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Master's Thesis in Regional Planning

Collaborative Planning Practice in Tallinn, Estonia: the Role and Viewpoint of Neighbourhood Associations

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Tartu 2014

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1. Introduction

Cities are and always have been diverse in many ways. They carry different functions, provide places for encounter and reflect various lifestyles. The more attractive the city, the more diverse it becomes. In order to steer this diversity and the city in the most promising direction possible, certain planning decisions are made. Simultaneously, with the growing number of different stakeholders in the planning process, it becomes harder and harder for local governments to enhance this rich diversity, and instead of creating sustainable, cohesive and just cities, the opposite may occur.

Collaborative planning, which aims at involving as many different interests as possible, has become one of the prevailing planning practices in (Western) Europe. Derived from Habermas' communicative turn and Giddens' theory of structuration (Healey, 1997) it comprises the belief that all of us have the ability to make sense together through the power of better argument. Regarding planning, as the interests and stakeholders vary, the 'iron triangle' of stakeholders often emerges, comprised of local government, private developers and neighbourhood representatives (Burby, 2003).

As a result, the aim of this study is to reflect the perspective of neighbourhood associations on the current planning practices in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia and discuss the roles they carry in the planning process. Neighbourhood associations are a rather new phenomenon in Tallinn and in general their spatial planning interest driven activity does not have very long history, since the majority of the associations have been founded in 2006 and after. As the neighbourhood associations have the potential to elicit certain interests closer to the administrative power, their possible role as representatives of public interest is eminent. Therefore, it is necessary to study who and in what ways is given the opportunity to participate in the planning practice in Tallinn. Also, since Estonian planning system has great influences of European, mainly Scandinavian, planning tradition, this research results will provide the opportunity to compare what have we learned from our western neighbours, what have we implemented and what not. Therefore, three research questions are posed:

1. **To what extent can we talk about collaborative planning in Tallinn?**
2. **Which different interested parties are included and which are left out of collaboration and why?**
3. **What role do neighbourhood associations carry in Tallinn's planning practice?**

The current study has been divided into five main parts. The contextual material has been presented in two different chapters – chapters 2 and 3 – in order to channel the research better. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework and chapter 3 illustrates the development of the current spatial planning system and gives an overview of planning legislation. A short overview of Tallinn and neighbourhood associations is also given in chapter 3. Chapter 5 presents the findings of qualitative analysis of 14 semi-structured interviews conducted from February 2014 to early May 2014 based on the themes that emerged during the analysis. In chapter 6 the results of the analysis are tied to the contextual framework provided in chapters 2 and 3.

The idea for the current qualitative study grew out of the EU FP7 project "DIVERCITIES – Governing Urban Diversity: Creating Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Economic Performance in Today's Hyper-diversified Cities" in which the author took part as a researcher.

2. Literature overview

2.1. The philosophical roots of collaborative planning

Giving an unambiguous answer to the question of what collaborative planning is can be quite difficult, for as according to Brand and Gaffikin (2007) collaborative planning can be seen as **a theory** (ref. Patsy Healey, 1997), **a strong programme** (ref. Barnes and Bloore, 1982), **a world view** (ref. Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger, 2002) or merely **a form of planning** (ref. Harris, 2002). Thus, it is necessary to understand the genesis of this planning thought or paradigm prevailing in contemporary society.

The philosophical roots of collaborative planning lie in the works of Jürgen Habermas and Anthony Giddens (Healey, 1997). Jürgen Habermas' work grew out of the German school of critical theory – primarily European tradition of social and political thought centrally concerned with critical reflection on capitalism and modernity – which he has modified in important ways (Dictionary of Human Geography, p. 125; Healey, 1997), mainly as the initiator of the 'communicative turn' in social thought. According to Healey (1992) Habermas argues that we should shift perspective from an individualised, subject-object conception of reason to reasoning formed within inter-subjective communication. Such reasoning is required where 'living together but differently' in shared space and time drives us to search for ways of finding agreement on how to address our collective concerns. As our consciousness is socially formed in interaction with others, we develop ideas of responsibilities towards others, as part of our constitution of ourselves (Healey, 1997). Thus, the whole process of reasoning is grounded in our cultural conceptions of ourselves and our worlds (*ibid.*). According to Habermas (*ibid.*) there are three modes of reasoning that we mix together:

1. **instrumental-technical**, which refers to scientific and rationalist reasoning, linking ends to means and evidence to conclusions;
2. **moral**, which refers to reasoning focused around values and ethics;
3. **emotive-aesthetic**, which refers to reasoning derived from emotive experience.

The abstract system of Habermas identifies the structures of economic order (the marketplace) and political order (bureaucracy) that are opposed to the lifeworld of personal existence. Habermas seeks to reconstitute the public realm (economic and political order) in order to redesign the abstract systems to be more sensitive towards our lifeworlds. In respect to reasoning, it means that Habermas tries to reduce the influence of instrumental-technical reasoning associated with the public realm and give more room for moral and emotive-aesthetic reasoning (Habermas, 1986, 1987; cit. Healey, 1997). In principle, this means that by using all of our resources of reasoning and all our cultural awareness, we can collectively imagine and agree upon the richest conceptions of both what is 'true' and 'right' through the power of the better argument (Habermas, 1984; cit. Healey, 1997).

As said before, the other main contributor to the collaborative planning thought is Anthony Giddens with his theory of structuration. According to Giddens (Giddens, 1989, 1990; cit. Healey, 1997) we are never as isolated or as autonomous as we think we are. How we see or sense ourselves is constructed through the interactions with others and how we relate to the physical world we are surrounded by. We are born to social relations that grow and change throughout our lives and through which we are linked to different histories, geographies that constrain our material and conceptual resources and experiences. In this way, our individual identities and social relations are structured by what has gone before and thus, we become embedded within these structures. Within these pasts lie the principles of power relations –

how things should be done and who should get what (Healey, 1997) – much like planning regulations embedding land-use, which can also be seen as just another structure.

While for Marx the world was dominated by structural forces, by relations of power, i.e. external forces acting on individual subjects, Giddens argues that structural forces work through the relational webs within which we live, as we both use and constitute the structures that surround us, i.e. the structuring takes place inside ourselves (*ibid.*). In this way two processes are carried out simultaneously – as we are culturally made and socially constructed, we ourselves make the culture and construct the structures (*ibid.*). As this is carried out, we affirm our pasts, challenge them and change them (*ibid.*) or as with planning take what is given, evaluate it and vision what can become of it.

As we live in webs of relations, typically multiple relational webs, each with their own cultures, modes of thought and systems of meaning and valuing, we experience clashes of these cultures, within and outside of ourselves, daily (*ibid.*). Thus, through our own experience and efforts we make and remake, give and re-give meanings. As Healey (1997) argues, this meaning-making is not new: negotiating among diverse thought worlds is part of our daily life experience. Taking all this to account, we – all of us – have the potential to make sense together.

As we can see, both Habermas and Giddens argue that even though we all are individuals with our own experiences, thoughts, cultures, lifestyles, etc., we still have one thing in common, which is socially constructed shared space. As we create structures, webs of relations and are simultaneously influenced by them, the main question remains: how can we take this potential and diverse knowledge about those structures and elicit it closer to the ruling or deciding power? Or as seen through the prism of planning – bring the local and its structures to a larger scale where even bigger and more influential relations are created.

According to Brand and Gaffikin (2007) collaborative planning is based on a relational understanding of space, i.e. spatial realities cannot be reduced to geometries without losing the rich and crucial complexities of real life. Thus, the object of any planning endeavour must be treated as a unique component of a complex larger system. As can be concluded from the works of Habermas and Giddens, our daily lives consist of complex adaptive systems that are characterised by fragmentation, uncertainty and complexity, and are quite often chaotic but with self-organising capabilities as added by Innes and Booher (2003a, 1999).

All of what has been said above can be concluded with one principle inherent to collaborative planning, which is the assumption that **everything is socially constructed** (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). For this reason, in terms of collaborative planning, we should always determine what kind of knowledge we are trying to obtain: are we only trying to comprehend the elicit patterns or see the underlying networks as well; do we make the invisible visible; how power is exercised through norms and practices (*ibid.*)? In addition to the previous train of thought Brand and Gaffikin (2007) state a set of typical questions that collaborative planners pose:

1. What are the power relations involved in a particular issue?
2. Who are the potential winners and losers?
3. What kinds of arguments are used to forge coalitions?
4. How does the prevailing situation influence the way we think about an issue?

Thus, the knowledge we obtain is diverse and its importance in the decision-making process varies from side to side. Which brings us to another question of how much and **what kind of**

knowledge needs to be taken into account. Therefore, collaborative planners stress the need to facilitate articulation of such experiential knowledge, as there are no privileged sites of knowledge production (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). So, *'knowledge generation thus resembles more a collective learning process, resulting in negotiated knowledge that can arbitrate among diverse claims and priorities'* (*ibid.*, p. 287), which in turn places us in the crossroads of two possibilities: (1) how to perform a task in given parameters or (2) learn the parameters and change the conditions under which tasks are performed (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007).

For socially created and chosen knowledge **the importance of candid and explicit discussions about values** in collaborative planning are emphasised, creating an inherent impulse for grassroots democracy that gives voice to the voiceless by drawing more attention, for example, to gender issues, ethnic diversity and the needs of disabled citizens (*ibid.*). The aim is not to dissolve power relations but to provide possibilities for communication in between. In this way collaborative planning sees diversity and multitude of voices as a social asset in so that the *'local planning process can combine the environmental, social and political awareness'* (*ibid.*, p. 289). Also, the **value of sustainability** is elicit when understanding collaborative planning, whether it is seen as *'systemic intelligence, flexibility and robustness that stems from the ability to adapt to new circumstances'* or combined with *'ecological concerns to the "expression environmental sustainability"'* (*ibid*).

Thus, collaborative planning is a set of principles that when followed, assist in developing sustainable, aesthetical, dynamic and place-based/context-based spatial vision. Collaborating (Oxford Dictionary: to collaborate – work jointly on an activity or project) in itself combines different actions: **participation** (OD: the action of taking part in something); **communication** (OD: the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium); **involving** (OD: having or including (something) as a necessary or integral part or result) and **informing** (OD: giving (someone) facts or information; telling). The mentioned principles are often epitomised, e.g. in the 'Guide for Inclusive Planning' (Tillemann and Viljasaar, 2012), as follows: (1) **trust**; (2) **respect and equal treatment**; (3) **shared responsibility;** (4) **openness and transparency; and** (5) **diversity and comprehensiveness**.

According to Tillemann and Viljasaar (2012) for there to be any purpose of collaborative planning, the stakeholders or different interests have to have **trust** in each other's skills and knowledge. The opinions and interests of stakeholders should be **equally** thought over and everybody has the right to receive feedback and use different media for exchanging information or shaping opinions. Also, the sooner possible stakeholders are included in the planning process, the more it shows **respect** to the possible interests the stakeholders may have. Even though with respect to legislation the local government takes the responsibility for the final result, all given opinions and actions made during the planning process presume **responsibility** from different stakeholders as well. For the planning process to be **open** and **transparent** the local government needs to inform and include the public of the planning goals, schedule and results. This is required, for all the possible stakeholders may not be thought of in the beginning of the process and may become relevant during a later phase. And finally, regarding the vagueness of possible stakeholders it is expected of the planner to look beyond eminent interested parties and search for underlying ones as well.

As collaborative planning's essence lies in the socially constructed knowledge or even truth, it is necessary in itself to give all the possible voices the opportunity to give opinion. Still, some socially formed and legislatively competent understanding of how the collaboration can take place is needed as well. All the information or knowledge gathered needs to be analysed and through that selective public opinion needs to be created. Here the majority of work lies with

the local government for they have the power to choose what is important and what is not in any given planning situation, but doing so by arguing and keeping the public's interests at heart.

2.2. New urbanism, just city and collaborative planning

Even though collaborative planning seems to have the majority of importance in the contemporary European planning practice, a comparison still has to be made with the concepts of **new urbanism** and **just city**. In this light, the main possible positive and negative aspects of collaborative planning are tried to be brought forth.

New urbanism is a planning movement promoting the conviction that the built environment can create a sense of community (Talen, 1999). She elaborates, '*that a reformulated philosophy about how we build communities will overcome our current civic deficits, build social capital and revive a community spirit that is currently lost*' (Talen, 1999: 1361). According to Fainstein (2000) new urbanism can be considered more of an ideology whose orientation resembles the early planning theorists such as Ebenezer Howard (the garden city movement – self-contained communities surrounded by greenbelts), Frederic Law Olmsted (shared community), Patrick Geddes (regionalism and locality, economic and community regeneration, environmental quality and sustainable development and social inclusion) aiming to use spatial relations that create close-knit social community with diverse interactants. She elaborates that with the aim for urban design, which includes a '*variety of building types, mixed uses, intermingling of housing for different income groups and a strong privileging of the "public realm"*' (Fainstein, 2000: 461) the basic unit of planning becomes the neighbourhood with its limited physical size, well-defined edge and focused centre. The critique of American suburbia, which is considered responsible for more problems than just traffic congestion, e.g. crime and anomie (Fainstein, 2000), has been fundamental to the development of new urbanism. Altogether, new urbanists stress upon the substance of plans, not the method of achieving them, and so they do not fear playing the role of the persuasive salesperson who has a particular point of view and strategies aimed at co-opting people (*ibid.*).

Still, questions need to be asked regarding whether new urbanism just redefines suburbia rather than overcoming metropolitan social segregation, or because they still rely on private developers, is the outcome just slightly different from the ones they dislike (*ibid.*)? As a result, might these new suburbias or communities act more like social dividers? Sure, there is bonding inside the community, which is essential for providing emotional sustenance to its members (*ibid.*) but will there be bridging outside, not only in the sense of ethnicity as in the works of Varshney (2001) but in all social aspects.

According to Fainstein (2000) for planning theory the most interesting aspect of the new urbanism is its assurance of a better quality of life, consequently, the main difference between new urbanism and collaborative planning is the fact that if collaborative planning offers only a better planning process, then new urbanism offers a better result, even if it is utopian.

The philosophy behind the **just city** concept in planning theory is derived from the political economy tradition. According to Fainstein (2000), just city theorists fall into two groups: (1) radical democrats, who believe that progressive social change results from the exercise of power by those who previously had been excluded from power (power is asserted through participation); (2) political economy, that takes the normative position concerning the

distribution of social benefits. Here as well the role of the planner is somewhat similar to the one who advocates new urbanism – they both advocate the result (close-knit social community; picture of a just city). In doing so the planners with just city at heart, rather than to prescribe a methodology for those in office of how to mediate between different interests, try to mobilise the public and relatively powerless groups (e.g. groups defined by gender, race, sexual orientation) (*ibid.*). In the market-oriented and neoliberal society, in democratic pluralism and its emphasis on group process and compromise, the planning process frequently allows dominance of those who have the greatest access to organisational and financial resources, thus the interests of the majority, e.g. all other (social) groups are frequently ignored (*ibid.*). As a result, when applying the just city perspective, we cannot forget that all results attained through public policy are seriously constrained by the economy, e.g. all our courses of action are limited by economic interests (*ibid.*).

According to Fincher and Iveson (2008: 5) *'to create more just cities, planners need a framework for making judgements between different claims in the planning process, as well as for facilitating them.'* Returning to Henri Lefebvre's description of 'right to the city' the question of who owns the city is posed, which leads us to principles defined by Fincher and Iveson (2008):

1. **redistribution**, i.e. remedy for inequality driven from social statuses;
2. **recognition**, i.e. remedy for treating all socially carried roles as equivalent;
3. **encounter**, i.e. remedy for fostering spatial openness and hybrid spaces to create opportunities to meet.

Based on Fincher and Iveson (*ibid.*) with redistribution the goal is set specifically on class-driven differences and the planning process is directed to reducing disadvantages and inequality. Thus, problems addressed are spaces that limit the opportunities available for disadvantaged people and cause their material conditions and liberties to deteriorate, i.e. locational (dis)advantages and accessibility. Recognition is strongly entwined with the term 'intersectionality', meaning different social roles we carry simultaneously in our everyday lives (Valentine, 2007). In this sense recognition denotes taking all these roles into account when making planning decisions. Consequently making lists of different groups to involve are suggested, i.e. group check-lists, which means making a list of all groups that need to be involved and consulted during the planning process, or cross-group, meaning more relational model of recognition (Fincher and Iveson, 2008). A more just city is also created by providing different places of encounter, for example where people can meet others alike or on the contrary, make contact with the new and different (*ibid.*). The simplest planning unit in such cases is often considered the street providing 'sidewalk contacts', as Jacobs (1993) phrased it.

