

## Democratic planning processes for diversity, difference and minorities

### Procesos de planificación democrática para la diversidad, la diferencia y las minorías

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**Resumen.** This paper explores democratic planning in its various forms and conflicts as an attempt to suggest possible ways to exercise it in today's contemporary context. Democracy can be an ambiguous term, characterized by equity or equality or both. This ambiguity can also be found on the scope of its implementation. The main disagreement among scholars advocating for "democratic planning", is whether democracy should be inherent in the decision-making process or in the outcomes which are product of that process. This work articulately distinguishes planners, like Paul Davidoff, who emphasize process from others, like Krumholz, who emphasize outcomes and notes the strengths and shortcomings of both. It uses three case studies, which bring up real examples of many of the dilemmas of practical democratic planning, as part of the analysis that will lead to solid conclusions on how to exercise democratic planning in a contemporary metropolis characterized by diversity, difference and the growing presence of minorities.

**Abstract.** El texto explora la planificación democrática en sus diversas formas y conflictos como un intento de sugerir posibles formas de ejercerla en el contexto contemporáneo. Democracia puede ser un concepto ambiguo, caracterizado por la equidad, la igualdad o ambas. Esta ambigüedad puede encontrarse también en el horizonte de su implementación. El principal desacuerdo entre los académicos que defienden la "planificación democrática" es si la democracia debería ser inherente al proceso de toma de decisiones o a los resultados a los que da lugar dicho proceso. Este trabajo distingue de manera articulada entre varios planificadores, tal como Paul Davidoff, quien destaca los resultados y aspectos fortalecedores, así como los atajos que se encuentran en ambos. Utiliza tres estudios de caso que ofrecen ejemplos concretos de muchos de los dilemas de la práctica de la planificación democrática como parte de un análisis que conducirá a conclusiones sólidas sobre cómo ejercerla en las metrópolis contemporáneas, caracterizadas por la diversidad, la diferencia y la presencia creciente de las minorías.

**Palabras clave.** Democracy; equity; decision-making; diversity.

**Keywords.** Democracia; equidad; toma de decisiones; diversidad.

### Introduction

#### –What can democracy mean in relation to planning?–

The Indian Amartya Sen (Nobel in Economic Sciences) has argued the basic principle of democracy is the ability of citizens to guide public policy's direction. Beyond political representation and respect for the rule of the majority, it implies protection of rights and freedom of all individuals, access to social benefits, and right to access information and to participate actively in collective deliberation. On the same line as Cornelius Castoriadis and his classical distinction between democracy as regime and democracy as procedure, Charles Lindblom (1977) gives another interesting definition of democracy. He quotes Robert A. Dahl (1971): *"The key characteristic of a democracy is the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens"* (Lindblom, 1977, p. 250). All of these authors emphasize the need of societies to legitimize their laws and to explain why they should be morally fair and right.

This essay explores democratic planning in its various forms and conflicts as an attempt to suggest possible ways to exercise it in today's contemporary context. I will use the term 'democracy' to refer to a particular way of group decision-making or deliberation in planning

cities. We will see how in this context, democracy may become an ambiguous term, characterized by equity or equality or both, among all the participants in the system, depending on its interpretation (point 2 of this paper). We find this ambiguity not only on the understanding of democracy's meaning, but also on the scope of its implementation. The main disagreement among scholars advocating for 'democratic planning', is whether democracy should be inherent in the decision-making process or in the outcomes which are product of that process (point 3).

The latter perspective is well analyzed in Richard Kimber's article "*On Democracy*" (Kimber, 1989), where he breaks down democracy as requiring three fundamental principles: 1) upward control, i.e. sovereignty residing at the lowest levels of authority; 2) political equality; and 3) social norms by which individuals and institutions only consider acceptable acts that reflect the first two principles of upward control and political equality. In the urban planning context, Norman Krumholz's principles and ideas on how to achieve equitable planning and his teachings on team work and decision making based in goals will be used to further explore this perspective.

On the other hand, planners who believe in the democracy of decision-making process will point out that the basic feature of democracy is the capacity of all voters to participate freely and fully in the life of their society (Martha Nussbaum, 2000). Paul Davidoff's work on advocacy and pluralism in democratic planning processes will be used to exemplify this other point of view.

Lindblom, in his book, "*The World's Political-Economic Systems*", makes a distinction between two different ways in which societies can weigh values and make choices. He names these two visions model 1 and 2, extracting major characteristics from communism (model 1) and liberal democracy (model 2). More than twenty years after the end of the Cold War, this terminology is outdated and it would be more correct to distinguish between a technocratic model, where democratic values prevail in the outcomes –equivalent to Lindblom's model 1; and a democratic one, where democracy is inherent in the decision-making process –equivalent to Lindblom's model 2.

