

Does Transition Management merge with Strategic Spatial Planning?

*A theoretical evaluation applied to the introduction of the Multi-Layer
Safety Approach (MLSA) in the Netherlands.*

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OVERVIEW

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical framework
3. Methods & Theoretical Results
4. Discussion related to MLSA
5. Conclusion & Recommendations

THEORY CHOICE

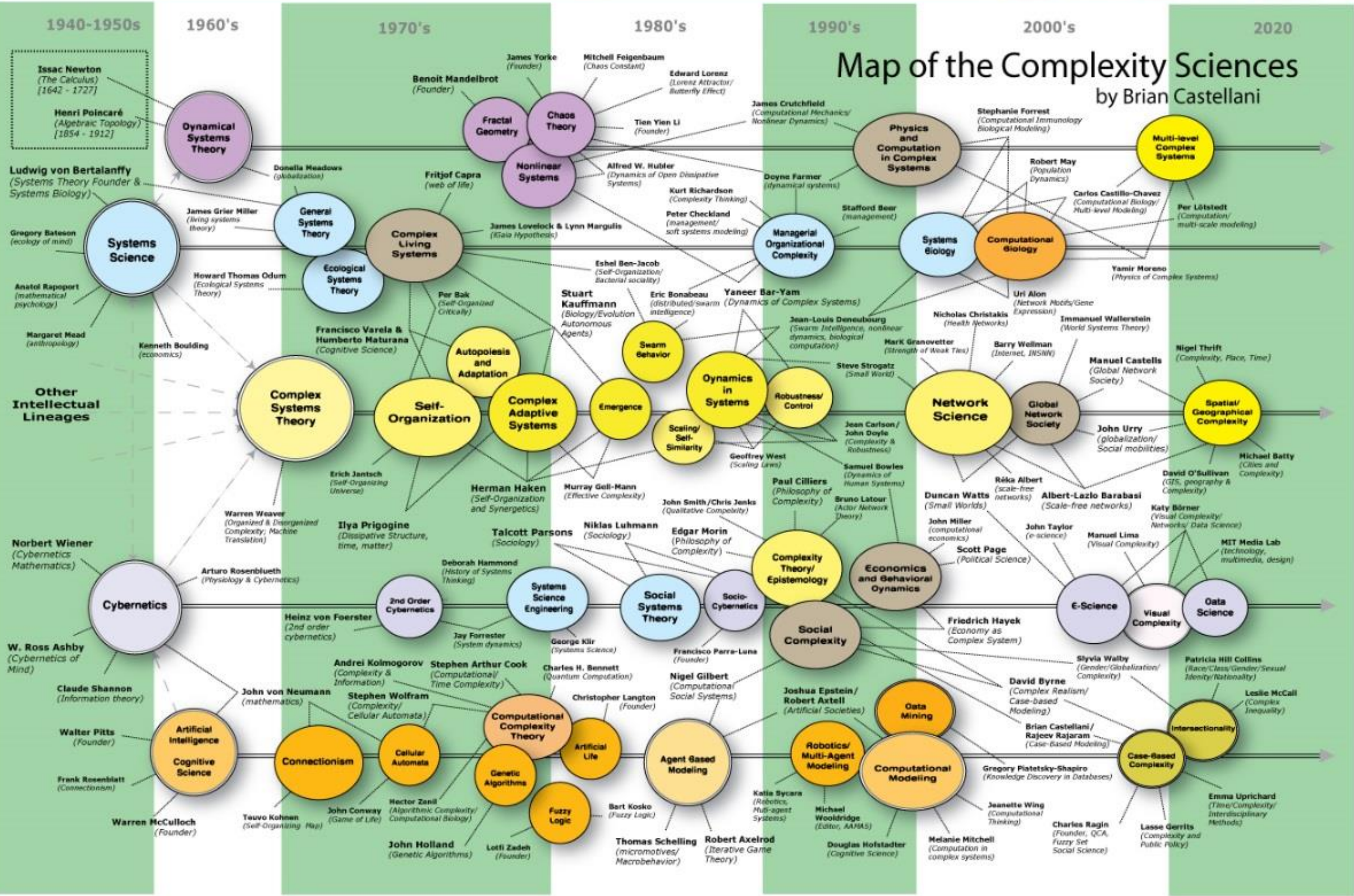
PLANNING THEORY

- Strategic Spatial Planning
- Reflexive Planning
- Communicative Planning
- ...

?

TRANSITION THEORY

- Transition Management
- Strategic Niche Management
- Multi-level Perspective
- ...



