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ID 1561 | CONSULTANCY FIRMS AS INTERMEDIARIES: THEIR PERCEPTIONS ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT (WORK IN PROGRESS, PLEASE DO NOT CITE WITHOUT PERMISSION)

Everardus Michiel Stapper¹

¹University of Amsterdam

e.w.stapper@uva.nl

1 INTRODUCTION

Consultancy firms are key-players in urban development as they are knowledge depositories, and have knowledge of regulations, real estate development, and planning processes in the western world. They are intermediaries for public and private parties and can play a role in the exchange of policy ideas and views. The responsibility of translating community interests in informal and formal agreements in urban development is increasingly outsourced to consultants. As external agents, they can shortcut institutional boundaries and find new ways to engage with communities and other stakeholders in urban development projects (UDPs). This study explores the role of consultants in urban planning practices. Specifically, their role in how to involve communities in the planning processes and how to incorporate community interests in urban development. This study is part of a broader research, aimed to investigate community-linked incremental urban development and its ability to find smart solutions to address economic, social and environmental challenges. The following research question is stated: 'Which perceptions on community involvement in urban development do employees of consultancy firms have and how do they incorporate or forfeit community interests in urban development?'

To explore the role of consultants in urban development I have chosen for a single case-study. A single case study helps to explore in depth the perceptions of consultants on the involvement of community interests in urban development. I also explore the relationship of consultants with their clients. The relation between consultants and their clients is described ranging from the idea that consultants are neutral actors because they are hired by their clients to the idea that consultants are some kind of 'shadow government' or 'consultocracy' (Hodge and Bowman, 2006; Saint-Martin, 1998).

In the first section of the paper I summarize the existing literature on the role of consultants in urban development. In the second I describe the methodology I use to answer the research questions. Next, in the third section, I describe which agreements consultants can use to incorporate community interests. In the fourth section, I describe three possible perspectives consultants can have on involving communities in

urban development and in the fifth section I reflect on the relationship between the client and the consultant. We end the paper with a conclusion and suggestions for further research.

2 CONSULTANCY

Saint-Martin (1998) linked the growing tendency of involving consultants in producing and executing public policy to the increase of New Public Management (NPM) methods by public authorities. In his historical institutional analysis of the influence of consultants on public policy he describes how especially right-wing politicians aim for involving consultants in public policy, in order to reform bureaucratic processes in Canada, the UK and France. The involvement of consultants gave credibility to policies because they came from the private sector and were seen as more efficient (Saint-Martin, 1998). The increase of involvement of consultancy firms in public policy has led some scholars to argue that consultancy firms have become a new bureaucracy, they introduce the term 'consultocracy' or 'shadow government' (Grijzen, 2010; Hodge and Bowman, 2006; Saint-Martin, 1998). Hodge and Bowman (2006) describe consultancy firms as the sellers of solutions for complex policy problems for public authorities that the public authorities themselves cannot fix. This has resulted in a flourishing market for consultancy firms. For consultancy firms, there is a direct interest in keeping the market expanding; government reforms are business cases for consultancy firms. However, there is no direct link between increased spending and increased influence. Consultancy firms are benefiting from the demand for private sector solutions, but public authorities, in democratically governed nation states, have created the demand (Hodge and Bowman, 2006). McCann describes how public-private coalitions hire consultants in order to create urban plans. Often the consultants claim to use collaborative, inclusionary methods to create urban plans, but McCann shows in his single-case study of the new planning vision for Lexington how they reproduce existing power relationships (McCann, 2001). In a survey under planning officials and consultants, Loh and Norton (2014) explored why public parties hired consultants. They found that both consultants and their clients think that the benefits of outsourcing planning activities outweigh the disadvantages of higher costs and the lack of local knowledge (Loh and Norton, 2014).

Grijzen (2010) has investigated the involvement of consultants in regional spatial planning in the Netherlands. Her research argues that consultants are hired to solve problems of cooperation and coordination. She argues that governments struggle to find new ways of involving communities. Consultants can solve those problems because they have an outside position and can overcome bureaucratic obstacles.

