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Leisuring landscapes

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Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2016

Citation for published version (APA):
Hartman, S. (2016). *Leisuring landscapes: On emergence, transitions and adaptation*. Coöperatie InPlanning UA.

Conclusions and discussion

"...planning must continuously reinvent itself as circumstances change." Friedman (2005, p. 29)

Cities, urban regions, rural territories are all dynamic entities to a greater or lesser extent. They perpetually change, being subjected to the dynamics of and interactions between socio-cultural, economic, and institutional processes that take place at multiple spatial scales and governance levels. For instance as a response to the rise of a leisure economy[13] we encounter regions that are 'leisuring', experiencing on-going transformative processes that are designed to foster touristic, recreational and residential demands. These dynamics relate to our globalized economy and network society, are complex, and make development trajectories – places evolving over time – which are nonlinear, are open to change and are uncertain. It is possible, however, to observe patterns that emerge, to examine directions in which places evolve, to distinguish transitions, and to develop adaptive planning strategies and reflexive governance approaches to guide places in their evolution in a meaningful way. Taking such a nonlinear perspective, strategic spatial planning increasingly involves a focus on adaptive capacity of places so to navigate (themselves) through a contextual environment that is changing continually[14].

13 Leisure economy is an umbrella term used in this thesis as well as in Dutch planning practice to refer to an industrial subsector including tourism, recreation, leisure, wellness, and exurban living and working (Hartman et al., 2011; Hartman, 2013).

14 Doing so meets the aims of the thesis as they are formulated in the introductory chapter: 1.) Discuss the implications and issues that the leisuring of regions raise for spatial development and planning; 2.) Elaborate how institutional frameworks shape regions that are leisuring; 3.) Discuss how the leisuring of regions can be stimulated through spatial planning.

Facing complexity: regions that are 'leisuring'

Planners have an interest in regions that are 'leisuring'. Throughout this thesis leisuring is used to refer to the on-going spatial transformations driven by activities and development projects related to tourism, recreation and leisure (Bunce, 2008; Hartman, 2013). Many places are being developed as tourism destinations, including cities, villages, and areas featuring specific natural beauty or cultural and built heritage. Peri-urban areas are experiencing transformations, becoming transitional zones between the urban and the rural, facing new activities and facilities related to leisure and recreation. The influx of new functions, land uses, firms and activities is driving the gradual change of existing functions, structures as well as the identities. In this thesis we have a focus on such places. Former agricultural areas become peri-urban metropolitan parks (chapter 3) or destinations for tourism and recreation (chapter 2, chapter 5). These places have drivers of change relating to developments at multiple spatial scales and governance levels. In chapter 6, we therefore emphasize that "it is essential to look carefully at how interactions between the global and the local shape development outcomes for individuals, households, communities and regions" (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001, p. 371).

On the one hand, this thesis identifies interactions between the global and the local producing *mismatches* and *urgencies* to pursue development trajectories that differ from the past ('push factors'). Mismatches and urgencies emerge for instance when the agricultural sector faces difficulties to stay viable in a globally competitive economy, when livability issues emerge due to increasing unemployment or when the desire arises to attract investments and stimulate employment and spatial development. These push factors are multiple and concern among others the following. First, alternatives could be desirable when employment declines in the more traditional agriculture, fishing or industrial sectors due to the combination of globalization and automation, particularly in highly specialized areas. This is the case in the Wadden Sea Region (WSR) and the Ruhr area in Germany as discussed in chapter 2. Second, the combination of urbanization, the importance of the service sector and the concentration of employment in major (regional) cities results in the need for alternative sources for socio-economic development in rural, peripheral and peri-urban areas being leisure (amongst others) and is mentioned in chapter 2, 3 and 5. Third, the desire to preserve unique features (e.g. heritage, landscape, culture, spatial qualities) could constrain developments such as housing and industrial sites or inhibit the up-scaling of agricultural firms and drive the need for functions that can

be 'qualitatively embedded' into landscapes which results in a quality that is essential for leisure-led regional development (chapter 4).

On the other hand, this thesis identifies interactions between the global and the local producing *opportunities* to pursue development trajectories that deviate from the past ('pull factors'). Opportunities for pursuing the leisuring of regions relate to a societal demand for leisure activities, recreation facilities and tourism destinations. At the global scale triggers for this demand are among others the increase of wealth and interest in health, enhanced infrastructure networks and mobility, the desire to travel and seek memorable experiences by exploring landscapes, cultures, and histories or participating in meaningful activities. At the local scale development opportunities are driven by factors such as the availability of unique features (e.g. heritage, landscape, culture, natural beauty, facilities and activities), accessibility and reputation.

Combinations of urgencies and opportunities can create pressures to (re)develop places and sites for the purposes of tourism, recreation and leisure, such as in the peri-urban and more peripheral areas that are examined in the previous chapters. These pressures drive 'the leisuring of regions' and emerge as a result of interactions between the global and the local by multiple actors, sectors and governance levels (Dewulf et al., 2009). In turn, the leisuring of regions raises issues for strategic spatial planning and decision-making concerning interventions in the evolution of regional development trajectories (how places develop over time). First, there is a need to enable and support spatial development by means of investments, policies, and plans. Second, there is a need to avoid the negative impacts on landscapes, heritage, eco-systems and communities. This duality comes with tensions, decision-making issues and governance implications. An emerging question is therefore how to manage the leisuring of regions. Hence, it raises the interest of planners.

