A QUEST IN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

– A PRACTICAL APPROACH ON THE ROLE OF THE PLANNER –

BY
M. SINAN ÖZDEN

SUPERVISOR
ALECH CHERP

SUBMITTED TO
BLEKINGE TEKNISKA HÖGSKOLA
FOR THE MASTER OF
EUROPEAN SPATIAL PLANNING AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SEPTEMBER 2009
Table of contents:
I. Introduction
II. Theoretical Background
   II. 1. Strolling through Theories of Planning with a view on planner’s self-esteem
   II. 2. Mapping the multi-stakeholder decision making process:
III. Case Studies
   III. 1. Redefining Boundaries While Planning Istanbul: Need For A Regional Policy-Making With Local Authorities (An Exercise Of Governance).
   III. 2. Stepwise Policy Development with the People while Planning Thrace: Incorporating Crowds into Planning (An Exercise of Public Participation)
   III. 2. a. The Tripartite Protocol (An Exercise in Administrative Interplay for Cooperation)
   III. 2. b. Planning, Public Participation, Democracy, Agony
IV. Conclusion
V. List of Selected Bibliography
I. Introduction

When I was unsure what a thesis work I would prepare, Aleh Cherp, my supervisor in this thesis work, advised me to reflect upon my own work as a professional planner. Following his idea I started to think about my own work experience and the points I was emphasizing when approaching to a planning problem. Apparently, it is not the product that comes at the end of planning, but the decision-making process itself what shapes my professional experience. The participants in a planning process, their relations with each other and their decisions reflected in the plans happen to be the focus of my work. Accordingly, the role the planner assumes in such a multi-stakeholder planning process forms the central question of the study here.

The paper is composed of two main parts. The first part is discussing various planning theories and how they position the planner in a planning problem. The discussion on these influential theories that shaped the planning discipline follows loosely a historical path to contemporary discussions. Communicative planning shaped the theoretical framework for the case studies I am presenting. The work of Hillier on agonism in planning (Hillier, 2002. Direct action and agonism in democratic planning practice) constituted the backbone for reflecting on and evaluating the case studies.

In the second part of the study, where I present the cases, I have tried to develop a participation landscape with participation and institutionalization axes based on Hillier’s diagram from her aforementioned work. The three case-studies presented here are mapped on this landscape. The institutional framework for involving into a planning process and the participants’ attitudes towards each other and towards the planning process itself are mirrored on these simple maps. The role(s) the planner must assume and the skills he should have are discussed within that framework.

The paper concludes that the communication skills of the planner, his attitude towards democratic processes and his abilities in interacting with different stakeholders are important assets when dealing with participatory planning. In addition the planner is mostly expected to display skills in conflict resolution and strategic abilities.

When I regard this paper as a reflection on my professional work, I have had the chance to think on my understanding and approach to planning during the extensive readings for the theoretical framework, as well as during recollecting and evaluating
the case-studies, and I have identified myself as a planner practicing between traits of communicative and agonistic approaches of planning.
II. Theoretical Background

II. 1. Strolling through Theories of Planning with a view on planner’s self-esteem

This brief dissertation is trying to provide an account on the role of the planning expert who is acting in the “new” planning paradigm by displaying three case studies in Turkey. Although ever from the start of my professional experience I have been acting in this participatory / political / communicative / collaborative planning, I am calling it “new (hence the multiplicity of names), for the literature, including Healey, 1997; Feinstein 2009/2000, Hillier, 2002, and others) is calling it “new” given a one and a half century long history of urban planning in the modern sense and start the transformation from the 1980’s. “the traditional spatial planner is in many cases being transformed into a kind of knowledge mediator and broker, using an understanding of the dynamics of the governance situation to draw in knowledge resources and work out how to make them available in a digestible fashion to the dialogical process of policy development.” (Healey, cited in Harris 2002, 39).

The planning process is a political process for the follower of a collaborative / communicative planning approach while it is more of a technical-scientific nature for the conventional (rational) planner. The conventional planner is used to follow a technical rationality and is normally confronted with the task to draft a vision of future, recommend a set of development proposals, and submit these to the implementing authority. For him “planning is a means to arrive at certain fixed goals” (Woltjer, 2000, 18). Issues like participation, governance, views of the stakeholders (and stakeholders themselves!) are not necessarily the central concern of the conventional physical planner. These issues are part of a greater administrative problematic and can be solved politically, by those political bodies. Through scientific analysis and evaluation, however, the rational planner thinks of himself being able to make better decisions. The conventional planner thinks that planning is different from politics, and is convinced that it is scientifically superior. He believes he possesses the power of “knowledge and analytical techniques” (Sager, 1994, 76). In a sense this is true: the rational conventional planner in fact possesses those techniques, but their power is over estimated. The power has rather been that of the governing apparatus.
Characteristically rational planner had a "comprehensive view on reality and decision making, a mechanistic view on control, and an ambition towards technical, scientific logic" (Woltjer, 2000, 18). He should be able to understand complex social and political processes and structures and furthermore show "the ability to develop plans, policies, and strategies for the future to meet specified goals" (Evans & Rydin, 1997, 57). Planners equipped themselves with approaches and methods like rational comprehensive planning. "However, it soon became apparent that this approach was impossibly ambitious and naïve in its attempt to technicise complex social and political processes" (Healey cited in Evans & Rydin, 1997, 57).

The physical planner's client is the public authority, in broader sense the government, as a rule. He is usually not the implementer nor sees he himself as part of the society whose lives are to be affected by the plan. Politically, his claim of comprehensiveness and objectivity has first been criticized by the initiator of advocacy planning, Paul Davidoff (2003 / 1965), arguing that “… planners were not value-free, that a plan prepared by a public agency did not represent the interests of all, and that the focus on physical planning in comprehensive plans was a disaster”.

The planning schools teach students history of planning including those various approaches to physical planning and more importantly feed them with a code of ethics stating that “the planner has the responsibility to care for the common public benefit and nobody’s individual interests”. That is at least what I have been taught in the first half of the 90’s. But, strange enough, when I left the school I have seen that the mainstream public planning practice is not much different than that Davidoff was critically describing in the 60’s.

In advocacy planning the planner is supposed to act as an autonomous agent for the benefit of the poor, structurally weak groups of the society and become advocates of the lay (Sager, 1994). Davidoff was inviting, moreover urging the planners to move away from an imagined objectivity of rational and scientific method, forcing them to realize that their action is political. He believed in the knowledge-power of the planners and wanted them to take sides for those who cannot defend their interests. Sager (1994, 76-77) explains this power of planner: “… the authority of the expert is based on “model power”, i.e. knowledge of causal relationships and analytic techniques. […] When the planners have model monopoly or are model-strong, while the local lay participants are model-weak, any information from the lay public can be
processed and used by the planner. [...] This would equip the planners with power to even simulate the simulations carried out by the lay participants.”