This gives them the ability to design and implement policies with multiple stakeholders, issues, and regulations. Consultants can help to create new ways for communities to get involved and therefore enhance democratic legitimacy. However, they also can erode democratic legitimacy. Public policy can become inconsistent and ad-hoc, especially concerning the participation of citizens. Furthermore, partly through the 'revolving door' mechanism, where former public officials are hired as consultants, consultants can become too focused on the institutions and organizations they have connections with. This can create the problem that consultants are becoming indispensable for planning practices and public officials lose too much expertise and knowledge (Grijzen, 2010).

3 INCORPORATING COMMUNITY INTERESTS INTO UDPS

Consultants can use three types of agreements to incorporate community interests into UDPs. They can use informal agreements, formal agreements and contracts to incorporate community interests. Informal agreements are the least powerful agreement and contracts are the most powerful type of agreement. Informal agreements are agreements that are not formalized and mainly used to manage and improve relationships. An example of an informal agreement is an assurance to a citizen that his concerns will be taken into account in the new plan. Informal agreements are made because legal terms are not able to capture the relationship between stakeholders (Scheper, Oh, et al. 2014; van der Veen and Korthals Altes, 2011). Formal agreements are agreements that are written down but are not enforceable by court. An example of a formal agreement is a summary of the commitments that are made by public officials concerning community during a public hearing. Lloyd (2015) notes that increased use of legal agreements to manage governance networks is accompanied by the introduction of formal agreements that are not

enforceable by court. He defines those agreements as 'soft contractualism'. Soft contractualism is the way of managing relationships between stakeholders and guide cooperation. They mainly regulate communications between stakeholders, cooperation in policy development, the exchange of knowledge and they regulate the confidently of information within a project (Lloyd, 2015).

Contracts are the most powerful agreements in urban development, because they can force stakeholders to act. According to Van der Veen and Korthals Altes (2011), contracts in urban development has four functions. The first function regulates the exchange of goods and services. The second function concerns the procedural rules. The third function is the planning function, which contains the conditions for the realization of the project. The fourth function names the instruments for realizing public goals (van der Veen and Korthals Altes, 2011).

4 METHODOLOGY

In order to find out which perceptions employees of consultancy firms have on the involvement of communities in urban development, I will use the Q-method. Q-method is a method were respondents have to sort statements in a normal distribution ranging strongly disagree to strongly agree. After the statements are sorted, I perform a factor analysis to analyze the perspectives about community involvement there are within the consultancy firm. After the Q-sort I have asked the employees questions in a semistructured interview. The semi-structured interview is used to reflect on the sorting of the statements.

Furthermore, I asked questions concerning how the employees engage with communities and how the client influences the relationship between the employee and the community.

Q-methodology is designed to identify clusters of perceptions. The method is a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The Q-method consists of six phases. First, a research question is stated. Second a broad spectrum of statements about the research question is created. The statements are based upon quotes from a range of sources and perspectives. Third, a sample is taken out the spectrum of statements that will function as the Q-sample. The sample should represent diverse opinions and a broad range of concepts. The fourth step requires a respondent to rank the Q-sample. Each statement has to be arranged in a normalized distribution ranging of nine categories ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This step reveals the subjectivity of the respondent because the respondent controls the ranking of the statements. The fifth step is to correlate the sorted Q samples using a factor analysis. The sixth step is interpreting the data (Cuppen, Bosch-Rekvelde, et al. 2015; Robbins and Krueger, 2000).

Originally the q methodology was created in order to erase bias and design an objective method to measure subjectivity. However, the researcher has six moments in which it can decisively influence the research questions (Kampen and Tamás, 2013). Therefore, it is important to not claim the absence of the researcher but to make explicit when the researcher is a presence and to make the research process transparent (Robbins and Krueger, 2000).

The Q-sample of this study consists of six statements about making informal, formal and legal agreements with communities in urban development. Of those six statements, three statements are positive about using informal, formal or legal agreements in order to incorporate community interests and three statements are negative about using informal, formal or contracts in order to incorporate community interests. Five statements cover opinions about how and when communities should be involved in urban development. This will define how the consultant think about how and when communities should be involved in urban development. Twelve statements follow about the political, social and economic utility of community involvement, six of those statements are negative and six are positive. Those statements measure why the consultant find community involvement in urban development important or not. Then sixteen statements follow about the role of communities, civil society organizations, the private sector and public authorities in incorporating community interests in urban development, eight of those statements are negative and eight are positive (see table 1). Those statements are based on the typical stakeholders in UDPs (Janssen-Jansen, and Van der Veen, 2016).