STRATEGIC
SPATIAL
PLANNING
THEORY

TRANSITION
MANAGEMENT
THEORY

Governance framework
Deal with the longer term (10-50 yrs)
Influenced by Complexity theory

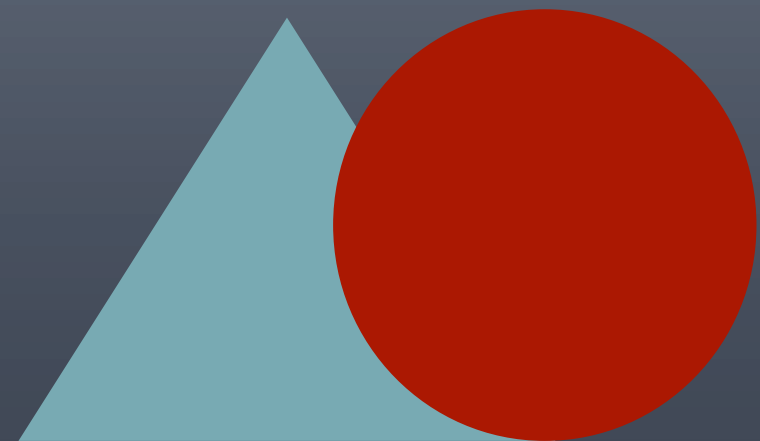
RESEARCH QUESTION

To what extent are Strategic Spatial Planning theory and Transition Management theory compatible?

And how does MLSA develop?

SUB QUESTIONS

- What is the status of the theoretical debate?
- What is the direction of the theoretical debate?
- What are the underlying assumptions of the theory?
- To what extent do the theories overlap, diverge and/or conflict?





STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING THEORY

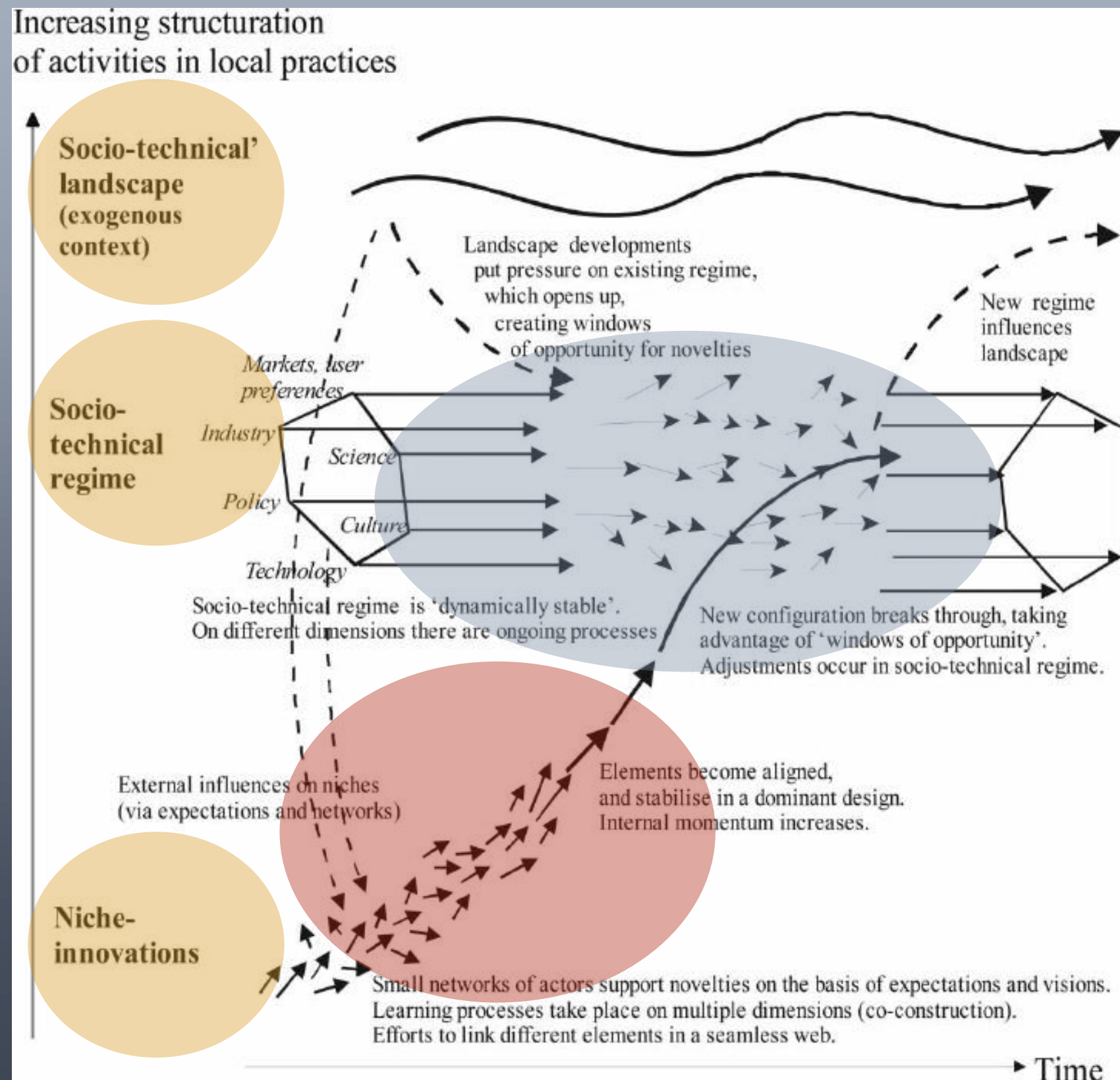
- Transformative socio-spatial process.
- Shapes and frames what a place is and what it might become.
- Through: visions, scenarios, coherent actions and means for implementation

TRANSITION THEORY

Multi-level
Perspective

Transition
Management

Strategic
Niche
Management



METHODS

LITERATURE SELECTION

Scopus as database and selection tool

- Five most influential articles:
- Citation-index score (2 articles)
- Recently published (2 articles)
- Relevance (1 article)

• Theory central; no geographical limitations

STATUS

Status analysis matrix:

empirically tested?

usable in multiple contexts?

development?

constructive criticism?