To summarise, redistribution aims to eradicate the diversity of 'rich' and 'poor', recognition aims to accommodate the diversity of group distinctiveness and encounters are created for strangers, as we usually are to each other, sharing the city. The general overview of the goals, strategy and results of collaborative planning, new urbanism and just city are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Prevailing concepts in contemporary planning thought and practice

	Collaborative planning	New Urbanism	Just City
Goal	Socially constructed knowledge/concept/ consensus	Close-knit social community	Spatial relations based on equality
Strategy	Collaboration through participation, involvement, informing and including all interested parties	Promoting urban design aimed to diversify building types, mixed uses, intermingling, privileging the 'public realm'	Questioning the benefits of the current market-oriented and neoliberal society, promoting ways to mobilise the relatively powerless groups
Result	Concept that satisfies all interested parties, is diverse and sustainable; consensus	Picture of a desirable city obtained through planning	Shift of power from decision-making minority to frequently ignored interested majority

Some of the possible shortcomings of collaborative planning have already been implied or brought forth. Nevertheless, Fainstein (2000) finds weaknesses in collaborative planning to be:

1. **the assumption that if only people were reasonable, deep structural conflict would fade away**, i.e. all interested parties are assumed to have the right knowledge of the topic under discussion and free of constraints created by their social and economic background;
2. **the role of the planner has been made the central element of discussion**, i.e. instead of asking what is to be done about cities and regions, a typically asked question is what planners should be doing and the answer is the planners should be good;
3. **communicative theorists avoid dealing with the possibility of an open process producing unjust results**, i.e. paternalism and bureaucratic modes of decision-making may produce desirable outcomes;
4. **different perceptions of interest held by those in different structural positions are not resolved simply through exchange of ideas** (socially constructed knowledge), i.e. there exist different historical contexts and fields of power. *'The aroused consciousness that puts ideas into practice involves leadership and the mobilisation of power, not simply people reasoning together'* (Fainstein 2000: 458);
5. **agreement by participants to a document does not necessarily mean that anything will happen**;
6. **lengthy time required for participatory process**;
7. **scope on which collaborative planning takes place**, i.e. the spatial boundaries define the homogeneity, heterogeneity and the equity, diversity of different stakeholders.

Regarding all seven points brought out, it might seem questionable why collaborative planning is seen as a good practice for the planning process. But the reason already lies in this statement – collaborative planning describes the aimed **process** itself by which participants arrive at an agreement on action that expresses their mutual interests (Fainstein, 2000; Healey, 1997). How well and in what way those interests are expressed or represented result from the skills, knowledge, communication, willingness to listen, ability to see beyond one's own

interests and respect for and trust in others. Thus, setting aside monetary goals for a moment, the only real flaw, if it can be seen as such, in collaborative planning is the assumption that all interested parties have the same level of understanding, the same level of knowledge about the planning process (e.g. the planning terminology, legislation, framework of how planning process should or is conducted), the same level of interest in the result. As in its essence collaborative planning aims for diverse and all-embracing participation, all the prerequisites and groundwork from either side (public and private) for this should be made before the participation can be carried out. This means that even though gathering different viewpoints for the universally satisfying concept are necessary, we cannot overlook the fact that in order to give those viewpoints, some level of understanding should be a prerequisite for everyone taking part in the planning process. In this way the rest of the criticisms brought out by Fainstein can be considered. For example, if the level of understanding is somewhat the same, there is no need for the planner to act as a mediator, rather than as an analyst who sifts through the given viewpoints and forms the main issues needed to be addressed. This in turn may reduce the time collaboration needs, reducing the reluctance of a local government's willingness to take into account all the different opinions gathered. Furthermore, adding the monetary aspect back into the equation – if time truly is money – then by saving time, we save money.

As today's society is diverse – more and more welcoming and accepting of new identities and various groups – it simultaneously requires planning practices that are able to recognise these groups and also provide them with satisfying planning outcomes. Meaning, the circle of interested parties who benefit from the planning process should be as big as possible. If collaborative planning aims for a just process, then when accomplished the result is also believed to be just. In the end all three – collaborative planning, new urbanism and just city – have the same interests at heart: how to create or recreate a liveable and pleasant urban space for everyone, regardless of the social and financial status or worldviews.

2.3. Collaborative policymaking

According to Innes and Booher (2003b) we have entered the Information Age, which presumes new collaborative ways for making policies as an alternative to confrontation (intrinsic to *maestro* or top-down planning). They argue that while rapidly changing conditions inherent to the Information Age provide creativity along with risk, at the same time they offer the *'opportunity to improve the system so it can be more productive, more adaptive and ultimately more sustainable'*. For these reasons Innes and Booher (2003b) see collaborative planning as highly adaptive and creative policymaking and action – an emerging mode of governance.

Burby (2003) has argued that in order to create 'plans that matter', the planning process has to involve a broad array of stakeholders, whose involvement is needed in order for the plans to have significant effect on the actions of local governments. Therefore, one of the main causes of ineffective plans is the lack of public's interest on the problems addressed or the solutions advocated (Burby, 2003; Innes and Booher, 2003b). Burby (2003: 34) elaborates that *'when issues do not attract the interest of potential stakeholders, planners do not benefit from this* [ordinary] *local knowledge, and the policies they propose may seem irrelevant to those they are supposed to benefit. Furthermore, planners are unlikely to learn about potential opposition to their proposals.'* But even worse, when the public does participate, the methods used to involve or the attitude of planners and/or local authority towards the public is often

inferior or even degrading, i.e. the local authority is prejudiced regarding the knowledge, information or suggestions the public may provide (Innes and Booher, 2004, 2003b; Burby, 2003; Ansell and Gash, 2008). And it seems just, as Ansell and Gash (2008) argue that some stakeholders may not have the skills or expertise to engage in discussions about highly technical problems. But this distrust is two-way, for as Innes and Booher (2004) discuss, the local authority does not take the public's view seriously, nor does the public trust the local authority, for the public believes that the government is unresponsive to their concerns, i.e. why should they participate if the result does not reflect any of the public's interests?

As a result authors such as Ansell and Gash (2008), Innes and Booher (2004, 2003a & 2003b) and Burby (2003) have brought out the prerequisites necessary for collaborative policymaking and given suggestions for how to increase public involvement in the collaboration process. First of all, as Innes and Booher (2004) suggest, the participatory model needs to be reframed from the dualistic system – citizens vs. government – to the pluralist framework, which means adding the involvement of organised interests, profit-making and non-profit organisations, planners and public administration to the equation. *'It is a multidimensional model where communication, learning and action are joined together and where the policy, interest and citizenry co-evolve'* (Innes and Booher, 2004: 422). Burby (2003) elaborates that participation processes themselves allow planners to educate stakeholders about poorly understood problems and policy issues, which builds understanding and incentives for collaboration. But in order for the process to be collaborative, the planner and/or the local government needs to listen and learn as well. Such genuine two-way learning, among other things, can take place only when conditions for authentic dialogue, i.e. all interested parties are treated equally within the discussions, are met, which in turn handles the issue of whether the citizens know enough to be listened to as they become more knowledgeable. Furthermore, planners and other stakeholders are more likely to enjoy rather than dismiss participation as an interesting learning experience (Innes and Booher, 2004).

Another prerequisite for collaboration is trust. According to Ansell and Gash (2008) the starting conditions for the collaborative process set the basic level of trust, conflict and social capital, which become resources or liabilities during collaboration. In their argument, institutional design sets the basic ground rules, while Innes and Booher (2003b) on the other hand feel that the collaborative group should define them as well as the group's own mission, rather than be given these by an external authority.

This brings us to the need for the facilitator of collaboration. According to Innes and Booher (2004, 2003a & b) and Ansell and Gash (2008) a way to increase trust between stakeholders is to add a facilitator, a person who does not have biased interests in the topic in question. This may be the planner or a person hired especially for the collaboration process. Thus, the participants feel safer and more comfortable in saying what is on their minds even if they think the others will not like it (Innes and Booher, 2003). The facilitator must also follow that every stakeholder's opinion or proposal gets heard, for some stakeholders do not have the capacity, organisation, status or resources to participate, or to participate on an equal footing with other stakeholders, which ultimately leads to manipulation by stronger actors (Ansell and Gash, 2008). These power and resource imbalances will affect the incentive of groups to participate in the collaborative process, much like the incentive increases as the participants see a direct relationship between their involvement and concrete outcomes (*ibid.*). This in turn leads to process transparency, which means that all interested parties can feel confident that the public negotiation is 'real' and not a cover for backroom deals (*ibid.*).

Another aspect that might influence the outcome of collaboration is the prehistory of antagonism and cooperation. According to Ansell and Gash (2008) prehistory of conflict creates a vicious circle of suspicion, distrust and stereotyping, whereas a history of successful past cooperation can create social capital and high levels of trust that produce a virtuous cycle of collaboration. In addition, what is interesting, that high conflict *per se* is not necessarily a barrier to collaboration (Ansell and Gash, 2008), for there are situations where stakeholders tire from conflict that does not seem to lead to a solution and engage in a collaborative process. When starting to understand each other's perspectives, new relations – professional and personal relationships – are created, social capital translated into new networks that work outside the collaboration process as well (Innes and Booher, 2004).

All of the above leads to a shared understanding of what they can achieve collectively together (Ansell and Gash, 2008). The prerequisites for collaborative governance are summed up in Figure 1.
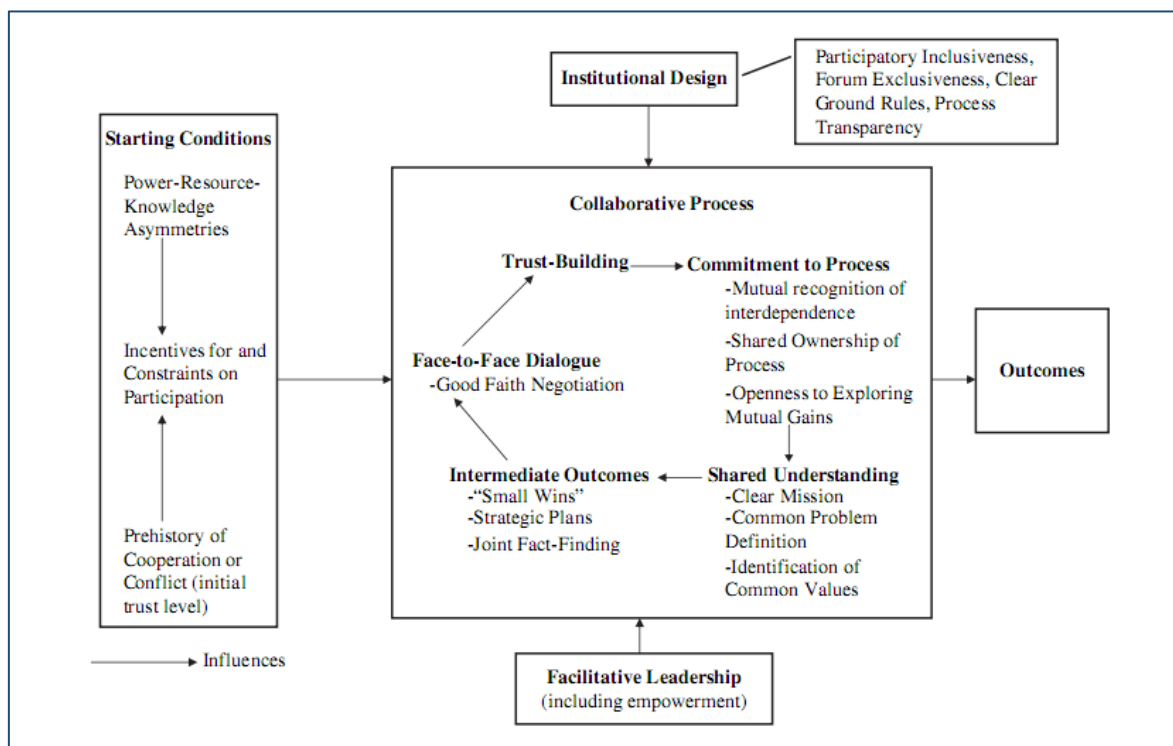
Figure 1. Model of Collaborative Governance (Ansell and Gash, 2008: 550)

According to Burby (2003) citizen involvement in planning tends to be dominated by an 'iron triangle' – local business and development interests, local elected and appointed government officials and neighbourhood groups. For the circle of the different interest groups to be wider, Burby (2003) suggests that planners do the following:

1. provide information to as well as listen to citizens; empower citizens by providing opportunities to influence planning decisions;
2. involve the public early and continuously;
3. seek participation from a broad range of stakeholders;
4. use a number of techniques to give and receive information from citizens and provide opportunities for dialogue;
5. provide more information in a clearly understood form, free from distortion and technical jargon.

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Also, to ease the dialogue between planners and stakeholders, Burby (2003) suggests (1) using visioning, charrettes and workshops for establishing goals and deciding on strategies; and (2) convening community fora to air issues related to the plan.

2.4. Civil Society – friend or foe?

As became clear in the previous chapter, one party of the 'iron triangle' assumed to be involved in collaborative (planning) process are the neighbourhood representatives, which in this paper are defined as neighbourhood associations. These associations represent but one voice of civil society, yet one that is still rather strong if given the opportunity.

According to Carley (2001: 3), *'at best, three key sectors combine in urban development partnerships – state/local government, market/economy/business and civil society/communities/households'* as was mentioned in the previous chapter as well. Simultaneously, Carley (*ibid.*) also brings out the worst scenario, where *'state and market ignore both long-term strategic needs for urban planning and management, and the needs of the growing numbers of urban poor, marginalised in disadvantaged communities, thus excluding an important sector of civil society from decision-making processes'*. Because of these possible polarisations between the rich and the poor, sustainable urban development has to be seen as a political process involving both strategic objectives and enhanced democratic participation (Carley, 2001).

In her master's thesis, Drews (2013) draws together the functions of civil society for democracy:

1. civil society acts as a conscience for the executive power by monitoring and restraining the state's exertion of power;
2. by stimulating political participation, it also recruits and trains new political leaders;
3. it creates channels for the articulation, aggregation and representation of diverse interests, e.g. minorities, thus providing opportunities for political participation and influence;
4. civil society increases the awareness for political action's transparency;
5. by improving accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, effectiveness and, thus, legitimacy of the government, citizens are more respectful of the state and also more likely to participate.

In addition, Purdue (2001) argues that trust between social and economic actors are a necessary condition for innovation, economic development and democracy, which all lie in the concept of social capital, a phenomenon equally defined in a community or neighbourhood as networks of mutual obligations, flows of information and enforceable shared norms. Based on his research findings, Purdue (*ibid.*) states that community networks in urban neighbourhoods are typically fragmented rather than closed and different social networks in a given neighbourhood are often poorly connected to each other. He adds that innovative leaders must act as mediators making connections between these competing networks, thus establishing an effective civil society within the neighbourhood (Purdue, 2001). He concludes that community leaders act as key points of contact between governmental regeneration initiatives and local residents in neighbourhoods (*ibid.*).

By posing six challenges that point to the importance of citizen engagement with local governance, Gaventa (2004) argues that more direct empowered forms of participation in the

local governance can under certain conditions, depending on the nature of the power relations, lead to democracy-building and pro-poor developmental outcomes. These challenges are:

1. **relating people and institutions**, meaning *'the construction of new relationships between ordinary people and the institutions'* (p. 25) as there is a growing tendency amongst citizens to perceive institutions to be distant, unaccountable and corrupt;

2. **working both sides of the equation**, meaning *'going beyond "civil society" or "state-based" approaches, to focus on their intersection, through new forms of participation, responsiveness and accountability'* (p. 27) as institutional forms of liberal democracy and techno-bureaucratic government are ill suited to the problems we are facing in the 21st century. The solution is seen in the interface of the civil society and good governance agendas;

3. **reconceptualising participation and citizenship**, meaning *'new forms of engagement between citizens and the state'* (p. 28), which argue for more direct connections between the people and the bureaucracies that affect them. Participation is seen as a freedom enabling people to see their social rights;

4. **new forms of citizen-state engagement**, meaning more ways to ensure citizens' voices in democratic governance processes, simultaneously posing questions, for example, whose voices are really heard in these processes and what about issues of representation and accountability within them?;

5. **the need for more evidence**, meaning *'how spaces for participatory governance work, for whom, and with what social justice outcomes'* (p. 31);

6. **assessing power relations in participatory process**, meaning whether the spaces for participatory governance are used for transformative engagement or merely as instruments for reinforcing domination and control.

In chapter 2 the origin of collaborative planning was revisited and its connection and importance to modern society examined. With the emergence of new social groups and interests that we encounter daily, new ways for recognising these groups are established. If provided the possibility, civil society carries an important role helping to elicit these groups. And so, for there to be successful collaboration, prerequisites like trust, some sort of mutual understanding, etc., are needed from all the potential collaborators. In the hope of 'making sense together' we have to be able to see past individual interests and argue for the greater good, which in turn will result in 'plans that matter'.