Moreover, this thesis draws attention to the importance of differentiation in the leisure economy. Consumers are able to select from a wide variety of leisure activities and travel options as a result of the continuous introduction of new tourism destinations and leisure experiences. It has become a highly competitive as well as dynamic economy. Individual entrepreneurs, firms but also governments are therefore constantly looking for (new) ways to fulfill the demands of recreationists and attract tourists to their company or region. Here, the focus is shifting towards creating memorable experiences and enabling transformations – the process of personal development in relation to relaxation, meaning-giving, education, spirituality (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). This shift comes

with implications for spatial planning and development. Creating experiences goes beyond the traditional focus on efficiency and quantitative (economic) growth as was generally adequate for agricultural, industrial and service economies. For these economies it is often sufficient to deal with landscapes in a factual and technical-rational manner and to spatially separate functions and land uses to avoid counterproductive interactions. In contrast, creating experiences depends on factors such as the aesthetics, identities, authenticity and uniqueness of the natural environment (nature, ecology, geology) and built environment (infrastructure, architecture, heritage, public space) as well as interesting ways in which local stories, cultures, foods and histories are made available. It is the combination of tangible and intangible factors that provides a décor for producing leisure experiences (Caalders, 2002; Metz, 2002).

Against the background of these developments we could say that the world is becoming more complicated and difficult to manage. The leisuring of regions is an addition to the strategic spatial planning repertoire and adds to the difficulty of managing the development of today's society. It is a dynamic process that includes multiple actors, policy domains and governance levels. Due to the rise of regions that are leisuring communities are facing new challenges, planners are confronted with new issues, and actors in decision-making positions are presented with new options for development. Fortunately, we are also learning about the emergence and management of such emergent, new situations. In this context, this thesis draws particular attention to complexity theories. In recent years there has been increasing interest in applying these theories to examining transformations and development in cities and urban regions, notably because these complexity lenses offer the capacity to show that urban and regional change is driven by the dynamic interplay between various systems and subsystems at multiple levels (Chettiparamb, 2013; De Roo et al., 2012; Gerrits, 2012; Hartman & De Roo, 2013; Innes & Booher, 2010; Portugali, 2012; Rauws & De Roo, 2011).

Complexity theories are used throughout this thesis for conceptual support to examine the emergence, development and management of regions that are leisuring. When the contributions of all chapters are taken together they offer a complex adaptive system (CAS) perspective on regions that are leisuring. This perspective shows – in line with the statements above about the use of complexity theories in the domain of spatial planning and development – that regions are leisuring as a result of the interplay between changing contextual circumstances, planned interventions and processes of self-organisation by actors on multiple governance levels and spatial scales (also see Urry, 2003; Urry & Larsan, 2011).

This use of a CAS perspective is motivated taking in mind that in the context of regions that are leisuring, planners are facing development trajectories that evolve nonlinearly. These nonlinear trajectories cannot be managed in terms of command and control and require alternative approaches that revolve around influencing and adjusting (Loorbach & Rotmans, 2006). In search of these alternative approaches, we use the concept of transition in the analysis of the case studies. This brings us to the conclusion that regions that are leisuring exhibit a long-term process of development and transformation in which there are different roles for planning, ranging from resisting change to actively pursuing spatial transformations. When taken together, the combination of theories on complex adaptive systems and transitions offer an enhanced understanding of the underlying processes that drive the leisuring of regions. In doing so, it offers the perspective of regions that are leisuring exhibiting a dynamic state of 'becoming'. This is further discussed in the following section, which comes to the conclusion that nonlinearity challenges planners to support and contribute to the *adaptive capacity* of regions.

Learning about complexity: nonlinear development trajectories

Nonlinear development trajectories

Throughout this thesis complexity theories are used to develop a dynamic systems perspective on regions that are leisuring. Complexity theories draw attention to concepts and mechanisms that help explain the emergence of nonlinear development trajectories. Nonlinearity applies to situations that cannot be interpreted as exact continuations or extrapolations of past trajectories due to fundamental changes in terms of structures, functions and identities (Hartman & De Roo, 2013; Walker et al., 2004). Nonlinearity is a useful concept for regions that are leisuring as these areas are undergoing a complex and often long-term 'transition' process of departing from one relatively stable state and gradually moving towards a state that fundamentally differs in terms of structures, functions and identities. The cases of the Wadden Sea Region (chapter 2), peri-urban development in the Greater Hague Region (chapter 3) as well as the areas of Hondsrug and Friese Meren (chapter 5) show that the state of agricultural dominance is in decline. It is gradually being supplemented amongst others by functions, structures and identities that relate to the development of these areas as destinations for tourism, leisure and recreation. The development trajectories of these areas – how places

develop over a period of time – are therefore conceptualized as nonlinear (Hartman & De Roo, 2013). Nonlinear development trajectories can be explained by means of complexity theories. These elaborate on mechanisms including self-organization, emergence, adaptation, co-evolution, positive and negative feedback and the understanding of 'open' systems that interact with their contextual environment. Moreover, elaborating on these mechanisms sheds a light on the implications of nonlinear trajectories for spatial planning and development.

First, nonlinearity relates to the interplays between systems. Many systems are continually interacting with and adapting to one another, and thereby exhibit co-evolution (Heylighen, 2008). Economic, political, cultural, technological, socio-ecological and belief systems are amongst the systems that are interconnected, dynamic and influence the ways in which other systems evolve. Together these systems shape the dynamic contextual environment of socio-spatial systems such as regions. The interaction between these systems can result in urgencies to adapt development trajectories of the past ('push factors') and trigger opportunities to explore alternative development trajectories ('pull factors'). The forces that stem from the contextual environment and influence local development options can be considered 'autonomous' drivers of change when they are beyond the sphere of influence of actors at local and regional levels of governance. The adoption of the Reconstruction Act of Midden-Delfland shows that plans and interventions by higher level governments could be amongst these drivers of change (chapter 3). The case of the Wadden Sea Region shows that the interplays between different systems makes the leisure economy a serious option for development – which is contrary to the development trajectory of the past (chapter 2). The case of Vlietzone shows how economic fluctuations eliminate options such as housing and office development and make it very difficult to command-and-control regional development trajectories (chapter 3). This limited capacity to control drives the need for adaptive capacity.

