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The great planning game

Exploring the variety of values and worldviews in planning

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the Great Planning Game

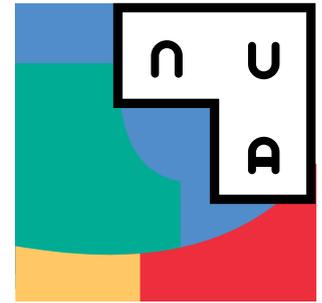
Exploring the variety of values
and worldviews
in planning

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The Great Plannig Game

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IMPLEMENTING
THE NEW
URBAN AGENDA

A GAME ELABORATED BY ROBERTO ROCCO AND
REMON ROOIJ BASED ON KARINA SEHESTED'S:

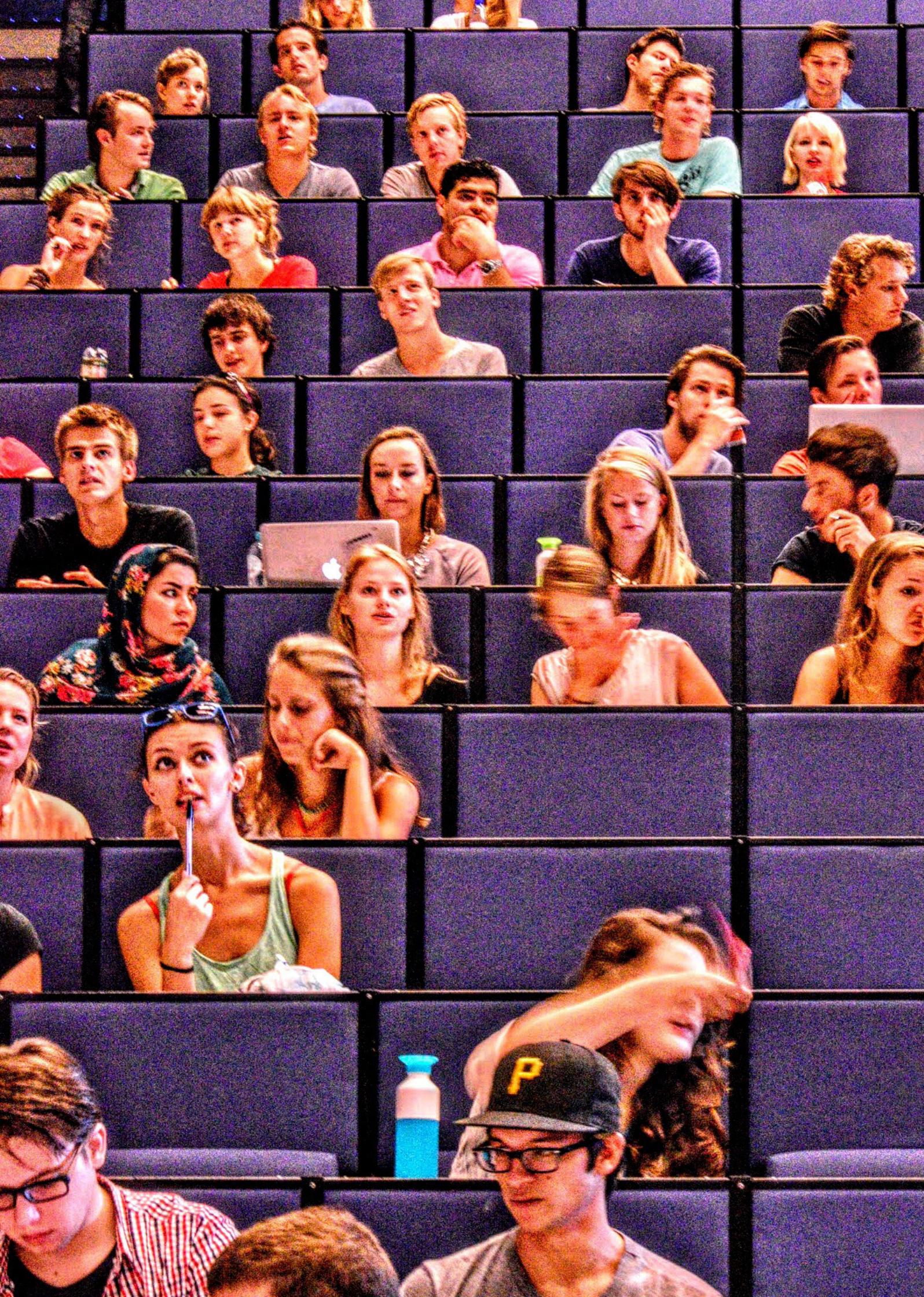
*SEHESTED, K. (2009). URBAN PLANNERS AS
NETWORK MANAGERS AND METAGOVERNORS.
PLANNING THEORY AND PRACTICE, 10(2), 245-
263.*