Statements	Neutral:	Positive:	Negative:
Using informal agreements, formal agreements and contracts		3	3
Process of community involvement	5		
Political aim of community involvement		2	2
Economic aim of community involvement		2	2
Social aim of community involvement		2	2
Role of public parties in involving communities in UDPs		2	2
Role of market parties in involving communities in UDPs		2	2
Role of NGOs in involving communities in UDPs		2	2
Role of citizens in involving communities in UDPs		2	2
N	5	17	17

Table 1: Categories of statements used in the Q-sort (authors)

Employees of AGA were asked to sort the Q-sample. The first eight employees that sorted the Q-sample were selected by senior employees of AGA. They are selected because they work in different departments of AGA, what helps to get a broad range of views on community involvement. I have used snowball sampling to perform the next three Q-sorts. During the ranking of the statements, the employees have been asked to articulate their choices by thinking out loud. This was helpful by analyzing the outcomes of the research.

5 FACTOR ANALYSIS

The factor analysis showed that there are three factors with an eigenvalue higher than one. Based on convention, only factors with eigenvalues greater than or equal to one are considered significant (Raje, 2007). Next, I performed a Varimax rotation to identify the three significant factors. The standard error for a factor loading is calculated by the expression $1/\sqrt{N}$, multiplied with 2.58(SE). This gives the indication of a meaningful relationship between the participants Q-sort and the factor type (Raje, 2007). Thus, in this research, loadings of or more than 0.41 are significant at the level 0,01. Ten of the eleven Q-sorts were loaded within the three factors (see table 1). Respondent 5 loaded in both factor 1 and factor 3 and is therefore excluded from this study. Here I describe the three perspectives that resulted from our Q analysis.

Respondent:	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1	0.70x		
2	0.57x		
3	0.66x		
4			0.73x
5			0.55
6		0.69x	
7			0.70x
8		0.74x	
9	0.70x		
10		0.64x	
11			0.77x
% expl. Var.	22	17	19

Table 2: Loadings Q-sort in factor types (authors)

5.1 CITIZEN EMPOWERERS

The respondents of this factor identify strongly with the statements 38 and 39, which state that the bureaucracy of the government obstructs the involvement of citizens in UDPs and that civil servants perceive protesting citizens as complainers. The respondents that identify with this perspective are clearly negative about the government. In interviews, they tell that the bureaucratic procedures, between civil servants and citizens and within the government itself, of civil servants temper the involvement of citizens. The perspective also agreed, although to a lesser extent, to statements 16, 17 and 25. Those statements note that involving citizens in UDPs is beneficial for social cohesion, that involving citizens in UDPs is an adequate instrument to fight spatial inequalities and that the involvement of citizens in UDPs is necessary as counter force for civil servants and the private sector. Again, those statements show a negative perspective on the government. However, it also shows that the respondents that identify with this perspective think that involving citizens in UDPs will have an important impact on society. In the interviews, they put emphasis on the knowledge citizens have about the area of an UDP. Furthermore, they believe that citizens have energy and good ideas to improve UDPs.

The respondents strongly disagree with the statements 13 and 37, which state that citizens have enough legal and political means to influence policy and that civil servants look after everybody's interests. Again, a statement that is negative about the government and a statement that points out that new legal and political tools are necessary to let citizens influence policy. One consultant noted that citizens do not have enough insight in how to influence legal and political procedures. According to the consultant are those procedures often too slow and technocratic for citizens.

To a lesser extend the perspective also disagreed with statements 22, 26 and 28 which state that it is more important that an UDP is beneficial for economic development than that the interests of citizens are safeguarded, the reason to not involve citizens in UDPs is that do not have sufficient knowledge and expertise to be valuable contribution to a project and that the involvement of citizens in UDPs only succeeds through the help of NGOs. This shows that the consultants that identify with this perspective are positive on the role of citizens in urban development and are convinced that the interest of citizens should be decisive in an UDP. Often the consultants note that citizens the local knowledge of citizens is very valuable for UDPs.