We could argue that urban planning democracy understood as outcomes, would follow a model where the most knowledgeable (the planner, the architect) are making the best and smartest decisions for everybody, following a technocratic model: "*an intellectually guided society*" where "*information, scientific inquiry, analysis and theory are conclusive [...] in discovering the correct form of organization for society*" (Lindblom, 1977, p. 250). On the other hand, urban planning democracy understood as process, by definition –decision making through interaction of people– would fit what we understand to day as truly democratic operating mode, "*where everyone knows himself to be fallible, [...] many needs cannot be known, [...] institutions and policies cannot always be tested by reference to them. Instead the volitions of «the people» are taken as the best indicator of needs and wants*" (Lindblom, 1977, p. 250).

Democratic planning, like we will explain, is ambiguous in both its definition (equity, equality, inequality) and its scope (outcomes or processes). Therefore, the distinction between the two models can become relevant only when a clear definition is given of the context of decision making –scope– and the people involved –content–. If citizens are perceived as ignorant, without the ability to make decisions of their own, model 1 would be applied. Tensions mainly present in this way of acting will be discussed in point 4.1., between democratic practices and knowledge and rational planning, where there is an absence of public arena for democratic processes. On the other end, if citizens are given a voice, model 2 would be applied and other tensions could arise, given an excessive emotional and biased approach, discussed in point 4.2., when there is a lack of carefully elaborated and integrated set of actions for attaining the desired democratic goals.

### Equity, equality, inequality

–the danger of adopting democracy literally in urban planning with no fine-grained specifics–

“...the strategies that are appropriate under decision-making conditions of severe structural distortion and inequality are restructuring strategies: strategies that work toward effective equality, substantive democratic participation and voice, and strategies that work away from the perpetuation of systematic racial, sexual, and economic domination [...] First, the traditional Rooseveltian liberal tack of redistribution might be adopted, wherein efforts are channeled in remedial or compensatory ways. [...] Second, the approach seeking to formulate and implement «nonreformist reforms» might be adopted, whereby effort is directed to empower populations who might then act further to alter the structures of power in the society [...] Third, more directly nonreformist efforts might be attempted: the work of planners and public administrators might be directed specifically to social and labor movements working to attain structural changes in the present political-economy” (John Forester, 1989, pp. 60-61).

Generally ‘equity’ means fairness and impartiality in the distribution of things or way of treating. It can imply ‘equality’ when things or rights have to be distributed equally in order to achieve equity, but it may not, if some of the people start out with less and must therefore receive more (things distributed unequally) in order to receive what they need (fairness) and deserve (impartiality). Equity therefore has a connotation of both quantity and quality, whereas equality implies mostly quantity. Generally both terms are associated with democratic planning, which therefore becomes a very ambiguous concept when it is not well defined in terms of what it is trying to achieve: equity among who and through equality or inequality on what?

In Forester’s quote above, we can find three ways in which democracy can be exercised through political power in order to attempt to achieve equity, which he also refers to as ‘effective equality’. The first one is through redistribution methods: attempting equity of those with less power or means, by giving them more (unequal distribution). This considers what they deserve but may not necessarily cover what they need. Like we will see below with an example, this is a very common ground for urban planning decisions. The second one is directed to empower populations, encouraging substantive democratic participation and

giving those with less, a voice. These types of strategies start to consider the aspect of need in achieving equity: if it succeeds and people are finally heard, they will express what they need and not just what they deserve. The third way Forester points out is to guide structural change. This pathway fully embraces and makes sure deserve and need in relation to equity are present in deliberation processes. It even facilitates the mediators (i.e., urban planners) that can make the system work.

Participation in the democratic system makes the assumption of 'sameness', where people are viewed as citizens with equal rights. To make that right for 'equality' possible, the urban planning system relies on professional technicality and regulatory control (which will be broadened later in the paper, under rational and knowledge planning), still reflected in Euclidean zoning ordinances, which have been the core of the urban renewal program in the US and other Western countries. This strong emphasis of planning in equality brings up severe incoherencies and undemocratic processes and solutions in today's context, which is extremely more diverse than codes, ordinances, and laws assume it is.

To exemplify this ambiguity between the terms of equity and equality in democratic planning practices, a case study in the city of Oshkosh (Wisconsin) cited by Michael Burayadi in his article, "*The Multicultural City as Planners' Enigma*", will be used.