The mainstream planner working as a civil servant is inclined to believe that the public interest and public benefit is best served when the interests of the public authority is served. And he is not interested that this idea has long been challenged and largely abandoned. Another group of planners claim to offer the outstanding comprehensive abilities to the benefit of the people, such as in the advocacy planning approach. Sager (1994) refers to this type of physical planners as “model-strong” groups who aim “directly at strengthening the negotiation power of he model-weak groups”. A group of urban and regional planners in Turkey who are actively organized around the Chamber of City Planners are rather followers and reproducers of such a pro-people advocacy planning approach and politically position themselves on the left-wing opposition to the government.

This year – 2009 – the 33rd National Planners’ Colloquium organized by the Chamber of City Planners gathers under the headline “Protecting / Defending the Cities”. Themes of the sessions include: “Defending the spaces of the poor (weak), defending the coast and the forest, defending the city centre, protecting the historical centre, defending planning …”. They take side on the powerless and the mute, they defend and protect those who are open to threats of unjustified individual interests and those cannot defend themselves.

Their position, as well as, that of the advocacy planning is based on the assumption that lay people cannot make it without the expert. Regardless of his being on the government side or the opposition, I have always had a problem with this mighty planning ‘expert’ image who is able to understand the reality and processes better than any ordinary man by applying his rational and comprehensive techniques.

Even if we forget for a moment that public decision-making is a political process and that planning is closely intertwined with public decision-making, the claim that we are able to analyze, understand and improve things by using our comprehensive approach, technical knowledge and analytical methods has been repeatedly disproven. I do not mean to discredit those skills totally. They are certainly needed and essentially used in planning processes, but they very often disjoint the planner from the complex real-life reality by letting him to generate solutions for a simplified constructed reality. Solutions of the constructed reality do not necessarily fit into the
real-life reality, as there are many neglected factors. Hillier (2002) too thinks in line with Davidoff in that the planning is not a politically neutral activity, but opposes to the argument that the planner’s ability / capacity to recognize every interest; planning is not just and fair to all parties. “There will always be losers from planning decisions.” We need to “realize situations in which it is not usually the powerless and marginalized who lose.” (Hillier, 2002, 133).

Charles Lindblom (1973/1959) has criticized this comprehensive approach and proposed an alternative as early as 1959 in his article “the science of muddling through”. Instead of a grandiose comprehensiveness, he has proposed an “incremental method”: Small and objective-near oriented steps, easy to translate to action and swiftly repeated in endless iterations. The decision-making method here relies on practical experience and knowledge and also some intuition. Lindblom called his method the “successive limited comparisons method”, because the decision to be made is in a sense short sighted, “limited” and for immediate action, however it demands a new decision to be made right after the first one is done – many small steps, each dealing with another primary objective. Lindblom’s contribution to planning is important because he gave back the dignity of our daily-life decision-making process. By this, “muddling through” has contributed to a more open policy development and planning process. Therefore the literature on participatory / political / collaborative planning theory is citing him a lot.

Lindblom (1973/1959) is explaining the method by using the analogy of two administrators, where one is using the rational-comprehensive method and the other “successive limited comparisons” method. I think this is meaningful, when we are discussing the role and the abilities of the planner. We planners often ask for a time for our research, analysis, synthesis, development of alternatives and the proposed plan. While doing this, we ask the administrators to halt every possible structural physical development in the area. In cases of insufficient data and documentation we take up the task of producing those from the scratch; and I have never witnessed a case where there were satisfactory basis information enough to start directly with plan production. Larger physical plans like regional plans or urban master plans take up to two years to be completed. In the mean time the administrators – mayors, in the case of city planning – who have a five years time between two elections, are instructed by the planners not to undertake any larger development scheme. Thus
the administrator is squeezed between pressures of various interest groups who want to undertake investments in the city, criticisms of the opposition who argue that the mayor is blocking the development, protests of the activists and citizen groups who ask for extension of let’s say public transport services and of the environmentalists who demand immediate improvement of the waste water discharge system. The mayor, who has commissioned a group of planners for production of a comprehensive development scheme can only say that “the plan is under way!”. Lindblom’s article did not talk of the political processes nor of participation, but offered a more practical (and pragmatic) technique to the administrator as well as to the planner. Instead of waiting for a grand “blueprint”, all parties can deal with the problems at hand.

I believe I have displayed a negating position towards ideas and approaches where the planner is believed to have a knowledge-power and is expected to use it for better futures. My concern is not about planner’s self-image. I f I may put it in the most naïve and simple way, the central concern that shaped my approach to planning is the people’s ability and their right to shape their own environment. We find most successful environmentally sound settlements in examples of vernacular architecture. We face lowest social conflicts in organically developed neighborhoods or traditional cities. Even illegal squatter neighborhoods (gecekondu) without formal, official planning in Turkish cities display a codex of values and a shared common-knowledge of building and physical development (Duyar-Kienast, 2005).

People are able to organize themselves and shape their environment. People have their own visions, demands, needs, wants and interests. I find it important that the people’s wishes are realized, instead of those of a planner, an administrator or a leader. Likewise, it is important to seek for ways, in which the people feel that their ideas and input ‘matters’. But, if the people can organize themselves and shape their own environment, as they have done for millennia, than what is the point of planning?

Sager (1994, 2) is discussing the communicative planning theory and starts his discussion with a has collection of different definitions by different authors, which might be helpful to answer the question asked above:

1. Planning is “a set of procedures for finding out and assuring appropriate future action” (Davidoff and Reiner)
Mintzberg’s (1994) discussion on the definition of planning is interesting. According to him “integrated decision making” is different than just “decision making” in that the decision process in planning is a systematic process. If planning is plainly “a set of (integrated) decisions for controlling future actions and events” than the need for a plan is still questionable. But he introduces a very fundamental element to the definition: “Planning is a formalized procedure to produce an articulated result in the form of an integrated system of decisions.”

Clearly this is a broad definition of planning, but it differentiates planning as a profession, let’s say public planning for our purposes, from the ordinary daily-life arrangements. It moreover contrasts planning with arbitrary decisions or some sort of mystical divine visions.

The accent on “formalized procedure”, the definition of the goal as “articulated result” and the understanding of decision making process as an “integrated system of decisions” guises planning as a profession.

Steiner (1969; cited in Mintzberg 1994, 13) has very high expectations from planning: “Plans can and should be to the fullest possible extent objective, factual, logical and realistic in establishing objectives and devising means to obtain them”. We understand that planning is a professional discipline and some expect the plans to fulfill those expectations. But in a social and political environment how is this possible? In a multi-stakeholder planning process there are the participants who do the decision making for their future, what does the planner do? What skills must he have?

In Sager’s (1994, 2) definition of planning, which is aimed at defining planning as a communicative action, we see that the planner is not necessarily the producer of a plan, but rather organizer of a process for policy making: Planning is “a technique
and communication aiming at organizing knowledge to provide a basis for decision-making on future collective action.”

When we approach to planning as a democratic process and try not to compromise Steiner’s expectations from it, solutions seem to be in governance and participatory planning. With participation the planner acquires new tasks and requires new skills other than those scientific, technical (architectural, engineering) skills. The planner is no more for imposing plans but for making the participants to plan. The planner becomes more of a moderator, enabler of action, mediator and less of an author. The planner, of course retains his technical skill to translate the policy options proposed by the participants into a plan – the concrete document; the object upon which discussion and subsequently agreement can be settled.