3. Context of the study

3.1. Estonian urban planning system development in European context

Compared to cities in the US, Ruoppila (2007) explains that national political institutions and significant public resources have a strong role in European cities' local government finance. He elaborates that there still exists a certain European city tradition where the public government looks for a compromise between economic interests and social responsibilities, thus attempting to prevent the market from dictating spatial and social development (Ruoppila, 2007). Even though 'families' of urban planning in Europe can be defined – British, Germanic, Napoleonic, Scandinavian and Eastern European – based on their legal apparatus and the government systems (Newman and Thornley, 1996), the tendency for planning systems to converge has emerged due to the increased market-orientation of planning and EU influences, meaning that European planning systems have in general become more flexible (Ruoppila, 2007).

According to Raagmaa and Stead (2014: 672), the *'spatial planning in Central and Eastern Europe differs from Western Europe in terms of rapidly changing economic, organisational and political landscapes, lower levels of trust in the role of government, the position of planning in society and the fact that spatial planning has had a longer history in Western Europe.'* They elaborate that the economic and political changes that have taken place in the Baltics have been much more profound than in other former republics of the Soviet Union. Mainly to secure access to EU funding, the Baltic States have attempted to emulate certain elements from western models of planning but in comparison to the rapid change of communist institutions their replacement with new planning institutions has been a slower process (Raagmaa and Stead, 2014). Ruoppila (2007) defines two phases that can be identified in the Central and Eastern European transformation of urban planning systems:

1. until the second half of the 1990s, low political priority concerning physical planning and a generally liberal approach towards urban development proposals;
2. from the late 1990s onwards, the role of planning has gradually strengthened and purposeful steps such as greater integration of physical planning and real-estate regulation, increase of transparency in planning and city management, greater involvement of the general public in the planning process and following the concept of sustainability are taken.

The trajectories of urban change in post socialist cities after transition from socialist to post-socialist or capitalist cities are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Major drivers of urban change in post-socialist cities

MAJOR DRIVERS OF URBAN CHANGE: Transition to Democracy (Systemic Political Change), Markets (Systemic Economic Change), Decentralised System of Local Governance		
Domain	From 'socialist' city: Outcomes	To 'post-socialist' or to 'capitalist' city: Outcomes
National urban system	Centrally planned population growth, investment, economic development and job creation; Stable increases in the level of urbanisation, sustained concentration in large metropolitan areas – economies of scale in production	Market-based restructuring of the urban system, integration in the global economic hierarchy of cities, service-led growth, core vs. periphery; Selective growth of cities, population decline in most urban centres

	Macroeconomic control through central planning, regulation, collective bargaining and control of markets through income and price policies	Deregulation of markets, laissez-faire approaches to economic development, growing competition, decline of manufacturing, unemployment, opening up of sheltered markets
Urban economic change		
Urban social change	Stronger welfare state, universal subsidies, moderate (controlled) urban growth, relatively homogeneous social structure, egalitarian income distribution	Retrenchment of the welfare state, socially polarised societies, poverty, marginalisation, declining and aging population, high economic dependency
Change in urban governance & provision of urban services	Dominated by central government decision-making, appointed officials; little autonomy; relative uniformity, provided by the state, largely funded by central governments, universal access to education and health care, investment in water, and sewer networks, strong emphasis on public transport	Democratically elected, decentralised, fragmented structure, fiscally dependent on central transfers, entrepreneurial approaches to planning and city marketing; Privatisation and marketisation in the provision of urban services, unfunded social mandates, growing inequalities in provision of water, sewer and public transport
Urban spatial change: production	Dominated by manufacturing and responsive to the needs of large-scale state producers, located in urban areas according to planning norms	Growing percentage of obsolete manufacturing facilities, new spaces for private small and medium production, suburbanisation of offices and retail;
Urban spatial change: consumption	Relatively uniform, social housing provision allocated by state institutions, universally affordable, built according to planning norms, mix of tenure types	Increasingly polarised social areas and housing markets, gentrified housing enclaves vs. problematic housing estates, predominantly owner-occupied

Source: Tsenkova, 2006: 47

Based on Roose and Kull (2012: 494) Estonia is an example of the 'new' European countries that *'have been steadily introducing new decentralised systems with high degrees of complexity and public participation, mimicking societal dynamics and the change of legal and economic systems and governance.'* When looking back on the five 'families' of European urban planning systems, Estonia is classified as a member of the Eastern European family (Newman and Thornley, 1996). However, as Roose and Kull (2012: 498) elaborate, even though Estonia's main trend has been decentralisation, following the steps of Scandinavia, *'the Estonian spatial planning system represents a comprehensive hierarchical system including mandatory, legally binding top-down delegation from the national level via the county level to municipalities.'* Thus, on the one hand we have strong Europeanisation, i.e. complex facets of European integration, on the national and sector levels and pragmatic land-use planning by the local authority on the other (Roose and Kull, 2012).

In addition to the traditions and practices opted from Western Europe, the main influencer of property ownership and the transition to market economy in Estonia has been the Ownership Reform Act (1991) (Roose et al 2013; Roose and Kull, 2012; Raagmaa, 2009; Ruoppila, 2007). Land has been transferred from the state to private ownership through restitution and land sales (Ruoppila, 2007), this change in Estonia has been illustrated in Table 3. The land reform has been stated to be successfully concluded as of November 2011 with a statement of the Ministry of the Environment. For example, as of 2013 there are in total 195,145 (100%)

residences in Tallinn of which 4143 (2%) are owned by the state or the local government (Statistical Yearbook of Tallinn, 2013). This means that any planning action is greatly influenced by private owners.

Table 3. Distribution of residential owners in Estonia (unit of measure: thousand)

Year	Private sector		State-owned		Local government-owned		In total		Thereof in urban settlement	
1995	270.4	**44%**	50.3	**8%**	297.6	**48%**	618.3	100%	-	-
2005	604.0	96%	6.3	1%	18.9	3%	629.2	100%	413.7	66%
2012	631.5	**96%**	6.6	**1%**	19.7	**3%**	657.8	100%	433.0	66%

Source: Statistics Estonia, 2014

3.2. Estonian planning system

The development of the contemporary spatial planning system began with the restoration of independence in Estonia. General principles adopted – planning as an agreement on future spatial developments, planning as a public and democratic process – were mostly based on northern neighbours' experience (Metspalu, 2005).

The spatial planning approach in use in Estonia derives from the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter (1983) and its principles were followed when the Estonian Planning Act (in force 2003) was formed. The principles of the Charter can be drawn up with § 1, section 3 of the Planning Act, which states that *'spatial planning means a democratic and functional long-term planning for spatial development, which coordinates and integrates the development plans of various fields and that, in a balanced manner, takes into account long-term directions and needs in the development of the economic, social, cultural and natural environment.'*

According to § 29, section 2 of the Planning Act, the Minister of the Interior and Regional Affairs is obliged to give an overview of planning related situation to the Estonian Government no later than six months after the routine elections of the parliament. In 2011, the Minister writes that the changes forced in the Planning Act in 2009 have been the most important and noteworthy. Their primary goals were:

1. to ensure better inclusion of people in the planning process and to expand the electronic communication and informing during the drawing up process of plans;
2. to establish tougher procedural rules in cases where the planned area concerns significant public interests or if the general interests are not defined with a comprehensive plan;
3. to ensure a working mechanism for choosing an object with significant influence.

On the other hand, many local governments have pointed out that changes in the Planning Act have made the procedure of treatment somewhat more complicated and time-consuming. Regardless, the changes have fulfilled their goal of making the planning process more open and the information regarding the planning process more accessible to the public (Ministry of the Interior, 2011).

And so the Estonian Planning Act § 3, section 1 states that *'drawing up of spatial plans is a public process. Public disclosure is mandatory in order to ensure the involvement of all interested parties and the timely provision of information to such parties and in order to*

enable the parties concerned to defend their interests in the process of drawing up a spatial plan.'

The Estonian Planning Act (2003), which regulates all planning activity in Estonia, defines four types of spatial plans, illustrated in Figure 2, according to their planning scope and nature. In addition, affects accompanied with the plan's implementation and their estimation is regulated with the Environmental Impact and Environmental Management System Act's section 2. Also, a city or rural municipality council's exclusive competence is established with the Local Government Organisation Act, § 22 section 1 points 31–33.
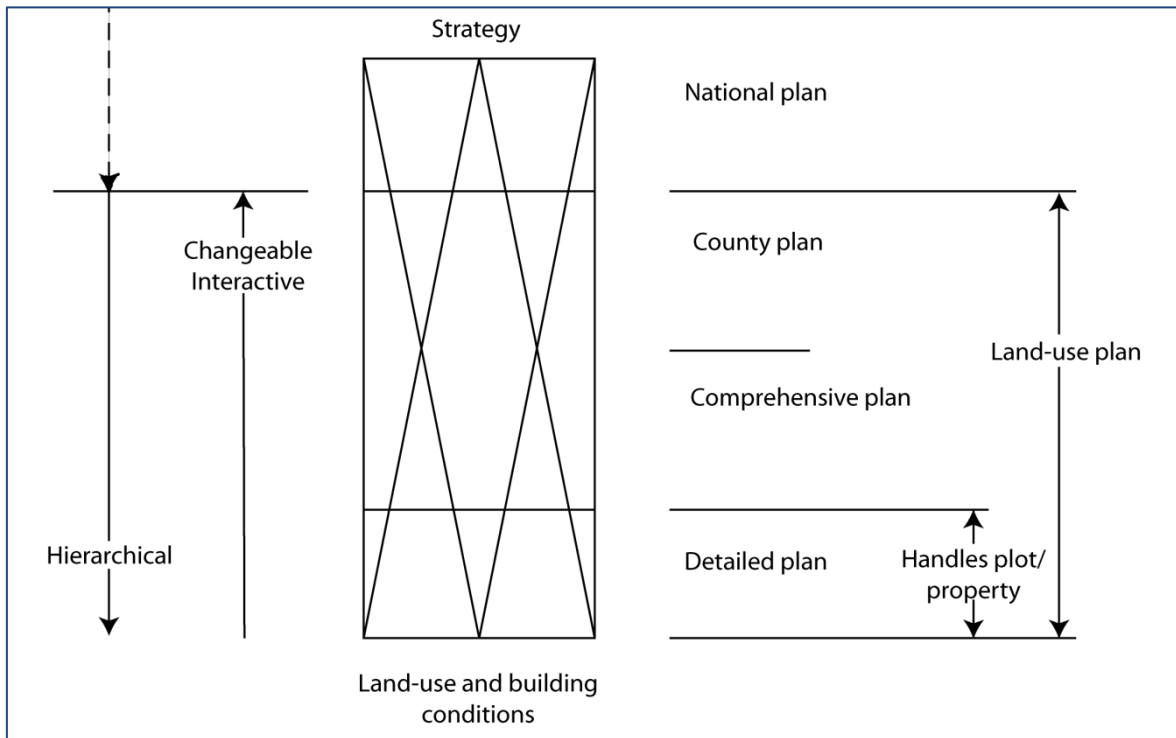

Figure 2. Planning types based on Lass, 2012

According to the Planning Act the national spatial plan is prepared in respect of the entire territory of Estonia. Lass (2012) elaborates that the national spatial plan is a strategic document, which defines a state territory's long-term development goals and programs their possible implementation, which in case of need are illustrated with figures and schemes. The national spatial plan is not a classical land-use plan, it does not define land-use or construction regulations, or object locations. Rather it envisions the future spatial arrangements and provides a basis for the preparation of county and comprehensive plans (Estonia 2030+, p. 13):

> *'Estonia is a nation with a cohesive spatial structure, a diverse living environment and good links to the external world. Low-density urbanised space integrates compact cities, suburbs and traditional villages, valuing all of these lifestyles equally. The human scale and economic competitiveness of low-density urbanised space are provided primarily by an environment that is close to nature and a network of urban communities that are well linked.'*

The same principle is in accordance with county plans. As explained by Lass (2012) a county plan is more of a strategy where the degree of generalisation is still quite big. The planning documents show the need for main elements of infrastructure and some general land-use

terms in the county. The main role of a county plan is still carried out by the text, which states the strategic goals and general land-use regulation. Thus both national spatial and county plans are more of strategies for general development and envision the main course of actions to be carried out.

The comprehensive plan determines the main land-use for bigger areas in the whole city or rural municipality or for parts thereof, e.g. residential areas, parks, forests, industry, also where the main roads and utility networks lie and bigger objects are located. A comprehensive plan designates all those elements, their need, location and regulations tied to them. Simultaneously it provides generalised regulations for land-use and construction activity as well as a rural municipality's or city's spatial development strategy (Lass, 2012). To amend or specify comprehensive plans, thematic plans may be drawn up, and they plan a certain feature for the whole city or rural municipality. For example in Tallinn there are thematic plans for the location of high-rise buildings and for valuable built (milieu) areas (Tallinn homepage, 2014).

The smallest scope, a plot or site, is covered with a detailed plan. This shows the planned housing, greenery, street characteristics, traffic arrangements, etc. Therefore, land-use and construction regulations need to have a certain degree of accuracy. Here most of the criteria for land-use and construction are given on a map (Lass, 2012). A detailed plan is obligatory for construction activity.

With a comprehensive and detailed plan the local context plays a significant role, which means that there are a lot more interested parties to be involved in the planning process, for the activities carried out based on the plan are more visible and may affect us daily. Here the role of local government grows with the responsibility and obligation to include everyone who may be a possible stakeholder due to the plan in force.

According to Lass (2012) Estonia's spatial planning system gives full and exclusive decision-making right regarding the questions of spatial planning to the local authority. This full and exclusive decision-making right is in accordance with the Estonian Constitution, Planning Act and Local Government Organisation Act, which is underlined as well in the European Charter of Local Self-Government (1985) that states that *'powers given to local authorities shall normally be full and exclusive. They may not be undermined or limited by another, central or regional, authority except as provided for by the law.'* Nevertheless, full and exclusive decision-making power does not mean absolute and unrestricted. In their decision-making regarding spatial planning, local governments are obliged to:

1. take into account/follow legislation that is in force and restrictions that result from them;
2. collaborate with local community, state institutions, non-profit organisations and other interested parties when deciding;
3. ensure balance between different interests that are taken into account (Lass, 2012).

Lass (2012) argues that collaboration with local communities is one of the most important prerequisite for successful and sustainable spatial development. The Planning Act does not describe how the planning process should be carried out and in what ways or how different stakeholders should be included and informed, nor does it explain how to arrange discussions or cooperate. This, of course, depends on various aspects or points of certain plan, e.g. the type of the plan, the location of the planned area, the size and values of the area, the possible range of friction between public and private interests, etc. All this determines the range of

inclusion and public disclosure the Estonian Ministry of Interior (national spatial plan) and local governments (comprehensive, detailed plan) need to decide on.

Nevertheless, when collaborating and including, it should be remembered that timely informing, collaboration and involvement create trust and decrease the number of possible unresolved conflicts. Thus, the later informed, included, involved, the bigger the chance for unresolved conflicts and misunderstandings (Lass, 2012; Pehk, 2008).

3.2.1. Role of the planner

Another matter to be addressed is the role of the planner. In 2005 Pille Metspalu wrote: *'The Planning Act does not establish stipulations for the planner. Nor does it mention the educational background needed by only stating the need for higher education'*. She elaborates that even though in the legislative framework the planner is the gatherer and negotiator of different stakeholders, the actual role is quite different. Also, the mentality that the only 'real' planner is an architect is dominant. The majority of the Estonian public still sees planning as physical, land-use planning, which in turn roots the belief that city planning gives an opportunity for creating a beautiful environment, from which in turn good life 'grows out' (Metspalu, 2005).

The Estonian Association of Spatial Planners (EASP) has in their appeal to the Estonian Qualifications Authority in 2009 taken a statement regarding the need of spatial planners, the role they carry and assignments they should be able to resolve. Here they conclude that in Estonia there is no complete curriculum for spatial planners, whilst simultaneously they do not see the possibility or need to issue a professional certificate.

According to the EASP (2009), planning means to consciously project the future of the environment or in other words planning the environment in time and space. The main assignment of the planner is to understand the processes that take place in society and how they are expressed through space. The planner is the leader of the planning process who is able to apprehend which specialists in any given plan development process are required to be included. The quality of the plan is ensured with the involvement of different specialists in the drawing up process.

In addition, the assignments of the planner according to the EASP (2009) are as follows:

1. vision development;
2. strategy development;
3. clarification and analysis of environments peculiarity (communities, village milieu, city space, etc.);
4. planning the spatial environment and land-use;
5. building and leading the planning process;
6. elaboration of technical and infrastructural solutions;
7. building and utilisation of GIS;
8. drawing up explanatory text, illustrations and presentation material;
9. strategic environmental assessment;
10. negotiation, communicating with the public;
11. the estimation of costs of implementation and procedure

Still, one has to ask what exact role the planner plays in the planning practice as the role is often comprised of being, for example, a technician, expert, visionary, official or politician.