Second, nonlinearity relates to adaptation. Adaptation is the ability of systems and agents within systems to respond and adjust to persistently changing circumstances (Axelrod & Cohen, 2000; Heylighen, 2008). Agents that respond by altering their actions, behaviors and interventions are important for the rise of new functions, activities and land uses. These can then drive the nonlinear evolution of development trajectories. Examples are the building of bungalow parks in search of alternative economies that contrast with traditional agricultural dominance (chapter 2), farmers that take up side activities in Midden-Delfland and the societal organizations that arise to respond to the

urbanization of Vlietzone (chapter 3). These developments are signals that traditional structures and identities are under pressure and/or that new ones are on the rise. Equally important for such adaptive responses by entrepreneurs are the supportive actions and interactions of planners, planning authorities, political leaders or societal organizations. These supportive actions are crucial for driving spatial transformations and for the pursuit of development paths that include leisure, tourism and recreation. Building leisure facilities to meet societal demands (chapter 3), stimulating spatial quality to support the leisure economy (chapter 4), promoting strategic storytelling to stimulate regional development (chapter 5) are all examples of planning interventions that contribute to adaptation.

Third, nonlinearity relates to emergence. Emergence is the rise of patterns and structures out of the collective actions of agents (Heylighen, 2008). The cases that are part of this thesis show that the leisuring of regions is accompanied by the emergence of different structures. Functional structures change due to the introduction of facilities, firms, land uses and activities related to tourism, recreation and leisure. Landscape structures are adapted and transformed in the cases of peri-urban Midden-Delfland, Friese Meren and Hondsrug to enhance their aesthetics, accessibility and attractiveness. New organizational structures and identities emerge in the context of further developing and marketing Midden-Delfland as a part of 'Hof van Delfland' as well as further developing and marketing the Hondsrug area as 'Geopark Hondsrug'. New actor-networks emerge such as societal organizations in peri-urban Vlietzone as well as networks amongst entrepreneurs and local and regional governments in the case of Friese Meren and Hondsrug. These examples indicate that the leisuring of regions is accompanied by the introduction of new functions, the emergence of new structures and the formation of new identities. Such steps are frequently and actively pursued by agents that aim to further develop the attractiveness of places for tourism and recreation. Emergence shows the need to acknowledge the temporality of structures, to identify emerging others, and to actively conceptualize alternative structures that provide a better fit between a system and its contextual environment.

Fourth, nonlinearity relates to positive and negative feedback mechanisms. Positive feedback refers to amplifying transformations so that these may grow out to affect wider (geographic) scales and higher (governance) levels. This is the aim of the strategic storytelling projects (chapter 5), fostering initiatives in niches of tourism, recreation and leisure to ultimately stimulate regional development. Negative feedback refers to the opposite process of suppressing change and stabilizing systems, for instance to protect spatial quality from

disturbances (chapter 4). It keeps systems in a particular development trajectory. The effect of these mechanisms is that agents become organized and coordinated in their actions, they become somewhat constrained in their actions (Heylighen, 2001). Instead of maximizing individual utility agents are stimulated to contribute to collective goals and aims (Heylighen, 2001). Chapter 4 identifies that both mechanisms are needed and should be in balance to support some projects with a positive impact whilst avoiding others with a negative impact. This clearly requires decisions and policies that define what projects and plans are considered positive and what are seen as negative perturbations. The subsection below on transitions further explains how positive and negative feedback can potentially result in a (negative) lock-in situation based on findings of the study on the Wadden Sea Region.

Nonlinear development trajectories strongly relate to agents adapting to changing circumstances, driving systems to shift from one relatively stable state to another. However, in the case of regions that are leisuring this is not easy and generally takes time – the cases of Midden-Delfland and Vlietzone show that it takes many decades to change and the strategic storytelling projects reveal the difficulty to achieve/enforce change. It could take many decades because adaptation is "a complex combinatorial optimization process" as explained by Kaufman & Weinberger (1989, p. 211). It requires that "many parts and processes must become coordinated to achieve some measure of overall success" (Kauffman, 1993, p. 33). In this thesis we use theories on transitions to conceptualize and conclude that the leisuring of regions is a long-term, co-evolving transition process.

A long-term transition process

Introducing transition theories to the analysis of regions that are leisuring offers the perspective to see these regions in the light of a long-term, co-evolving transformation process. This is explained in detail in chapter 6, section 3. Aspects are amongst others path dependence, lock-in, the mobilization of actors and resources, and institutional design. Moreover, the use of theories on transitions in the case study analyses sheds a light on different planning approaches and multiple possible roles for planners. These vary between avoiding change (chapter 2), supporting development (chapter 4) and actively pursuing spatial transformation (chapter 3 and 5), which means that spatial planning can support as well as constrain the manifestation of transitions.

First, the leisuring of regions is a long-term transition. Spatial transformation is supported, albeit often incidentally, ad hoc by opportunity and rather locally, whilst the upper hand is with approaches restricting projects and plans that intend to fundamentally change structures and functions at a large scale and in a relatively short period of time. Restrictive approaches contribute to path dependence and lock-in situations. Path dependence concerns the influence of past decisions on future development paths. The case of the Wadden Sea Region (WSR) shows how a strong restrictive planning regime fosters the rise economically and morphologically monotonous landscape by favouring land uses related to agriculture and nature. By doing so, it restricts the rise of a leisure economy. Lock-in is coined to describe when places become 'trapped' in a distinct development trajectory and agents are prevented from exploring alternative options for development (Frenken et al., 1999). In the case of the WSR some land uses and activities can be found, but have emerged mainly in spite of and not because of this planning regime. In the case of Midden-Delfland the Reconstruction Act prevented the rise of housing projects, industries and green house complexes and provided funds to reconstruct the cultural-historical landscape of the past. Whereas funds were also provided for leisure facilities and nature development, the upper hand is with protecting the landscapes of the past and preventing large scale changes to the open spaces of Midden-Delfland.

