2.1 Unlocking the Padlock of Developmental Potential

With the emergence of globalisation and the subsequent socio-economic restructuring, nation states have been compelled to redefine their role insofar as engaging with international and local agencies is concerned. Contrary to the view held by some social scientists particularly in the mid-1990s that the nation state was 'hollowing out', 'obsolete' or in near demise (Deas and Ward, 2000: 23) nation states have proven to be effective in holding societies together. As MacLeod (2001: 813) rightly states, "the state continues to play a central role in the ongoing struggle to command, control, reconfigure, and transform social space." What might have changed however is the way in which the nation state interacts with sub-national tiers of government. In other words, the scale on which the struggle is organised has been significantly denationalised. The devolution of power from the centre to the sub-national tiers has paved a way for the resurgence of regions as formidable political entities and focal points for socio-economic governance (MacLeod, 2001; Deas and Ward, 2000; Keating, 1998).

When viewed through the new regionalist lens, a region ceases to become a mere outcome of deeper political and economic processes (Storper, 1997). Instead, a region (that is the level below the national and above the local tier of government) becomes "a fundamental basis of economic and social life; a vital relational assert for distilling learning-based competitive advantage" (MacLeod, 2001: 805) and a functional space for economic planning and political governance (Keating, 1998). Consequently, NR as a theoretical paradigm acknowledges the important role played by regions in an era where there constant global socio economic and political restructuring. Writing on the resurgence of the region in the twenty-first century, Deas (2004: 2) describes how globalisation has resulted in the "reterritorialisation of the state in which power has dislocated upwards (to an array of supra-national institutional entities), downwards (to cities and regions) and …'outwards' (to non–state bodies)." In other words, sub-national governments as well as non-governmental agencies are perceived to be strategically positioned to engage with

the supra-national as well as the local agencies in a more effective and productive manner.

Considering this, one should point out from the onset that different regions respond differently to the new regionalist wave. The political devolution process for instance, determines the power and thus the ability of a region to engage with and negotiate with the forces of globalisation. In almost all federal states, be it in developed or developing countries, national governments determine the political and the financial power that sub-national tiers wield (Bird and Vaillancourt, 1998; Rodriguez-Pose and Gill, 1998). Ultimately, the political and fiscal autonomy of a particular region dictates the way in which that particular region engages with global as well as local agencies. In most developed countries such as Germany, Britain and the USA, regions are bound to have more power to determine their social, economic and political fate as compared to regions in Africa and Latin America. In any case, regions in developing countries possess the needed *institutional thickness* (Amin and Thrift, 1995) to express and define their regional interests. Still, that cannot be said for regions in developing countries which are faced with different and complex challenges.

Thus, a discussion on the rise the region of the region should acknowledge the different political and the institutional contexts in which regions operate. However, one cannot ignore the globalisation trends that cut across all regions and cities in both developed and developing countries. It is imperative therefore for scholars and academics in the so-called North and South to engage with common issues such as globalisation and the renaissance of regions in the post-modernist context. In any case, the decentralisation wave seems to have struck all countries albeit in varying degrees.

It is the aim of this chapter to attempt to understand the response[s] taken by regions from different political and institutional contexts in fostering strategic

spatial planning, because, as the proponents of NR propose, the planning process has been influenced by new regionalist wave (Tewdwr-Jones, 2001; Vigar *et al.* 2001; Wheeler, 2000). Despite the differences in constitutional and legislative contexts, regions in both developed and developing countries have an important role to play in shaping planning systems. This chapter therefore strives to analyse the roles played by different regions in coping with the new regionalist planning agenda. In other words, emphasis will be given to the powers that regions have in shaping and realising their planning agenda. Furthermore, the constitutional and legislative framework whereof regions operate will be reviewed. To achieve the task at hand, the discussion will focus on regions in both developing and developed countries, with more attention given to regions' approach to strategic planning. Thus, the chapter is structured as follows:

• New regionalism will be employed as a theoretical framework or paradigm where arguments and debates on the resurgence of the region can be effectively engaged with;

• The new and emerging international perspective on regional-scale planning will be explored. Furthermore, international experiences on regional-scale planning will be examined, with more emphasis given to the constitutional and legislative framework that provinces find themselves operating in;

• The intergovernmental relations between different tiers of government and other non-governmental agencies in informing strategic planning will be explored.

By the end of this discussion, one should be able to have an understanding of how different regions approach strategic planning, and the knowledge gained from this discussion could be used to inform and perhaps improve the status and effectiveness provincial-scale planning in South Africa.

2.2 New Regionalism and the Rise of the Region

From the late 1990s, there was a resurgence of literature on the rise of the region (Keating, 1998; Jones and McLeod, 1999, Vigar *et al.* 2000; Deas and Ward, 2000; Tewdwr-Jones, 2001). For theorists of NR, the region posed as a new symbolic space that has the capacity to engage with the supra-national, local as well as the global economic and political agencies. For MacLeod (2001) most of the new regionalist scholars are mainly from North America and Western Europe and their work was influenced by the politics of the time which was characterised by devolution of political power to sub-national levels (Tewdwr-Jones, 2001). With the transformation and redefinition (but not withering away) of the role of the welfarist state towards the end of the twentieth century, the region was canonised and decoded as "a nexus of untraded interdependencies[2]" (MacLeod 2001: 800). In the face of a transforming state structure and functions, a region posed as formidable political entity that could foster political and economic governance (Wheeler, 2000). Without necessarily replacing the nation state, a region particularly in the post-Fordist European context was seen to be in a better position to work with both the national and local government in tackling the challenges (and opportunities) that came with global socio-economic restructuring.

Like any theoretical paradigm, NR is not without its critics. Lovering (1999) for instance, directs attention to the shortcomings of NR, particularly its sweeping approach to regions as uniform entities that are strong and ready to tackle the globalisation challenges head-on. Although it has its own loop-holes, NR has managed to capture and acknowledge the political and economic processes that have not only redefined the role of the nation-state as the main actor in the politico-economic arena, but has also managed to highlight the shift from government to governance (Amdam, 2003). The new regionalist approach highlights the importance of networking of different political and economic actors towards a

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[2] For MacLeod (2001: 807) the interdependencies are a result of complex synergies and networking that exist between public and private agencies as well as non-governmental actors.

common goal and that from a new regionalist perspective, the regional space is also a forum where specific regional issues can be addressed. New regionalism celebrates the politics of difference that is celebrating and embracing cultural differences that might exist in any given nation, without threatening national unity and harmony. This expression of regional differences is likely to give the marginalised communities a voice in the decision-making process, and moreover, being closer to the community, regional actors are likely to consider local experiences and histories.

The NR agenda emphasises networking within and between regions and that the success of the region as a viable economic motor as well as a political space for governance depends on the synergies that the region forms with other regional players (MacLeod, 2001; Storper, 1997). Being a part of institutional or government machinery, the region is expected to liaise with other tiers of government in order to attain the desired economic, social, environmental and political goals.

For Rainnie (2002) NR derives much of its intellectual value from the New Institutionalist turn and its emphasis on the creativity, innovation and governance at regional level, one can rightly purport that NR is informed by Third Way thinking (Harrison, 2002a). Not only does NI and Third Way thinking stress the importance of governance with focus given to partnerships between government, the private sector and NGOs, but these paradigms feed into the New Public Management (NPM) agenda – an ideological that also emerged towards the end of the twentieth century emphasising efficient management of public institutions (Vigar et al. 2000; Healey, 1997). For new regionalists, regions (particularly urbanised ones) are faced with a task of being inventive and flexible in their dealing with international, national and local role players. In other words, the region is an arena where the economic well-being of the postmodernist society is based. Adaptability and inventiveness for regions therefore, is of paramount importance. As Rainnie (2002: 3) explains:

The *creative region* is one where innovative people come together and pool their ideas to generate non-linear solutions to issues that contribute to their local communities becoming better places…*The creative region* will be one that has the ability to generate and implement new ideas, by *actively* linking its structures and processes of innovation and learning to regional needs.