I label this perspective the citizen empowerers, because the respondents that identify with this perspective are very critical on the role of the government but strongly belief that if citizens can improve UDPs. They also think that if citizens play a significant role in the UDP, it will benefit social cohesion and challenge inequalities. The following quote is a good example of the logic of a 'citizen empowering consultant':

"I think that the knowledge and expertise resides with citizens instead of on the other side of the table. People know a lot, people work, they are not stupid. I really think it is ridiculous if you think like that. It is not respectful towards the citizens. They know the

environment and make use of it. The designs only become more beautiful. [respondent 3, 2016]”

5.2 PROFESSIONALISTS

The respondents of the second factor identify strongly with statements 18 and 27. The statements note that if citizens can get involved in an UDP only loud citizens participate and that citizens in UDPs only focus on their own private interests. This respondents that identify with this perspective are therefore negative on the role of citizens in UDPs. The consultants argue in the interviews that it often costs much time and money to let citizens participate, which is not necessarily a bad thing. When citizens participate they often struggle to see the benefits of the UDP for the broader community.

To a lesser extent this perspective agreed with statements 1, 6 and 15, stating that it is important to write agreements with citizens down, conflicts in UDPs often emerge because it is not thought through how agreements with citizens are made and the involvement of citizens make it easier to solve political problems. The high scores of those statements put emphasis on the necessity of making clear agreements with citizens and that they can solve political problems. The consultants state that when clear agreements are made with citizens, political problems can be avoided.

The respondents strongly disagree with statements 4 and 34 which state that new legal instruments are needed to involve citizens in UDPs and that the government listens more to the private sector than to citizens. The respondents that identify with this perspective note that citizens already have much legal possibilities to get involved in the urban development process and that therefore both public and private parties have to listen to the concerns of citizens.

They also disagree, although to a lesser extent, to statements 20, 28 and 30. Those statements note that citizens are involved in UDPs to hide budget cuts, that the involvement of citizens in UDPs only succeeds through the help of NGO and that the position of citizens is voiced the best by NGOs. The consultants note that often participation processes are expansive and that NGOs are mostly focused on the interest they represent and not necessarily with the interest of citizens.

I label the consultants that identify strongly with this perspective the professionalists. I have chosen for the term professionalists because they believe that much conflict within UDPs comes from not thinking through well enough how agreements are made with citizens. They are also note that if citizens have too much influence, it would take too much time to develop a project. The following quote is representative for the logic of the professionalist consultant:

“As long as you know what their interest are, and if you know their struggles, than you can give them the feeling that they are being heard. You cannot develop a project that everybody likes, that is just not possible. Than you have to go into another trajectory [if citizens obstruct an UDP], legal frameworks are available. We live in the Netherlands luckily, where everything is neatly organized, if you identify the possible threats and plan the process well. [respondent 8, 2017]”

5.3 BALANCERS

The respondents of the third factor strongly agree with statements 18 and 25. Those statements reflect that that if citizens can get involved in an UDP only loud citizens participate and that the involvement of citizens in UDPs is necessary as counter force for civil servants and the private sector. The respondents that identify with this perspective, note the importance of involving citizens, but acknowledging that they do not reach every population group. One consultant noted that it is very hard to reach elderly people, lower educated people or people with a minority background.

To a lesser extent, they agree with statements 1, 5 and 32 noting that that it is important to write agreements with citizens down, that legal agreements scare citizens and that the private sector sees citizens as a way of doing market research. The consultants that identify with this perspective note that writing agreements down has symbolic importance. This happens mostly in summaries of public hearings

and is important because it symbolizes that the concerns of citizens are taken into account. The consultants noted that the private sector is mainly driven by making profit and therefore is not very interested in giving citizens influence.

