Nordia
Geographical Publications

Volume 48:4

Limits of localism: Institutional perspectives on communicativeness, neoliberalization and sustainability in Finnish spatial planning

Jonne Hytönen

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

to be presented with the permission of the Doctoral Training Committee for Human Sciences of the University of Oulu Graduate School (UniOGS), for public discussion in the lecture hall IT116, on the 8th of November, 2019, at 12 noon.

Nordia
Geographical Publications

Volume 48:4

Limits of localism: Institutional perspectives on communicativeness, neoliberalization and sustainability in Finnish spatial planning

Jonne Hytönen

Nordia Geographical Publications

Publications of
The Geographical Society of Northern Finland
and
Geography Research Unit, University of Oulu

Address: Geography Research Unit
P.O. Box 3000
FIN-90014 University of Oulu
FINLAND
heikki.sirvio@oulu.fi

Editor: Teijo Klemettilä

Nordia Geographical Publications
ISBN 978-952-62-2422-0
ISSN 1238-2086

Punamusta Oy
Tampere 2019

Limits of localism: Institutional perspectives on communicativeness, neoliberalization and sustainability in Finnish spatial planning

Contents

Abstract

Limits of localism: Institutional perspectives on communicativeness, neoliberalization and sustainability in Finnish spatial planning

Hytönen, Jonne, Geography Research Unit, University of Oulu, 2019

Keywords: Communicative Planning Theory, Finland, neoliberalization, legitimacy, spatial planning

In the study, the transforming relationship of public steering and market actors in planning is approached from two perspectives. The first relates to applying interaction-focused planning theories of Anglo-American origin in Finland. The second perspective relates to how local planning powers are changed in relation to the central government.

The first part of the thesis analyzes how Communicative Planning Theory fits Finland and its strong public planning tradition and Nordic legal culture. Regarding justification of planning, Communicative Planning Theory emphasizes interaction in the local context and gives less attention to the expertise of the planner and to institutional trust. The key idea is to empower local communities to counteract the excessive use of economic power in the local setting. However, as suggested in the thesis, this argument is potentially problematic: even though the application of Communicative Planning Theory aims at the inclusion of a wide range of interests within individual planning cases, in certain contexts applying the theory leads to contrary consequences. Due to the possibility of narrow focus in local circumstances, collective perspectives related to broad environmental concerns, for instance, may be left without attention. Likewise, the concept of public interest has increasingly taken on individualist and narrow connotations. Hence, it is argued in the thesis that applying Communicative Planning Theory in a context-insensitive manner in the Finnish legal and administrative culture may have led to increasingly market-oriented planning. A narrow focus in local circumstances and local interests is not without problems if it weakens the status of the public planner in relation to particular economic interests.

The second part of the thesis focuses on the contemporary reforms of planning in Finland. Here, the thesis operates with concepts such as *neoliberal state transformation* and *state rescaling*, and suggests that increasing local discretionary powers would cause a risk of the public planning tradition increasingly turning towards a market-reactive and short-sighted direction. Municipal and city-regional competitiveness may start to dominate the discussion about the principles of good planning. Thus, bringing a broad selection of societally relevant concerns to the localist planning agenda may become harder than before. Neoliberalization of planning manifests as short-sighted market-reactivity in rushed local planning practices.

The thesis concludes with suggestions regarding how to make Finnish planning more future-oriented and sustainable. These suggestions build on an assumption according to which the ability of the planning apparatus to respond to challenges such as those set by climate change requires high performance and legitimacy of the public planning

institution. First, promoting communicative perspectives in planning ought not to be considered as an alternative to a strong public planning institution. Hence, legitimacy of planning should not be sought solely from bottom-up communicativeness sources and inter-personal trust; traditional institutions of representative democracy and institutional trust should be taken into consideration, too. Second, resorting to Communicative Planning Theory while deconstructing the discretionary powers of the central government is highly problematic. Hence, increasing municipal discretionary powers (to the extent that has already taken place), necessitates better expert resources and resources in land use policies, regardless of the size of the municipality. The central government should be allowed to maintain its guiding and supportive role in relation to the planning practitioners working in the municipalities. Also, more sustainable and long-sighted planning requires more binding planning legislation.

Tiivistelmä

Paikallisuuden rajatut puitteet. Institutionaalisia näkökulmia vuorovaikutteisuuteen, uusliberalisaatioon ja kestävyyteen Suomen yhdyskunta- ja aluesuunnittelussa.

Hytönen, Jonne, Maantieteen tutkimusyksikkö, Oulun yliopisto, 2019

Asiasanat: kommunikatiivinen suunnitteluteoria, Suomi, uusliberalismi, legitimiteetti, yhdyskuntasuunnittelu

Julkisten toimijoiden ja markkinatoimijoiden suhde yhdyskunta- ja aluesuunnittelussa voi muuttua eri syistä. Tämä väitöskirja esittelee syihin kaksi toisiaan täydentävää näkökulmaa. Ensimmäinen näkökulma keskittyy huomioihin anglo-amerikkalaista syntyperää olevan vuorovaikutteisen suunnitteluteorian vaikutuksista julkisten ja yksityisten toimijoiden suhteeseen suomalaisessa julkisen suunnittelun kontekstissa. Työn toinen näkökulma keskittyy analyysiin siitä, miten muutokset kuntien ja valtion keskushallinnon vallanjaossa vaikuttavat julkisten ja yksityisten toimijoiden suhteeseen.

Työn ensimmäisessä osiossa arvioidaan, miten angloamerikkalaisesta common law -maista lähtöisin oleva ja suunnittelun paikallista vuorovaikutusta painottava kommunikatiivinen suunnitteluteoria sopii Suomen julkisen ja kuntakeskeisen suunnittelun kontekstiin. Kommunikatiivisessa suunnitteluteoriassa suunnittelun oikeutuksen nähdään rakentuvan ensisijaisesti vuorovaikutuksen varaan, perinteisten edustuksellisen demokratian instituutioiden, suunnittelijan asiantuntemuksen tai institutionaalisen luottamuksen jäädessä vähemmälle huomiolle. Tavoitteena on, että vuorovaikutuksen avulla suunnittelija kykenee – kommunikatiivisen suunnitteluteorian rohkaisemana – voimaannuttamaan paikallisyhteisöjä kamppailussa ylikorostunutta taloudellista valtaa vastaan. Kuvattuun vuorovaikutteisen suunnittelun teoreettiseen taustaan on syytä suhtautua kriittisesti: Vaikka kommunikatiivisen suunnitteluteorian tavoitteena on laajentaa suunnittelussa huomioonotettavaa intressien joukkoa, voi tietyissä olosuhteissa teorian soveltamisen seuraus olla päinvastainen. Kapean paikallisfokuksen vuoksi erilaiset kollektiiviset intressit esimerkiksi ympäristöarvoihin liittyen voivat jäädä huomiotta, ja yleisen edun käsite voi saada aiempaa kapeampia määritelmiä. Väitöskirjan keskeinen argumentti onkin, että kommunikatiivinen suunnitteluteoria ja etenkin tapa soveltaa sitä suomalaiseen oikeudelliseen ja yhteiskunnalliseen kulttuuriin heikosti sopivalla tavalla voivat johtaa osaltaan aiempaa lyhytjänteisempään, markkinaehtoiseen suunnitteluun. Keskittyminen entistä kapeammin suunnittelun paikallisiin olosuhteisiin ja paikallisesti esillä oleviin intresseihin ei ole ongelmatonta, mikäli se heikentää suunnittelijoina toimivien asiantuntijoiden itsenäistä asemaa suhteessa erityisiin taloudellisiin intresseihin.

Työn toisessa osiossa keskitytään suomalaisen yhdyskunta- ja aluesuunnittelun muutokseen. Suunnittelujärjestelmään kohdistuvien uudistusten analyysi on tehty *uusliberaalin valtiomuutoksen* ja *valtion uudelleenskaalauksen* käsitteitä hyödyntäen. Väitöskirjan toinen keskeinen väite on hypoteesinomainen: paikallisen harkintavallan lisääminen uudistuksissa voi johtaa suunnittelun liioiteltuun markkinareagoivuuteen ja lyhytjänteistymiseen. Paikallista keskustelua hyvän suunnittelun periaatteista voivat

määrittää aiempaa enemmän kuntien ja kaupunkiseutujen kilpailukyky. Työssä esitetään pitkäjänteisen suunnittelun periaatteiden olevan vaarassa, mikäli kaavoitus nähdään kapeasti kuntien ja kaupunkiseutujen elinvoiman edistämisen instrumenttina. Edellytykset tuoda suunnittelun asialistalle laajoja yhteiskunnan kokonaisedun kannalta merkittäviä näkökulmia ovat tällöin vaarassa heiketä. Suunnittelun uusliberalisaatio ilmenee lyhytjänteisenä ja pakotettuna paikallistason markkinareaktiivisuutena.

Väitöskirjassa tehdään ehdotuksia pitkäjänteisyyden ja kestävyyden parantamiseksi suomalaisessa yhdyskunta- ja aluesuunnittelussa. Lähtökohtana ehdotuksille on, että reagointi ilmastonmuutoksen kaltaisiin haasteisiin edellyttää julkisen suunnittelun hyvää toimintakykyä ja legitimiteetin ylläpitämistä. Ensinnä, suunnittelun vuorovaikutteisuuden kehittämistä ei tule nähdä vaihtoehtona vahvalle julkiselle suunnittelukoneistolle. Suunnittelun legitimiteettiä tuleekin vahvistaa jatkossa paitsi vuorovaikutteisuuteen ja henkilöiden väliseen luottamukseen perustuen, myös perinteisiin demokraattisiin instituutioihin ja vahvaan institutionaaliseen luottamukseen rakentuen ja sitä tukien. Toiseksi, kommunikatiivisen suunnitteluteorian käyttäminen valtion keskushallinnon kaavoitusvallan purkamisen perusteena on ongelmallista. Kuntien vastuiden jo tapahtunut kasvattaminen edellyttääkin paitsi riittäviä maapolitiikan ja maankäytön suunnittelun resursseja kunnan koosta riippumatta, myös riittävää valvontaa ja tukea valtion keskushallinnolta. Pitkäjänteinen suunnittelu edellyttää lisäksi nykyistä velvoittavampaa kestävää kehitystä edistävää lainsäädäntöä.

Supervisors

Professor Toni Ahlqvist
University of Turku, Finland

Professor Raine Mäntysalo
Aalto University, Finland
Primary supervisor until 2016.

Pre-examiners

Associate professor Kristian Olesen
Aalborg University, Denmark

Professor Sami Moisio
University of Helsinki, Finland

Official Opponent

Professor Jouni Häkli
Tampere University, Finland

List of original articles

Article A[1] Hytönen, J. (2016). The problematic relationship of communicative planning theory and the Finnish legal culture. *Planning Theory* 15: 3, 223–238.

Article B[2] Puustinen, S., Mäntysalo, R., Hytönen, J. & K. Jarenko (2017). The "deliberative bureaucrat": deliberative democracy and institutional trust in the jurisdiction of the Finnish planner. *Planning Theory & Practice* 18: 1, 71–88.

Article C[3] Hytönen, J. Mäntysalo, R., Peltonen, L., Kanninen, V., Niemi, P. & M. Simanainen (2016). Defensive routines in land use policy steering in Finnish urban regions. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 23: 1, 40–55.

Article D[4] Hytönen, J. & T. Ahlqvist (2019). Emerging vacuums of strategic planning: An exploration of reforms in Finnish spatial planning. *European Planning Studies* 27: 7, 1350–1368.

[1] Article A: The author of this thesis was responsible for writing the article. Reprinted with permission of SAGE Publications Ltd. Originally published: 12 Sep 2014. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095214549618

[2] Article B: The author of this thesis wrote parts of the text that focused on the legal culture and societal contextual differences between national planning contexts, and took part in elaborating the article's main arguments. This is the authors accepted manuscript of an article published as the version of record in 2016© Taylor and Francis - https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2016.1245437. Originally published: 18 Nov 2016.

[3] Article C: The author of this thesis shared the theoretical work and writing task with Raine Mäntysalo. Besides the author, the other four authors took part in gathering and analyzing the empirical material and followed the writing process of the article. Reprinted with permission of SAGE Publications Ltd. Originally published: 3 July 2013. https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776413490424.

[4] Article D: The author of this thesis shared the writing task with Toni Ahlqvist. This is the authors accepted manuscript of an article published as the version of record in 2019© Taylor & Francis - https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2019.1580248. Originally published: 14 Feb 2019.

Foreword

Background of my PhD thesis is in policy-relevant research work. I hope this means that my theoretical ideas resonate with the real world. At best, the arguments presented in the thesis will perhaps encourage public and private planning practitioners, law makers, citizens of different types of municipalities, politicians, civil society actors, small town journalists, entrepreneurs, landowners, public administrators and scholars to take part in the discussion about the principles of good planning. I believe that the public debate about the future priorities of Finnish spatial planning could be more versatile than it is now.

In academia, working on your own is sometimes considered heroic. Publish efficiently or perish, alone! However, writing in isolation without elaborating your ideas by sharing them with colleagues is something that I try to avoid. I believe that true insights are more easily gained in a supportive atmosphere, through collegial collaboration. Hence, below I would sincerely like to express my gratitude to all my previous and current colleagues who have shared their thoughts with me.

Numerous discussions around the coffee tables and on formal occasions have taken my research further at Aalto University, WSL Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research, the Association of Local and Regional Authorities (Kuntaliitto) and at the University of Oulu. I wish to thank all my colleagues in those institutions, without forgetting the members of the KLAKSU study circle in Otaniemi. Special thanks to those who have been writing with me. Hanna Mattila and Raine Mäntysalo, thank you for translating my occasionally complex verbal delivery into understandable form. You have had a crucial role in my research career. Funding from the Academy of Finland (project 255480) made it possible to concentrate on writing one of the articles. Colleagues at the University of Oulu have enabled me to finish the PhD process: thank you, Toni Ahlqvist, Jarkko Saarinen, Andrew Pattison, Kaj Zimmerbauer, Jarmo Rusanen and – most importantly – all the colleagues who so warmly welcomed me to Oulu and to the Geography Research Unit. I wish to thank my opponent Jouni Häkli, as well as pre-examiners Kristian Olesen and Sami Moisio for their constructive feedback.

To end, I owe warm thanks to my family and to those who have been following my research work from a close distance and supported me during the years. I also feel lucky to have many good friends – thank you for existing and not asking too many questions about how the PhD project is going. Outi, your deep-flowing mental calmness and faith in good will has helped me to take it easy at work and elsewhere.

Jonne Hytönen

1 Research setup

1.1 Reasoning and the research questions

In Finnish land use planning practice, a more communicative culture has taken root from the 1990s onwards. Since then, much academic and applied research has been conducted in Finland in order to develop communicative practices of planning (e.g. Peltonen *et al.* 2012; Horelli & Wallin 2013; Kyttä *et al.* 2013). The emergence of the so-called communicative turn in planning (Puustinen 2006) derives from the ideas of Communicative Planning Theory (CPT). The theory still has a rather hegemonic position among planning scholars in the country.

Within CPT, open and undistorted communication is considered to be a crucial source of legitimacy of planning (cf. Sager 2013). Instead of underlining the role of institutions of representative decision-making, communication between stakeholders within the local context is seen to play a primary role regarding sources of legitimacy in planning. This understanding is emphasized especially in the Anglo-American tradition of planning thought (e.g. Forester 1989; Healey 1997; about legitimacy management in CPT in general, see Mattila 2018a). The theory aims at not only acceptance and toleration of planning interests among local stakeholders, but also empowerment of local communities. Implementing the principles of CPT in land use legislation is seen as a way to make planning fair and less bureaucratic. Hence, it is about promoting democracy in planning, especially within local contexts.

Regarding the case of Finland, essential elements of CPT were brought into the planning legislation in 2000 when the Land Use and Building Act (132/1999) came into force. Flexibility and space for discretion within local decision-making was increased, as it was considered that applying communicative principles of planning requires dismantling hierarchic control (Syrjänen 2005). Top-down command was reduced while putting emphasis on local discretion (Vatilo 2000). Since then, bureaucratic state control of local planning has been decreased further. Legislative control of planning is wished to become replaced partly by the activity and awareness of civil society actors (Government Bill 251/2016).

It is noteworthy that seeking legitimacy of planning primarily through local communication seems to dovetail neatly with the goals of those who primarily seek stronger economic growth. In this vein, decreasing regulation is not seen as a condition for community involvement but as an opportunity for gaining more leeway for development project initiatives and ways to speed up urbanization's pace in general. An essential motivation for introducing the communicative principles was to reduce the number of legal appeals on plans (Syrjänen 2005). Pro-business actors have joined the public discussions about the desirable future development of Finnish planning from just such an

efficiency point of view (e.g. Hurmeranta 2013). Decreasing public planners' (especially the central government's) steering power, making planning more flexible, and increasing market actors' room for manoeuvre in planning is being called for by many (e.g. Ekroos *et al.* 2018). Bureaucracy is ostracized by those who seek development opportunities, and by those who subscribe to the principles of CPT.

Communicative and market-driven approaches, or tendencies, are observable in the ongoing transformation of the Finnish land use planning system. Partial legal changes altering the relationships between different planning actors have been implemented (e.g. Government Bill 251/2016) and new legislative fixes are being discussed, in the run-up to the expected comprehensive renewal of the Land Use and Building Act (cf. Ekroos *et al.* 2018). The recent and forthcoming changes and reforms of the land use planning system and the administrative system have had and can be expected to have further impacts on the regulative framework of planning.

I will analyze this process. In doing so, I will take into account the specific features of the Nordic legal culture that, I argue, have so far placed the Finnish public planner in a particular kind of political position. This notion is based on certain deep-rooted features in the legal culture. In an international comparison Nordic law (including Finnish law) is regarded more as a social enterprise, and citizens have a primary role in making the law (Smits 2007, see also Trägårdh 2010). In the Nordic context, the authority of the planning practitioner does not derive from technocratic expertise alone. These features are bypassed in argumentation that promotes reducing bureaucratic steering of land use. Instead, legitimacy of planning is increasingly being sought from communicative sources, whereas the public planning apparatus is easily deemed bureaucratic or paternalist (cf. Sager 2012; 2013).

I find that the elementary institutions of legitimate and long-sighted planning are, so to say, in flux. More scholarly attention should be paid to this structural change. Here we come to the main motivation of the thesis: I analyze how implementing the principles of CPT affects the societal conditions of planning, and how the relationship of private and public actors in planning is changing in Finland. My aim is to investigate the implications of adopting CPT's normative ideas with respect to planners' abilities to act in the face of economic power.

Thus, I formulate my research problem as two questions. The first one has a theoretical character: the concept of neoliberalization comes under scrutiny while illustrating and reflecting on the relationship between private and public actors:

1. What are the connections between Communicative Planning Theory and neoliberalization in the context of Finnish land use planning?

Whereas answers to the first question are sought from critical perspectives on planning theory, explorative answers to the second one can be sought through a theory-based analysis of the ongoing and forthcoming planning-related reforms in Finland:

2. In light of planning reforms increasing local discretion in planning, how is the relationship of public planning and market actors being changed in Finland?

I believe that answering these research questions helps us to reflect on how the capacity of public planning to cope with future challenges is in the state of change – especially regarding climate change and urbanization-related societal issues such as socio-economic segregation. Regarding legitimacy, I wish to elaborate how legitimacy of planning can be sought from different kinds of sources. My interest is in investigating how different sources of legitimacy appear from the Communicative Planning Theory point of view in particular.

The four papers represented in the thesis offer differing but interconnected perspectives on the research questions. Instead of conducting detailed juridical research, I contribute primarily to the planning theoretical discussion and operate in a multidisciplinary conceptual framework. I aim to contextualize my planning theoretical argumentation with the help of concepts familiar from state transformation debates. Although the papers, as such, are based on different research designs, all of them have a more or less theoretical character and have similarities in their conceptual frameworks. The ideas presented in the papers bring together several scientific traditions and combine discourses in planning research with comparative law, for instance, and the idea of state rescaling in human geography.

Throughout the synopsis of the thesis in hand, neoliberalization is an anchor concept. Naturally, alternative approaches and emphases would be possible for examining the changing planning culture of the country. However, I chose to apply the neoliberalization concept because I consider it an effective and easily applicable tool for describing the transforming relationship between the public and private power in planning. One of the key ideas is to illustrate what kind of new elements the relationship might bear in the future in comparison to the post-World War II decades (cf. Bengs 2012; Mattila 2018a; Hankonen 1994).

I discuss the concept's different bearings and manifestations, such as the propensity to view land use planning as business facilitation. I aim to offer context-sensitive viewpoints on neoliberalism and the process of neoliberalization, and insights on what these concepts might mean in the contemporary context of Finnish planning in particular. I will investigate how these differ from some common understandings that are visible in the planning theoretical debate regarding neoliberalization of spatial planning (e.g. Sager 2013; Allmendinger & Haughton 2013; Olesen 2014; Purcell 2009). Regarding anticipations about the unfolding reforms in Finnish planning (discussed in the following section), I especially discuss features such as increasing market-reactivity and short-termism in planning.

I adopt a wide conceptual framework within which societal developments are interpreted from a class-struggle viewpoint (e.g. Peck 2001; Peck & Tickell 2002). However, my main motivation for the study relates primarily to the capacity of public planning to cope with

the fundamental future challenges of spatial planning, such as climate change. As such, my aim is more about the space and capabilities of maneuvering – and about legitimate and efficient steering capacity – than about drawing attention to the restoration of class power or class struggle as such (cf. Harvey 2006a; 1989).

1.2 Contemporary reforms in planning

Several legal and administrative reforms related to planning have taken place recently or are expected to take place during the coming years. Thus, steering capacities and the conditions for using economic power in Finnish planning practice are under transformation.

a) A complete renewal of planning legislation is being prepared.
b) Several minor legal amendments have recently been implemented.
c) In addition, the future tasks of the municipalities may possibly be redefined.

The impacts of these reforms are discussed throughout the thesis and especially in article D. However, I shortly review the contents of the reforms below. After that, I present my expectations regarding the combined impacts of these reforms on the relationship between public planning and market actors.

First, in the coming years, the planning legislation of Finland will be renewed (a). The first outputs concerning the goals of the legislation renewal (Ekroos *et al.* 2018, see also Ministry of Environment 2018) suggested partial loosening of the public planning monopoly: detailed planning – so far taken care of by the municipalities – would be partly handed out to private developers and landowners. These, more or less market-driven premises for the renewal were suggested before the parliament elections in 2019. However, the law-making process is ongoing (in the spring 2019), and the contents of the renewal remain to be seen.

Second, several amendments to the planning legislation have already been enacted during the last few years, diminishing of the central government's role in relation to the municipalities (b). For instance, the right of the central government's regional organs' (so-called CEDTE centers; Centers for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment) right to appeal on local planning decisions has been significantly reduced. The changes are not without significance since for many planning practitioners working in the municipalities, the CEDTE centers have served as a backdrop and as a source of support for long-term planning in the face of pressures from municipal decision-makers (Eskelä, Kuusimäki & Hytönen 2016; Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018).

In addition, the major responsibilities of the municipalities may be redefined (c) in the near future, especially if some form of major government reform takes place across the country. Notably, a discourse of promoting the *vitality* of the municipalities gained

strength in the context of preparing the reform: until its resignation in March 2019, the national government was preparing a reform in a form that would have introduced a regional model to Finland. Eighteen regions with directly elected representatives were to become responsible for organizing social and health care services, taking this responsibility away from the municipalities. A so-called vitality task, including land use planning, would have been left to the municipalities. During the preparation of the regional model, it was envisioned that the municipalities would continue to exist in the future primarily as communities of citizen involvement, culture and vitality. After ceasing the preparation of the regional model, it is now uncertain whether and when this government reform will be carried through. It also remains to be seen how the likely diminished power over social and health care would be compensated for in the municipalities in the future. Nevertheless, the notion of a 'public planning institution' has already gained novel interest amongst political decision-makers, and the planning powers of the municipalities have been increased – at the expense of the controlling role of the central government.

Hence, it is unlikely that the municipal decision-makers' interest in land use planning would diminish, regardless of what happens with the potential regional model. As noted in article D, land use planning may start to play an increasingly important role as part of the municipal tasks. Considering that the planning control of the central government is being reduced at the same time, rising political interest in land use planning in the municipalities requires special attention from the point of view of sustainability, as I will suggest. I do not foresee any regional planning organ that would take on a strong planning role that would drastically affect the relationship between the general aims of land use legislation and municipal planning practice. Rather, it is possible that the imbalance will escalate, at least in the near future, on issues such as urban sprawl control (Hytönen *et al.* 2012), retail planning (Hytönen 2016a) and cross-municipal planning (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities *et al.* 2015).