Sager (1994, 24-25) cites Firedmann’s thoughts about the abilities of an action planner. The same abilities are also required for creating dialogue in participatory planning. The action planner is asked to have additional skills like “empathy and readiness to listen, …”. His personal abilities and skills “in managing interpersonal relations” are decisive for a successful process (cited in Sager, 1994, 24-25). The planner cannot stay in his office on top of maps and statistical data and conduct planning.

In a multi stakeholder planning process, i.e. a participatory planning process, each and every actor is expected to influence the decision. In a previous paper presented at the 12th National Congress on Regional Science and Regional Planning I explained the multi-actor decision making process in analogy to the vectors in physics (Özden et al., 2007). Decision-making is an event. Every participant influences the decision in accordance with his wills and interests. If we had a calculational basis for the influences of the participants, we were able to represent every influence by a vector, i.e. every influence would have a magnitude and direction. In a public debate, regardless of its being formally organized or not, every participant would impose an influence on the decision to be taken. The sum of all influences (vectors) would represent the decision.

Clearly the decision would fall somewhere in between of all influences, and no one actor would fully attain accomplish his interests. At the same time it is also clear that every actor would feel that his views and interests are represented in the decision.
It is also true that the more powerful a party is the more it has influence on the decision. This is where the advocacy planners build up their arguments; strengthening the weak, the disadvantaged. By doing this, they take an active part in the decision making debate. However without their influence in the social counter play the decision should be assumed balanced and valid for all participants. Otherwise, some participants would keep fighting until they feel sufficiently represented in the decision.

The moment the decision is taken is the moment when the social tension (agony) is the lowest. Even though the agreed decision may seem that one party’s interests are more satisfied than the others, the satisfaction form the result is outbalancing the tension of dislikes of any other solution by all parties. So is the common-sense generated, the consensus is reached.

![Diagram](image-url)

**Figure 1:** Vectoral representation of decision-making with multiple actors. Every actor influences the decision with a magnitude and direction; the struggle and social interplay between the participants end up in a commonly accepted (-able) decision. (Source: Özden et al. 2007)
Yet the process continues virtually endlessly. As Lindblom explained it, when a
decision is taken or latest when it is implemented, a new initial situation is established.
the new state is not only a state of consensus of the “past” discussion but it is the
starting point of a “new” conflict among the participants. The new power-play of pulls
and pushes in every possible directions will result in a new balance for the matter,
where a new publicly established decision is taken.

As opposed to a claimed generalized objectivity, the subjectivity of the particular case
creates a more satisfying decision, and higher degrees of ownership by the
participants, and as a result better implementation chances for the plan. Hillier (2002,
131) goes further and claims that the only way to reach a good and just result is the
debate: “…without some form of agreement or consent to an outcome of the debate,
it is impossible to be sure that the [planning] decision will be good and just.”

In such process, if the planner decides to take sides, as in advocacy planning or
enters in a corporatist coalition with the government or one or the other interest group,
he would disturb the internal power relations among the participants. His direct and
active involvement into the decision-making process as an actor is not desirable. His
task and role in the process is to enable as much communication between the actors
as possible. In Hillier’s (2002, 110) words: “[Planning] has recognized the importance
of communication in planning decision-making and the role of collaboration between
as many actors as possible in working towards a political democratization”. The
Mayor of Lüleburgaz, one of the key participants of the second case study I am
presenting here had once commented that “this (planning) process were valuable as
a ‘democracy undertaking’ and as an exercise of active involvement for the people,
even if it fails to produce a formal physical plan document”.

Susan Fainstein (2009, 106) gives a very concise and almost encyclopedic definition
of communicative planning: “Within communicative theory, the planner’s primary
function is to listen to people’s stories and assist in forging consensus among
differing viewpoints. Rather than providing technocratic leadership, the planner is an
experiential learner, at most providing information to participants but primarily being
sensitive to points of convergence. Leadership consists no in bringing stakeholders
around to a particular planning content but in getting people to agree and in ensuring
that, whatever the position of participants within the social-economic hierarchy, no
group’s interest will dominate”.
The definition is in fact very accurate, but the assessment that “… no group’s interest will dominate” can be misunderstood. It is not that an external power is imposed on the participants so that ‘no group’s interest will dominate’; but it is rather the social dynamics and power struggle between members that lead to a consensual agreement. Hillier’s (2002, 122) position favoring agonism could be explanatory: “…a pluralist democracy must allow the expression of dissent and conflicting interests and values. Since we cannot eliminate antagonism, we need to domesticate it to a condition of agonism, … towards the promotion of democratic decisions which are partly consensual, but which also respectfully accept unresolvable disagreements”.

Democracy, forms of representation and power, its use for control are naturally central issues in communicative planning. Therefore public participation is very crucial. The planner’s fundamental role is than orchestrating participation and achieving a sort of citizen control in decision-making. Hillier (2002, 131) sees the planning practice as a “field where interests and social groups meet and clash”. Therefore planners should understand themselves not as eliminators of power, neutralizers of group domination but deal with the question “how to constitute forms of power that are compatible with democratic values” (Mouffe, 1999, cited in Hillier 2002)

If every single actor is shouting for his own interest, and if consensus or compromise cannot achieve an ideal state for the participants, but just a mediocre satisfaction, that they could retain their interests to some extent through bargaining or argumentation how does the planner perform? Any planner who accepts these as precondition, as the world we live in, should recognize the local and also general political processes; that is, should accept the local social and political dynamics as a starting point. The first role of a planner in a planning process should than be to open up the political communication channels; and if they do not exist he should establish them. All of the case studies in this paper are examples of establishing mutually agreed communication channels which did not exist before. The term ‘political communication’ indicates a dialogue process among the participants where all possible views and thought are exchanged by using every possible means of media. It is a non-violent struggle and conflict arena. How the planner establishes this arena is closely linked to the practicalities of the project: the dimensions of the planning project, resources available, duration, etc.
The second role of the planner is to watch the debate carefully and to sense the social energy in discussions. He should be able to track the "consensus point" where the tension between parties fades. In more formal planning exercises, where communicative rational is more evident this is easier, since parties gather for reaching a collectively rational solution (the third case study is an example for that). However in planning exercises where social groups are involved, the planner should try to extract the point where the most contradicting groups feel the other one's position at least bearable. Since no one party would admit that there has been a consensus between each other or no one would politically admit that he has agreed to a compromise, it would be the planner's ability to pinpoint the decision.

The third role of the planner is to safeguard transparency of the planning process. Every proposal and demand must be reflected back to the parties. No single information should be kept by the planner; otherwise there emerges the danger of manipulation. No hidden agendas or no distortion of communication is permissible. Since the parties would be willing to gain more from the process, they would be willing to hold back information. The public administration is in no way an exception on the contrary the most manipulative actor among others. Public authorities tend to understand participation as "informing" the public or "consulting" about their ideas; in fewer cases they tend to establish partnerships with the more influential parties. Therefore Planner’s responsibility is to openly disseminate every piece of information to the participants – at least make publicly available. Thus the planner is responsible to keep a level playing field.