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The Great Planning Game

Exploring the variety of values and worldviews in planning

TEXT BY ROBERTO ROCCO

This game explores different styles of spatial planning and different “types” of planners. The objective of this game is to make planning student sensitive to the variety of planning styles around the world. The types of planners described here (rather humorously) are based on the meticulous research conducted by Karina Sehested from the University of Copenhagen. While Sehested based her research on Danish municipal planning departments, we have extrapolated her results to include types not described in her paper. We did so inspired by Nadin and Stead’s text “European Spatial Planning Systems” (2008), in which the authors explore different styles of planning in Europe. Based on these two texts, we came up with a set of “ideal types” of planners. These ideal types obviously might not exist in their “pure form” in reality, but describe, we believe, a variety of planning attitudes and planning positions students might encounter in the workplace.

We believe it is urgent to discuss values associated with planning and planners. While personal values might certainly influence how one acts as a planner, we believe that the style of planning prevalent in each country influences the values and the behaviour of planners, ultimately influencing the outcomes of planning actions.

But why is it important to discuss planning values explicitly? We feel that planning and design schools around the world have largely failed to include a discussion on values and societal attitudes in their curriculums. In doing so, they overlook an important part of planning education, one which should take a central place: what is planning for? What are its main

objectives and core values? And what are the ethics of the planning profession? Clearly, planning is a politically charged activity, and those who claim that planners should be neutral in political struggles clearly overlook the fact that (urban) space is eminently political, since (urban) space is scarce and contested, and the services and amenities which make our cities habitable are not always available to all.

Planning is a political activity, because it needs to deal with distribution, rights, obligations, power imbalances and democracy (and lack thereof). This does not mean that planners and designers should ignore their technical education and their specific training. On the contrary, good urban planning and design are made based on evidence, and technology plays an important role in how space is negotiated. Planners and designers should strive to deliver just outcomes that take the needs and wishes of a multitude of stakeholders into account. Therefore, based on an understanding of the complexity of social interactions and claims over space, we believe that knowledge production must be shared, open, democratic and diverse in order to reflect this complexity. Planners and designers are not all-knowing, and they ultimately must rely on participation of some kind to include the complexity of multiple stakeholders with conflicting wishes, and to give a voice to stakeholders who are either silent or not present in the planning process (disadvantaged groups, but also nature and future generations) (see figure 1). While this seems to be an emerging paradigm in planning and design, the truth is that old and new paradigms coexist in the real world.

But if we accept that planning is a political activity, we are left with the question of what is planning for. At TU Delft, we are exploring the notion of public goods, because it helps us define objectives for planning and design. It is worthy to remind the reader what public goods imply. Public goods are, by definition, non-excludable and non-rivalrous. By 'non-excludable', we mean that no-one can be 'excluded' from consuming a public good, therefore it must be free at the point of consumption, or its access must be guaranteed. By non-rivalrous, we mean that the consumption of a public good does not reduce its availability. This is a complex notion to grasp, but let's take 'safety' as an example. Many economists take safety as the ultimate example of public good. Safety is a state created by many actions, regulations and infrastructures, which in themselves must be coordinated and regulated (most often by the State) and paid for (most often through taxes). Once the state of safety exists, everyone living in that state can enjoy it and while enjoying it, once doesn't reduce its availability to others.

