regional planning. (3) Construct an overview of how the prioritised planning functions shall be followed up and the arrangements for public participation in planning work. Figure 2 shows the similarities and differences between a STP-process and a RPS-process. Stages 1 and 2 are identical for the RPS- and STP-model, and then they separate. Where the STP- process continues through setting goals – undertaking analysis – developing strategies – implementation, the RPS adds a stage Plan for Planning.

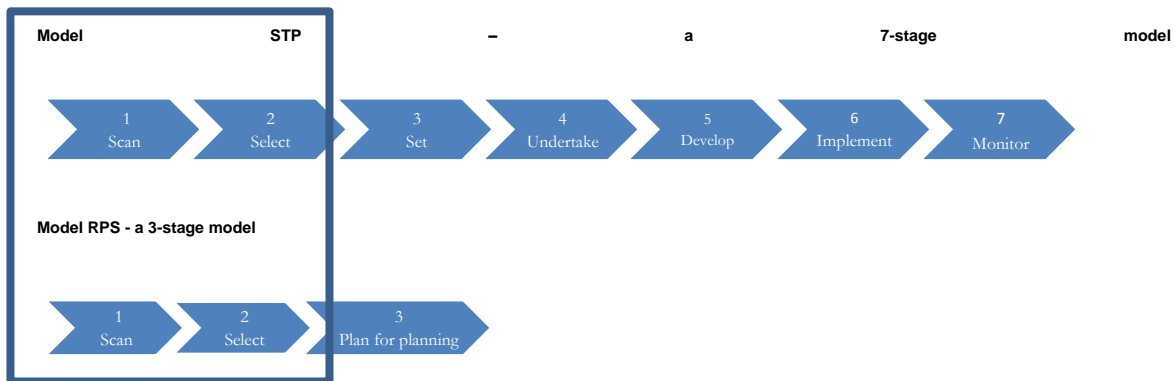


Figure 2: The RPS- and STP-model. Differences and similarities. Based on Sorkin, Ferris, and Hudak (1984) and PBA § 7-1

Our findings, both from first and second round, are unequivocal regarding that all RPSs are strategic processes and documents. Many different actors have participated, and the regional planning authorities have confirmed priorities and conclusions regarding vital challenges and planning needs. This supports what we argued in the introduction that it is expedient to regard RPS as a STP. Both in the first and second round the counties chose to address the challenges - long-term development potentials – goals in different ways. The county can choose to act without planning, or with planning either as a non-PBA plan (strategies) or a PBA plan. There are three main types of such PBA plans - inter-municipal plan, regional plan for a specific theme, sector or geographical area and the former mandatory comprehensive regional plan the county plan.

In the first RPS round the two heretical counties have developed a STP/a county plan, rather than a RPS. The 16 other counties have implemented the RPS in accordance with PBA. In the second round all the counties have made a RPS, but five have chosen to stick to a comprehensive county plan. In addition, many of the RPS documents have a length and a thematic with that reminds of a planning document. One county clearly underline that they regard the RPS to be the comprehensive, long-term planning document in their county. There are more use of non-PBA plans /strategies in the second round than in the first round. Regional plans are tempting to avoid because of the demanding participations regulations. We consider all this to be within the scope of action the counties have got from government.

8 DISCUSSION - CONCLUSION

There were vital differences in how the counties in Norway have implemented the RPS in the first round 2011/12, while it seems almost no differences in the second round. Regarding the two national state framing parameters – complying with the RPS and complying with the National Expectations to the regional and local planning, we find RPSs in all four of our ideal types: The loyal, the translators, the challengers and the heretical in the first round. All acted loyal in the second round.

What does this variety in the first round tell us? First, the variety confirms the already vast evidence in the literature of the challenges concerning top-down implementation (cf. Hill, 2013; Røvik, 1998). Since this hierarchy consists of regional publicly elected bodies with a certain degree of autonomy from the central government (the counties and the municipalities), the counties feel free to translate the PBA into their own

regional context. In the case of RPSs, the translations and contextualization is to be assessed along the two axes. Firstly, the degree of regional adjustment is given by law, which should imply a relatively narrow degree of regional freedom in how to implement the RPS as a planning strategy. As we have seen, this fact does not hamper a third of the counties' regional contextualization and translation. For most of these, we understand the translation as path-dependency (Scharpf, 1997), since these RPSs mostly continue the county planning tradition, as the RPS is contextualized and formed as a long-term plan. Of course, such adaptation also illustrates a need for comprehensive regional planning, which is downplayed in today's PBA. These counties have made a short cut by using the RPS as the overall and comprehensive strategic plan, and translated the PBA to make it useful for their own needs or demands. Therefore, we argue that the new regional planning system in its realization may not fulfil the intended consistency between strategies for planning and the planning itself, and hence contribute to a hybridization. Now, the central government also advances such hybridization by the latest amendments in the PBA, from 2014. Now the PBA also instructs that long-term development goals be stated in the RPS for the future.

