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EXPERIMENTAL ARTISTIC APPROACHES TO CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING: ACTORS IN NETWORKS AND POWER-RELATIONS

GISLE LØKKEN

Abstract

Citizen involvement has become “taken for granted” in liberal democratic planning and is in Norway required by law. However, planning processes are also power-processes often involving strong, political and economic interests where more marginal actants easily can feel (or deliberately become) manipulated to accept, for them, disadvantageous decisions. In this article, Foucaultian notions of power-knowledge relations and “poststructuralist” methods of openness and responsivity are discussed through artistic interventions and experimental citizens’ engagement in the “Tromsø Waterfront Laboratory” 2020 (TWL). The case is related to a contested development of a harbourfront area and the parallel revision of the municipal masterplan for Tromsø city centre. The aim is to confront internalised structures and “units” in planning and the “discursive regularities” of the planning process, heavily impacted by strong power-structures, confining the plan as a democratic means. The TWL project evolves in the wake of previous experimental planning and participation processes in Tromsø as the “The City Development Year 2005” (CDY), and reveals the discrepancies there often are between good intentions and real influence. The article also explores how new objects and subjects can emerge as a multitude of actants and alternative networks – from positions that are normally conceived as “subjugated” in power-relations.

Keywords:

citizen involvement, power-relations, actants, counter-hegemonic, artistic methods

Introduction

Citizen participation has become a matter of course in planning during the latest decades, as a long-standing ideal in planning-education and practice, and a “taken-for-granted aspect of almost all liberal democratic planning systems” (Huxley, 2013, p. 1528). In Norway, participation is regulated through the *Planning and Building Act*, and different methods for participation and inclusion processes are described and encouraged through numerous guides and reports. As such, the guide *Public Participation in Planning* (Regjeringen, 2014), published by The Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, is still a unifying standard for participation. The minister at the time, Jan Tore Sanner states in the guide that: “The Government wants to place more emphasis on local democracy”, and that knowledge-based, well-balanced and active planning processes can “ensure influence and contribute to a beneficial development of attractive local communities” (Sanner, 2014, p. 7). The minister also emphasises the right to participation through the *Planning and Building Act* and the shared responsibility for everyone to take part and contribute to the planning process (ibid.).

Despite these declared good intentions, there are obvious issues of tokenism and deception related to participation that can hinder the planning process from being truly democratic and counteract the ideal that the plan should be “beneficial” for the whole society. Not least, this has become clear in the many infrastructure and energy projects that have been planned and implemented in Norway in later years (see e.g., the supreme court verdict from Norges høyesterett, 2021)¹ despite strong resistance from conservationists and local communities, where in some conflict cases the government even gives legal aid to the companies. The severity of these cases indicates a need for challenging what Chantal Mouffe (2013) calls “the existing consensus” (p. 97), which in most cases with strong and contradictory political and economic interests (as in most environmental and land-right cases), in reality constitutes “consensus” between powerful agents against less powerful human or non-human interests.

Tokenism in participation was first elaborated by Sherry R. Arnstein (2004) in her influential article: “A Ladder of Citizen Participation”. Arnstein states that “citizen participation is citizen power” (p. 1), and according to Bent Flyvbjerg (2003): “Power determines what counts as knowledge” (p. 319), which in turn defines the dominant interpretation of reality. When power is “defining reality” by “defining rationality” it becomes a “principle means by which power exerts itself” (ibid.). Arnstein’s text is still applicable, as she approaches power and interpretation of reality through concrete examples ranging from “manipulation” – via “information” or “consultation” – to “partnership”, “delegation” and “citizen control” (Arnstein, 2004, p. 2). Where the lowest level is clearly “non-participation”, showing how developers, politicians and professionals

- 1 In Norway, the most glaring contemporary case is the “Fosen windmill project”. In October 2021, the supreme court (Høyesterett) stated illegal the permit given a multinational private company to build wind farms in the mountain areas of Fosen that are historically used by Sami reindeer husbandry. The construction process was encouraged and approved by the Norwegian authorities despite major controversies. The statutory ‘participation process’ conducted by the company was from environmentalists and Sami protesters claimed to be utterly undemocratic and illegal.

can manipulate the non-professionals to endorse measures that are clearly not advantageous – the highest level of “citizen control” rather turns citizen representatives into decision makers resembling politicians in a democracy – with the risk of creating new distance to other affected citizens.

Regardless, in light of the danger of manipulation, there are reasons to discuss how participation has been exercised and exalted as an essential aspect of the idea of democracy – inherited from the liberal ideals of the Enlightenment, even claimed to be related to the “protestant notion of the participation of man in the infinite grace of God” (Huxley, 2013, p. 1536). The “taken-for-granted” notion that participation and the “communicative ideal” in planning is a guarantor for democracy, explained by Patsy Healey (2005) to be a “conception of inter-subjective reasoning among diverse discourse communities” (p. 31) – is by Bent Flyvbjerg & Tim Richardson (2002) considered problematic, “because it hampers an understanding of how power shapes planning” (p. 44). Rather, critics of planning and “radical” planners and theoreticians “agree that planning is not democratic enough, as it lacks the integrated representation of different sectors of society” (Alfasi, 2003, p. 186). Drawing on Michel Foucault, John Pløger (2021) even suggests that planning has become “the art of taming public participation”, as well as a “tool for ‘the governmentalisation’ of societal development to be part of ‘a series of specific governmental apparatuses (appareils)’ and ‘series of knowledge (savoirs)’ giving form to the ‘administrative state’” (p. 2).

When both planning theorists and “real-life experiences” emphasise the dichotomy between high ideals of inclusion in planning and strong, but often vague, obstructive powers difficult to detect – it is imperative to investigate more experimental methods aiming for an operational, responsive and democratic planning – “as a body of knowledge and practice” (Foucault, 1972, p. 42). This means that the plan must become open and explorative where the citizens’ interests and democratic rights to participation and “a transformed and renewed right to urban life” (Lefebvre, 2008, p. 158) can be confirmed. Henri Lefebvre’s vision of citizens’ rights, which in the context of this article equally include non-humans’ rights, implies radical changes and alterations of urban social and spatial relations (Purcell, 2002, p. 99). A claim for “radical changes” is a claim for defining reality and the “relationship between rationality and rationalization” (Flyvbjerg, 2003, p. 321) with the potential of ultimately transforming “both current liberal-democratic citizenship relations and capitalist social relations” (Purcell, 2002, p. 99).

BYUTVIKLING TROMSØ KUNST

Hvordan kan vi snu byen mot vannet ved hjelp av kunst?



Kunst og byrom langs sjøfronten ved Sørjeteen i Tromsø. Det historiske bildet i bildet er fra 1909 med ukjent fotograf. (Kilde: Riksantikvaren/Nasjonalbiblioteket – Mittet. / Future Frames: raumlaborberlin / Foto: 70°N arkitektur)



When Tromsø municipality in 2017 started the statutory process of renewing the city centre masterplan, resulting in a public hearing in the autumn 2020,² a momentum arose for experimenting with democratic aspects in a planning process strongly impacted by “capitalist social relations”. The new process, called “Tromsø Waterfront Laboratory” (TWL), started as an open call in 2019 for an “art in urban space” project generated by Tromsø municipality and KORO (Kunst i offentlige rom / Art in Public Space), primarily focusing on the harbourfront (KORO, 2019). The project involved several artists and actors, and the case elaborated in this article comes from the subproject concerning the southern part of the city centre and the harbour, conducted by 70°N arkitektur with associates in 2020.³ The statement in the application from 70°N (2019) was to critically confront the suggested development of the area and the proposed city centre masterplan as interconnected processes. The intention was to use artistic methods, performative involvement and citizens’ engagement – acknowledging Mouffe’s (2013, p. XVII) statement that “cultural and artistic practices can play a critical role by fostering agonistic public spaces where counter-hegemonic struggles could be launched against neo-liberal hegemony”.