Second, the leisuring of regions is a long-term transition because it involves the coordination and organization of many agents (individuals, firms, societal organizations, and institutions), the mobilization/allocation of financial resources and the adaptation of spatial, organizational and institutional structures. Chapter 3 reveals that it may take decades for peri-urban areas to shift from a predominantly agricultural area to a well-integrated metropolitan park. Transforming peri-urban Midden-Delfland into a leisure-oriented metropolitan park already takes multiple decades and today actors are still trying to further (re)develop the area and its identity as 'Hof van Delfland'. Chapter 5 on the analysis of two strategic storytelling projects shows that the effects of these projects may not instantly become visible in terms of spatial development. Their contribution may, at first, concern mobilizing and uniting public and private actors, (re)establishing commitment of actors and institutionalizing actor networks. Here, critical are the actions of individuals ('signifying agents') who take initiative and actively create and maintain these networks of actors. However, the research on the storytelling projects identifies that it remains difficult to create these (public-private) networks and for them to engage in collative action regardless whether these intermediary roles are taken by entrepreneurs (case of Friese Meren), by representatives from governmental agencies or by government-backed goal-oriented project agencies (case of

Hondsrug). Such factors therefore cause transitions to take several decades to become spatially manifest at a regional level.

Overall, the cases emphasize the involvement of multiple actors with a wide range of interests who are dispersed over different governance levels. No single agent is therefore in complete control of how development trajectories evolve over longer periods of time. The implication is that trajectories cannot be completely predicted or steered by means of blue-print planning and end-state plans nor for that matter by consensus planning and participatory plans (Hartman & De Roo, 2013). Although for certain periods command-and-control planning approaches may be used to strongly shape development trajectories (compare to the Reconstruction Act in the case of peri-urban Midden-Delfland), in the long haul they may need to be adapted (shown by the cases of peri-urban Midden-Delfland and Vlietzone) or can become counterproductive (shown by the case of the WSR). Planners are challenged to become "transition managers who aim to guide regions through transition processes by ensuring that those regions have the adaptive capacity to do so" (Hartman & De Roo, 2013, p. 566). This allows for a transition process "to become more fluid; instead of a collapse, this could involve a gradual process of moving from one state to the other through iterative adaptation to changing circumstances" (ibid, p. 566).

The on-going processes of adaptation

The above discusses regions that are leisuring are persistently dynamic areas, and therefore in the process of 'becoming'. Alternatively stated, they are 'open' socio-spatial systems wherein actors continually respond and adapt to changing circumstances. This thesis identifies the following (non-exhaustive) set of implications for spatial planning and development.

First, an implication is that planners may need to 'open up' and seriously consider the option of regions engaging in leisuring. Such a development trajectory could offer welcome opportunities for socio-economic and spatial development. Diversifying local economies, anticipating negative lock-in situations and managing regions in decline could be amongst the reasons to consider the option. Second, implications stem from the globalized tourism industry and dynamic sector of leisure and recreation. Today, visitors can select from a great variety of tourism destinations, leisure activities and experiences. Firms as well as regions are challenged to constantly redevelop themselves to co-evolve to the demands and desires of potential visitors – one of the driving forces behind the strategic storytelling projects discussed in chapter 5. These efforts are important for enhancing attractiveness and retaining

competitiveness – and can include stimulating spatial quality (chapter 4). Third, planners should take into account that there are no guarantees when it comes to adaptation. The leisuring of regions might be a temporal phenomenon in itself. Potentially the transition may lose momentum due to the increasing importance of alternative development paths. Chapter 3 outlines that regions may have the potential to develop in a variety of development directions. In the case of peri-urban development in the Greater Hague Region (GHR) these are ranging from housing, glass house development, leisure, agriculture, of which some of these development trajectories are mutually exclusive. Changes in systems of economy, culture, decision-making, politics and planning can greatly affect which development path is favored by actors and privileged in processes of decision-making – compare to the case of peri-urban Vlietzone (chapter 3).

Summarizing, adopting the perspective that development paths of socio-spatial systems such as regions that are leisuring can evolve nonlinearly and that these regions are therefore in a dynamic state of 'becoming' comes with consequences for strategic spatial planning. Planners must be aware that many forces which drive the change and transformation of functions, structure and identities are beyond their control and influence, and therefore 'autonomously' drive change. Examples are the macro-economic developments, demographic changes, technological innovations and changing life styles and consumer preferences. Adapting to changing circumstances is therefore an on-going process and brings pressures to continually (re)develop functions, structures, and identities amongst others to enhance attractiveness or retain competitiveness. Planners should also be aware that other development paths that do not include tourism or leisure may become more desirable by society and more promising by the likes of actors in decision-making positions for socio-economic and spatial development. This brings us to the conclusion that the role of planners is to focus on conditions that support and contribute to the *adaptive capacity* of regions.

Managing complexity: a planner's focus on adaptive capacity

In theories of complex adaptive systems, adaptation is defined as the process of achieving a better 'fit' between a system and its contextual environment (Heylighen, 2001).Adaptation or the capacity to adapt is important because contextual circumstances often change and systems will need to be 'refitted'. Adaptation in the context of regions that are leisuring can

then be understood as the 'refitting' of these areas in response to changes in their contextual environment (e.g. changing economic structure, life styles, demographics, technology, travel behaviour, etc.). The process of adaptation involves coordination and planning as well as unplanned, unpredictable and self-organized changes in the ways of doing and acting of agents that are part of a system.

Overall, adaptation is a driver of the gradual and possibly fundamental transformation of spatial structures, functions and identities of systems – resulting in the nonlinear evolution of development trajectories. It is the underlying driving force of regions that are leisuring. Moreover, adaptation is an important capacity to have and, therefore, an interesting capacity to actively pursue by planners. The cases that are part of this thesis draw attention to the following (non-exhaustive) set of factors that contribute to the adaptive capacity of regions and thereby to their ability to transition towards new states. These factors come with implications for strategic spatial planning.