A fourth role the planner assumes in a collaborative planning process is technical-scientific. This most original role of the planner should not be undermined. Planning is a technical profession. In fact, the whole debate on ‘planning being intertwined with politics, but it is not being politics’ originates in planning’s technical nature. The planner is responsible to translate all of the proposals of the participants, and the political decisions into technical terms. These proposals and would-be-decisions are thus screened through technical, ecological, economical filters and their feasibility, attainability, and their fiscal as well as social and ecological costs should be tested by the planner. In its most plain terms, implementation of the proposals and would-be-decisions need to be simulated and the results displayed to the participants. As long as the parties accept to take on the burdens associated with the decisions, they
become definite as formalized outcomes of the planning process. Otherwise a new
debate starts; but this time participants are part of a more concrete planning
discussion in comparison to the initial discussion on visions and goals. At this stage
the technical leadership of the planner is required. Finally the planner (in fact
planning team) comes up with a plan as a product.

The planner is supposed to aim at not only a formal approval of the product, but at its
acceptance as a commonly approved document, as a “Charta”. There are countless
examples, at least in Turkey, where the physical plans (proposed development
policies of the plans) never get recognized by the general public, nor by the official
authorities. Physical development plans are conducted mainly because of the legal
requirement and not because of “formal decision-making for future action”; in most
cases the people consider planning as a costly but useless document for the self-
interest of the bureaucracy. The municipalities that take the rules and regulations
seriously, they recognize the physical development plans. In their case, however, the
plan is part of the agenda of almost every municipal assembly for amendment. There,
day-to-day power relations and short-term interests on urban rent are usually more
effective than a thoroughly thought comprehensive development plan. At the end the
plan gets so much amended that it loses any integrity. Turkey has been trying to
protect its planning system through a set of legal regulations, which make arbitrary
amendment of plans ever harder. But every control regulation generates its by-pass
methods and its effectiveness reduces immediately. On the other hand planning as a
democracy undertaking, “conducting debate in public spheres” (Melucci in Hillier
2002, 117) would produce a wider acceptance and a sense of ownership on the
commonly agreed terms of development. Therefore the planner is supposed to work
as transparent – knowledge sharing as possible, and should value the political
decision-making processes that also includes elements of ‘direct action’.
II. 2. Mapping the multi-stakeholder decision making process:
The case studies I am presenting here are planning exercises of different size and content. The first example is a governance attempt with mayors of various municipalities in a larger region, the second one is a regional planning exercise with involvement of the general public, and the third one is a national policy-development proposal with involvement of high level government institutions. Despite the differences in character and scale, all three examples represent the effort to involve as many actors as possible within the framework of the respective project. Otherwise, the normal (and formal) decision-making process would function based on the official competences and jurisdiction of the authorities. The examples are representations of efforts in communicative planning model. Furthermore all three projects are comparable in their participatory processes and organizational structure. This can be represented with a diagrammatic landscape as in Figure 2.

**FIGURE 2:** Participation topography in a planning process. Participation of stakeholders can take different forms. The messy interaction of the parties can be plotted on this basic map. Source: modified from Hillier (2002, 127).

The participation topography enables to plot the projects according to their decision making process. Thus the projects are comparable in their level of participation and
their level of institutionalization. The horizontal axis representing ‘participation’ shows the participants’ social and political interaction. Whether the decisions are taken through agreement to the matter in a more or less common-sense approval by the participants or whether the participants are in dispute or disagreement on the matter but have found a sort of reconciliation, and reached a decision. The vertical axis shows the level of institutionalization. Decisions may be results of institutionalized processes or informal political processes. Whether stakeholders (participants) are interacting in formatted ways, where the rules are set and input can only be recognized through following certain order. For example a most widely imposed form of interaction with government institutions in Turkey is the petition. Citizen’s requests, ideas or any type of interaction with the state is only recognized with a petition, if there aren't more sophisticated formalities.

In planning terms, there exist strict rules for making of physical plans, since they constitute the intervention interface on the private property rights. There have been court cases, in which plans were cancelled, annulled not for their content but for the planning process was not in order with the governing rules. The latest most sensational one is the cancellation of the regional plan of Istanbul in 2008, where the commissioning process / assignment of the planners was found contrary. Later, after conducting a formally appropriate process, in 2009, the same plan content with minor changes had to be approved again. The planning process on the other hand is not regulated that strictly. During the planning process the planner is relatively free to use any suitable technique and decision-making process. Therefore the planning process itself may include and recognize very informal ways of participation. Hillier’s (2002, 117) question seems to have the answer buried in it as a guiding thought for planners:

“if we want to move towards more consensual planning decision-making, or at least decisions with which most stakeholders can live, do we want to impose some formal institutional structure on what is essentially a largely interpersonal framework? Can planners really not feel comfortable (less vulnerable?) unless there is ‘an awesome and incontestable authority hanging over everything?”

The initial idea to plot the projects on a participation topography and see how the planner has interacted within those projects is developed as a product of our
discussions with Alech Cherp. Planner’s influence in cases of formal and informal forms of participation was merely at the center of that discussion. Hillier’s (2002, 116, 126) diagrams depicting “participation in planning activity” have helped me to develop the idea further. Hillier’s discussion is concentrated on how to include agonism and direct action into planning. I am however trying to reflect on the role of the planner in the case studies I am discussing. Nevertheless Hillier’s work has heavily influenced my diagram.

Through the diagrams and the participants’ behavior and interaction I am trying to understand and discuss the planner’s input and role in that particular planning process. In some cases the planner is forced to establish, initiate, the process, light-up the powder keg, in others he listens carefully to arguments, and in some other case waits until the furious high-water has passed and collects the remains what could not be swept by the flood. In any case the planner is supposed to follow the dialogue between the parties very carefully with full attention.

III. Case Studies

I am presenting here three different case studies. These are different from each other not only in their content but also in their dimension. Nevertheless all three are examples in which multi-stakeholder decision-making mechanisms have been functional. The participation process of each project is reflected on the participation landscape, I have explained in the previous chapter.

The first example is a governance attempt in the Marmara region. The north-west region of the country is the richest and most developed part of Turkey, according to statistics, however it suffers a severe intra-regional development gap – the wealth is accumulated in the metropolitan area. While preparing the physical development plans for Istanbul planners needed a supra-metropolitan, a regional decision-making mechanism and mobilized the municipal administrations of the cities in the region. The mayors have tried to develop a consultative regional cooperation board, which had no officially binding power but has been influential.

The second and third case studies are part of a very ambitious planning practice: Preparation of the regional development plans of the Thrace region. Therefore the case studies appear as 2.a. and 2.b. in this paper. The project is an experiment that
displays elements of a spectrum reaching from consensus planning to agonism. The project involves governance at the national and regional levels, and an extensive effort for direct citizen participation in three provinces and 27 cities (district centers) of the region.

It should not be foregone to state that all three projects are examples of physical planning, but the products are not necessarily drawn or plotted on maps. The outcomes of those processes are deliberately and directly changing the physical environment. But within the limitations of this study I am trying to lay down the way how the planning process itself is organized, and not how the physical environment was affected.
III. 1. Redefining Boundaries While Planning Istanbul: Need For A Regional Policy-Making With Local Authorities (An Exercise Of Governance).