Figure 1
To the left; facsimile from a newspaper article, introducing the waterfront project saying: “How can we turn the city to the water by the use of art” – to the right; facsimile from the front page of the TWL project blog.

ILL.: TWL (2020a)

- 2 The 2020 plan proposal from Tromsø kommune, which formed the basis for the TWL-process is no longer available at the Tromsø kommune’s web-pages but can be read with comments from the TWL team on the project blog (TWL, 2020b).
- 3 The project was commissioned, after a public application process, to the Tromsø based architecture and planning office 70°N arkitektur in cooperation with architect Berit Steenstrup, Tromsø. The author of the article is also author of the project.

Theoretical and methodical approach

The intention of the article is to conduct a critical investigation of the contextual conditions and power structures leading up to and defining the premises for the TWL project. Further, the use of proactive artistic means is explored, with the possibility of producing “new subjectivities” (Mouffe, 2013, p. 90) through “counter-hegemonic interventions” (ibid.), where aims and methods, and “instances of control” (Foucault, 1981, p. 72) of citizen involvement processes are discussed by approaching the “discursive regularities through which they are formed” (ibid.). The article draws on Foucault’s (1972) notions of power and knowledge where the relational structures of actants, processes and elements of openness and democracy are confronted as a “dynamic combination of succession, coexistence intervention procedures” (Hocutt, 2014, para. 4) coming from the situations that are investigated. The article discusses the process of becoming an active subject through “subjection” in power-relations (Foucault, 1980; Butler, 1997), with a subsequent possibility of liberating a multitude of “actants” in the planning process exposed through more open and adaptive methods like the “Actor Network Theories” (ANT) (Latour, 1996; Mol, 2010). In this context, the idea of the ANT represents a counterforce against what Foucault (2000) describes as “subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization”, which is consistent enough to preferably stimulate the plan to “[develop] action, thought, and desire by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction” (p. xii).

Planning realities

In today’s rather confusing reality, planning is a practice of paradoxes, which is drawn between a paradigm of what Flyvbjerg & Richardson (2002) describe as a “modernist instrumental rationality” (p. 17), interpreted to be a dominant utilitarian cost benefit ideology, and a notion of a more communicative and democratic planning with “new institutions, governance processes and discourse” (Friedmann, 2004, p. 54) – more in line with what is claimed to be the intentions of the governmental authorities (Regjeringen, 2014). Flyvbjerg & Richardson (2002) mark a clear distinction in planning theory between the opposites represented by Jürgen Habermas’ notion of a “utopian world [...] oriented towards an ideal speech situation” claiming validity based on “consensus among equal partners” (p. 4), and Michel Foucault’s notion of “discourse as a medium which transmits and produces power” (ibid., p. 11). Where Habermas sees individual freedom and democracy as conditioned by a “political public sphere unsubverted by power” (ibid., p. 8), Foucault would claim that “for the fight against domination”, it is more relevant to start with “conflict and power relations” (ibid., p. 13). Hence, he accepts “the realities of power” (ibid., p. 8) where the “exercise of power” is not static, but “elaborated, transformed, organized” through processes that are “more or less adjusted to the situation” (Foucault, 1982, p. 792). Foucault therefore promotes an alternative approach where power has the potential of being “productive as well as destructive” (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002, p. 9).

Planning operates in this reality where, according to Foucault, power is “not a thing or a possession” but is fluid and “runs along and across various networks” (Urry, 2004, p. 11), taking the form of economic and political visions, opportunism and pragmatism. Political power will most typically relate to the initial ideas or dogmas after which a community is governed and the political processes facilitate and confirm each plan. Juridical power comes from the fact that the plan is conditioned in a rigid framework of laws, codes and regulations – and also the reality that the plan itself becomes a law and is therefore largely written in legal terms and with an intention of being indisputable. Juridical power overlaps economic power, which should be obvious and self-exploratory within our constitutional societal system, where land-ownership and private property rights are enshrined in the Constitution, and equally strongly enforced in society. Likewise, plans are often initiated (or disputed) by private developers or capital owners, which indicates a power of influence that is largely disproportional compared to more marginal actants – those without juridical or economic power – or even those human or non-human actants not being able to speak for themselves.

However, despite the significant impact of planning on *real-life* matters and people’s everyday welfare, planning cannot be considered “an open space of dialogues on planning issues” (Pløger, 2021, p. 13). According to Flyvbjerg (2003), rationality in planning is rather “penetrated by power” – which means that planners, researchers or decision makers should not “operate with concepts of rationality in which power is absent” (p. 320). Therefore, if participation primarily is an exercise of power, misused to legitimise political decisions (Pløger, 2021, p. 1), there are good reasons to claim that the prevalent notion of the Habermasian “communicative model” (Fainstein, 2000, p. 3) cannot guarantee democratic processes or proper representation – because it, according to Mouffe (2013), is a “conceptual impossibility” presupposing “consensus without exclusion” (p. 92). When “the communicative turn” in planning (Healey, 2005, p. 31) is even claimed to be a threat to democracy by its neglectance of power (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002, p. 50) – we should investigate what Foucault’s “power-analytics” posit as an alternative approach, focusing on “‘what is actually done’, as opposed to Habermas’ focus on ‘what should be done’” (ibid., p. 44).

Any participation process without the intention of redistributing power can therefore, according to Arnstein (2004), easily become “an empty and frustrating process for the powerless” (p. 2). That is why John Forster (1989) warns planners against being ignorant of “those in power” because it will “assure their own powerlessness” (p. 27). A warning that becomes even more appropriate when accepting David Harvey’s claim that planners are unconsciously trained to maintain the current social order and to protect the built environment from any tremors, implying that planners have an intrinsic commitment to the ideology of social

harmony (Alfasi, 2003, p. 198). Therefore, even planning processes with the intention of being participative and democratic, can easily be “converted into pacification or a means to manipulate people and cover up disagreement” (ibid.), and become hierarchical and reductionistic with a strong tendency to objectify marginal actants. Forester (1989), likewise, describes the position of being a “powerless planner” as “frustrating”, claiming that this is a well-known feeling, often being “overwhelmed by the exercise of private economic power, or by politics, or by both” (p. 27), which confirms the materiality that power is defining and creating the “concrete physical, economic, ecological, and social realities” (Flyvbjerg, 2003, p. 320) of which the plan takes form.

Tromsø, a city of urban experiments

The TWL project takes up the legacy from several experimental urban processes conducted in Tromsø since the 1970/80s – where the notion of planning, described by David Webb (2012), as a “field of facts” understood as “a priori description[s] accessible to reason alone” and consequently existing independently of “empirical experience” (p. 54), has been strongly challenged. These are processes primarily connected to the long-standing reconstruction of the city centre after several city fires in the 1960s, to the formation of the new university from 1969, and not least the substantial city growth with an annual average of nearly 1000 people in the latest 30 years. For that reason, Tromsø is today the largest city in the Sub-Arctic part of Europe with approximately 80.000 inhabitants, claiming to be “the capital of the Arctic” (Tromsø kommune, 2022a). At the same time, for decades the city has attracted avant-garde architects experimenting in architecture and city development. Professor in urbanism, Knut Eirik Dahl⁴ has played a major role, and in the early 1990s he launched different explorative concepts of openness and “Tromsø as an experimental zone” with the intentions of challenging the city’s strong “neo-liberal” expansion from the early 1980s. The most notable processes⁵ being “Spillet om Tromsø”⁶ (“The Tromsø Game”) 1995-98 (Dunderović, 2013), and “The City Development Year 2005 (CDY)” – (Kolbotn, Dahl & Johannesen, 2006; Pløger 2007; Løkken & Haggärde et al., 2008; Nyseth, Pløger & Holm, 2010; Nyseth, 2011; Nyseth, 2012; Nyseth, Ringholm, & Agger, 2019). The CDY has so far been the most comprehensively developed experimental process with an intention of challenging the whole structure of the planning process. The CDY started as a self-organised network of committed societal actors, which joined forces through several debate meetings, and demanded a “time-out” from the municipality’s process for a new masterplan for the city centre (Nyseth, 2011, p. 579). The proposed plan was characterised as “neo-liberal”, and an agenda was set “for a changed discourse about the future of the city, through promoting alternative and more visionary issues” (ibid., p. 580). The ideas of the CDY-process were summarised in Dahl’s concept of the “city of dialogues”, with a notion about “openness” as a genuine transparent dialogue

4 Knut Eirik Dahl was one of the founders of the progressive architect office “blå strek” in Tromsø, which was an innovative force in Norwegian architecture during the “postmodern” period of the 1980s – merging international currents with explorative regional understanding.