Thus, is the planner a city official who himself draws up the plan, meaning he has the final deciding power? In this sense the term 'planner' usually consists of a group of planners who themselves might have different visions of the final result leading to a conclusion based on someone's 'matter of taste', a result often derived due to the need to finalise some sort of decision. Or is the planner a consultant paid for his expertise who has to delegate between multitudes of interests, often torn between the local government and the private developer? If in the collaboration process planner is considered a leader or even facilitator of the process, the need for the planner to be unbiased and representative of public interest is eminent.

3.3. Overview of Tallinn and neighbourhood associations

Tallinn, the capital city of Estonia, population 431,184 as of 1 May 2014, is an urban mixture of different eras. During the Soviet decades central areas demolished in World War II were re-developed at the beginning of the Soviet era but the remaining historical urban structure survived relatively unscathed (Ruoppila, 2007). Ruoppila (2007: 409) continues:

> *'The preservation of the medieval Old Town was intentional, but other centrally located "old" areas, including a significant number of out-dated industrial sites, were inadvertently spared due to the lack of re-development. Urban growth was instead channelled outwards to as-yet vacant land, though in a way that the urban structure remained compact. The largest construction sites were the three large housing estate districts* [panel housing areas – Mustamäe, Lasnamäe, Õismäe] *located at the edges of the inner city. Such features of socialist cities have been explained by the irrelevance of land prices in land-use planning and the conventions of socialist public housing construction.'*

Due to the fact that the main funding for urban development was directed towards the panel housing areas, a rather unique outcome in the context of Europe can be seen in the case of Tallinn, as large areas of inner city quarters consisting of 1-2 storey wooden-houses, e.g. Kalamaja have remained (Ruoppila, 2007). These inner city areas that were left to decay in favour of new peripheral construction (Kährik et al 2013) are today going under revitalisation processes such as gentrification. Sýkora wrote in 2004 that while several inner city areas in Tallinn showed signs of revitalisation, only one area was undergoing gentrification – Kadriorg. Today the situation has changed and implications of gentrification can be seen in wooden housing neighbourhoods like Kalamaja and Uus Maailm as well as in other areas of Tallinn's inner city. This kind of revitalisation process driven by young and childless households, young families, students or certain lifestyle groups often find an output through cooperation, thus the emergence of neighbourhood associations is quite inherent to Tallinn's inner city areas.

According to the *Estonian Urbanists Review*, issue 15 there are 22 neighbourhood associations in Tallinn as of November 2013, see Figure 3 below. The sphere of activities stems from the neighbourhoods' environment, e.g. milieu, inner city wooden houses, garden-city-like suburbias, and from the interests of the association members. Ait (2013: 31–32) has said that the neighbourhood associations have defined themselves and their activities, expertise and periphery accordingly:

1. *a neighbourhood association is not a representative assembly of the residents of the area, it is a (ideally one of many) citizens' association that focuses on improving the local living environment;*

2. *a neighbourhood association does not have to represent all residents of the area because that would contradict one of the founding principles of the associations (and democracy) – fostering diversity. There are several neighbourhood associations and other organisations in one area and when there are disagreements, making a decision to address diverse interests lies with the city government;*
3. *although the term 'neighbourhood association' has become a fixture in public vocabulary, most of the neighbourhood associations do not operate within the historical borders of districts set by the city, but instead determine their territory of activity themselves (*a good example is the Telliskivi Association that cares for the well-being of the Pelgulinn and Kalamaja neighbourhoods – author*). At the same time, local life is influenced by decisions that are made outside that particular area or affect the entire city, such as public transport, schools and nursery schools, and organisation of transport, which is why the neighbourhood associations bring a local perspective to these discussions and make suggestions for improving city-wide systems;*
4. *as the neighbourhood associations bring together people with very different interests, the decision-making tries to follow the principles of deliberative democracy, which means looking for a consensus or if that fails, to cater to different opinions in the best possible way;*
5. *a neighbourhood association does not wish to create a parallel governing structure; instead, it is willing to be a mediator between the neighbourhood and the city authorities, passing on information on the neighbourhood's needs and problems, that is to say, it strives to be an expert on local conditions.*

Neighbourhood associations are NGOs driven by citizen initiative, thus making them one of many outputs of civil society. As NGOs, meaning according to law (see Non-profit Associations Act, 1996) they are voluntary associations whose objective or main activity cannot be earning income from economic activity, thus, their main income comprises of membership fees, donations and funding. Civil Society Development Plan 2011–2014 (Estonian Ministry of the Interior, 2011) states that public authorities should facilitate the development of civil society by shaping the legal environment influencing civil initiative and establishing good communication practices with citizens and their associations. The latter requires awareness, an attitude supportive of civic initiative and skills of involvement, financing, public services delegation and supervision.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATIONS IN TALLINN

NÕMME HEAKORRA · KOPLI · MERIVÄLJA · PELGULINNA · NÕMME TEE

PIRITA · UUS MAAILM · MÄHE · KAKUMÄE · TELLISKIVI · MÕLDRE TEE · PROFESSORITE KÜLA SELTS

1908 · 1930 · 1932-1992 · 1992 · 1999 · 2005 · 2006 · 2007 · 2009 · 2010 · 2011 · 2012 · 2013

KASSISABA · KITSEKÜLA · JUHKENTALI · LUITE · MAARJAMÄE · LOOV NÕMME · LIIVA KÜLA · VANALINN · KALAMAJA · KADRIORG
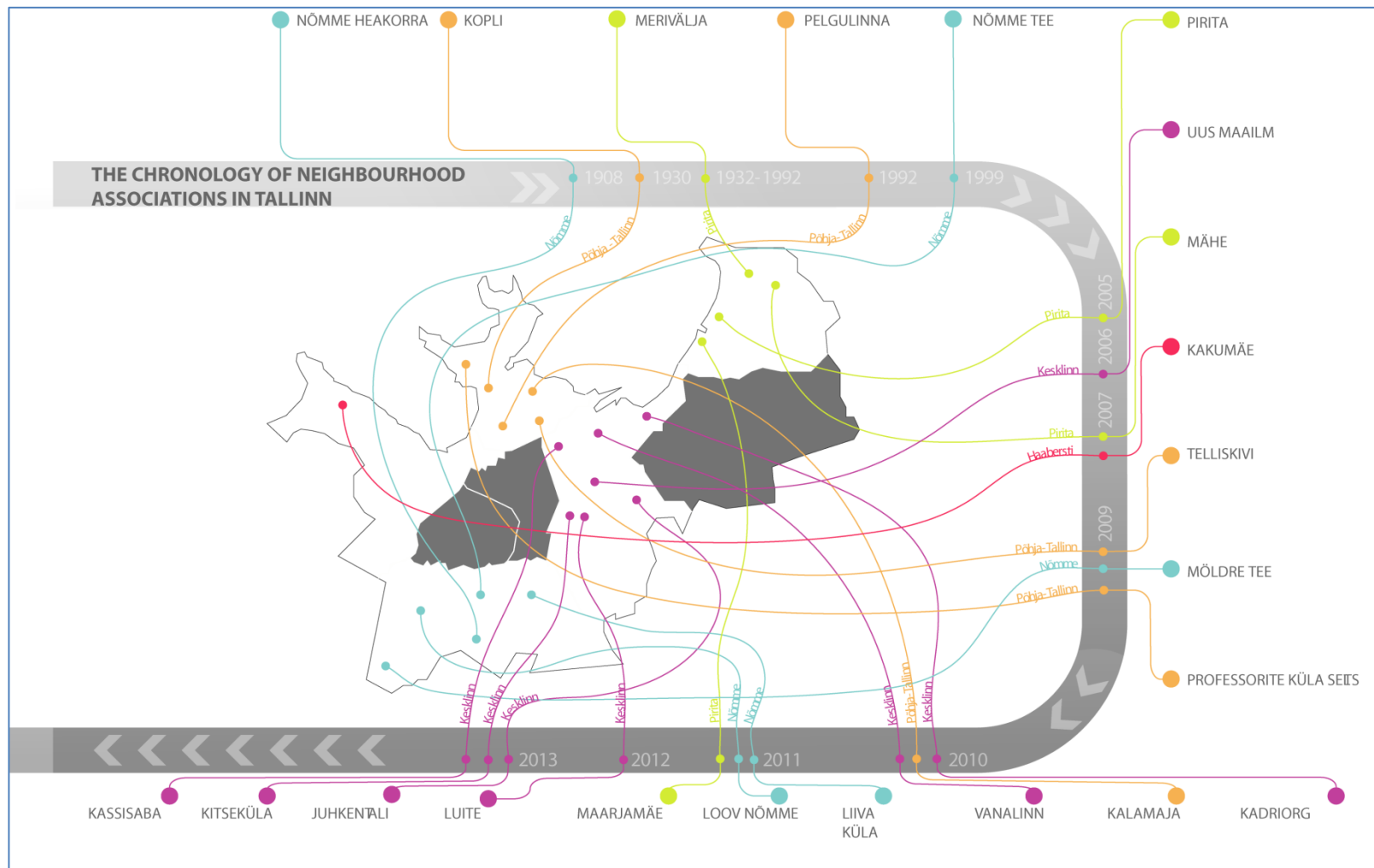
Figure 3. Tallinn's neighbourhood associations (by Anu Kägu, *Estonian Urbanists Review*, issue 15: 2013)

According to the Civil Society Development Plan 2011–2014 (Estonian Ministry of the Interior, 2011), as citizens' associations need consistent support there are many services funded from the state budget, e.g. counselling, possibilities to receive training and consultation, various mentoring and development programmes, information about developments in the third sector and their area, access to research and analyses, events to discuss common issues, etc. Such services are provided by approximately twenty consultants working at the county development centres coordinated by Enterprise Estonia. Similar support services are also provided by the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations (weekly e-letter, journal *Good Citizen*, conferences, spring and summer schools, etc.) and the Centre for Volunteer Activities (training and consultation related to volunteer activities, development activities). Certain support activities necessary for associations are organised by the National Foundation of Civil Society founded in 2008, which is one of the main financial contributors to NGOs in Estonia. According to their statute, the goal of the NFCS is to help build the capacity of Estonian non-profit associations and foundations to develop civil society and shape an environment that fosters civic action (NFCS homepage, 2014). To apply for funding, it is generally obligatory for projects' expenditure to be explained.

When funding NGO activity in Tallinn the city of Tallinn follows the Procedure of NGO Activity Funding and the Extra Conditions of Funding NGO Activity for 2014 (Tallinn homepage, 2014), which state that a project in need of funding has to be in accordance with the city's development documents and budget. All projects applying for funding follow the procedure of open competition. Also, according to the Development Plan for Tallinn 2014–2020 (2013), cooperation with non-profit organisations is seen as a risk mitigation option for the capital's population replacement deterioration by increasing involvement of residents and the non-profit sector in organising local life, increasing the social responsibility of people and enterprises. In addition, the city is looking for ways to involve non-profit organisations in seeking options to construct the social and technical infrastructure. Furthermore, when increasing the importance of long-term planning, the city seeks more ways to be the initiator of planning activity and a strong collaborator with the state and private and non-profit sector (Tallinn homepage, 2014).

Altogether it can be concluded that NGOs and their activity are seen as a means of creating social cohesion and social responsibility both in state and city development documents. Also, support services and funding are provided by state lead organisations as well as the Tallinn City Government.

3.3.1. Urban Lab and Urban Idea

Although not a neighbourhood association, Urban Lab has provided an initiative Urban Idea that wants to unite all the neighbourhood associations in Tallinn. Urban Lab is a non-profit organisation founded in 2006 in Tallinn. Located in the Telliskivi Creative City in the up-and-coming district of Northern Tallinn it is the focal point for studying cities, urban issues and phenomena. Using different techniques or methods – scientific, social, artistic – they work on new solutions to improve and diversify urban life (Urban Lab homepage, 2014).

Among different initiatives there is one focused solely on improving the cooperation between Tallinn's neighbourhood associations and local government. According to the Urban Lab homepage, dated 1 September 2012, the initiative '*Urban Idea believes that all residents are united under one overarching idea – in a good city the leaders and residents work for the same goals … The Urban Idea dreams about the future city, that is created in cooperation with the residents and the city government*'.

As a result in February 2014, 49 different organisations of Tallinn signed the Tallinn-centred 'Good Collaboration Pact'. According to the coordinator of Urban Idea and the leader of Urban Lab, Teele Pehk, the 'Good Collaboration Pact' is a document with its goal set to promote the cooperation culture of NGOs and city agencies. The 'Good Collaboration Pact' follows the understanding that good, well-considered ideas develop from dialogue and collaboration. This document brings forth the obligations and rights both of city agencies and NGOs and draws together general principles of collaboration that have not been set yet on the level of City Government (Urban Idea homepage, 2014).

In conclusion of chapter 3 it can be said that the Estonian spatial planning system comprises aspects of Scandinavian tradition of decentralisation, simultaneously carrying the properties of a hierarchical system. Here the facets of European integration meet pragmatic land-use planning by the local authority. As the planning practice is strongly influenced by the market-oriented economy, the local government must often struggle between the interests of private owners and the diverse public. Based on the overview of Estonian planning legislation and development documents it can be said that in theory the incentives for collaborative planning have been adopted by, for example, recognising civil society as a potentially equal partner in the collaboration process regarding spatial and social development.

4. Data and Methods

4.1. Data and sample

During the time of the current research the author of this thesis took part in a EU FP7 project 'DIVERCITIES – Governing Urban Diversity: Creating Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Economic Performance in Today's Hyper-diversified Cities' (DIVERCITIES, 2013) as a researcher of the University of Tartu's Centre for Migration and Urban Studies (CMUS). Due to the overlapping of the initiatives of the project and the interviewees, some of the interviews conducted for the project are also used in the current thesis.

According to Ait (2013), there are 22 neighbourhood associations in Tallinn as of November 2013, mainly in four major districts – Northern Tallinn, Nõmme, Kesklinn and Pirita (see Figure 3) – except one in Haabersti Kakumäe. Due to the concept (collaboration) under study, it was decided that all associations would be included in the sample, i.e. by choosing universal sampling, all associations that were reached were included in the analysis. Those that were not reached were described based on secondary data available, e.g. association's homepage, newspaper articles, and evaluated by giving a general overview of their aims and background.

In total, 14 interviews were conducted, 3 as part of the DIVERCITIES project. The lengths of the interviews vary from 41 minutes to 1 hour and 22 minutes. All interviews were carried out by the author of the current thesis. Participants were contacted first via e-mail, asking for an interview with a representative of the association. If a response via e-mail was not obtained, phone calls were made. 12 interviewees are members of the associations' directive, in some cases also the original founding members. 2 other interviewees are active members of the association, one of them also a founding member. The metier or association external activities of the interviewees vary from side to side, see the full list in Appendix 3. The interviews were conducted in associations' rooms, cafés, pubs or interviewees homes. All the interviewees were asked whether their words could be cited namely and in all cases I received their approval. All the interviews were conducted from February 2014 to early May 2014.

Of those 8 associations that were not interviewed, 6 did not respond to either e-mail or phone calls, 1 forwarded to another contact who in the end did not respond and 1 responded when the analysis was already finished.

4.2. Methods

4.2.1. Method choice for empirical data

As the aim of the present research is to provide a viewpoint of a certain interest group significant in the collaborative planning process, it was quite clear that the best way to reach that aim was to conduct semi-structured qualitative expert interviews.

According to Dunn (2000), research interviews are a good way of gaining access to information about events, opinions and experience. One of the major strengths of interviewing is that it allows the researcher to discover what is relevant for the informant (ibid.). Another big advantage lies in the method's flexibility – the possibility to regulate the data collection according to the situation and the respondent (Laherand, 2008). Based on Dunn (2000) and Laherand (2008) interviewing as a research method is justified in the following situations:

1. there is little or no research conducted on the topic;
2. there is a need for knowledge that other methods, e.g. observation, census data analysis, cannot provide;
3. the importance of seeing the person as a subject in the research process is stressed. Interviewees should be given a chance to express themselves as freely as possible. They are the ones *giving the meaning* to the research and are the *active party*;
4. to collect a diversity of opinion and experience. Interviews provide insights into the differing opinions or debates within a group but they can also reveal consensus in some issues;
5. to place the answers in a broader context. During the interview it is possible to follow the expressions and gestures of the respondent. In addition, the interviewees might speak more about the topic or themselves than the interviewer has expected;
6. the topic in question might produce many different answers, the researcher wishes to specify the answers;
7. the researcher wishes to gain deeper knowledge. For example, asks to justify the positions taken by the interviewee. In case of need, additional questions can be asked;
8. topics in question are difficult, complicated or sensitive.