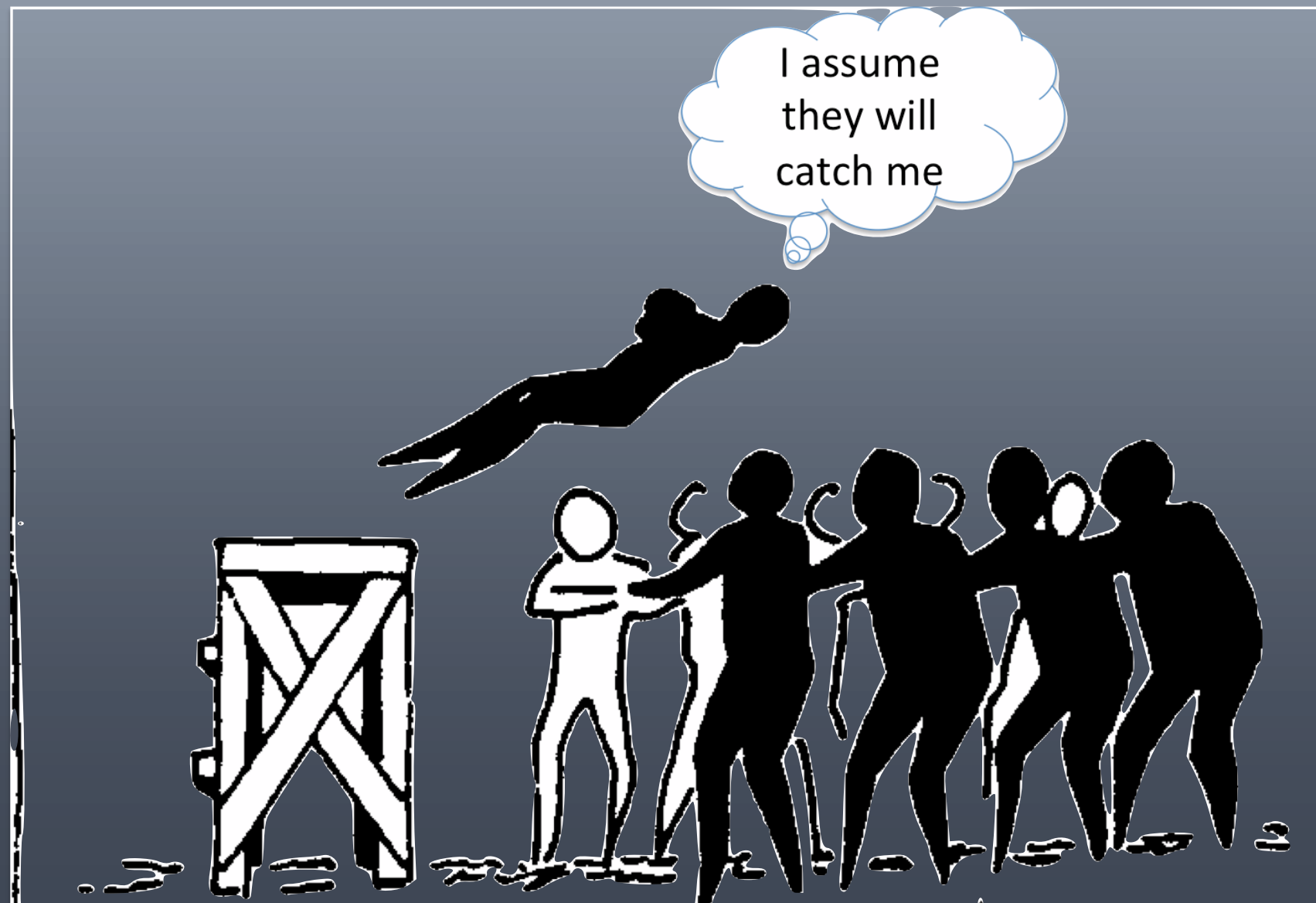


DIRECTION



UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

- Thorough and critical review of selected articles
- Longlist
- Shortlist
- Table