The notion of public goods, however complicated, is extremely useful for urban planners and designers, as it allows them to formulate visions, strategies and projects that produce and deliver spatial justice to all. But to facilitate the production of public goods, we must understand the actions and the values of different types of planners. Spatial Justice is not a guiding paradigm for all. For many planners, efficiency is the ultimate goal. For others, the production of increasing returns is the goal. For others yet, the preservation of the environment is the ultimate goal. Here we argue that, while

those goals may be sufficient in themselves, according to one's own values, they still do not express the ultimate achievement of spatial planning and design, which we argue is to produce public goods, accessible to all. This brings us to the notion of publicness. While spatial planners and designers might be employed by either the public sector, the private sector or civil society, their actions must benefit society. Even someone employed by a company to plan or design a private development must keep the notion of publicness in mind, insofar the private development in question should avoid negative externalities and should produce benefits that go beyond its own borders.

For this reason, it is important to discuss the worldviews of different styles of planning, what core values they harbour and what objectives they pursue, so students can make informed decisions about professional paths to take.

GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES & COMMUNITIES #SDG11

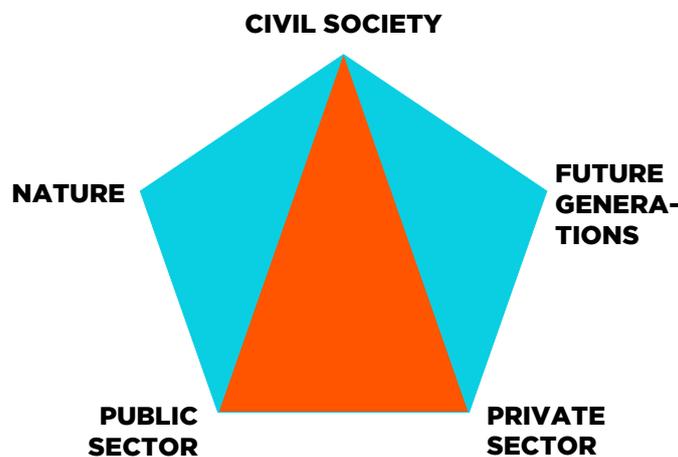


Fig 1. A model of governance that includes the three main societal groups (public sector, private sector and civic society), and includes 'nature' and 'future generations' as stakeholders.

References

Nadin, V., & Stead, D. (2008). European Spatial Planning Systems, Social Models and Learning. *disP: The Planning Review*, 44(172), 35-47.

Sehested, K. (2009). Urban Planners as Network Managers and Metagovernors. *Planning Theory and Practice*, 10(2), 245-263.

The Game

A. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

AT THE END OF THIS GAME YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

1. DESCRIBE THE DIFFERENT ROLES OF PLANNERS IN CONTEMPORARY STRATEGIC PLANNING,
2. REFLECT AND DISCUSS THE DIFFERENT VALUES ATTACHED TO DIFFERENT ROLES OF PLANNERS,
3. REFLECT ON TOOLS YOU MIGHT USE WHILE PERFORMING THOSE ROLES,
4. DEBATE YOUR IDEAS CONCERNING VALUES FOR PLANNING AND DESIGN

B. ORGANISATION:

ESTIMATE TIME: 1H30 HOURS

STUDENTS MUST BE DIVIDED IN GROUPS OF 3 OR MORE.