Of course, every research method has its shortcomings. For example, qualitative research methods have been criticised for being unscientific and unduly subjective (Laherand, 2010). Its main drawback lies in its reliability stemming from consistent categorisation of different cases or rather lack of it (*ibid*.). In addition, there is the question of validity for the conclusions are drawn from small excerpts of the interview or the interviewer's own values are insufficiently reflected, thus interfering in making adequate conclusions (*ibid*.). Thus, when interviewing the author tried to keep herself unbiased and aimed to control her attitudes, which might influence the answers of the interviewees.

Therefore, neighbourhood associations together form an interest group in the planning process. To better understand how and to which extent this grassroots initiative influences the outcomes of the spatial planning process, mainly how they themselves see their influence, the choice of a semi-structured interview is justified for the following reasons:

1. the present research is intended to gain deeper knowledge of a certain viewpoint;
2. the researcher feels that a survey will not open certain aspects that might arise during an interview;
3. new knowledge might become elicit, which the researcher might not anticipate;
4. flexibility of the method, data collection can be regulated during the research.

As neighbourhood associations in Tallinn are a rather new phenomenon and their activity in the planning process is showing a rapid tendency of growth, deeper understanding of their role and influence on the matter can be drawn with the interview method.

4.2.2. Method choice of analysis

As highlighted in the chapter literature overview, the collaborative planning process and governance is widely researched and has obtained a certain status in Western (European) theory and practice. For mapping the situation in Tallinn, Estonia, the empirical analysis chosen was **directed content analysis**.

According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1281), *'the goal of a directed approach to content analysis is to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory'.* By using existing theory or prior research, researchers begin by identifying key concepts or variables as

initial coding categories. Coding is a multilevel process consisting of: open coding, i.e. codes are derived from data and the researcher's knowledge of context; axial coding, i.e. the relations between codes that emerged from open coding are analysed and bigger differences brought out; and selective coding, i.e. differentiating important codes. Codes can be: *in vivo*, meaning keywords or phrases that impart the actions taking place in the text; open codes, meaning they are derived from text, i.e. inductively; and given codes, meaning the coding takes place by following given codes and instructions. The coding scheme usually forms from the combination of *in vivo*, open and given codes (Masso, 2011).

The basis of analysis stems from the literature overview and theories, concepts discussed. When starting to code, ideas such as competence, collaboration were kept in mind whilst still trying to be as open-minded and unbiased as possible to be open for new unexpected codes. The texts were read multiple times. Codes were given for words, sentences or even sections of text, depending on the signification. Altogether 50 codes were created and 4 themes with 5 subthemes and 2 over-arching contextual themes derived. Some codes were overlapping describing the same part of the text.

As the current study grew out of the 'DIVERCITIES' project, the three first interviews were conducted following the interview guide of the project (see Appendix 1), which was also assembled by the author of the current thesis. After the first three interviews another guide was prepared (see Appendix 2). During the span of interviewing some initial questions were dropped or redefined and some questions were added, depending on the need for further elaboration. During the interviews main themes emerged and with some questions the answers started to take similar positions. In ways, sample saturation was sensed as the experiences were different but the positions taken were the same.

In the following chapters the findings of the analysis are presented. Chapter 5 presents the general findings with no interpretation by the author, chapter 6 provides a discussion concerning the emerged themes and some other interesting aspects that arose during the interviews while linking the results with overviewed literature. Therefore, chapter 6 will provide answers to the posed research questions.

Because of the context of the current research – spatial planning practice in Tallinn – which involves mainly three various stakeholders – local government, private developers and civil society – it must be stressed that as this research elicits the viewpoint of neighbourhood associations some critique towards local government and private developers is expected. As the other stakeholders were not interviewed, the results of this study reflect only the viewpoint of neighbourhood associations. To give the overall view of spatial planning practice in Tallinn the experience and positions of local government and private developers have to be included through subsequent research.

5. Findings

5.1. Overview of neighbourhood associations that were not interviewed

As became evident based on secondary data the impulses for founding vary somewhat the same as with the interviewed neighbourhood associations, e.g. opposing some private development – Mähe, Luite, Nõmme Tee, Kakumäe; promote the living environment – Telliskivi, Pelgulinna, Professorite Küla, Kadrioru, Kalamaja, Kassisaba, Kitseküla; protect the current living environment – Pirita, Nõmme Tee, Nõmme Heakorra, Kalamaja; and networking, creating community, which applies to every association. The goals and activities are tied to the founding impulse, e.g. mediating information between residents of the area and local government or other institutions; organising events for the residents or wider audience; organising seminars – all of which became evident from the interviews as well. The two highlighted waves of neighbourhood associations can also be seen, e.g. Nõmme Heakorra and Kopli represent the 1st wave and others the 2nd, two of which – Kassisaba and Kitseküla – have been founded not more than 7 months ago. Still, local activity has been evident for much longer.

The interesting details discovered were that in two of the cases – Nõmme Heakorra and Kakumäe – the interest of separating from the city of Tallinn were shown (see article in Ekspress dated 6 July 2010). This point was mentioned in one of the interviews as well. Rumour has it that some neighbourhood associations were actually founded in hopes of becoming a detached government unit (Int-7, Vanalinna). Also, the associations' apolitical tendencies were brought out, e.g. Kalamaja, Merivälja. This point was strongly stressed regarding the Pelgulinna association, which stated that their 20 years of productive activity is strongly bound to the fact that they have been able to remain apolitical (Int-2, Pelgulinna).

With Kalamaja and Kopli the goals reflect more than just networking and creating community, organising events. Kalamaja has set their interests towards researching the history, culture and other interesting aspects of both Kalamaja and Tallinn, Estonia in general. Also, they promote collaboration between the association, residents and educational and scientific institutions. Kopli has stressed their involvement in charity and collaboration with the local government.

Attitudes towards the political views of the current City Government could be noticed. Here it has to be stressed that it is unknown how many members of the association or residents of the area agree to this statement:

> *"Actually the situation for the citizen is extremely sad. There is no right for substantial say. It appears that if the developer buys a voucher for a detailed plan from the Central Party's office and as long as the city holds every necessary meeting, answers all the letters and nothing is completely off the citizens have no chance of accomplishing anything in court."* / Almar Sehver, Kakumäe association (see article in *Ekspress*, dated 5 December 2013)

In conclusion, the described themes as a result of the following analysis and their relations can be adapted to the associations that were not interviewed. There appear to be varieties of actions but the goals can be assumed the same with the overarching goal of improving and or maintaining the living environment. Also, as it became evident based on secondary data, similarities regarding additional and interesting details have supported some opinions that became elicit during the interviews. For a summary of secondary data, see Table 4 below.

Table 4. Overview of 8 associations that were not interviewed

Name/ district	Impulse for founding	Goals	Activities	Interesting details
Nõmme Heakorra/ Nõmme	Protecting the originality and cultural heritage of Nõmme district	To protect and introduce Nõmme's cultural assets; develop Nõmme according to traditionally set ways; organise events to improve the upkeep and appearance	Information exchange; classes on milieu values; organising events	The oldest neighbourhood association in Tallinn; have stated their main goal: to reinstate Nõmme as a town (see association's homepage)
Kopli/ Northern Tallinn	Developing the initiative to protect the interests of residents	Promoting human friendly living environment, security; collaboration with local government and state governments, businesses and organisations; organising events	Neighbourhood charity events; helping families in need; spring fairs	Reinstated association; organising charity
Merivälja/ Pirita	Appreciating a garden-city and nature-friendly lifestyle	Represent Merivälja's homeowners' interests; be a constructive partner to local government in Merivälja's development issues	Networking between residents	States to be apolitical
Kakumäe/ Haabersti	Court case against the planned yacht harbour development in Kakumäe area	Stand against the determination of yacht harbour detailed plan (see petition); stand against corruption, decentralise planning process (see election promises of Urmas Sõgel, the representative of Kakumäe association);	Information exchange between residents; organising protest against yacht harbour development	Have shown interest in seceding from Tallinn
Kalamaja/ Northern Tallinn	To value areas historical, architectural and environmental uniqueness; raising safety	To protect, promote Kalamaja's neighbourhood, living environment, cityscape, cultural heritage; to study scientifically, analyse the culture and history of Kalamaja and Estonia; to contribute to the wider community, sustainable, family-centred and child welfare, social thinking and the further development of democratic principles	Providing mentioned target audience information, events and activities for free or on favourable conditions; various research on Kalamaja; organising public events, seminars; newspaper	States to be apolitical; stresses the research of cultural, historical environmental aspects of both Kalamaja and Estonia; promotes democratic values; cooperation with educational and scientific institutions
Maarjamäe / Pirita	Encouraging communication between residents	-	Maarjamäe fair	-
Kitseküla/ Kesklinn	Improving the quality of the living environment	Bring together active people who care for their living environment and want to raise its quality	Networking between residents	One of the youngest, founded in 2013
Kassisaba/ Kesklinn	Community initiative; improving the living environment	Bring together residents and friends of Kassisaba neighbourhood	Kassisaba Day; tours in the neighbourhood	One of the youngest, founded in 2013; very active in social media (Facebook)

All secondary data used for the overview is summarised in subchapter 'Sites regarding the information of neighbourhood associations that were not interviewed'.

In the following subchapters the main findings of the analysis are presented. The main themes that emerged were the stakeholders in the planning process, i.e. **local government**, **real estate developers** and **civil society**. During the interviews the question of **public interest** was often brought out, thus it has also been defined as a detached stakeholder. These four are the primary themes discussed. The secondary themes that emerged were **institutional structure** directly connected to local government, and **measures**, which are connected to local government and private developers for they both shared somewhat similar for taking action or acting in certain situations, often sharing the same interests. Analysis of measures will be given with the local government and private developers. Another secondary theme pertaining to civil society was the **neighbourhood associations** as one very specific representative of civil society, which will be analysed with the theme civil society. From here tertiary themes, **whose voice, whose opinion** and **leader** follow. The tertiary themes will be analysed strongly in connection to the theme neighbourhood associations. As the question of whose voice and leader was often brought up accordingly by the interviewer and the interviewees, the author feels that they should be somewhat detached categories brought forward. All the themes are bound together with the overarching themes of **principles** and **attitudes**, for all the stakeholders have developed attitudes towards the measures or other stakeholders and have a set of principles they act upon or want the other stakeholders to act upon. The themes and their connections are summarised in Figure 4 below.
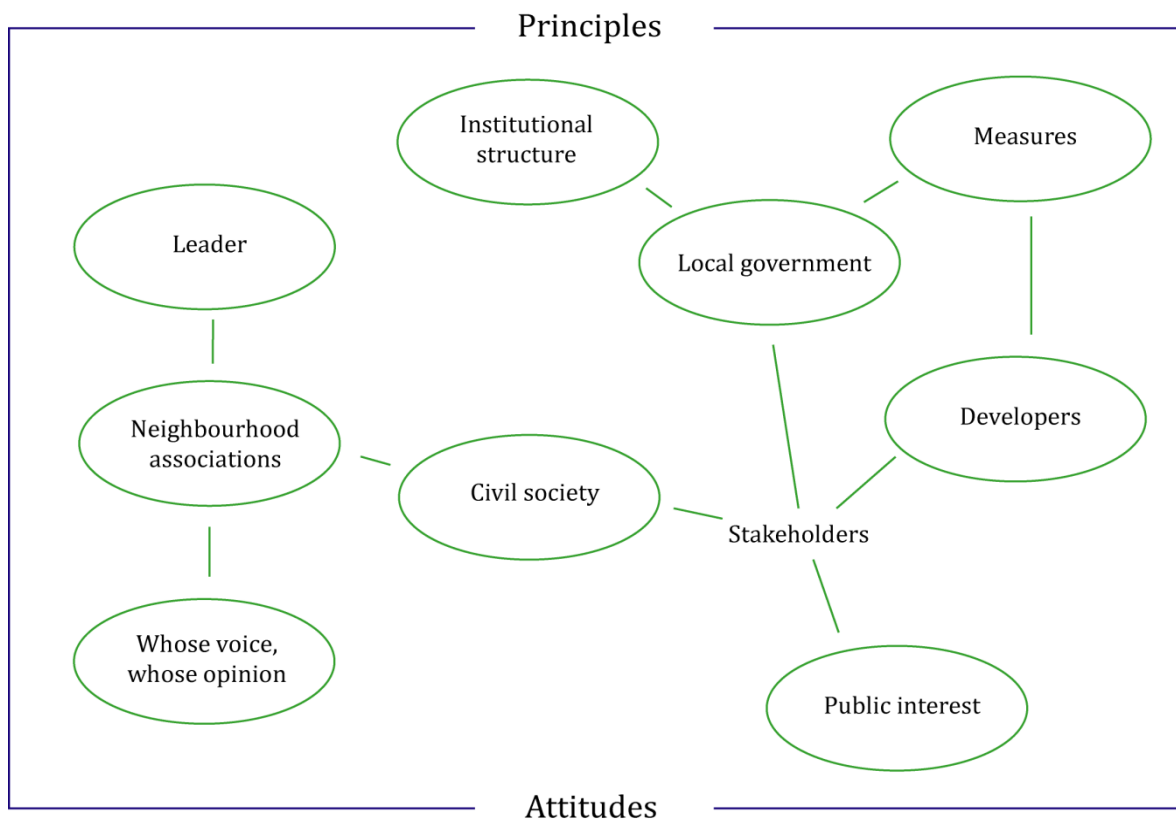

Figure 4. Emerged themes and their relations

5.2. Civil Society – neighbourhood associations, their leaders and voices represented

As mentioned, neighbourhood associations have become active during the last 20 years and two main waves can be highlighted – one in the 1990s and the other from 2006/2007. The first wave represents some associations that were active during the first Estonian independence at the beginning of 20th century that had reinstated themselves after re-independence, e.g. Nõmme Heakorra, Kopli, as well as some that were founded in the 1990s, e.g. Pelgulinna, Nõmme Tee. The other wave's emergence was often accounted to the Uus Maailm association, which began in 2006 and is still going on, as every year since 2006 one to three associations have been founded.

> *"Before 2006 there were not so many neighbourhood associations, we call them 'old-school' associations. After 2006/2007 there is a new and strong wave of neighbourhood associations. ... I think the reason was that Uus Maailm's example was such a strong one."* / Int-5, Uus Maailm (number of interview and name of the association. See the full list in Appendix 3)

> *"The Uus Maailm association was the first one, after which we started to prepare our association."* / Int-8, Kadrioru

Thereafter, not only is the emergence of young associations a new phenomenon but strong networking amongst them is taking place – within city districts such as Nõmme or Pirita ('cooperation workshops') and throughout the city as well, e.g. Urban Idea. The associations are creating a support network that also has the information mediation function and provides a platform for discussion of everyday problems.

> *"We created our cooperation workshop in 2006, it was very active until 2012. ... Then we were able to* [give the impression that we] *have people from every neighbourhood, at least someone. ... Nõmme is in the same position now as we were in 2006."* / Int-6, Pirita

> *"Nõmme's associations have created a cooperation workshop with 20-member associations that deal with the community and call themselves NGOs."* / Int-4, Loov Nõmme

> *"Therefore Urban Idea was necessary during which 4 meetings with neighbourhood associations took place where we discussed what our legitimacy stems from, who we really represent, what our inner democracy stands for."* / Int-5, Uus Maailm

The reasons why a certain association was founded and the focus they have taken vary. Some were founded to tackle everyday problems, e.g. parking, transportation, neighbourhood security. Others had bigger problems that might influence the whole neighbourhood or even district, e.g. road construction, or simply had a common vision of community or identity. Today all the associations that were interviewed have focused their activity on maintaining and improving the living environment and creating a social network mainly inside but also across the neighbourhoods. Also, in some cases the activities or problems addressed are overlapping, thus cooperation is often carried out, for example as the Telliskivi association

represents both the Kalamaja and Pelgulinna neighbourhoods the case of Hipodroomi[1] was tackled by both the Telliskivi and Pelgulinna associations.