A diverse regional leisure economy

The relevance of a degree of diversity has been extensively discussed in previous chapters. Diversity is a key aspect of avoiding negative lock-in situations and important to adapt to a highly competitive leisure economy and (re)claim a competitive position. Lock-ins may "trap exploring agents preventing them from exploring any other point" (Frenken et al., 1999, p. 147). The cases of the Wadden Sea Region and Midden-Delfland show that it is economically and socially unsustainable to maintain trajectories of the past that revolve around agriculture and to extrapolate these linearly into the future. Mitleton-Kelly (2003, p. 14) argues that "to survive and thrive an entity needs to ... generate variety'. De Landa (1994; 1997) and Heylighen (2001) explain that generating diversity is important for finding solutions to issues that arise when circumstance change.

In this thesis, particularly in chapter 6, we build on these arguments and draw attention to a degree of diversity. This should not be confused with a call to stimulate diversity at random for the sake of diversity. The issue is that "systems become unsustainable whenever they have either too much or too little diversity" (Goerner et al, 2009, p.77). Too much diversity may be counterproductive when it leads to policy inconsistencies, high transaction costs, fragmentation, lack of coordination, disputes, frustration, etc. (Folke et al., 2005; Duit et al., 2010). Some forms of tourism and leisure have a capacity to gentrify communities, disrupt ecosystems and landscapes, and can limit opportunities for ecotourism

or community-based tourism. Whereas diversity is needed, it is needed towards a certain degree: a degree of diversity (chapter 6).

Such a degree of diversity can contribute to systems being robust and flexible at the same time, which contributes to its capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. On the one hand, diversity makes systems flexible, easing the ability to reorient or switch between multiple trajectories. When circumstance change and development trajectories prove not to be sustainable paths towards the future, having options to switch to alternative ones could enable system to achieve a better fit. On the other hand, diversity contributes to robustness of systems. Eliminating or replacing some elements does not cause negative effects on the properties and overall functioning of a system (Gershenson, 2007). As such, a degree of diversity provides the ability to endure perturbations as well as provides time to recover from perturbations. Recovering of perturbations, however, requires the encouragement of re-establishing a degree of diversity.

Pursuing a degree of diversity is controversial, however. First, it implies to encourage development in order to reach a degree of diversity. Strategies are needed to actively seek innovation and path creation. Ahern (2011) identifies the need for a 'safe-to-fail' strategy: promote experimentation and at the same time anticipate failure so that the effects of failing experiments are contained and minimized. Experiments help to identify innovative and successful services and experiences as well as stir (in-region) competition and trigger a drive amongst firms to innovate. Second, it implies to avoid and counteract plans and initiatives that negatively perturb local situations. Planning frameworks are needed to limit the impacts of random developments that could fuel potentially chaotic situations and cause extensively perturbations to the functioning of systems. Hence, a degree of diversity comes with the planning challenge and decision-making issue of privileging some functions and land uses over others for instance by means of planning interventions – as is further discussed in the subsections below.

Collective action: governance arrangements, connectivity and transition management

The development of attractive, competitive destinations for tourism and recreation depends on a range of actions that need to be actively pursued. In this context, chapter 3, 4 and 5 highlight the relevance of governance arrangements. Governance arrangements are ensembles of interacting and collaborating (representatives of) governments, societal organisations and/or private actors that have a shared or common interest in the realisation of particular

projects. These arrangements have the potential to strike a chord between governments and institutional frameworks on the one hand, and the actions of societal organisations and market parties on the other hand. An example of the Council for the Hof van Delfland is given in chapter 3. The Council operates as a platform that builds bridges between a range of public and private actors on multiple levels and tries to stimulate a collective course of action. It aims to further develop the area in the direction of a leisure-oriented metropolitan park that is well-embedded in the Greater Hague Region. Other examples are the coalitions that emerge in the context of the 'Nije Pleats' project (chapter 4). The project leads to temporal governance arrangements around small scale development projects. Private initiators collaborate closely with a government-supported project team to realize the goals of the initiator as well as contribute to governmental ambitions regarding spatial quality. The case study research on strategic storytelling also identified the emergence of governance arrangements around the initiative of the Geopark Hondsrug and the development of the Friese Meren area (chapter 5). All cases draw attention to the role of intermediaries and 'bridging organizations' establishing relationships and networks between public and private sector agents. Examples of these intermediaries include individuals and groups who take initiative and actively create and maintain these networks of actors (chapter 4 on 'signifying agents'), intermediate project agencies (chapter 4, 5) or cooperative bodies (chapter 3). The cases also show that emergence of arrangements relate to leadership: (groups of) individual entrepreneurs and representatives of (semi-)governmental agencies that take initiative and mobilize resources to establish and support the bridging organizations that are entrusted with the formation of governance arrangements around initiatives that support the leisuring of regions.

The formation of governance arrangements requires that actors connect, interact and collaborate. Connectivity is therefore an important prerequisite for aligning the actions of governments, societal organizations and market parties. Connectivity relates to connections between (groups of) entrepreneurs, governments and organizations that have a role in area development. To enhance connectivity and stimulate collaboration, the literature on transition management proposes to form transition arenas and engage in practices of agenda setting, by articulating promising development trajectories that may trigger further innovative niche developments (Chapter 6). Strategic storytelling, for its part, seeks to mobilize and assemble perspectives with the aim to articulate a common understanding and portray or emphases desirable development trajectories. Chapter 5 brings these aspects together and proposes a cyclical approach that contains the following elements:

1. Establish a small actor network of frontrunners;
2. Draft a transition agenda that serves as a policy frame for collective action;
3. Mobilize resources;
4. Execute development projects;
5. Enhance regional and external connectedness;
6. Establish the adaptive capacity to revisit these steps by monitoring and evaluating progression and by revisiting and reorganizing actor networks, transition agendas, projects, and mobilizing additional resources.

