

## Spatial Planning at TU Delft

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# Teaching, Learning & Researching **Spatial Planning**

Edited by Roberto Rocco, Gregory Bracken,  
Caroline Newton & Marcin Dąbrowski



# Teaching, Learning & Researching Spatial Planning

TOOLS, CONCEPTS AND IDEAS TAUGHT AT THE SECTION OF SPATIAL PLANNING AND STRATEGY OF THE  
OF URBANISM, FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, THE NETHERLANDS.

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# Spatial Planning & Strategy at TU Delft

REMON ROOIJ, GREGORY BRACKEN, DOMINIC STEAD, ROBERTO ROCCO

The Department of Urbanism of the TU Delft is organised in six sections: Spatial Planning & Strategy (SPS), Urban Design, Environmental Technology & Design, Urban Studies, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Data Science. SPS has three distinct and complementary pillars: (i) Spatial Planning & Strategy, (ii) Regional Design and Planning, and (iii) International Urbanisation & Development Planning. Spatial Planning at TU Delft has an evident, but unique relationship with spatial design, focusing on the development and transformation of spatial form, composition, patterns, structures, and networks.

The sections form the key pillars to Urbanism at Delft University of Technology. They bring together spatial and visual thinking, planning and governance, the urban and non-urban, data and technology, research and design. This integrative approach to urbanism has a long history at TU Delft and makes the University's academic profile in spatial planning highly distinctive and highly ranked.

All over the world, cities and regions are challenged by the risks and opportunities associated with accelerating challenges arising from migration, climate change, the fourth industrial revolution, globalisation, rising inequality, and political instability. They face urgent questions with respect to sustainable growth and transformation that can only be tackled in an interdisciplinary integrative way that promotes social, economic, and environmental sustainability and spatial justice. In other words, they are not only concerned with what to do (i.e. the objectives of spatial planning) but also

with how to do it (i.e. processes of democratic citizen engagement and governance).

Over recent decades, spatial planning, policy making, and territorial governance have changed drastically. First, trends of deregulation and decentralisation have had a large impact on traditionally strong spatial planning authorities, such as national governments and national bodies of planning. They have repositioned themselves and gotten new responsibilities, but regional and local planning authorities have had to adapt as well. Additionally, at least in the European Union, private stakeholders and civil society have been given much more room to co-create spatial plans and interventions with those planning authorities. Spatial planning has developed into an inter- and transdisciplinary activity, especially in advanced economies.

Secondly, vision and strategy-making have become mainstream in spatial planning with an increased understanding of the complex, uncertain, networked, and dynamic nature of cities and regions. Planning for resilience and sustainability, for organic growth, for flexibility, and for adaptivity means that planning has become a process of intensive interaction, negotiation, and communication between involved stakeholders, looking for shared visions and strategies to go forward. Such a process is helped by diverse tools and ways of approaching the tasks at hand, with the formulation of alternative spatial scenarios and by vision and strategy-making. These tools contribute to a new planning paradigm that focuses on communication and consensus-seeking in collaborative

decision-making processes. This has increased the need for urbanism-planning professionals who can lead, guide, facilitate, mediate, manage, and steer those processes, across a variety of spatial scales, from neighbourhood to city-region and beyond.

Thirdly, spatial planning has become a more digitised and digitally supported process in many ways. In several places, spatial planning processes are based on E-participation and innovative ways of citizen engagement. Urban (big) data and sophisticated 2D and 3D analysis, visualisation, modelling, and decision-making tools are providing urbanism professionals with more input on the city than ever before, making urban policy-making processes potentially more transparent, explicit, and democratic, and strongly underpinned and supported by actual and dynamic data that allows for evidence-based decision-making.

The changes within the professional field of spatial planning come with many questions that can be researched at the University, focusing on issues of:

- fairness, spatial justice, and democracy building.
- the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in spatial development processes, including the roles and values of planners.
- spatial decision-making processes and how they are informed by socio-spatial data (analysis).

SPS contributes to teaching and research on these questions and contributes to the understanding of theoretical perspectives on the nature, scope, and effects of spatial planning. Our section focuses on (i) international and European territorial governance and policymaking, including their potential for democracy building, (ii) contemporary methods of spatial planning, spatial planning instruments, and spatial planning systems, (iii) territorial evidence and impact assessment. By doing so, the Section contributes to theories of spatial planning and builds on SPS's strong tradition of international comparative studies.

TU Delft is the leading institution in the Netherlands for research and education on Urbanism. It has an established track record of excellence in research, teaching, and learning, confirmed by external assessments.

With this book, we intend to disseminate a specific understanding of what spatial planning entails and how it converses with other disciplines. This understanding is anchored in a Dutch tradition that brings together spatial planning, urban design, environmental technology, urban studies, landscape design, urban data approaches, and more.