Thus, the beginning of the twenty-first century was characterised by new ways of thinking and new ways of engaging with societal, institutional and political issues (Vigar *et al.* 2000). The survival of the region and the state relied primarily on the institutions' craftiness and reflexivity particularly in engaging with complex forces of globalisation. Part of this craft and reflexive nature of the state resulted in the political devolution – a process that led to or necessitated the rise of the region. Before delving into the crux of this discussion (that is regional-scale planning) is it worthy for one to sketch out the link between devolution and the renaissance of the region – both processes have a direct bearing on the regions' approach to strategic planning, a concept that will be dealt with shortly.

2.3 Devolution and the Rise of the Region

For most countries in the north, political and fiscal decentralisation was seen as part and parcel of the neo-liberal agenda. In other words, for mature democracies of the North such as the USA, Canada, Australia and Germany, the devolution process was embraced as a way of either quelling political tension or simple relieving the nation state of some of its traditional roles. In most of the federal states in the North, the central government did not completely relinquish its political powers to the sub-national tiers. Instead of completely hollowing out (McLeod, 2001; Deas and Ward, 2000) central governments in most federal nations such as Germany and France still retained much of their political authority. What the devolution process achieved in these Northern countries was to foster democracy at sub-national level. For countries such as Canada where there were ethno-political tensions exacerbated by

differences in ethnicity, the decentralisation process led to the quelling and toning down of those tensions[3].

It is not within the scope of this discussion to spell out the pros and cons of decentralisation. This section however seeks to point out the link between the devolution process and the subsequent rise of the region particularly in the mid-1990s onwards. For theorists like Tewdwr-Jones (2001) the devolution drive, was a consequence and a response to the global socio-economic restructuring process. The emergence of the neo-liberalist paradigm coupled with restructuring and the redefinition of the nation state's political and economic role, meant that political actors were urged to consider other stakeholders who would have the capacity to negotiate with the new global demands (Vigar *et al.* 2000). Globalism therefore, led to localism – with more emphasis given to local governance (Tewdwr-Jones, 2001). For some critics however, localism[4] gave way to NR (Deas and Ward, 2000). In being above the local and just below the national government, the regional tier posed to be the appropriate arena for interpreting national policies, making it easy for local authorities to interpret and implement them (Tewdwr-Jones, 2001).

The renaissance of the region in the Northern countries during the late 1990s be said to have marked yet another wave of devolution – a process that redefined the regional arena, canonising it as a strategic space for promoting political and economic governance. The rise of the region therefore led to governance – that is joint action driven by a common purpose, a shared framework of values and rules and continuous interaction between the region and other tiers of government as well as the civil society (Amdam, 2004; MacLeod, 2001; Keating, 1998). Thus regions of the North were seen through the critical yet entrepreneurialist lenses of NR and the underpinned by neo-liberalist ideology.

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[3] Tensions were between French-speaking Quebecers and the predominantly English-speaking state government regarding moves to make Quebec nominally independent from Canadian federal control.
[4] Localism – that is the importance of local authorities in fostering economic development and local political governance.

Although this emanated from the political and socio-economic histories of the North (McLeod, 2001) there is no doubt that the regions and cities in the South caught the new regionalist fever as well. As Bird and Vaillancourt (1998) indicate, the influence of the tenets of decentralisation were beginning to emerge in the 1990s and to varying degrees, had already been made manifest. Unlike in the North were most countries have the resources and viable political institutions to fully execute the decentralisation agenda, the picture in the South is rather complex and 'mosaic'- representing different responses to the decentralisation process (Khan, 1998). The democratisation and decentralisation process in Latin America and Africa proved to be either "a panacea or a plague- either a cure for all the ills of such countries or an addition to their heavy burdens" (Bird and Vaillancourt, 1998: 1). Faced with economic stagnation, rapid urbanisation and poverty, most countries in the South were compelled to try and interpret the globalist ideology which was a dominated and created by the rich Northern countries (Khan, 1998). Decentralisation therefore was seen as a move that could foster local democracy and economic development, at the same time serving as an entry point to the global village.

In a bid to capture the political realities of the South particularly in the 1990s, African scholars (Khan, 1998) vividly illustrated that for many poor countries, the globalisation and decentralisation process led to the capture of the state apparatus by a predatory elite. For Bayart (1999) not only did this lead to the criminalisation of the state but they also paved a way for a deadly trend of politics – the *politics of the belly*[5].

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[5] In their writing on the 'predatory elite' including corrupt and greedy politicians Bayard *et al.* (1999) explain that the new wave of democratization particularly in the twentieth century politics led to the mismanagement of the political resources thus leading to the "privatisation of the state" and for this elite, there was a blurry line between state and personal resources.

To exacerbate the situation, most countries in the South were (or are still) characterised by weak political institutions marred by corruption and dire mismanagement of public resources. In explaining the failure of most developing countries to execute the decentralist agenda, Khan (1998: 10) submits that in most of those countries:

> Policies are made in a hurry, often under intense external pressure, new legislatures are inexperienced, and inundated with massive amounts of new legislation; the executive bureaucracy are hamstrung by weak staff, poor information and logistical support; and inadequate procedures and lack of clarity concerning clear relations between governmental departments.

With that backdrop, most regions and cities in the South are likely to have missed the proverbial new regionalist boat that sailed across the North. Realising the political, economic and cultural differences that exist between the North and the South, Watson (2005) has questioned the usefulness of normative theories in the context of the South. While Watson's critique is based on planning theories such as communicative rationality instigated by Forester and Healey among others, one can also apply the same principles and question the significance the relevance of NR in the context of the South. Given that most countries in this part of the world are struggling to grapple with the democratisation and decentralisation process, it is tempting for one to come to a conclusion that theories such as NR are Eurocentric and do not apply to the African context. Drawing such a conclusion would be surely precipitous and rash. Instead of emphasising continental differences, social scientists should strive to come up with perspectives (be it in planning, economics or politics) that draw the North and the South together (Harrison, 2005; Watson, 2005).

Without condoning any blind embrace of a normative theory, this discussion stresses the importance of reflexivity and ingenuity. For countries in the South that are faced with political instability, economic stagnation and in some instances, near collapse of the state itself (Bayard, 1999; Khan, 1998) a roadmap to institutional recovery lies in the ability to promote stateness. In other words, all tiers of government should strive to work together – marrying local experiences with international ones. It is crucial there for scholars and academics in the South to try and understand the current trends that shape and dictate the pace of change and development. Notwithstanding the histories that define regions and cities in the South, there is a need for regions in this part of the world to be a part of the globalising world. Understanding decentralisation and the significance of sub-national tiers of government as well as civil societies in fostering economic, cultural and political development might be a step towards economic independence for most countries in the South.