A cyclical approach is an appropriate strategy in the context of nonlinearity for the following reasons. Contextual circumstances change continually and adaptation is time and again required to achieve a better fit between a system and its contextual environment. Because of nonlinearity, situations emerge that are new and, therefore, could require a different set of actors, approaches and projects. Here, strategic storytelling is useful to build new bridges and reinforce existing ones between actors, encourage dialogs between them and develop agendas for collective action. At this point, there is an important role for intermediaries and bridging organizations that mobilize and unite actors from different domains and governance levels (Chapter 5). In the Friese Meren case a group of entrepreneurs formed the driving force to initiate a strategic storytelling project. The project contributed to the rise of a governance arrangement in the sense that it resulted in the formal establishment of an entrepreneurial organisation and better linkages with governments and their policies. In the Hondsrug case a coalition of government agencies initiate a project organisation to connect to and mobilize other actors such as entrepreneurs, marketing organisations and universities to contribute to the development of an area in the province of Drenthe as Geopark Hondsrug. Here, the intention is to create a governance arrangement that actively pursues this goal. Nevertheless, as chapter 5 also identifies, changing circumstances require also the cyclical adjustment of stories, supportive projects and organisational structures.

The many actors and factors that are involved in processes of adapting structures, functions and identities of places make the leisuring of regions, in the words of Kaufman & Weinberger (1989, p. 211), "a complex combinatorial optimization process". Individuals, organizations and institutions may have their own perspectives on the most promising state of a region and the projects that are needed to get there. Perspectives may harmonize but can also collide and conflict. The cases of peri-urban development in the Greater Hague Region are good examples of this. Peri-urban areas offer potential for leisure-related functions and land uses but could also be used for housing, greenhouses, offices, or infrastructure development. Potentially, some options offer synergies

whilst others are mutually exclusive. Their development trajectories are therefore constantly challenged and renegotiated which makes is challenging to develop a shared perspective on future situations to avoid and situations to achieve.

Design of institutional frameworks: inhibiting, allowing and encouraging behaviors and actions

The importance of a diverse regional leisure economy, discussed earlier, does not mean that plans and initiatives should be supported at random as they can easily perturb local situations. In doing so, they may deplete the qualities that places confer to the leisure economy, qualities on which its successful development often depends (compare to issues regarding 'common-pool resources' e.g. in Ostrom, 1990). As such, in the Netherlands, governments at the level of the nation, province and municipality are all involved in trying to steer and shape development trajectories by means of institutional design. Institutional design is the process of "devising and realization of rules, procedures, and organizational structures that will enable and constrain behaviour and action so as to accord held values, achieve desired objectives, or execute given tasks" (Alexander, 2002, p. 1; North, 1990, Alexander, 2006). Institutional design is a key aspect of strategic planning (Innes, 1995; Alexander, 2005) and generally results in institutional frameworks consisting of a multilevel system of formal organizational structures, ensembles of formal rules (laws, regulations and procedures), policies and informal constraints (norms and codes of conduct).

The design of institutional frameworks delineates the range of actions of the plurality of actors involved in initiating and executing plans and projects that contribute to the development of the leisure economy (cf. De Landa, 1994, on space of possibilities). These frameworks can be crafted to (strongly) steer and shape development trajectories of a region, for instance emphasising or privileging leisure. In this study we found that institutional frameworks can be designed as such to simultaneously inhibit and allow particular land uses and activities over others as well as to encourage ones that contribute to strategic visions and goals. It is a challenge to find a framework that offers a satisfactory balance between inhibiting, allowing and encouraging particular land uses and activities over others. This balance is important on the one hand to encourage innovations in niches of tourism, leisure and recreation and the pursuit of diversity and, on the other hand, to protect nature, heritage, and spatial quality from the negative impact of spatial development. Chapter 4 of this research unpacks an institutional framework that is geared towards achieving such a

balance between inhibiting, allowing and encouraging particular land uses and activities over others in the context of stimulating spatial quality. The chapter indentifies a framework that is 1.) selective in order not to be too comprehensive and prescriptive from the top down[15]; 2.) multi-component because it consists of a combination of measures to achieve the composite goal of inhibiting, allowing and encouraging[16]; and 3.) dynamic because the framework is constantly renegotiated in multilevel decision-making processes.

The findings suggest that, following Heylighen (2008), the ability of socio-spatial systems to transform towards enhanced states requires that "agents are organized and coordinated in their actions so as to maximize their synergy" (p. 9). To organize and coordinate the actions of agents generally involves the presence of rules, regulations or procedures "determining which actions are allowed, and which are not" (ibid, p.9). The implication of organizing and coordinating the actions of agents is that the freedom of individual agents is (somewhat) reduced, which is considered essential in order to turn a collection of initially independent agents into a collective, organized, and goal-directed

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15 Such frameworks can limit more context-sensitive or place-based approaches. Although higher level governments should be selective when introducing measures, this does not mean that other aspects are unimportant. These are then viewed as the responsibility of municipalities, communities and developers to further negotiate and specify. The rationale is to create more degrees of freedom at the regional and local levels by shifting responsibilities. Choices regarding the design of institutional frameworks must be able to diverge at the tiers of provinces and municipalities, each having to deal with specific local circumstances, interests, issues and political compositions.