YOU WILL RECEIVE 7 CARDS WITH DESCRIPTIONS OF TYPICAL PLANNING ROLES (OR TYPICAL PLANNERS), DERIVED FROM SEHESTED 2010. THESE ARE DESCRIPTIONS OF TYPES OF PLANNERS THAT REALLY EXIST, BUT OF COURSE THEY DON'T EXIST AS 'PURE TYPES'. PEOPLE TRANSIT BETWEEN DIFFERENT TYPES OR HAVE A COMBINATION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS DESCRIBED.

YOU NEED TO CHOOSE WHICH OF THE TYPICAL ROLES YOU AS A GROUP WANT TO PERFORM DURING THE EXERCISE.

ONCE YOU HAVE CHOSEN ONE ROLE (OR A COMBINATION OF TWO), YOU WILL NEED TO:

1. DEFINE THE PLANNING TASK
2. DEFINE MAIN KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND VALUES NECESSARY TO FULFIL THE TASK
3. SUGGEST A HYPOTHETICAL STRUC-

TURE OF ACTORS POSSIBLY INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING TASK

4. SUGGEST ONE TOOL TO DEAL WITH A HYPOTHETICAL ACTOR NETWORK INVOLVED
5. SUGGEST AT WHICH POINT AND WHERE THIS TOOL WOULD BE USED
6. SUGGEST AN ANSWER FOR THE PROBLEM PRESENTED

C. RULES:

ALL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP MUST BE ACTIVE SPEAKERS

ALL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP NEED TO HAVE ENOUGH TIME AND OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS AND EXPLAIN THEIR POSITIONS

EACH GROUP NEEDS TO FIND REASONABLE CONSENSUS FOR DECISIONS TAKEN

THE ACTIVITY NEEDS TO BE CONDUCTED WITH RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT POSITIONS AND OPINIONS

EACH GROUP WILL BE ALLOCATED ONLY 5 MINUTES TO EXPLAIN THEIR POSITION IN THE END.



the Great Planning Game

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Planning Office & Research Unit
Urban Design Planning and Strategic Transport

Organized by
Planning Office
University of Cambridge

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& the Planning Institute of Great Britain



... planner

the advocacy planner

I am an advocacy planner. You might wonder what that means, but let's just say that my main objective is to defend the interest of those who don't have a voice in urban development. We live in an unfair world. Many groups don't have a voice in urban development (women, minorities, migrants, even children are poorly represented!). Resources are not fairly distributed. As a planning professional, it is my moral duty to fight for those who have the least, and to guaranty that they will get a fair share of the fruits of development, either by allocating resources to the areas where these people live or by finding ways to redistribute the gains. I do that by applying several new tools at my disposal, like progressive taxation or taxation of unproductive land. I accept the market society of course, but there are ways to regulate the market and to redistribute profit in a fair way. After all, when investors realise gains in a certain location they are generally benefitting from infrastructures built with tax money, and all the positive externalities created by society and especially by all those around them

the communicative planner

I believe in participation. Democracy is the most important tool for real progress, because real progress IS democracy. You might wonder what that means. Let's say that by encouraging people to participate in decision-making, I widen the possibility of those people to share the gains of urban development. But most importantly, along the way they will acquire the knowledge and the tools to take a stronger stance in urban development and will be able to articulate solutions that benefit all. This is an important aspect of my profession and it is called democracy building. The process is as important as the final outcomes. Of course, in order to do all this, I must have great communication skills. I need to communicate complex ideas to people who have had no training. But don't be fooled: their knowledge is as important as the knowledge of professionals and I need to be able to help them articulate it. On the other hand, I also need to facilitate communication that will allow consensus building among different stakeholders with very disparate interests.

the manager planner

I am a manager planner. I feel very close to my colleagues who call themselves "strategists". I believe it is all about having an effective strategy for urban development. But we will not have effective strategies if we cannot manage our relationship with investors and the private sector in general. We cannot deny that money is an essential factor: nothing can be achieved without investment. Who will pay for this, is generally my first question. But let's not forget that we are acting in benefit of the public. In order to do so, we need to listen to several actors, in an organised way, making use of the democratic instruments we have at our disposal. It is important that we keep public participation, but we need to manage it in a way that allows us to continue to be efficient. Too much participation can be disruptive and we don't have that much time.