Complying along the other axis, the National Expectations of Planning is quite another story. The counties of Norway have since the late 1990's been expected to develop a regional policy based on the region's own challenges and resources, what is called the regime shift from a national allocation or re-distribution of resources for regional development, to a more endogenous and regional resource-based approach (Amdam and Bukve, 2004), in collaboration with both public and private actors. This is continuously underlined in several white-papers (Kommunal- og Regionaldepartementet, 2001, 2002, 2013); and by 2015, the counties' paramount task is the strategic and direction-setting function related to regional planning – to comprehensively assess and contextualize the many central state priorities in the actual regional challenges (Kommunal- og moderniseringsdepartementet, 2015). Therefore, the counties' re-contextualization of the National Expectations was anticipated. The interesting findings here lie in the government's response. We find that the letters of final approval miss contextualization, meaning they show a narrow interpretation of the regional freedom (and expectation) to assess the national goals into the actual regional situation. The central government is torn between the notion of (and need for) flexibility in planning and the need for control or direction setting in policy- and strategy making. The control however was not stricter than that all the RPSs were approved.

This is the first round, the findings correspond with our chosen theories, the findings confirm that the regional political level is about to reinforce their own role as a regional development actor. Many counties evade the national framing and storytelling processes. They use regional co-production to make own plans, to tell own regional stories, to create their own regional political frames for regional development. None of the RPSs is disapproved by the government, which means that this seems to function both for the regional and national authorities.

Why is the second round picture so different? We have to go more deeply in to the RPS – processes, not least to interview participants in these co-production processes. One possible explanation is that the cause of diversity in the first round is due to lack of understanding of what the new tool RPS is supposed to be. There was lack of knowledge and incompetence more than the academic and political independence we met in the RPS from the first round. Now in the second round the planners, politicians and other process participants have learned their RPS lesson¹.

Another possible explanation is that both the PBA and the National expectations are that invite to a broad room for different interpretations. The linguistic formulations are vague; the political priorities are few and weak. The framing is open and broad. It is easy for the counties to be loyal, if they choose to be loyal. It is obvious that in the second round almost all counties are loyal; they have no need to highlight disagreement. This is a possible third explanation. Norway is characterized by a professional and politically united storytelling about which challenges and development trend are valid and important. All ongoing governance processes, all plan making on national – regional – local level, all this co-production leads to a basic united dominant view of the present and the desired future. Disagreement comes later, in the follow up and implementation process.

¹ Still at least five of the counties do not use updated Plan and Building (PBA) law paragraphs in their RPS

9 FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The main goals for, and the intentions behind, inserting a new tool, the Regional Planning Strategies (RPS) into the regional planning system was to make the political priorities for regional planning more targeted by focusing on important regional development trends and challenges, assess long-term development potentials and goals and determine which issues are to be addressed through further regional planning.

What we experience in the second round, however, is that the RPSs represent an almost identical story about the present and the future as we find in National Expectation, in the PBA (Planning and Building Act). We read about the same challenges, the same development goals. Few counties make clear thematic and political priorities. It is not in the RPSs most of the counties signal their own political priorities, as the intention with RPS is.

Alternatively, maybe this is a correct expression for that Norwegian government and the counties are largely unanimous, about the present situation, and about the years to come.

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ID 1016 | THE RETURN OF PUBLIC PLANNING IN A POST-POST-POLITICAL MEMPHIS

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ABSTRACT: In the US Old South, a context that is characterized by major social and racial gaps and the worship of individual freedoms, planning has always faced significant challenges. Especially in the last couple of decades, the growth of electoral consensus in favor of a political establishment that is clearly against the very existence of any form of public spatial planning – perceived as an unbearable interference with the freedom to dispose of private property by legitimate owners – has favored the establishment of neoliberal planning methods and contents. This is true also for the southern city of Memphis, west Tennessee, the ‘northern capital’ of the Delta region, whose history has been shaped by king Cotton. However, in Memphis, that in many ways represents the full accomplishment of what in the literature is defined as a post-political city, i. e. the substantial death of a political debate able to reflect social conflicts together with basic forms of public welfares, few signs of interest in traditional forms of planning, i. e. an effort by public institutions to govern spatial dynamics in the name of the ‘public interest,’ are appearing. Surprisingly, the very actors that have played a major role on the post-political stage, are today taking a