Considering the joint impacts of the three reforms or trends, pursuit of facilitation and deregulation is apparent and seems to be a common denominator for all of them. Such a tendency is indicated in the recent changes in planning legislation (b), and I expect it to be maintained in the anticipated renewal of planning legislation (a). A redefinition of the municipalities' tasks in the future (c) may reinforce this process, especially if the regional model is implemented later on. Hence, I am suggesting that a certain kind of market-oriented tide is likely to emerge, not only due to certain detailed legal changes reducing the discretionary powers of the municipalities in relation to market actors (which is the case, for instance, with retail planning); rather, such a tide may follow the increase of municipal power over planning in relation to the central government. This, I suggest, will likely lead to an understanding of public planning primarily as an instrument of business facilitation. I call the emergence of such a market-oriented tide a *facilitative leap*. The term expresses a potential shift from planning-driven development towards development-driven planning, catalyzed by several parallel legislative changes to planning.

1.3 Seeking sustainability: about normative positioning

In the thesis, I do not draw attention only to possible tensions between the planning apparatus and the civil society or local communities, but also to the potential tensions between public planning on the one hand and particular business interests on the other hand. My underlying aim is to promote environmental values and democracy in planning, to seek ways to more sustainable and more legitimate planning. The following is the starting point to the argument of the thesis, and can be considered as a normative positioning of it, too:

I draw attention to the collective goals of long-sighted planning. In my understanding, ideally, the public planner could be considered as a political actor who understands – and should be obligated – to bring broad societal and long-term environmental views onto the planning agenda. Even though strong growth-oriented features existed already in the state-driven public planning apparatus of Finland during the late twentieth century (Hankonen 1994), in the current municipality-centered planning system the public planning authorities have often been the ones – if anyone – who are keen on keeping the broad issues such as environmental values on the planning agenda. The public planning practitioners working in the municipalities should be encouraged to maintain this balancing role in relation to private and particular (business) interests.

The nature of the public planning institution is constantly changing: it may easily be transformed also in a short-termist direction. The current legal reforms of Finnish planning follow changing priorities of land use planning. The idea of land use planning is being re-set, and the existing balance between planning's short-term tasks and long-term tasks is about to be redefined. For instance, shifting of planning powers from the central government to the municipalities is not without problems. I expect the ongoing and anticipated legal reforms to tune the resonance between the legislation's general level long-term goals and the local planning practice.

Seeking the ideal of long-term and sustainable planning culture, I set out to promote a broad conception of the future role of public planning. I am motivated by the will to enhance environmental priorities in planning. From this perspective, I aim to critically investigate the currently hegemonic discourse on promoting local competitiveness and the interpretations concerning the future tasks of the municipalities, dominated by neo-classical economist rhetoric (e.g. Huovinen 2017). I find it problematic that conceptions of public interest are increasingly conditioned by pursuits to enhance competitiveness of the municipalities in economic terms.

Different planning theoretical strands have implications on the short-term/long-term agenda-setting of municipal planning, too. In my view, planning theorists are often in a quandary when it comes to broad environmental concerns and how they could be maintained on the planning agenda. For

instance, Communicative Planning Theory sets considerably high expectations on the role of local communities regarding holding back excessive neoliberal planning endeavors.

Returning to the legal reforms introduced in the previous section, dramatic changes in the national party-political power balance may produce counter-reactions, in terms of more strictly regulated retail-planning, for example. It is possible, too, that the emerging focus on the vitality of the municipalities will offer municipal planning practitioners some tools to resist some of the short-sighted pro-market initiatives, especially in the biggest cities with strong planning cultures. So far, however, there have been no indications of any profound change in political ethos questioning pro-growth, competitiveness-driven urban policy from ecological perspectives. It is possible that the pursuit of municipal competitiveness will turn out to be simplistically interpreted and manifest as short-termist facilitation of business interests and market-reactivity.

To summarize, I do not expect the reform of the land use legislation (Land Use and Building Act renewal) to bring crucial new tools or resources that the planning practitioner can use to keep a broad selection of (e.g. environmental and other long-term) issues on the municipal planning agenda. So far, the research community has largely not focused on holistic analysis of the transforming land use system in the country. Broad interpretations of the so-called vitality task are rare, as well. This is where I wish to contribute.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis builds on two approaches, Approach I and II. Within Approach I, I analyze the transformation of Finnish planning culture from the point of view of planning theory. I answer the first research question primarily in terms of this approach: *What are the connections between CPT and neoliberalization in the context of Finnish land use planning?* With Approach II, I emphasize analysis of the transformation of the planning system from a state theory point of view. I answer the second research question primarily in terms of this approach: *In light of planning reforms increasing local discretion in planning, how is the relationship of public planning and market actors being changed in Finland?*

In the **first section** of the thesis at hand, I introduce the reader to the theme of the thesis. In the **second section**, I bring theoretical and methodological perspectives to the background project work.

In the **third section,** I shortly introduce the key concepts, especially neoliberalism and its different forms. I discuss the different bearings of the concept of public interest, too. The conceptual tools that I operate with will bring together the conclusions from the articles, even though each article has a theoretical framework of its own. The key concepts connect the individual frameworks to each other.

In the **fourth section** I present the planning-theory-related Approach I. I explore the relationship of neoliberalization and CPT. Some scholars claim that CPT helps to

fight neoliberalism in planning, while others claim the opposite. I review this debate and contribute by offering some context-specific arguments concerning the institutional framework in which planning practitioners work. I open up and frame this rather specific debate first, before proceeding to a more general-level critical analysis concerning state transformation (the fifth section). Opening up the specific perspective before proceeding to more general insights may in this case be of use to the reader: a review of the relationship between the communicative approach and neoliberalism offers a possibility to reflect on the impacts of applying CPT in Finnish land use legislation – particularly those that have taken place for some time already. Only after that, using a chronological logic, do I proceed to an evaluation of the anticipated future developments of the Finnish land use planning system.

In the **fifth section** I represent the state-theory-related Approach II. The idea is to put my conclusions regarding planning theory and neoliberalism into perspective. I shortly review the argument according to which neoliberalization proceeds in structures via state rescaling, that is, through increasing of local decision-making power in land use planning and through harnessing the localist planning apparatus for growth-seeking. I aim at context-sensitivity: to help to understand what kind of forms neoliberalization is taking place in Finnish planning, particularly in the context of the planning-related legislative and administrative reforms. Here my approach builds on debates about state transformation. This allows me to broaden my planning-theory-related perspective to the structural analysis of the changing spatial planning system. I limit my investigation on the mentioned state-theoretical approach to those perspectives that I find most relevant from a planning theory point of view. I wish to bring the idea of state rescaling to the planning theoretical debate and claim that there is a risk of emphasizing local priorities in a market-driven and short-sighted manner.

The sixth section pulls the strings of the thesis together. I summarize the most important arguments from the sub-studies discussed in earlier sections, claiming that Finnish land use planning may now be heading down a path that is not only an increasingly growth-seeking but also increasingly short-termist and market-reactive. I also bring in some ponderings about how my line of thought has evolved during the years.

The seventh section is a concluding discussion. I elaborate the findings more broadly, from selected perspectives. I return to the research questions, discussing the key neoliberal components and the key driving forces of the neoliberalization of Finnish planning. The arguments of the thesis are further elaborated in the section by raising some issues regarding the differences between the procedural/pragmatist planning theoretical discussion on the one hand, and human geography on the other. I also offer some future predictions about Finnish planning and make suggestions for future research.

1.5 The research articles

The Table 1 summarizes the thesis and the two major approaches in it. Approach I builds on articles A and B and presents the planning theory line of argumentation used in the thesis. Approach II, building on articles C and D, pulls in the state transformation perspective.

Table 1. Structure of the thesis.

Title	**Limits of localism: Institutional perspectives on communicativeness, neoliberalization and sustainability in Finnish spatial planning**			
Research questions	*- What are the connections between CPT and neoliberalization in the context of Finnish land use planning?* *- In light of planning reforms increasing local discretion in planning, how is the relationship of public planning and market actors changing in Finland?*			
	↓			
	Approach I: Planning theory perspective on neoliberalization		**Approach II: State transformation perspective on neoliberalization**	
	Article A	Article B	Article C	Article D
Article title	The problematic relationship of communicative planning theory and the Finnish legal culture	The "deliberative bureaucrat": Deliberative democracy and institutional trust in the jurisdiction of the Finnish planner	Defensive routines in land use policy steering in Finnish urban regions	Emerging vacuums of strategic planning: an exploration of reforms in Finnish spatial planning
Overview	Critical exploration of Communicative Planning Theory from point of view of differing planning contexts	Theoretical contribution on discussion concerning different conceptions of trust as sources of planning legitimacy	Analysis of inter-municipal cooperation in planning in the city-regional context	Analysis of planning reforms from a state rescaling point of view
Key words	communicative planning theory, legal culture	institutional trust, inter-personal trust, legal culture	defensive routine, inter-municipal cooperation, city-regions	vacuum of strategic planning, reforms, rescaling
Research design	Theoretical paper that draws on insights from multidisciplinary sources	Theoretical paper that draws on insights from multidisciplinary sources	The paper contributes with a theoretical framework to elaborate further conclusions of an applied research project	The paper contributes with a theory-based analysis of planning reforms, and draws in conclusions from applied research projects

Argument	Communicative Planning Theory neglects institutional sources of legitimacy that are a crucial resource for Finnish planners to cope with neoliberal planning aspirations	Nurturing of institutional trust together with interpersonal trust would strengthen the planner's agency to counteract the excessive forms of neoliberal planning	Mixed messages sent by the municipalities are preventing effective cooperation on city-regional planning issues	Finnish planning is being pushed in a market-reactive direction. The development takes place in connection to a rescaling process: relative increase of municipal autonomy in planning
Significance for the thesis: How does the paper relate to the research question?	Communicative Planning Theory suggests empowerment of local communities and avoidance of paternalism and bureaucracy. However, this may hinder the planning practitioners' abilities to keep broad issues on the market-dominated planning agenda	The article discusses context-sensitive and institutionally responsive theory of communicative planning. Instead of rejecting community focus in planning, it seeks to back up planners' agency in fighting market-reactive short-sightedness	The article increases in-depth understanding of systemic problems that the municipality-centered planning causes in the city-regions. Land use planning is sometimes conditioned by localist and narrow municipal goal setting	The article discusses the forthcoming planning and administrative reforms in Finland, proposing that they predispose especially strategic planning to neoliberalization
		↓		
Conclusion	*The Finnish land use planning system is being transformed towards a municipality-driven and market-reactive direction. It follows that there will likely be less room to keep broad issues such as climate change or city-regional cohesion on the planning agenda.*			

2 Theoretical and methodological selections

My overall picture of the field of the thesis has partly been formed during project research work at Aalto University (formerly Helsinki University of Technology), the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and the University of Oulu. The general insights on the administrative system presented in the thesis relate also to the cross-disciplinary studies in the planning-related fields of environmental law, comparative law and critical human geography, among others. Further, even though the thesis has a theoretical character as such, the research projects in the background have had a close-to-practice nature. In sections 2.1 and 2.2, I present in more detail the methods and materials of the projects and the sub-projects that are empirically linked to the articles in the thesis. First, I briefly introduce these projects and their conclusions at general level below.

The YKS-ARTTU project focused on cooperation between municipalities in land use planning in Finnish city-regions. According to the study, most of the studied city-regions lack effective inter-municipal policies to tackle city-regional planning challenges beyond the municipal borders (Mäntysalo *et al.* 2010; Hytönen, Akkila & Mäntysalo 2011; Hytönen *et al.* 2012). A discordance between the general-level goals of the land use legislation and the actual behavior of municipalities concerning land use policy steering was, and still is, recognizable. Planning issues that would have required city-regional attention were solved at the local level, sometimes in a rather unpredictable manner. Because the results of the project (published by Mäntysalo *et al.* 2010) are analyzed further in article C, I review the methods and materials of its starting phase in section 2.1.

The KUVA project was a compilation of case studies about the relationship between local and central government in planning in Finland (Hytönen 2016a). In the project report, I criticize the increases of municipal autonomy in land use planning, and especially the reduction of central government steering, as this was observed to catalyze municipal sub-optimizing in retail and housing planning. The project also included a separate expert evaluation of inter-municipal planning cooperation in 11 Finnish city-regions (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities *et al.* 2015). I reflect on the methods and materials of the project in section 2.2 regarding the expert evaluation and one of the case studies referred to in article D.

A survey study, reported by Hytönen, Kotavaara and Ahlqvist (2018), offered a possibility to assess the changing legal framework of Finnish planning from the point of view of planning practitioners. The results align with hypotheses concerning the possible narrowing of the municipal planning agenda, regarding small municipalities especially but not exclusively. The land use planners in the municipalities consider that land use planning, when long-sighted and sustainable, can support the vitality and competitiveness of the municipalities. However, a large share of the respondents consider that excessive market-orientation is a threat to environmental values and long-term land use planning. In the conclusions, it was noted that land use planners need expert resources, firm systemic

backdrops and safe-guards against short-sighted, market-driven endeavors. I reflect on the methods and materials used in the project in section 2.2. The findings of the survey are widely discussed in article D.

All the above-mentioned research projects have had an applied, policy-relevant character. Normally, the funding institutions have had some kind of a practical need for the study, related to evaluation of legislation and its development, for instance. Typically, a steering group, consisting of the funding institutions' representatives, was following the work. This means that the research questions were not independently set by the research group. The given research settings were formed in a way such that the results would serve development work in the municipalities or in the ministries. With respect to the integrity of research in the latter stages of the projects, I did not find that the steering groups retouched or influenced the conclusions or normative positioning after the given starting points were assigned. Also, funding from the Academy of Finland in the form of the BALANCE project offered more time to elaborate the conclusions independently and to continue the theoretical work.

The results of the above-mentioned studies were reported as research reports/ monographs. Because the reports were practice-based and policy-relevant exercises, extensive theoretical work was done in the peer-reviewed journal articles. This work has enabled the thesis to operate with more theoretical concepts. The theoretical conceptualization was realized on an independent academic basis. By increasing the analytical distance, it was possible to achieve a scientifically reasoned and critical conceptual framework. The more or less procedural theoretical approach applied when writing the research reports changed incrementally into a critical approach. I will reflect on the transition from a pragmatist planning theory viewpoint to a more critical perspective throughout the thesis, and especially in section 6.3.

Articles A and B are based on theoretical work and are not constructed on any specific empirical project. Articles C and D are theory-based likewise, even though they refer to the results of the final reports of the empirical studies. However, especially the article C is more closely linked to the empirical material of a project (see Mäntysalo *et al.* 2010). In the article, we introduce a novel conceptual framework to analyze cross-municipal planning cooperation. Although primarily a conceptual paper, article D too has a limited empirical character. It summarizes findings from several applied studies while making a theory-based analysis about the transformation of the Finnish planning system. The methodological compositions of the mentioned policy-relevant research projects on the background are described in their final reports (in Finnish). In the following list, I summarize the materials on which these referred studies are based:

- Article C elaborates the conclusions of a study based on five case studies:
  - multi-method studies, focusing on analysis of altogether **46 semi-structured interviews**.

- Article D refers to the conclusions of several empirical studies, including
  - a Delphi-based study with **a questionnaire sent to 50 planning practitioners**,
  - a multi-method case study, including analysis of **document and newspaper data**, and
  - **an expert evaluation** of inter-municipal planning.

More detailed descriptions of materials and methods are presented below.

2.1 Methods and materials of the projects related to article C

Article C relates to the conclusions of the empirical YKS-ARTTU research project (Mäntysalo et al. 2010), based on case studies of five urban regions, with altogether 46 interviews. Motivated by the desire to better understand the problems of restricting dispersal of urban structures in urban regions, the research task of the study was to analyze the drivers and conditions of inter-municipal cooperation.[1] In each of the studied urban regions (Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Oulu, Turku and Vaasa), one surrounding municipality on the fringe of the region was selected for closer examination, together with each central city. Within each case study, GIS (Geographical Information System) and document analysis supported the interview data.[2] Article C further elaborates the conclusions of the YKS-ARTTU research report by focusing primarily on the interview data. The interview data consisted of theory-driven semi-structured interviews. The total number of interviews was 46. Forty-three of the interviews were recorded, with the permission of the interviewees. The interviewees in each region were key local politicians or officials working in the municipalities or regional organizations, selected due to their involvement in planning issues or cross-municipal cooperation. Some local journalists were also interviewed as key informants to gain an overall picture of the situation in the regions at the starting phase of the case studies.

The interview methodology was based on the approach of (environmental) conflict mapping (Peltonen & Kangasoja 2009). The approach is rooted in conflict theory (e.g. Bartos & Wehr 2002) and theory of cooperation (e.g. Axelrod 1984), with a view on institutional conditions of collaboration (e.g. Scharpf 2000). The research group aimed at recognizing factors fostering or disrupting path dependencies behind the potentially conflictual and competitive settings regarding the relations of the municipalities. The idea was to gain an in-depth understanding of how the general inter-municipal setting was reflected in the creation of common planning policies between the municipalities in city-regional planning issues. The thematic structure of the interviews (Mäntysalo *et al.* 2010: 38) is listed below:

- historical framework and background drivers of planning cooperation and conflicts;
- recognizing central forums and actors in the cooperation;
- examples of success/failure in cooperation;
- tools of (cross-municipal) planning;
- topical planning issues in the case study regions (such as retail planning or urban sprawl);
- conflict dynamics (factors that escalate conflicts) and
- identification of possibilities for easing or resolving the conflicts.

The same thematic structure was applied in the interviews for each region. I took part in the collection and analysis of the interview data in the regions of Oulu (10 interviews) and Jyväskylä (11 interviews). In the first stage, the research relied on extraction of the interview data. The final report (Mäntysalo *et al.* 2010) too includes rather broad empiric presentations of the situation between the central cities and the surrounding municipalities. Region-dependent drivers of cooperation and potential inter-municipal tensions were investigated. First, close-to-practice actors in the regions benefited from the rich empirical findings. Second, efficient filtering and further content analysis was carried out on the basis of the firsthand empirical work (about the deductive approach and structuring content analysis, see Mayring 2014: 95).

In the second stage, a more conceptual approach was applied when conducting the (summarizing) content analysis of the data. The results regarding the analysis of the complete dataset (including interviews, GIS data and documents) for all of the studied regions were drawn together within a conceptual framework that relied on the concepts of institutional *path dependency* and the so-called *increasing returns* in the municipality-centered planning system (see especially Pierson 2000). The analysis had a broad institutional focus based on comparison of the urban regions. The broadness of the empirical material, together with data triangulation, supported the meta-level approach in the analysis. As a result of this stage, threads of trust and mistrust in planning cooperation were sketched (Mäntysalo *et al.* 2010: 210–211) to illustrate factors driving or easing inter-municipal rivalry in urban regions. Finally, the notion of 'surrounding municipalities of increasing returns' was introduced (Mäntysalo *et al.* 2010: 220–222). The notion aimed at illustrating the tensions between the municipality-based motivations for planning and the city-regional perspectives. The key issue was that surrounding municipalities lacked incentives for city-regional planning.

Article C represents meta-level conceptual work that furthers the conclusions of the starting phase of the YKS-ARTTU project. The aim of the article is to offer a novel theoretical insight for those who wish to understand why enhancing city-regional planning and planning cooperation in Finnish urban regions is often so difficult. Related to the relationship between the local and state government, many municipalities were found to avoid cross-municipal planning cooperation and in-depth debates about related political controversies through defensive behavior and sending mixed messages. I discuss the

contribution of article C in relation to the perspective of this thesis more widely in section 5.3.

2.2 Methods and materials of the projects related to article D

Article D includes theory-based analyses about the transformation of the Finnish land use planning system. It contributes theoretical insights and introduces the concept of vacuum of strategic planning to analyze the transformation of Finnish planning. The results of the specific empirical reports are referred to in article D, to support the theory-based approach.

I describe the data used and the theoretic-methodological configuration of the policy-relevant reports, authored or co-authored by myself, shortly below (a survey study: Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018; an expert evaluation: Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities 2015). Regarding one of the reports (Hytönen 2016a), I present the case study referred to in article D (case study concerning retail planning and a regional plan in the South Karelia region).

The survey study (Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018) is based on a questionnaire to 50 experts. The main task was to gain a better understanding of the *vitality task* of the municipalities from the viewpoint of planning. The study was based on an anonymous internet-based expert questionnaire sent to land use planners working in municipalities. The survey used an applied version of the Delphi method that is widely utilized in futures studies and foresight: the respondents (municipal planning practitioners) represented specialized experts in the field, meaning that the study was not based on random sampling. As such, the respondents were assumed to be qualified to comment on the theses/arguments regarding the themes of the study presented by the researchers. The theses/arguments were based on existing research literature.

The questionnaire was sent to 50 planning practitioners in 40 municipalities, representing municipalities of varied sizes across the country. Ultimately, 45 planners from 39 municipalities took part in the survey. Despite the relatively low number of respondents, the response rate was 90%, which ought to be taken into consideration when assessing the reliability of the study. Answers to the survey were analyzed either statistically or through qualitative content analysis (part of the data was in text form). The study was conducted in close collaboration with the research team members. I took part in all phases of the study, excluding the statistical analysis of the data.

In accordance with Approaches I and II in this thesis, the theoretical and conceptual framework through which the questionnaire was constructed involved a combination of the planning theoretical approach and the human geography/state theory approach. First, these perspectives were concretely present via questions concerning the relationship between the planning practitioners and actors such as entrepreneurs (relating to the

planning-theoretical debates about the influence of financial power in planning and planner expertise). Second, questions concerning the changing relationship between the local and central government in planning were included (relating to the state theoretical debates about localism and capital flows in the local contexts).

The planning practitioners were asked to answer the questions based on their expertise, professional experiences and personal perceptions, and to not base their responses necessarily on the official stances of their corresponding municipalities. The questionnaire included questions concerning 1) the vitality task assigned to the municipalities, 2) the role of land use planning in relation to the other municipal tasks, and 3) the changing land use system in the country (i.e. the power relations between the planning tiers). The survey made it possible to test several arguments frequently presented in academic debates concerning neoliberalization tendencies in planning. In the report's (Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018) conclusions, we suggest that adapting a long-term perspective on municipal planning and active land policy would make it easier to integrate sustainability perspectives within the municipalities' vitality task.

A multi-method case study concerning market-reactive retail planning in South Karelia (incl. document and newspaper data) and expert evaluation of inter-municipal planning. The case study and the expert evaluation were both part of the so-called KUVA project. In the KUVA project, I conducted four multi-method case studies concerning regional planning issues across Finland (Hytönen 2016a). Similarly to the approach applied in this thesis, the conceptual framework of the research project derived from critical planning theoretical debates and applied different social scientific methods to investigate the relationship between local and national government in planning. Concepts such as institutional ambiguity (see Laine, Leino & Santaoja 2007; Bäcklund & Mäntysalo 2010; cf. Hajer 2003) were applied to answer the research questions concerning the potential existence of vacuums of planning in the urban regions and to understand how these vacuums should be handled.

The case study discussed here focused on potential problems in the interaction between the state authorities and the local or regional authorities, especially in retail-related regional planning. The general methodological approach of conflict mapping was applied (Peltonen & Kangasoja 2009). The aim was to study what had actually happened in the Lappeenranta urban region when a conflict between state authorities and local/regional actors had escalated a few years earlier. The case study relied on data triangulation: several types of data were collected. I analyzed documents related to the investigated regional planning process (including: 13 planning documents; minutes of 7 meetings between local and state authorities; 4 statements by the state authorities) to obtain a more detailed picture of the conflict. The results of this analysis were compared to the results of an analysis of newspaper data. Twenty-eight local and regional newspaper articles were analyzed to enrich the picture about the alternative perspectives on the conflict, meaning that the conflict mapping approach was supplemented with elements of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 2013) and narrative analyses (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka

2006). Discussions with the local planning actors and state representatives in the starting phase of the case study introduced me to the case study area and offered a preliminary impression of the conflict. I concluded the case study with critical notions about the observed local tendency toward market-driven and weakly controlled retail planning. I problematized the institutionally weak role of regional planning which leads to vacuums of strategic planning that are not controllable by the local or state government. These conclusions of the case study were elaborated in the final report of the KUVA project together with the other conducted case studies (Hytönen 2006a).

The expert evaluation (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities *et al.* 2015) was another part of the KUVA project referred to in article D. The task was to evaluate the strength of inter-municipal cooperation in planning in the absence of legally binding city-regional planning tools. I was responsible for the evaluation's groundwork (with the assistance of another research staff member at the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, who conducted statistical analyses of the evaluated regions) and the final report of the evaluation. The groundwork was supported by a short survey sent to key authorities in the central cities for each of the 11 evaluated urban region. The Helsinki metropolitan region, with its special issues, was excluded from the evaluation. The groundwork (ca. 2 pages for each region) was sent to the evaluation group in advance. The actual evaluation took place in a meeting in which representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Transport and Communications, and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities were present. The evaluation group gave each region a numerical evaluation of the central viewpoints and forms of cooperation. Integration of land use, housing and transport planning issues was evaluated, as were the tools of control for dispersing urban structure. Commitment to and resourcing of planning cooperation were evaluated too, together with municipal mergers. The final report summarized the results by stating that the state of voluntary planning cooperation between the municipalities in the Finnish urban regions had weakened since previous similar evaluations. The results are discussed in article D.