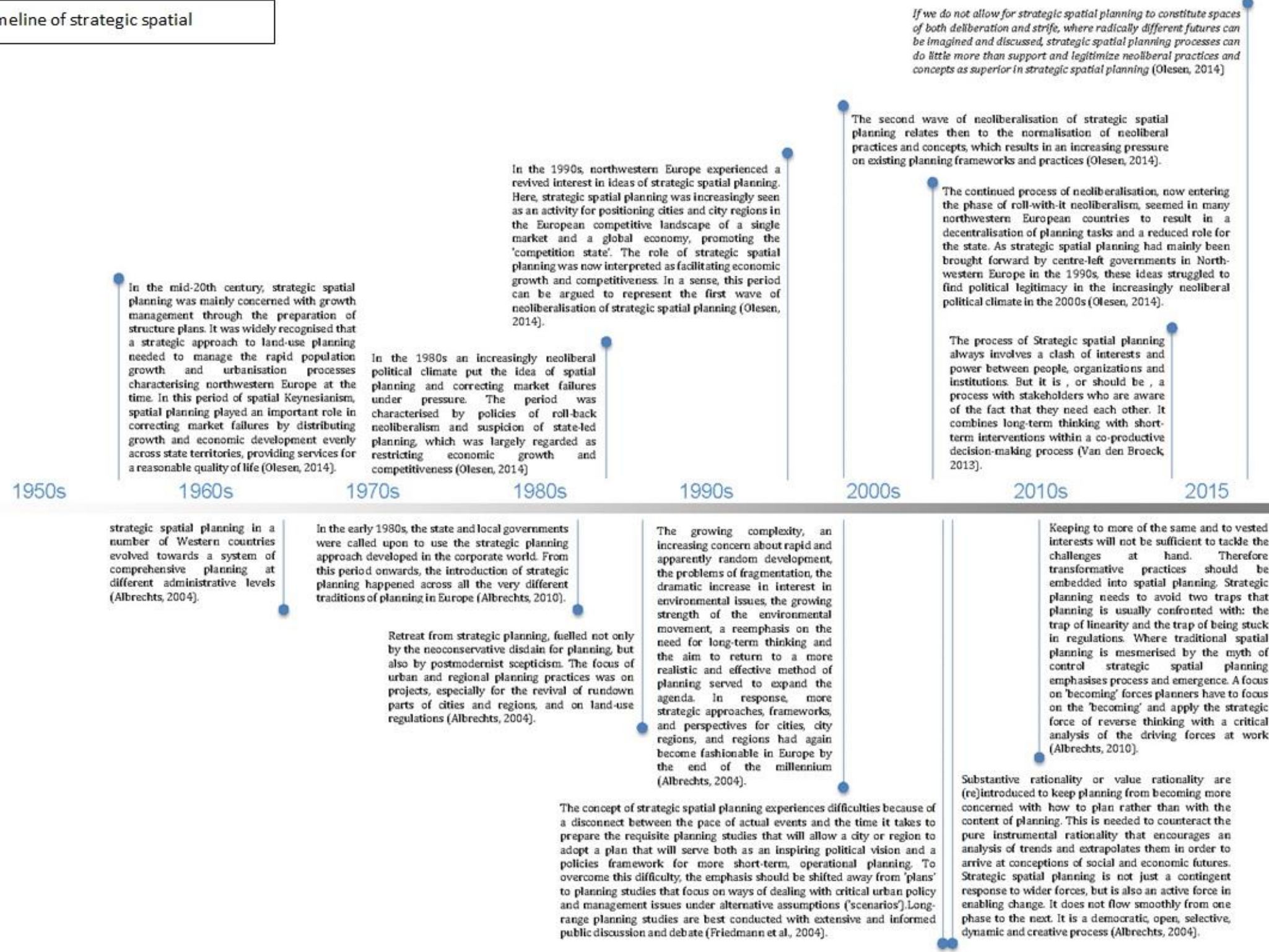
RESULTS THEORY

STATUS OF THEORIES

- SSP theory is often tested in practice.
- Used around the world and in multiple contexts.
- Transforming to accommodate critical dimension and transformative practices.
- Receives constructive criticism.
- TM theory is difficult to apply in practice, not validated empirically.
- Diffusing to other countries and context is challenge.
- Not changing fundamentally, but is being improved rapidly.
- Receives a lot of constructive criticism.

DIRECTION Strategic Spatial Planning

Timeline of strategic spatial



DIRECTION

Transition Management

With all its strengths and precision on the level of transformative knowledge, TM lacks a deeper consideration of individuals engaging in transition experiments, or a basis for monitoring or assessing changes occurring at the level of the participating individuals. Participants are essential ingredients to see niche experiments evolve (towards more sustainability). Therefore, TM should embrace a more encompassing conceptualisation of the individual. This extended comprehension should include peoples' values, motivations and reasons for action both for themselves and within a collective. This might help to correctly assess intra-individual changes with regard to sustainability awareness or motivation prompted in the learning processes facilitated in a typical TM process (Rauschmayer et al., 2015).

