A Methodological Framework for Assessing the Effectiveness of the State in Collaborative Planning

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ABSTRACT

Collaboration between different urban actors including in spatial planning facilitates mobilization of resources and ownership. It enables, among other things, integration of policy decisions and coordination of action. It becomes even more critical in developing countries where resource limitation is debilitating. Unfortunately, such collaboration is not always forthcoming or is limited at best where it is needed the most. The rhetoric in collaborative planning forwards normative prescriptions based on ideal situations that may not be present under all contextual settings. It does not provide clear insight into what may inhibit collaborative action. Nor does it offer instruments for how to measure the degree of collaboration of a planning exercise or its implementation.

The research aims to contribute to the discussion on collaborative planning by presenting a methodological framework for assessing a collaborative exercise. It adapts a different analytical perspective that focuses on the effectiveness of the state within the framework of formulating and implementing public spatial policies in collaboration with others. The article has three parts- *Introduction* positions collaborative planning within 'the communicative turn', highlights some of its normative prescriptions and why it is not always possible to achieve everywhere. Planning being a public domain, the state is the most important institution with great power of influence and thus, its effectiveness facilitates or hinders collaborative action. The second part discusses *the constructs under State Effectiveness*. The final part presents the *Methodological Framework* for assessing the effectiveness of the state in collaborative planning.

Keywords: collaborative planning, assessing state effectiveness, state society relations

1. Introduction

Planning is the formulation, content and implementation of spatial public policies (Yiftachel, 1998). Mainstream planning theories have almost always considered planning as a technical and/or political tool to reform society or create equitable cities. For Healey, planning is 'a democratic enterprise aimed at social justice and environmental sustainability.' (Healey, 1992:233) Fainstein on the other hand stresses the significance of planning outcome, sometimes even at the cost of the process, which according to her should be to create a just city (Fainstein, 2005). However, in addition to its reformist nature as an agent of positive change, planning can also serve as mechanism for social control, including via its procedural dimension. Yiftachel argues that the 'regressive and oppressive' role that planning can have along different cleavages - what he calls its 'dark side'- is often neglected (Yiftachel, 1998). On the other hand, Huxley contends that it is impossible to completely disentangle reform and social control in planning action since the former is "...inescapably enmeshed in control and normalisation." (Huxley, 2002:146)

Evolved out of the 'communicative turn' (for instance, see Healey 1992,1998; Huxley and Yiftachel 2000), collaborative planning is concerned with the transformative influence of the process over existing institutions (structure and processes) and power relations, which also differentiates it from other strands within the 'communication turn' (Tewdwr -Jones and