3 Key conceptual debates

The thesis combines several independent yet interlinked sub-studies in the form of four journal articles. Each of them builds on a specific theoretical framework. However, there are certain key concepts linking the sub-studies to each other. I outline the most important ones below. I describe the theoretical and conceptual tools that I operate with in order to bring together and reinterpret the conclusions from the sub-studies.

First, it is worth bringing in some most basic elaborations of neoliberalism as a concept. Operating with the concept enables me to discuss how the relationship between public sector actors and the market is changing in the Finnish planning system. I bring in selected perspectives from the literature on the concept. Second, I introduce the ideas of let-do neoliberalism and help-do neoliberalism. Third, I bring in a debate on the concept of public interest: especially within critical human geography the concept is often criticized – as a rhetorical tool for capitalist strategy. Partly in response to this, I aim to illustrate why the concept should not be abandoned. I will bring another kind of perspective on the concept: it can be applied as a carrier of collective perspectives in public planning geared to promoting long-term sustainability in land-use.

Later, I will reflect on my own findings and conclusions regarding the concepts. Articles A and B discuss neoliberalism and the idea of public interest from a planning theoretical viewpoint (Approach I), whereas the approach of articles C and D builds on the point of view of state transformation and especially state rescaling (Approach II).

3.1 Neoliberalism: emphasis on economic freedoms over political steering

In the case of Finnish land use planning, a variety of market-oriented and growth-oriented features have long been present. They have not appeared in Finnish planning as a result of any individual legal reform, nor have they followed the introduction of the Communicative Planning Theory (CPT)-influenced Land Use and Building Act (132/1999) that came into force in the year 2000. Certain trajectories such as pursuit of continuity of growth have existed in Finnish planning, and in the public planning agenda, for decades (Hankonen 1994; Mattila 2018a). Nevertheless, some of the recent as well as possibly the forthcoming legal changes are changing Finnish planning in a new and market-oriented way: the division of planning powers is being relegated from the central government to the municipalities, and further, to the market actors. Increasing the planning powers of local governments may lead to strengthening of the conception of land use planning as an instrument for facilitating capital accumulation and further narrowing of the municipal planning agenda. If this is so, to what extent should the mentioned tendencies

be considered as an expression of neoliberalism, or, more precisely, as an expression of the ongoing process of *neoliberalization* of Finnish planning?

To enable a better understanding of this fluid concept, I introduce some basic analytical perspectives on it in the following. I aim to interpret the processes through which the relationship between public actors and private stakeholders changes in land use planning, in land use planning practice on the one hand, and in planning-related legal reforms, on the other hand. Here, I find it interesting and relevant to study how neoliberalism actually takes place in planning.

According to the widely cited critical scholar David Harvey (2006a: 145), neoliberalism is "a theory of political economic practices which proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms" and avoidance of state interventions in markets once they (the markets) have been created in as many areas as possible. In a way, the desired state of future development in society could be figured out by following the market logic.

Harvey (2006b) suggests that the primary motivation for neoliberal institutional reform has not been – perhaps surprisingly – stimulating economic growth (cf. Molotch 1976) but restoring class power. Put another way, maximizing of capital accumulation has not been the main driver of the neoliberal turn but rather maintaining the financial power of the richest. In this understanding, capital accumulation takes place in a way that serves the financial interest of the richest in an uneven way. This spatially defined *unevenness* forms a key to understanding why many human geographers are interested in the neoliberalism concept. According to Neil Smith's (1990) definition, the term uneven development refers to social inequality in geographical terms, and to how this geographical inequality is then exploited for capital accumulation purposes.

For Peck (2001), maximizing economic freedoms and removal of obstacles to free markets is one of the main features of neoliberalism. Peck (2001, see also Peck & Tickell 2002) underlines the political character of this phenomenon, or ideology, which is predicated on seeking competitiveness. Forms of collective initiative are restrained within the individualist neoliberal discourse.

Neoliberalism is a fluid concept. As Castree (2006) has put it, a fuzzy one too. It is a general term used in various theoretical contexts. Depending on the field of research, the term bears narrower or broader definitions. The planning theorists' definitions of the concept, deriving from more or less concrete empirical analyses (see e.g. Sager 2013), differ compared to the theoretical, strongly critical interpretations (e.g. Harvey 2006a; Peck 2001). Some common denominators regarding the different conceptions are nevertheless traceable. I underline one such: neoliberalism is often associated with organizing society in a market-oriented manner that emphasizes the economy and entrepreneurial freedoms over political steering. Entrepreneurial freedoms are seen to condition political power – not the other way around (e.g. Harvey 2006a: 145; Sager 2013: 130, see also Harvey 1989). Therefore, urban planning, in its public form, may appear as politically motivated intervention and as a threat to the efficient functioning of markets (Sager 2013: 129).

In the thesis, I aim to illustrate if and how the general phenomenon of neoliberalism appears at an operational level. To that end, to get a better grip of the concept from a planning point of view, I will now turn to the so-called roll out/roll back forms of neoliberalism. I will shortly discuss how the concept of so-called help-do neoliberalism differs from so-called let-do neoliberalism.

3.2 Let-do and help-do neoliberalism

Through what kind of mechanisms is society organized so as to privilege entrepreneurial freedoms over political steering? One way to elaborate the different forms of neoliberalism in more detail is to make a distinction between those conceptions that draw on deregulation, on the one hand, and those conceptions that pay attention to the reorganizing of the state in a business-oriented and growth-seeking manner, on the other (see Table 2). The former refers to understanding neoliberalism in terms of diminishing governmental interventions in the market (so-called roll-back neoliberalism or let-do neoliberalism). The latter one refers to market-driven transformation of the state in general (roll-out neoliberalism or help-do neoliberalism) (e.g. Brenner & Theodore 2002; Purcell 2009; Olesen 2014; see also Jessop 1994 and Goodwin, Jones & Jones 2005 about hollowing out/filling in).

With let-do neoliberalism one may simply refer to retreating public institutions and to liberalizing market action. Then, it is not seen that regulation would serve the functioning of the market; rather, the role of the state is to step back. Considering help-do neoliberalism, the role of the state appears more proactive. Here, one may refer to those arrangements of the state that function in a market-supportive manner or in a manner that serves certain businesses. This line of thought is based on an instrumental conception of the state that sees the state as actively serving capital accumulation. Simply put, instead of considering the state as something that merely controls or restricts private capital accumulation, the state is understood as something that is intertwined with capitalist power.

These two approaches, emphasizing either let-do or help-do neoliberalism, are intertwined, and it is not always easy – or purposeful – to distinguish the different conceptions of neoliberalism the different studies build on. In different kinds of hands-on approaches, based on case studies for instance, neoliberalism as a term can simply be used to refer to an excessive emphasis on economic power in relation to the power

Table 2. Let-do neoliberalism and help-do neoliberalism.

	Let-do neoliberalism	**Help-do neoliberalism**
takes place through…	deregulation: diminishing government intervention	organizing regulation to serve market interests
…with the state having the role to…	roll-back; to disappear; to hollow out	roll-out; serve markets; to fill in

of civil society actors. There, neoliberalism might refer concretely to the market actors' ability to flee regulation. This kind of neoliberal practice could, then, be counteracted with the help of CPT through empowering local communities to redeem power from the economic actors. Such understanding can be said to approach the neoliberalism concept from the let-do viewpoint: solutions for urban problems are seen to sought after in a way that emphasizes private business interests (e.g. Sager 2013: 131). Public interventions in the interplay of actors acting on market-logic might be downplayed, because the interventions are seen to harm the growth-seeking actions of the market actors.

The entrepreneurial mode may also penetrate societal structures and public governance culture as well, with local governments starting to seek better competitiveness in relation to other local public governments. Such re-identification of local administrations, via the mechanisms of *New Public Management*, denotes a new balance between capital owners and the state (Sager 2013: 130). Eventually such a mode of governance ends up conditioning land use planning processes via different kind of neoliberal policies. At worst, planners are pressured to present planning solutions (those that are actually ruled by economic power) pathologically; to pretend as if they were run through in a truly communicative process (Mäntysalo, Saglie & Cars 2011) following ideals of deliberative democracy.

Such an approach, even if it takes into account the structural power that conditions individual planning processes, stems primarily from a procedural, more or less micro-perspective on neoliberalism. It can, nevertheless, be supplemented using conceptual thinking related to state theory. While one can focus more on the forms of neoliberalism in the micro perspective with an emphasis on planning practice (neoliberalism is seen to take place, for example, through imbalances in the planners' regulative vs. facilitative tasks), one may also take neoliberalism into focus at a macro level. Then, neoliberalization of the 'planning state' is given more attention. Accordingly, state structures, and how they are transformed in a way that serves capital accumulation, are brought into the loop. Thereby, the focus is shifted away from everyday practice and onto agenda-setting and the rules of the 'planning game'.

Regarding especially reformations of the land use planning system, the different conceptions of neoliberalism (roll-back/roll-out neoliberalism) actually appear in distinct ways (in comparison to practical case studies on planning procedures, for instance). At such a macro scale, help-do neoliberalism stands out perhaps as an easily distinguishable concept: it is easy to consider the market-driven agenda-setting of municipal planning as help-do neoliberalism. It is about altering planning to serve capital accumulation at the expense of democratic goal setting at a very elementary level.

3.3 Public interest and common good

According to Finnish law, the tasks of planning currently include improving economic life in the municipalities. As such, the above-mentioned market emphasis in the agenda-setting

of planning is present in the current Finnish land use legislation. Municipal planning has always been about balancing between the goal of improving economic life and other aims e.g. improving sustainable land use. A crucial aim in this thesis is to describe how this balance is coming under novel pressure. Due to the anticipated planning-related reforms in Finland, short-term economic pressures on planning practitioners can be expected to increase. This may impact the agenda-setting of municipal planning. A new balance between short-term and long-term perspectives in planning is sought after. To draw a clearer picture of this transformative process, I will trace the pathways that are altering the relationship between public and private power in land use. Changes in this relationship may affect the capacity to react to potential future environmental crises.

During the last decades numerous authors have written about the market's limited ability to take sufficiently into consideration environmental concerns without public intervention (e.g. Ridley & Low 1993; Klostermann 1984, cf. Smith 1990, 63). I engage with this long-standing discourse and argue that institutional support is needed in order to keep a broad selection of issues on the municipal planning agenda, especially in small municipalities which have limited resources for comprehensive planning and are struggling with austerity (cf. Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018).

I seek a conception of planning in which the broadest concerns are integrated into the criteria through which development is not only facilitated but also adjusted with a view on even development, environmental concerns and democracy. I refer especially to the principles of long-term planning, and to the ecological conditions of urban growth. To discuss how a broad selection of issues could be maintained on the planning agenda, I now turn to the concept of *public interest*. I bring in some perspectives on the concept, especially the critical view that considers the concept as a conceptual tool for capitalist strategy. In parallel, I will describe an alternative approach by suggesting that public interest may also function as a vehicle for privileging sustainability perspectives and as a counterweight to particular business interests.

The discussion concerning the concept of public interest on critical premises has a long history (e.g. Campbell & Marshall 2002; cf. Mattila 2016). In short, it has been seen as a depoliticizing concept. The critical perspective has been presented in Finland too in the current debates concerning spatial development and planning (e.g. Luukkonen & Sirviö 2017). This viewpoint connects to the critical reading of class power, about public interest as a strategic rhetorical tool deployed by the capitalist elite.

The critical debate about the concept concerns planning scholars too. For instance, the topic is debated among those who more or less subscribe to CPT. Puustinen, Mäntysalo and Jarenko (2017) argue that CPT does reject the idea of public interest as a mere aggregation of particular interests and, thus, encourages establishing a collaborative process – with the local community – to determine the public good. Nevertheless, from CPT's perspective, arguments that rely on broader perspectives (those that are not necessarily brought up by the local stakeholders) would potentially be considered paternalist and elitist. Even if not strict in his stance towards the public interest concept,

Tore Sager (2013) is representative of those scholars who build their approach firmly on "anti-paternalism". In his view, paternalism springs from a "belief" that identifying public interest requires planners' special knowledge (Sager 2013: 25).

It may be interpreted that such a skeptical stance towards the idea of public interest stems from particular institutional and historical conditions, such as fundamental distrust towards public institutions and low level of generalized trust. In a strict communicative approach, the collectivist motivations of the planner and the mandate to resort to other interests than those apparent in certain planning cases would come under critical scrutiny. Hence, instead of relying on the idea of public interest, CPT recommends focusing on local interests. Communication between the local stakeholders is considered to be the primary source of legitimacy for planning (see Approach I).

Regarding the debates in human geography, some authors (cf. Luukkonen & Sirviö 2017; Kellokumpu 2019) share the criticism of the very idea of the public interest. However, by referring to *general interest* (see Jessop 2000), a slightly different 'bird's eye' perspective is adopted. In this reading too referring to general interest reduces the room for local disagreement. It seems like a rhetorical tool applied to silence dissenting voices, meaning the political opinions in opposition to the chosen policy or planning decision.

The concept of general interest, as used by Jessop (2000, see also Ahlqvist & Moisio 2014), derives from political economy. In this view, referring to (an imaginary) of general interest can be considered as privileging some interests over others (Jessop 2000). As such, the general interest has its specific conceptual background, returning to Marxian economic interpretations regarding the circumstances needed to create favorable circumstances for fluent capital accumulation. Such circumstances are created via emerging "spatio-temporal fixes": within the spatial and temporal boundaries of these fixes, the contradictions caused by/deriving from capital accumulation may be more easily handled (cf. Jessop 2000: 335).

Nevertheless, according to my interpretation, the concepts can be compared easily enough. The public interest is a formulation more commonly used in planning theoretical debate. Notably, both terms are commonly translated into Finnish in the same way as *yleinen etu*, including by Luukkonen and Sirviö (2017), who connect the critical human geography approach with their interpretation of the concept.

Acknowledging that the concept public interest can also be used to refer to an aggregation of private interests, especially within the liberal political ethos (cf. Puustinen, Mäntysalo & Jarenko 2017), from this point on I prefer to refer with the concept to a slightly more collectivist idea of *common good*. The concepts are not completely overlapping. However, especially the more collectivist conceptions of public interest can be used in parallel to the idea of common good – and likewise the idea of general interest too.

To repeat, the concept has been rejected or ostracized by many in human geography. Hegemonic and national discourses are seen to suffocate political debate. In that understanding, resorting to general interest is seen as a means to maintain and legitimize the hegemony and status quo of the national political and economic capital-serving life (compare to McGuirk 2004, about the hegemonic discourses and projects). As Philip

Allmendinger (2002, 85) puts it, from such a critical perspective "land-use regulation is only a shopfront of rational public-interest decision-making that hides the logic of market-mechanism".

However, I suggest that – regardless of whether planning theory or human geography is the chosen approach – ostracizing the concepts of public or general interest may trickle down to the level of planning practice in a problematic way.

Adopting a most critical attitude towards the public interest concept may denote difficulties for local planning practice. Justifying planning solutions that serve more or less collective virtues – in comparison to the particular interests promoted by business stakeholders, for instance – may become harder (cf. Bengs 2005a; see also segregation and public planning related example by Zakhour & Metzger 2018: 55). At worst, critical theoretical perspectives on the concept could manifest as a paralyzing pessimism, as a hesitancy to use the concept in local debate when defending the principles of long-term planning. Such debates about the principles of planning concern, among other things, ecological sustainability, the rule of law, and public steering capacity in relation to the role of private planning. My intention is to articulate that the common theoretical and critical perception of public interest as a concept does not necessarily support the goal of making planning more sustainable.

Argumentative tools to promote practical endeavors to make planning at least a little bit fairer or more sustainable are needed but become easily questioned in the critical discourse. Such thinking would prevent us from promoting planning measures that could enhance sustainable development in the name of the common good – something that would definitely be in the interest of the broader public. Here I approach some holistic ideas about so-called *commons planning*, regarding the use of structural power in land use planning (Marcuse 2009), while still putting a special emphasis on ecological viewpoints (see e.g. Toivanen & Venäläinen 2015: 42, about the limitations of localist commons thought from the ecological sustainability perspective).

Actually, it might be that the critical human geographer's most common meta-critical approach may partly explain why sometimes they are found to be in difficulties when explaining how the processes of uneven distribution actually take place in grassroots practice (see Cox 2014: vii; Harvey 2006a). A sufficiently nuanced understanding of how to make planning fairer is difficult to attain, if planning priorities – including those that derive from the most collectivist conceptions of the public interest as common good (cf. Marcuse 2009) – are primarily interpreted as capitalist priorities. I will return to this debate in the concluding discussions.

4 Approach I: Communicative Planning Theory and neoliberalism

In the following, I will investigate the relationship between Communicative Planning Theory (CPT) and neoliberalism. I will examine how CPT's focus on local circumstances appears from the point of view of the relationship between public planning and market actors in the Finnish context.

To begin with, I will shortly review the consensus-seeking underpinnings of CPT, and especially its fundamental idea of community inclusion. Here my key references are some influential and widely cited books written by John Forester (1989: Planning in the Face of Power) and Patsy Healey (1997: Collaborative Planning). With the aid of other international literature about the communicative approach (e.g. Forester 1993; Innes & Booher 1999; Innes 1995; Healey 2003; about Finnish perspectives, see: Bäcklund, Häkli & Schulman 2002; 2017; Peltonen & Villanen 2004; Puustinen 2006; Staffans 2004; Leino 2000; Mäkelä 2000), I illustrate the development of communicative planning thought primarily through these books. Even though these books might be partly outdated from today's perspective, when published they steered the evolution of the theory and were influential when the current land use legislation was created in Finland during the 1990s. In addition, the contributions of Tore Sager (2013) and Hanna Mattila (2017) are essential sources from recent years.

4.1 Theoretical background: seeking consensus

To understand the origins of CPT, it is useful to understand the hierarchical and expert-driven planning culture of past eras (e.g. Taylor 1998; Allmendinger 2002; Bäcklund & Mäntysalo 2010). My interpretation is that communicative theory springs primarily from a wish to re-delegate the centralized power of a centralized system, and, consequently, to empower citizens. In other words, one of the key ideas regarding the communicative approach is to share the power of planning experts – the bureaucrats – with local communities. It is about drawing back from the times when planning was considered to be a technocratic problem-solving practice (Healey 1997; Forester 1989: 16; Innes 1995).

Hierarchical power relations within the planning bureaucracy came under critical scrutiny. In the communicative mien, it is thought that (hidden) economic power can be taken into consideration through progressive planning (Forester 1989), meaning that the planner ought to filter the biased information to counteract manipulative "noise" and biased use of power in its different forms. The planner's role, then, is to facilitate and to encourage critical action against misinformation and economically motivated misuse of power. Largely, it is about activating and empowering civil society.

"Planners can work through these networks and groups to call attention to policy alternatives that serve the public and that might be otherwise ignored or suppressed by the narrower initiatives of private-sector investors." (Forester 1989: 81)

Hence, it is fair to say that the very idea of CPT builds on inclusion of communities. Citizens are considered to know what kind of planning solutions serve their interests. The focus is turned to local communication and to empowerment of the local stakeholders. Patsy Healey (1997) contributed to the theory with an institutionalist and collaborative approach. She underlines how citizens could eventually even have an impact on power structures, meaning that such frameworks are not stable and given. Empowerment of local grassroots communities through collaborative planning, in comparison to Forester (1989) for example, is meaningful not only in terms of resisting biased misinformation and misuse of economic power from the higher levels of the power hierarchies, but also in a wider positivist sense of having an impact on the structures. Healey considers that such collaborative capacity-building should be encouraged, in contrast to "individualistic competitive behavior" (1997: 313; cf. Innes & Booher 1999: 20, about "competitive and beggar-thy-neighbor positions").

Hence, like Sager (2013), who relies on empowerment of local communities, Healey's (1997) perspective relies on seeking consensus and on an idea according to which the local (stakeholder) community is the one who brings the politics into planning. Even if a certain kind of place-sensitive communicativeness may facilitate better understanding of the structural conditions of democratic planning (see Healey 1999), in this reading representative democracy, nevertheless, seems to denote bureaucracy and technocracy, and outdated classical political institutions (cf. Hajer 2003). In Healey's approach, the community appears as a counterpower not only to the "sphere of business", but also to the traditional "political institutions" (Healey 1997: 124).

Healey took the idea of capacity-building further. Giving less importance to the traditional political institutions, she conceives of collaborative planning as helpful in reconciling the "economic", "everyday life" (citizen/consumer perspective) and environmental "biospheric" dimensions of urban region life (Healey 1997: 163). The three aspects were approached in a rather distinctive manner. They were considered as something external to each other, as something that could simply be brought together in local land use planning *if* collaboration were consciously encouraged and mutual trust constructed. Again, competitive behavior would need to be avoided:

"Given the potential for conflict between stakeholders in local environments, and the uneven power relations among stakeholders, a critical challenge for the integration of environmental, economic and social dimensions of managing change in local environments is to find ways of collaborative agenda-setting and policy development, to build policy approaches which are more inclusionary in the issues and stakes they encompass and more informed by locally relevant understanding." (Healey 1997: 195)

The collaborative approach was sketched to find a path away from harmful individualism. Hence, in Healey's (1997) understanding, at that time, collaboration and consensus seeking within the local context could even serve the interests of the business actors, as they too need to build trust within the surrounding community at hand. Such an approach would also be sufficiently inclusive regarding environmental causes. The particularity of business interests in comparison to more public interests does not appear as a major problem, and a successful consensus-oriented collaborative process could guarantee that all three dimensions (economic, everyday life, biospheric) become reconciled. It seems that, in such understanding, the environmental cause is not a pervasive premise or starting point for any (development-led) planning project; rather, the environmental viewpoint is a particular cause worth taking into account in local contexts by the stakeholders at hand. Public intervention would thus not be required to address the environmental causes, as it was believed that civil society and self-organizing market actors would communicate in a way that accommodates the causes, while the state bureaucracy was expected to stand down.

4.2 Agonism to expose the controversies

The communicative approach, and especially the consensus-orientation, has been a widely debated topic in planning theory. Hanna Mattila (2017), among many others, has written about the Habermas-inspired basis of communicative planning, and how a great share of the criticism concerning CPT derives from the so-called agonistic perspective. To simplify, the core idea in this criticism is that consensus-seeking principles within communicative planning might downplay the conflictual elements in planning. In this understanding, conflictual elements in planning are inevitable and they should not be hidden. Hence, consensus-orientation is seen to be risky: it might lead to manipulative use of power and, as such, to insufficient and biased community inclusion.

Furthermore, those who subscribe to the critical agonist theoretical approach in planning (e.g. Hillier 2003, Pløger 2004; cf. Purcell 2009; Mouffe 2000) claim that instead of seeking (possibly forced) consensus in a context of biased background power structures, one should rather bring the underlying controversies to the surface. Otherwise, increasing the amount of communication within the planning procedures may not lead to increased legitimacy or more just planning, but the opposite. Possibilities to attain true learning between the stakeholders in the long-term in a consensus-building process (cf. e.g. Innes & Booher 1999) are questioned.

To avoid such an outcome, one might call for radical civil society movements, for example, to resist dominating powerful actors in planning (Purcell 2009). The key idea of such a perspective is to enable and activate counter-reactions in order to expose the undemocratic features and thoroughly neoliberal character of the established planning system and the state. A new balance between the liberal market economy and the civil

society is encouraged to be sought by facilitating civil society actors to counteract economic power. The state, thus, is seen as no more than an oligarchical arrangement preventing a true democracy in which people retain their own power (Purcell 2016).

Haughton, Allmendinger and Oosterlynck (2013: 223), writing about the relationship of statutory and soft planning, discuss the politicization of planning in terms of local inclusion. In their view, "it is not the degree of inclusion, but rather its openness towards disruption through the staging of dissensus, that is indicative of the properly political nature of soft spatial governance."

Indeed, a great share of criticism of CPT can be conceived as criticism of consensus-orientation and how it is hard or impossible to question the existing power structures through the communicative approach. Again, a dichotomy between those who subscribe to CPT's more or less consensus-oriented approaches on the one hand, and those who relate more closely to so-called agonistic, dissensus-based theoretical perspectives on the other hand, can be recognized (Mattila 2017).

Despite some differences between the consensus-oriented and dissensus-oriented approaches, they both seek ways to expose the power of the economically powerful: Neoliberalism in planning is seen to take place as prioritization of economic perspectives within planning procedures. In conditions of lack of trust towards public institutions, CPT seeks cures for the dominance of economic interests through the communicative approach. Agonists, on the other hand, seek ways for even more profound civil society empowerment and counter-hegemonic struggle.