TM falls short of distinguishing the normative orientation of change. TM is claimed to be explicitly a normative model by taking sustainable development as long-term goal. Despite of focussing explicitly on addressing sustainability issues, the TM concept has witnessed critique of its understanding of sustainable development as being rather blurred. As the transition management methodology puts the concrete definition, interpretation and valuation of sustainability in the hands of the process, i.e. the participating individuals, a substantive definition of sustainability cannot be found in TM literature. The approach falls short to propose methods to assess the procedural achievements (e.g. future visions or pathways) developed by participants against scientifically grounded understandings of sustainability. This may in the end lead to sustainability becoming completely negotiable, and therewith random, at niche, but also at regime levels (Rauschmayer et al., 2015).

TM has been developed to infer societal transitions, but TM lacks target knowledge, as it cannot differentiate between sustainability-related outcomes and other outcomes of transitions. TM does not have a sufficiently clarified understanding of those individuals who are participating in the transition experiments. TM additionally lacks systems knowledge as it concentrates on the transformation within the niches and not those that should be induced at the societal or individual levels.

The capability approach covers part of these normative and individual shortcomings. Practice approaches, can be mobilized to describe changes at the societal level, indicating how social practices come about and change (system knowledge). At the same time, PA lacks target knowledge and transformative knowledge. Combined these three heuristics could generate a heuristic assemblage that could be of use to describe, explain, assess and interrelate changes at the individual, the niche, and the regime levels (Rauschmayer et al., 2015).

Although TM aims at radical changes the definition of this change is (in line with the systems' perspective) very encompassing, including structure, culture and practices. In this complex picture it somewhat remains opaque what exactly should change. In addition, the role of individual agency (besides the role of frontrunners) is without clear conceptualization within the systems perspective. Here this systems perspective should be combined with a thicker description of the object of change, taking account of both, agency and structure (Rauschmayer et al., 2015).

Around 2011 scholars voice criticisms about TM because TM-researchers have a double role which can be prone to obscuring the analysis: possessing definitional power on how issues are framed in the participatory process and on how the selection of the participants is framed. It also remains opaque how the interaction between (niche) experimentations and incumbent (regime) system could be prescribed in practice (Rauschmayer et al., 2015).

In essence, TM is an explorative and participatory process addressing 'persistent' or 'wicked' problems and searching for long-term sustainable solutions (Rotmans et al., 2001 in Rauschmayer et al., 2015).

Within TM-processes, sustainability is never an a priori explicit objective, but rather the possible outcome of negotiation, debate, competition, and experiment (Loorbach, 2007 in Rauschmayer et al., 2015).

Around 2007 TM is critiqued for its naivety to issues of power, politics and democratic legitimacy. Allegedly too little attention is paid to the processes of negotiation of the goals within TM experiments (Rauschmayer et al., 2015).

2000

2005

2010

2015

Transition Management (TM) is a concept that has gained significant traction from approximately 2001 onward. TM is a reflexive and participative governance concept that attempts to manage transformative change (i.e. influence the speed and direction of change) towards sustainable development by combining long-term thinking with short term action (thus complementing conventional policy) through a process of searching, experimenting and learning (Lachman, 2013).

Transition scenarios help to anticipate sudden changes and deviations from trends, align and engage multiple stakeholders, keep options open, and contribute to learning. The methodology to conceive transition scenarios is identical to the traditional scenario planning methodology (Sondeijker et al., 2006; Wiek et al., 2006 in Lachman, 2013).

TM is a governance framework for addressing persistent societal problems. (Loorbach, 2010).

TM as prescriptive mode of governance could be characterised as a reflexive approach toward long-term social change through small steps based on searching, learning, and experimenting. It is normative in its ambition, prescriptive nature, long-term focus, and analytical basis (Loorbach, 2010).

Based on the understanding of transitions in complex societal systems, central tenets of the transition management approach are, for example, the need for a long-term perspective to guide short-term development, the acknowledgement of uncertainties and surprise, the importance of networks and self-steering, and the necessity of creating space for innovation (Loorbach, 2010).

TM is promising both theoretically and as operational management strategy, but it still develops quickly and largely needs to prove itself. TM has been mainly implemented and conceptualized as a "shadow track" in which way visions, ideas, and agendas can be developed in a more innovative way than within the context of regular policy processes (Loorbach, 2010).

Diffusing and translating TM to other countries and contexts poses an inspiring challenge. The ambition is to validate the partly descriptive and partly prescriptive parts of TM for the coming period empirically, and in such a manner that a scientifically well-grounded concept and framework can be used and further developed in a broad societal context and also internationally (Loorbach, 2010).

Though promising in theory, TM has been proven difficult to apply in practice; hence, it has been difficult to assess whether TM actually works. Current literature on TM focuses more on management of niche-regimes dynamics than management of the transition itself (Lachman, 2013).

TM is a reflexive governance approach. It can be understood as "a multi-level model of governance which shapes processes of co-evolution using visions, transition experiments and cycles of learning and adaptation.

TM is inclusive and calls for setting long-term and intermediate goals, alignment of policies short- and long-term policies and strategic experimentation, besides traditional policies.

The presented concept of TM has been derived from the complex systems approach, new forms of governance and social theory.

TM aims for directed evolution and is possibly best described as directed incrementalism, taking on board criticisms voiced against incrementalism such as lack of orientation, conservatism and negative stance against a analysis.

