

# PARTICIPATORY SPATIAL PLANNING

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The presentation discusses the theoretical framework for participatory spatial planning, with a special focus on the role-playing technique. It emphasizes the importance of participatory localism and the global dimension of participatory planning. Participatory localism refers to the participation of actors in urban planning, who are usually more focused on local actions that enable the tracking of personal and institutional interests. This, in turn, enables the accountability of elected leaders and decision-making organizations. However, in an era of a globally interdependent world, the solely local cannot be the primary focus of civil society organizations and democratic planning action. Therefore, there is a need to use mechanisms of effective participatory practice that work beyond neighborhoods, cities, and even national borders.

Furthermore, international documents and declarations that support participatory spatial planning are presented, including the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Aarhus Convention, UN-Habitat activities, and the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). UNECE strives to promote pan-European economic integration. The Aarhus Convention establishes a number of public rights regarding environmental information, participation in decision-making, and access to legal protection. UN-Habitat promotes urbanization as a positive transformative force for people and communities, especially by reducing inequality, discrimination, and poverty. IAP2, on the other hand, strives to advance and expand the practice of public participation worldwide.

The historical context of participatory planning, from the 1960s to the present day, is outlined, along with key milestones and evolving approaches. In the 1960s, rapid industrialization and the growing role of experts emphasized the prevalence of scientific knowledge. In the 1970s, the first major global economic crises prompted the search for alternatives and highlighted the need to give voice to those who do not have it. During this period, the first more extensive attempts at participatory approaches began. In the 1980s, the value of local knowledge began to be recognized, and non-governmental organizations sought alternatives to top-down development. In the 1990s and later, participation became imperative, with the emphasis shifting from top-down to bottom-up.

The goals, opportunities, challenges and risks of participatory spatial planning are discussed, as well as the conditions for a successful participatory process. The goals of participatory spatial planning can vary among different stakeholder groups, including experts, administration, residents, and investors. The participatory approach offers opportunities to promote dialogue and cooperation among various stakeholders, including the creation of an inclusive and multidimensional vision that reflects the context and the strengthening of the social dimension, such as empowerment and social inclusion. However, there are also challenges, such as identifying key stakeholders, meaningfully involving stakeholders throughout the process, building trust, adapting the approach to the context, and ensuring that stakeholders feel ownership. In addition, there are risks, such as unclear goals,

unresponsiveness to changes, the use of generic solutions, the mere validation of expert solutions, and overlooking the majority of the population.

Special emphasis is placed on the use of role-playing in spatial planning, including its definition, contributions and practical implementation. Role-playing is a method in which participants take on specific roles, engage in scenarios, and interact with each other to simulate real-world situations. Role-playing encourages participants to put themselves in the shoes of various stakeholders, which promotes a deeper understanding of different perspectives. Participants can test and refine planning strategies in an environment without the risks that are otherwise characteristic of real life. Role-playing enables participants to consider different perspectives and understand the complexity of decision-making in spatial planning. It also provides an opportunity to improve participants' communication skills and promotes effective communication and collaboration.