What is a crucial notion here, common to both of these approaches, is a disbelief in the 'institutional public': both approaches refuse to rely on traditional political institutions as a possible resource in counteracting narrow market-driven planning. As public intervention – and the rule of law – are easily associated with bureaucracy, top-down control and authoritarianism (e.g. Healey 2003; Sager 2013; Hillier 2003; Purcell 2016), the better solution is to find ways to empower local stakeholders and focus on supporting civil society. It is, in a way, about critical and constructionist analysis about the use of power in local contexts.

In the next chapter, I go deeper into the role of traditional political institutions, and argue that strictly limiting the focus to local communities might be harmful regarding the long-term goals of sustainable planning. Although CPT has been applied in Finland in a way that may have bolstered the acceptability of individual planning projects from the local viewpoint, I am doubtful whether it has helped the planners to keep the widest societal and environmental issues on the municipal planning agenda.

4.3 The role of traditional political institutions: material base of CPT?

In the following, I approach the planning theoretical debate on CPT and neoliberalism through the debate between Christer Bengs (2005a; 2005b) and Tore Sager (2005; 2009; 2013). Whereas Sager's general approach relies on communicativeness, Bengs brings in critical perspectives.

Christer Bengs is an author who writes about CPT from the Nordic perspective, and, as I believe, he manages to grasp something essential about societal context sensitivity that I too wish to express. After reviewing the debate between Sager and Bengs, I will offer my contribution to it. Taking part in this debate can be considered as the crux of the thesis.

Following the introduction of CPT to Finnish legislation in 2000, Christer Bengs wrote about how the communicative approach actually strips away political elements from planning (Bengs 2005a, 2005b). To simplify a bit, according to him, planning was turning towards straightforward facilitation of private interests. Bengs was highly critical of CPT. In his understanding, the communicative approach left no room for representative democracy. Bengs saw the problem to hide in the ambivalent attitudes about the existence of public interest in the first place:

> *"If the public interest could be conceived of as the collective interest of all, then the question emerges how this collective interest could be formulated beyond that of individual interests, or as something other than the sum of individual interests."* (Bengs 2005a: 9)

Bengs' interpretation is that in such a discourse there is no room for discussion about principles of planning (cf. Healey 2009: 278, about "metaphysical higher principles to articulate rules for creating good cities") or about the public interest. Thus, planning starts to appear as a playground for dealing, mediation and facilitation between and with particular interests. He anticipates the emergence of the deregulation discourse in the planning debate too:

> *"A new planning regime with a minimum of predefined restrictions and guidelines and ample possibilities for striking deals on the local level is in conformity with the neoliberal ideals."* (Bengs 2005a: 7)

From such a critical perspective, CPT appears as a vehicle of neoliberalism. Its recommendation to focus on local circumstances and the interests at hand (through local inclusion) reduces citizens to stakeholders, and further to customers. The contradiction to what Tore Sager (2005; 2013) argues, is striking. Sager defends CPT against these allegations: he emphasizes that CPT and its goal of community inclusion is not the cause of the problem, but the opposite. Wide inclusion and community activism are keys to stronger resistance to neoliberal planning.

Tore Sager writes that neoliberalism in planning appears as private and competitiveness-driven solutions to urban problems in a way that serves business interests (e.g. Sager 2013: 131). At a general level, neoliberalism means a restructuring of the relationship between the state and private capitalist interests on an entrepreneurial basis (Sager 2013: 130). Investments are sought after, which, in turn, leads to a positive view of the market-ruled development encouraged by the New Public Management governance culture. Further, seeking ways to enhance the efficiency of public administration leads to entrepreneurialism. Municipalities, for example, start to seek out better competitiveness in relation to other local public governments. Eventually, such a mode of governance ends up conditioning land use planning too, via a variety of neoliberal practices and policies.

> *"While Bengs criticizes communicative planning theorists for reducing citizens to stakeholders, the New Public Management version of neo-liberalism is widely criticized for reducing citizens to consumers."* (Sager 2005: 5)

Thus, Sager (2009; 2013) argues that it is actually New Public Management – the economy-ruled public managerial governance culture – that should be blamed for delimiting the stakeholder community. In Sager's view the ideals of communicative planning are not the ones to be blamed:

> *"The main feature of New Public Management is its one-dimensional emphasis on economic norms and values. Communicative planning instead opens up the process and welcomes all sincere arguments from involved parties."* (Sager 2005: 6)

The basis for Sager's argumentation, according to which it is actually simplistic economic steering of the public planners that is to be critically examined, seems at least partly apt in reply to Bengs' criticism: the pursuit of competitiveness within public administration may start to overrule the other goals of planning (cf. Harvey 1989).

Further, in Sager's understanding, whereas CPT should be considered to recommend extensive inclusion of local communities, NPM has the opposite effect. In practice, entrepreneurialism is observable in concrete policies such as property-led urban regeneration and public-private partnerships. Most importantly, from Sager's (2013) perspective, due to its pursuit of regulatory flexibility and procedural efficiency, NPM tends to delimit the possibilities of local communities to have a more straightforward impact. Hence, the planner becomes "more of an enabler of development and therefore runs the risk of being less occupied with community impact or environmental quality" (Sager 2013: 133).

This delineating tendency is the reason why in Sager's view neoliberalism should be resisted: the number of those who are invited to participate within individual planning processes is limited. Democracy, and more precisely, the broad inclusion of local communities, becomes conditioned by policies deriving from NPM-driven governance, catalyzed by global competition between cities. Once again, however, this should not be considered something primarily caused by CPT:

"After all, CPT challenges neo-liberalism because CPT argues for finding solutions through deliberation rather than market transactions, and because it broadens the notion of representation from deal-makers to all affected groups." (Sager 2013: 199)

Nevertheless, Sager (2013) takes the criticism directed at CPT seriously and explores ways to respond to it. His focus is rather strictly on local communities and whether CPT helps to empower them or not. Ultimately, he rather openly ends by noting that it is difficult to argue against allegations according to which CPT may *unwittingly* serve neoliberalism in planning. It is so, even if he, as such, considers the values of CPT to be in deep contrast with those values that neoliberal administration represents.

To better disconnect CPT from neoliberalism, Sager (2013) chooses to seek ways to empower local stakeholders instead of focusing on the fundamental background drivers of market-driven agenda-setting in planning. He favors operating in a communicative and practice-oriented way on the local scale by emphasizing dialogue and deliberation. Sager also mentions conversion from publicly planned solutions to market-oriented ones. Hence, he reckons that reducing government intervention to mere distortion of market functionality is actually an essential part of neoliberalism (Sager 2013: 129) and recognizes the significance of the political system behind planning's legitimacy (Sager 2012). Nonetheless, he does not seem to seek cures for neoliberalism primarily by increasing government intervention or affecting municipal agenda-setting – not even if decreasing government intervention is one of the symptoms of neoliberal planning.

A slight discrepancy is traceable here: he prefers to operate in a more or less process-oriented framework of CPT, arguing that the stakeholders are the ones who know what serves their interests. For Sager, transforming from publicly planned solutions to market-driven solutions is a problem primarily due to its impact on the local communities. As avoiding paternalism is a primary imperative in Sager's approach, it seems that strengthening of government intervention receives only fleeting attention in his suggestions for cures to neoliberalism.

Within this outlook, there seems to be little room for the belief that public planning institutions could ever be organized on other than increasingly market-oriented terms. Only local communities could resist neoliberalism in planning.

However, from the viewpoint of Bengs (2005a; 2005b), who appears to emphasize the depoliticizing impacts of neoliberalism, it seems that it is CPT itself that actually ends up serving the managerial planning culture. Naturally, NPM has not caused the emergence of CPT, nor vice versa, but CPT and NPM easily walk hand in hand. Neither of them, in this understanding, supports the strong agency of the planning practitioner, even if she would rely on the rule of law and would wish to maintain a broad municipal planning agenda.

From the viewpoint of Bengs (2005a; 2005b), broadening the bottom-up focus from deal-makers to "all affected groups", as the very idea of CPT recommends (Sager 2013), may not be enough. A discussion about the wider principles guiding planning practices is left unaddressed due to the focus on local stakeholder groups:

"Promoting the idea of 'stakeholders' instead of 'citizens' or 'everybody' is a way of playing down the question of principles and public interest while upgrading the question of particular interests." (Bengs 2005a: 9)

Eventually, the discrepancy between Bengs' view and Sager's communication-oriented view was partly left without a resolution. My intention is to transcend the dichotomy of the views of Sager and Bengs, by employing some institutional observations regarding societal context-sensitivity of applying CPT. This is done especially in articles A and B. I will argue that whether applying Communicative Planning Theory makes planning more legitimate – and whether it broadens or narrows the scope of interests taken into account in planning – depends on the context. It seems that CPT's focus on community inclusion is sometimes interpreted in a way that shifts our attention onto procedural issues and away from the fundamental agenda-setting possibilities of municipal planning. The same concerns, to some extent, the agonist interpretation of communicative planning, with its focus on radical empowering of local grassroots civil society actors.

It can be said that radical agonist approaches to planning theory, as well as some of the communicative approaches, have elements of constructionist thinking due to their interest in how power is socially constructed and used in local contexts (see e.g. Healey 1999; 2003; Innes 1995; Hillier 2003; cf. Häkli 2004: 149). However, I aim to shift the focus to such institutional circumstances and structures that relate, for example, to legal cultures. Thereby, I do not sidestep the critical view or ethos (considered social-constructivist by Healey 2003: 107) of those who adopt a procedure focus when writing about planning theory, but I am a bit troubled with its certain kind of boundedness. It seems that even if some (locally relevant) power relations and structures are investigated, other relevant dimensions of the systemic framework of using power are left unaddressed. (These dimensions relate, for instance, to legal cultures and come under scrutiny in articles A and B, as noted above.) This may be so because the focus is primarily on emphasizing "human potentiality" and "action in specific situations", as Healey (2009) described the pragmatist strand of planning thought.

Nevertheless, I would like to emphasize some crucial features in the structural basis of the procedural perspective, so to say (about the constructionist and structuralist approaches in general and especially in human geography, see e.g. Cox 2014 and Häkli 2004). I consider such investigation particularly important when transferring the ideas of CPT from an institutional context to another one (cf. Healey 2011; 2013).

Thus, in the following, I will contribute to the debate about neoliberalism and CPT, voiced in Bengs' and Sager's opposing views. My argumentation is articulated in more detail below: I will present my arguments and discuss the impact of CPT in the context of the publicly oriented but increasingly market-conditioned planning culture of Finland. As noted, this rather theoretical approach is constructed in two articles, articles A and B.

Later, I will construct a wider and contextualizing approach in articles C and D. That perspective will rely on structural analysis concerning the conditions that municipal goal

setting has set on land use planning: the rescaling process of the Finnish land use planning system. There I will operate through the terminology of state transformation literature in human geography (e.g. Brenner 2004; Cowen Smith 2009, see also Moisio & Paasi 2013).

4.4 The relationship of CPT and the Finnish legal culture (summary of article A)

> Hytönen, J. (2016b) The problematic relationship of communicative planning theory and the Finnish legal culture. *Planning Theory* 15: 3, 223–238.
>
> This section summarizes article A.
>
> Article A focuses on the planning theory debate about whether CPT helps to limit neoliberalism in planning or not (Sager 2009; 2013; Bengs 2005a, 2005b). I argue in the article that CPT does not necessarily help resist neoliberalism. This is because of particular features in the Finnish legal culture that are distinct from the Anglo-American equivalents.

Applications of CPT may, at worst, lead to a narrowing of the scope of interests that are taken into account in public planning. This is due to CPT's procedural focus on local communities, localist interpretations of democracy, and – more broadly – on communication as a backdrop for legitimate planning. I argue that this notion should be brought under critical structural scrutiny: the key here is to understand how such procedural focus may undermine the institutional setting that supports the practitioner's agency. Incorporation of CPT in the Finnish planning legislation may actually weaken the municipal planner's abilities to maintain long-term issues such as climate change and sustainable development in general on the municipal planning agenda. Hence, if CPT is applied in the Finnish context too straightforwardly, it may end up advancing narrow market-driven planning in the country.

By arguing about the straightforward incorporation of CPT in legislation, I wish to draw attention to differences in legal cultures and argue that the basis of legitimate planning differs from one societal context to another. In the Finnish publicly driven planning context, and in the absence of politically normative court institutions, one should acknowledge that representative politics has had a widely relied upon capacity to steer land use. This public steering capacity springs from a different 'societal landscape' in comparison to the Anglo-American context of common law. In Finland, institutional representative politics still plays a foundational role, and constructs the planning practitioner's agency.

Further, the planning institution, being part of the widely trusted public administration, can be said to have a somewhat profoundly political character: due to vivid local political

and parliamentary steering – typical of legal cultures in Finland and to some extent other countries of Nordic law – planning experts do not act in a clearly depolitical, technocratic space that would need to be repoliticized (cf. Husa, Nuotio & Pihlajamäki 2008; Husa 2011; Kouvo 2014; Smits 2007; Trägårdh 2010). At least, one should be more aware of the contextual differences, for instance regarding contexts of more or less privately driven planning focus. This is the reason why the emphasis on local needs does not straightforwardly make planning more political in the Finnish context. Actually, a narrow local focus may even block out those collective perspectives/future generation perspectives on planning that are not necessarily brought to the discussion by local stakeholders. That is why special attention should be given to the institutional frame in which CPT is being applied in general, and to the rule of democratic law.

In the procedural and stakeholder-focused outlook of CPT, some essential sources of legitimacy in planning – manifested as measured high institutional trust – may become mistakenly paralleled with mere bureaucracy, technocracy and paternalism (e.g. Healey 2004; Sager 2009; 2012; 2013; about Finnish interpretations, see also Puustinen 2006; Horelli & Kukkonen 2002; Koskiaho 2002). Such a localist perspective may diverge from what is considered the local community's viewpoint. The focus on local communities as platforms for democratic planning has sometimes led to the adaptation of an increasingly narrow interactionist approach in planning, and to the repulsion of proactive public action. I argue that, eventually, the land use planning system starts to head towards a situation in which planning practitioners find it increasingly difficult to keep broader issues on the planning agenda, to safeguard a wide, collective perspective in public interest and sustainable development in planning. Supported unwittingly by CPT and its focus on local circumstances and particular interests, neoliberalism finds spaces through which to penetrate into planning practice. Eventually, the planning agenda narrows down.

The underlying problem lies in the localist conception of democracy and CPT's the uneasy relationship towards the existing, institutional sources where to seek stronger legitimacy of planning from: in the insufficient understanding of institutional trust in the Finnish context. CPT may, at worst, downplay the key resources of the Finnish planner in maintaining her strong agency in planning and in resisting excessive market-driven land use endeavors. Based on empirical studies conducted after the publication of article A, such tendency is taking place especially in the municipalities with insufficient planning resources (cf. article D; Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018). Lack of resources precipitates the problematic development especially in the small municipalities, as it did in the regional state institutions during times when the central government still had stronger steering powers regarding local planning (Puustinen *et al.* 2013).

These factors should be taken into consideration when applying universal planning theory-related ideas in new societal contexts. CPT's ideas should be deployed in a context-sensitive manner that recognizes the unique context of Nordic legal culture and high institutional trust (cf. Healey 2011; 2013). In the article, I suggest that the planner should

be considered "a public servant who is expected to rise above the conflicts between some private stakeholders" (Hytönen 2016b: 234). The institutional context, which supports the Finnish planner's strong and political agency, should be underlined and its particularities drawn out.

Obviously, what might make planning more democratic in terms of the political steering of municipalities might not, however, make it necessarily more sustainable. I discuss this issue later in this thesis. There is a lot of variation considering how the individual practitioners interpret the sustainability-related goals of the legislation. Hence, I argue that the planner's strong agency creates/maintains the *potential* and capacity to resist excessive forms of market-driven land use mainly for those planners who have sufficient expert resources and still are willing to do so. One should, nevertheless, note that planning practitioners tend to set different aims for planning in comparison to local political decision-makers, for example when it comes to ecological issues or long-sightedness in planning (Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018).

To summarize, I argue in the paper that incautious incorporation of CPT in Finnish planning may end up downplaying some of the context-specific institutional features that form a particular setting for legitimacy-seeking in planning. As some of the legitimacy sources are not recognized (while focusing on localist interpretations of democratic planning), the agency of the planning practitioner may weaken. As such, CPT, even though unwittingly, is linked to the more or less individualist and deregulation-based conceptions of public interest in planning, departing from the rule of democratic law. The contested regulation-based collective conceptions (in which the good of the community is determined by the public authority) are replaced with a facilitative ethos, and with an aggregation of private interests (Puustinen, Mäntysalo & Jarenko 2017). In the following (in article B), these arguments are constructed more firmly through exploration of the municipal planner's changing societal status, in terms of interpersonal and institutional trust.

4.5 Supporting the planner's institutionally strong agency (summary of article B)

Puustinen, S., Mäntysalo, R., Hytönen, J. & Jarenko, K. (2017) The "deliberative bureaucrat": Deliberative democracy and institutional trust in the jurisdiction of the Finnish planner. *Planning Theory & Practice* 18: 1, 71–88.

This section summarizes article B.

As a continuation of article A, article B helps to understand how the Finnish planner's institutional status could be strengthened in order to resist excessive

neoliberal planning (cf. Mattila 2018a). The article sheds light on the idea according to which the idea of a community bears different meanings in the Finnish societal context compared to Anglo-American contexts.

The article promotes better understanding of the contexts of applying CPT by drawing out some implicit presumptions about the theory. In article B, we go deeper into the discussion concerning the elements of legitimate planning and operate with the concept of trust:

> *"In the context of Finnish legal culture, there is a crucial political mandate for the planner's jurisdiction based on institutional trust, which is not to be cited as the planner's paternalism per se."* (Puustinen *et al.* 2017: 81)

The viewpoint taken is that of the planning practitioner. Her changing status is explored: how her right to exercise authority in matters concerning planning is transforming. This status differs when comparing contexts of high institutional trust and contexts of low institutional trust. If it is considered that planning's legitimation should not be sought after in institutional sources, planning would arguably be more vulnerable to contextual power imbalances, due to not recognizing the role institutional resources play in mediating the particular interests.

Hence, a better understanding of the *institutional framework* of the planner's agency is sought in the article. For example, there is a historical background to the high institutional trust evidenced in Finland. Such high institutional trust evolved alongside legalism and the rule of law in rather exceptional circumstances under the pressures of the Russian regime in the nineteenth century. This framework can be seen to influence public administration still today. The public planner, as part of the widely trusted administrative system, is still relied upon. In contrast, fierce skepticism towards public bureaucracy is uncommon. High institutional trust is an essential resource that backs up the public planner's agency.

Again, this is not to say that high institutional trust could not also be misused. It in fact exposes planning in Finland to unintended neoliberal aspirations, and even to corruption (Mäntysalo 2008; Mäntysalo & Saglie 2010). Hence, it is fair to say that we need to develop theoretical perspectives on planning theory that take into account both institutional and inter-personal trust as resources when balancing between the private, particular interests and the more collective ones. This is why we call for a new kind of planning actor, the so-called 'deliberative bureaucrat'. The 'deliberative bureaucrat' is a planning professional who is able and empowered to redeem support for her public interest-serving initiatives from institutional sources as well. From such a perspective, the representative institutions of political decision-making could, perhaps, appear in a new light, too.

To summarize, according to the argumentation of article B, inter-personal trust may be seen to support institutional trust and vice versa. One exists more easily alongside the other. Nevertheless, as will be noted in the latter parts of the thesis, the government from 2015 onwards nevertheless limited possibilities for public control over excesses in

market reactivity. The agency of the public planner is not supported as strongly as before. The municipalities have gained more power in relation to the central government, but the managerial pressures on planning – following adoption of the governance methods of New Public Management – can be recognized: diminishing professional autonomy in relation to the municipal management's pursuit for competitiveness. These observations are discussed in detail later.

4.6 Outcome of Approach I

In principle, CPT encourages taking into account broad perspectives and interests within planning processes. Among those who subscribe to CPT (a theory deriving from Anglo-American contexts), it is thought that it is the community's power that could enable resisting excessive market-driven planning endeavors in the local context. In the 1990s, during the earlier phases of the theory, possibilities to reconcile citizen perspectives, business interests and environmental concerns through collaboration were sought after (cf. Healey 1997): empowerment of local communities was conceived as a way out of the neoliberal loop (Healey 2003). Following the implementation of the current land use legislation, Finnish land use planning too has slowly been breaking out of its "hierarchic and rationalist traditions" (see Healey 1997: 293) and turning towards communication within the local communities (about the communicative turn in Finland, see Puustinen 2006).

However, according to critical voices such consensus seeking violates pluralism. This can be said to be the main claim especially within the agonistic approach: the consensus-seeking ethos of the communicative approach suppresses the critical voices in planning processes. Consequently, Mattila (2017) argues, for example, that both of these approaches – the communicative and the agonist – are needed but on different scales. According to her, there is a place for consensus-orientation in adjusting the planning system and when planning legislation is being sketched. However, there is also a need for places of agonist confrontations: in the local planning practice.[3] Radical confrontations can be expected if the municipal planning practice loses its steering role and credible collective character, and ends up serving as a mere business promoter and as a facilitator of investments. Thus, dissensus-oriented approaches to planning theory might be increasingly useful in the future. I align with this view partly: local pluralism should be respected, as the agonist approach proposes.

However, another kind of critical perspective, distinct from the agonistic approach, is also discernable. It can be claimed that the communicative emphasis has meant not only empowering of the local communities but also serving business interests at the expense

of representative decision-making (cf. Bengs 2005a; 2005b). With this critical discourse I engage, too. I suggest that attention should be shifted to the institutional framework and the capacities that the planning practitioners have had, de facto, to counteract narrow market-driven planning.

I argue that in the Finnish context of publicly driven planning CPT does not always support or encourage planners to pursue sustainable planning in the long run. This is partly due to CPT's premises: the theory is based on a skeptical stance towards the public planning enterprise and seems to build on assumptions about pervasively neoliberal, undemocratic and merely market-serving public administration. Strong public planning has too easily come to be associated with top-down steering and ill-natured use of bureaucratic power (e.g. Sager 2013: 188; Forester 1989: 156, cf. Vatilo 2000). The maneuvering space of the public planner becomes limited if the use of expert knowledge is avoided for fear of technocratic paternalism. Regarding democracy of planning, I find such limiting of public discretion a potential problem.

This potential problem relates to the tendency of playing down the regulative possibilities of planning practitioners. Moreover, the problem is not only suppression of civil society in the planning processes in the face of economic power, as some agonists argue. Rather, as it is considered within the communicative approach that the planner should not rise above the stakeholders' interests, there is a risk of downplaying traditionally important institutional resources of the planning practitioner to act in the face of power. If such resources of critical action are lost, the planning practitioners may end up adopting a more market-oriented view in their work in general.

If we are still in favor of constructing the capacity of the planning practitioner in relation to the particular market-driven interests, the planner should be encouraged to bring also the most politically sensitive topics to the planning agenda. The public planner should be urged to facilitate planning debates in a way that takes into account the broader societal and long-term environmental issues in local contexts. In this task, support from environmentally ambitious legislation is needed to avoid misuse of the institutional capacities of the planning practitioners.

We should broaden our attention to the institutional sources where legitimacy of planning can be sought, especially in the Finnish societal and legal context: to those sources that the communicative and the agonist approach do not cover or recognize to the fullest. The democratic character of the so far widely trusted representative decision-making institutions guiding public planning needs to be understood. The notion of high institutional trust in the Nordic context sheds some singular light to the community-centeredness and empowerment focus of the communicative approach, too.

Further, extending the communicative basis of legitimacy at the expense of its institutional basis should be avoided. We need to be aware of the risks related to the deconstruction of legal and central government supervision of local planning practice. It is possible that the central government's agenda on local planning will shift dramatically in the future towards a market-driven direction. However, so far local governments have been

found to be more market-reactive than the central government (e.g. Hytönen 2016a; Hrelja, Isaksson & Richardsson 2012). This problematic, regarding the relationship between the central and local government, plays a prominent role in the so-called facilitative market-oriented leap which is discussed more thoroughly in Approach II through some state-theoretical interpretations of state rescaling.

Nevertheless, I believe overly high expectations have been set on the local communities in terms of how they are expected to resist biased use of structural economic power in planning. Insufficient understanding of the contextual factors of applying the communicative theory has led to a situation in which the Finnish planning practitioner's tools to regulate or reject excessive market-driven and landowner-driven planning are not strengthening but weakening. In some instances, communicative practices have been applied to justify landowner-driven, low-quality and unsustainable planning solutions. Then, communicative planning ends up providing certain kinds of tools of operative justification: they serve as legitimation tools for powerful stakeholders and for the maintenance of biased power structures (cf. Elling & Nielsen 2017) – another driving force for neoliberalization of public planning.