TM is a model to shape processes of co-evolution into sustainable directions, with clear guidelines for how to do this. It takes society into new directions offering sustainability benefits in a prudent manner, by relying on processes of variation and selection with special attention to system innovation (Kemp et al., 2007).

TM provides an interventionist approach building on empowering collectives as it translates descriptive knowledge of complex systems' development into tenets and instruments of transition governance. (Rotmans and Loorbach, 2009).

The complexity of the system is at odds with the formulation of specific objectives and blueprint plans. Therefore TM avoids a too early selection of innovations and keeps options open to learn about alternatives before selecting. This allows for an adaptive, open and participatory process of vision development (Rotmans and Loorbach, 2009).

The underlying premise is that a better understanding of the dynamics of complex, adaptive systems provides insight into the opportunities, limitations, and conditions under which it is possible to influence such systems. This implies a strong linkage of content and process: The combination of analytic insights into systems complexity and understanding of the process of governance complexity is new and has resulted in a set of management principles that forms the basis for the management framework. The management principles are reflexive rather than deterministic, reflecting a belief that transitions toward sustainability can be directed to a limited degree (Rotmans and Loorbach, 2009).

timeline Transition Management theory |



DIRECTION OF DEBATE

SSP theory:

- focus on the becoming;
- use of scenarios and back-casting makes room for imagining radically different futures;
- increasing critical dimension.

TM theory:

- diffusion to other contexts;
- lack of target and system knowledge is addressed;
- understanding of individual agency is addressed
- power, and politics remains issue

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

Tracking number	Underlying assumptions Transition Management Theory	Sources										Underlying assumptions Strategic Spatial Planning Theory	Tracking number
		Kemp et al 2007	Rootmans&Loorbach	Loorbach 2010	Lachman 2013	Rauschmayer et al	Albrechts 2004	Friedmann et al 2004	Albrechts 2010	Van den Broeck 2013	Olesen 2014		
T1	Takes long-term thinking (at least 25 years) as a framework for shaping short-term policy.											Combines long-term thinking (25-30 years) with short-term interventions.	S1
T2	Tries to find new attractors for systems or visions by developing (sustainability) solutions.											Requires the prospect of a win-win situation and the involvement of actors on an equal basis to build some form of consensus around which actors can mobilise.	S2
T3	Is a reflexive and participative multilevel governance approach, based on insights from complex systems theory and new forms of governance.											Should be a process where radically different futures can be imagined and discussed.	S3
T4	Uses the development of sustainability images to initiate a process to develop transition pathways and draws up a common transition agenda.											Constructs visions or frames of reference in a dialectic back-casting and fore-casting process.	S4
T5	Recognises danger of lock-in, avoids this by keeping options open.											Always involves some sort of clash or conflict between stakeholders as they have different values, opinions, interests and their competences varies.	S5
T6	Continuous cycles of learning, searching and experimenting are crucial to Transition Management.											Based on consensus building.	S6
T7	Monitoring and evaluating the transition process and transition management is a vital part of the search and learning process of transitions.											Is a form of governance that implies the mutual dependency of actors with different and even competing interests, goals and strategies.	S7
T8	Views transitions as radical, structural change of societal (sub)systems that is the result of a co-evolution of economical, cultural, technological, ecological and institutional development at different scale levels.											Uses visioning, not to eliminate uncertainty, rather it seeks to work as well as possible within the context of uncertainty.	S8
T9	Combines scenarios, back casting and forecasting to set goals for new sociotechnical systems.											Is focussed on decisions, action, results, and implementation in both the short- and the long-term and incorporates monitoring, feedback and revision.	S9
T10	View sustainability not as an end state, but rather as the possible outcome of negotiation(s).											Takes a critical view of the environment, in terms of determining strengths and weaknesses in the context of opportunities and threats.	S10
T11	Uses experimenting and learning to guide guided variation and selection (learning-by-doing and doing-by-learning).											Focusses on a limited number of strategic key issues.	S11
T12	Initiates and executes transition experiments and mobilizes actors to broaden, deepen and scale up existing and planned initiatives and actions.											Takes into account power structures, uncertainties and competing values.	S12
T13	Focusses on persistent problems.											Is a public-sector-led socio-spatial process.	S13
T14	Creates space for niches in transition arenas to provide distance and protection from the regime and resources for experiments and empowers niche actors to generate viable alternatives for the regime.												
T15	Shapes processes of co-evolution.												
T16	Content and process are inseparable.												
T17	Is explicitly a normative model by taking sustainable development as a long-term goal.												

Based on short list

SIMILAR UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS (18) - EXAMPLE

- Transition Management takes long-term thinking (25 years) as a framework for shaping short-term policy
- Strategic Spatial Planning combines long-term thinking (20-30 years) with short-term interventions

CONFLICTING UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS (3) - EXAMPLE

- Transition Management, recognises danger of lock-inn, avoids this by keeping options open.
- Strategic Spatial Planning, is focused on decisions, action, results and implementation in both the short- and long-term and incorporates monitoring, feedback and revision.