5 70°N arkitektur and the author of this article were engaged in both processes among other planners, architects, politicians, cultural workers, academics, journalists, school children, developers, and many “ordinary” citizens.

6 Knut Eirik Dahl received “Bolig- og byplanprisen” (The Housing and Urban Planning price) in 2004 for “Spillet om Tromsø” (The Game about Tromsø).

between citizens, planners and politicians. The CDY-process uncovered a common wish to reformulate the plan on the basis of new ideas and methods and was by Nyseth et al. (2010, p. 224) claimed to be a process where a “fixed planning process had overnight become a fluid one”.



The CDY process was highly influenced by “poststructural” ideas about fluid planning and “openness as method” (Løkken & Haggärde, 2008, p. 3), in the sense that literally everyone was encouraged to participate in city walks, performances, talks, exhibitions, newspaper articles under a common label, etc. (ibid., p. 4-5). The basic conception that “everything” is considered relevant for the coming plan became statutory, as a process of “planning by folding”, encompassing and connecting ideas and inputs of utterly different traits – like the Deleuzeguattarian “rhizome”, where “any point [...] can be connected to anything other, and must be” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 7). According to Jean Hillier (2007), there is in “planning as becoming” “no predetermined style of folding, unfolding or refolding”, and she uses Doel’s suggestion that the planners could “(s) play along the folds and ... become swept up by the variable consistency of a certain context’: a Deleuzeguattarian ‘voyage in place’ opening up potentials for ‘people-to-come’” (p. 232). In many ways the CDY-process preceded Hillier’s elaboration of poststructural concepts as a method in planning, in what she described as: “Planning and Governance as Speculative Experimentation” (ibid., p. 223). In retrospect, this opened an opportunity to analyse and theorise the CDY-project in the light of general, progressive ideas on planning and citizen involvement, which to a large extent have been passed on in the TWL project.

Figure 2

From the CDY-project showing inclusive activities like city walks and talks – here by Knut Eirik Dahl (left) and city model talks and exhibitions under the slogan “to exhibit is to open up” (right).

PHOTOS: ANN SISSEL JENSEN

Learning from the CDY-processes and new experiments

Despite the comprehensive attempts to define a more democratic and less instrumental planning process, the progressive and open concepts of Tromsø’s urban experiments were largely appropriated by developers defending transformation and densification of the historical centre of Tromsø. The developer processes were claimed by Torill Nyseth (2011) to

be “basically made at the project level, guided by more or less ad hoc principles [where] [planning] became more “entrepreneurial”, placing individual developers in intimate collaboration with the planning authorities” (p. 579). The municipality was deeply involved and financed both “The Tromsø Game” and the CDY-processes. According to Milan Dunderović (2013, p. 18) “The Tromsø Game” was considered by the municipality “an example of successful strategic planning” (author’s translation). However, and surprisingly, even if the previous urban experimental processes in Tromsø intended to address the complexity of “reality” in its full breadth and depth, in an “ongoing fluid, open, non-linear and unpredictable development” (Boelens & Roo, 2014, p. 5), the learnings were barely brought forward in the following planning processes because it did not fit in to the formatted planning system (Dunderović, 2013, p. 18). This was an observation connected to the “The Tromsø Game”, but was equally seen in the aftermath of the CDY-process, confirming Flybjerg’s (2003) conclusion from the “Aalborg project”, that even if planners, administrators and politicians think that a strong belief in the project will ensure that “rationality would emerge victoriously” (p. 318) – it is not the case, and it can on the contrary lead to “environmental degradation and social distortion” (ibid.).

Thus, it might not be a surprise that in 2020, the new proposal for “Sentrumsplan for Tromsø kommune” (Masterplan for Tromsø city centre, (Tromsø kommune, 2020), see also note 3), largely was conceived in the same structuralist-modernist paradigm of linearity and reductionism – neither indicating any learning from the previous experimental citizen processes, nor fully recognising “the new reality” of climate and environmental crises. Because of this rather demanding situation, it was an imperative for the TWL project to try out alternative artistic methods and “interventions” in planning. The initial intention from KORØ and Tromsø municipality was to conduct an art project running parallel to the “Sentrumsplan”, and it became even more significant through the process to develop the TWL project as a “counter-act” to the new masterplan – to confront the rather instrumentally rigged planning process with complex and evolving aspects concerning involvement and democratic integrity – following the argument that “no phenomenon can appear without having passed by way of synthesis” (Webb, 2012, p. 54).

Tromsø Waterfront Laboratory – contemporary context

From the 1980/90s, the city centre of Tromsø shared the fate of many cities worldwide in being slowly discontinued as a retail centre – to the benefit of new shopping malls outside the centre. Additionally, in the latest 5-10 years, Tromsø has become a year-round tourist destination due to different natural attractions, which means a shift from traditional trading and retail to becoming dominated by a rapidly growing tourist

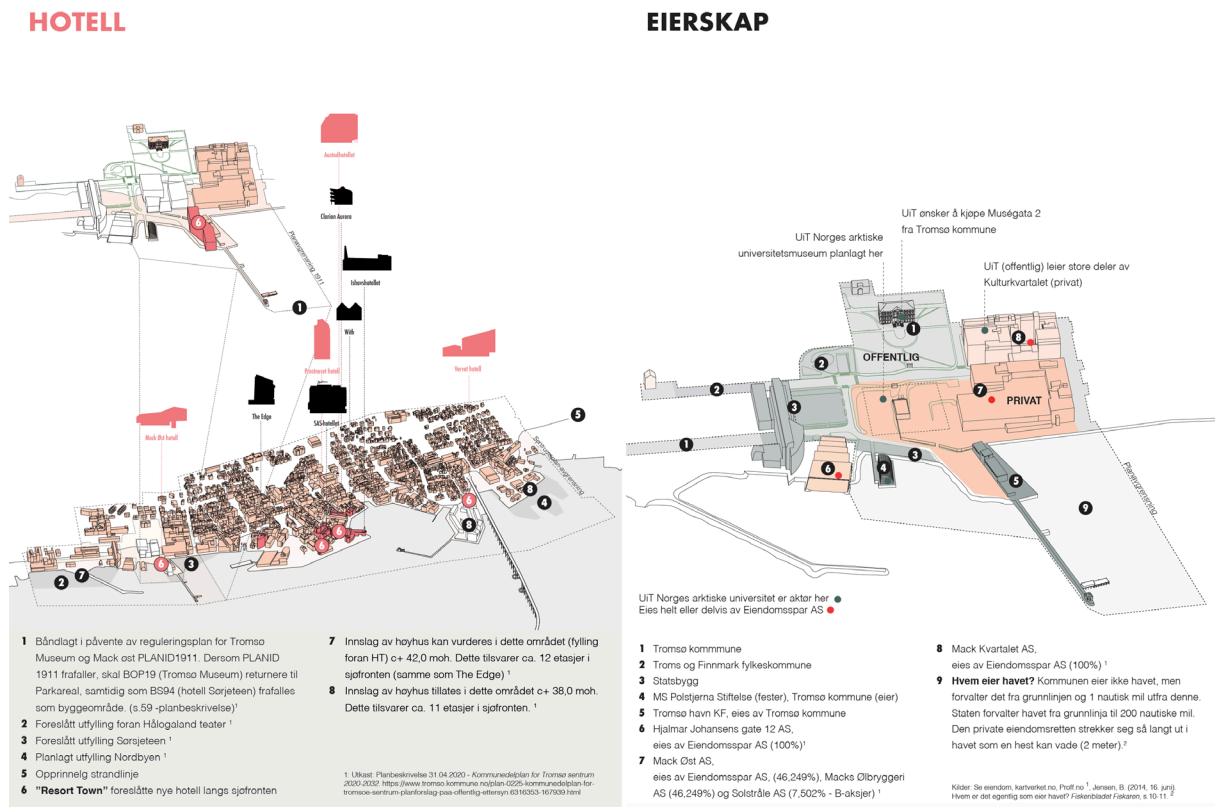
industry. This is displayed by many vacant commercial buildings and correspondingly an increasing amount of tourist shops and tour operators along the main downtown streets, and not least by many new, and also planned to be built, large hotels – primarily along the harbour front.