the market planner

I like to call myself a market planner. It is not so much that I am working FOR the market. Rather, I am trying to realise projects within the sphere of economic opportunity, and in order to do that, I need to engage with private actors. I am familiar with the logic of business. I feel the public needs to accept co-responsibility for the city's development and it is my responsibility to create close relationships between the parties with the necessary resources in order to promote development. But this is done in the realm of democracy, with the legal tools at our disposal. In order to make the most of these tools, I need to articulate the contacts between decision makers and investors. I also need to propose new tools with which investors can participate in urban development in a fair way. Of course citizen participation is important, but it is crucial to manage this participation in order to avoid standstills.

the process planner

I like to call myself a process planner. This means that my main task is to create democratic processes that can integrate all relevant actors in order to make common decisions regarding the right kind of urban development. I feel that all affected parties should be heard or integrated in the process before decisions are made. Is this time consuming? Of course it is, but this is the price of true democracy. Besides, by doing that I create ownership of decisions and decrease the prospect of our actions being contested. My main skills are communication and networking. Of course I need to be a good communicator if I want to integrate non-professional actors in the planning process. I am something between a pedagogue and a process consultant. As a good teacher, I rely on narratives to engage all kinds of actors, not only professional ones, and certainly not only investors. I want to involve the common citizen in decision-making. My advocacy planner friends and I work quite well together.

the strategic planner

I am a strategic planner. My objective is to develop strategies that will benefit all, but I am aware that elected politicians are the legitimate representatives of the people. This is why I work hard to seduce them with engaging visions and appealing scenarios, to guide their actions. I think planners must appeal to other professionals working with the city in order to formulate these visions. But sometimes I feel these professionals are not very practical. We need to engage investors as well, and the best way to do this is to offer investors opportunities via large urban projects. I find that large urban projects are the best tool to mobilise political and economic action. They are also an effective way to intervene in the spatial configuration of a city. These projects compose spatial strategies, with which we will achieve agreed goals.

the traditional planner

I am an old-school planner. I was trained to do my job and therefore I believe I am fully capacitated to take the right decisions. I believe in the power of the government to make people's lives better. In order to achieve that, comprehensive planning is the best tool we have at our disposal.

By planning carefully and in a detailed way, we will achieve good results for all. I like the traditional ways of organising the work. I am the chief planner; therefore I expect my subordinates will listen to my instructions. We strive for the general good and sometimes I have the feeling we are more concerned about the public than the elected members of our government. Our adversaries are greedy investors who would ruin our city with huge shopping centres and weird ideas about mixed housing.



1. FIRST STEP:

Write down the objectives of your regional strategy (Q3). What does your strategy aim to achieve?

(Don't forget to mention the place and the specific issues you want to tackle)

2. SECOND STEP:

From the cards provided to you, choose the planning role that better expresses the position and understanding of the group about your role as planners and designers.

THEN

Choose a "second best" (another role that the group also finds relevant).

Write down the 'types of planners' you chose:

3. STEP:

What are the drivers and hampers of development in the region? What are challenges and opportunities?

(mini SWOT)