"In the 1980's as part of a US resettlement program for refugees from south-east Asia, the city became home to several Hmong families. The Hmong had an agrarian culture and large families. Thus, it was not uncommon to have 6 to 10 children in a household. As families were resettled in the City of Oshkosh, city planners were involved in trying to find housing for these families. Using Western standards of housing, it was felt that a minimum of a three-bedroom house or apartment was needed for the large families. After a tedious search, housing was found for these families. On one such occasion, a three-bedroom house was found for a family of six. It was reasoned, the parents would share a bedroom and the four children would pair up in each of the other two bedrooms" (Burayidi, 2003, p. 268).

Housing standards (including 'overcrowding', the one relevant for this specific case) are supposed to provide health, hygiene and safety. The planner in our first story searched for housing for the Hmong families that qualified for American overcrowding standards, taking into little consideration their specific cultural norms. For the Hmong, a standard one bedroom for parents and a large bedroom for the children would have been the preferred housing type; and health, safety and hygiene would have still been maintained.

After some time the city planner in Burayadi's story went to visit the families resettled, and found out that the four children were all using one of the bedrooms while the third bedroom remained vacant. She eventually realized that Hmong families preferred their children to share the same bedroom to foster bonds between the siblings, which don't follow the American standards for overcrowding. The Hmong family, treated equally to the rest of Americans was given what they deserved but not what they needed.

This example not only points to the need for planners to provide housing choices that will accommodate the different housing needs of a diverse population, but to the need to do it not just through redistribution methods (the American standard house can be excellent for those who choose to live in such a setting; however, the standards do not meet the needs of a diverse culture with different tastes and ways of life), but at least through empowering those populations (there should have been a method in the system to hear their opinion about how they needed to live) and ideally through the mediation of planners that were trained to listen to minorities and incorporate their ‘voices’ in their decision making process.

## Processes vs outcomes

–in context and time–

“The present social context of planning has become a field of institutions organized around contending interests. Regulatory systems have been established by law to monitor and control the actions of agencies [...] Within these institutional fields, planners no longer follow the centralist planning model. They practice in relation to a growing variety of special interest groups and regulatory systems, and they have developed a variety of new or modified roles” (Donald Schön 1982, 354).

For this paper it is especially important to understand the context and time in which we are analyzing democratic planning; a context that has been prolonged for quite some time. In the 80’s Schön already gave an accurate description (above) that serves well as a point of departure even for today. If we examined for example democratic planning as a series of outcomes (technocratic model) without a time and context frame, we could erroneously include the traditional centralist planner, operating after World War II, and described by Schön as having a “*system of knowledge-in-practice [that] dealt with the framing of objectives and goals, the imaging of a desirable future [...] and the prediction of the consequences of action*” (Schön, 1982, p. 353) in such a perspective.

Democracy can be a very ambiguous concept if we don’t specify whom it is aimed at and how it is doing it. To discuss the scope of its implementation (another ambiguity): the decision-making process or the outcomes which are product of that process, this work has chosen two authors that “fight” for the same cause –set within the same context–, even if they do it through a different way. Both Krumholz and Davidoff stress the word equity as the central concept of their work. This common aim as planners (work for the less privileged) makes their work still very relevant to the discussion of how to achieve democratic planning today, as it is a problem we are still trying to find a solution to, a problem still discussed by many contemporary authors, like we will see further in the paper.

Altshuler’s Foreword in *Making Equity Planning Work* (Krumholz and Forester, 1990) describes the two views’ common ground quite accurately: “*As civil rights and poverty moved to the center stage of American politics, city planners at first found themselves on the sidelines. Their techniques, their standard nostrums, and their apolitical modus operandi were at best irrelevant to these new issues, at worst perverse. It soon became apparent to*

*perceptive observers that even the most «neutral» planning was inescapably political in failing to question, and tending to reinforce the existing distribution of power and wealth in society. And a reaction got under way, in the journals and on the campuses if not in man, city halls, pointing toward a new era in which some planners, at least, would serve (in Paul Davidoff's term) as advocates for the poor and the politically weak” (Krumholz and Forester 1990, Foreword, xi-xii).*

Having framed their common playground (they are even citing each other), we can now point out their differences, as planners (they had different roles within the planning context) as well as strategies used when playing the game. Krumholz works for the government, he's the director of a planning department, and therefore he makes the calls in a system that until very recently did not facilitate an arena for open debate on urban issues and did not empower the disadvantaged ones, in favor of equity principles. So he's trying to 'practice' democratic planning (make equity for the disadvantaged happen) in a system very much guided by pre-established outcomes, that come from a non-inclusive/non-participatory system, where the most knowledgeable (the planning department or the government) makes the decisions; becoming here specially interesting its resemblance with a technocratic planning model. On the other hand, Davidoff is an academic and consultant. He works directly with the disadvantaged outside the 'official' system (government). He therefore aims at changing the process (making it more democratic), within his reach of practice, believing that by doing so a more democratic outcome can be achieved.