The primary site for the TWL project was the southern part of the city centre and the harbour, with the former location of the brewery Mack (established in 1877 and moved out in 2012), the planned Arctic University Museum of Norway (see Figure 4), and not least the emblematic “Sør-sjetéen” (southern breakwater), which marks the southern demarcation of the inner harbour. The site has the character of a “common” and includes the first museum building in Tromsø from 1894-1961 (Arkitekturguide, November 29, 2004), now housing Tromsø kunstforening (Tromsø Art Association), and “Framsenteret” established in 1991, hosting the Norwegian Polar Institute and the Arctic Council, among several significant institutions of the North. An old name for the area is “Finngam-sletta” (Steenstrup, 2020), meaning “the plain with Sámi cabins”, indicating a diverse cultural heritage. Today, the site is largely an undefined urban expansion area, but the old storage buildings from the brewery, which are planned to be demolished, locate popular low-key sports activities, concerts and events. To emphasise the aspect of the non-human subjects, the brewery’s east and north facades have been taken over by nesting red-listed gulls, or krykkje (kittiwakes)⁷ (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 From the TWL project by 70°N + B. Steenstrup: mapping of all kinds of actants and activities in the area for the coming plan (left), and the nesting kittiwakes at the former brewery, which is intended to be transformed to commercial programs (right). ILL.: TWL (2020a) / PHOTO: MAGDALENA HAGGARDE

7 The spring of 2021 the gulls started preparing for the breeding season in March. Even though the birds had started building nests, the owner of the building implemented measures preventing the birds from accessing the nesting places. The measures taken are disputed and possibly violate the Norwegian law on the management of nature’s diversity (naturmangfoldsloven) (Lovdata, 2021).



Conflicting interests

Eiendomsspar,⁸ which is the majority owner of the site, have plans for rebuilding the industrial brewery buildings to become mainly a shopping mall and a concert hall for the Arctic Philharmonic – and not least a 300-room hotel on the harbour side of the planned museum (see Figure 4 and 5). Nevertheless, there is a growing scepticism among the inhabitants concerning the city-centre development – in reality clogging the harbourfront with high-rise buildings of what has become “a new normal” of 13 floors.⁹ The situation reveals a classic conflict between, on the one side, commercially oriented developers and landowners wishing to exploit the presumptively best sites’ potential to the maximum, and on the other side, the interests of the citizens to develop a new “arctic common” for multiple purpose and public use. It is a situation where a private developer apparently is providing culture as a “gift” to the society, but it represents rather what Mouffe (2013) describes as a “blurring of the lines between art and advertising [...] such that the very idea of critical public spaces has lost its meaning” (p. 85). Additionally, the situation challenges the municipality’s stated ambitions¹⁰ for urban ecology, green spaces and new urban nature, and the statutory obligations to protect endangered species and ecosystems as the kittiwakes, but not least the comprehensive littoral ecology, threatened by extensive land reclamation in the area and along the entire east side of the Tromsø island.

Figure 4
Illustrations used in articles by the TWL by 70°N + B. Steenstrup to illustrate existing and planned hotels at the waterfront (left) and property owners in the area, showing that most of the site is owned by private developers (right). ILL.: TWL (2020a)

- 8 Eiendomsspar is an investor and property developer located in Oslo, controlled by the financier Christian Ringnes. The company is the majority owner of the former brewery buildings – and are promoting a new zoning plan for the area in collaboration with Statsbygg. The plans are including the site for the new Arctic University Museum of Norway, and also a hotel at the “Sørjeteen”. The plans presuppose 13-stories buildings along the harbor front.
- 9 13 floors represent a significant height at the latitude of Tromsø, where the sun never reaches higher than 43° above the horizon, casting correspondingly long shadows. For a liveable city centre it is important to create sunny and wind protected outdoor spaces.
- 10 Tromsø municipality (2022b) has committed to UN Sustainable

The new museum and “collusion” among powerful actants

The planning of a new Tromsø museum started in 2007 with a broad political and public engagement. After a long process, Statsbygg¹¹ was, in 2017, given the assignment from the Ministry of Education and Research to undertake the process of building a new “regional museum of the North” at the site south of Mack. On Statsbygg’s (2022b) webpages, it is stated that: “The project is being developed by Eiendomsspar AS in close dialogue with a private project, where the owner of the plot, Mack Øst, is planning a new hotel and shopping centre next to the museum in collaboration with the landowner and Tromsø municipality” (author’s translation).¹² After a short and contested tender process¹³, the Danish architectural office Henning Larsen was commissioned to develop the project.¹⁴

The TWL case emphasises several dilemmas in comprehensive planning processes, where the plan potentially impacts the city’s development severely, but the possibilities for the citizens to influence the decision processes are limited. Despite the fact that the *Planning and Building Act* (Lovdata, 2022, §5-1) clearly states the right to, and demand for, participation in planning processes, saying that: “Anyone who submits a plan proposal must facilitate participation” (author’s translation), there has not been any substantial citizen involvement in the process concerning the old brewery or the new museum, the planned adjacent shopping mall or the hotel at Sørsjetéen. On the contrary, in an official consultation response from Universitetet i Tromsø (UiT) / The Arctic University of Norway, as the coming operator of the museum, it is “strongly requested” that the plans for the museum and for the hotel should be connected. UiT even claims that an “absolutely crucial prerequisite for success with this fantastic cultural boost [the building of the new museum] for Tromsø and Northern Norway, is that a hotel is established on the seaside” (UiT, 2019, author’s translation). There is no critical reflection from the university about a potential conflict between the shopping mall, the hotel and the museum, despite the substantial physical impact on the area. Nor are there any concerns expressed for the littoral ecology on the site, the absence of citizens’ involvement or other public interests.

The landowner and developer, Eiendomsspar AS (2019)¹⁵ states equally in their response note that the comprehensive process and the agreed plan initiative between the parties “Tromsø municipality, leading politicians, UiT and Statsbygg” (author’s translation), legitimise the extensive plans for building up to the height of c+ 42m for both the brewery and the hotel. Nor does Eiendomsspar indicate any intentions, needs or interests for citizen involvement in the process. Rather, the perception of the area as exclusively private property is established in an e-mail received by the TWL team from the minority owner, Ludwig Mack AS, claiming that the TWL project continues in a year-long, “painful” conflict with Tromsø municipality, where “an ever-growing industrial enterprise is enclosed and

10 continued:

Development Goals, including #11; “Sustainable Cities and Communities” and #14 and #15 concerning life on land and below water.