16 First, measures that delineate which land uses and activities are allowed, such as laws, regulations and norms that privilege some activities over others. Second, measures that introduce conditions for development such as process requirements stating that initiators of development plans and projects should demonstrate how particular criteria are taken into account. For instance, in Friesland, it is obliged to motivate by means of a spatial quality paragraph how functions are 'qualitatively embedded' into local contexts. Third, measures that are aimed to the active pursuit of synergies between individual interests and common or shared interests (e.g. spatial quality, regional coherence). These include the support of organisations such as the Quality Team (chapter 4) and the Hof van Delfland (chapter 3) or initiating projects such as Nije Pleats (chapter 4) and around strategic storytelling (chapter 5). Fourth, measures that stimulate the creation of visions and perspectives on future situation to achieve and situation to avoid. An example is the support of organisations such as ARK Fryslân and Atelier Fryslân.

whole[17] (Heylighen, 2008). However, if the (self-)organization and coordination amongst agents are weak or absent, influencing development plans and projects becomes a daunting challenge, as does affecting their possible negative impact on places and communities. Possibly, individuals will consider this a positive situation as it provides them with the freedom to pursue their individual goals and maximize their utility. But this situation can also be problematic when plans and projects act against collective views on spatial and socio-economic development. Therefore a first major challenge for institutional design is to find a framework that offers a satisfactory balance between inhibiting, allowing and encouraging land uses and activities over others (compare to chapter 4). A second major design challenge in the context of nonlinearity is that institutional frameworks need to be dynamic. They are likely to be constantly contested and renegotiated in the face of changing contextual circumstances and local development opportunities. Below it is further explained that this requires a reflexive stance towards governance.

Reflexive stance towards governance

This thesis points out that a reflexive stance toward governance is needed in the context of nonlinearly evolving development trajectories. Voss & Bornemann (2011, p. 1) explain that a reflexive stance toward governance rejects "the assumption of 'one' adequate problem framing, 'one' true prognosis of consequences, and 'one' best way to go that could be identified in an objective manner from a neutral, supervisory outlook on the system as a whole". This is a consequence of accepting that there are multiple possible pathways coexist in which development trajectories may unfold towards the future (Geels & Schot, 2007). Furthermore, reflexivity "calls into question the foundation of governance itself, that is, the concepts, practices and institutions by which societal development is governed, and that one envisions alternatives and reinvents and shapes those foundations" (Voss & Kemp, 2006, p. 6). For strategic spatial planning the consequence is that systems of planning and governance must themselves be adjusted and adapted in response to changing circumstance.

Alternatively stated, reflexivity emphasizes the need to recognize when and how situations are changing, to call into question whether concepts, practices and institutions are still sufficient, and to envision alternative approaches (Voss & Kemp, 2006). By doing so, reflexivity builds on advancements in critical

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17 In complexity theories, the notion of self-organization is coined to describe the process when organization emerges 'spontaneously' and no single agent is in control of the entire process.

(social) theory on the reflection, assessment and change of social and cultural structures (Forester, 1980), the theory of structuration on the analysis of both agency and structure to examine the production and change of social systems (Giddens, 1984) and the strategic-relational approach of Jessop (2005; 2008) which elaborates on the interactions between structure and agency and the (reflexive) reorganization of institutional frameworks (structures) through the actions of agents (agency).

The relevance of reflexivity for managing regions that are leisuring is illustrated for instance by the case studies on the development of peri-urban Midden-Delfland and Vlietzone (chapter 3). These areas could not remain completely devoted to agriculture. Forces driving change relate to the combination of urban development in the Greater Hague Region, demands to preserve nature, heritage and open space for recreation as well as the global agri-economic system that renders small scale farms unviable. Peri-urban Vlietzone, for its part, was strongly affected by the financial crisis of 2008 which led to the postponement of housing and office developments. Changing situations affect development options. When situations change, alternative governance approaches may be needed. In the case of Midden-Delfland top-down approaches were not continued after the Reconstruction Act expired, but substituted by a more bottom-up and collaborative approach to the governance of the peri-urban. This shows that a planning implication of reflexivity is that "the planning process becomes readable as a repeatedly and experimentally generated response to changing relations in spatial development" (Van Wezemael, 2012, p. 45).

A reflexive stance contributes to the ability to recognize when and how changing circumstances affect development trajectories of regions. Reflexivity could be of use as development trajectories of regions can become subjected to path dependence and lock-in situations. Path dependence refers to a set of cumulative decisions taken over a long period of time to reinforce a particular development path (Hassink, 2010). When the returns on such decisions are increasing, these situations often feature self-reinforcing positive feedback. It can also be negative when regions become locked-in and are unable to deviate from past trajectories as a result of self-reinforcing tendencies. As is discussed in chapter 2, "[t]he ability to deviate from a vested development trajectory is then constrained by rigidly retaining traditional spatial patterns, policies, strategies, and institutional settings that once supported economic growth in an area but do so no longer. Consequently, mismatches will emerge between entrepreneurial and societal desires and institutional settings, causing an inability to acquire other, perhaps better, suitable combinations of land uses and functions at a specific time and place" (Hartman & De Roo, 2013, p. 559).

Whereas chapter 2 illustrates how rigid institutional frameworks can constrain regions from leisuring, it is shown in chapter 4 that institutional frameworks are not necessarily static. They are constantly renegotiated and transformed amongst others in response to emerging societal demands or changing socio-economic situations.

Summarizing, this section identifies that socio-spatial systems such as regions that are leisuring could benefit from the capacity to adapt. It draws attention to a set of conditions that contribute to adaptive capacity of regions and their ability to transition towards new, enhanced states. Moreover, it discusses in-depth the multiple implications for strategic spatial planning in the context of the design of institutional framework, stimulating organizing capacity and managing adaptive capacity.

7.4 Towards an agenda for further research

On the basis of the findings and case study analyses presented in this thesis, we can provide several suggestions for an agenda for further research. These suggestions build on perspectives such as regions that are leisuring are exhibiting emergence: local interactions and innovations in niches of tourism, recreation and leisure give rise to new functions, structures and identities (Heylighen, 2008; Walker et al., 2004). We have identified that new spatial, organizational and institutional structures do not emerge easily. These are often relatively long-term transition processes which depend on the aligned actions of a range of entrepreneurs, firms, organizations and institutions on multiple governance levels. Forces driving the transition of regions that are leisuring are contextual influences such as economic development, technological innovation, environmental change, political dynamics, and lifestyle changes. Furthermore, transitions come about as a result of adaptation: the local of often self-organized interactions that produce series of small changes whereby the structures and functions of systems gradually but fundamentally change over a period of time. These findings contribute to an enhanced understanding of regions that are leisuring as a phenomenon but also touch upon several topics that are discussed below, which can be further researched to further improve planners their capacity to manage regions that are leisuring.