Schön describes this new generation of planners from the 70s on, concerned with justice and equality of society (in other words, engaged truly with democratic planning and the real meaning of democracy) as having “...*knowing-in-practice [that] had to do with issues such as these: expressing the interests of the dispossessed (Krumholz), or empowering the dispossessed to express their own interests (Davidoff)*” (Schön, 1982, p. 354), among many other qualities and endeavors.

The first one, expressing the interests of the dispossessed, describes very well the type of democratic planning Krumholz would defend in relation to the contemporary sociopolitical context, even if he stresses a “*persistent and careful articulation of the goal*” (Krumholz and Forester, 1990) in any planning process. Schön's second description of planners empowering the dispossessed to express their own interests fits very well with the arguments Davidoff would make, focusing then more than in the quality of the outcomes (as Krumholz) in being able to “*establish an effective urban democracy, one in which citizens may be able to play an active role in the process of deciding public policy*” (Davidoff, 1996, pp. 211-212).

Both perspectives on planning for cities acknowledge unsolved and problematic issues that like we'll see later are related to tensions with how things work in reality. Davidoff argues “*the difficulty with current citizen participation programs is that citizens are more often reacting to agency programs than proposing their concepts of appropriate goals and future action*” (Davidoff, 1996, pp. 215-216). He's most likely stressing that the bureaucratic system is too rigid and doesn't leave any space for real participation and inclusion of citizen's ideas.

Krumholz defends that planners can work effectively to benefit every citizen but that they “*will not end injustice, even if they can strengthen democracy, weaken exploitation, empower citizen organizations, and resist injustice*” (Krumholz and Forester, 1990, Preface). Krumholz is aware he needs a political system to work with but he accepts the fact that citizens feel powerless over the actions of planners (or politicians).

## Tensions with reality

### Rational and knowledge planning. Absence of public arena for democratic processes

Leonie Sandercock (2003, p. 38) criticizes that the history of planning associated with liberal democracy, trusts excessively the rational planning of ideal social orders (1) and the progress through science and technology (2), as only ways to achieve equality, liberty and justice. Here Sandercock is mentioning two excesses that can create different kinds of tensions: between the planning prescribed in the rational model and democratic planning (1) and between knowledgeable planning and democratic planning (2)

The first tension –rational planning vs democratic planning– can be related to the unbalance between bureaucracy (too much) and democracy (too little) that leads to lack of power and exclusion of certain factions of society. Briggs (2006, p. 4) points out the powerful tensions between democracy, “*the ethos of associational action*”, and bureaucracy, “*the imperatives of programs, budgets, and expectations from funders and other external authorities*”. In this bureaucratic age public view and participation must be considered a priority. Influential voices, like Archon Fung (2004) agree that strong democracy is threatened by the loss of activities and associations that engage people locally. “*The fact that citizens' organizations have not played a positive role in formulating plans is to some extent a result of both the enlarged role in society played by government bureaucracies and the historic weakness of municipal party politics [...] There is something very shameful to our society in the necessity to have organized «citizen participation». Such participation should be the norm in an enlightened democracy*” (Davidoff, 1996, pp. 215-216).

Davidoff points out a contradiction between what the rational model used in bureaucracy points as correct and what it actually does in reality. “*It is interesting to observe that «rational» theories of planning have called for consideration of alternative courses of action by planning agencies. As a matter of rationality, it has been argued that all of the alternative choices open as means to the ends ought be examined [...] In a democratic system opposition to a public agency should be just as normal and appropriate as support*” (Davidoff, p. 212).

Davidoff's solution to solve this kind of tension is plural planning and the role of the planner as advocate, as lawyer. “*In a democratic system opposition to a public agency should be just as normal and appropriate as support*” (Davidoff, 1996, p. 213). The agency (lets call it bureaucracy), even if it is obviously concerned with planning, may be serving undesired ends. He's not very radical on his view, even if he points out the need for a plural planning

(lets call it democracy) he doesn't want to take away power from the public planning agency. He believes in their work. *"The advocacy of alternative plans by interest groups outside government would stimulate city planning in a number of ways [...] planners, like lawyers, may have a professional obligation to defend positions they oppose [...] Such alternatives would represent the deep-seated convictions of their proponents and not just the mental exercises of rational planners seeking to portray the range of choice"* (Davidoff, 1996, p. 213).