11 Statsbygg (2022a) is the Norwegian government’s building commissioner, property manager and developer.

12 See Statsbygg’s webpages about the museum project. Project web page (2022b).

13 Despite high political ambitions and equal public expectations for an architect competition, the Ministry of Education decided to ignore the local claims and made the “competition” a tender competition and not a competition about architecture, which in reality narrowed down who could take part (the requirements made it only possible for major international consulting companies to take part) and the potential of bringing a substantial number of proposals to the table. A requirement also stated from The Association of Norwegian Architects in an article in *Arkitektnytt* in April 2018 (Woltmann, 2018).

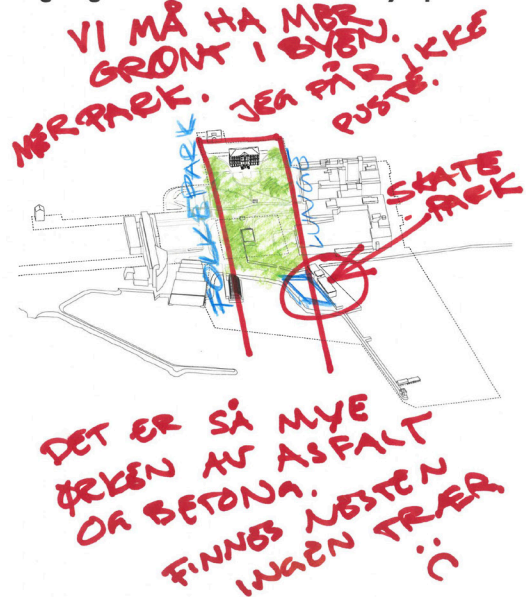
14 The project has a size of 19.700m² gross area – and a cost frame of NOK 1.8 billion – growing to 2,0 billion in 2022. (Statsbygg, 2022b).

15 From Eiendomsspar AS, *Merknad til plan 1911 med høringsfrist 29.08.19* (Note to Plan 1911 with consultation deadline August 29, 2019) (Eiendomsspar, 2019).



Sørsjetéan

tegn og skriv dine ønsker, idéer, synspunkter



eventually suffocated by the city” (H. Bredrup, personal communication, September 08, 2020, author’s translation).¹⁶

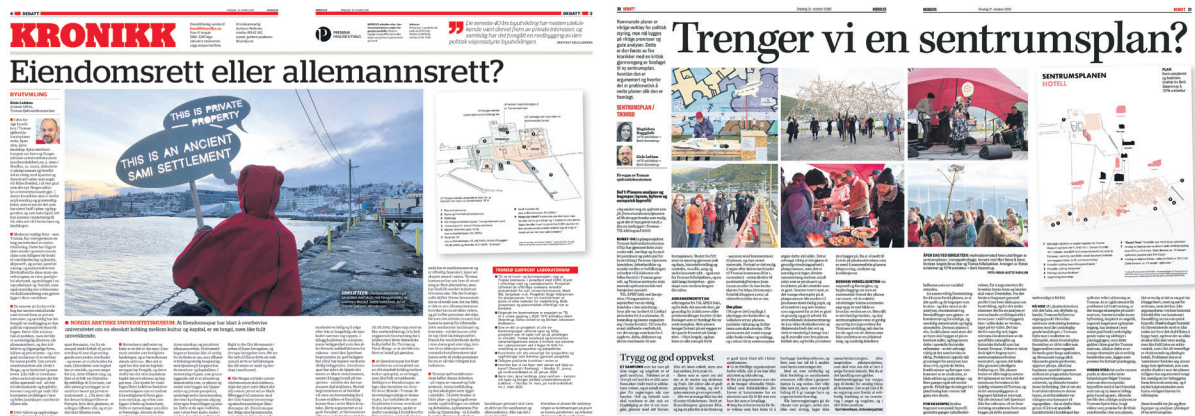
The power-structure in the area is highly unbalanced and constitutes an alliance between the Norwegian government as the premise giver and financing part for the museum; the Norwegian government as the executing part for the museum through Statsbygg, which operates as one of the largest and most non-transparent project developers in the country; the UiT as the operator and academic part of the museum operation, and also the provider of content; and Eiendomsspar (including Ludwig Mack AS as a minority owner) as land owner, investor and developer of the whole area and which can determine the conditions for converting the site for the museum. Additionally, the municipality of Tromsø plays a significant role as planning authority and decision-maker for the location. In total, this will normally be considered the strongest power-part in any process – with a history of executing the planning process as a formal exercise towards a predetermined result, neglecting and representing what they consider as unnecessary disturbances.

Figure 5

Showing the planned museum by Henning Larsen – the waterfront is not a part of the museum as indicated on the illustration (left-bottom). Initial plans for a new hotel at the Sørsjetéan (left-top) – the height is contested by the municipality, but not the program and volume which is planned by Eiendomsspar. On the right shows a note from a participant at the TWL Open Day by Statex + 70°N + B. Steenstrup, arguing for making the site a green common – saying “we should have more green in the city – I can’t breathe” (author’s translation).

ILL.: TOP LEFT: EIENDOMSSPAR (2019) / BOTTOM LEFT: HENNING LARSEN (STATSBYGG, 2022b) / RIGHT: TWL (2020a)

¹⁶ E-mail received September 8, 2020, from the former director of Mack, Harald Bredrup, as an answer to a request for borrowing soda crates to the “Open Day” event.

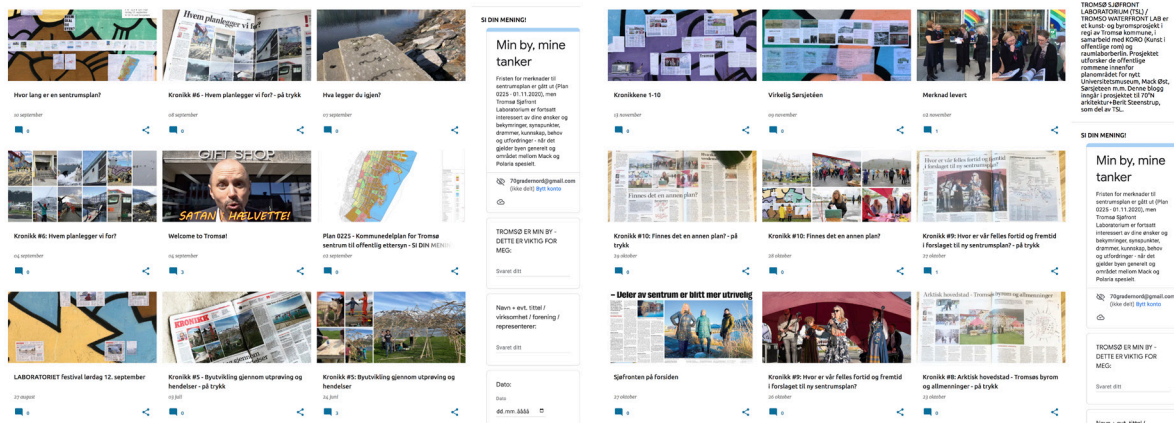


On the other side of the power-scale, there is an unorganised number of citizens that have engaged in the site and the process – mainly protesting the height, location and function of the hotel (and new hotels along the shoreline in general). There are also several voices advocating for a possibility of establishing a new public space and a common through the area (see Figure 5), including the shoreline and littoral zone. And not least, in an actor-network perspective, the red-listed kittiwakes (see Figure 3) will as representatives for other non-human actors emerge as active subjects in the power-relation.¹⁷ As endangered species protected through international conventions and national laws like the “naturmangfoldsloven” (Act on the management of nature’s diversity) (Lovdata, 2021), the birds cannot be ignored; but as is most common in development processes like this, neither the required citizens’ involvement nor the demanded considerations and obligations for endangered species have been lifted in the process. The very visualisation of the power-structures and processes was an important objective of the artistic approach to both “widening of the field of artistic intervention” and for the “production of new subjectivities and the elaboration of new worlds” (Mouffe, 2013, p. 87).