For relatively new democracies like South Africa, a thorough understanding of the international political trends such as globalisation, decentralisation and the rise of the region, might contribute to the country's knowledge-base, leading to better-informed policy and decision-making processes. As Watson (2005) rightly declares any engagement with theories from very different parts of the world must not simply be imported and implemented locally. Instead, countries like South Africa can maximise on the relevant international experiences, compounding them with local experiences and histories and then adapting them to context-sensitive planning situations. The ability to marry the international theories and experiences with the local ones is important especially in the area of strategic planning. As the cliché states – *no man is an island* – countries therefore learn from each other's experiences simultaneously remaining locally anchored (Hague and Jenkins, 2005).

2.4 Regional-Scale Planning: A Strategic Approach

In this section one seeks to unpack the concept of strategic regional-scale planning in the context of NR and global socio-economic restructuring. Writings on the emergence of regional planning date back to the mid twentieth century. Critics like Weaver (1979: 14) outline the importance and inevitability of regional planning – that "it has come of age [and is]…part of the established machinery of government." Seemingly in agreement Gore (1984, cited in Boshoff, 1989: 9) makes note of the fact that, "regional planning has become a necessity in most countries. But nobody seems to quite know what it is, and no nation seems to know how to do it." Regional-scale planning has become so many things to so many people, and for some, it is a type of public planning which is specifically concerned with social space; with the 'ordering' of activities and facilities in space at a scale greater than a single local authority and smaller than the state" (Martins 1986, cited in Wannop, 1995). In a similar vein, Wannop (1995: xv) defines regional planning as an activity that deals with "the balancing of resources to modify standards of living and disparities in economic conditions as between different parts of the nations." Indeed, regional planning does involve elements of planning for economic development within a given social space,[6] but in the twenty-first century context however, regional-scale planning has become more complex, sophisticated and more strategic in outlook (Amdam, 2004; Vigar *et al.* 2000).

From a new regionalist perspective, the phrase *regional-scale planning* does not only describe the geographical space or context where planning takes places, it also focuses on the strategies and plans employed by sub-national governments in meeting their developmental goals. For Tewdwr-Jones (2002) the fate of regional planning, particularly in this age of global restructuring is defined by the way in which a region as an institution or an entity, interacts and networks with other

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[6] Realising that these definitions were formulated in the 1980s and mid-1990s respectively, one should understand that during that particular 'era' planning for many critics, meant physical and land-use planning. With the advent of sustainable development and a move away from modernism, planning has become more complex with more emphasis given to strategy and governance.

regional actors. Regional planning therefore is characterised and defined by the way in which regions position themselves in a complex maze characterised by different *scales of governance*[7] (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). These new forms of governance have created an opportunity for regional actors to participate fully in determining the development of regions. As Hague (1990: 296) articulates, a shift towards governance has released "a real tide of imagination and optimism" placing regions as formidable actors in strategic planning and development.

In a conference held under the banner of *Everyday Life and Spatial Governance* Harrison (2005: 5) points to the importance of regions and cities in the North as well as the South to foster spatial governance – a concept that emphasises the recognition of spatial dimensions in everyday interactions. Regional-scale planning therefore is premised on, and informed by governance - an action, manner and system of governing in which the boundary between the public and the private sector and the civil society, becomes permeable (Amdam, 2004; Storper, 1998). What differentiates regional-scale planning of the twentieth century with what one might term *new* strategic regional-scale planning are the deliberation processes which not only lead to broad community and stakeholder participation (Hague and Jenkins, 2005) but also results in strategic plan-making (Healey et al. 1997). The new strategic regional-scale planning therefore, strives to achieve sustainable development, with the regional level acting as a nexus for top-down and bottom-up planning processes.

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[7] 'Scales of governance' refers to the existence of networks between different role players who have an influence and a 'stake' in regional planning and economic development.

2.5 Unpacking Strategic Planning

At this juncture, one should try and unpack the concept of "strategic planning." Instead of being mere planning jargon or concept developed by planners to confuse and alienate – strategic planning is a process that when fully employed, can transform the way the society perceives itself. In explaining strategic spatial planning process, Healey (2004: 46) writes:

> *Strategic* is sometimes used to mean a higher level of administration or a more general or abstract level of policy… [It is] a focus on that which really makes a difference to the fortunes of an area over time. *Planning* also highlights a developmental movement from the past to the future. It implies that it is possible to decide between appropriate actions now in terms of their potential impact in shaping socio-spatial relations. This future imagination is not merely a matter of short-term political expediency, but is expected to be able to project trans-generational temporal scale, especially in relation to infrastructure investment, environmental management and quality of life.

For Healey (2004: 46) strategic planning "also implies a mode of governance driven by the articulation of policies through some kind of deliberative process and under the judgment of collective, active action in relation to these policies." The new regional-scale strategic planning process therefore, involves a deliberate effort to improve collective action (Healey *et al*. 1997). For some, strategic planning at any level "emphasises the dynamic nature of strategy making for sustainable and balanced spatial development" (Hutter and Wiechmann, 2005: 2). Not only does strategic planning lead to spatial sustainable spatial development – it is a process that seeks to co-ordinate actors and institutions in fragmented, uncertain environments thus being able to empower and motivate key stakeholders and to provide a decision-making forum for the sustainable management of the space, the environment and the economy (Hutter and Wiechmann, 2005: 2).

When employed at regional level, strategic planning is likely to promote sustainable and liveable human settlements, and developmental approaches that are as diverse and varied as regions themselves. As Harrison (2005) and Watson (2005) have highlighted, regions of the North are faced with different challenges and opportunities than those in the South. Essentially, that while strategic plan-making in the North might be concerned with environmental sustainability and the promotion of liveable neighbourhoods (Healey *et al.* 1997) a similar process in the South might be more concerned with problems of marginality, poverty and underdevelopment (Harrison, 2005). So, what might one call an acceptable definition of a sustainable strategic planning? Although it is not a comprehensive, one-size-fits-all definition, it clearly spells out the important components of a strategic planning, and according to the TCPA (2003) strategic planning should be:

- "*Visionary* as well as practical;
- Aimed at long-term viability *in terms of 'sustainable development '* criteria;
- *Prescriptive*, not solely informative;
- *Binding*, not just advisory;
- A combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches;
- *Spatial*, relating to specific locations;
- *Sectoral*, relating to specific sectors and areas of activity;
- *Achievable*, in terms of resources and processes of implementation;
- *Well founded* in terms of research and understanding;
- *Comprehensive* in terms of the range of coverage, but not too detailed;
- *Consistent* in content and application;
- *Open and accessible*, with wide consultation, public participation, and direct involvement of stakeholders;
- *Cyclical*, through monitoring and review medium and long-term in timescales; and
- *Accountable* to an elected authority, assembly or parliament at national and regional level."

Without engaging with the above characteristics of strategic planning in detail, suffice to highlight the importance the pragmatic nature of a strategic plan. Most importantly, the political buy-in is critical to the realisation of the strategic plans' visions, goals and objectives (TCPA, 2003; Healey et al. 1997). The abovementioned characteristics of a strategic plan, could act as a criteria for evaluating regional plans from different political contexts.

However, it should be made clear that although *some* strategic regional plans may be reviewed, the main focus of the discussion is on the power that regions have in formulating and implementing strategic plans at regional level. Moreover, the discussion tries to understand the legislative framework influencing the role played by provinces in fostering strategic planning. For the degree of political and fiscal devolution as well as the position of the region in relation to other tiers of government is bound to have an impact on the capacity and influence that this tier has in engaging in planning activities. In response to political and economic restructuring, regions are becoming more and involved in making strategic planning. In a context where regions are merely deconcentrated arms of the centre (Garmise, 1997) the incentive for innovation, creativity and strategic planning might be deficient. It is pivotal therefore for the region to be a part of functional government machinery, at the same time having sufficient resources and influence to define and strategically address region-specific challenges.