Forester would argue that's not enough: *"The liberal-advocate's view gained a more explicitly ethical following, in part for addressing issues of inequality, but it has been correctly criticized for failing to address the historical and structural character of these issues. The liberal-advocate has been characterized as a nurse, ministering to the sick yet unable to prevent their illnesses from occurring in the first place"* (Forester, 1989, p. 32). He would defend the role of the progressive planner, who *"approaches information as a source of power because it can enable the participation of citizens and avoid the legitimizing functions, [...] planner's information can also call attention to the structural, organizational, and political barriers that needlessly distort the information citizens rely on to act. The progressive perspective [...] recognizes that political-economic power may function systematically to misinform affected publics, by misrepresenting risk or costs and benefits, for instance. The progressive view anticipates such regular, structurally rooted misinformation and organizes information to counteract this «noise»"* (Forester, 1989, p. 31).

The other tension –knowledgeable planning vs democratic planning– derives from excessive trust in *"progress through science and technology"* (let's call it knowledge). Sandercock criticizes that the role of planning and planners is seen as a good thing: *"It is taken for granted that planners have agency –that what they do and think has autonomy and power. It is seen as natural that right that planning should be 'solution-driven', rather than attentive to the social construction of what are held to be urban problems. There is no scrutiny of the ideology, the class or gender, race or ethnic origins or biases of planners, or of the class, gender, or ethnic effects of their work"* (Sandercock, 2003, p. 39). Similarly, Edward Soja points to a greater awareness of how the administrative structures of governance constrain the possibility of obtaining greater justice and democracy. A system of governance that is more closely adapted to the conditions of the specific region could be the answer to obtain a larger degree of justice. NGO's and other more innovative alliances might here play an important part (Soja, 2005 [2000], p. 410).

Like Soja, the solution she gives is to expand democracy by extending participation at the local level (also defended by Xavier de Souza Briggs, 2008, in his face-to-face model). Sandercock defends the model of agonistic democracy, where there is *"always contested engagement with and continually redefined notion of the common good and shared destiny of the citizens of the city"* (Sandercock, 2003, p. 151). She still believes in knowledgeably planning as *"strong, visionary leadership that encourages and rewards exposure to new ideas and risk-taking"* but also calls for the inclusion of all voices *"for fostering a vibrant public realm and for the democratizing of decision-making"* (Sandercock, 2003, p. 216). I



think that what she is proposing is empowering both perspectives, the knowledgeable – planners– and the citizens –everybody– (just like Davidoff proposed the planning agency should have advocated for the things in which it believes and for the things in which it doesn't) because all eligible citizens should have an equal say in the decisions that affect their lives, and that is what democracy is all about.

The example used to discuss the two kinds of tensions explained above, is the Public Housing Complex El Ruedo, in Madrid (Spain). Commissioned by Madrid's Regional Government in 1986 to the well known Spanish architect Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oíza, its aim as social housing was to relocate the families living in the slums of El Pozo del tío Raimundo, mostly formed by gypsies<sup>1</sup>. The roles of a planner acting under the rational planning model (Madrid's Regional Government) and of a planner following knowledge planning ideals (the architect designing the housing complex) will be addressed.

The building, known as an emblem of Spanish architecture of the time, hasn't been maintained since the year 1997, presenting serious damage that affects the life of the families living there. Most of the houses are owned by the Housing Department: three quarters of the residents have social rents (107 euros per month) and the other quarter bought the house gradually from the government. The government spent 30,000 euros on each of the 346 houses that form the complex; and most of its residents –still today– are originally from the slum area that was 'cleared' after the construction of El Ruedo. They have very little or no resources to buy or even maintain the complex, the government's suggestion to solving the problem<sup>2</sup>.

The social housing project can be seen as a failure, as it did not satisfy the needs of the relocated residents on the long run. But ironically the building is still studied as an example of good architecture in most Architecture Schools. Today, by the end of year 2013, the complex still faces the same exact problems this paper describes.