Figure 6
Two of ten articles in local paper “Nordlys” discussing planning related issues. The first text is a critical approach to the “taken for granted” right for property owners to exclusively decide the use of sites of very high public interest (left), and the second problematises the need for internalised “modernistic” planning (right).

ILL.: TWL (2020a)

17 In line with a global trend, sea birds and in this case kittiwakes, due to lack of food and other threats, are increasingly becoming urbanised. As a consequence, they are met with measures hindering the birds from nesting on buildings. In Tromsø this has become an exigent matter and a conflict between property owners and environmental protectors. See newspaper article in Nordlys in May 2021 (Sojtaric, 2021) as an example out of a series of articles about sea-gulls in Tromsø.



Artistic involvement – bringing the “repressed” on stage

The experimental and artistic TWL approach intended to play on many strings that are normally difficult to use when being a formal part of a planning process. When Deleuze (1994) talks about “[the] discrete [discontinuous], the alienated and the repressed” as “the three cases of natural blockage, corresponding respectively to nominal concepts, concepts of nature and concepts of freedom” – it invokes “conceptual identity or Sameness of representation” accounting for repetition and attributing to “elements which are really distinct but nevertheless share strictly the same concept” (p. 15). The power-processes unfolding and shaping the plan do not recognise the “unknown knowledge” represented in these “concepts” – but still, using Deleuze’s theatre metaphor, this unknown knowledge “must be represented as bathing the whole scene, impregnating all the elements of the play and comprising in itself all the power of mind and nature” (ibid.).

The TWL aimed to stage a “scene” for any “counter-hegemonic” concept by encouraging reflection and by informing and educating the public in planning issues through the TWL blog, by writing in the newspaper and at the site, and illustrating, exhibiting and critically arguing in the planning process. The TWL team produced 10 newspaper articles thematically structured, concerning legal issues and processes, ownership, citizen rights, human and non-human subjects – and not least presenting counter-perspectives on for whom and for whose benefit the plan should be. The proactive format of the TWL stimulated several external actants, such as artists and engaged citizens, to write their own newspaper articles and perform various performances. The whole process was simultaneously documented in the project blog (TWL, 2020a), where any event, newspaper article, debate or comment regarding the case were collected.

Figure 7
Open blog: “Tromsø Sjøfront Laboratorium” / “Tromsø Waterfront Laboratory” – edited by 70°N. The blog opened early in 2020 and has documented all activity in the following year (it is still open, but occasionally maintained). The blog is chronologic and thematic, and combines written articles, comments and essays with photos, videos and illustrations. It is intentionally kept light and visual but also contains in-depth articles. The blog address was regularly announced in the newspaper in conjunction with the articles – and it encouraged to post comments and opinions about the content, or any issues related to planning or the site. The blog also passed on any other relevant newspaper articles, events or other related content.

ILL.: TWL (2020a)



The artistic involvement of 70°N culminated in a public event, “Open Day”, at the site – in collaboration with one of the other artist groups, Statek Collective (2020). The “Open Day” became an example of how a seemingly wasted plot can temporarily become a pivot point and an urban space for opinion formation through artistic performance and public engagement. The entire masterplan for Tromsø city centre was commented on by the TWL team and the more than 500 pages with remarks, comments, references, posters, articles, illustrations and analyses were pasted on the 85m long wall of a harbour building at the site. The “exhibition” took the form of a very literal “public hearing” in the tradition of wall magazines and wheat paste murals. Representatives from the team used the day proactively by explaining the planning “system” and discussing the content of the plan proposal with the public, and everyone was encouraged to write remarks to the municipality. More than 40 comments were made, representing half of all the remarks on the plan received by the municipality. In a newly published article, Tromsø municipality’s project leader for the Waterfront project, Anniken Romuld, summarises the “Open Day” as a performative example of how the formal plan can take new forms and be inserted with new meaning when exhibited, twisted, debated and performed in an open and artistic context, claiming that: “I believe I am speaking for several when I say that this place took on a new meaning. Perhaps this experimental and critical approach to the plan proposal has paved the way for new ideas both for the area and for how we plan” (Nyseth & Romuld, 2021, p. 165, author’s translation). The TWL process was summarised in 4 booklets / 250 pages, including public remarks on the plan and the TWL team’s corrections made in the planning document itself (TWL, 2020b).

Figure 8
10 newspaper articles on planning related issues – under a common label of “Tromsø Sjøfront Laboratorium” / “Tromsø Waterfront Laboratory”. Starting by introducing global issues about “right to the city” confronting the “taken for granted” land ownership vs. public use and democratic rights to city space – by introduction of Rousseau’s (1754) critical remarks on more or less unlimited private property rights – and Lefebvre’s elaboration of public rights to citizen life (Lefebvre, 2008). Further articles were organised thematically discussing participation, ecology, city events, temporality and planning processes. The last four articles were critical analyses of the proposed plan for the city centre with an additional comment on possible alternative approaches to the plan.

ILL.: TWL (2020a)