The metropolitan municipality of Istanbul established a large, semi-public planning office ‘The Istanbul Metropolitan Planning and Urban Design Center (IMP)” for the preparation of development plans of the metropolis, and employed or hired a large number of urban and regional planners. Planners have started a conventional comprehensive planning process. First of all information had to be gathered, if not available had to be produced. With the help of universities Istanbul has never been studied more in depth before. Physical, geographical, environmental analyses, demographic, sociological studies have been carried out, economical prognoses have been developed. Limited within the administrative and legal boundaries a very thorough work has been going on.

Istanbul is a metropolitan city with a 12 Million population. It is the most populated urban and economic center of the country. However Istanbul is at the same time one of the smallest provinces of Turkey. The total urban area reaches uninterrupted beyond the administrative boundaries of the province and encompasses fully or partially four other provinces. The total population of the metropolitan-region regardless of the administrative boundaries is about 16 Million people. Furthermore, the metropolitan area is in close relationship with the entire Marmara region with a total population of approximately 20 Million people (Istanbul included), living in 150 cities and towns and several hundred villages. Obviously any planning decision for Istanbul would fail without the involvement of the other cities and settlements if a joint cooperation and coordination mechanism were not established.

The problem the planners had to handle was not centered in regional planning techniques but in developing a decision-making mechanism for the entire region.

Turkish government system is centralized and a regional government model does not exist1. The regional growth solution proposed for Istanbul can be summarized in

1 The Turkish administrative system is very similar to the one in Sweden. Turkey is a unitary state and has a centralized government. The country is divided into provinces (in Sweden this is called county – Län). A governor represents the central government in the province; but there co-exists a locally elected provincial administration. In the recent years a substantial part of the governor’s power has been shifted to the provincial administrations. The major difference between Turkish and Swedish administration systems lies in the
decentralization of functions and regional integration strategies; but this socio-economic and physical solution does not have an organizational administrative point of reference or counterpart.

The Turkish administrative system is being reformed as part of negotiations for EU membership. One of the attempts has been establishment of Regional Development Agencies (RDA), which encompass the governor’s office, municipalities, representatives of private sector and civil organizations. In hope for finding a counterpart at regional level the planners first lobbied and argued for accelerated establishment of these RDA’s. However the process has been stopped abruptly. The centralist government system is still very popular in Turkey. Discussions on regional administrative bodies or regional collaboration with official character immediately spark debates on unitarism versus federalism, and federalism is understood as a milestone towards separation of the country. The legal framework enabling RDAs has been cancelled for a while. The establishment of RDAs has been delayed. Thus, chances to refer to a formal regional administration are lost.

Planners needed to seek an alternative, an institutional focal point for regional dialogue – an informal cooperation and collaboration structure for policy-making at regional level. The Union of Municipalities of the Marmara Region (Marmara ve Boğazları Belediyeler Birliği – MBB) offered to provide the roof framework. MBB is the oldest municipal union in Turkey, but has not been very active and influential. Even so, almost all municipalities are members of the MBB. The Secretary General of MBB, by then Mr. Halil Ünlü, wanted that the MBB becomes a more influential union and increase its activity level. A coalition of goals of the planners and of the union could be established there. Although the provincial level was not represented administratively, the MBB was able to reach and contact all of the municipalities, including the smallest ones.

It is worth to mention some of the regional development strategies proposed for achieving regional development goals:

---

municipal system. Turkish municipalities are established in the settlement area – town or city, and have no responsibility or competence in the rural area and villages. They are not contiguous like their Swedish counterparts. Governor’s Office and the provincial administration and their subdivisions are responsible for the rural area.
1. Functions concentrated in Istanbul were to be redistributed to the rest of the region, i.e. The industry in Istanbul was to be decentralized.

This proposal has become highly controversial. Industrial lobbyists in Istanbul as well as environmentally motivated civil groups in the region have positioned themselves against it. Business circles such as chambers of industry and commerce delightfully welcomed the proposal. The mayors also embraced the idea of creation of new workplaces.

However it was clear that the mayors had to coordinate their activities if they wanted to be attractive for possible investments. They were supposed to develop joint strategies. They have never done this before.

2. Istanbul’s global and national attraction were to be diverted to suitable centers in the region, leading to a polycentric development.

3. New attraction centers in the region were to be developed in order to slow down the contiguous growth of Istanbul and to achieve a better geographical distribution of wealth as well as population.

These proposals have become publicly known as “creating small Istanbuls around Istanbul”. Some took it seriously some not, but everybody were smiling when they heard the idea.

These proposals generated a sense of competition by the mayors. Without really estimating capacities of their towns many of them wanted to become an attraction center.

MBB invited mayors to several seminars on cooperation possibilities held by the regional planners. Cooperation, collaboration and competition have become the motivation for mayors to answer the calls of MBB (and the planners) for coming together. A consensus was reached that the mayors wanted to interact; which they have not done before in a formatted way.

The main interaction between the mayors of the region was either based on their private interpersonal relations or their activities in their political parties. Apart from that, the mayors usually do not feel the need to cooperate with each other. One major reason for that is the Turkish administration system; whatever is beyond the competences of the municipalities is formally the responsibility of the central
government and respective ministries. Another reason can be found in the geographical distribution of the municipalities. Normally the municipalities have no common borders. They do not have neighborhood relations. Municipal administrations are responsible only for the urban area and they have wider distances with pastoral landscape between them. Until a new regulation imposed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry they have not shares resources or service facilities like water resources or waste disposal sites either.

Forms of cooperation did not require novelties. MBB holds general assembly meetings semi-annually. Interested mayors take part in those meetings, if not all. The main change has been in the agenda of those meetings. Although we cannot speak of a radical take-off in dynamism towards joint action, issues of active cooperation have become a more prominent topic in those meetings. A dialogue process could be started. Furthermore, there have been committees established dealing with, “regional development”, “cooperation on technical matters” (such as sharing technical staff, engineers, architects, planners, etc.), “committee on joint infrastructure possibilities”.

It is, however, interesting to note that the mayors volunteering to take part in those committees have been predominantly from smaller to medium sized municipalities that were lagging behind in the development race, i.e. municipalities that had limited competition power.

This has been a process in which the planners have started to prepare a regional plan with own initiative (and out of necessity). Naturally the plan wasn’t going to have any formal and binding status and no targeted counterpart to implement. But it has constituted a basis for policy-making at regional level and has been extensively discussed by the mayors at the MBB. The mayors have reformulated their municipal development policies with reference to the regional development proposals. An informal plan production process has been gone hand in hand with an informal regional dialogue process between the policy-makers of singular units within the region has started to influence the formal urban policy-making processes.

When we look at the planning of Istanbul, we see that a technically mature comprehensive planning for Istanbul has proven not implementable without the political dialogue. This is true for the regional level as well. The planners have had no other chance than organizing political processes. The planner had to assume the role
of an “initiator” for governance, they had to mobilize policy-makers and mediate their dialogue.