NEUTRAL UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS (11) - EXAMPLE

- Transition Management uses experimenting and learning, to guide variation and selection.
- Strategic Spatial Planning takes into account power structures, uncertainties and competing values.

DISCUSSION THEORY

Selection of articles.

Analysing direction of the theoretical debate.

Depicting underlying assumptions

More scripted method might result in more scientific results.

MULTI LAYER SAFETY APPROACH (MLSA)

- Dune-dike prevention (probabilistic reasoning)

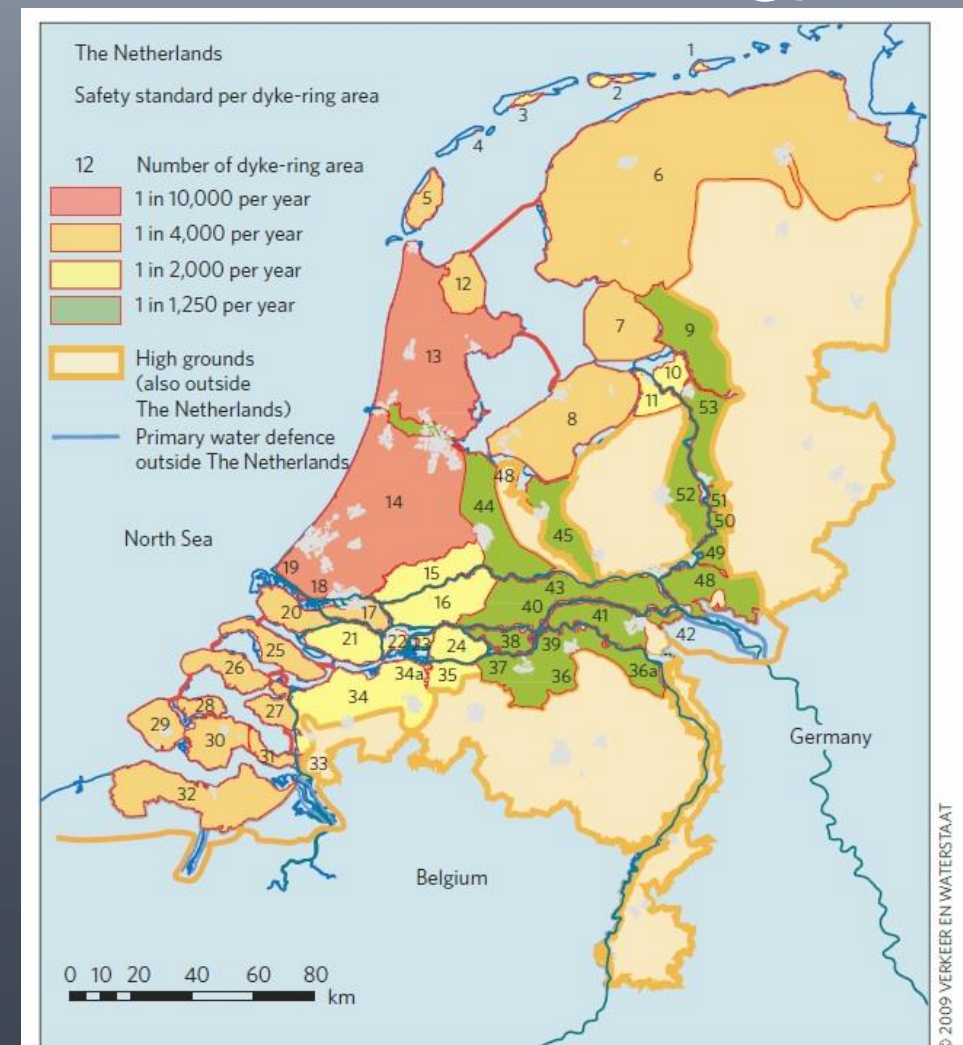
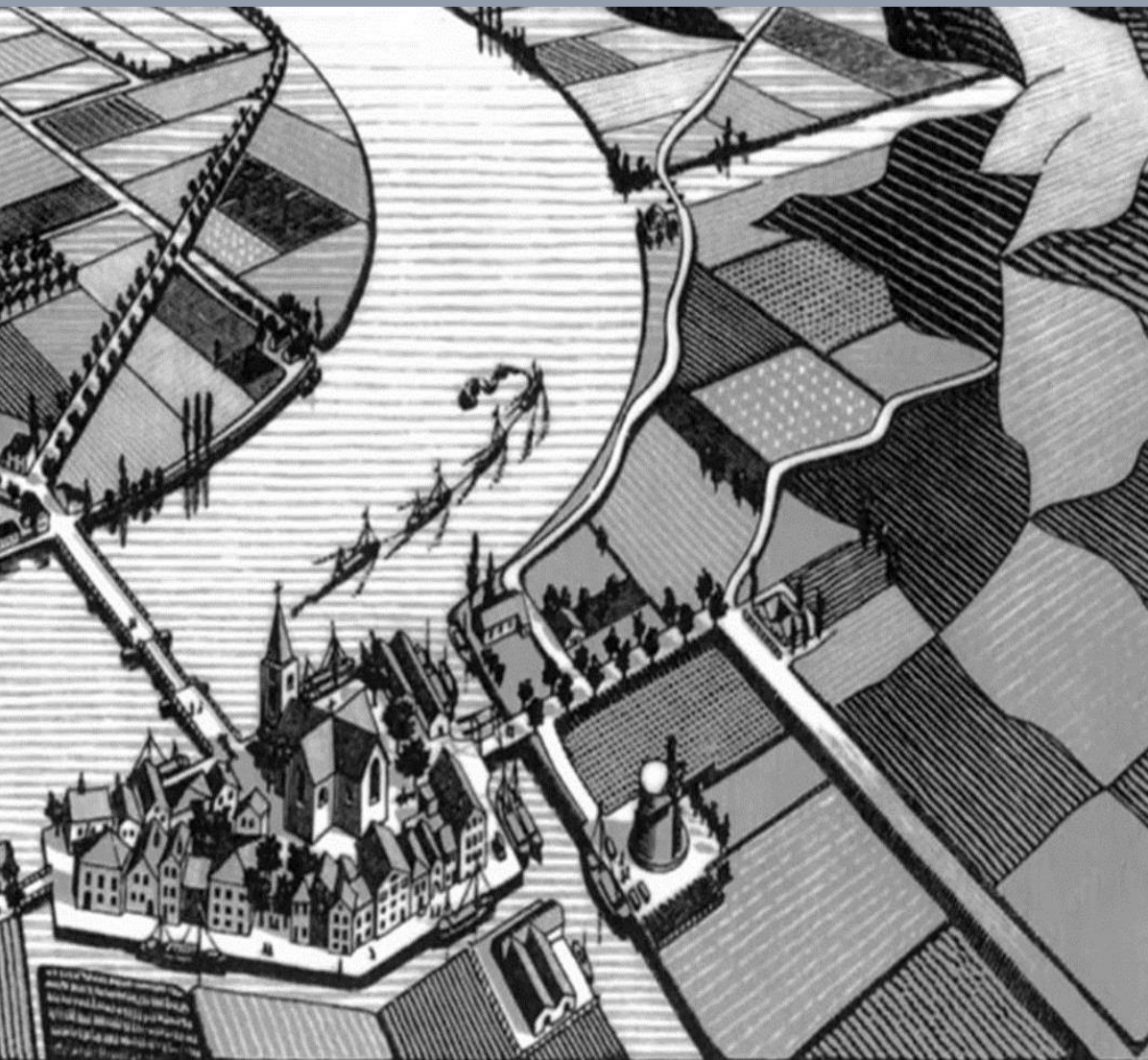