We will look first at the role of the planner acting through the rational model (Madrid's Housing Department). The aim of the project had clearly a democratic component: give a 'decent' house to people living in conditions socially perceived as 'indecent' (slums); when most people know gypsies have a philosophy of live on the verge of societal values and they live in itinerant complexes that change and adapt as necessities change, that enable them to earn their living through various ways very interrelated with the physical space where they inhabit. The first tension here, is that nobody asked the families of gypsies how they wanted to live and nobody cared to research either how families of this kind usually live. They were given no option: either accept the governments 'redistribution measure' or aid because they were poor and they 'deserved' equal means, just as any other Spanish citizen; or find another place to live, because the slums area was being demolished. So basically they were told how they had to live. Therefore they felt misunderstood, misrepresented, and never really identified themselves with the housing complex so never felt a need to maintain it and

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<sup>1</sup> [http://cincodias.com/cincodias/2005/12/28/empresas/1135780807\\_850215.html](http://cincodias.com/cincodias/2005/12/28/empresas/1135780807_850215.html)

<sup>2</sup> [http://elpais.com/diario/2003/03/15/madrid/1047731062\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2003/03/15/madrid/1047731062_850215.html)

feel proud of it. They were never able to prosper and improve their living standards either. So basically, when the government stopped having money to 'feed' the project (because people in it did not care enough or didn't have the means to do so) the whole thing started decaying and falling apart, physically and socially. This has to do with equality understood as equity (not as fulfilling actual needs, even if the path was inequality/difference)

Here we see what we discussed earlier with Davidoff about lack of citizens' participation in planning due to enlarged role played by government bureaucracies. The solution he gives for this kind of tension is introducing the role of the advocacy planner, who would advocate for alternatives. In this case, the advocacy planner (replacing the rational one), would have explored different alternatives for the relocation of gypsy families, other than just suggesting one: the massive social housing complex, that was doomed from the start, as it just addressed what they deserved and not what they needed.

If we look at the role of the knowledge planner (the 'star architect') we realize how he took the government's commission without further research of his own. He never questioned (that we know of) if that was the more 'democratic solution', the solution those families not only deserved but needed. Furthermore, just like the government's planner (as well as the planner of our previous case, the Hmong housing finding), he never talked to the families he was designing a house for. He guided his design by the ideas of the time, by his own knowledge of what a house should be made of and look like, by his own perception of beauty and functionality, as well as by codes and standards that make every citizen's needs 'equal'.

Like Sandercock says, the planner or architect sees planning as 'solution-driven'; with no scrutiny of the ideology, class ethnic origin, etc. for the people he's planning for, he always has the correct or best solution to a problem, because he's the one that has the knowledge and technical skills. To solve this kind of tension she would have suggested the implementation of agonistic democracy, where there is "*always contested engagement with and continually redefined notion of the common good and shared destiny of the citizens of the city*" (Sandercock, 2003, p. 151), and there is an inclusion of all voices taken into the design or plan.

This criticism provides of course a skewed view of the problems in urban planning. The phenomenon is much more complex and not all problems are caused by a lack of participation in the planning process or by a lack of empathy from public administrations and technicians. Like some experts in participatory processes have pointed out before (Tomás Rodríguez Villasante, Jose Luís Martí, Adriana Razquín), participatory processes are not ideal, they can still bring internal inequalities in terms of cultural capital, expertise or time management.

Therefore more participation doesn't necessarily mean more justice or equality. But like David Harvey defends, understanding power relations around participatory processes are crucial for social justice; and to do so as many discourses as possible must be heard. In his article, "*Social Justice, Postmodernism and the City*" (1993), David Harvey discusses diversity of social groups and social justice and says that "*our conception of justice requires*

*not the melting away of differences, but institutions that promote reproduction of and respect for group differences without repression”* (p. 388). Critics against the idea of a common social rationality that can guide the planner to make decisions state that some groups’ «rationality» will be dominating the discourses. Harvey defends “[...] *there is no acceptable definition of social rationality to which we might appeal, but innumerable different rationalities depending upon social and material circumstances, group identities, and social objectives*” (Harvey, 1993, p. 393).

### Emotionally and spontaneously driven planning. Absence of carefully elaborated and integrated actions for attaining the desired democratic goals

We have explored how rational and knowledge planning roles can be undemocratic, in the broad sense, because they ignore citizens’ needs, they don’t take into account their ‘voices’ and they don’t facilitate a public arena where participation in planning processes can take place. But, like we will try to explain with our next example, falling into the other extreme, into very spontaneously driven (opposite to rationally) processes with lack of delineated outcomes, can have its tensions and risks too. Emotions can hamper our professional judgment, like Richard Bolan argues: *“The planner who approaches the cultural framework with technical expertise alone soon finds others’ perceptions of his role quite narrow and his operating arena and impact highly circumscribed [...] On the other hand, focusing on process alone limits the planner to symbolic emotional support roles and unduly hampers his capacity for professional judgment”* (Bolan, *“Community Decision Behavior: The Culture of Planning”*, 1969, p. 308, quoted by Briggs, 2008, p. 1).