If we reflect the regional governance process on the participation landscape, we see that mayors were coming together willingly and with a positive attitude, very much in line with Habermassian thought of communicative rationale. The planners also have positioned themselves towards a social and political justification of their proposals rather than staying within the legal-administrative domain, given the regional scale, which is virtually not recognized by the state apparatus. The informal nature of this cooperation between technical and scientific studies and communicative action should locate the case study somewhere in the informal – consensus sector of the landscape; and the political identity and administrative competences of the mayors as well as the roof-framework function of MBB with its formalized decision-making procedures (general assembly, committees) would move the project to the edge of the institutionalization. Other aspects of the case, such as what the mayors had to undertake within their municipalities, how they have decided to cooperate at the regional level or whether they were exposed to local opposition, etc. are not handled within this case study. Each municipality must have had its own experience in that respect.
FIGURE 3: Case Study 1, Communicative regional policy making plotted on the participation landscape. An informal process associated with shortcomings in legal framework, but accepted by the local politicians, the mayors in consensus.

One closing remark is, however, significant: The secretary general of MBB, who has been one of the key actors enabling the whole process has been removed from his post soon after. Almost all participants and witnesses of the process comment that this happened mainly because of his success in increasing the efficacy of the MBB. He started heading a relatively insignificant organisation in political terms, but when MBB got under the spotlights, desire of stronger municipalities (and political parties) to control the institution has lead to the change of the executive officer. This is probably one of the examples affirming Hillier’s (2002, 130) comment on power and democracy: “When we understand power, we see that we cannot rely solely on democracy based on rationality to solve our problems. For this reason I prefer a theory of democracy which incorporates both associative and agonistic aspects.”
III. 2. Planning Activities in the Thrace Region

The case I am presenting here is composed of two consecutive processes: a) Setting up the planning environment and b) policy development with the participation of the general public. The first part is worth to display and document due to its unconventional cooperation dialogue between otherwise inflexible public organizations. The second part is a tale of a planning activity in which a broad public participation in decision-making was aimed.

In the usual Turkish experience the plan as legal and formal document imposes its own goals and development policies onto the people and stakeholders. However, these plans find only a limited number of supporters, such as the planners themselves and academic milieu that represents socially the scientific rationality. Therefore the plans are very often faced with a huge social and political rejection.

In the case study I am presenting here, the planners have tried to achieve a broad based consensus on the policies and regulations reflected on the plan through an open policy-making process. Our aim was to arrive to a widely accepted Charta rather than to draft a utopian but not implementable plan. The plan was supposed to reflect whatever the public consensus was and not impose some external policies – it should reflect and document the development goals and sensitivities of the people.

The setting of the case study is the Thrace region in Turkey. It consists of three provinces: Edirne, Tekirdag and Kirklareli. With Istanbul and Gallipoli they together form Turkey’s lands on the European continent. Sharing the same main water basin and plain, Ergene, the three provinces are geographically interrelated in geographical terms, and they are socially and culturally fairly homogenous. Thrace forms a region of its own.

There exists a Union of the local administrations in the region: TRAKAB (Trakya Kalkınma Birliği – Thrace Development Union) is the union of the local administrations in the Thrace region. The three province administrations and over 70 municipalities are members of TRAKAB. TRAKAB has been established in the late 90’s when the local authorities recognized the difficulties in tackling with environmental problems individually. Although the statute of the union enables it a very broad spectrum of activities, it hasn’t been able to undertake much activity for insufficient personnel and financial resources.
III.2.a. the Tripartite Protocol (An exercise in administrative interplay)

According to Turkish legislation (the law establishing the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and the law on province administrations – Çevre ve Orman Bakanlığı Kanunu, İl Özel İdareleri Kanunu) the responsibility and competence to prepare regional development plans is shared between the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and the Province Administrations. Preparation of regional plans (sometimes also called sub-regional plans) comprising more than the area of one province and having a map scale of 1/250,000 to 1/100,000 or above is the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Provincial Development Plans organize the entire area within the administrative boundaries of a province and must be prepared by the province administrations with a map scale of 1/100,000 to 1/25,000. This simple but hierarchical model has not been followed in the case of Thrace, turning it to a collaborative planning activity.

In 2006, there existed an approved regional plan of Thrace for about five years. The province administrations were required to prepare the provincial plans and decided to undertake a joint action. The governors of the three provinces and some mayors wanted to increase the activity of TRAKAB and they had concerns about the harmonious interplay of the provincial plans if they were prepared separately.

The river Ergene runs through all three provinces and gets industrially polluted on its course disturbing agricultural activity on the plain. Coupled with such environmental concerns the three province administrations have delegated TRAKAB the planning competence for the entire region.

Meanwhile, the Istanbul Metropolitan Planning Center (IMP), undertook a regional study and promoted for regional planning as part of planning activities of Istanbul. The first case study presents a part of these activities. TRAKAB officials were interested in the regional studies of IMP and asked for cooperation.

A further, maybe more influential reason for TRAKAB’s willingness to work with IMP was the semi-public, non-profit setup of the latter. With the limited financial resources, the TRAKAB officials couldn’t guarantee an attractive bidding for private planning companies, but a cooperation with IMP could also bring in some grant support as part of public-public cooperation. True to form, at the end of negotiations with the Istanbul
Metropolitan Municipality, the parent organization of IMP, the municipality decided to grant most of the costs of the planning activity.

Revision of the existing regional plan of Thrace was also a necessity due to several shortcomings of the plan and its lack of cross-border / cross-regional interaction with its neighbors, namely the Istanbul metropolitan region. The effects of the industrial dispersion of from Istanbul were misdiagnosed. A relatively sudden and uncontrolled industrial expansion already filled up the designated industrial zones and spread to make inroads to poorly protected agricultural areas. Improved planning and land management measures needed to be taken. As the regional plans are the competence of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, it had to be involved into the planning process, becoming the third official party.

All three parties, Ministry, TRAKAB and Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul agreed to sign a cooperation protocol, as a first step. However, agreeing on the terms of the protocol has proved to be a lengthy and stressful process of negotiation. Each party threatened the others at least once with retreat from cooperation.

At first, the higher officials of the metropolitan municipality and the ministry had to argue whether the institutions were able to cooperate at all. The initial statement was “if it could have been done it would have been done!”. Following a thorough investigation of the laws and regulations of the institutions it could be proven that cooperation was in fact possible. However the bureaucracy of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality would even today argue that a cooperation involving direct support of the municipality should not have been realized at all. They have been arguing that any commitment beyond the administrative boundaries of the municipality cannot be made. A counter-argument had to be nurtured by planners: Any activity benevolent for Istanbul, and furthering its development policies can be supported by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality regardless of where the activity is taking place. For instance, direct support to employment generating activities in towns with high out-migration ratio has been an established practice of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality in order to slow down the population increase of the metropolis. The bureaucracy in Istanbul had to break up resisting, however unwillingly.