> *"The idea of creating an association was in a lot of ways bound to the fact that there were so many others created. ... Then we got together and discussed that there was a need for a communal union to improve the living environment and create contact between people."* / Int-9, Juhkentali

> *"Our association was triggered because the city wanted to construct a road along a natural forest, which is geologically, biologically and naturally unique – a forest in the city is of great value."* / Int-14, Nõmme Tee

> *"We came together because there was very dense lorry traffic along Kalmistu Tee. ... We had written many letters as individuals but that did not lead us anywhere, we needed a representative body."* / Int-11, Liiva Küla

> *"Besides preserving the history, simply gathering locals, creating identity, the cognition that home does not start from your door. So there would be a feeling of district, community, we want to introduce people to each other."* / Int-2, Professorite Küla

With neighbourhood associations the question always remains: whom do they represent, whose voice speaks? According to some, they speak for the whole neighbourhood, all the residents who live there because their activity is transparent, i.e. everything done and said is public. Others say they represent the association members and everyone in their mailing list but there are a lot more supporters via social media, e.g. Facebook. The voice that speaks through associations varies according to the neighbourhood or district. For example, from the Kadriorg neighbourhood comes a more elite voice, Nõmme Tee's voice is that of intellectuals, Mähe and Möldre Tee represent young families, Telliskivi and Uus Maailm bring forth a mix of young with somewhat similar lifestyles but nonetheless diverse world views, Pelgulinn on the other hand can be considered as a naturally emerged subgroup of elderly. Altogether Nõmme and Pirita can be considered somewhat similar as they both are districts mainly of one-family residences, i.e. the voices represented are of families with higher social statuses, certain age groups starting usually from the mid-thirties. Kesklinn and Northern Tallinn are more of a mixture of different housing areas, there are neighbourhoods with panel housing as well as, for example, buildings for 2 to 8 families and also one-family residences and inner city wooden housing areas mentioned earlier, i.e. they represent more diverse social statuses, age groups varying from the mid-twenties to senior citizens. As a result of the associations' concentration to certain areas, the representativeness of Estonian and Russian voice through neighbourhood associations is unbalanced, meaning that neighbourhood associations are considered more Estonian representative bodies. Still, the interest of involving Russian residents in the associations' activity was mentioned in some interviews.

> *"*[The members of the Nõmme Tee association are] *intellectuals, there are no members who do not have higher education. White collars."* / Int-14, Nõmme Tee

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[1] Three NGOs: Telliskivi, Pelgulinna neighbourhood associations and NGO for Estonian Horsemanaging Promotion demanded the annulment of the installed detailed plan on the current racetrack that according to the detailed plan would have assigned a land purpose change from social function to living function. The NGOs represented the position of NOT changing the assigned land purpose.

"The Mähe neighbourhood has 1/3 of Pirita's population. ... This garden city certainly is a good place to live for young families." / Int-10, Mähe

"In a diverse area there cannot be 100% consensus that this kind of company cannot be tied to one group. You can represent a way of thinking that it does not have to be uniquely identified." / Int-1, Telliskivi

"... The Uus Maailm association is quite amorphous. We have very different people who do different things. ... The association is as a platform, an information field that allows people to bring forth different ideas. ... We represent this area and all residents living here purely because our activity is public, transparent, inclusive of as many residents as possible. Of course everybody cannot be included but if they see that we are doing something they do not agree with then they can say that as well." / Int-5, Uus Maailm

"The original idea was to represent all residents of the area, we did not feel the need to have everyone be members, we tried to be aware of what was going on in the neighbourhood and tried to be the megaphone [in Estonian – kõnetoru]. *... Our current position is that if we send an opinion or position out via a mailing list and receive no feedback, we assume they agree. Silence is consent." /* Int-8, Kadrioru

"Yes we may [say the association represents residents of the Old Town]. *... There are very different people who may not accept each other but they share common problems and goals. ... There is no common worldview this is what makes the Vanalinna association different from others. ... To put it bluntly, our people get together when there's some sort of problem taking place." /* Int-7, Vanalinna

"The members are mainly Estonian but there are Russians with Estonian mentality who hold their neighbourhood close to their heart." / Int-2, Professorite Küla

The final recurring theme regarding civil society was the leaders. In every interview the lifecycle of an association was mentioned or implied. This means that when an association is founded they are very active and morally willing to tackle as many problems as possible. After some time the active remains, i.e. number of people carrying the organisation who mediate information, organise activities, monitor the planning activity in the neighbourhood. This is all done voluntarily and, thus, without pay and with the cost of one's own time, leading to problems such as weariness of the active. Some associations felt that some sort of funding was needed for motivating the active or at least giving the opportunity for the association to hire a person whose tasks would be to monitor the mailing lists, social media and local government's announcements. This brings to another problem mentioned: the neighbourhood associations do not carry any legal role in current legislation, thus any funding is chaotic, for all finances stem from membership fees, donations and from funds, e.g. the National Foundation of Civil Society, which usually are applied for regarding a certain project. Another problem brought out was the sustainability of the association for if the active members tire and withdraw then who is left there to carry on the association?

"I have to mediate the info I get, for example, from a public debate to cooperation workshop and the feedback I receive back to the local government. This is all very important but rather time-consuming work and for this reason previously active association members, civil activists, have withdrawn. But this is extremely shameful for this very valuable human capital is wasted away, people who already have gone through this process and who are able to have a say, need to be replaced." / Int-4, Loov Nõmme

> *"With the associations and NGOs it would be good if someone were to be unemployed, so they would have the time to deal with it."* / Int-11, Liiva Küla

> *"Neighbourhood or interest associations do not have, for example, in the Local Government Organisation Act any role, neither in the legal act of the city. As in fact they do not exist. Also, the funding of activity is quite chaotic. You do not have any certainty or authority."* / Int-13, Möldre Tee

In conclusion of this subchapter, one very active part of civil society has emerged – the neighbourhood association. Regardless of the reasons for their formation all of them stand for the neighbourhood's pleasant and sometimes unique living environment and creating an active social network. Main issues tackled are the question of representation, whose voice sounds through and the sustainability of the association and its active leaders.

5.3. The local government and its measures

With the local government the main codes that emerged described the institutional structure and problems that pertain to it. In Tallinn there are the central City Government and district governments in every district. Also, there are different offices/departments, some located in the central City Government, others scattered around Tallinn. The main problem mentioned was the lack of communication and cooperation between and inside municipal offices. The majority of the interviewees expressed amazement at how ineffective the communication and collaboration between different offices and also in one department's different levels was.

> *"The main problem of municipal offices is that the different domains and functions are so scattered that it seems different offices are like states within a state, they do not work with each other. ... Different officials from different offices do not know who does what or what the reasons behind a certain decision are. They presume that the citizen goes from office to office with his problem and does the communication for them."* / Int-13, Möldre Tee

The other often mentioned obstacle was the level of responsibility or onus officials may take. The majority of interviewees felt that often the problem or issue under discussion could be answered more quickly than it is. Often the officials could give the answer on the spot but generally an official who might be very competent has to run the feedback through with his superior, which in addition to common bureaucracy leads to the slowing of the feedback process. It became evident that when approached unofficially, the answer could be obtained in the matter of minutes as opposed to the official way, which could take up to weeks if not months.

> *"The officials are very competent in their field but they are not allowed to give answers before consulting with their superiors, which leads to a slow process. ... If I say it is unofficial, please help, he helps you very quickly. Understanding is built that you will not misuse his trust, that you will not file a complaint. You get it much more quickly. Whereas making a formal inquiry to the same person might take 2 to 3 weeks, which you know unofficially takes 5 minutes on the phone, for he has to run it by his supervisor and you never know whether the supervisor understands it the same way."* / Int-10, Mähe

The main differences of opinion between the interviewees and regarding the institutional structure became elicit when talking about cooperation with the district governments versus the central City Government. The associations from the Nõmme district unanimously

preferred to address the problems to the District Government. Still, there are quite mixed opinions depending on the results. A drastically different opinion came from associations in the Pirita district, which did not see any necessity for District Government. They regarded it mainly as a formal institution, thus feeling when something needs to be done, the problem should be addressed to the central City Government, the higher the better. The rest of the associations had mixed experiences and found upsides and downsides with both, often concluding that all the collaboration comes down to the person who you are up against or working with.

> *"... We conduct our business with the District Government. We communicate directly with some city officials (Transportation Department, Municipal Engineering Services Department) we have good relations with them. ... We communicate with other neighbourhood associations and they could not help but wonder how it is possible that this* [collaboration with the District Government] *is working for us."* / Int-11, Liiva Küla

> *"Mainly we communicate with the District Government, with which the local community should communicate. ... Often we cannot agree with the District Government because it does not serve the locals' interests. ... If we were to stand with the District Government for the Nõmme district, there would be no fragmentation."* / Int-4, Loov Nõmme

> *"There is no need for the District Government, no need."* / Int-6, Pirita

> *"... The District Government is quite pointless. It is a formal place where people can go and blow off some steam and unfortunately that is what they often do. If there is any opportunity you should go as high as possible. ... When you manage to reach, let's say, the level of deputy department director, then you may assume that something will happen. If you reach the level of deputy mayor, then with great probability something will be done. When you get the possibility to tell the mayor about your problem, it will be done."* / Int-10, Mähe

> *"With the central City Government we are just an uncomfortable partner behind the desk who is always saying something. But with the District Government it is easier, likewise depending on the district's leader. Are you respectful enough, do you get along with him on a personal level? If you do, that means all other officials from the same building will as well."* / Int-7, Vanalinna

> *"We took the position from the start that we would not start collaboration with the city from top-down, as we are citizens coming from the grassroots level, we will go to the City Government to the level of the official. It worked really well because that final official who does his work and longer than the political side, does his work with passion, was happy that someone would come and consolidate opinions and communicate with them."* / Int-8, Kadrioru

The other theme that is labelled as measures consists of different ways the local government conducts its everyday business. The codes that emerged were: politics, power, legislation, development documents, i.e. comprehensive plans, detailed plans, development programmes, precedents, collaboration and inclusion of stakeholders.

The main problem considered by the majority of associations with a couple of examples was that there were no installed comprehensive plans or if there were, the determined land-use was often changed with detailed plans, e.g. from social function to residential. Also, the terms of

reference for planning often consist only of numerical data, not providing any information regarding the local context and generally no requirement for including the locals in the planning process is added.

> *"The worst problem is that the district's comprehensive plan is still not adopted. I have heard that even though the plan has not been officially installed, the Urban Planning Department has no other official document for reference, thus they act upon the* [uninstalled] *comprehensive plan. This is not a very sustainable situation and I do not understand why this* [planning] *process has been stopped." /* Int-13, Möldre Tee

> *"They change site by site. The comprehensive plan is installed, a year goes by and you can start. ... They put mixed building areas in many places, so they can currently specify with detailed plans." /* Int-6, Pirita

> *"I would not reduce the City Government's role. One very great minus or shortcoming in planning ...* [is] *that it is the role of local government to make prudent decisions and according to legislation they should draw up plans but they have delegated that right to the developers because they themselves do not have the money ...* [It] *should already be said to the developers in the terms of reference what the context of the area is, what is there, what is not, what we expect and what not. ... I often feel that the city puts the developer in a bad situation." /* Int-5, Uus Maailm

Another matter frequently addressed was the tradition of involvement so far as the collaboration practice is quite young and has not yet been efficiently introduced to planning practices. In general, merely informing is done and usually in the later phases rather than in the earlier ones. Many associations feel that the informing and explaining should be done more consistently and providing more explanations of why certain decisions are made. Still, some positive precedents of collaboration between neighbourhood associations and the local government/private developers can be brought out. Overall, any collaboration is usually initiated by the neighbourhood associations showing interest and asking to be informed of any planning activity in their neighbourhood or district. Consequently, depending on officials or district governments, in some cases the local government has shown initiative or interest in including the neighbourhood associations by doing more active informing.

> *"Yes, we got everything we wanted. We got those lorries away, the city of Tallinn did this resulting from our initiative. ... This was very extraordinary. At some point we had achieved everything." /* Int-11, Liiva Küla

> *Interviewer: "How has the activity of neighbourhood associations promoted the planning process?"*

> *Interviewee: "The more infamous cases such as Hipodroomi are known. As a positive example, the Soo Street plan[2] can be brought out, which could be very useful for neighbourhood associations. One thing is the result the other is the collaboration that took place." /* Int-9, Juhkentali

> *"The City Government might have very clear visions in these negotiations. Simply, they should explain more to the people the background of their choices. What happens when we make this choice, what it will bring with." /* Int-5, Uus Maailm

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[2] The Soo Street renovating process was planned in collaboration with the Telliskivi association and local government, and the results reflect the ideas and interests of locals and of the association.

"Generally they do not include, inform. All the information is given only on the homepage of the District Government as if you should follow it from there." / Int-7, Vanalinna

"[Collaboration] could be much better. When I think about the last questionnaire regarding Sanatorium Park the questions themselves were set wrong: do you want nursery school and apartment buildings, yes/no. You were not even given a choice, everything was put in one pot. The questionnaire failed ... But this is also not a solution, you should reach a result that satisfies more or less every interested party." / Int-13, Möldre Tee

"Informing takes place. ... If you specifically say you want to be informed, included. ... If you want to reach [information] you will find it but this means you yourself keep track. Ordinary people do not." / Int-6, Pirita

"Tallinn's practice is that they have not embraced anything good ... It is not that they do not know where to send [information] but they avoid sending it. If we find and ask, then out of courtesy they send it. We would like to see their initiative that the information would be sent out immediately." / Int-10, Mähe

Another category that emerged was the matter of politics. Five interviewees expressed disappointment towards general politics carried out in Tallinn mainly revealing in communication with different governments and influencing the collaboration with officials. As mentioned earlier, the officials often do not have the onus to give answers without the consent of their superiors. Some of these five associations expressed concern that the answers received seem to rather reflect the political views of the superiors or in some cases the officials and do not represent the public interest. The others felt that the City Government favours some NGOs over others, depending on how comfortable those NGOs are in the sense of politics.

To summarise the chapter some positive precedents of collaboration, e.g. Soo Street, can be brought out. Still according to neighbourhood associations, much work has to be done to root collaborative planning in Tallinn as they are considered annoying rather than an equal partner for collaboration. The main obstacles are the lack of communication between different City Government offices, the responsibilities the officials are allowed to take and lack of initiative or interest from local governments to include the neighbourhood associations in the planning process.

5.4. The developers and their measures

Even though the neighbourhood associations understand that the action of private developers is profit-oriented they still feel that more developer-initiated interest in collaboration is needed. At the moment the majority judges the collaboration or even interest in locals' opinions to be non-existent. Neighbourhood associations are considered as an uncomfortable and disturbing factor. The main problem seen in the action of private developers is that they buy land whose use is determined by a comprehensive plan to be, for example, forest but when they start to plan the development the detailed plan pertained to it intends the change of land-use from forest to residential. In areas, such as Nõmme and Pirita where the main land-use already is residential, the need for social land to provide infrastructure is crucial. Thus, the neighbourhood associations try to stand against such activity and also hope for better collaboration initiated by the developers in the future. At least one good example was

mentioned where the activity of the neighbourhood association and constructive discussion lead to consensus.

> *"Automatically we plan on trying to veto all manner of land-use changes – social or business use to residential. ... We do not want Nõmme to turn into a bedroom suburb."* / Int-4, Loov Nõmme

> *"In the case of Pirita Top[3] there are mainly business interests. Why should the city change social land to residential? The worst part is that the developer builds everything and then leaves, he does not care."* / Int-6, Pirita

> *"Generally in the case of Tallinn's practice when the developer wants something he adds pressure so that he tends to get what he wants and the locals suffer. Now the situation has somewhat changed. We did not threaten to go to court but we said we have so much competence that we are able to influence your activity for a long time. And if we've already had for four years, the developer understands that it is more sensible to start to collaborate with us rather than struggle and push those apartment buildings on us. If the detailed plan is set as we have agreed then I think this will be a good precedence in Tallinn."* / Int-10, Mähe

> *"If the developer does not include us in the planning process of Kopli lines[4], he is unwise. With our help he can build a reputation, without us the development would have no foundation."* / Int-2, Professorite Küla

In summary, the issue of private developers has to be evaluated with the local government. As mentioned in the previous chapter the role of local government should not be considered lightly as they are the ones setting the planning rules, which need to be followed by the developers. As it became evident, and we have to keep in mind that bad examples are easier to remember, often the developers search for ways to avoid following legislation, which sometimes even leads to mischief.

> *"If Nõmme's comprehensive plan in the documentation were in order there would be no need for involving neighbourhood associations for some kind of house detailed planning, if everything followed legislation. But as they always try to mess about ... You have to continuously inspect it. A good example is a house development where all the coordination with the neighbours was for a house and we started to have some doubts. So when we looked it up from city archives the first page was for a house but on the second or third page there are already 4 apartments and 2 commercial spaces, all in the same box. ... The city planners have so much work that they are not able to follow everything. The developer went in for final coordination and just switched those two pages."* / Int-11, Liiva Küla

According to the interviews, so far the planning practice has been quite preventive of neighbourhood associations. Local governments want to decrease the time needed for processing so it is quicker for them only to involve the private developers. With the activation of neighbourhood associations the local government and developers are starting to

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[3] Pirita Top stands for the Tallinn Olympic Sailing Centre built for the 1980 Moscow Olympics regatta. In the context of 20th century Estonian architecture it is considered a unique sports campus with a land size of 193,000 m².