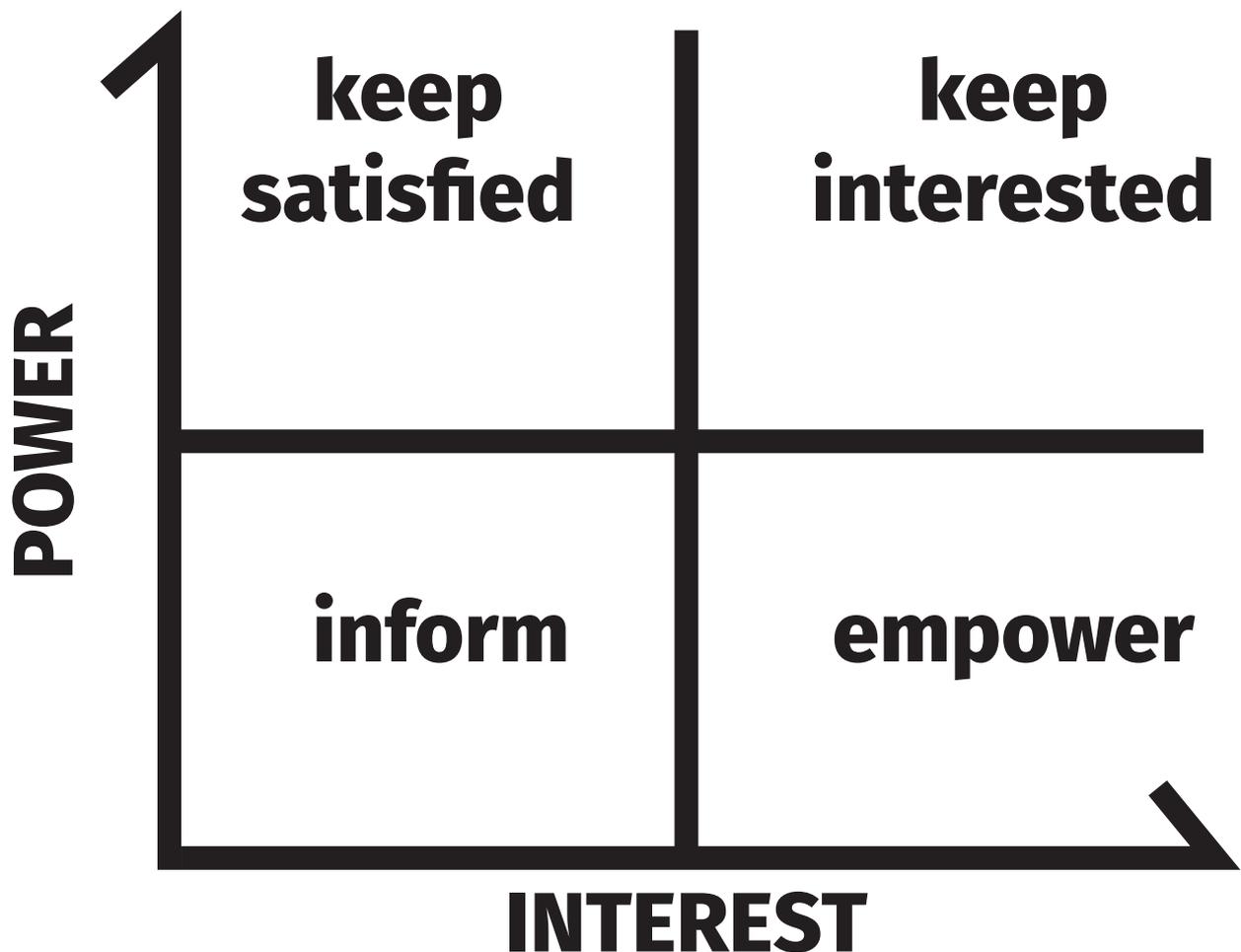


4. STEP:

Make a list of 3 PROJECTS and/or POLICY priorities for the region, relevant to your spatial strategy, based solely on the values of your 'type' of planner. Remember this is a role playing game!

5. STEP:

Map the stakeholders according to the power/interest matrix below. Who is potentially against those project priorities? Who is favourable? Who benefits? Who loses?



6. STEP: Let's debate!

Write down your project and/or policy priorities and hand them down to the teacher. Present these priorities to the other groups. Do they agree with them? Can you defend your ideas and fundament them with evidence? In other words, are they evidence based? Whose interests do they cater for? Whose interests do they contradict?

THE GREAT PLANNING GAME

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