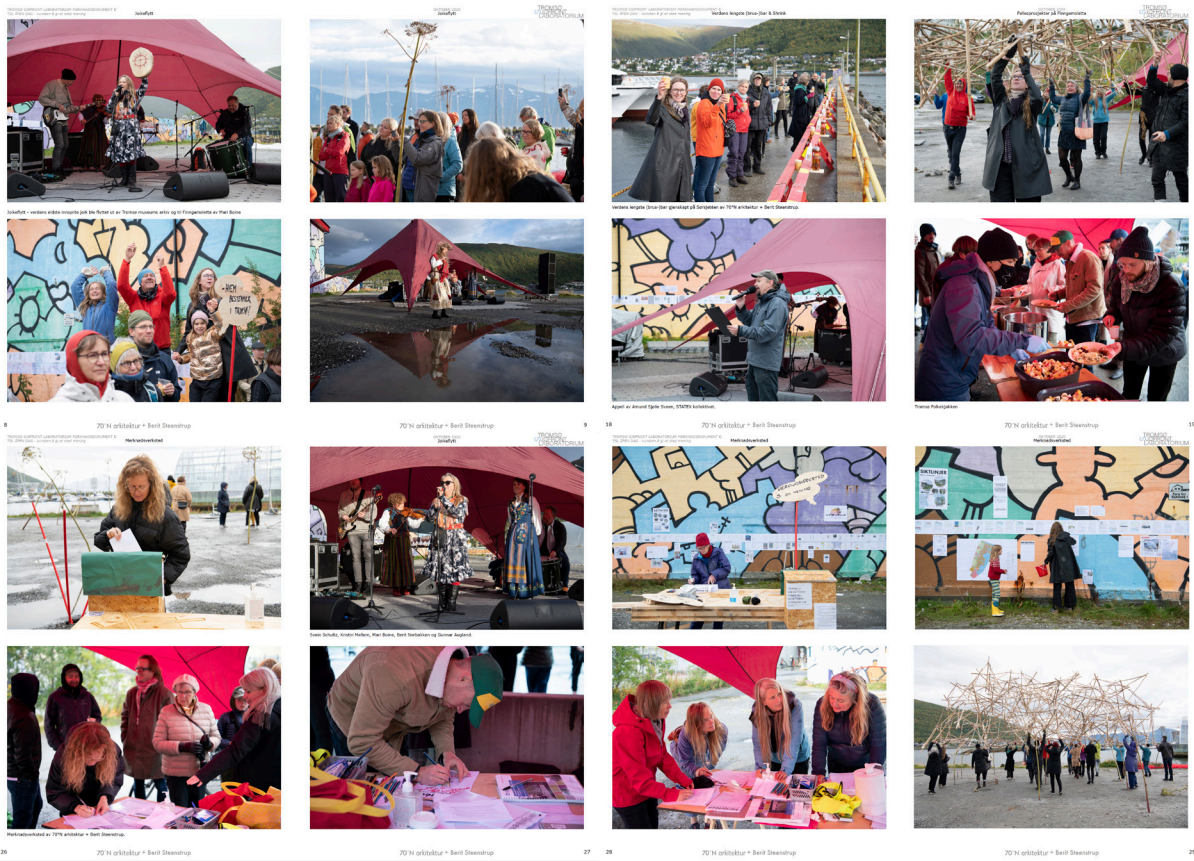


Figure 9
Public events connected to the TWL artistic approach – in collaboration with Statex Collective. The main event; “Open day” at Sørsjetéen September 12, 2020, was a combined artistic happening with workshops / performances / concerts by leading artists like Kristin Mellem, Mari Boine and Berit Norbakken – “moving” Sami joiks, Kven and Norwegian folk hymns from the archive of Tromsø museum to the new museum site – as a symbolic gesture pointing at the immaterial heritage of the site / food from “Tromsø folkekjøkken” (Tromsø public kitchen) using expired food / drinks along the most famous Sørsjetéen formerly nicknamed “the world’s longest bar” / exhibition of the municipal plan proposal with remarks and comments from 70°N+Berit Steenstrup / annotation workshop / building of light temporal constructions (by the use of the dried local plant “Tromsøpalme”) / provocative political agitation on site-related issues by “Nordting” (provocative performance group, on northern political issues, part of Statex) / public debates and conversations between the artists and architects, and the engaged audience.
FACSIMILES FROM THE REPORT, PHOTOS: INGUN ALETTE MÆHLUM / TWL (2020a)

Merknad levert

02 november



Fredag 30. oktober ble merknadsdokument i fire deler overlevert fra 70°N arkitektur + Berit Steenstrup / Tromsø Sjøfront Laboratorium til Tromsø kommune:

A: KRONIKKENE - 10 tekster om å planlegge fremtiden

B: MERKNADSVKSTED - merknader fra innbyggere i Tromsø

C: TSL ÅPEN DAG - kunsten å gi et sted mening

D: PLAN 0225 - kommentarer og analyser av planbeskrivelsen



Figure 10

Report (TWL, 2020b) delivered to the representatives from the Department of urban development, Tromsø municipality, October 30, 2020. Booklet A contained 10 articles about planning, general perspectives, contextual conditions, and new planning perspectives / Booklet B collected all the remarks and inputs from the annotation workshop, by citizens expressing views, feelings and inputs for the site and the city centre / Booklet C the “Open Day” at “Sørsjetéen” on September 12, 2020 / Booklet D was a review of the entire plan-proposal (the municipal plan for Tromsø city centre) – with remarks, comments and proposals by 70°N arkitektur + Berit Steenstrup. All together over 250 pages of comments, remarks and documentation was handed over to the planning authorities. ILL.: TWL (2020a)

Kronikk #6: Hvem planlegger vi for?

04 september



Fugl og folk på Finnamsletta: dansegruppe spiller inn video / pauserom i ly for vinden / hundetreff / krykker på fuglefjellet nedre Mack / soiveggen malet meteplass / lom og ærfugl ved Sørsetéen / treningsøkt / Maya Mi Samuelsen coronadansstudio Sørsetéen / strandryddeaksjonperformance / selmatsanking / Kirkens bymisjon oppskåpende virksomhet og matutdeling / artsrangfold i littoralsonen. Foto: Maya Mi Samuelsen / Berit Steenstrup / 70°N arkitektur

Kronikk #6 nå på nordnorskdebatt.no

Kronikk #10: Finnes det en annen plan?

28 oktober



En annen plan: Uprøving av Finnamsletta som allmenning og byrom i bruk under TSL / Åpen dag; felles byggeprosjekt / konsert / performance / deltakelse. / Sentrumsplan på offentlig høring; utstilling i byrommet, merknadsverksted med samtaler og innlevering av idéer, ønsker og drømmer. TSL Åpen dag arrangert av: Stalex kollektivet & 70°N arkitektur + Berit Steenstrup. (Foto: Ingun Alette Mæhlum)

Kronikk #10: *Finnes det en annen plan?* nå på nordnorskdebatt.no

Figure 11

From the TWL blog showing activities, both existing / unplanned / spontaneous and from the “Open Day” event on the site – under the headlines of newspaper articles: “Is there an alternative plan?” (right), and “Who are we planning for?” (left) (author’s translation). PHOTOS: MAGDALENA HAGGÄRDE (LEFT) AND INGUN ALETTE MÆHLUM (RIGHT) / TWL (2020a).

“The reality of power” – subjects and objects in new formations

When Foucault elaborates the concept of power in society, it appears ambiguous and not solely oppressive, indicating that an analytic approach to “power and rationality” can also be used productively to “support the empowerment of civil society” (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002, p. 3). On the one hand, power has been characterised “by a legislation, a discourse, an organisation based on public right” articulated on the principle of the individual citizen’s “social body” and “delegative status” (ibid.) and, on the other hand, by what Foucault (1980) describes as “a closely linked grid of disciplinary coercions whose purpose is in fact to assure the cohesion of this same social body” (p. 106). This is a reasoning pointing at the “heterogeneity” between “a public right of sovereignty” and a manifold “disciplinary mechanism” (ibid.), where the challenging momentum is that the concept of power in general is too biased because many can only see “oppression and coercion where power operates” (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002, p. 3). As a form of power, Judith Butler (1997) emphasises that “subjection is paradoxical” (p. 1) signifying both the oppressive nature of power as well as the “process of becoming a subject – whether by interpellation, in Althusser’s sense, or by discursive productivity [of power and knowledge], in Foucault’s” (ibid., p. 2).

Therefore, according to Foucault, a discourse cannot be seen as “a system of language” (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017, p. 110), but as “institutionalized patterns of knowledge that govern the formation of subjectivity” (ibid.). According to Foucault (1972), discourse can be seen as “a group of rules proper to discursive practice” (p. 49) produced “by effects of power within a social order” (Adams, 2017, para. 2) where the “discursive order” can be defined as a “regularity” “between objects, types of statements, concepts, or thematic choices” (Foucault, 1972, p. 38). Moreover, Foucault (1980) claims that the “effects of power” can constitute “myriads of bodies” as “peripheral *subjects*” and that we therefore should try to understand “subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects” (p. 97).

The Foucaultian notion of “subjection” through power-processes alters accordingly the history of subjects and objects, where the subject has been considered as human and the object has been collocated with the non-human (Wilding, 2010, p. 21). According to Latour (2004), the different subjects and objects can then either be constituted as “pair with associations between humans and non-humans” (p. 246) or as a “reunification of things and people, objects and subjects” (ibid., p. 57). Therefore, through Foucault’s notion of power and relational subjects, a need emerges for more open, adaptable and less contradictory ideas about subjects, objects and hierarchies in planning processes that can offer an opportunity for a re-thinking of internalised positions. The most radical conception in that respect is the way the “Actor Network Theory” (ANT) not only re-

structures the cemented position of human actants – as poor versus rich / powerful versus powerless – but confronts the entire hierarchy between humans (subjects) and non-humans (objects), where a non-human natural element is considered an equal actor as a human one (Wilding, 2010, p. 21). In the ANT, the notion about an “actor” gets blurry and open; as an “actor” is not just human but is considered to be “different things” (Mol, 2010, p. 255). The ANT is therefore “open” and non-hierarchical in the sense that it does not primarily ask for the actors’ position, intentions or goals, but it comprises various effects: “surprising ones included” (ibid.). According to Annemarie Mol, the ANT therefore offers the “possibility of seeing, hearing, sensing and then analysing the social life of things – and thus of caring about, rather than neglecting them” (ibid.).