To sum up, it seems that attachment to the idea of local community or civil society inclusion as a key to more sustainable – and legitimate – planning is insufficient. It is based on an strained attitude towards institutional trust. Collective conceptions of public interest are eschewed. The focus on local stakeholders might fit rather naturally in the context of more privately-driven facilitative planning (about planning as development control; see Hirt 2012; March & Low 2004, see also Booth 2007). Crucially, however, a localist focus seems not to ease, at least not in any obvious way, the managerial burden that the Finnish municipal planner increasingly carries when aiming to resist excessive neoliberal endeavors in local land use.[4] I believe this is so when the landowners' power in relation to civil society actors is strong, especially outside the biggest cities.

Hence, it is not obvious that CPT would have helped to slow down the neoliberalization of Finnish planning. To talk about the so-called 'facilitative leap' in Finnish land use planning is to talk about how the agendas of the municipal planning apparatus have become increasingly narrow and short-termist.

5 Approach II: state transformation and neoliberalism

Following the argumentation in the previous sections, Finnish planning is now moving towards a facilitation-focused direction. I have argued that planning practitioners are increasingly in a quandary when attempting to keep broad issues on the planning agenda. I have suggested that this is partly caused by context-insensitive applications of Communicative Planning Theory (CPT). However, such a facilitative turn is also manifest in the current and anticipated administrative reforms. In the following, my focus will move towards structural perspectives and rescaling of state.

I will investigate how the relationship between public planning and market actors in Finland is changing within the ongoing and forthcoming legal and administrative reforms. In general, my line of thought (within Approach II) will take steps in an abstract direction. I depart partly from the analysis of everyday planning practice and provide a state theoretical view on the transformation of Finnish land use planning. I wish to better understand *statehood* and how using planning powers in general is bound to the idea of the state.

The state's structures are changing, and its scales are receiving new definitions due to various international economic processes (e.g. Brenner 2001). The nature of the state can be seen, in the first place, to depend on the use of external (and internal) economic power (e.g. Cowen & Smith 2009; Moisio & Paasi 2013). Such understanding leaves behind the rigid conception of the state as a given, independent public organ and builds on relational understanding of the state. Land use planning too is driven forward by different economic forces.

Ahlqvist and Moisio's (2014) definition of social neoliberalism is one of the more specific conceptions that I use to illustrate the interconnectedness of economy with the public and the (Nordic) state. In comparison to the writings on neoliberalism's history in the Anglo-American context (e.g. Peck & Tickel 2002), I believe that Ahlqvist and Moisio's slightly more regulation-focused and state-centric writing offers a relevant revision of the concept within the Finnish context of a Nordic welfare state. Neoliberal city-regionalism is another key point of reference here (see Luukkonen & Sirviö 2017) as well as Neil Brenner's (2004) idea of new state spaces (see also, among others, Rodriguez-Pose 2008; Brenner & Schmid 2014). Within the discourse about city-regionalism, a key idea is to underline how the state's presence in certain selected urban areas enhances unevenness within the state's territory (e.g. Jones 1997).

Later, I will take a look at how Ahlqvist and Moisio's (2014) interpretations relate to those of planning theorists such as Sager (2013) on the one hand, and of Allmendinger and Haughton (2013) in the English context of spatial planning, on the other (see also Olesen 2014). Allmendinger and Haughton's argumentation concerns bounded pluralism within the local, market-serving setting. The above-mentioned are the key references through which I broaden my perspective – which has so far been planning theory-focused

– towards a wider geographical framework. I will explain why narrowing down of the municipal planning agenda may become one of the key features of the neoliberalization of Finnish land use planning, and how it is expected to take place through adjusting administrative structures.

5.1 Theoretical background: the state as a medium of uneven development

Uneven development within a state's territory is often an interest of human geographers. Generally, (un)evenness is a term that can be conveniently applied to ponder the geographical nature of capitalism; what kind of processes characterize capitalist development in geographical terms (Smith 1990). This kind of interpretation about unevenness and the state springs from Marxist theoretical premises, from the very general manner of describing the relationship between economy and society with class struggle terminology (e.g. Harvey 2006b; Smith 1990). In a way, the state is considered primarily as something that takes care of social control in society on behalf of the economically strong class which benefits from the movements of capital. The state becomes a subordinate, a "manager of that which private capital is unwilling or unable to do" (Smith 1990: 49) to ensure the kind of conditions of capital accumulation that are favorable for the capital-owning class. The weight of the state in relation to the movement of capital is seen to diminish over time.

Under these premises, the global circulation of capital eventually follows with situation in which states – and urban regions – are more or less forced to compete with each other (Harvey 2006b). This competitive arrangement relates closely to the idea of uneven development. Harvey (2006b: 417) states that "the temptation for capitalists to engage in interregional trade, to lever profits out of unequal exchange and to place surplus capitals wherever the rate of profit is highest is in the long run irresistible", causing differentiation of regions within the national states. Neil Smith (1990: 54) is not using language that would be any less colorful: "In search of profit, capital stalks the whole earth. It attaches a price tag which determines the fate of nature." Smith describes a "geographical see-saw", a perpetual (de)stabilization maintaining regional differentiation – something that capital owners aim to exploit. To simplify, this unevenness can be explained by the constant flow of capital from one place to another, something that is a necessary condition for the continuity of profitmaking:

> *"The mobility of capital brings about the development of areas with a high rate of profit and the underdevelopment of those areas where a low rate of profit pertains. But the process of development itself lead to the diminution of higher rate of profit."* (Smith 1990: 148–149)

He continues by stating that such see-saw of capitalism is evident especially at the urban scale: "the centralization of capital finds its most accomplished geographical expression in urban development" (Smith 1990: 136).

Regarding the Finnish context, Ahlqvist and Moisio (2014) focus on (un)even development within a Nordic welfare state turning into a competition state. The authors describe the ongoing transformation of state in Finland from a cartel polity to a so-called corporate polity that embraces a corporate-inspired management culture. They do not limit their perspective to land use planning issues merely, as they widely discuss the Finnish state's past regional and peripheral presence (see also Moisio 2012). Their analysis of the country's increasingly managerial governance culture also increases understanding about the pressures on public land use planning and especially strategic planning (cf. Olesen 2014).

According to Ahlqvist and Moisio (2014), during the post-World War II decades the state's presence in the peripheries was strong. It is fair to say that the state's presence was at least increasing. There was a great variation in the economic circumstances between the wealthier southern and western parts of the country in comparison to the eastern and northern parts. The aim was to speed up economic growth and to stabilize social conditions throughout the state's territory, including Lapland – the northernmost region which needed to be completely rebuilt after the Second World War. Strongly nation state-centered and welfarist planning stimulated industrialization in order to create more stable social and eventually political conditions at the national level.

The pursuit of stability was not motivated solely by economic factors. According to Moisio's (2012) view, anxiety caused by far-left movements in the northeast of the country resulted in special attention and improvements in the social conditions of those regions. The state invested in heavy industry in several locations in the north, on the northernmost coastline of the Baltic Sea but also inland. Within the reconstruction project in Lapland, the emerging consciousness regarding social issues reached the level of housing policies and land use planning, as Kinnunen (2018) has shown.

This stabilizing development can be seen to have led to the current situation in which inequalities in public economy are evened out through a compensatory system that effectively stabilizes the municipal tax income differences between the poorest and the richest municipalities. However, according to Ahlqvist and Moisio (2014), the role of the state is now changing again. The authors claim that whereas during the past decades the role of the state was more associated with redistribution of wealth (also spatially), the focus is now turning to competitiveness within a supra-national context.

After critically observing the contemporary common argumentation in the public debate, according to which such development would be inevitable and unavoidable for the sake of funding the welfare state, Ahlqvist and Moisio (2014) end up formulating the concept of *social neoliberalism*. The notion is about departing incrementally from state-led growth policies and about mixing welfare rhetoric with neoliberal adjustments. They describe a 'capillary' progress in which some certain state features are slowly being

deconstructed, as it is assumed that they do not support the international competitiveness of the state. Ahlqvist and Moisio argue that redistributing and subsidizing regional policies are ostracized and resisted since such state functions are considered not to serve market logic or the competitiveness of the state in an international context (cf. Ward & Jonas 2004).

Here we return to the state as a concept. The key idea in the critical view is that the state is wittingly turned into something that facilitates capital accumulation concretely in a geographically uneven manner. State intervention and public regulation as such are not resisted by capital owners (see e.g. Peck 2001; Peck & Tickell 2002, about roll-out neoliberalism). Instead, state intervention is actually called for to create markets and to facilitate market action. The regulatory framework of the welfare state is tuned to facilitate the accumulation of capital instead of redistributing it – in a spatial sense as well. In this understanding, the state sets up a framework for problematic spatial development by privileging certain places over others through various strategies. These strategies have either intended or unintended selective consequences between different areas, yet within the state's same territory (Jonas 1997).

As Neil Brenner (2004) uses it, the state as a concept does not refer here to any particular administrative tier, nor to the central government as apart from local government. His interest is not merely in the nation state as a clearly defined agent. Rather, his focus is on statehood and how social, political and economic power is deployed through altering its structures, that is, the arrangements between its scales (cf. Purcell 2006, for instance, about 'scalar strategies'). Global economic processes should be understood to be bounded to the essence of statehood. Hence, in a supranational view, some researchers speak of geoeconomics rather than of geopolitics when discussing capitalist restructuring of the state (e.g. Cowen & Smith 2009, see also Moisio & Paasi 2013 who write about "transnationalisation of state spaces" under the neoliberal political rationality).

In this understanding, the role of the national state is that of an institutional mediator of uneven development in geographical terms. Instead of correcting imbalances between regions, the nation state's role has become to intensify the differences, even in a rather short-termist manner (Brenner 2004). It is seen that the increasing competitiveness of the biggest city-regions hampers equal geographical development and may also cause problems in development capacities in the longer term. To repeat, the state is not just a regulator, or something that aims to stabilize the fluctuations of the capitalist economic system; instead, Brenner describes the nation state's role as a site of and as an active agent of global restructuring of capitalist power (see also Brenner & Theodore 2002).

Bringing city-regions to the fore is not considered merely a reaction to global megatrends, but as a result of intentional policies that uphold the centralizing capitalist project (see also Jessop 2002). *Competitive city-regionalism* treats cities as sites of competition instead of redistribution and politics (Ward & Jonas 2004, see also Rodríguez-Pose 2008). These viewpoints are not far from those of Ahlqvist and Moisio (2014) or Brenner (2001; 2004), who notes that

"Within these rescaled configurations of state power, major urban regions have become important geographical targets for a variety of far-reaching institutional changes and policy re-alignments designed to enhance local economic growth capacities." (Brenner 2004, 3)

In sum, Brenner's idea is to describe how "statehood" is transformed through selected scalar arrangements. The focus is shifted to the city-regions (see also Harrison 2007; 2010).

5.2 Urban scale and market-driven local

As used by Brenner (2004) for instance, the concept of scale does not refer to any distinct or clear tier as part of some rigid and hierarchic construct. The rescaling process does not necessarily mean an erosion of the state's regulative power. In his understanding, rescaling of the state should be understood as an intentional ordering process, resulting in inequalities in the territorial sense (about unevenness, see previous section; about spatial selectivity, see Jones 1997). I further discuss some other selected perspectives on the concept of scale in the following.

Within the legally defined governmental system, the scales and their interrelatedness obviously appear as a hierarchic structure in which the local government functions within the national frames. However, the way many human geographers typically approach scale as a concept differs from this kind of perhaps mechanist understanding of the juridical frames of administration. Rather, the focus is often on the structures of the economy. Neil Smith (1990) posits each scale (urban scale, global scale, the scale of the nation-state) as a certain kind of relatively stable (even if still constantly transforming) geographical arena for the circulation of capital. The urban scale, in particular, appears as a requisite of accumulation in the Marxian interpretation of economy. The physical limits of the urban scope are determined by the local labor market and how the workplace can be reached – the everyday life conditions of production.

Such an everyday life perspective organically links to a constructionist viewpoint of the concept of scale. The significance of the urban scale is also apparent from this perspective (e.g. Marston 2000; Marston & Smith 2001). Departing to some extent from the approaches underlining structures as given conditions of capitalist production, the focus is turned to scale as a social construction – to the different ways of producing scales. To simplify, in the constructionist perspective the interest turns to how the interaction of people is actually part of establishing material structures – not the other way around. Instead of repeating merely how capitalist political economy is "global in its scope and impact" (cf. Marston 2000: 222), Marston (2000) draws attention to "social reproduction" and to consumption. In Marston's view on how capitalism works, it is important to understand not only the large-scale infrastructure of capitalism, but also "the small-scale social, physical, cultural and emotional infrastructure of the household where labor power is reproduced on a daily basis" (Marston 2000: 232). This perspective

underlines the significance of the household scale regarding deeper understanding of economic mechanisms – even if its importance becomes understandable in relation to other scales such as the urban scale. It is not only local economies, but also households that become integrated into the international economic flows.

The meta-level approach to the urban – to the so-called competitive city-regionalism (Ward & Jonas 2004; Rodríguez-Pose 2008) – offers another applicable interpretation of the inter-scalar relationships between the scales above and below the nation state. Here, the debate regarding the emergence of city-regions in the national political debate of regional development is interesting. These debates connect to the earlier notions about rising inter-urban competition and the transition towards entrepreneurialism as a way to cope with this rivalry (see e.g. Harvey 1989).

But what are the implications of the process (Ahlqvist & Moisio 2014, see also Brenner 2004) for the spatial planning system and especially detailed land use planning? Here we come to the fine-tuning of division of powers between the administrative scales of the state. Decreasing the central government's – and increasing local governments' – powers in planning in Finland (see articles C and D) can be understood as a concrete way to transform the state structures locally to favor capital accumulation, as I suggest later.

In the critical understanding of city-regionalism, adjusting city-regional concentration processes through detailed land use planning can easily appear as a triviality. More than as an effective control tool, detailed land use planning appears as camouflage hiding the underlying contradictory features of (class struggle and) uneven geographic development.

Brenner's (2004) approach to detailed planning expresses pervasive skepticism. He writes about most grassroot-level planning ("neighborhood-based and anti-exclusion initiatives") pessimistically:

> *"Finally, many neighborhood-based anti-exclusion initiatives are not coherently integrated into European or national frameworks of spatial, regional, and urban policy; they thus exacerbate the fragmentation of state space by generating a patchwork of localized, place-specific regulatory enclaves."* (Brenner 2004: 274)

To explore the relationships of state rescaling and spatial planning more in-depth and in more detail, Allmendinger and Haughton's (2013) argument is beneficial. In relation to the most common-level state theoretical approach, Allmendinger's and Haughton's view offers possibilities to evaluate the local implications of state rescaling as a process. They consider that a locally determined approach, in a market-serving sense, has come to replace spatial planning. This understanding relates closely to the understanding of urban scale as the crucial scale from the viewpoint of capital accumulation (Smith 1990).

In Allmendinger and Haughton's (2013) work the conditions of capital accumulation are discussed, too. Their exploration of neoliberalization in planning in England can be used when considering the international discussion concerning neoliberalism and planning (see also Haughton, Allmendinger & Oosterlynck 2013; Olesen 2014). They describe the

changing nature of "spatial governance" as a shift from central government-driven spatial planning to market-serving localism, which is, then, considered a neoliberal procedure. It leads to a "perfect market supportive scalar and institutional fix" (Allmendinger & Haughton 2013: 10), ostracizing the state's interventions in the local contexts. The most established of such fixes may create path dependencies, narrow down local perspectives on possible development, and close off subsequent development paths by delineating the further evolution of the scalar configurations (cf. Brenner 2001).

Allmendinger and Haughton (2013) reflect on Harvey's (2006a) widely cited general definition of neoliberalism: restoring the class power of the ruling economic class is seen as a primary motivation for the construction of an administrative and political composition ("the fix") that serves capital accumulation. This is closely related to the definition that Brenner (2004) made. However, Allmendinger and Haughton's approach creates a better basis for understanding the implications of meta-level neoliberalization of the state for practical land use planning. Here we can talk about better understanding how neoliberalism is actually taking place, a need underlined by Cox (2014: vii), Harvey (2006a) and Brenner and Theodore (2002), for instance.

From the land use planning point of view, neoliberalism might be interpreted to take place as a transformation towards pro-market localism, something that follows the re-allocation of discretionary powers between the tiers of traditional statutory planning (see Haughton, Allmendinger & Oosterlynck 2013). In Harvey Molotch's (1976) well-known terms, we are coming close to the conception of the city as a "growth machine". Then, the planning apparatus can be understood as an integral part of the machine, steered by local coalitions of landowners, business interests and key administrators, for instance.

Strictly conditioned pluralism hesitantly allows room for wider issues to be brought onto the planning agenda (cf. Allmendinger & Haughton 2013: 18; see also Purcell 2006, writing about "the local trap"). This view is an interpretation of how marketization of planning takes place: municipalities are financially encouraged – via increased tax income – to intervene in the balance of the local governments' tasks in controlling vs. expediting development, to promote rather than regulate new development projects (Haughton, Allmendinger & Oosterlynck 2013: 231–232):

> *"…this new form of neoliberal governmentality has reworked the nature of planning itself, as it has become less focused on the visionary and imagining the 'impossible' and more concerned with pragmatic negotiations around the reductive sense of the 'sensible' and the 'necessary' in the context of the seeming inevitability of market-based forms of policy rationality. This loss of a wider sense of purpose is important both for planning itself and for society more generally."* (Haughton, Allmendinger & Oosterlynck 2013: 232)

The localism discourse is strongly present in the current changes in the Finnish planning legislation. It seems rather obvious that Finland, even though years behind, is following the same path as England. My interpretation is that Finnish land use planning is facing

neoliberal pressures in two ways. First, as described in the previous sections of the thesis, some insensitive applications of CPT have partly caused a narrowing down of the municipal planning agenda and a weakening of the agency of the planning practitioner. Second, the state rescaling process is about to endanger the wide and long-term sense of purpose of the public planning apparatus and to increase managerial pressures towards the practitioners in the localist settings.

In the following, I will go into this strand of thought in more detail by investigating the implications of the state rescaling process from the point of view of public steering powers on the one hand and the market on the other. To start with, article C introduces some factors that affect planning's agenda-setting in the context of the current municipality-centered planning system.

5.3 Conditions of municipalities' goal setting in city-regional planning (summary of article C)

Hytönen, J., Mäntysalo, R., Peltonen, L., Kanninen, V., Niemi, P. & Simanainen, M. (2016) Defensive routines in land use policy steering in Finnish urban regions. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 23: 1, 40–55.

This section summarizes article C.

Article C discusses delineating features of the municipality-centered land use planning from the city-regional point of view. Thus, it helps in contextualization of the forthcoming planning reforms in Finland.

To understand the neoliberal components of Finnish planning, it is useful to understand the variety of pressures set on land use planning practitioners in the local administrations; they act in an institutional environment that is marked by strong municipal autonomy. They work in a double role as a law-bounded authority and, at the same time, as a facilitator of industries/developer of economic life in the municipalities. The central government plays its role, too, when trying to steer local planning practice. Actually, the national governments that preceded the elections in 2015 pushed Finnish municipalities to take part in more or less voluntary inter-municipal land use planning cooperation, in city-regional contexts.

However, the municipalities succeeded to defend their significantly wide autonomy in land use planning in relation to the state authorities. The so-called defensive routines prevented effective planning cooperation and political debate on the core issues of cross-municipal planning during the so-called PARAS project ca. 10 years ago. The municipalities successfully safeguarded their space for maneuver in planning against the policies that were pushed by the national government even though the so-called PARAS Act (Act on

Restructuring Local Government and Services, 169/2007) included wide general-level obligations for inter-municipal cooperation. For some of the municipalities, especially those on the fringes of the urban regions, the goal of enhancing strategic planning on the scale of urban regions was a threat: the central government's guidelines were considered to infringe on municipal autonomy. There were tensions between the municipalities and the central government at the time.

Enabled by their defensive behavior[5], the municipalities have moved on in the form of sub-optimizing planning in the city-regions. On the other hand, under the government from 2015 onwards, the pressures set on the municipalities (by the central government) concerning inter-municipal cooperation eased as well. This is a relevant observation from the viewpoint of the thesis, as the rescaling of powers between the scales of administration is one of the primary objects of study. The government from 2015 onwards (until its recent resignation in March 2019) aimed to increase municipal planning powers in relation to the central government. Hence, more than before, land use planning in Finland now relies on municipal goal setting.

Further, based on the conclusions of the article, it can be argued that it will be increasingly difficult to find space for long-term planning aims that are clearly premised on, for example, environmental or city-regional cohesion points of view. At present, the planning practitioners working in the municipalities are more likely to bring only those issues to the planning agenda that do not contradict municipal political and managerial goal setting. The increase of municipal decision-making power in land use planning, and how it may lead to more short-sighted market-driven planning, is further discussed in the following (see paper D).

5.4 Rescaled planning power and neoliberalism (summary of article D)

Hytönen, J. & Ahlqvist, T. (2019) Emerging vacuums of strategic planning: an exploration of reforms in Finnish spatial planning. *European Planning Studies* 27:7, 1350–1368.

This section summarizes article D.

Article D contributes with a more structural-level analysis of neoliberalism and especially of the neoliberali*zation* of Finnish planning: the changing administrative and legal framework of planning is explored. The article argues that the rescaling of planning powers may lead to increasingly market-reactive and short-sighted planning. The paper suggests to describe such development as an expansion of so-called vacuums of strategic planning. There are commonalities with article C, which also focuses on the systemic deficiencies of the planning system.

Neoliberal elements of contemporary legal and administrative planning reforms are reviewed in the paper. The municipalities' weakened regulative power in relation to certain landowners is discussed. Finnish land use planning has already been transformed through a straightforward decreasing of public discretionary powers in land use planning. Managerial pressures on planning practitioners are getting heavier in multiple ways, and, in that, direct deregulation is not actually playing a major role. More importantly, the article discusses a parallel process by which the municipalities' power in land use – in relation to the other scales of administration – is being increased. We argue that downgrading the oversight role of the central government in relation to the municipalities predisposes to simplistic interpretations about the tasks of public planning, and further, to increasing managerial pressures towards municipal planning practitioners.

We make an exploratory prediction in the article with respect to enhancing local vitality as an emphasis among the municipalities' tasks. We argue that a new kind of interest in the planning institution can be expected to rise in the municipalities: land use planning will be closer to the core of the most important tasks of the local administration. The risks related to the task of promoting local vitality and competence ought to be recognized. This pertains to avoiding "tightly circumscribed localism" (Allmendinger and Haughton 2013), and to avoiding instrumentalization of the planning apparatus.

The vitality discourse has a long history in Finland, but it became stronger and received new elements in the context of the preparation of the government reform. The preparation ceased after article D was published – due to the resignation of the national government – but it may continue later. If these plans move forward in some form in the future, the so-called 'vitality task' would then appear as an apt way to compensate for the municipalities' reduced powers to organize social and health care, and as a way to emphasize the municipalities' character as communities of citizen involvement, culture and vitality. Such development would further increase the interest of local decision-makers in land use planning.

Hence, we see that in the future the practitioners must find a new stance when balancing their double role as facilitator of economic life/regulator of land use. The risk of a simplistic and instrumental conception of planning is apparent. There are several reforms that are affecting the public planner's capabilities to keep complex, long-term issues, such as sustainable development, on the planning agenda. In terms of state transformation, the question is about state rescaling: the central government's tools for preventing excessive market-driven solutions in local planning are being dismantled. In addition, as already noted, the regulative capacity of the municipal planner is being reduced and some parts of it are being delegated to market actors for some issues such as large-scale retail planning. These developments predispose land use planning further to short-sightedness and to narrowing of planning agendas.

In the article, this argument is supported by referring to several studies on market-ruled local planning (e.g. Annanpalo 2014; Nyman & Mäntysalo 2014; Hrelja, Isaksson & Richardsson 2012, see also Rannila 2018). An empirical retail-planning-related case

study (Hytönen 2016a) and a survey study conducted amongst municipal planning practitioners (Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018) are introduced too. The results of these studies indicate that increasing municipal autonomy in land use planning may lead to less sustainable planning development in municipalities of all sizes, but especially in those that have insufficient planning resources. In such a new localist composition, municipal planners can be expected to find it increasingly difficult to address long-term issues and to "guide planning processes towards broader inclusiveness and broader deliberation beyond particular interests of the given strong stakeholders" (Puustinen *et al.* 2017: 82).

Such reduction of room for manoeuver of public planning can be conceptualized as an expansion of so-called vacuums of strategic planning. The vacuum of strategic planning is introduced as a conceptual tool that can be used when examining the relationships between strategic planning, detailed planning and neoliberalism (cf. Olesen 2014). Insufficiencies of the land use planning system may leave certain types of activities unregulated, or only lightly regulated, and local market actors may exploit these zones of light and flexible regulation. If the vacuums expand, this will hamper the ability of long-term planning to inform short-term development-led planning (cf. Mäntysalo, Kangasoja & Kanninen 2015; Mäntysalo & Mattila 2016). Even if serving the goals of the global investment consortia is often seen as a primary driving force of neoliberalism, the vacuum concept underlines the other – local and organic, so to say – side of the coin. Through application of the vacuum concept, one may underline and draw out the dualistic nature of neoliberalism: it emerges as a two-sided global phenomenon that has local engines too. The conditions under which these engines (cf. growth machine, by Molotch 1976) operate are changed due to the expansion or contraction of the vacuums.