[4] Kopli lines or the Russian-Baltic neighbourhood or Russian-Baltic industrial workers' neighbourhood to undergo development if a developer can be found.

comprehend the presence of a new stakeholder who as many of the interviewees stressed are not here to take away anyone's job but to help provide input.

5.5. Principles and Attitudes

All stakeholders have their own agendas. Local governments aim for on-going and sustainable city growth, private developers aim for profit return and civil society a pleasurable and sustainable living environment. All these stakeholders act upon certain principles and are driven by their worldviews. By doing so they develop attitudes towards others and are influenced by them when making decisions or taking action.

The main influencer of attitudes is competence, i.e. the ability to see beyond one's individual interests, the ability to foster constructive discussion. The opinions regarding competence vary. The arguments provided by the local government stem from legislation, arguments from private developers from private interests. The arguments from neighbourhood associations tend to be mixed. In general the competence of neighbourhood associations has risen. The associations have adapted the mentality that to be an acceptable partner they have to be able to explain themselves, provide arguments, take part in discussions and also be able to understand when they need to step down for the greater good. Instead of going to 'war' with fists held high the attitude is growing to be 'good word wins over foreign power'. This shift of attitude stems from obtained and shared experiences and from self-educating.

> *"To be able to have a say on a city level you must be competent to have a say."* / Int-1, Telliskivi

> *"Of course they do not know how to argue. The city follows legislation or a certain plan. It has structure and system. But when it comes to associations, there are very different people from different fields with different goals. ... Everyone is sticking to their own small detail. And precisely, they do not know planning, architectural design, often not even history. ... It is funny, on one hand I sit in the directive of the Vanalinna association, on another I practice planning or designing so I see both sides. On some occasions I am embarrassed for one side, then again for the other."* / Int-7, Vanalinna

> *"In our case we were in luck that we had enough sense and patience, we did not have a go at anyone. Thus, we have been successful."* / Int-11, Liiva Küla

> *"I think they do not know very well, the association or the city. I can understand why the city or the officials do not want to include or they are frustrated, for the feedback they get from neighbourhood associations is not that much better, but accordingly, rather self-centred, narrow-minded and attacking. The adjectives associations usually use to characterise the city often apply to themselves."* / Int-5, Uus Maailm

> *"In the case of Mähe, there are a lot of competent people who start to argue. But the most crucial aspect is information exchange – breaking the information blockade, which is complicated. For some reason they think that the earlier they give out information the more time the opposing side has to build a case. ... We have said that if you start to give out information earlier, consequently, your costs will have reduced."* / Int-10, Mähe

The attitudes, for example, way of thinking are directly bound to principles such as responsibility, trust, obligations or commitments, and some already have become evident in previous examples. Building trust should be two-way: the local government should show their

trustworthiness with justified decisions and neighbourhood associations with their competence.

> *"We cannot trust the local government when they overlook these things* [legislation, Building Regulation]. *... Everything is absolutely backwards and the associations' signal – let us do it the other way – will not work until the City or District Government and the officials start to support it and start thinking the same way."* / Int-4, Loov Nõmme

> *"If there were trustworthy City and District Governments and they defended the interests of residents all this* [neighbourhood associations] *would be unnecessary, for example, we trust the Estonian National Guard, we know they will not screw up."* / Int-11, Liiva Küla

> *"We are all citizens, from the same district, we all have rights and responsibilities. The responsibilities are often forgotten."* / Int-6, Pirita

To summarise the findings, I have tried to be unbiased and only reflect the positions of neighbourhood associations and how they see the relations between different stakeholders in the context of current attitudes and principles lie. I have purposefully left out the theme of public interest, which I would like to elaborate more specifically in the following chapter of discussion.

In conclusion of this chapter the emergence of neighbourhood associations as a representative of civil society is eminent and has been quite rapid in the last decade. The main issue with the associations is representativeness, i.e. whose voice, whose interests are represented. Another matter to address is the sustainability of the association resulting from the life cycle of the association, i.e. the very active beginning, which at some point recedes to the activism of numbered people. The main concern regarding the local government is their institutional structure. The complicated framework of different institutions leads to bad communication between offices and officials. This in turn leads to the problem of supervisor-official relations. Concerns towards the formal inquiries and their time-consuming affect was frequently mentioned. Also, the tradition of involving neighbourhood associations to planning practice was generally judged insufficient and often regarded to reach only the level of informing. The measures of private developers was often seen as mischievous and hence, the associations feel the need to verify the actions and interests both of the local government and the private developers as they still sense that when it comes to local government and the developers the situation frequently remains us vs. them.

In the following chapter the findings are tied to the theories overviewed in the literature overview. Some interesting aspects that became evident in the interviews shall be discussed and possible steps for rooting the mentality of collaboration are provided through the reflections given in the interviews.

6. Discussion

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the theme of public interest needs deeper discussion. The term 'public interest' is a vague one, it is often referred to in literature, it has seldom been defined. It became elicit from the interviews that the neighbourhood associations regard themselves as representatives of public interest. This in turn leads the City Government to question in what ways the neighbourhood associations can regard themselves as representatives of public interest when they, the City Government, have been elected via public and legislative vote to represent the public interest. With the latter, another question emerges – who defines or inputs the public interest?

According to Ikkonen (2005) the term 'public interest' is a legal term hard to define exhaustively due to its high level of abstract and context relevance. The Estonian Tax and Customs Board defines 'public' as when all the actions are done publicly and there is no concealment of information. Furthermore, 'public' means that to those actions a maximum possible circle of individuals is included, the actions are directed towards the goals and interests of society as a whole, i.e. aiding the poorest representatives of society. Associations whose activities do not reach further than only satisfying the private interest of association members do not qualify as representatives of public interest. Operating as a representative of public interest means contributing to some kind of public benefit, i.e. something that the state and local communities are interested in as a whole (Estonian Tax and Customs Board homepage, 2014).

That being said the question of 'public interest' is strongly entwined with the question 'whose voice, whose interest', the question of legitimacy that became apparent as a theme in the analysis. The neighbourhood associations deal with this question daily. The interviews show that much work regarding legitimacy has been done already, i.e. the four meetings during Urban Idea where they discussed what their legitimacy stems from, whom they really represent and what their inner democracy stands for. This means that neighbourhood associations have started to think and act upon this problem, understanding that if they do not know how the residents who are non-members feel about a certain issue they might not have the right to say that the association still represents them. The easiest yet the most time-consuming and expensive way would be to hand out questionnaires, thus giving the association the right to show that everyone has been included in the opinion, which now could be considered public. Instead, the associations have chosen another way – a way of mediating information – which was stated by every association interviewed. **If** taken to consideration that 'public' means that all the actions are done publicly in the sense that **no information is concealed then** it can be assumed that **neighbourhood associations do represent the public voice**. As became apparent from the interviews, for example, the Telliskivi and Uus Maailm associations stated that as long as their actions are done publicly and are transparent, even actions that might be considered nonsense, then all the others have the right to come and say that they do not agree, which **makes the neighbourhood associations that act upon such principle representatives of public interest**.

On the other hand, one of the major problems concerning the local government was the fact that information is not signalled out properly, meaning that all the informing is done only in the range needed that stems from legislation. All extra information was given only when asked for and even then not always or had to be searched for from the right channels, which might require time and knowledge. This urges the question of whether the local government represents the public interests to such an extent as they themselves state. It is understandable

that public election has granted the City Government the right to represent the public interest by implementing the decisions that are made in the City Council. Therefore, there appear to be three possibilities apparent for why informing or information dissemination might be insufficient:

1. The City Council has never pointed out the need to inform regularly and consistently;
2. The City Council has pointed out the need to inform regularly and consistently but the City Government has chosen not to;
3. The City Council has pointed out the need to inform regularly and consistently, the City Government has chosen to do so but the information gets lost in the bureaucratic apparatus.

In this case based on a majority of the interviews the latter seems to be the case **as the (right) information often gets lost or lagged between different officials and city offices**. In addition, there is the problem of the amount of information available. The City Government as a public institution publishes, for example, memos or abstracts regarding every activity that is accessible for the public, for example, on the City Government homepage. **Even if the information penetrates through, the amount is often unfathomable making the decision of what is important and in need of addressing that much harder to decide**. Ordinary people and even associations might not know how to 'shoot down' the information they need as the memos are generally written in bureaucratic language, often hard to comprehend, and do not aim to inform every individual. Still, **even though we should remember that the City Government is an official institution that has the responsibility to remain official, it does not justify the usage of bureaucratic language in situations where it is not needed**.

This brings us to the first point brought out by Gaventa (2004) – relating people and institutions, meaning as there is a growing tendency amongst citizens to perceive institutions to be distant, unaccountable and corrupt. As also became apparent from the interviews, the City Government system is seen as complex and often disconnected. The interviewees brought out **the need to bring more humane communication manner to the Government**. To build this relationship, **work has to be done on both sides**: when needed, the City Government must explain (in simpler and more understandable terms) the information they give out and the associations have to have the knowledge to ask the right questions. This two-way change of attitude is another point brought out by Gaventa (2004) – working both sides of the equation (see also Innes and Booher, 2003b). In addition, the idea that as a grassroots initiative the neighbourhood associations should communicate with the closest level of government power seems reasonable as a district government has a better overview of undergoing processes in the district while neighbourhood associations usually are more informed of the processes in parts thereof. Thus, **the need to facilitate competence in district governments is crucial** for if a united front comprised of locals and district government is created, the found consensus is believed to be more influential and better represented on the city level.

Elaborating further, **the need for competence in exchanging information as well as in participation is eminent**. Based on Ansell and Gash (2008), Burby (2003), Innes and Booher (2004, 2003b) and the result of interview analysis the competence when arguing for one's positions is a prerequisite for successful collaboration. The interviewees stressed that to be a considerable partner some level of knowledge on the matter is needed. In this sense progress is apparent as the associations have started to educate themselves and to raise their competence in the planning matters. On the other hand, the local government has acknowledged the presence of neighbourhood associations and even though the experience

with different levels of government varies, *'things have been set into motion'* (Int-12, Luite). However, the general experience of neighbourhood associations regarding planning processes is that they are considered annoying, a group whose opinion local government and private planners are forced to consider. Thus, **precedents of good collaboration are a tough encounter (Soo Street) resulting from generally insufficient informing and no initiative from local government or private developers to involve neighbourhood associations in the planning process**. Interestingly, as pointed out by Ansell and Gash (2008) that even though usually good past experience encourages and bad past experience discourages collaboration they also brought out that high conflict *per se* is not necessarily a barrier to collaboration. This statement found support in the Mähe association's experience as the private developer tired of the association's opposition and turned to collaboration (Int-10, Mähe). This example illustrates the growing competence of neighbourhood associations, which should help with changing the prevailing way of thought that neighbourhood associations are unable to have a say in planning matters. Furthermore, as pointed out by Burby (2003) that citizen involvement tends to remain at the borders of the 'iron triangle' the need for a competent partner who represents the public voice tied to a certain area (not, of course, always) and **carries the role of the indicator or as neighbourhood associations themselves say, the ones who provide input, is crucial**. Furthermore, as brought out by Innes and Booher (2004) if collaboration is given a chance the simultaneous learning experience can be pleasurable for every stakeholder.

Neighbourhood associations' connectedness to a specific area gives them a certain expertise of a local. As the City Government carries the legal framework and the role of the conclusive decider, bearing in mind the public interests as it has been compelled by the public election, and the private developer acts upon his private interests, and neighbourhood associations act as the indicator and the informer who also carry the public interest. So **the generally encountered planning situation where us**, meaning local government and private developer (see Carley, 2001 and Innes and Booher, 2004), **vs. them**, meaning neighbourhood associations **should be re-organised**. According to the interviewees, they understand that the city has knowledge and vision regarding the development of the whole city. However, this vision seems to be rather 'full of holes' as Tallinn's comprehensive plan is quite outdated and district comprehensive plans tend to be vague, e.g. mixed land-use (see Ruoppila, 2007), or incomplete, which poses the question of who this vagueness is useful for? Often the answer is the developers.

As the majority of land in Estonia is privatised, all planning activity is controlled with someone's private interests. Therefore, **strong general visions in planning are crucial**. Still, we have to remind ourselves that without developers there would be no development – unfortunately neither cities nor the state have enough resources for the cities to thrive by themselves. Thus, whilst holding a steady course, the conditions for developing have to be at least acceptable or better yet intriguing. But, **as the city sets the terms of reference, they should be obliged to still facilitate the involvement of neighbourhood associations in the planning process**.

The idea and goal of collaborative planning in theory is noble and **in case of Tallinn the willingness to collaborate** (at least the initiative of neighbourhood associations) **is apparent**. Unfortunately, often the bureaucratic factors, general knowledge and relations between, e.g. neighbourhood associations and local government, prevent its successful implementation in practice. Thus, certain social groups, for example poorer and less informed or less educated are left out of the discussion (see for example Ansell and Gash, 2008). Often it is the question of empathy, ability to recognise these groups (see Fincher and Iveson, 2008), other times the

assignment of the planner to consistently think over the stakeholders throughout the planning process.

As planners carry many often simultaneous roles when leading the planning process, the question of whether the role of a facilitator should be one of them (see Innes and Booher, 2004; 2003a & b; Ansell and Gash, 2008). The Estonian Association of Spatial Planners has stated all the different roles they feel a planner should be able to carry, amongst them the role of a mediator. During the drawing up process, depending on the certain plan, the circle of interested parties may vary. With detailed plans concerning one plot it is usually quite easy and the check-list of interested parties to be involved is rather small – private developer, local government and the neighbouring plot owners. Thus, the outreach of the plan does not seem to be that wide. But when drawing up a comprehensive plan whose general vision and result influence a much wider circle, the check-list approach might not be sufficient. Consequently, neighbourhood associations could provide aid in recognising these different groups or interested parties precisely because of the networks they have created and the information they mediate. Therefore, **if the local government has failed to create prerequisites for the involvement of neighbourhood associations, this task should be performed by the planners**.

In order to implement the concept of collaboration in the planning process more substantially several ideas were recommended by the interviewees. As the concerns towards comprehensive plans were most apparent, **stronger focus on involving a broader array of stakeholders was insisted upon**. Even though all the reasons why certain drawing-up processes of comprehensive plans have been lagged are unknown, the practice so far reflects the notion that the drawing up process takes years. Thus, it leads to the conclusion that as the process is slow any way, the assumption that involving more stakeholders slows down the process even more should not be the reason for not involving them. Rather, if collaboration is not the common practice, we do not have the data or experience upon which to conclude that consistent involvement slows the planning process. Furthermore, as precedents resulting from collaboration have become apparent, the thoughts regarding questions like 'what if we collaborated instead' and 'whether the results might be more sustainable' should be considered. As a result **the need for more open and transparent planning processes is eminent**, which the majority of neighbourhood associations find to be hindered by the local government.

Based on the analysis and discussion, the main roles neighbourhood associations carry in the planning process in Tallinn are: **mediator**, **informant** and **indicator**. As neighbourhood associations provide a platform for fostering different ideas and activities, they are a place for social encounter. The ideas, questions, problems, etc., are carried to members of the association, residents of the area or other people who share the idea of the association via (social) networks. Thus, neighbourhood associations have the capacity to mediate information between the members/ residents and local government because they have already built the network(s) and they themselves have shown the initiative in doing so. In addition, neighbourhood associations have started to educate themselves to become the worthy partners of collaboration, thus, having the competence they carry the role of indicator. By indicating certain deficiencies or imperfections in the planning process the aim is not to take someone's job but to provide input in constructive discussion.

This leads to the second research question posed, which interested parties are included or left out of the planning process and why? As it became apparent from the analysis and discussion, **everyone who does not**, for some reason, **receive information is basically left out of the**

process. This is consequently tied to the fact that current planning legislation does not define how the planning process should be carried out and in what ways or how different stakeholders should be included and informed, nor does it explain how to arrange discussions or cooperate. At the same time, in the name of more productive planning processes, local government as the initiator of the planning process should invest more in thinking through ways for different stakeholders to be informed and involved or demand this action from the ones this assignment has been delegated to, e.g. the planner. Furthermore, the possible checklist of stakeholders, even if only preliminary, should be informed of the preparation of terms of reference to initiate planning, which in the long run might reduce conflicts during the planning process.