While Briggs urges planners to be more than just sources of ‘emotional support’, Forester (as well as Sandercock and others) reminds us that *“to deliberate well –which requires both sympathy and detachment– one must [...] be able not only to think clearly but to feel in certain ways as well. The person who shows good judgment in deliberation will thus be marked as much by his affective dispositions as by his intellectual powers, and he will know more than others do because he feels what they cannot”* (Forester, 1999, p. 54).

We will explore now an example shown by Forester (1999) where the emotional aspect takes a primary role in the planner’s practice, above technical or rational knowledge. Allan, a Community Development Planner, is hired as executive director of a settlement house serving poor white Appalachian and African American communities. Forester quotes his thoughts:

“The first thing I did was advertise for a home buyer counselor. I remember saying, «If we’re going to have an equity program here, we’re going to have to buy these houses, rehab them, and sell them.» And I needed somebody to advise residents who had never before dealt with banks, on how to deal with banks [...] The only person I found for this home buyer counseling role was this woman who responded to the ad I put in the paper. She had grown up as a welfare mother herself, [...] I knew there was a lot of training I had to do, but she could understand the program. She just happened to be black [...] I asked her point-blank: How comfortable did she feel in dealing with Appalachian whites? I didn’t have to ask that question twice –she knew exactly what I meant. She said she thought she could do it. I left it up to good faith after that [...]

A lot of people in fact wouldn't work with us in the beginning. But ultimately, they did. She was good, sensitive, and not overly aggressive. In fact, she was very quiet. In her own quiet way she plugged along, helped everybody over the two years, and became a very trusted member of the Appalachian community." (Forester, 1999, pp. 49-50)

First of all, Allan does not follow the general advice (or rational point of view) he got from people: "*The Appalachian poor will never work with a black. You're taking a risk with the project*" (Forester, 1999, p. 50). Instead, he based his planning decisions on a hunch. Although the plan was successful, we'll always have the doubt whether this story would have been as useful as Forester says and would have been explained on a different way, if Allan's plan had failed. Allan took a risk; a black woman could have as easily sympathized with other black women or people from the black community 'more like her', as with whites that shared the characteristic of 'poor' she was labeled with in the past.

Allan based his choice on what Forester calls "*practical rationality [...] that does not promise grand strategy but responds to particular need, that does not so much fix clearly on an end and choose a means to it as it responds without creating new problems*" (Forester, 1999, p. 51). This is exactly why this example interests us from the point of view of the process in democratic planning and the absence of clear goals. But there are some flaws in Forester's assumptions. Even though he outlines the woman's emotional characteristics (good, sensitive, not overly aggressive, quiet, etc), more than her technical skills or intellect, were key for the success of her work, the truth is Allan could not have known all those things when he first met her and decided to hire her. Even though the plan worked, Allan discovered most of her key qualities –that ended up helping in the process– only after the process had started.

Forester notices in Allan a very positive quality for a planner: being able to interpret people. "*She knew exactly what I meant*", said Allan about her implicit response to the question "*How comfortable did she feel in dealing with Appalachian whites?*". Allan had good perceptions, but does everybody? Is this enough to make a call for a decision of this nature? Isn't it a dangerous to prescribe planners to act through personal impulses? Can even these qualities be taught? "*Particular sensitivities and luck matter as much as technical competence here [...] but so too does a care-full perception, so too does the work of search, knowing what you are missing and having an eye out for what you need.*" (Forester, 1999, p. 52).

A useful thing we can do learn from this story, though, that could indeed be extrapolated to other cases, is how to handle immediacy and non-idealness of real life planning processes and decisions. With this story, Forester teaches us how taking advantage of a tool like 'emotions' and 'perceptions', while sacrificing logical, rational or more technical tools, may save a bad situation (he does take a risk, no doubt about that) –"*The only person I found for this home buyer counseling role was this woman who responded to the ad I put in the paper*"– and even produce a good democratic planning process with successful outcomes. So one can learn to see what resources can she/he count with at each given time and try to make the best of it. We learn about the crucial importance of particular people in particular places and times and being perceptive enough to make a good situation out of that. But like

we have seen in the paragraphs above, it does have some risks in order to be 'the rule to follow' in order to plan democratically.