Based on the analysis of the land use planning reforms in the country, a rather pessimistic long-term development path is sketched in the article to elucidate how the land use planning system could evolve in the future. Within the context of the recent and forthcoming reforms, there is a risk that the role of planning will turn more exclusively towards facilitation of economic growth in localist settings, whereas the other goals of land use legislation will be downplayed.

5.5 Outcome of Approach II

Above, I have applied concepts related to state rescaling to analyze the ongoing and forthcoming legal changes. I have argued that due to the increased power of municipalities in relation to the central government, the Finnish planning system may lurch towards a market-driven direction in the future. Here I return to the core of the thesis' argument: in the field of land use planning in particular, the wider phenomenon of neoliberal state transformation can be interpreted as happening through a rescaling process. This process heads towards a new scalar configuration that can be considered to serve the interests of the economically powerful. Eventually, it might mean that in the future the public planner's

abilities to keep broad issues on the planning agenda may be increasingly overruled by economic and managerial pressures (cf. Hytönen 2016a; Annanpalo 2014; Nyman & Mäntysalo 2014; Hrelja, Isaksson & Richardsson 2012). The planning practitioner's work in the municipalities is often characterized by struggling with the sagging public economies. A lack of planning resources especially in the small municipalities supports this conclusion: to some extent, local land use planning has less ability to control market actors – to offer possible alternative futures (Mäntysalo, Kangasoja & Kanninen, 2015; cf. Albrechts 2010) – than is the case in the large cities (about planning resources, see Puustinen *et al.* 2013; Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018).

There are novel neoliberal features in Finnish planning. The growth-orientation evident in the history of Finnish spatial planning with its tradition of welfarist long-term planning can be interpreted as a phase preceding the current localist neoliberalization. Growth-orientation has characterized Finnish planning for decades (see e.g. Mattila 2017; Hankonen 1994; cf. Jonas & Moisio 2016; Luukkonen & Sirviö 2017). Now, however, the state-embedded growth-orientation in urban and regional planning is evolving increasingly towards a short-sighted market-reactivity in the rushed local planning practice in which the planning practitioner's discretionary power in relation to other local actors is narrowing. To elaborate this line of thought, regarding neoliberalization tendencies taking place in the land use planning system, I have introduced the concept of vacuums of strategic planning. It is a concept that may help to analyze the practical implications of the neoliberal state transformation process in the context of (strategic) land use planning.

Through the vacuum concept, I offer a tool to analyze and illustrate the unrecognized and underused room for maneuver in public planning. As we suggest in article D, these passive operational spaces open up possibilities for exploitation by market actors by allowing specific liberties to proactive local market actors. The expansion of the vacuums opens more room for a limited scope of business interests within the local "growth machines" (Molotch 1976). Such vacuums may also emerge through deficiencies or mismatches in the regulative framework of planning. For example, in the context of Finnish city-regions, the municipality-centered land use planning system is facing challenges (discussed also in article C) due to inter-municipal sub-optimizing in planning (e.g. Mäntysalo *et al.* 2012). I argue that proactive market actors benefit from the competitive composition between the several investment-seeking municipalities. Thus, the active market actors and promoters of private interests in general are sometimes able to flee city-regional regulation endeavors. Local market actors exploit these opening spaces of light regulation. Increasing vacuums delimit public planning's capacity to cope with the challenges it is facing.

6 Summarizing the key findings

In this section, I summarize the arguments of the two approaches of the thesis. Preceding the more far-reaching conclusions, I will also highlight some aspects of how my thinking has evolved during the years of my research. I will clarify what my interpretations are concerning the neoliberalization phenomenon in the case of land use planning in Finland. Then, I will move towards future expectations regarding Finnish planning culture.

6.1 Communicative Planning Theory's focus on local circumstances is problematic

To simplify, the key idea of Communicative Planning Theory (CPT) is that planning ought to be done in a transparent and communicative manner that redistributes the authoritative power of the planners and empowers local communities (e.g. Healey 1997). Such emancipatory openness is considered to increase planning's legitimacy, that is, public acceptance of the delegation of authority over planning to the planner (Sager 2013). Empowerment of the stakeholder community is needed especially when the planning process is initiated by the economically powerful. Following CPT makes it possible to counteract excessive market-driven planning and to raise the voices of less powerful stakeholders in the planning processes (e.g. Forester 1989). Legitimacy is sought after through communication and technocratic use of power by experts is strictly avoided (Sager 2012; 2013). Eventually, planning is expected to become fairer and less bureaucratic.

Ideally, CPT appears as a means to empower local communities. However, as I have argued, under certain circumstances there is a risk that following CPT's recommendations leads to deterioration of the agency of the municipal planner and eventually to market-reactivity and a narrowing down of the public planning agenda (articles A and B/ Approach I). Ultimately, this hinders the planner's ability to bring broad issues such as environmental concerns to the planning agenda. I argue that this is so at least in Finland and may be the case also in other similar countries. (At least, the communicative ideals concerning mediation between local interests do not fit the context of Nordic legal culture without problems.) The democratic character of the still widely trusted traditional political institutions guiding public planning is not recognized. Rather, CPT associates strong public planning with top-down steering, and with ill-natured use of power by "closed bureaucracies" (cf. Sager 2013: 188, see also Forester 1989: 156).

In my reading, CPT's recommendation to focus solely on local interests evinces a limited understanding of the institutional context and the legitimacy sources of planning in the Nordic context. It is not well understood how public acceptance of the delegation of authority over planning to the public planner is channeled through institutional mechanisms. Due to its strained attitude towards traditional political institutions, CPT

relies mainly on communicative sources of legitimacy in planning. The emphasis is on civil society's input in the planning apparatus. I find such view problematic and underline the need to distinguish how applying planning theory differs from (privately driven) planning contexts of low institutional trust on the one hand, and (publicly-driven) planning contexts of high institutional trust on the other hand.

Following Scharpf (1997), a crucial issue regarding legitimacy lies in the self-determination of the governed, of the citizens. When talking about so-called input legitimacy in the local context of running through planning processes, such self-determination may be enforced through accountability, that is, via the more or less instant and direct control of the (planning) authorities. Or then, regarding so-called output legitimacy, by assessing in hindsight the performance of the planning institution and by ensuring that the outcomes of the (planning) authorities are fair and of high quality. Regarding CPT's perspective, it is more natural to interpret that the legitimacy of planning is constructed via (civil society) control of the individual solutions made in planning processes, than to focus on the institutional context of the planning apparatus, its fairness and quality of its outputs.

Excluding the outputs of certain pro-business interest groups (e.g. Hurmeranta 2013), the quality and fairness of the outputs of the planning system have not been questioned so far in the Finnish planning tradition to the same extent as in some other countries. The public planning apparatus in the Finnish context still functions within an institutional framework that is characterized by high institutional trust and trust in public institutions. Hence, it may be misleading to assess legitimacy of planning by focusing merely on procedural aspects – by emphasizing accountability and input legitimacy (Scharpf 1997) viewpoints alone. The institutional trust viewpoint ought to be considered too (see article B).

Further, I have argued (in article A) that the nature of the Finnish planning apparatus is particularly political: such circumstances form a particular basis for planning legitimacy. Nordic law is regarded as a social enterprise, and citizens have a primary role in making the law (Smits 2007, see also Trägårdh, 2010). This primary role, and such channeling of the political will through institutional mechanisms, may also be interpreted as a certain kind of institutional-level input into the control of the planning apparatus (cf. Scharpf 1997). Hence, in the Nordic legal culture the public planner acts in a singular position.

In the following, I wish to clarify and further establish my argumentation. The following illustration (Table 3), purposely a simplistic one, aims to underline the significance of context-sensitivity in the planning theory debate. I sketch out two imagined planning contexts in which the principles of Communicative Planning Theory (CPT) are to be applied. Context A represents an imagined societal context in which I see CPT would be easily applicable. Planning context B expresses another kind of societal context, one of publicly driven planning. I have argued in the thesis that the communicative approach to planning theory has unique consequences when applied in a context that is more publicly driven (planning context B). This division is partly inspired by Booth's (1999; 2007)

Table 3. Different implications of CPT in different societal contexts.

	Context A: privately driven planning	Context B: publicly driven planning
General description	In this context, changing land use emerges out of a series of consequential development projects. Here, the **developer's or landowner's initiative** is key and a starting point of the planning process. Resonating with the liberal outlook, public institutions are thought to be served not through bureaucratic steering of detailed planning, but rather through avoiding unnecessary restrictive regulation.	In a strongly plan-driven and publicly oriented planning context, democratically steered **public authority is responsible** for carrying through the planning process. Individual planning processes are thought to be carried through in a way that is guided by the more general-level plans. Regulative and juridical frames of detailed planning are emphasized.
Implications of CPT	In a planning context emphasizing land owners' and developers' rights, CPT appears as a vehicle to democratize land use development. Voice is given to the **local communities** who otherwise would not be heard. Quality and fairness of the planning process are enhanced through collaboration with a broad selection of stakeholders. Regulation must be flexible enough to enable such local collaboration. For the developer, assessing the impacts of land use projects together is a way to prove that her project should be granted permission, if it is shown that it does not cause any unreasonable or illegal consequences.	As in context A, following CPT may increase acceptability of development projects. Impact assessment and collaboration with stakeholders may help the developer to assure decision-makers that her project fulfills regulations and serves the goals of the land use planning system. However, here, skepticism towards the bureaucratic powers implied by CPT and increasing flexibility is not without problems. If the **agency of the planning expert gets undermined**, so may happen also to her endeavors to maintain long-term planning issues on the planning agenda.
Aspects of neoliberalism	The societal context is considered pervasively neoliberalized. Such established neoliberalism stands out as **overruling economic perspective** in individual planning cases – as insufficient inclusion of those who are impacted by the expected land use development project.	First, neoliberalization may surface in market-driven planning practices. Second, neoliberalization of the planning system is still ongoing. The imperative of maximal **growth facilitation is slowly penetrating the juridical framework** of planning. It is a **systemic, societal change** mixing political power increasingly with economic power. The planning system is adjusted toward a short-termist direction: regulation capacities of the planning practitioners are diminished.
Ways of counteracting neoliberalism	Restraining entrenched neoliberalism, thus, may become possible if the principles of CPT are followed: **Community inclusion** is the key to empower the stakeholders and to resist excessively market-oriented or landowner-driven planning. In such a procedural view no one – including the planning expert – should set herself above the other stakeholders, as CPT recommends; such a stance would merely support the 'closed bureaucracies'. At best, implying principles of CPT in this context could increase understanding of economic power structures or even transform them.	Ideally, following the principles of CPT may at best help to tune and control the most excessive market-driven planning solutions in the local contexts. Resisting neoliberalism appears here as slowing down of neoliberalization tendencies of the changing land use planning system: primarily, as **maintaining the democratic steering capacity** over project-driven land use development. Hence, recommendations to increase flexibility in local planning contexts ought to be scrutinized cautiously.

distinction between development control and regulatory planning (see also Zakhour & Metzger 2018, about planning-led regime and development-led regime).

With the simplistic illustration presented in Table 3, my intention is not to claim that communicative planning theorists would not be interested in the economic power that pushes land use forward, sometimes in an unfair manner. This has been the starting point for many widely cited theorists: planners must be able to work in the face of power (e.g. Healey 2003; Forester 1989; Sager 2013). However, the communicative focus relies on social learning as "potentiality in people", as Healey (2009: 281) puts it regarding the pragmatist planning approach. Hence, understandably, the very idea of CPT is to rely on community inclusion. The term "community" nevertheless holds different meanings in different contexts (about the discussion concerning community, see e.g. Mulligan *et al.* 2016).

My intention is to say that (whether talking about consensus-seeking communicative traditions or dissensus-exposing agonist traditions) communication-based planning theories seem to best suit the most liberal societal contexts, and contexts marked by privately driven and project-driven planning (see "development-led regime", by Zakhour & Metzger 2018). It is possible that there these theories will be more successful in bringing a widening selection of interests to the planning agenda. In another context, the same approach may nevertheless inadvertently *limit* the perspectives brought to the public planning agenda, push the discussion about the principles of planning aside, and end up emphasizing particular interests, as Bengs (2005a) has argued (see "planning-led regime", by Zakhour & Metzger 2018).

As noted, regarding the so-called output perspective on legitimacy of planning (cf. Scharpf 1997), the ability of the Finnish public planning tradition to achieve collective goals and to produce relatively fair and sustainable outcomes has not been questioned to the same extent as in Anglo-American contexts. CPT and its focus on local community empowerment and input legitimacy of planning does not resonate fully with the Finnish institutional context, which is characterized so far by high institutional trust, widely relied upon parliamentary steering of the administrative system, and – especially – the public planning tradition. This is why context-insensitive interpretations of CPT that ignore such contextual differences lead to situations in which public planners working with a strong public mandate are paralleled to privately hired planners working with a narrower (local) mandate. Such development proceeds practically, for instance, through law amendments increasing local discretion and flexibility in an excessive way – as discussed in article D. In the following sections, I will continue pondering what this potential weakening of the public planning apparatus in the future bodes for the pursuit of more sustainable planning.

6.2 Surfacing facilitative tide?

Regarding the different institutional frameworks, I refer here especially to the hesitancy in accepting collective public interest-related articulations of planning in the Anglo-American context (cf. Booth 2007; Campbell & Marshall 2002; Hirt 2012). In this vein, one refuses to consider strong public planning as something that could be a way to protect the wider good. Rather, the focus is on weighing the particular perspectives in relation to each other and finding a decent balance between those interests, preferably in local settings (cf. Purcell 2006). Such uneasiness in relation to the collective idea of public interest stems from a deep-rooted distrust of and great skepticism in public power in the Anglophone context (Mattila & Hytönen 2016). In the absence of widely trusted public institutions, empowerment of the local community is seen to replace fuzzy ponderings about the common good. CPT too, with its procedural focus, can be understood to rely on stakeholders' abilities to recognize what is in their interest.

In the Finnish context, the institutional framework has so far provided public planners with a strong mandate to bring broad concerns to the planning agenda (article D). It has provided tools for counteracting the dominance of strong economic interests in individual planning processes, too. The public planner's capacity to keep a critical distance in relation to narrow planning interests may, however, become endangered. In terms of legitimacy, I argue that the application of CPT in Finnish legislation has strengthened acceptance of Finnish planning only in a narrow sense, through greater transparency of individual planning processes in some cases (cf. so-called input legitimacy, Scharpf 1997).

At the same time, the tools of the central government to steer local planning and to support local planning practitioners are being dismantled. The functionality and effectiveness of the public planning apparatus are thus being weakened (cf. so-called output legitimacy, Scharpf 1997). I argue that this endangers its ability to influence the agenda-setting of planning and to promote sustainable planning solutions.

Further, in a parallel political process, the democratic steering capacity over private planning endeavors has recently become weaker through a number of direct deregulative legal changes enacted by the national government since 2015 onwards until 2019. This is in easy concordance with the anti-paternalist recommendations of CPT. This process strengthens the neoliberal tendencies of Finnish planning. Such a localist tendency (of deregulation) can be expected to maintain also in the future, due to the unfolding planning reforms, analyzed in article D.

Decreasing of central state control in relation to municipalities increases the discretion of municipalities' planning and make it, as such, stronger in a relative sense. However, I recognize a risk that the nature of public planning turns more towards the direction of facilitative practice. The facilitative function of planning can be expected to become more dominant than before. I argue that the legal reforms in Finland – those that as such

mesh with many of the ideals of the communicative approach, including increasing local autonomy in planning – may in the future lead to short-sighted and project-based land use development.

The municipalities receive more power for discretion (in relation to the central government). I argue that this brings with it a risk that the role of the land use planning apparatus within the municipalities will take on a more instrumental role than before. In the future, the municipal planning enterprise may become increasingly considered an instrument of the municipal managers seeking growth. The sustainability-related goals are unlikely disappearing entirely from the municipal planning agenda, but there is a possibility that they will become increasingly conditioned by the need to promote livelihoods in the municipalities. As such, there may be less space for proactive, long-term maneuvers in public planning that do not serve the vitality of the municipality in any obvious way. New doors may open for private interests in an unintended way that bypasses the broader perspectives beyond the particular and commercial interests at hand in individual planning cases (cf. Mattila 2018a). It remains to be seen how strong such a facilitative tide will turn out to be under the future governments. Nevertheless, as the central government's steering role in relation to the municipalities reduces, the goals of the planning apparatus will be defined locally more than before, by municipal decision-makers and local interest groups.

The vacuum of strategic planning is a concept developed to illustrate the underused room for maneuver in strategic public planning. These passive operational spaces are open to short-term exploitation. The vacuums make long-term planning difficult: they make informing short-term development-led planning more difficult and decrease possibilities to integrate the most long-term sustainability-related goals into the planning agenda. The vacuums illustrate the below-perspectives on state transformation and the neoliberal tendencies embedded within it. Article D presents local implications and nuances of uneven capital accumulation,[6] and how neoliberalism concretely may take place and proceed within increasingly market-reactive ad hoc planning in the future. As such, the neoliberal state transformation can be understood to proceed through a state rescaling process.

Conclusions of Approach I (planning theory) are summarized as follows:

- Planning theory focusing on local community inclusion can also be applied to produce legitimation tools also for short-termist and unsustainable planning solutions.
- Overly high expectations have been set on local communities in resisting excessive use of economic power in planning.
- It is questionable whether a planning theoretical focus in local communities eases the managerial pressures towards the agenda-setting of the local land use planning.

Conclusions of Approach II (state transformation) contribute to the same discussion as Approach I, however from the state rescaling-related point of view. The findings are summarized as follows:

- Decreasing the discretionary powers of the central government and increasing the powers of the local government in planning may deepen the existing problems recognized in the municipality-centered planning system.
- Planning practitioners work under managerial pressures, often in municipalities with sagging public economy. This may catalyze excessively market-reactive planning solutions and sub-optimizing planning within the city-regions.
- If land use planning becomes a core task of the future municipalities, it creates a risk of increasingly instrumental conceptualization of the municipal planning apparatus. Land use planning is expected to support the 'vitality' of the municipality.

6.3 Combining procedural and structural perspectives

The two approaches and the four articles bring some selected and interrelated viewpoints to the overall theme of the thesis. They offer possibilities to reflect on the debate about neoliberalism and planning from the Finnish perspective. Related to the allotment of discretionary powers between the private and the public, my awareness of the potential problems in municipal decision-making has increased during the last years of my research work. I have conducted several case-study reports including examples of strongly market-driven municipal planning (Hytönen 2016a). The transition from a planning theory framework to the abstract and general framework of human geography has offered conceptual tools to contextualize the results of such close-to-practice studies. The transition between the conceptual frameworks is also present in the differences between the two approaches of the thesis, that is, Approach I and Approach II.

The conclusions of the two approaches are interconnected and not exclusive to each other. However, some variations between the papers' approaches appear when it comes to the analysis of the role of municipal political steering in relation to neoliberalism in planning. In the following, I scrutinize the differences of the perspectives with respect to the tradition of planning research in Approach I and to the more structuralist approach of human geography in Approach II.

Approach I: Articles A and B discuss Finnish planning from the viewpoints of legal culture and trust and focus on sources of legitimacy in planning – in a terminological framework typical especially of the planning theoretical debate. It is argued in the articles that procedure-focused interpretations of planning theory have helped to justify local

planning solutions in many cases. However, it is questionable whether applying CPT has supported the public planner in keeping broad issues on the municipal planning agenda. In terms of neoliberalism and neoliberalization, I have reviewed the discussion around these concepts from a more or less planning practice-oriented viewpoint. I have conceived neoliberalism to become concrete as an exaggerated and forced market-orientation in planning practice, in a way that leaves little room on the planning agenda for goals other than the pursuit and facilitation of growth. Local representative democratic steering has appeared to me ideally as a balancing factor in relation to market-driven pressures on land use. Hence, resisting neoliberalism as excessive market-reactivity in planning was believed to be possible through (municipal) democratic control over market action. However, from that perspective, context-insensitive application of CPT may be considered as a vehicle that takes neoliberalism forward, *if* it leads to a situation in which planners are not able to bring broader issues to the planning agenda as widely as before. As articles A and B argue, this may be so if the (communicative) focus overrides the institutional support of planner and the planning apparatus to resist overly market-driven land use. To some extent, this can be said to have been the case in some reforms of Finnish planning: the planning culture seems to have shifted towards a market-driven direction in parallel with the introduction of CPT in planning legislation. The municipal planning institution, which ought to be the platform on which the broadest concerns are handled, ends up increasingly serving narrow market-oriented, reactive and short-termist goals.

Approach II: However, in comparison to the argument above, article C and especially D relate partly to another kind of framework within which neoliberalism in planning is explored. It adopts a more structuralist perspective: there, capitalism would be coded, so to say, into the local democratic system itself (cf. Harvey 2006b; 1989; Ahlqvist & Moisio 2014; Luukkonen & Sirviö 2017; Purcell 2016; Lehtinen 2018 and numerous others). In a structural understanding, the planning system as a whole – including municipal steering of land use – would be analyzed as a capitalist project as such. The point of view is general to the extent that it actually makes no sense to strictly distinguish planning practice from local political steering; rather, planning practice and political steering appear as one (cf. Hankonen 1994). In the critical reading, the foundations of the municipality-focused land use planning system are questioned, from an ecological point of view for example. The public planning institution is conceived as a facilitator and as a legitimation instrument of capital accumulation (cf. article D). As such, the regulatory framework of planning – and local political steering of planning practice – is tuned to stimulate growth and to serve market interests. Emphasizing economic freedoms over the regulatory premise of planning can easily be understood as a manifestation of (help-do) neoliberalism whereas the dependency of public institutions on tax income and workplaces are its drivers. From such a meta-level critical perspective, legal changes that leave less room for public intervention in market-driven land use are somewhat trivial. Hence, arguments according

to which local democracy could help to fight neoliberalism may seem even obscure and irrelevant.

Even if I do not completely embrace the strictest structural logic as such, there are still differences between Approach I and Approach II. Despite the skeptical stance on land use planning adopted in Approach II, I also underline the significance of political steering (local and national) in Approach I (especially article A). Is it possible to fit these different perspectives on neoliberalism and municipal democracy in the same thesis? I answer this question below with two points.

First, I consider these viewpoints to be intertwined and to complement each other. They both rely on critical readings of planning theory, even if from two different perspectives. Through articles A and B, I aim to offer perspectives on neoliberalism *from below*, from the point of view of planning practice and the planning practitioners' agency. These micro-level perspectives are meant to supplement the meta-approaches of articles C and D. In fact, even though it operates with meta-level conceptual tools such as state transformation, article D as well aims to contribute better understanding of how neoliberalism actually takes place through law drafting and systemic deficiencies in the land use planning system. Especially the concept of vacuum of strategic planning illustrates the various ways through which steering capacity over market-driven land use development may weaken.

Second, it is obvious that local political steering (even if potentially supporting the legitimacy of municipality-led public planning and capacities of the municipal planning practitioner) is sometimes at odds with long-term and sustainable planning (Kotavaara, Hytönen & Ahlqvist 2018). I underline that one should obviously be aware of the risks related to local-level land use planning and short-termist investment-seeking local and regional government (cf. Rannila 2018; Purcell 2006).

Hence, in order to promote long-term and more sustainable planning, I suggest a new balance between the high discretionary powers and autonomy of the municipalities on the one hand, and the responsibilities placed on the municipalities in a juridical sense on the other. I aim to complement the ponderings of Approach I with Approach II, which better takes into consideration the deficiencies of municipal land use planning from the point of view of sustainability. Further, although I recognize that neoliberalization of the land use planning system in Finland is still ongoing in many forms (as argued in Approach II), I do not embrace the most critical interpretations doubting that the system could have at least a slightly more democratic and collective nature than what it presently has (cf. Brenner 2004).

I wish to underline the constant struggle between those who want to drive the municipal planning institution in a narrowly market-serving direction on the one hand, and their opponents on the other. This struggle takes place at the procedural micro level (cf. Grange 2017) but also at the macro level of the legal system: the regulative and restrictive role of the central government in relation to the municipalities is not static. It

is changed incrementally. Apprehension about planning's tasks in general is slowly turning into promoting development facilitation, local vitality and competitiveness of the local governments, as illustrated in article D. However, the outlook of the chosen policies is not given, and can be changed.

So far, the regulative and steering character of planning has not disappeared. It still exists, in parallel with the facilitative aspects of planning. I claim that efficient promoting of more sustainable planning requires that the diluting of this democratic role needs to be ended. Although the local public steering of planning might be becoming more growth-oriented than before, it still might be better to rely on it in part – at least if the other option is to shift to a comprehension of planning as completely unrestrained and privately driven facilitative practice. Similarly, even if the legislative and regulative framework in which the municipal planning apparatus works might be tuned to growth-orientation, it is still perhaps worth safeguarding it and its potential restrictive role – at least if the other option is to rely on increasingly market-driven municipal discretion only.