2.6 A Quest for a Sound Planning Polity...[8]

Indeed, in one of his writings on strategic planning, Tewdwr-Jones (2002) points out that planning is a political process that impacts on and permeates through every faction of the postmodernist society. He (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002: xi) goes on to state that planning "masks a whole series of conflicting webs between different levels of government and different political actors that have to be reconciled." The negotiations and compromises taken by different tiers of government and political

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[8] The title of this section is an adaptation of Mark Tewdwr-Jones's (2001) book: The Planning Polity: Planning, Government and the Policy Process.

actors concerned tend to shape the nation's planning system. This relationship between different levels of government therefore, is what Tewdwr-Jones (2002: xi) refers to as the *planning polity:*

> Planning polity [is] the political, administrative and governmental contexts within which [strategic planning] policy-making is placed and the tensions and conflicts between each of those various tiers, scales and agencies involved in the planning process.

In other words, the negotiating power that each level of government has, determines its place in the planning polity. When trying to understand regional-scale planning particularly in federal countries where there has been some form of devolution of power to the sub-national governments, it is crucial for one to have an understanding of the context as well as the tensions that exist between the region and other tiers of government. Depending on the power devolved to the regions, there is bound to be some variation in the way regions approach planning. If there is a clear intergovernmental planning system with all the tiers of government working together towards the same goal, there is a likelihood of attaining a sound planning system.

To accentuate the above point on planning polity, one could turn to Wannop (1995: 273) who suggests that in a federation such as the USA, a sound planning polity or system can be achieved if:

> Different tiers of government's responsibilities intermingle, forming an image of a rainbow, or marble cake [with] an inseparable mingling of differently coloured ingredients, the colours appearing in vertical and diagonal strands and unexpected whirls.

Vivid and appealing as it might be, attaining this kind of 'rainbow' planning takes determination from policy makers and other stakeholders to achieve a synchronised planning system. As the unfolding chapters will highlight, in developing countries

such as South Africa and India, the process of harmonising and integrating planning is yet to be undertaken and entrenched (Oranje, 2001; Harrison, 2000).

Since this discussion concerns regional-scale planning, one should try and understand the *role* and the *purpose* that regions can play in contributing to the stability and the efficiency of the planning system. Although different planning systems are designed and structured according to the needs of a particular polity, one should devise criteria or a set of attributes that define strategic planning particularly in a sub-national context. Drawing on work from the TCPA (2003) article on strategic planning and regional planning one could state that:

• Strategic planning at regional level should set out guidelines for regional and local development. In other words regional-scale planning should strive to promote a *well-balanced, functional planning polity*.

• That kind of a functional polity can be attained if there is a clear framework for future infrastructure investment for the public and private sector. In short, a strategic regional plan should guide investment, thus being able to stimulate regional and local economic growth in areas of need (Garmise, 1997).

• As one will realise in later sections of this discussion, for most planning systems, there seems to be a lack of a co-ordination between different government sectors (Tewdwr-Jones, 2001; Healey *et al*. 1997). From the TCPA's (2003) view point, a strategic regional plan should provide inter-developmental synchronisation. Simply put, the plan should bring together and align land use, housing, transport, education as well as other activities. A case in point – for the past five years the South African government has been trying to enhance its planning polity by encouraging the harmonisation and alignment of sectoral and departmental activities (Mohamed *et al*. 2004). Such attempts to harmonise planning at regional level are indicative of the region's pivotal role as a functional space (MacLeod, 2001) for nurturing political, economic and spatial governance.

• According to the TCPA (2003) a strategic regional plan should be "accompanied by effective powers for implementation". The decentralisation process therefore should guarantee the political and legislative authorities that regions have especially with regard to planning. Instead of only being monitors of local planning, regions should be in a position to offer financial assistance and guidance to the sub-regional levels. A strategic regional plan therefore, should embody regional as well as local strategic planning aspirations.

• Such a strategic regional plan can only be formulated through regular consultation with local authorities, the private sector, as well as the civil society. As previously hinted, a sound regional strategic plan should be informed by top-down and bottom-up processes (TCPA, 2003; Healey *et al*. 1997). The participation of many stakeholders therefore is likely to lead to a strategic regional plan targeting specific objectives and programmes.

Thus, strategic planning at regional level has the potential of promoting spatial, political and economic governance. Although the above roles and purposes of regional strategic planning might seem to be ideal, when a proper planning polity is in place, such approach to planning can yield positive results. The following section will try and explore the planning systems in the UK, Netherlands, and India (Figure2.1) with attention played to the relationship between different tiers of government with regard to strategic planning. Moreover, the role played by the region in promoting strategic planning will be analysed. Although it is a daunting task to scrutinise each and every regional plan, one would try and weigh the regional plan against the characteristics or criteria outlined above.
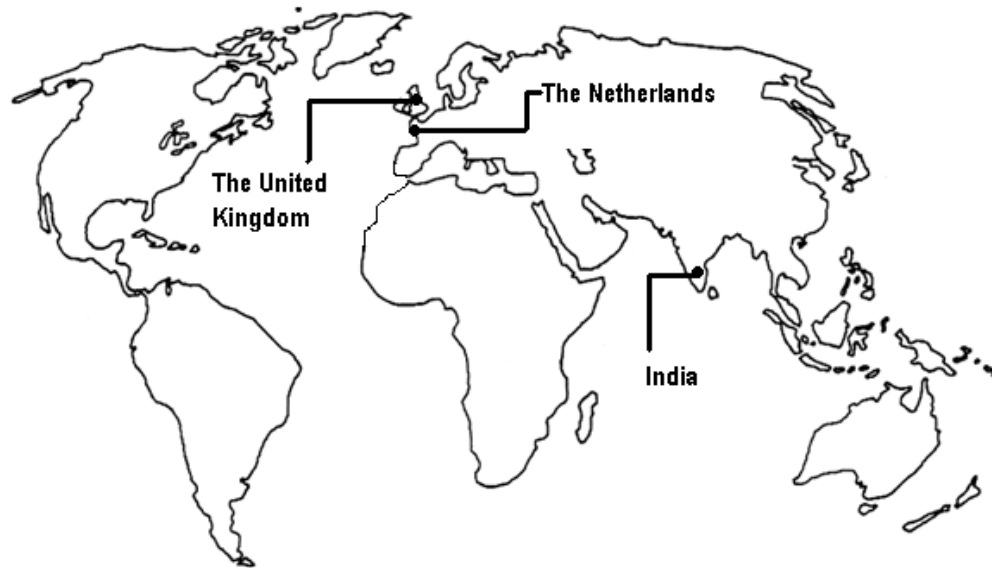
Figure 2.1 Locating the UK, Netherlands and India in the Global Context – These planning systems have particular interest in this exploration because of their efforts to develop and implement regional planning on the ground.
Source: Pearson Education © 2005 from
http://wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/579/592970/BlankMaps/World%20Map.gif

2.7 Strategic Planning in the UK

Most writing on strategic planning in the UK (Figure2.2), particularly towards the end of the twentieth century, celebrates the renaissance or the re-emergence of the regional tier in the planning system (Healey *et al*., 1997; Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). Theorists like Bradbury and Mawson (cited in Vigar *et al*. 2000: 4) acknowledge the "significance of locality, place and territory as foci for policy attention." One should point out from the outset though that the British planning history is long and complex. The political and institutional processes that led to the current strategic planning in this particular country are intricate and multifaceted. Put in other words, the rise of regional planning in the UK is a culmination or a product of diverse political processes, compromises and negotiations.