“Breaking down” the “units” intending a new “discursive practice”

The constituted planning process and its methods are strictly framed and controlled through legislation and by the formation of “objects of discourse”, by Foucault (1972), claimed to be made possible in history by “a group of relations established between authorities of emergence, delimitation and specification” (p. 44) – at once controlling, selecting, organising and redistributing through procedures aimed at limiting dangers, and to control “its chance events” (Foucault, 1981, p. 52). However, the TWL process compel us to challenge these “delimitations” and to play in an open field of power, knowledge and “rules of formation” (Foucault, 1972, p. 65). This means to consider issues about what is true and false, and to be aiming for a new “discursive formation” through another “discursive practice” (ibid., p. 38, 191), by advocating and “caring about” the historical and emerging interests of any human or non-human actor not being an authority, developer or financier of the plan.

The CDY process had clear agents and advocates in the public process, also gaining a formal position through political resolutions. By this, it revealed a broad public engagement for the city centre, but the planning department did not have any receiving apparatus to take over and redistribute the learning to the constitution of a new formal plan. The TWL process on the other hand, did not have the same momentum for citizen engagement on the same level, nor was it welcomed in the formal municipal process. Rather paradoxically, the municipal management (except the project leader), which formally owns the TWL process, unofficially expressed the view that the TWL engagement was disturbing (orally conveyed to the TWL team), and did not wish to contribute to, promote or participate in any project event. By this “silent ignorance” of the TWL project “publicly commenting and exhibiting” the municipal planning process – the municipal authorities, maybe unconsciously, legitimised the mindset that the public interest can be left to privatisation (Mouffe, 2013, p. 85), with the consequence that any critical comment or deviating interest is “neutralised” by the “forces of corporate capitalism” (ibid.).

However, proactive and performative planning processes, as the CDY and TWL processes intend to be, make the formation of new objects and subjects more open and possible by penetrating and exposing the often deceptive “coloured chain of words” (Foucault, 1972, p. 49) offered in the institutionalised planning process and by stimulating a critical exploration and redistribution of knowledge and power along unpredictable “lines of flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 23). According to Foucault (1972), the discourse should not be treated “as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (p. 49), meaning that the signs do more than denote things and that it is this “*more*” that keeps them from not being reduced to language or verbal expression: “It is this “*more*” that we must reveal and describe” (ibid.).

The CDY and TWL processes are searching for this “*more*” to sustain the planning process as explorative, open and responsive to unexpected knowledge and new positions. Foucault’s (1972) methods of “archaeology” explains this as a way to investigate “the historical presuppositions of a system” and its “rules of formation of discourse” (Olssen, 2014, p. 29), and “genealogy” as way of explaining the “existence and transformation of elements of theoretical knowledge [...] by situating them within power structures” (ibid., p. 31). Apparently, this allows us to break down the “units of discourse”, which planning historically is based on, and which “have been accepted at the cost of reinforcing the constraints from which thinking in modernity has struggled to escape” (Webb, 2012, p. 48) – “to reveal their construction and transformation” and to openly expose events that have “previously been concealed behind a façade of readymade concepts, subjects, objects and assumptions about the nature of change”.

An explorative and responsive planning process conducted in the spirit of the actor-network’s non-hierarchical and non-biased approach towards “the units” of the plan, has the possibility of emancipating new subjects and unexpected objects and “produce” a new ontology of the plan. Conversely, there is no guarantee, even if the process is open and inviting, against the plan still becoming rigid and limited and conform to already internalised power-structures. When the CDY project proactively invites practically anyone to an unrestricted confrontation with authoritarian recipients, it literally liberates a multitude of subjective positions and subjugated knowledges and distorts and displaces the normal power-structure of the planning process. But when the planning authorities do not signify any interest or ability to convey the knowledge or contribute to “reveal and describe” the Foucaultian “*more*” (1972, p. 49) into a new plan, the CDY can easily stand as an example of tokenism. Likewise, when the TWL project reveals the substantial commercial and governmental power-actants colluding to achieve their respective goals within the same neo-liberal paradigm – and confronts this with

“counter-hegemonic” interventions from citizens and other non-human actants - it emphasises the close possibility for statutory participation processes to become manipulative tools for “forces of corporate capitalism” (Mouffe, 2013, p. 85).

Conclusion

Neither the CDY process nor the TWL process conclude in any obvious way, but they represent clear but different attempts to critically confront what Nyseth, Pløger & Holm (2010) call the “post-structuralist ‘challenge’” (p. 226) in today’s planning regime: “seeking to control fluidity through spatial plans and political decisions seeking to tame critical voices and discourses” (ibid.). What is formulated as a right to democratic influence in the law, therefore easily becomes a deception when the dynamic complexity of a society is met by an instrumentally oriented planning process and reduced into the static format of a “masterplan”.

The CDY process was a “bottom-up” initiative that nevertheless was orchestrated by more or less organised groups of professionals and politicians stepping out of their initial roles. And the TWL process was initiated from the planning authorities and in its entirety staged by planners, architects and artists experimenting freely with alternative and provocative artistic methods. Even if the awareness of the power-knowledge relations were strongest in the TWL process, both cases can be seen as attempts of “grasping the subjugation” of the formal planning process in its “material instance” (Foucault, 1980, p. 97) by participative means and experimental methods of different kinds. But even though, in the CDY-process, the nature and substance of the “poststructuralist” method obviously brought forward new concepts and interesting ideas for the city’s development, it did not consider the formal and reductive coercion of the planning regime, nor the reality that even a strong belief in the project will not, in itself, ensure a good plan. Accordingly, the TWL wanted to challenge the “stable power-relations” between a prevailing constellation of private developers and public authorities and the citizens’ subjugated interest for the development of the area. The idea was that “artistic practice” and “counter-hegemonic interventions” can play a critical role in the planning process and that engagement and participation that are “practical, committed and ready for conflict provide a superior paradigm of democratic virtue” (Flyvbjerg, 2003, p. 326) against processes that are more “discursive, detached and consensus-dependent” (ibid.). As such, the TWL process aimed for an agonistic process, but with a distinct receptive, artistic and “activist” inclination acting *in* the statutory planning regime, but not being restricted by it. Both cases anyway show that “breaking down the units” is a prerequisite for citizens’ influence and for opposing, defining or controlling the “discursive regularities” of the plan; the plan should be conceived as an open process, responsive to the influence of “signifying elements” vs. “practical experiences” (Foucault), or

“nominal concepts” (Deleuze), “subjugating power-relations” (Foucault) and “emerging actants” (Latour) that in any way could be significant to the plan. Hence, “A city is its people, their practices, and their political, social, cultural and economic institutions as well as other things. The city planner must comprehend and deal with all these factors” (Davidoff, 1965, p. 293). The plan should therefore not only accept, but encourage a multitude of actants and networks, “discursive surfaces and public spaces” (Mouffe, 2013, p. 91); to keep up the complexity rather than being reductionistic, it should become more responsive and play more freely. In ANT there are no “a priori order relations” as it, according to Latour (1996), “allows us to reshuffle spatial metaphors that have rendered the study of societal nature so difficult: close and far, up and down, local and global inside and outside” – and replaces it by “associations and connections” (p. 373-374). Rather than accepting “subjugation” of the public “by a closed planning dispositive secured by law” (Pløger, 2021, p. 13), we are therefore obliged to continue experimenting with methods transferring the “unknown knowledge” of “nominal concepts” and “concepts of nature and freedom” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 15).

Postscript

The hearing remarks to the masterplan from citizens engaged in the TWL project have caused a change in the revised plan proposal of April 2022, where the hotel at Sørsjetéen is replaced with a new green area (Tromsø kommune, 2022a). Accordingly, the latest proposal for the zoning plan from Eiendomsspar, presented in the local Newspaper, Nordlys April 20, 2022 (Presteng Thuen, 2022) is also presented without the same hotel.

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