Finally, the question regarding the current situation of planning practice in Tallinn has to be answered. Resulting from the analysis and discussion it can be concluded that **there are implications towards collaboration, which unfortunately are not generally expressed in practice**. If considering all the actions necessary for collaboration – involving, informing, communicating and participating – and adding the prerequisites or principles collaboration is based on – trust, respect and equal treatment, shared responsibility, openness and transparency, diversity and comprehensiveness – we see that there are shortcomings apparent with every stakeholder – local government, private developers and civil society. Still, based on the current analysis, the representatives of civil society are making efforts towards becoming as reasonable partners for collaboration as they possibly can by showing initiative and willingness, taking the responsibility in representing the public interest and complementing their knowledge and competence. Even though neighbourhood associations already promote a certain way of thinking of how to regard and practice spatial planning, no substantial change can be hoped for unless the local government chooses to start thinking in the same direction as neighbourhood associations. Ideally, the neighbourhood associations can be considered as links between ordinary citizens and the ruling power somewhat the same as village elders mediating problems, ideas, and suggestions to municipality mayors.

In conclusion of the discussion it can be said that even though we have strong influences of European, mainly Scandinavian, planning tradition, thus, also the concepts of collaborative planning are introduced and in ways even adapted to planning legislation (see Roose and Kull, 2012; Lass, 2012), the practice reflects somewhat different situation. As the practice of collaboration in the case of Tallinn can be reduced to numbered precedents we cannot talk of collaborative planning, not to mention of collaborative policymaking until the prerequisites are met. Meaning that trust between possible partners must be created. The prerequisite of trust cannot be met when planning actions are taken behind closed doors and driven by someone's certain political or monetary interests. When returning to the issue of public interest it is apparent that the need for transparent actions from every stakeholder is eminent for creating the basis for trust in the planning process.

As this current study has provided only the opinions of neighbourhood associations based on their experiences, consequently, all the drawn conclusions result from empirical data provided by the interviewees. In order to present overall view of current planning situation in Tallinn, subsequent research is crucial. Thus, the author hopes to conduct new research with representatives of City Administration and of private developers in the nearer future to illustrate the overall situation of planning practice in Tallinn.

Another aspect regarding further research is the different voices heard in the sense of Estonians and Russians as these are the two main ethnic groups in Tallinn. Neighbourhood associations are inherent to inner-city areas and one-family dwelling areas where the majority

of population is Estonian (see Kährik et al., 2013). Consequently, this leads to the assumption that neighbourhood associations are representative bodies for Estonian voice which was confirmed in some interviews. Even though there are Russian members present in neighbourhood associations, there cannot be certain distinction whether the voice is Estonian or Russian, rather the overall voice is Estonian. As a result, current research is insufficient in the aspect of Estonian-Russian representativeness, thus, further research on how Russian voice of civil activity is brought forward is needed.

7. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to reflect the perspective of neighbourhood associations on the current planning practice in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia and discuss the roles they carry in the planning process. Consequently, three research questions were posed: (1) on what extent can we talk about collaborative planning in Tallinn; (2) which different interested parties are included and which are left out of collaboration and why; and (3) what role the neighbourhood associations carry in Tallinn's planning practice?

Literature overview revisited the origins of collaborative planning and the principles the collaborative planning process is based on. Also, comparison to two other prevailing planning concepts – new urbanism and just city – was provided. In reflection to new urbanism and just city the shortcomings of collaborative planning were presented. In addition, the basis for collaborative policymaking was overviewed and the need for civil activism in modern society considered. Second contextual chapter gave a review of the development of Estonian spatial planning system in the context of Europe and the Baltics. The legal framework of spatial planning was presented and the different roles of the planner thought over. Also, a short review of peculiarities of Tallinn was given and introduction of 22 neighbourhood associations in Tallinn provided. In addition, the ways neighbourhood associations' activity in Estonia is supported on the state and city level were overviewed.

Qualitative data analysis followed the principles of direct content analysis which data comprised of 14 semi-structured interviews conducted by the author. Due to the concept (collaboration) under study, all associations (22) were decided to include to the sample, i.e. by choosing universal sampling, all associations that were reached, were included to the analysis. Those that were not reached (8) were described based on secondary data available, e.g. association's homepage, newspaper articles, and evaluated by giving a general overview of their aims and back-round. Findings given in chapter 5 followed the themes which emerged during analysis.

Based on the results of the analysis the emergence of neighbourhood associations as a representative of civil society is eminent and has been quite rapid in the last decade. The main issue with the associations is representativeness, i.e. whose voice, whose interests is represented. Another matter to address is the sustainability of the association resulting from the life cycle of the association, i.e. the very active beginning which at some point recedes to the activism of numbered people. The main concern regarding the local government is their institutional structure. The complicated framework of different institutions leads to bad communication between offices and officials. This in turn leads to the problem of supervisor-official relations. Concerns towards the formal inquiries and their time consuming affect was frequently mentioned. Also, the tradition of involving neighbourhood associations to planning practice was generally judged insufficient and often regarded to reach only the level of informing. The measures of private developers was often seen as mischievous hence, the associations feel the need to verify the actions and interests of both, the local government and the private developers as they still sense that when it comes to local government and the developers the situation frequently remains us vs. them.

In chapter 6 the issue of who defines and provides input to the term public interest was discussed leading to the conclusion that whilst local government has the right and obligation to represent public resulting from legislative vote, the neighbourhood associations represent the public interest as well, as long as all their activity is public, transparent and does not conceal information. Regarding the City Administrative, conclusions that were drawn

expressed the need to facilitate more humane communication manner and more openness towards passing out information on current or future planning processes. Furthermore, when preparing the terms of reference for the planning process primary check-list of possible stakeholders should be made and also informed. Although neighbourhood associations have shown initiative of becoming a worthy partner in the planning process additional work for achieving competence is to be done. This applies also to local government and private developers who are expected to change their positions towards collaboration as the collaboration process is believed to be simultaneously pleasurable learning experience for every stakeholder. Also, due to the fact that majority of land in Estonia is privatised, all planning activity is controlled with someone's private interests. Therefore, strong general visions in planning are crucial which brings to the issue regarding current situation of comprehensive plans as Tallinn's comprehensive plan is quite out-dated and district comprehensive plans which specify it, in some cases, are still in drawing up process. Further steps to implement collaborative planning practice in Tallinn are to raise competence of every stakeholder, also, the need to restructure of local government was implied.

In conclusion of the study, the research questions posed were answered. The roles neighbourhood associations carry in current planning practice in Tallinn are mediator, informant and indicator. The involvement or non-involvement in planning process is strictly bound to the fact, whether the information regarding planning is sent out and obtained. According to neighbourhood associations the current planning practice in Tallinn has implemented some principles of collaboration, depending on the specific institutions and officials but the overall situation needs fundamental improvement, mainly due to the need of shift in general attitudes towards collaboration.

Resümee

Koostööl põhineva planeerimise praktika Tallinnas, Eestis: asumiseltside roll ja vaatenurk

Linnad on ja on alati olnud väga mitmekesised ja seda erinevates tähendustes. Linnadel on erisugused funktsioonid, nad on kohtumispaigad inimestele, nad peegeldavad erinevaid elustiile. Mida külgetõmbavam on linn, seda mitmekesisemaks ta kujuneb. Eri huvigruppide arvu kasvades planeerimisprotsessis muutub tekkinud mitmekesisuse hoomamine üha raskemaks. Selle tõttu võib tekkida, selle asemel, et planeerida jätkusuutlikke, sidusaid ja õiglasi linnu, vastupidine olukord.

Koostööl põhinev ehk kollaboratiivne planeerimine, mis on (Lääne)-Euroopas valdav planeerimispraktika, püüdleb kõikide võimalike huvide planeerimisprotsessi kaasamisele. Kollaboratiivse planeerimise põhimõtted tulenevad Habermasi kommunikatiivsest pöördest ja Giddensi strukturatsiooni teooriast (Healey, 1997), ühendades endas mõtteviisi või uskumust, et kõik koos suudavad süüvida asjade olemusse, leida tähendusi ja mõtestada parim, jõulisim argument. Planeerimisprotsessi puhul, kus on palju ja erinevaid huvigruppe, kehtib tihti "raudse kolmnurga" reegel, mis tähistab kolme huvitatud osapoolt, kes kindlasti planeerimisprotsessis osalema peaksid – kohalik omavalitsus, arendaja ja naabruskonna esindajad (Burby, 2003).

Eelnevast tulenevalt on käesoleva uuringu eesmärk tuua esile asumiseltside hinnang praegusele planeerimispraktikale Tallinnas ning arutleda, milliseid rolle asumiseltsid planeerimisprotsessides kannavad. Asumiseltsid on Eesti kontekstis võrdlemisi uus nähtus ja nende planeerimisalasest huvist tingitud tegevus võrdlemisi lühikese ajalooga, peamiselt seetõttu, et enamus Tallinna asumiseltse on asutatud alates 2006. aastast. Et asumiseltsidel on potentsiaalne võimalus tõsta esile kindlaid huvigruppe, on nende võimalik roll avaliku huvi esindajana märkimisväärne. Seetõttu on oluline uurida, kellele ja millistel viisidel on antud võimalus planeerimisprotsessides kaasa rääkida. Kuna Eesti planeerimissüsteem on tugevalt Euroopa ja eriti Skandinaavia planeerimistraditsioonidest mõjutatud, pakub käesoleva uurimustöö tulemus võimaluse võrrelda, mida me oleme oma läänenaabritelt õppinud, milliseid põhimõtteid omaks võtnud ja milliseid mitte. Sellest tulenevalt on püstitatud kolm uurimisküsimust:

1. Millisel määral saab Tallinnas rääkida koostööl põhinevast ehk kollaboratiivsest planeerimisest?

2. Millised huvigrupid on kaasatud planeerimisprotsessi ja millised mitte? Miks?

3. Milliseid rolle kannavad asumiseltsid tänases planeerimispraktikas Tallinnas?

Kvalitatiivne andmeanalüüs järgis suunatud sisuanalüüsi põhimõtteid. Tulenevalt uurimise all olevast kontseptsioonist – koostöö – otsustati võimalusel analüüsida kõiki (22) Tallinna asumiseltse, s.t. aluseks on kõikne valim. Kokku analüüsiti 14 poolstruktureeritud intervjuud, ülejäänud 8 asumiseltsi analüüs teostati kättesaadavate sekundaarandmete põhjal.

Uurimistöö tulemustest selgub, et kuigi kohalikule omavalitsusele on seadusliku ja avaliku hääletuse läbi antud õigus ja kohustus avalikkust esindada, teevad seda ka asumiseltsid täpselt nii kaua, kui nende tegevus on avalik, läbipaistev ega varja informatsiooni. Kohaliku omavalitsuse suhtes selgusid järeldused, et ametiasutustes on vaja rohkem edendada inimesekeskemat suhtlusviisi ja luua suurem avatus planeerimisprotsessi puudutava

informatsiooni levitamisel. Veel enam, lähtetingimuste koostamisel on esialgsel kaasamiskaval põhinevate huvigruppide informeerimine äärmiselt tähtis. Kuigi asumiseltsid on näidanud üles huvi ja initsiatiivi olemaks võrdväärne ja kompetentne partner planeerimisprotsessis, on lisatöö just kompetentsi omandamiseks vajalik. See kehtib ka ülejäänud osapooltele, kellelt oodatakse suhtumise muutumist koostöösse. Tulenevalt faktist, et enamus Eesti maast on erastatud, kontrollib planeerimistegevust kellegi erahuvi. Seetõttu on oluline kindlate üldvisioonide kinnitamine ja nendest kinni hoidmine, seisukoht, mis tuleneb suuresti Tallinna linnaosade üldplaneeringute puudujääkidest. Edasised sammud, juurutamaks koostööl põhinevat planeerimist Tallinna planeerimispraktikas, on eri osapoolte kompetentsi tõstmine ja arvestamine võimaliku kohaliku võimu ümber struktureerimise võimalustega.

Käesoleva uurimustöö kokkuvõtteks saab öelda, et püstitatud uurimisküsimused said vastatud. Asumiseltside rollid Tallinna planeerimispraktikas on vahendaja, informeerija ja osutaja. Kaasatus on tugevalt seotud informeerimisega, s.t. kui ei informeerita, siis ka ei kaasata ja kui informeeritakse, siis reeglina läbi selliste kanalite, mis on seadusandlusest tulenevad ja selle info kättesaamine on keeruline, kui ei tea, kuskohast otsida. Asumiseltside seisukohast lähtuvalt saab öelda, et tänane planeerimispraktika Tallinnas on sõltuvalt linnavalitsuse ametkonnast võtnud omaks mõningaid koostööl põhineva planeerimise põhimõtteid. Üleüldise olukorra muutmiseks on siiski vaja põhimõttelisi parandusi, mis peamiselt tulenevad planeerimispraktikas valitsevast mõtteviisist pigem mitte kaasata.

Acknowledgements

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview guide for EU7 project "DIVERCITIES"

FIRST: About the association

1. How did the association come to be? What are the goals?
2. Whose opinion comes /does not come through the association? How much of the residents of the area the association represents? Are there any differences between the positions of the association members and non-members?
3. In what ways are the non-members included to the activities of the association?

SECOND: Association's structure and management

4. How many members are there?
5. How is the association directed?
6. Main supporters, donators? Has there been funding for certain projects/initiatives?
7. How are the strategic aims reached?

THIRD: Activities, projects

8. To whom are the initiatives directed towards?
9. Initiatives with positive outcomes? Initiatives with negative outcomes?
10. In what ways have the initiatives influenced the diversity in the city? Are the results positive/negative and why?
11. The accomplishments of the association?

FORTH: Diversity and collaboration

12. How can we turn social and economic differences in the city to our advantage? How to manage and shape socially diverse city? What principles may help in managing a) city planning; b) social policy; and c) integration policy?
13. How and on what extent do you collaborate with other neighbourhood associations? City government, local government?
14. How do you vision Northern Tallinn in the nearer future?

Appendix 2. Interview guide for the neighbourhood associations

INITIAL GUIDE

1. How did the association come to be, what were the reasons? What are the goals and activities?
2. Who do you represent?
3. Different interest groups in the area?
4. How would you describe the collaboration between neighbourhood associations and local government, city government in Tallinn?
5. Who are the potential interested parties in planning and how are they included to the planning process?
6. Who are left out of the planning process and why?
7. Are the grass-root initiatives a new phenomenon or are they now just more active?

8. How would you describe the level of competence of different stakeholders? Are they able to argue and justify their needs/demands/wishes?
9. What should be the first steps towards rooting the collaborative way of thinking?

ADDED/REDEFINED QUESTIONS OR QUESTIONS HOPING FOR ELABORATION

1. Experiences of collaborative planning in Tallinn?
2. Are there check-lists for different interest groups?
3. Who should do more research before initiating planning process?
4. What developments have taken place in the resent years regarding collaborative planning?
5. The need of collaboration between neighbourhood associations?
6. Would more active collaboration during drawing up of comprehensive plans lead to less misunderstandings/conflicts with detailed plans?
7. In your opinion, how does the public sector regard neighbourhood associations?
8. The need for district government?
9. What changes (in planning) have the neighbourhood associations initiated?
10. The background of association members, the general background of the residents in the area?
11. If there is collaboration, who initiates it?
12. Who should finance the activity of neighbourhood associations?

Appendix 3. Interviewees in interviewed order

	Association	District	Interviewees	Metier
1.	Telliskivi	Northern Tallinn	Juho Kalberg	Advertising designer
2.	Professorite Küla	Northern Tallinn	Carmen Brus, Kais Matteus, Teet Parve	Kais "Tsunfik" Matteus – at the moment stay at home mother. Preservation of cultural heritage; Carmen "Alchemist" Brus – Human resources manager and specialist, other activities pertain green movement; Teet "Metaphysician" Parve – University, researcher of combustion
3.	Pelgulinna	Northern Tallinn	Pille-Maris Arro	Freelance prop manager, artist assistant
4.	Loov Nõmme	Nõmme	Ülle Mitt	Accounting, member of electoral alliance "Free Tallinn Citizen"
5.	Uus Maailm	Kesklinn	Madle Lippus	Project manager, degree in city management

6.	Pirita	Pirita	Lea Nilson	Degree in real estate development
7.	Vanalinna	Kesklinn	Maria Pukk	Architect
8.	Kadrioru	Kesklinn	Kulno Kesküla	Entrepreneur
9.	Juhkentali	Kesklinn	Raivo Salumäe	Lawyer, member of electoral alliance "Free Tallinn Citizen"
10.	Mähe	Pirita	Erik Vest	Head of Planning and Land Authority in Viimsi county, degree in city management; member of electoral alliance "Free Tallinn Citizen"
11.	Liiva Küla	Nõmme	Indrek Luberg	Member of Nõmme district government council, degree in business studies; member of IRL
12.	Luite	Kesklinn	Jaak Ader	Property management
13.	Möldre Tee	Nõmme	Triin Nigul	Information Security expert
14.	Nõmme Tee	Nõmme	Kadi Alatalu	Journalist, retired; member of Nõmme Heakorra

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