Different interpretations of public participation in practice – Evidence from municipal planners in England and Denmark

The rise of governance in political discourse from the 1990s has raised a multitude of problems surrounding how decisions are taken and who is accountable for taking such decisions. The search not only for legitimate but effective decision making has reinforced the ideals around participatory democracy against more traditional modes of representative democracy. Planning is an extremely politicised process that has been greatly affected by these shifts in political paradigms, and planners have to adapt their roles in changing political circumstances. This project looks into the way planner’s roles are shaped by changes to the planning systems within which they operate. The English and Danish planning systems have both undergone recent reforms to their planning systems (2004 in the English case and 2007 in the Danish case). Illustrative cases from these two countries are used to develop an understanding about the way the role of the planner altered in relation to public participation when these reforms were introduced.

Planning for a Diverse City: A Case Study of Carlsberg Byen

The purpose of this project is to investigate how a diverse city can be achieved through planning. In order to gain an understanding, theoretical and practical knowledge are linked through a case study of Carlsberg Byen in Copenhagen. The Carlsberg Byen planning process began in 2006, but due to the current financial recession building has yet to begin. Nevertheless, Carlsberg A/S has a clear vision of the diverse city they want to create and they have utilised different processes to achieve it, for example a Local Plan and different communicative and branding methods. The report concludes upon the realisation that as a guiding principle of city planning, a diverse city, and diversity more generally, should be seen as a positive step as this new principle refuses to accept traditional homogenous developments as the only option for the urban environment.
A Bridge over Troubled Water: Stories, Conflict and Power in the Case of the Egholm Crossing.

This project deals with conflicting stories and the power behind them in the case of the Egholm crossing. This case is part of the planning process for a 3rd Limfjord connection that dates back to the 1960’s including many actors and thus many stories. Our aim of this project is to investigate some of the prominent stories in this process, and analysing the rationales and discourses behind them. Furthermore, we want to explore how a planner should deal with such stories within a planning case and how stories and storytelling can be a useful tool. From analysis and interpretation of interviews with prominent actors in this process, we investigate two dominant sides which in general link to the conflict between nature and mobility. How the stories are told affect the power behind them, however in the end it is the powerful and institutionalised discourse of mobility that dominates this case. For achieving a better understanding between the two sides we recommend a mediator/negotiator role for the planner. For this to be realised we propose that changes in the education of planners and in the institutional structures behind them are required.

The Augustow Bypass: From Conflict to Deliberation

This report deals with the question of how, conflict may evolve into deliberation within the planning process, what the triggers are for such a shift and where within the planning process they might be detected. The Via Baltica, more specifically the Augustow Bypass, in north-eastern Poland is what this analysis will revolve around by aiming to understand power and conflict in the planning process. The analysis shows how the planning process for the Augustow Bypass developed from one of conflict to one of deliberation which culminated in consensus. Several triggers can be identified that led to this shift from conflict to consensus within the process. It will be highlighted that all the triggers acted in aggregate configuration to produce the resolution of the conflict over the Augustow Bypass; that several triggers can be detected and seemingly no one trigger proved to be more important than another. The triggers together helped change the planning process from one of conflict to one of deliberation.
Brand Power

This project deals with the changing of the retail regulations in the Danish Law of Planning in 2007. The basis for the project has been the study of IKEA as a powerful actor in the process of the changing of the law. The analysis is made of four steps. Step One explains the background to the retail planning law in Denmark, explaining why restrictive legislation was introduced in 1997 and why it was subsequently changed in 2007. Step Two goes into detail about the actors, arenas, and filters, ending up in identification of the themes of the process; ‘Planning’ and ‘Ethics and Democracy’. Step Three goes into details on the discourses that have been used by implementing discourse analysis, while Step Four is the power analysis, identifying the winners and losers of the process. One of our conclusions is that there are many different interests in this law change, and that some actors form coalitions across interests, based on the same discourses. Another conclusion is that IKEA successfully used the power of its brand (and its authority as a global brand) to alter the retail regulation in its favour. Even though the change is not specifically for IKEA, IKEA will benefit the most from the law.

The need for conceptual advance: Transport planning in a mobility perspective

In this report we study the work of the Danish Infrastructure Commission from 2006 to 2007 and its recommendations regarding the future planning of transport and infrastructure in Denmark. The commission’s report was published shortly before we started our project period at the 8th semester of Urban Planning & Management, and after receiving massive critique in the media it seemed a natural pick for our semester project about power in planning. In this report we will be investigating the discourses related to the report of the commission and to the public debate before, during, and after the work of the commission. We attempt to adopt a discursive approach regarding the understanding of the power mechanisms that shaped these discourse, and the units of analysis include the report of the commission, the public attitudes to the work of the commission, as well as interviews with selected members of the commission to get and understanding of the process. Through this data triangulation we have identified a series of undesirable conditions for the work of the commission and attempted to formulate a set of recommendations to improve future policy and planning processes by framing it in mobility perspective.
The Regional Development Plan: Neither Fish nor Fowl

The reform of the Danish planning system in 2007 issued a new planning instrument on regional level – the Regional Development Plan. Under the theme of “Power and Planning” the report is investigating the power of the Regional Development Plan. The analysis is performed in two steps. The first step regards the past and is dealing with the discourses and legislation on the national level and the process behind the Regional Development Plan in Region North Denmark. The second step is dealing with the current plan and contains an analysis of the Regional Development Plan itself to identify values, focus areas and means, as well as an analysis of the impact on municipal planning. This is done in order to investigate the power of the new planning instrument. The chosen approach for the assessment is discourse analysis and decision-making analysis which together with the power concept reveal the sort of power the Regional Development Plan contains and how this influence the planning in the municipalities.

A New Beginning for Planning Culture: With Focus on Ikast-Brande Municipality

The point of departure of this project is the Structural Reform and the planning cultures that are being created in the processes of making the strategic plans. We have worked with Ikast-Brande Municipality as our case study with the following problem formulation: How is the planning culture that is being created in the context of the Structural Reform affecting the strategic plan? An analysis of both theoretical and practical approaches to planning culture has resulted in an understanding of planning culture with emphasis on planning practice including the underlying conceptions and institutional settings that affect this practice. Further, an analytical framework is developed in order to investigate the planning culture in Ikast-Brande Municipality. This framework consists of three levels; the observable, the conscious, and unconscious level. The framework is used to analyse the planning culture in Ikast-Brande Municipality in connection with the strategic plan. Three main tendencies have been identified on basis of an investigation of interviews with key actors in the municipality. First, there is a spatial turn in the strategic plan. Second, the management’s role is strengthened. Third, the political ownership is doubtful. These tendencies are, however, not an expression of the wider picture in the Danish municipalities, as the picture is more multiple. This illustrates that the Danish municipalities use the large degree of freedom that there is in relation to the strategic plans and, thereby, create unique planning cultures that are adjusted to the specific situation in each municipalities.