Figure2.2 The United Kingdom: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – Perhaps a country largely acknowledged as being one of the first in the world to formally develop planning systems and certainly a world leader in developing regional planning.
Source: Webmarket Group LLC © 2004 from http://www.last-minute.co.uk/images/uk_map.gif

Prior to the devolution agenda heralded by the New Labour Party, planning in the UK was highly centralised. Most of the planning activities took place at local level – a tier that acted as an arm of the central government. Thus, the central government made planning decisions for Wales, Scotland and England. These political entities (or regions) did not play a major role in determining their regional fate. When analysing planning in the UK, the term *region* cannot be easily applied as would be say, in the Netherlands. One should actually state that the devolution process of 1997 was long overdue, but that the British central government, despite its centralist leanings, was able to guide the planning process of the nation, offering national certainty, consistency and co-ordination between different areas of the country (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002).

What is of interest in this discussion is the devolution process that transformed the UK planning system, owing to the Blair administration and its belief in Third Way politics, the constitution of the UK became more accommodative particularly with regard to the more strategic aspects of regional planning, especially after 1997.

2.7.1 Devolution and the Rise of Regional-Scale Planning In the UK

Regionalism in the UK gained currency at a time when there was a need for new ways of thinking and new ways of doing particularly in the area of policy making (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002; Vigar *et al*. 2000). Not only was the nation-state's traditional role as "a dominant economic unit of global importance" questioned in the 1990s, but the regional level was posed as a new political space that could lead to economic growth (Hague and Jenkins, 2005: 21). The rise of the region in the UK was a response to the need for regional identity which had been suppressed for centuries (Mawson, 1998). Moreover, a shift towards governance necessitated the involvement of other role players that were hitherto denied a chance to participate in the decision-making process.

The establishment of Regional Development Agencies (RDA) for England in 1997, and the call for a Scottish Parliament and a National Assembly for Wales in 1999 marked the beginning of a new political dispensation in the UK. This devolution process certainly had an impact on the planning system of this particular country. With the National Assembly of Wales possessing policy-making powers and the Scottish parliament with the authority to make and interpret their own laws, there is no doubt that the planning system in these two polities was to reflect distinctive regional aspirations (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). From a new regionalist perspective, the devolution process paved a way for regional creativity and economic innovation- at the same time giving regional policy-makers to address region-specific agendas (Deas and Ward, 2000).

The following subsection will try and analyse the strategic planning systems that emanated from the UK devolution process, with the discussion being limited to specifically to Wales.

2.7.2 Strategic Planning in Wales

The establishment of the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) marked the beginning of a new planning system in this country. Put in other words, this kind of devolution whereby a region can have enough autonomy to formulate its own policies is rare. In actual fact, the establishment of the NAW can be said to be a triumph of the new regionalist agenda. As Tewdwr-Jones (2000) indicates, the political custodians of the newly founded Welsh nation stove to create a distinctive, yet inclusive governance system that would best serve the interest of the its people.

In a bid to utilise its policy-making powers, the NAW responded to the needs of its people by enacting a Wales Act (1998). The Act enabled the assembly to engage in issues around urban and rural regeneration, transport infrastructure projects, town and country planning policy, environmental protection, as well as the conservation of built and natural heritage. The political authority that Wales possessed after decentralisation enabled it to be more responsive to the needs of its citizens (Tewdwr-Jones 2000).

After having outlined the characteristics and the roles of the NAW, one cannot doubt that the decentralisation process in the UK certainly led to the promotion of a better planning polity for the whole country. Although there might have been fears or concerns that the devolution process was likely to lead to the fragmentation of the UK planning system, resulting in the centre losing its control over planning matters (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002) – that proved not to be the case. Furthermore, the central government has played a major role in providing guidance and consistency in the planning system.

Before moving into a deeper exploration of the actual plan for Wales, it must be noted that the devolution process and the NAW that resulted from it, play a major role in providing policy and guidance to local planning authorities

2.7.3 Plan for Wales 2001

As Healey (2004) has posed, a strategic plan is defined by its all-inclusive and forward-looking nature and like most countries in the North, strategic planning in Wales is informed and guided by the principles of sustainable development. As articulated in the plan (NAW, 2001: 8), the main objectives of the strategy is ensure that there is quality delivery of services, helping those in need, making policies work and being innovative. These goals can be attained through working in partnership, a fact the NAW acknowledges by stressing the importance of networking through involving all stakeholders in strategic planning. As outlined by the TCPA (2003), a strategic plan must be a result of both bottom-up and top-down processes. Plan for Wales 2001 said be a product of extensive community participation – a process guided by the NAW (2001).

Instead of being voluminous and complex, the strategic plan for Wales is a twenty-four-page document that clearly spells out the short-term and medium-term goals of the country. The goals of the plan (NAW 2001) include:

- Developing the learning country;
- Improving health care services;
- Promoting a modern, competitive economy;
- Creating sustainable neighbourhoods and strong communities;
- Supporting rural Wales;
- Fostering territorial identity and
- Promoting governance.

Not only are the set goals well-articulated in the plan, they are also pragmatic and attainable. To give an example, the plan sought "to develop its economy by sharpening the focus of grant support to small businesses as well as strengthening business and academic links" in Wales (NAW, 2001: 11). By 2003│2004 (which is the short-term goal) the plan was to ensure that there was an increase in the number of businesses formed. The medium to long-term strategies include ensuring that all

businesses in Wales have access to a choice of modern advanced telecommunications services at an affordable cost. The point to be noted here is that the strategic nature of the plan lies in its ability to project and forecast both short-term and long-term plans.

One of the reasons for the political devolution process and the formation of NAW was to enable Wales to formulate a planning system that deals with Welsh-specific issues (Tewdwr-Jones, 2001). The promotion of sustainable rural areas in Wales for instance is indicative of the plan's target-oriented nature. This point is linked to the promotion of a distinctly Welsh identity. As pointed out in the plan, "Wales has a strong identity – with a growing number of people learning and speaking Welsh, an active art sector and international reputation for [their] festivals" (NAW, 2001: 18). The plan acknowledges that these distinctive Welsh identities are under pressure from the global media and social change. Thus, from a NR standpoint, territorial identity can be promoted through strategic regional planning. After the devolution process Wales was able to redefine its identity as a region. Although it still maintained contact with the central government, devolution gave it an opportunity to reinforce its territorial distinctiveness.

The success of a strategic plan is dependent on the political support it gets from government officials (TCPA, 2003; Needham, 1997) and the NAW has been instrumental in supporting strategic planning in Wales acting as a forum for coordinating strategic policy-making in Wales. As the main policy-making body, NAW has the responsibility of garnering support from all relevant stakeholders and promoting public participation in planning matters (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002).

The Plan for Wales 2001 has a clear implementation strategy and is said to have played a role in garnering support from the business sector thus being able to set a budget for all projects outlined in the plan. As spelled out in the plan (NAW, 2001: 23) "commitments [for strategic planning] are backed up by significant public investment and a clear operational framework against which to measure progress."

Not only are the planning projects budgeted for, there is also an appraisal, review and evaluation process, and the Cabinet is also committed to ensure that all strategic planning policies and programmes are in line with the Assembly's guiding principles.

So, given the right political and institutional environment, a region can liaise with supra-national entities thus being able to promote economic growth. The NAW has enabled Wales to form strategic alliances or linkages with the European Commission (EC) as well as the European Union (NAW, 2001). Such linkages have enabled Wales to access structural grants from the EU.