The respondents strongly disagree with statements 11 and 13. Those statements note that citizens should have to feeling that they are involved but should not have real influence, that citizens have enough legal and politics means to influence policy. One of the consultants that identify with this perspective has written a book on how he was not taken seriously as a citizen when a new station was built near his home. He stated that everybody that worked in urban development should participate once in a whole urban development process that learn how important it is to take citizens seriously. Another consultant described how political and legal instruments are mostly used by politicians, civil servants and the private sector but not by citizens.

They disagree to a lesser extent to statements 23, 26 and 35. Those statements express that the involvement of citizens in UDPs saves money and time, that the reason to not involve citizens in UDPs is that do not have sufficient knowledge and expertise to be valuable contribution to a project and that the private sector listens better to citizens than the government. The consultants that identify with this perspective explain in interviews that the participation process for citizens often does not save time or money but that it is necessary because the citizens have local knowledge about the area. They also point out that every stakeholder has his strengths and weaknesses.

I classified this perspective as the balancers. They are looking for a new balance between the community and other stakeholders. I have chosen for this definition because the consultants argue that the involvement in UDPs can be beneficial but that the interest of the citizens should be weighed against the interests of other stakeholders. The following quote reflects the logic of a balancer-consultant:

“The private sector wants to reduce costs as much of possible. The government has the role to balance between both sides [private sector and citizens], but they also have to deal with politicians and maybe NGOs and they have to deal with many more interests than only the interests of the triangle [of citizens, private sector and government]. And citizens often don’t look beyond their own interest. They do not really think about the rest. This can change, if you organize the process well and focus on the interests of other stakeholders, but at first instance they do not think beyond their own interest. [respondent 4, 2016]”

5.4 REFLECTION ON VARIATION OF THE Q-SORT

Giving an explanation for the question why consultants identify with a certain factor type is based on this research difficult. The working experience, departments and functions are quite spread across the different factor types (see table 2). However, the two community managers working in the spatial planning department are both citizen empowers. This makes sense because their job is to involve communities in urban development. This could suggest that frontline workers tend to be more often citizen empowers. However, more research is needed to explain the variation of factor types within the consultancy firm.

Respondent:	Factor type:	Working for Antea in years:	Working experience before Antea:	Department:	Function:
1	Citizen Empowerers	27	No	Infrastructure	Project manager
2	Citizen Empowerers	11	Public party	Water & environment	Environmental specialist
3	Citizen Empowerers	6,5	Market party	Spatial planning	Community manager
9	Citizen Empowerers	11	No	Spatial planning	Community manager
6	Institutionalists	14	Public party	Real estate & law	Real estate /legal adviser
8	Institutionalists	24	No	Architecture	Architect
10	Institutionalists	11	Public party	Planning	Project manager
4	Balancers	1,5	Public party	Real estate & law	Real estate/legal adviser
7	Balancers	27,5	No	Spatial planning	Project manager
11	Balancers	6	Market party	Contracts	Real estate/legal adviser

Table 3: factor types with department and function of the respondents (authors)

6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CLIENT AND THE CONSULTANT

The relation between consultants and their clients is described ranging from neutral actors to a shadow government (Grijzen, 2010; Hodge and Bowman, 2006; Saint-Martin, 1998). In the interviews, I asked the consultants why clients hired them and how they disagreed with clients on the topic of involving communities in urban development. The consultants told that they were mostly hired because of their expert knowledge. The expert knowledge can be divided in two types of knowledge, knowing how to get things done and knowing certain skills. Two consultants also mentioned that they are sometimes hired because of trust issues between communities and public authorities. The consultants are then presented as mediators between all the stakeholders. One of the consultants nuanced their ability to be seen as neutral actors, because could give them the benefit of the doubt, but that they were still seen as intermediaries of public authorities or the private sector.

When inquired how the consultants disagreed with the clients the answered mostly with advice. They present alternatives to the preferences of the client and they can strongly urge to choose for an alternative. But in the end the decision is the decision of the client. When asked to give examples of situations where the consultants disagreed with the clients, they often gave examples where they disagreed with politicians. One consultants described a situation that an alderman ignored the outcome of a participation process and the consultant had to go with the decision of the consultant. However, the consultant actively reached out to citizens to point to their rights and how they could legally object against the decision of the alderman. Thus, based on their own perception, consultants, not surprisingly, do not seem themselves as part of a shadow government. This does not mean that they are neutral actors, because they have their own experience, skills and knowledge. Their experience, skills and knowledge shapes the way they give advice to their clients. Giving good advice is the essence of the consultant's job, and a good adviser also gives advice that is contrary to the client's opinions. However, in the end, the consultants will follow the decision of the client.