Figure 11 How do safety standards of dykes in The Netherlands. The current level of protection ranges from a flooding probability of 1 in 1,250 per year inland to 1 in 10,000 per year along the coast.

MULTI LAYER SAFETY APPROACH (MLSA)



- Dune-dike prevention (probabilistic reasoning)
- Risk approach (including exposure flood and vulnerability - 2009)

Multi-layer safety, prevention, sustainable spatial planning and disaster management © Beleidsnota Waterveiligheid 2009-2015

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MULTI LAYER SAFETY APPROACH (MLSA)



Multi-layered approach:

3. Disaster management
(Katrina effect)

2. Smart land-use planning
Room for the River

Living with Water: spatial
planning, urban design, multiple
layers of defense and green infra

1. Robust Protection

Multi-layer safety, prevention, sustainable spatial planning and
disaster management © Beleidsnota Waterveiligheid 2009-2015

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MULTI LAYER SAFETY APPROACH (MLSA)



- ‘deliberate transition’ using policy documents, pilots, legal arrangements by RWS + local authorities since 2009
- 17 interviews; policy documents; reports; literature

MULTI LAYER SAFETY APPROACH (MLSA)™



- Interviewees: will take a long time to become common practice; missing principles/attractors to catalyse
- No MLSA scenario's involved, merely FRM – probabilistic reasoning
- Only common understanding about MLSA is that it will always be 'work in progress' and is a situated practice

MULTI LAYER SAFETY APPROACH (MLSA) SSP



- Vested interests (mainly the prevention + allocated budgets) acts more as a lock-in
- Competing interests, structured by amongst others existing responsibilities and budget allocations for safety sustaining or improving measures
- Not based on consensus building; it is a designed approach by public officials

MULTI LAYER SAFETY APPROACH (MLSA)



- More opportunistic use than considered long term change
- Intention to collaborate between layers and actors
- Especially cost efficiency on short term seems to prevail
- Power, resource management and knowledge integration are more or less ignored

CONCLUSIONS

- SSP and TM theory are fundamentally compatible
- TM theory should develop further
- Both theories can learn from each other
- Learning process in implementation of MLSA – maturing steps, also in the organisation

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM MLSA?

THANK YOU

Processes need the time they require

QUESTIONS?

Geldof, 2004