Building adaptive capacity

However, the capacity to adapt is very context-dependent and differs from place to place. Section 7.3 draws attention to a set of conditions that contribute to the adaptive capacity of regions and thereby to their ability to transform towards new states. But these conditions are not automatically present or supported by local actors in decision-making positions. Therefore, we may need to pay more attention to analyze or assess *the extent to which* regions feature adaptive capacity. This could shift the focus towards helping regions to further improve their adaptive capacity by engaging in a process of 'building adaptive capacity'. Studying adaptive capacity building could shed a light on the extent to which conditions are in place in specific regions and whether resources are available to further improve adaptive capacity. It would mean the development of a more situated, context sensitive approach to adaptive capacity. As such, it could help (local) decision-makers to prioritize certain actions over others, based on possible pathways towards adaptive capacity and resource availability to engage in such pathways.

Emergence and evolution of governance arrangements

This thesis identifies the formation of governance arrangements as a key aspect of adaptation. However, this aspect still remains under researched whilst it becomes an increasingly relevant topic to further explore. We know that governance arrangements are collaborative coalitions of (representatives of) governments, societal organizations and/or private actors that have a shared or common interest in the realization of particular projects. We also know that these arrangements have the potential to strike a chord between governmental structures and formalized institutional frameworks on the one hand, and the actions of societal organizations and market parties on the other hand. Yet we do not know in detail the determinants or conditions for the (successful) emergence of (productive) governance arrangements. A preliminary but non-exhaustive set of factors are identified in this thesis such as connectivity, formal and informal intermediaries or bridging organizations, and institutional variety. But further studies are needed that focus in more detail on how arrangements adapt over time in relation to external, contextual changes or how the adaptation of arrangements is organized 'from within' to enhance their performance. Moreover, studies could look into the emergence of possible issues concerning democratic legitimacy of these governance arrangements. This thesis touches upon these aspects but did not examined them exhaustively. Doing so would, however, further expand the emerging field of evolutionary governance theory (Van Assche et al., 2014).

Building 'experience environments'

The ability to form productive governance arrangements gains importance now that the industry cluster of tourism, recreation and leisure has gradually become an experience-oriented economy. The leisure economy is fast-growing, highly competitive and therefore also highly dynamic. Throughout the world, places have been adapted and transformed for the purpose of leisure, tourism and recreation. Because of the enormous growth of the leisure economy, there is an immense and intense global competition, which means an abundance of choice is available to society. Visitors are able to continuously shift their interest from one destination to another. Entrepreneurs and governments are caught up in a process of continuous innovation and improvement of their firm and region. They are stuck in a process of becoming, forced to iteratively find and develop niches that captivate people and attract visitors, inhabitants and businesses.

In doing so Benur & Bramwell (2015, p. 215) observe that actors "meet market demands through an increasingly careful engineering of experiences to match specific market expectations, which involves the detailed choreographing of activities, encounters and experiences". This comes with major challenges, not only for firms, also for planners managing the development of destinations for tourism and recreation. Regions that are leisuring are forced to evolve into 'experience environments'– a region which is experienceable as a more or less cohesive entity and host to a range of leisure experiences from which visitors can select (cf. Mossberg, 2007 on experiencescapes). This is illustrated by recent developments in the case of Geopark Hondsrug. The Hondsrug area is being developed to become experienceable as a cohesive Geopark. The region is made more recognizable as a cohesive entity by means of a 'brand identity' (reappearing logos, colors, symbols, names), signage, landscape art, landscape design and infrastructure development. Furthermore, eleven history-oriented stories are elaborated. Each story tells the tale of a specific part of the area's past and ties together a dynamic set of sites, histories, expositions, activities, events and facilities. The efforts to create a more cohesive entity make the area better recognizable and marketable on the one hand, and on the other hand allows drawing attention to a range of experiences visitors can select from. Whereas local and provincial government authorities initiated the project, a purposeful project agency is established that, amongst others, strongly encourages entrepreneurs to connect to the rationale behind framing the regions as a Geopark. Conditions clearly include connectivity amongst actors, interactions, signifying agents and bridging organizations, an agenda for collective action, resource availability, etc.

These ideas relate to theories on (urban) imagineering which is a portmanteau of imagining and engineering. It refers to a spatial development process as well as the (re)creation of the image of a place (Rutheiser, 1996; Paul, 2005) and to the concept of Disneyfication which is the repacking and thematising of places and their identities (Bryman, 2004). Clearly, using these ideas and applying these concepts in practice should be approached with great caution. When transforming places for the leisure economy becomes a commercial or political goal on its own, it could be at odds with the sustainable development of local societies and environments. Nevertheless, due to its potential contribution to socio-economic and spatial development the design, development and management of such experience environments remains a relevant topic to further explore and develop in the context of a highly dynamic and competitive leisure economy.

Lastly, a nonlinear perspective on regional development paths will always be accompanied by a discussion on whether to further specialize for increasing returns on investments at the risk of lock-in situation or on whether to diversify by means of niche-innovations for the benefit of flexibility. "The longstanding binary of specialisation versus diversification" as it is called by Dawley et al. (2010, p. 662). The challenge is to find a balance, as is discussed in the context of a degree of diversity (chapter 6). This will be an ongoing process to find such a balance and will remain a point of discussion due to the different perspectives and interests of entrepreneurs, local communities, politicians, planners, societal organization, entrepreneurial associations and lobby groups, etc. Particularly, because findings such a balance involves making decision on privileging some land uses and activities at the expense of others. It is, nevertheless, essential to choose as well as essential one to have this ongoing discussion when accepting a nonlinear perspective and aiming to manage the nonlinear development trajectories of regions, such as those that are in the process of leisuring.