In a normal process, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry had to open a tender for revising the regional plan; following the approval of the revised regional plan,
each province administration had to open its own tender. In this case the ministry was not willing to take over the burden of a new planning activity for the Thrace region. It was not ready to admit that the plan was too shortsighted and partly insufficient, but welcomed the re-planning on the condition that it involved no demands on the ministerial budget and costs; and the ministry would not give up its control and approval rights.

TRAKAB, the main beneficiary of the cooperation, was expecting two major gains out of this cooperation: Firstly they did not want to spend too much on planning, a “soft administrative tool, which causes more questions and troubles than the answers and guidance it provides”. Secondly, the regional development perspective put forward by IMP did convince the administrative and political decision-makers so they wanted to take part in it instead of starting a process of their own with another group of planners. However as the negotiations extended, TRAKAB started to get anxious. Their expectation was to finalize the whole planning process within one year, which is even with a signed protocol very unrealistic. Signing of the protocol by all parties itself has taken a little shorter than one year.

Another draw back from the point of view of TRAKAB was how the signing partners treated each other. The ministry considered itself as the higher approval authority and above of the metropolitan municipality and TRAKAB. The Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality was thinking of itself as the donor organization and its bureaucrats were in many instances behaving as if they were undertaking a charity for their poorer neighbors. TRAKAB with its governors and mayors sitting in the executive board, who are used to be acted toward as VIP, was not ready to assume a deprived role. On the contrary, TRAKAB saw itself as the owner and the initiator of the project.

In such a setting, the dialogue between the three partners tended to break down before the negotiations resulted in an agreement. The planning team in charge had to mediate between the participants and enable the communication. Furthermore every progress in negotiations has been documented by the planners themselves. Starting from the initial draft to the last signed version of the protocol I have written at least a dozen of protocols with every incremental progress in meaning or just wording. The planner in this process went beyond the point of a neutral mediator or a facilitator. He took initiative at desired points, especially at bottlenecks in order to steer the communication into safe waters. Throughout the process of negotiations the
planner was forced to intervene using his model-strong power and assumed the role of an expert, a consultant in its relations with the signatory parties of the protocol.

When we reflect the process on our participation landscape (Figure X), we see that the whole process has run within formal and institutionalized setting. All three parties were represented in negotiations most formally; almost all talks took place in form of meetings within the framework of pre-defined agenda. The planner has virtually been the only one who had bi-lateral talks to each one of the party.

![Diagram Image](image)

**FIGURE 4:** Case Study 2.a., An institutional cooperation effort disclosing the discord between the public organizations. The process of signing the tripartite protocol that enabled the actual planning phase plotted on the participation landscape. A formal process but hard bargaining.

However, the cooperation process was not consensual. A power game between the parties, different, sometimes opposing expectations and dispute were characteristic for the talks. It may be argued that three public organizations talking for cooperation should be regarded as corporatism where parties support and cover each others insufficiencies. Therefore there exists an inborn consensus. We have seen that this is not true. The power struggle between organizations in coming together has proved to
be more decisive. Furthermore unexpectedly conflicting interests, such as the ministry doesn’t want to change the recently approved but incompetent plan, TRAKAB doesn’t want to pay for planning but has to, the metropolitan municipality doesn’t want to undertake any cross-border activity but the city has already grown over boundaries, have contributed to the difficulties in communication. Although the initial and “courtesy” nodding “yes, we have to cooperate!” would move the project towards consensus the rest of the project was far less consensual. The signing of the tripartite protocol appears on the landscape of participation in the ‘institutionalized-agony’ quarter.
III.2.b. Stepwise Policy-making with the People:

As soon as the protocol was signed the road was cleared for us to start up with the planning activities in the region. We preferred and promoted an open process. This meant to raise the awareness of XXX million people living in three provinces and 27 cities and towns. We have designed a participation scheme as part of the planning activity with four consecutive steps, which we believed to involve the widest possible number of people into the decision making process:

1. Informing the general public;
2. Developing collective visions – development goals;
3. Discussing for policy-making;
4. Displaying the plan.

1. Informing the general public:

Projects that are willing to participate people into decision-making very often do the mistake of inviting the people to a first meeting and are asking them their ideas, thoughts, wants and demands. Participants feel usually uneasy due to the sudden exposure to question without having had a thought on the subject. We wanted to avoid that and started an intensive campaign in Thrace. Together with the governor’s offices and the municipalities the planning team has organized information meetings in every township of Thrace. The planning process has been explained in 3 province centers and 27 towns.

This has been the most communicative step of the planning process. The people haven’t been asked any questions. Original plan of the planning team was to explain the planning process, preparing the people to an active discussion period for policy-making, in a sense for active political debate. We have invited the people to ask questions without limitations.

A regional planning debate had already been started during the planning process of Istanbul. Some of the ideas developed for Istanbul, especially the decentralization idea, did cause the most heated discussions which had found a considerable place in press and media. In a nutshell, the ones supporting the idea of decentralization of Istanbul were hoping for a dispersion of wealth and prosperity, and workplaces for their towns. The ones who were against the idea were claiming that Istanbul never would give up the profitable sectors, and would “decentralize” (!) only highly polluting, low profit businesses, while retaining the “lion’s share”. Thus the idea of poly-centricity and decentralization were already taken up with suspicion.
Especially the NGO’s, and among them environmentalist groups and the professional chambers were the ones who took a negative attitude towards the idea of decentralization. And now the same planning team who developed the poly-centric development/regional integration idea was commissioned to plan Thrace – this could not mean any good!

Planning is seen as an official, bureaucratic operation of the central or local governments. The Turkish state is not very reputable in asking its citizens’ opinions. It was suspicious that now some officials and planners were interested in public opinion caused further suspicion. Did the government have a hidden agenda, so cruel that they need a public approval beforehand?

There emerged also supporters of the planning activity. They were appreciating the participation effort and were arguing that this was the first time a public opinion was asked already beforehand.

Some others were moaning that this effort had to be made several years ago and that it was a belated undertaking after “everything was already lost”.

The information meetings held in the largest hall of each town has drawn attention. In combination with the controversial discussions, some of which I have cited above, the local media showed close interest, informing the rest of the population about the planning activity. However, the press was more interested in stirring things up, thus to a large portion the headlines were rather misinforming.

Nevertheless, we were happy that there was a close attention of the general public in the planning process. The information process achieved to mobilize a substantial part of the society. Awareness could be achieved; but people were standing cautious.

Apart from the meetings organized by the planning team, a second layer of meetings started to take place in every province center. These were organized by the NGOs and citizen groups. The planners were invited to those meetings to answer questions but most of the time we were trying to win the confidence of the people against accusations of deceiving the public.

It was very important to convince the public of the neutrality of the planners. We had to show that we are avoiding any form of clientalism or manipulation. The only trustworthy way of doing this is to lead an openness policy and transparency. During this period all information relevant for planning has been kept accessible by the planners. This proved to be disturbing by some groups who were demanding a privileged position. For instance, the previous planning team of the previous plan
composed of mainly academicians or some stronger NGOs claimed to be excluded from the process.