Furthermore, the Wales planning system is positively influenced by the EU planning principles that are embodied in the ESDP. Thus, this brief discussion of the Welsh strategic plan sought to highlight the major components that define strategic planning. In this vein, a strategic plan should be concise and the goals and objectives well-articulated and more practicably, the implementation strategy must be supported and funded by a operations and capital expenditure budgeting structure. As highlighted in the Plan for Wales 2001, strategic planning must also have a political buy-in and it must be supported and driven by an authoritative body such as the NAW. Not only does the Assembly work hand in hand with planners, the business sector and the civil society to formulate strategic planning policies, it also ensures that planning objectives are prioritised and systematically executed. As a medium-long-term strategic planning instrument, Plan for Wales is backed by a spatial plan – the People, Places, Futures: Wales Spatial Plan (WSP).

2.7.4 People, Places, Futures: Wales Spatial Plan

A spatial plan like this is important as it reflects "honestly and clearly the way a whole range of activities and investment occurs across a geographical space" (NAW, 2004: 3). The first Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) therefore seeks to realise the goals and targets set in the Plan for Wales 2001. Realising that there are no uniform and arbitrary solutions to 'fit' all parts of Wales, the Assembly acknowledged that there was a need to identify the most suitable approach for each area. As clearly articulated in the WSP (NAW, 2004: 4):

> "Spatial planning is the consideration of what can and should happen where. It investigates the interaction of different policies and practice across regional space, and sets the role of places in a wider context. It goes well beyond 'traditional' land-use planning and sets out a strategic framework to guide future development and policy interventions, whether or not these relate to formal land use planning control."

The WSP therefore, seeks to ensure that the public and private sector as well as other role players involved in strategic planning are able to develop policies that are target-oriented. The WSP is an instrument for coordinating investment in the region thus giving guidance and direction to those who wish to invest in area.

In essence, the spatial plan (NAW, 2004: 5) is guided by five themes namely;
►Building sustainable communities;
►Promoting a sustainable economy;
►Valuing the environment;
►Achieving sustainable accessibility and;
►Respecting distinctiveness.

The themes in the spatial plan correlate to the goals set out in the strategic plan discussed above, and are also related to other Welsh planning strategies such as the Planning Policy Wales: 2002 which sets out the Welsh land use policies (NAW,

2004). Given its well-knit and coordinated nature, one might boldly suggest that the WSP is bound to achieve its goal of promoting sustainable development. Suffice to say, that the plan is set to provide a clear framework for future collaborative action involving the NAW, the business community as well as the civil society. In other words, the spatial plan is instrumental in cementing progressive networking and governance in Wales. Apart from informing the Assembly's budgetary process, the spatial plan clearly outlines the development trajectory in the area making it possible for policy makers and the business community to make informed planning decisions. Thus, the effectiveness of the Welsh planning system is reflective of the new regionalist triumph. The planning policy making process as well as the implementation of the plans is a collective effort involving the Assembly and local authorities as well as the business sector. In essence, the Wales planning polity is one characterized by consensus, negotiation and constructive compromise (Tewdwr-Jones 2002).

Developing countries like South Africa can tap into the Welsh experience particularly when it comes to the coordination of various sector plans and planning instruments from different tiers of government. Moreover, the constant support and determination of the Assembly in promoting planning is a trait worth emulating. As will be highlighted in the next chapter, the South African Premiers need to support strategic planning at provincial level. Demonstrable political commitment is likely to result in resources being poured into strategic planning projects and the business sector is likely to invest its resources in planning programmes that are supported by influential political leaders.

2.8 Strategic Planning in Netherlands

Like Wales, the Netherlands has also experienced some institutional change as well as a transformation in philosophical zeitgeist where strategic regional planning is concerned. Prior to assessing the Netherlands (Figure2.3) planning polity, one should outline the institutional or administrative structure of this particular state. The Netherlands are divided administratively into twelve provinces and six hundred and forty-seven local authorities (Hague and Jenkins, 2005). Like in most European countries, the central government has much power and control over sub-national tiers of government. Although Netherlands has a relatively small population of approximately fifteen million people, it certainly makes an interesting case-study as its administrative structure resembles that of South Africa. What differs is the fact that while the former has a hierarchical administrative structure – with the more power and control residing in the centre, the constitution of the latter emphasises distinctiveness and hence equality of all three levels of government.

Figure2.3 The Netherlands and Groningen – A small but significant jewel in the EU crown.
Source: GroenLinks © 2002 from http://home.hetnet.nl/~damhof11/afbeeldingen/mapnederland.jpg

2.8.1 The Netherlands' Strategic Planning System

The Netherlands planning system is striving to redefine itself through strategic spatial planning in order to achieve new identity in this forever changing geo-political landscape, spatial concepts are not only anchored in the identity of the region, but also strengthen and develop this identity. Furthermore, the strategic spatial planning in this particular country, seeks to identify and experiment with varying techniques in order to be as inclusive as possible – involving everyone from politicians to children, from planners to scientists – and stimulating dialogue within the region (Holt and Collins, 2001 cited in Hague and Jenkins 2005).

As pointed out earlier on in this discussion, the country's administrative structure has a capacity of moulding the planning polity, in turn influencing planning decisions and policies (Vigar *et al*. 2000). While the Netherlands is constitutionally designated as a kingdom, the monarchy enjoys formal recognition but very limited political power, with the Prime Minister and Cabinet consisting of members of parliament that have been voted for by the people. Of more direct relevance to development planners are the following – that the Dutch provinces' autonomy is constitutionally guaranteed and that all three tiers of government co-operate in formulating strategic spatial policies, the regional plan formulated by the province "has an independent status in planning law" (Needham, 1997: 174).

The autonomous nature of a region is crucial in this discussion as it links to the NR paradigm that sees this particular arena as a formidable player in the global economy. This kind of approach to planning is characterised by a systematic formal hierarchy of plans from national to local tiers of government, acting as a focus for spatial integration. At the national level, the Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (in consultation with the National Spatial Planning Commission and the National Spatial Planning Agency) prepares a National Spatial Plan (NSP). It is this NSP that informs planning at provincial and local level, offering guidance and directives to be considered when plans are made at sub-national level (Hague and Jenkins 2005).

At the provincial level, the Provincial Minister for Spatial Planning in consultation with the Provincial Spatial Planning Agency and the Provincial Spatial Planning Commission prepares a Regional Strategic Spatial Plan (which is also referred to as a Regional Policy). This plan deals with strategic issues such as water, transport and environmental issues example. Using the guidelines provided by the national government, provinces in Netherlands have the power to adopt provincial structure plans as well (Jenkins, Kirk and Smith, 2001). These Structure Plans play a major role in informing spatial planning decisions taken at provincial level. In this paper, the existence of such planning powers at provincial level is indicative of the new regionalist approach that was dealt with the previous sections. The success of planning at this level however must be in consistence with strategic spatial planning at local level as well.

The provincial tier of government is expected to oversee strategic planning at local level (Hague and Jenkins, 2005). Although Provincial Spatial Strategic Plans are not legally binding, they play a pivotal role in informing planning at local level. The Municipal Spatial Planning Department (in consultation with the provincial government) adopts City Region Plans, Structure Plans as well as Local Land Use Plans. At the local level these more concerned with spatial and physical planning issues and once they have been approved, they are legally binding (Jenkins, Kirk and Smith, 2001).