Deeming any endeavor of holistic planning categorically as camouflage for the capitalist growth project easily leaves planning scholars – and, especially, principled planning practitioners – helpless in the face of undemocratic economic power in individual planning processes (cf. Healey 2009: 287). I wish to step one step away from the most general level critical interpretations, and to take a more nuanced look at the planning system. I also wish to highlight the still existing space for normative maneuver in planning policies. Obviously, the current policies regarding the renewal of the planning system are normatively charged, even though they have been promoted through seemingly rationalist and depoliticizing argumentation. Such political tensions should be recognized and explicated. I argue that planning scholars need more analytical tools to analyze this struggle and to support the planning practitioners in their sustainability endeavors. Other than market-conditioned goals of planning still could be fitted into the municipal planning agenda. Again, this is a matter of ongoing political struggle. Even though I see no need to question the Marxist premises of such economy-driven analysis here, from the point of view struggling for more sustainable or democratic planning, the strictest interpretations of planning's nature are not perhaps fruitful (e.g. Brenner 2004, cf. Harvey 1989; 2006a).

7 Conclusions

In the previous section, I brought together the findings of the research articles. In the following, I offer selected perspectives from which it is possible to elaborate the findings of the research articles further. Thereby, in this section, I answer the research questions of the thesis. I will elaborate my argumentation about Communicative Planning Theory (CPT) and how it, in certain conditions, enhances neoliberal features in planning.

I will sharpen my perspective on neoliberalism as a concept and discuss the background of the common-level market-driven trajectories in Finnish planning. Avoiding deterministic or overly generalizing conceptions of neoliberalism with respect to municipalities of different sizes, I aim to recognize the general *neoliberal components* within the explored (complex) situation (cf. Castree 2006). Especially, I seek a more nuanced basis for my thread of argumentation about the increasingly reactive and short-termist public planning agenda, in the context of the unfolding planning reforms in Finland.

7.1 Welfarist background of growth-stimulation

It would be simplistic to claim that the communicative turn in planning (Puustinen 2006) as such would have turned Finnish planning neoliberal – in the context of the previous legal reform that introduced many of the communicative features of the current legislation in 2000. As Hanna Mattila (2018a: 320) puts it, the period of the last 20 years of Finnish planning with neoliberal features "does not represent a radical break with the welfarist planning and administrative tradition but continues many of the welfare-statist trajectories in a new form."

For instance, pro-growth thinking as such was deeply embedded into the welfarist planning system already during the decades after the Second World War. In the sub-urban fringes of the biggest cities the post-war history of Finnish planning was growth-oriented indeed (Moisio 2012). Growth pressures were satisfied sometimes in a rather unopen and even corrupted manner. At worst, the established developer-construction companies, in close relations with the municipal decision-makers, exploited insufficiencies and the vulnerabilities of the public planning system (Bengs 2012; Mattila 2018a; Hankonen 1994; see also Klami 1982, a well-known popularized book about municipal corruption in the context of the construction business). The roots of the current planning culture, together with its most growth-oriented features, have thus been growing for decades. Some of its non-transparent and even corrupt characteristics have been formed with the help of, and even *within,* the local democracy apparatus (Mäntysalo 2008).

Even though some market actors could sometimes exploit the system in an unfair manner, the system as a whole still relied on representative democratic steering. Welfarist planning stimulated growth, but at least partly for the aims of consensus politics and

political power (cf. Ahlqvist & Moisio 2014; Moisio 2012; Kinnunen 2018; to compare to the trajectories in the UK, see e.g. Haughton, Allmendinger & Oosterlynck 2013; Allmendinger & Haughton 2013). The planning-related coalitions of local decision-making (cf. Molotch 1976) were economically influential but did not act in a completely loose or unregulated framework. One could say that the system was simultaneously not only growth-oriented and selectively facilitative, but also plan-oriented and more or less under the control of democratic institutions. Nor was planning practice heavily contested by civil society actors (see Mattila 2018a: 317)- The growth-seeking welfarist planning tradition relied on collective conceptions of the public interest.[7] What I find important here is the socio-political character of the growth-orientation of the planning system during the past. In my view, it is not fruitful to see that growth-orientation alone would turn planning neoliberal.

Further, even if it would be misleading to claim that any individual legal reform would have brought neoliberalism into Finnish planning, the so-called site development contracts (called land use agreements) were, for instance, officially brought into the Finnish legislation at the same time when "the role of public participation in planning was brought in to the centre of planning" (Mattila 2018a: 322). The new planning legislation (from 2000 onwards) manifested, for its part, not only the communicative turn but to some extent also the institutionalization of contract-based and developer-driven planning in the statutory plan-driven system (Mattila 2018a).

My interpretation is that the planning practitioners were expected to start to follow the ideals of communicative planning within circumstances that were more market-ruled than before. In the emerging communicative paradigm, hierarchic, authoritarian use of bureaucratic power was seen – or hoped – to be increasingly contested by civil society actors, represented by the local stakeholders at hand (cf. Bäcklund, Häkli & Schulman 2002, a widely referred selection of communicative approaches). I find this a curious story: it is hard to deploy the communicative ideals in cases in which the landowners and developers or other private stakeholders (or municipal management) implicitly delineate the starting points of the communicative processes.

7.2 Groundless expectations on CPT?

The newest changes in the land use legislation (reviewed in article D) further transform some of the steering tools, especially those of the central government in relation to local planning. But *what are the connections between CPT and neoliberalization in the context of Finnish land use planning?* This and the following section (7.3) provides answers to the first research question of the thesis.

As stated in the preliminary work of the legislative changes (Government Bill 251/2016), communication and active stakeholders were considered to balance – to compensate in a way for – the weakening top-down, bureaucratic steering of land use. However, following

my analysis, one should be careful with such an assumption. Because of the landowner-driven and development-driven elements integrated into the changes, the planning legislation may actually reduce the influence of communication in planning. I claim that the high expectations of communicative practices (which are supposed to replace some of the official controls) are partly groundless. This is because of the increasing managerial pressures limiting the space for manoeuver of the communicative planning practitioner (Hytönen 2016a: 40–58; Mäntysalo & Saglie 2010; Mäntysalo *et al.* 2011, cf. Sager 2009). Notably, in the biggest cities there is often a field of active civil society actors, and strong traditions and resources of public planning. In many municipalities, however, there are few if any civil society actors to act as a watchdog against misuse of economic power.

The high ideals of CPT such as openness and transparency may start to wither in an increasingly development-driven planning culture (e.g. Hurmeranta 2013; Ekroos *et al.* 2018; Majamaa *et al.* 2008) if the structural, societal conditions and starting points of planning projects are not opened to the public. Then, at worst, the communicative approach is implemented in the practice superficially and communication becomes steered by pre-given conditions. On the other hand, in the future, antagonist confrontations may be expected to become more common (Mattila 2018b: 12) due to the lightening top-down-control of municipal planning. If such a development takes place, the importance of communicative practices may increase as they receive a mending role.

I acknowledge here that my argumentation regarding pre-given conditions is not necessarily in contrast with what is suggested in the foundational communicative contributions in planning theory (e.g. Forester 1989; Healey 1997; Sager 2013). Nevertheless, due to strong reliance on the idea of anti-paternalism and community empowerment, those who subscribe to CPT commonly fail to recognize or strengthen the institutional backdrop that has been offered to the planning practitioners to resist certain neoliberal components in planning and to promote priorities of long-term and sustainable planning. Within the Anglo-American context, perhaps, it is not easy to see how institutional trust and social capital could be constructed otherwise than within the most local grassroots context.

Obviously, CPT has not been applied to Finnish land use planning in any pure form that could be said to strictly follow its own principles. Hence, to some extent, my argumentation is more a theoretical exercise than an evaluation of the impacts of applying the theory in any pure form. It can be said that my criticism of CPT is mostly, in the end, criticism of its superficial and ambivalent applications.

Still, using CPT as an excuse to reduce representative democratic steering of planning should be avoided. It is problematic to dismantle the tools that the public planning apparatus needs to curb the market-driven agenda-setting of planning. I suggest that communicative practices are needed but should not be considered, uncritically, as something that would replace representative democracy-based steering mechanisms. This is not to say that central government control of municipal land use, for instance, could not be turned incrementally to emphasize the stimulation of growth straightforwardly.

Even if the framework of representative decision-making may also be tuned to neoliberal goals, an exclusive focus on local circumstances (cf. Purcell 2006, about the local trap) – together with the loosened regulatory framework – would expose municipality-led planning to landowner dominance and to pressing market-driven pragmatism.

A pre-set emphasis on landowner's rights obviously contradicts the ideal of unbiased setting as the starting point of the communicative process. If growth-orientation alone does not broadly meet the criteria of neoliberal planning, an added emphasis on entrepreneurial freedoms may do so. What follows from running through a communicative process in a biased setting is the risk of 'legitimizing' low-quality planning solutions. This is why a communicative process ought not to be deemed unsuccessful only, for instance, if legal appeals follow.

Preventing legal appeals on planning decisions, in general, is a problematic motivation for promoting communicative practices in planning legislation (cf. Syrjänen 2005). On the other hand, if legal appeals are avoided – due to a "successful communicative process" – it may or may not mean that a planning solution is of high quality and that principles of sustainable planning were followed. In general, considering communication as a mere tool for running through (cf. 'acceptance planning', Elling & Nielsen 2017) low-quality planning or project facilitation should be avoided.

In summation, bringing discretionary powers to the grass roots is not an obvious solution that makes planning more democratic (cf. Purcell 2006; Rannila 2018). I do not, however, recommend altogether forsaking transparent stakeholder-focused communication in detailed planning, as it is a way to construct generalized trust, and eventually, a way to support the agency of the planning practitioner aiming to promote collective conceptions of public interest (cf. article B). Instead, I suggest that especially those who manage and allocate resources in municipal planning practice (especially public and private managers) need to take the recommendations of CPT far more seriously – already in the agenda-setting stage of planning. One should be aware of the possibility that real communicative planning processes produce outcomes that do not necessarily meet the developers', landowners' or even the planners' criteria for good or cost-efficient solutions. Planning processes ought to be open and transparent, and should stimulate political debate instead of limiting it. The legitimacy of planning should be strengthened via a communicatively strong procedural focus – in an institutionally and legally firm framework.

7.3 A call to safeguard steering capacities

Public intervention may be used either simplistically in favor of short-term economic growth facilitation and profit-seeking at the expense of environmental sustainability for example, or in favor of moderation and fairness. It nonetheless continues to be a matter of political struggle. Maintaining steering capacity in land use obviously serves business

interests too: a well-functioning public planning apparatus have benefited and continues to benefit investors through its facilitative function and through its stabilizing impact on business environments. Still, growth-orientation as such is not the core of the neoliberal problematic in the contemporary planning reforms; instead, I claim that deconstruction of steering capacity and spaces for interventions in market-driven development may be the root of the problem. This would preclude even the *possibility* of future (sustainability promoting) public interventions, and mean fewer spaces and possibilities for handling fundamental normative disagreements in general.

Undermining public steering capacity would possibly degrade our collective capacity to quickly answer the known, and still unknown, surprising challenges that we may face in the future. In order to minimize the negative environmental impacts of urban growth in the long perspective, we may have to adjust urban growth in a dramatic manner – already in the short run.

Further, I suggest a strong regulative and juridical framework of municipal land use planning that can preserve the democratic discretionary powers over inadvertent following of the market logic in land use. However, acknowledging the sub-optimizing composition between neighboring municipalities in growing city-regions (Mäntysalo *et al.* 2012), increasing the planning autonomy of the municipalities is problematic. Inter-municipal competition limits long-sighted planning and, as such, exposes land use to further market logic excesses. In short, increasing local discretionary powers risks predisposing land use planning to accelerating inter-local competition.

However, even if the municipality would not be the most suitable tier on which to take care of the widest societal concerns, local democracy has offered and still could offer, for its part, the planner a mandate for her strong agency. The local planning apparatus may be a solid foundation for long-term planning based on the principle of sustainable development, but it must be supported with sufficient expert resources, sufficient public land ownership resources, central government's legal backing, and a clear legislative framework. Tools to transcend inter-municipal rivalry should be found. There should be a better fit between the general sustainability-related goals of land use legislation and the practical means and obligations handed out to the planners to attain those goals – in a locally sensitive way.

The communicative turn in planning culture, *if* causing diminishing steering capacities of public planning, might actually have introduced a rather radical break with the welfarist planning tradition. Here my line of thought, as presented in Approach I, diverges to some extent from Mattila's (2018a) more tempered interpretation. Most importantly, this is where my argumentation takes a different path in comparison to those theorists who rely merely on inclusion of local communities as the way to resist neoliberalism in planning.

The capabilities and planning resources of many municipalities seem to not credibly meet the responsibilities delegated to them – especially since the hierarchic mechanisms of the land use planning system have been lightened. As the municipalities are invested with more discretionary planning powers than before (in relation to the central government),

the regulative framework in which the planning practitioner works would need to support and help her to carry these increasing responsibilities. Here, major expectations towards the renewal of planning legislation and the tools of supra-municipal planning are pertinent.

There are a number of reasonable arguments for making the rigid and hierarchic planning system more flexible; bureaucracy naturally is not an end as such. Importantly, the division of responsibilities between the planning tiers in Finland could be organized better, for the sake of clarity and efficiency. However, reorganization of public responsibilities between the tiers does not, in principle, require destruction of responsibilities from any public planning organ or tier. I see no well-established reasons for the deconstruction of the institutional and obligatory framework in which local planning practitioners plan and facilitate projects under democratic steering. This also seems to be a view that many municipal planners share, as they do not seem to disapprove of the support for long-term priorities that they have received from the central government and legislation, in the face of economic power in the local contexts (Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018; Eskelä, Kuusimäki & Hytönen 2016).

The managerial pressures on planners have been channeled through municipal management and local political steering, but it is worth bearing in mind that the municipal managers and the planning practitioners do not share the same values (cf. Sager 2009). Thus, I also find it an important future task for the research community to investigate the relationship between municipal management and the planning practitioners. We should study and be more aware of the everyday mechanisms and instruments through which market-driven pressures filter down to planning practice. I will return to these suggestions later on.

So far, the municipal planning practitioners' attitudes towards economic power on the one hand, and deference to the principles of sustainable planning on the other hand, have evinced some tenacity. Our study indicates that this is the case also in the small municipalities that lack sufficient planning resources (Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018). Nevertheless, partly because of the absence of a normative court institution (compared to many common law countries), there is a need for a firmer legal framework and detailed codification of law that would concretely and credibly build on environmental sustainability. Without clearly obligatory guidelines, municipalities are tempted to compete with each other in terms of regulatory flexibility, meaning that in cases of flexible legislation, only the minimum requirements of the law tend to be fulfilled.

Contrary to my hope for a more consistent legal framework, the current and forthcoming legal changes in Finnish planning can be, however, expected to further market-driven development in the future in a problematic way. There is a risk that the role of planning is increasingly turning into facilitation of market-embedded interests and development control. I expect that the planner's possibilities to invoke the collective good will not strengthen. In the following section, I present some longer-term anticipations deriving from the analysis of the contemporary situation regarding the ongoing planning-

related legal and administrative reforms. In this, I answer the second research question. After that, I will discuss the results in terms of public interest.

7.4 Anticipated long-term directions of Finnish planning culture

In the following, I ponder the relationship of public planning and market actors and return to Hanna Mattila's (2018a) line of thought concerning the history of market-oriented land use planning in Finland. As such, this section provides answers to the second research question of the thesis: *In light of planning reforms increasing local discretion in planning, how is the relationship of public planning and market actors being changed in Finland?*

As noted, Hanna Mattila (2018a) underlines that some of the features of neoliberal planning emerged already during the decades of welfare state construction. The same growth-driven trajectories of that time are still visible in altered form in the current evolution of the planning system. Mattila wishes to avoid simplistic explanations according to which the introduction of the communicative approach would have been a sudden, neoliberal turning point in the history of Finnish planning.

Focusing on past planning reforms, Mattila (2017) is somewhat careful in her conclusions about anticipating the future. I follow her reasoning partly. Political fluctuation regarding endeavors to either regulate or deregulate the markets is probable; in the long run, excessive deregulation may become stabilized via counter-reactions (see e.g. Allmendinger & Haughton 2013; Haughton, Allmendinger & Oosterlynck 2013; Gunder 2010). However, building especially on my analysis of the contemporary planning reforms (see article D), I embrace argumentation that goes slightly further than Mattila's.

Especially, the combined impact of several parallel changes to the legislative framework of planning predispose the Finnish land use planning system to a strong and long-lasting neoliberalization tendency. As there are several parallel renewals taking place (the minor changes to the Land Use and Building Act and the anticipated major renewal of the land use legislation), it might mean that the consequences of these changes will accumulate in an unpredictable way. Comprehensive predictions about the combined impact of the numerous reforms are difficult to make (cf. Eskelä, Kuusimäki & Hytönen 2016). Nevertheless, some sort of a novel scalar fix, effected as the collective outcome of these several parallel processes, may turn out to be rather permanent and established. This is likely, especially if the regional reform and the removal of the regionally acting state authorities would take place.

In comparison to any single (and as such more predictable) law amendment, such a fix possibly created in the near future would delineate and constrain long-term developments in planning culture (cf. Brenner 2001). The relationship between public planning and market actors may become fundamentally reworked. Turning back from such a complex

and structural change may be hard or impossible. This is why I suggest that we might be heading towards a facilitative leap concerning the future of Finnish planning culture.

My perceptions concerning the future direction of Finnish planning have been summarized in the below table (Table 4). In the first column, I call the welfare-statist era of planning 'national consensualism' (cf. the term *Finnish consensualism,* see Hankonen 1994; Mattila 2018a). I have named the following era 'local facilitation'. The chart is formed into two columns, but I do not wish to imply that the pace of the processes would necessarily be sudden or dramatic. However, just as the term facilitative leap suggests, some of the long-term tendencies may escalate quickly depending on when and in what form the forthcoming legal reforms take place.

To pull the future expectations together, I find that neoliberalism is becoming apparent in Finnish planning, in new forms. The welfarist planning culture of the country did already decades ago pursue for economic growth – rather aggressively from time to time (cf. Hankonen 1994). However, as Ahlqvist and Moisio's (2014) interpretate, growth-orientation was in the past seen to lead to better and more equal living conditions throughout the country: the pursuit of growth was an instrument to reach political consensus. Ahlqvist and Moisio (2014) ponder especially the drivers of regional and national policies, but their conclusions are feasible also within the context of the local scales of the planning system, including detailed land use planning. Growth-stimulation may be turning to reactive short-sightedness, with less room for the planning practitioner's discretion on sustainability perspectives.

Currently, there are a number of research endeavors and on-going close-to-practice studies concerning city-regional planning in the country. In the partly ministry-funded BEMINE project, for example, the challenges of cross-municipal planning have been the focus (see also Kanninen 2017). It remains to be seen if the projects focusing for example

Table 4. Towards a facilitative leap in Finnish planning: key processes (inspired by several sources, e.g. Hankonen 1994; Mattila 2018a; Gunder 2010; Allmendinger & Haughton 2013).

NATIONAL CONSENSUALISM		LOCAL FACILITATION
state-driven growth policy	>	organic growth on market basis
comprehensive planning	>	strategic planning framing project planning
centralized public discretionary powers	>	dispersed discretionary powers
parliament focus	>	court focus
nationalized public interest	>	mixtures of private/local interests
ideal of equal distribution	>	competition through spatial inequalities
expert-driven public planning	>	project-driven private planning
authority of the central government	>	autonomy of the municipalities
citizen/voter focus in the context of municipalities	>	stakeholder/customer focus in local contexts
top-down	>	bottom-up

on soft regional planning tools will be considered as an impetus to better control urban growth in ecological terms, or just as another competitiveness pursuit (Brenner 2004: 281, 286; Luukkonen & Sirviö 2017; Lehtinen 2017). Nevertheless, I claim that stronger city-regional planning institutions would, at least potentially, create a better framework for controlling urban structures and helping to fight urban sprawl in its various forms (cf. Ward & Jonas 2004: 2128).

In the overall picture, rather than through promoting continuity or stability of economic growth (cf. Hankonen 1994), neoliberalism in planning becomes visible through the rushed, market-oriented planning practices of investment-seeking local governments. It is about local engines of growth, about preconditioned spaces of political disputation (Kellokumpu 2019), and about the planning apparatus acting increasingly in favor of the entrepreneurial freedoms of landowners and other market actors. As such, neoliberalism in Finnish planning takes new forms through the rescaling of state powers to the local or, possibly, to the city-regional level. Haughton, Allmendinger and Oosterlynck (2013) write about the neoliberal rescaling of the planning state in the United Kingdom, and I argue that Finland is following the UK's path – a few decades later, though:

> *"Since the 1970s, as the foundations of the postwar welfare state settlement came under fundamental challenge, there has been a major rethink of the relationship between the state, market, and civil society, where the state has not so much shrunk as reformulated its rationale and role from being arbiter and provider of key forms of collective infrastructure, preferring instead narratives such as enabling, facilitating, guiding, coordinating, occasionally stimulating. Perhaps not coincidentally these are terms that planners too have adopted, as they have recast their role to fit in with changing societal expectations."* (Haughton, Allmendinger and Oosterlynck 2013: 221)

Regarding "societal expectations" of planning, and critical interpretations about public planning's motivations, Luukkonen and Sirviö (2017: 118) argue that city-regionalism as a key concept offers "a mental framework" to legitimize contemporary capitalist economic action. In this understanding, planning on the city-regional scale can be considered a neoliberal task in which seeking investments and attaching them to the city-regions overrules political debates over planning. The investments are then bounded to the regions with the tools of detailed planning. In this setting, there is no space for political confrontation.

I sympathize with such a critical interpretation of neoliberal city-regionalism regarding the global economy perspective. Nevertheless, I would also like to avoid repeating the conceptualization of neoliberalism as a monolithic project, and draw more attention to the nuances and grades of neoliberalism in everyday planning practice (cf. Larner 2003). Not all planning efforts similarly/primarily serve capital accumulation. For instance, in terms of cross-municipal planning, and public steering over landowner-driven action,

institutionally strong city-regional planning tools are needed. These tools could prevent sub-optimized growth-orientation in planning and, as such, help to hold back the most excessive forms of neoliberalization (cf. Ward & Jonas 2004: 2128, about a "more politically informed approach to competitive city-regionalism").

Further, considering all city-regional regulation primarily as straightforward encouragement of the capitalist project is of no use from the viewpoint of the principled planning practitioner. Given the lack of institutionally strong city-regional regulation tools, socio-economic segregation between the municipalities (Mäntysalo *et al.* 2012; Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities *et al.* 2015) is allowed to continue. So-called vacuums of strategic planning expand when municipalities compete for industrial sites, well-off citizens or private retail locations, for instance. In the long term, sub-optimal planning based on municipal premises may lead to ineffective urban structures. As noted in article D, this could result in counterproductive results, such as increases of private car traffic. Finding ways to resist inter-municipal competition necessitates efficient cross-municipal planning tools.

Thus, some sort of political city-regionalism could be considered not only as "a mental framework" for the economic elite (Luukkonen & Sirviö 2017), but also as a framework in which one could seek out stronger control over growth in the urban regions across the municipal borders. Here I approach comprehension of planning as something that not only accelerates capital accumulation, but also eases and restrains the self-destructive features of capitalism.

7.5 Longing for pluralist debate about the public interest

Returning to the debate about the concept of public interest, the typical anti-paternalist critical approaches to the notion of public interest and the general interest poorly recognize the institutional capacity that the concept has offered to planning practitioners in the municipalities. In a way, the political character of the bureaucracy has gone unnoticed. By this I mean that the high institutional trust seen in the Nordic context has actually obligated and made it possible for the local planner to seek and forward such collective interests that are not directly presented by particular stakeholders or business interests but rather are manifested elsewhere (e.g. in the general goals of the land use legislation). This kind of mandate and space of maneuver should be recognized, even if the local neoliberal regimes would aim at a hegemonic position, that is, to dictate the agenda-setting of planning (cf. Molotch 1976).

From this perspective, one may ask whether the most critical readings of public interest would force planners to focus on the facilitation of the apparent particular interests. Would this end up further narrowing the municipal planning agenda? If so, such a development would not help to redirect and to repolitize the societal, planning-related debate.

In Healey's (2009: 287) approach, critical work within social science can "all too easily end up with a paralytic effect, inhibiting any kind of action". To find a way out of this dead end, she takes a pragmatic path and shifts critical attention to the "situated particularities" of planning practices. It is about finding "grounding criteria for practical judgment in the human capacity for social learning". However, even if I recognize a similar kind of fatalism-seeding tendency regarding the critical structural approach as Healey (2009) does, my aim is to find other kinds of (structurally informed) perspectives and paths out of the deadlock.