## Conclusions

"A more democratic and culturally inclusive planning not only draws on many different ways of knowing and acting, but also has to develop a sensibility able to discern which ways lie most useful in which circumstances. What has been missing from most of the collaborative planning/communicative action literature is this recognition of the need for a language and a process of emotionally involvement, of embodiment." (Sandercock 2003, p. 163)

Collaborative or communicative planning is probably today's body of knowledge and perspective considered more inclusive and more based on citizens' interactions; in other words, more democratic. Like Sandercock mentions above, although it takes in account new ways of knowing –technical and rational– and acting –praxis–, that attempt to solve many of the tensions this work has analyzed, it still lacks a full control –embodiment– of how to use emotions in planning in a pragmatic and successful way, in all the aspects of the process. Some of those imperfections or improvements Sandercock points out were discussed through the last example. But we must nevertheless acknowledge, that collaborative planning usually addresses democratic practices at a more local level, and usually offers vast knowledge about practice but on specific roles of planners, that 'handle' people as part of their work, and that they can therefore facilitate dialogue, collaboration, understanding and even produce more democratic solutions through the very process itself.

Throughout the paper we have seen how this is not the only dimension where contemporary planning clashes with democratic ideals or values. Like Davidoff pointed out in his work, we still need planning agencies, that aren't making necessarily decisions based on a day to day interaction with citizens, but are making laws, codes, master plans, etc., at a higher level, isolated at their own offices and in front of their computers; and we still need architects and engineers, that not necessarily introduce 'democracy' and interaction with big array of clients or visitors (that include the culture and practices of minorities and diversity, which are with no doubt part of our societies), specially in the design of typologies different than private family homes. Sandercock also pinpoints the many spheres of planning, seen in general an elaboration and integration of projected actions to attain the desired goals. Democracy, we said in the beginning, is understood in this work as a particular way of decision making, that should be present at all levels of the process: analyses of problems, setting of broad objectives, survey of available resources, establishment of specific operating targets, etc.

This work opened with Amartya's more general definition of democracy. He approaches the term from the citizens' point of view: "*Collective deliberation, guiding public policy, rights and freedom, access to social benefits*". In planning, it would be equivalent to the people the planner is trying to mediate with, facilitate deliberation upon, include in their design or plan, etc. We see in his definition these various dimensions we just mentioned above that include

many levels, scales and contexts, planners must face through multiple roles in order for democracy to be inherent in the process and the outcomes. Dahl's definition (given by Lindblom), on the other hand focuses more on the government or administration: continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens. In planning, this would be any of the planners (and their specific roles) we have been analyzing through our three examples.

This study reached to the following set of conclusions:

First. There is no one or another when it comes to choosing between outcomes or processes inherently democratic. The planning field must facilitate both. Sometimes they will go hand in hand, other times not, depending on the scale, scope, or phase of a plan or the role of a planner. Krumholz and Davidoff, both fighting for equity, can still do so from different perspectives and methods. As planners we need to express the interests of the dispossessed as well as empower them to express their own interests.

Second. Burayadi argues planning is about helping people reflect on their needs to find creative ways to meet them. He also mentions planning understood as the improvement of general welfare. Like we saw with our first example, in order to do so, in order to be truly democratic and approach not only what people deserve (as equals) but also what they need (as individuals) –equity–, we need more than just redistribution methods. Beyond giving people a voice and empowering them, we need structural changes that will facilitate the mediators (planners, architects, etc.) to do so, as well as the rules of the game (codes, standards, norms, laws, etc.), that respond to diversity and minorities.

Third. We need to achieve a balance between rational and knowledge planning (decrease their supremacy) and new ways of knowledge and action (like emotional knowledge, perception or sensitivity). This can be done through the building of a public arena for democratic processes to strengthen and make more democratic the rational and knowledge decision-making and through the control and normalization of collaborative practices so that they don't end up being completely spontaneous driven processes, with lack of elaborated actions (which can be and should be flexible, though) for attaining the desired democratic goals. Like Harvey says, it requires not the melting away of differences, but institutions that promote reproduction of and respect for group differences without repression.

Fourth. The role of the planner in democratic planning processes is essential, as he transforms citizens' suggestions in feasible realities and proposes, when needed, better alternatives that fulfill the same needs. Yet, planners should learn an array of new tools necessary to confront this diverse context in a truly democratic, equitable and fair way. These can be from cognitive, non-verbal knowledge and action tools, to learning to control ones emotions when dealing with people and develop one's own perceptive and emotional characteristics, showing planners that these matter as much as technical competence.

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