This process constitutes an example for how agonism cannot be avoided. Despite the efforts to generate a communicative rationale with the stakeholders of planning, individual groups more or less influential, preferred to position themselves in opposition to the planning process. Each group or individual had its own reason; some were politically motivated, some were misinformed; existence of some is based on reaction. Whatever the reason may be, agonistic inputs have been an integral part of the planning process. I would like to comment on it further by stating that without the “against” factor, the success of the participation process would be endangered.

People tend to raise their voice whenever something is not fitting with their expectations. The tension to protect ones interests produces a more energetic political process. The social decision-making mechanism seems to be an agonistic process than a consensual one.

During the information meetings the planning team was asking the people to think about their future and their cities; the way they want to live in twenty years from now.

The appeal has found repercussion. The second phase could be started.

2. Developing collective visions – development goals;

Following the information and awareness raising phase, the people could now be invited to develop their own development goals. This has been organized with the municipalities and the province administrations. The municipalities were asked to organize meetings under the heading “Vision Forming meetings”. The planners have developed a standardized information sheet to be filled by the municipalities at the end of the meetings which were to be signed by the participants. The signature was important for documenting that the forms were filled collectively and not individually in the mayor’s office. The returning forms were to be evaluated by the planners and transformed into development-policies. However the returning forms included every sort of demands. We have seen that without the orientation and guidance of the planner the process was producing arbitrary results.

Interest groups with economical concerns, such as industrial entrepreneurs or land developers did not contact the planners during the information phase. In this second phase, however, they started to visit the planning office. They were either asking to include their prospective investments into the plans or they were trying to find out information, apparently for land speculation, how the physical development would
look like. In face of these demands the planners split. One group was asserting that
the information was for individual gains and therefore preserved until the plans were
finalized; the other group was arguing that under conditions of full transparency and
free access to information no speculation could take place. Even though the debate
was not resolved, the planning office has not kept any planning related information
covert. Some land developers immediately turned against the planners.

3. Discussing for Policy-making:
This third step was designed to show people the accumulated results of their wishes
and demands. The overall vision, if it were put forward, for future required a set of
policies to implement. The planners were supposed to use their technical knowledge
in the classical sense to develop alternative policy proposals that lead to the goals
set by the people; and ask whether they were ready to undertake the costs and
burdens associated with their future visions. We wanted to show people how their
“unrestricted” imagination of future would change as they retreat against the
sacrifices they were supposed to bring about. Whatever is remaining from the original
imagination (or vision) would form the policy foundations for the plan.

4. Displaying the Plan
In this last public communication phase, the planners were to display the plan, the
formalized product of the people’s future thinking. The planners were expecting to
come to a public consensus and broad acceptance of the plan. The idea was to
produce a publicly recognized document which people would regard as their own
public convention.

***

Whatever the intentions of the planners were, the last two phases have not been
realized as foreseen by the planner team. Internal problems within IMP and changes
in working conditions have caused the planning team to disintegrate. The process
has been interrupted. IMP continued the process to fulfill its planning commitment,
however in a more conventional and less communicative approach.

Although interrupted, the experience can be reflected on the participation landscape
(Figure 5). The planners designed the participation process in line with
communicative planning ideas, expecting to be able to reflect the communicative
rationale on the product. However the process showed that conflict and dispute were
stronger motives than consensus. We have managed to adjust to agonistic
procession of events and tried to extract results for policy-making. The planners
intended to develop a process which would fall into the first quarter of the landscape, institutionalized-consensus. However as it was the case in the tripartite protocol, conflict-led interaction has overthrown consensus-led communication.

FIGURE 5: Case Study 2.b., The public participation process was designed by the planners as a formalized process and consensus would be reached as a product of rational discussions. However the democratic policy-making process is a product of disputes in any form. There is an old Turkish proverb: “whoever loves the rose must bear the thorn”.

“… Planners should be aware of the existence of intractable opposition and resistance as well as searching for agreement” (Hillier, 2002, 133). Seeking for institutionalized interaction has also proved to be sounding better among the professionals. However, the real course of action has moved forward with less formal ways of interaction. The informal or in other terms unformatted meetings and debates have contributed more to policy-making than the formal meetings. The invitation to make the planning process a part of their daily-life, for instance while having a coffee with friends has become more effective than asking people to develop the policies. Similarly, the negating groups, who have been asking tough questions, accusing the administrators and the planners and sometimes protesting the process have contributed more actively and more effectively to the planning process. Those inputs were not intended by the planners. When the project is plotted
in the participation landscape there appears a travelling course from institutionalized-consensus to informal-agonism.
IV. Conclusion:

It is important to state why I chose or was led to communicative / collaborative planning. It has always been a challenge for the planners to get their plans implemented. There are only a few physical plans that were able to determine the future development of the cities and regions. Plans are usually seen as boring bureaucratic obligations. The planning documents get only partially implemented and the extensive planning studies and reports which are officially inseparable parts of the plan layout are rather for the shelves. Furthermore, plans are amended every now and then so that they are altered until they lose every integrity and become unrecognizable. As a planner looking away from the problem creates an ontological problem for both the plans and the planner himself.

Another question I have been asking myself ever since I have started to study planning was “where do we get the freedom to impose our visions and solutions onto larger number of people who happen to be living in a certain place?” The planners needed to be able to understand ongoing social processes and contribute to the policy-making dynamics. During my university years I have followed a planning education valuing comprehensive planning; but some important lessons I am carrying from those years are extra-curricular. When reacting against a road project that divided the university campus into two, we were furious with the planner. The planner replied that he was very happy of our demonstrations, which strengthened his arguments against the road convincing the political decision makers in charge. The road has not been built. Planning, controls, planner’s relation with power have been questions turning in my head. I learned that planning is a political decision-making process. Hillier, too, (cited in Harris, 2002, 40) proposes that the skills to be taught to planning students should be:

“- Restoring knowledge of the processes and dynamics of urban and regional change
- Skills of consensus-building
- Strategic ability.”

The case studies display that I was channeled first to the Habermassian communicative planning. Later I tried to make more informal and agonistic groups a part of the decision-making process. Seeking for consensus may end up in ignorantly involving only the “nice”, “peaceful” groups into planning. However a participatory planning process must be:

1. Open to everybody,
2. Transparent,
3. Open to conflict and discussion; avoid submissive concurrence,
4. Accepted and recognized by the masses
The case studies presented here are brought together on a participation landscape. As can be seen on the diagram (Figure 6) the planner needs to be very flexible and versatile. Planners cannot expect to work within the upper left quarter, under institutionalized-consensus conditions quarter only. In fact, most of the stakeholder involvement happens through informal channels, especially when the stakeholders are representing their own interests. Formal participation seems to be required when participants are representatives of the stakeholders. This is usually then when employees, bureaucrats, etc. are representing their institution.

**FIGURE 6:** “The concept of strategy-making is a process of deliberative paradigm change, a means of shifting systems of understanding and frames of references” (Harris, 2002, 35)
The landscape also shows that processes have their own dynamics and the planner must be ready to changes. A shift from institutionalized-consensus to informal-agonism should not scare the planner. Most probably things are not getting out of control but a genuine participatory planning process is about to start.
V. List of Selected Bibliography


Douglass *Cities for Citizens* (chapter 1). West Sussex: Wiley