Without fully outlining the process that leads to the adoption of strategic spatial plans in the Netherlands, it must suffice to point out that in this particular country, there is more emphasis on representation or participation in planning (Hague and Jenkins, 2005). With the shift from government to governance in the twenty-first century policy making (Deas and Ward, 2000; Amdam, 2003; Healey *et al*. 1997) the planning practitioners have tried to create an environment that would necessitate and/or stimulate 'networking' in the planning process (Hague and Jenkins, 2005).

There exist bodies or agencies that deal with spatial planning issues, but what is important to remember is that at provincial and local level, the public may be informed of the planning process prior and during to proposal phase (Hague and Jenkins, 2005) as public opinions play a major role in informing the shape and content of strategic planning instruments.

In their research on strategic planning in the Netherlands, Hague and Jenkins (2005) shone a spotlight on the importance of tapping into local experiences in planning, and drawing on socio-cultural dynamics as well. The success of the planning process in the Netherlands can be credited to the tradition of public negotiation. This culture of participation, has led to "a higher degree of public acceptance of the formal governance processes… including a strong corporate negotiation process" (Hague and Jenkins, 2005: 76). As a developed country with a considerable institutional thickness (Amin and Thrift 1995) and a long history of democratic governance, it is not surprising for one to find such a well-knit and coherent planning system.

Thus, the country's strategic planning system is an indication of a new regionalist triumph. It also shows the importance of a well structured planning polity (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002) that recognizes the need to be more flexible, inclusive and accommodative. Having sound planning policies in place is not an end in itself – what is needed is a change in attitude and hence action towards planning. Put in a nutshell, good governance is one of the integral elements of progressive planning. In this era of globalisation where there has been outcries about the death, demise or the hollowing out of the nation state (Deas and Ward, 2000) one realises the importance of public sectors to reaffirm, reinvent and redefine themselves – positioning themselves in such a way that they are able to survive the wrath of globalisation. Obviously, the nation-state is not in any danger of being obsolete. What comes out clearly however, is the need for the public sector to be adaptable to the changing socio-economic dynamics.

A crucial part of understanding these dynamics is to highlight the importance of networking and public participation in planning, is one of the key elements that define governance (Amdam, 2003; Deas and Ward 2000).

2.8.2 Re-Defining Provincial Planning: Groningen, Netherlands

Although there has been more emphasis on the sub-national tier of government as the locus of regional development, it should be noted that regions are not 'immune' from the current socio-spatial and economic dynamics that characterize this epoch. What is needed therefore is for regions to continue redefining themselves if they are to survive, and one way of doing that is through the use of strategic spatial planning (Vigar *et al*. 2000). In doing so, this section will again rely on the Jenkins' (2005) account on strategic planning in Netherlands – relating how the province of Groningen, tried to reclaim its place and identity in the planning polity.

Situated in the northeast of the Netherlands (Figure2.3) Groningen has a population of 550 000 inhabitants. The province is divided into twenty-five municipalities and "the provincial government's influence extends to all aspects of daily life including housing, jobs, recreation, traffic and transport, environment and culture" (Jenkins, 2005: 118). With the provincial council being elected directly by the citizens, the public office bearers are bound to be responsive to the citizens' needs, and this political arrangement could be one of the reasons why provincial strategic plans in Netherlands are a success.

In Groningen, the strategic planning system is defined, expressed and embodied in the *Plan for the Environs* otherwise known as the POP plan (Jenkins, 2005). What is unique about the POP plan is that it is integrative in nature, incorporating four previously separate strategic plans; the Regional Plan 1994, the Environment Policy Plan 1999-2000, the Water Management Plan 1999-2000. For Jenkins (2005) the integration of the abovementioned plans was a bid to avoid disjointed or

fragmented spatial planning. In being an integrated plan, the POP deals with issues around water management, industry, nature and landscape as well as infrastructure. The rationale behind the POP plan was to enable the province to focus its energy and attention on developing and implementing one strategic tool that would be all-inclusive.

Realizing that the legitimacy of the provincial tier of government was compromised, the political leaders in Groningen tried to use the POP plan as a tool that would reassure citizens of the province's viability. As Jenkins (2005: 119) writes, "the provincial level of government has been relatively weak and has had a low profile as perceived by municipalities, trade and industry, interest groups and citizens." The POP plan then, was one way of reversing the political apathy that existed in that tier. Provinces in South Africa might be to a considerable extent, experiencing the same kind of legitimacy crisis.

Groningen province worked with its neighbouring provinces in the north to set out a common macro-regional vision known as Compass for the Future (Jenkins 2005). This provincial body sought to engage come up with strategies of getting funds from the national government. The POP plan therefore, was formulated and implemented with a 'macro-regional' scope in mind. The formulation process of the POP plan involved as broad a selection of stakeholders as possible. According to Jenkins (2005) politicians, the business sector as well as citizens found some representation in the plan, as a participatory framework and process during the three formulation phases was encouraged (and implemented). The *Orientation Phase* – the first of the plan was characterised by campaigns in local newspapers, television as well as press conferences. What this initial phase sought to do was to ascertain, assess and detail what the people expected from the province insofar as planning strategically for meaningful action was concerned. The normative question posed by the province was:

How [does the province] take advantage of the spatial economic organization of the Netherlands and how do we make the province an attractive place for companies who want to settle down in Groningen? (Jenkins, 2005).

Secondly, the *Discussion Phase* sought to find out what the community as a whole expected from the POP plan. Debates were held between different sections and factions within the province – with the leaders of the province pledging to consider the inputs that the business and civil societies brought forth (Jenkins, 2005).

In the Final *Plan Development Phase*, discussions were held between municipalities, the business sector as well as community representatives within the province to foster community participation, with the meetings open to everyone who had a vested interest in the process. The debate and deliberation in this phase, culminated to the drafting and subsequent passing of the POP plan in December 2000 (Jenkins, 2005: 123).

Commenting on the processes leading to the drafting of the POP plan Jenkins, Kirk and Smith (2001) propose that like in any strategic plan making process, some voices are bound to be louder than others. Usually, influential politicians and business people get to benefit most from the process. Although this is true, one cannot help but marvel at the way in which the Groningen province tried to include as many stakeholders as possible in the planning process. Such an effort is example of good governance and networking at play (Vigar *et al*. 2000). Only in such instances can one talk of a 'multi-vocal' and participatory planning process, a process which is likely to yield results (Vigar *et al*. 2000: 289).

After having outlined the process that led to the drafting of the POP plan, Jenkins (2005) concludes that Groningen was able to renegotiate its position in the planning polity. Effectively, that the Groningen's quest for territorial identity opened new trajectories where different forms of planning where negotiated between different communities in the province (Vigar *et al*. 2000).

2.9 The Indian Planning Experience

However, in most developing countries, the decentralisation and democratisation process was viewed as a panacea that could cure all the social, economic and political ills (Olowu, 2003; Bird and Vaillancourt, 1998). It is unfortunate that for most developing countries, political decentralisation turned out to be nothing more than an extension of central power to sub-national government levels. As Sundaram (1983: 45) characterises it, the decentralisation process in most Third World countries "amounted to an exercise in breaking the bulk." In other words, the central government was only willing to deconcentrate some of its functions to the sub-national level without providing a sound institutional and financial base (Khan, 1998). Thus, in most developing countries planning is controlled by the central government and sub-national tiers become the implementation arms of the centre.

Like most developing countries, India (Figure2.4) has been trying to engage effectively and productively with the global world. The decentralisation process in this country led to the creation of twenty-five states and seven centrally administered territories (Bird and Vaillancourt, 1998). The seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution clearly outlines the legislative of both the central and state governments.