7 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest that at least three perspectives on the involvement of communities in UDPs exist in the consultancy firm Antea. The variation of perspectives within one consultancy firm implies that consultants are not neutral actors, but that they have their own experience and beliefs that will shape their interactions with communities. Furthermore, the perspectives show that the consultants have very different attitudes towards the government and their relation with communities.

The citizen empowerers are consultants that are the most passionate about incorporating community interests. They argue that new legal and political instruments are needed to cater for the involvement of enthusiastic citizens in UDPs. Contrary to the citizen empowerers, the institutionalists are more skeptical about the involvement of citizens in UDPs. They argue that citizens are mostly focused on their own private interests and that it is very important to make clear agreements, based upon existing procedures, with citizens to prevent conflict in UDPs. The balancers are consultants that note that it is very important to incorporate community interests, but that the group of citizens that participate lacks diversity and that they tend to be focused on their own interest. Agreements should be written down, but legal obligations for citizens are too farfetched.

8 DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The limit of this research is that it is a single-case study of an engineering- and consultancy firm. More research is needed on if this or other variations exist in other types of consultancy firms. Furthermore, observations of consultants that cooperate with citizens is needed to validate the interviews with the consultants. Next, an international comparative study could explore whether the variation is typically Dutch or that there is an international pattern.

With the limits of this research in mind, the findings of this study suggest consultants have quite different perceptions on involving communities in urban development. More research on this topic is needed, and therefore I propose three propositions that should be explored further. The first proposition states that citizen empowerers are more successful in incorporating community interests in urban development than professionalists and balancers. Citizen empowerers could benefit from their positive perception of citizens, but this could also mean that they have blind spots concerning the real needs of communities.

The second proposition that could be explored is the proposition that balancers are more successful in incorporating community interests because they acknowledge that not every population group is reached in their efforts to involve communities. Therefore, they are more inclined to find new ways to involve communities.

Based on the q-sorts and the interviews, the proposition that the interests of communities weigh less than the interests of other stakeholders could also be explored. Most consultants mentioned that in the end the interest of communities are taken into account when possible, but that community interests are not the dominant concern in their work.

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ID 1595 | FLEXIBILITY IN URBAN RENEWAL PRACTICES: THE CASE OF TURKEY

Sezen Tarakci¹; Sevgiye Sence Turk²

¹Istanbul Arel University; ²Istanbul Technical University
sezentarakci@arel.edu.tr ; turkss@itu.edu.tr

ABSTRACT: In Turkey, urban planning is provided through the regulatory planning system. However, significant changes in the planning system since 2000 have triggered a shift in the planning system which is defined as regulatory in theory, towards a flexible planning system in practice. A flexible system is also evident in urban renewal practices. Flexibility in urban renewal implementations occurs in two different ways. Firstly, urban renewal practices are excluded from the regulatory planning system due to a project-led approach instead of a plan-led approach. Urban renewal practices are applied in accordance with special laws that have been in effect since 2004. These special laws bypass the hierarchy that exists within the regulatory planning system. Moreover, development rights, which are prepared in accordance with the regulatory planning system, expire once an area is declared an urban renewal area. This situation enables a great deal of flexibility in urban renewal practices, in sense of giving of new development rights. Secondly, the legal regulations regarding urban renewal differ from the legal tools of the regulatory planning system in that the former give both the central and local administrations discretionary power on various issues, such as the identification of the renewal area or the completion of the implementation.

KEYWORDS: Flexibility, regulatory planning, urban renewal, practices, Turkey

1 INTRODUCTION

Cities are affected and governed by various internal and external factors, such as processes of capital accumulation in the country, along with efforts for institutionalisation this brings about, in addition to the demands of their administrators. Differences in the process of capital accumulation between countries create differences in terms of not only opportunities, but also of problems. This difference also varies