Figure2.4 India – Former British colony and home to one sixth of the world's population regionalism here has great potential and pitfalls in a country with more than nine hundred languages and dialects, deeply rooted regional and national identity as well as being the gateway to south Asia – A burgeoning world power in every respect.
Source: Emergency and Disaster Inc. © 2001 from
http://www.disaster-management.net/pic/india_map2.gif

Although the central government and the states have concurrent constitutional competencies, the former wields more power especially with regard to planning matters (Harrison and Oranje, 2002; Bird and Vaillancourt, 1998). Not only does the Indian President appoint State Governors but also has the power to appoint Finance Commissions that determine the allocation of taxes and grants to the states (Bird and Vaillancourt, 1998). Given that the central government in India gives wields more political and fiscal power, planning decisions in this populous federation are highly centralised[9].

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[9] In a country with over billion people, the central government has to be decisive and strategic when allocating resources.

2.9.1 Sub-national Planning in India

India is well known for its long history of centralised economic planning (Sundaram, 1983). Like in most developing counties, strategic planning in India seeks to address socio-economic issues such as poverty and unemployment. Given its hierarchical administrative structure, the central government in India offers planning guidelines and directives to the sub-national tiers (Johnson, 2003). The central level prepares a perspective plan that usually covers between ten to fifteen years. This long-term plan spells out the economic activities that India seeks to accomplish. The second phase, five-year plans are prepared by the central government in consultation with the States. As Sundaram (1983: 47) points out, "the five-year plan is more specific as they outline various activities and projects that need to be carried out within that given time." Finally, the third phase of planning results in the adaptation of annual plan. Within the annual plan, specific planning targets are made and aligned with the budgetary process. After the Central and State level had approved, the annual plan is then made operational.

Although the states in India have power to prepare five-year and annual plans, these plans must be in line with the national planning objectives. In order to maintain national consistency as well as effective use of resources, the Planning Commission monitors planning activities in India States (India Planning Commission, 2005). This iterative process between the Planning Commission and the states is away of ensuring that planning is not disjointed and fragmented. To promote planning at state level, most Indian states have established a sub-national networks that give them enough power and leverage when engaging with the Planning Commission. As Sundaram (1983: 47-48) commented, "the State governments in India have built their own State machinery for planning which makes the necessary analyses and puts together various departmental programs of the State."

Given the size of most Indian states, some planning activities have to be devolved to the district level (Bird and Vaillancourt, 1998, Sundaram, 1983). It is the role of the states to monitor to monitor planning at district level. The District Planning Boards are in charge of liaising with the state authorities in their preparation of District Plans. Like in any planning system, this multi-level planning structure that India sought to cultivate is not without challenges.

2.9.2 Challenges of Indian Multi-level Planning System

The multi-level planning approach is crucial as it gives sub-national tiers of government enough room for innovation and creativity. The decentralisation of planning in India therefore was a way of promoting economic growth and effective service delivery at sub-national level. What seems to be a major challenge however is the assigning of planning roles and functions between different tiers of government. The effectiveness of a multi-level planning approach lies in a country's ability to establish a functional, decentralised administrative structure (Sundaram, 1983). Put simply, different levels of government must have exclusive functions and they must be well capacitated to execute them. In India, most states do not have the institutional thickness to effectively carry out their planning activities.

Another challenge to the Indian planning system is the lack of coordination of plans from different levels of government (Bird and Thrift, 1998) because the harmonisation of planning in India has been curtailed by lack of effective communication between different levels of government. Giving an example of the state of Karnataka, Sundaram (1983: 53) points out that:

- The sectoral priorities determined by the districts did not coincide with the sectoral priorities decided at the state and national levels;
- Even within a particular sector, various priorities were given for different programs and this did not tally with the budgeted outlays;

- The locations proposed in the district plans could not be adhered to at the state level, since the latter had taken locational decisions without reference to district plans.

This scenario highlights lack of communication and consultation between those responsible for planning in India, and if the plans at sub-national levels are not well aligned with the national objectives planning is bound to be chaotic.

Although there are notable changes in the Indian planning system, with the Planning Commission (2005) striving to make state planning more consistent with national and local objectives it will take more determination from politicians and all stakeholders involved in planning to make the planning system work. Issues such as corruption and abuse of political power seem to be thwarting strategic planning in India. Indeed, the multi-level planning approach in India is limited by political, administrative and institutional factors, and particular factors have a negative impact on India's planning system namely corruption, a lack of political will, widespread poverty and a weak administrative structure.

Thus, the Indian planning experience is indicative of planning in most developing countries. As will be realised in the South African case, planning in most developing countries is yet to be strategic. It would take more determination and from the public and private sector as well as the community at large to make planning more effective. For Camay and Gordon (2004) issues such as corruption, lack of accountability and abuse of public resources by the political elite need to be thoroughly dealt with if political and economic governance is to be achieved in developing countries.

2.10 Lessons for Developing Countries…

Strategic planning is a process that takes commitment from all role players, ranging from politicians to planners and the community. From the three scenarios discussed above, it is evident that developing countries such as India can learn from the English and Dutch strategic planning experiences. Although the political and socio-economic contexts between developed and developing countries differ, there are some lessons that both 'worlds' can learn from each other.

The well-orchestrated devolution planning in the UK for instance is an example worth emulating. The UK devolution process enabled the NAW to be more proactive in the Welsh planning process, resulting in a well-structured planning polity (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). Again, the leadership role played by the NAW emphasises the importance of political-buy in the planning process. Similarly, the well-delineated Dutch planning system enables provinces to be more precise and focused in their planning approach. As the Groningen case has shown, provincial-scale planning is a collective effort between politicians, planners as well as the community (Hague and Jenkins, 2005). The broad-based participatory process in Groningen enabled the province to legitimise its existence as a sound, viable and functional political entity. From the new regionalist standpoint, the success of Groningen was necessitated by its ability to formulate practical strategic plans. Furthermore, the cooperation of the Groningen with other provinces led to a well-organised platform, enabling provinces to determine their own planning agendas. Such provincial creativity can inform planning particularly in developing countries that are still in the process of designing and defining their planning systems.

Given their weak institutional structures and other challenges that characterise the so called Third World, countries such as India are yet to strategise their planning activities particularly at sub-national levels. In India political accountability need to be promoted as it would curb corruption at all government levels, resulting in the channelling of resources to planning activities that would benefit the whole society.

The alignment of plans within and between different tiers of government in India has been a challenge for this particular country. It would take more communication between all three government levels to make multi-level planning in India more synchronised. With the new regionalist agenda emphasising the importance of creativity in planning (Vigar *et al*. 2000) developing countries can incorporate some positive practices from their Northern counterparts at the same time compounding them with local planning histories and experiences.

For countries like South Africa, provincial-scale planning can only take root if the role and purpose of this political sphere is clearly articulated. As the following chapters with indicate, getting South African provincial-scale planning right will depend on the way this particular sphere interacts with other level of government within the cooperative governance structure (Camay and Gordon, 2004). As in the case of India, the South African planning system is in dire need of coordination and harmonisation between and within all three spheres of government (Mohamed et al. 2004). As the new regionalist authors like MacLeod (2001) would point out, for provinces to be more functional and productive within a given administrative set up, all key stakeholders must work in tandem towards a more sustainable and equitable development. In short, governance and networking can unlock sub-national development potential, making provinces in developing countries more focussed and progressive in their approach to planning.