Importantly, I argue that the institutional status and mandate of the Finnish public planner has guaranteed her an independent position in relation to particular (economic) interests. This may have appeared as an odd paternalist attitude in terms of participation in planning (cf. Puustinen 2006), but also as an independent position in relation to profit-seeking market actors. The mandate of the planner has a political not merely technocratic character: in the Nordic legal culture the public planner acts in a unique kind of political position. The law is regarded as a social enterprise and citizens have a primary role in making the law (Smits 2007, see also Trägårdh 2010). As such, the Nordic legal system puts authorities into a particular position in the international comparison; something that should be taken into consideration when evaluating whether strict legal control expresses paternalism or not. Strong local autonomy also underlines the significance of political steering of the authorities. As noted in Approach I, these features typical of the Finnish legal culture construct a rather particular and solid setting for legitimacy of planning.

This is so in Finland and equivalent countries, as opposed to many Anglo-American countries with more private-oriented planning cultures. In the Finnish legal culture, the courts have minor normative discretionary space of maneuver (in comparison to common law countries), which – as such – makes the amendments to the legal framework remarkable. The specific position of the Finnish planner in relation to market actors is manifested by the fact that the public authorities have (so far) had a planning monopoly in the country. From this viewpoint, the recommendations to focus on local needs in conflictual planning cases – in order to avoid the misuse of power through paternalistic public interest-related arguments – seem partly misguided. To simplify, such recommendations may lead to a situation of bargaining in which local needs are more or less, or perhaps even inclusively satisfied, but the broader concerns, whether related to the environment, cross-municipal segregation or other challenges, are neglected.[8]

In my view, the problem is not the term public interest as such, but the way it is sometimes used in a depoliticizing manner – perhaps especially in national politics. Here I can easily agree with the state-theoretical critical interpretation of general interest by Luukkonen and Sirviö (2017). However, regarding local land use planning, I long for a conception of the public planner as an agent who is an active facilitator of political discussion. Here I wish to supplement the view of critical human geography (cf. Kellokumpu 2019).

As a proactive contributor, the planner could ensure that broad topics are included in the political discussion about the nature of *common good* in municipal decision-making. This could also work well in the national planning-related debate, even for planning scholars. The planning practitioner could be encouraged by planning scholars to question the locally hegemonic discourse when needed, and to encourage critical debate about the political and case-dependent nature of the public interest. Broad sustainability-related goals are mentioned in a general manner in the common level goals of the land use legislation, for example, and the planner could be provided with sufficient argumentative tools to rely on them in everyday planning practice.

Could, then, the concept of public interest appear as something else than just a depoliticizing, suffocating argumentative tool, at least within local contexts? In this understanding, traditional political institutions would not be rejected as paternalistic, bureaucratic or outdated (Hajer 2003; Healey 1997; Sager 2013); instead, their character as a forum for pluralist political debate would be sought after and strengthened (see Grange 2017, about the practitioner's suggested role as a critical challenger in political debate). Perhaps the community-like, inclusive character of the municipality might be strengthened through such an open debate (cf. Mulligan *et al.* 2016).

The public interest admittedly is a complex and controversial concept. Its bearing should always be explicated with care. It has been used in a problematic way to narrow the local, political planning debate, as critical analyses have shown. Still, it is hard to see how reintroducing the broadest concerns to the planning agenda could be effected if resorting to the idea of public interest is completely rejected – or, on the other hand, if it is seen that the public interest can only be discovered through a participatory practice and through local inclusion. If the planner recourses to such a narrow perspective and refuses to discuss and reinterpret the nature of public interest or common good, she neglects the institutional support and mandate for her proactive action and undermines the inherently political character of her position.

The very notion of high institutional trust can be seen to underline the collective responsibilities of the public planner. Notably, a majority of public planners in Finnish municipalities still seem to espouse the collective ideas of public interest (Puustinen, Mäntysalo & Jarenko 2017). Further, it seems that many Finnish planning practitioners in municipalities consider that particular interests aim to dominate the municipal planning agenda, which endangers long-sighted planning (cf. Hytönen, Kotavaara & Ahlqvist 2018). The practitioners may end up in troubles with particular (business) interests if they cannot refer to the existence of public interest or try to explicate it in a context-sensitive manner (cf. Zakhour & Metzger 2018).

Even if it is not always worth expecting that the outcomes of planning are significantly different than those of the market, it is worth expecting some change nevertheless (cf. Allmendinger 2002: 86). Further, as Puustinen, Mäntysalo and Jarenko (2017: 93) put it, it is not only about how to justify with reference to the public interest, but also what it

actually is that is being justified by the concept. If we want political debate about land use and its regulation to be diverse, we need spaces of political intervention and conceptual tools to support the discussion.

It may be that in different kind of contexts of development-driven planning the discussion about the concept of public interest appears, perhaps, in a different light or shade. In such cases, pluralism is called for, instead of referring to "the culturally homogeneous community with a common 'public interest'", as Healey (1997: 32) has put it.

Nevertheless, the most pressing environmental causes such as fighting climate change or biodiversity loss are perhaps the most obvious example of issues that do not easily pertain to the needs or interests of stakeholders in planning cases. This is why I believe the public interest, when interpreted as distinct from particular (business) interests, should not be confused with the general interest as appropriated by the economic or political elite. Instead of falling into an ill-conceived, perhaps even paralyzing skepticism in the face of managerial investment-seeking pressures in public land use planning, we, as planning scholars, should aim at supporting the planner's institutional status as a guardian of the public, collective interest who encourages lively political debate about the goals of planning (cf. Grange 2017).

7.6 Final words and suggestions for future research

In general, I wish the critical ideas of the human geographic research tradition and the more-or-less practice-oriented ideas of the planning research tradition would be combined more often. By discussing the limitations of pragmatist planning thought from the sustainability viewpoint, this is what I have attempted to do in this thesis. The aim has been to analyze the changing planning culture of Finland from the viewpoint of short/long-sightedness and sustainability in localist planning practice. The conceptual framework that I chose to apply in the thesis made it possible to further scrutinize the recognized common denominators regarding the conclusions of the different articles. In Approaches I and II, those conclusions have been revisited from a planning theory point of view, and in turn, elaborated further in a more general conceptual framework typical of human geography. I wish I have been able to operate with the concepts of neoliberalism and public interest in a way that bridges close-to-practice viewpoints with state theoretical ones.

Building on my future anticipations about the evolution of Finnish planning, I also approach the issue of future research needs from the point of view of the dichotomy between close-to-practice studies based on procedural planning theoretical perspectives and common-level structural analyses (within frameworks such as political economy).

The division between close-to-practice studies and the more structural bird's eye approaches can be described also in terms of different sources of legitimacy of planning.

Much research is conducted in a way that focuses on communication in planning as supportive of inter-personal trust between stakeholders. The legitimacy of planning, then, is seen to build on communicative sources. However, more emphasis could be put on such structural approaches that take into account the societal, political and administrative frames that ultimately support the legitimacy of communicative hands-on planning practice. A synthetizing viewpoint that combines these perspectives is something I wish to see more of in future planning-related research in Finland.

Especially those who seek better understanding about the political and economic drivers of planning (e.g. Luukkonen & Sirviö 2017; Lehtinen 2018; Kellokumpu 2019, and others with such research interests) could benefit from in-depth investigations concerning the everyday mechanisms and vehicles of neoliberalism, and how it actually takes place in planning practice. Further, my research has shown that the legal and administrative frameworks of communicative planning are not meaningless. There is a need for better understanding of the contexts of applying CPT. As the land use planning system in Finland is going to face major changes in the coming years, my hope is that planning scholars will pursue sufficiently wide and societally relevant analyses of the impacts of the legal reforms that frame planning practice.

The ongoing transformation of the state is expected to further transform the roles of different planning actors in Finland. A new scalar configuration will be sought between the municipalities and the central government. It is still also possible that the regions are established, at some stage. Nevertheless, the framework of applying planning theory and the relationship between private actors and public planning are changing. A reform of the land use legislation has now been initiated. The agenda-setting for the renewal process was made on market-driven premises, as noted, but the final outcomes of the process remain to be seen.

Nevertheless, more than before, the public planning apparatus has been slowly tuned to promoting the competitiveness of the municipalities and the city-regions. I underline the need to understand how such societal structural change impacts planning practice, especially in municipalities of different sizes. I also call for a better understanding of the differing contexts in which planning practitioners work in different parts of the country. There is a great diversity when it comes to planning resources and the role of civil society actors in different kinds of municipalities and regions. Independent, non-governmental organizations, for instance, are not similarly present all over the country. This variation has been largely ignored with respect to those smaller-scale changes in the land use legislation that have already taken place. It remains to be seen whether the differences will be taken into account in the pending major reforms. In general, I consider such a comparative perspective something that is worthy of further study: How is communication-focused planning theory – or strategic planning theory – applied in different institutional contexts in Finland?

How will the capacities of the municipal planner change? How will the relationship of the municipal managers, municipal politicians, and the municipal planning practitioners

change due to the planning reforms in municipalities of different sizes? How do the planning practitioners themselves conceive the changes taking place in the institutional framework in which they work? Advancing research on these issues would also be in the interest of lawmakers if they wish to succeed in implementing long-term and complex changes in the land use planning system. Focusing on these issues would be easily justified, not only theoretically, but also from the point of view of practical relevance regarding impact assessment of lawmaking in the future.

References

Act on Restructuring Local Government and Services, 169/2007. Came to force 23 Feb 2007. <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2007/20070169> (accessed 30 Aug 2019).

Albrechts, L. (2010). Enhancing Creativity and Action Orientation in Planning. *In* Hillier, J. & P. Healey (eds.): *The Ashgate Research Companion to Planning Theory,* 215–232. Ashgate, Farnham.

Ahlqvist, T. & S. Moisio (2014). Neoliberalisation in a Nordic State: From Cartel Polity towards a Corporate Polity in Finland. *New Political Economy* 19: 1, 21–55.

Allmendinger, P. (2002). *Planning theory*. Palgrave, Basingstoke.

Allmendinger, P. & G Haughton (2013). The Evolution and Trajectories of English Spatial Governance: 'Neoliberal' Episodes in Planning. *Planning, Practice & Research* 28: 1, 6–26.

Annanpalo, H. (2014). Toteutuuko kuntalaisen oikeus osallistua kaavoitukseen? *Yhdyskuntasuunnittelu,* 45: 2, 53–69.

Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (2015). *Kaupunkiseutujen yhteistyön tilan arviointi. Maankäyttö, asuminen, liikenne*. Kuntaliiton verkkojulkaisu. <http://shop.kuntaliitto.fi/download.php?filename=uploads/kaupunkiseutujenyhteistyo_ebook.pdf> (accessed 1 October 2018).

Axelrod, R. (1984). *The evolution of cooperation.* Basic Books, New York.

Bartos, O. J. & P. E. Wehr (2002). *Using Conflict Theory*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Bengs, C. (2005a). Planning theory for the Naïve? *European Journal of Spatial Development*, July (Debate), 1–12. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.471.6147&rep=rep1&type=pdf> (accessed 20 March 2019).

Bengs, C. (2005b). Time for a critique of planning theory. *European Journal of the Spatial Development* (June 2005: editorial no. 3).

Bengs, C. (2012). Totuuden tarinat ja tarina todellisuudesta. *Yhdyskuntasuunnittelu* 50: 2, 16–26.

Booth, P. (1999). From regulation to discretion: the evolution of development control in the British planning system 1909–1947. *Planning Perspectives* 14: 3, 277–289.

Booth, P. (2007). The Control of Discretion: Planning and the Common-Law Tradition. *Planning Theory* 6: 2, 127–145.

Brenner, N. (2001). The limits to scale? Methodological reflections on scalar structuration. *Progress in Human Geography* 25: 4, 591–614.

Brenner, N. (2004). *New state spaces. Urban governance and the rescaling of statehood.* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Brenner, N. & C. Schmid (2014). The 'urban age' in question. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38: 3, 731–755.

Brenner, N. & N. Theodore (2002). Cities and the geographies of "actually existing neoliberalism". *Antipode* 34: 3, 349–379.

Bäcklund, P., Häkli, J. & H. Schulman (2002)(eds.). *Osalliset ja osaajat. Kansalaiset kaupungin suunnittelussa.* Gaudeamus, Helsinki.

Bäcklund, P., Häkli, J. & H. Schulman (2017)(eds.). *Kansalaiset kaupunkia kehittämässä*. Tampere University Press, Tampere.

Bäcklund, P. & R. Mäntysalo (2010). Agonism and institutional ambiguity: Ideas on democracy and the role of participation in the development of planning theory and practice – the case of Finland. *Planning Theory* 9: 4, 333–350.

Campbell, H. & R. Marshall (2002). Utilitarianism's Bad Breath? A Re-Evaluation of the Bublic Interest Justification for Planning. *Planning Theory* 1: 2, 163–187.

Castree, N. (2006) From neoliberalism to neoliberalisation: consolations, confusions, and necessary illusions. *Environment and Planning A* 38(1), 1–6.

Cowen, D. & N. Smith (2009). After geopolitics? From the geopolitical social to geoeconomics. *Antipode* 41: 1, 22–48.

Cox, K. R. (2014). *Making Human Geography.* The Guilford Press, New York.

Dalton, R. J. (2017). *The Participation Gap. Social Status and Political Inequality.* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Ekroos, A., Katajamäki, H., Kinnunen, H., Lehtovuori, P. & A. Staffans (2018). *Maankäytön ja rakentamisen ohjauksen uudistaminen.* Ympäristöministeriön raportteja 7/2018. Ministry of Environment, Helsinki. <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/160553/YMra_7_2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (accessed 20 March 2019).

Elling, B. & H. N. Nielsen (2018). The misleading of public participation in environmental assessment–exploring four infrastructure cases in Denmark. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning* 20: 3, 282–297.

Eskelä, E., Kuusimäki, A. & J. Hytönen (2016). Miten maankäytön suunnittelujärjestelmä muuttuu? *Yhdyskuntasuunnittelu* 54: 4.

Fairclough, N. (2013). Critical discourse analysis and critical policy studies. *Critical Policy Studies* 7: 2, 177–197.

Forester, J. (1989). *Planning In The Face of Power.* University of California Press, Berkeley.

Forester, J. (1993). *Critical Theory, Public Policy, and Planning Practice.* State University of New York Press, Albany.

Goodwin, M., Jones, M. & R. Jones (2005). Devolution, constitutional change and economic development: Explaining and understanding the new institutional geographies of the British state. *Regional Studies* 38: 4, 421–436.

Government bill 251/2016. Government bill on amendment in Land Use and Building Act. <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/esitykset/he/2016/20160251> (accessed 30 Aug 2019).

Grange, K. (2017). Planners – A silenced profession? The politicisation of planning and the need for fearless speech. *Planning Theory*, 16: 3, 275–295.

Gunder, M. (2010). Planning as the ideology of (neoliberal) space. *Planning Theory* 9: 4, 298–314.

Hajer, M. (2003). Policy without polity? Policy analysis and the institutional void. *Policy Sciences* 36, 175–195.

Hankonen, J. (1994). *Lähiöt ja tehokkuuden yhteiskunta: Suunnittelujärjestelmän läpimurto suomalaisten asuntoalueiden rakentumisessa 1960-luvulla*. Gaudeamus, Otatieto Oy & TTKK Arkkitehtuurin osasto, Tampere. Doctoral dissertation.

Harrison, J. (2007). From competitive regions to competitive city-regions: a new orthodoxy, but some old mistakes. *Journal of Economic Geography* 7, 311–332.

Harrison, J. (2010). Networks of connectivity, territorial fragmentation, uneven development: The new politics of city-regionalism. *Political Geography* 29, 17–27.

Harvey, D. (1989). From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation in urban governance in late capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 71(1), 3–17.

Harvey, D. (2006a). Neo-Liberalism as Creative Destruction. *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography 88*: 2. Geography and Power, the Power of Geography, 145–158.

Harvey, D. (2006b). *The limits to capital*. Verso, London; New York.

Haughton, G., Allmendinger, P. & S. Oosterlynck (2013). Spaces of neoliberal experimentation: soft spaces, postpolitics, and neoliberal governmentality. *Environment and Planning A* 45: 1, 217–234.

Healey, P. (1997). *Collaborative Planning. Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies.* MacMillan Press LTD, London.

Healey, P. (1999). Institutionalist analysis, communicative planning, and shaping places. *Journal of planning education and research* 19: 2, 111–121.

Healey, P. (2003). Collaborative planning in perspective. *Planning theory 2*: 2, 101–123.

Healey, P. (2004). Creativity and urban governance. *Policy Studies* 25: 2, 87–102.

Healey, P. (2009). The pragmatic tradition in planning thought. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 28: 3, 277–292.

Healey, P. (2011). The universal and the contingent: Some reflections on the transnational flow of planning ideas and practices. *Planning Theory* 11: 2, 188–207.

Healey, P. (2013). Circuits of knowledge and techniques: The transnational flow of planning ideas and practices. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37: 5, 1510–1525.

Hillier, J. (2003). `Agon'izing Over Consensus: Why Habermasian Ideals cannot be 'Real'. *Planning Theory* 2: 1, 37–59.

Hirt, S. (2012). Mixed use by default: How the Europeans (don't) Zone. *Journal of Planning Literature* 27: 4, 375–393.

Horelli, L. & H. Kukkonen (2002). Osallistuminen, ympäristö, vuoropuhelu. *In* Bäcklund, P., Häkli, J. & H. Schulman (eds.): *Osalliset ja osaajat. Kansalaiset kaupungin suunnittelussa,* 243–259. Gaudeamus, Helsinki.

Horelli, L. & S. Wallin (2013). Starting points. *In* Horelli, L. (eds.): *New Approaches to Urban Planning – Insights from Participatory Communities,* 11–20. Aalto University publication series Science+Technology 10/2013. Unigrafia Oy, Helsinki.

Hrelja, R., Isaksson, K. & T. Richardsson (2012). IKEA and small city development in Sweden: Planning myths, realities, and unsustainable mobilities. *International Planning Studies* 17: 2, 125–145.

Huovinen, J. (2017). Kunnat elinvoiman moottoreiksi. *In* Nyholm I., Haveri A., Majoinen K. & M. Pekola-Sjöblom (eds.): *Tulevaisuuden kunta,* 394–404. Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. <http://shop.kuntaliitto.fi/download.php?filename=uploads/acta264_sisalto_ebook.pdf> (accessed 20 March 2019).

Hurmeranta, M. (2013). *Kaavoihin kangistuneet. Tusina ratkaisua kaavoituksen hitauteen ja tehottomuuteen.* Elinkeinoelämän valtuuskunta. Taloustieto Oy. <https://www.eva.fi/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Kaavoihin-kangistuneet.pdf> (accessed 20 March 2019).

Husa, J. (2011). *The Stories we tell ourselves – About Nordic law in specific.* EDILEX Edita Publishing Oy. <http://www.edilex.fi/artikkelit/8060.pdf> (accessed 20 March 2019).

Husa, J., Nuotio, K. & H. Pihlajamäki (2008). *Nordic law – between tradition and dynamism.* Ticom Tilburg institute of comparative and transnational law, working paper No. 2008/10. Faculty of Law, Tilburg University. <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1287088> (accessed 20 March 2019).

Hytönen, J. (2016a). *Kuntien ja valtion välinen vastuiden ja vallan jako yhdyskuntapolitiikassa*. Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. <http://shop.kunnat.net/download.php?filename=uploads/1781yhdyskuntapol_vastuutjavalta_ebook.pdf> (accessed 20 March 2019).

Hytönen, J. (2016b). The problematic relationship of communicative planning and the Finnish legal culture. *Planning Theory* 15: 3, 223–238.

Hytönen, J. & T. Ahlqvist (2019). Emerging vacuums of strategic planning: An exploration of reforms in Finnish spatial planning. *European Planning Studies* 27: 7, 1350–1368

Hytönen, J., Akkila, I. & R. Mäntysalo (2011)(eds.). *Kaupunkiseutujen kasvukivut. Kuntien maankäyttöpolitiikka ja suunnitteluyhteistyö viidellä kaupunkiseudulla.* Paras-ARTTU-tutkimuksen julkaisuja nro 15. Aalto University and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Helsinki.

Hytönen, J., Kotavaara, N. & T. Ahlqvist (2018). *Elinvoiman askelmerkkejä ja ristiriitoja. Maankäytön suunnittelijoiden näkemyksiä kuntien tulevaisuuteen.* ARTTU2-tutkimusohjelman julkaisusarja 5/2018. Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. <http://shop.kunnat.net/download.php?filename=uploads/arttunro5_2018.pdf> (accessed 20 March 2019).

Hytönen, J., Mäntysalo, R., Akkila, I., Kanninen, V. & P. Niemi (2012)(eds.). *Kaupunkiseutujen kasvukivut II. Päätelmiä maankäytön suunnitteluyhteistyön kehityksestä viidellä kaupunkiseudulla.* Evaluation Research Programme ARTTU Studies 22. Acta Publications 241. Aalto University and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Helsinki.

Hytönen, J., Mäntysalo, R., Peltonen, L., Kanninen, V., Niemi, P. & M. Simanainen (2016). Defensive routines in land use policy steering in Finnish urban regions. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 23: 1, 40–55.

Häkli, J. (2004). *Meta Hodos. Johdatus ihmismaantieteeseen.* Osuuskunta Vastapaino, Tampere.

Innes, J. E. (1995). Planning theory's emerging paradigm: Communicative action and interactive practice. *Journal of planning education and research* 14: 3, 183–189.

Innes, J. E. & D. E. Booher (1999). Consensus building as role playing and bricolage: Toward a theory of collaborative planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 65: 1, 9–26.

Jessop, B. (1994). The transition to post-Fordism and the Schumpeterian workfare state. *In* Burrows, R. & B. Loader (eds.): *Towards a Post-Fordist Welfare State?,* 13–37. Routledge, London and New York.

Jessop, B. (2000). The crisis of the national spatio-temporal fix and the tendential ecological dominance of globalizing capitalism. *International journal of urban and regional research* 24: 2, 323–360.

Jessop, B. (2002). Liberalism, neoliberalism, and urban governance: A state–theoretical perspective. *Antipode* 34: 3, 452–472.

Jonas, A. & S. Moisio (2016). City regionalism as geopolitical processes: A new framework for analysis. *Progress in Human Geography* 42: 3, 350–370.

Jones, M. R. (1997). Spatial selectivity of the state? The regulationist enigma and local struggles over economic governance. *Environment and Planning A* 29: 5, 831–864.

Kanninen, V. (2017). *Strateginen kaupunkiseutu – Spatiaalinen suunnittelu radikaalina yhteensovittamisena.* Aalto University publication series. Doctoral dissertations 227/2017.

Kellokumpu, V. (2019). Kuka hallitsee tulevaa? – Visiointi poliittisen hallinnan työkaluna. *Versus*-online forum. <https://www.versuslehti.fi/gradusta-asiaa/kuka-hallitsee-tulevaa-visiointi-poliittisen-hallinnan-tyokaluna/> (accessed 20 March 2019).
Kinnunen, V. (2018). Tulevaisuuksien muotoiluja Lapin varhaisessa seutusuunnittelussa. *Alue ja ympäristö* 47: 1, 31–49.
Klami, H. T. (1982). *Turun tauti: kansanvallan kriisi suomalaisessa ympäristöpolitiikassa.* WSOY, Juva.
Klosterman, R. E. (1985). Arguments for and against planning. *Town planning review* 56: 1, 5.
Kouvo, A. (2014). *Luottamuksen lähteet. Vertaileva tutkimus yleistynyttä luottamusta synnyttävistä mekanismeista*. Annales Universitatis Turkuensis C 381, University of Turku. Doctoral dissertation. Painosalama Oy, Turku.
Koskiaho, B. (2002). Onko osallisuus vahvaa demokratiaa? Maankäyttö- ja rakennuslain soveltamisesta. *In* Bäcklund, P., Häkli, J. & H. Schulman (eds.): *Osalliset ja osaajat. Kansalaiset kaupungin suunnittelussa,* 36–57. Gaudeamus, Helsinki.
Kyttä, M., Broberg, A., Tzoulas, T. & K. Snabb (2013). Towards contextually sensitive urban densification: Location-based softGIS knowledge revealing perceived residential environmental quality. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 113, 30–46.
Laine, M., Bamberg J. & P. Jokinen (2007). Tapaustutkimuksen käytäntö ja teoria. *In* Laine, M., Bamberg, J. & P. Jokinen (eds.): *Tapaustutkimuksen taito* (3rd edition), 9–38. Gaudeamus, Helsinki.
Laine, M., Leino, H. & M. Santaoja (2007). Keskustan rajattu merkitys. Tapaus Tampereen keskustan liikenneosayleiskaava. *Yhdyskuntasuunnittelu* 45: 1, 6–21.
Land Use and Building Act (132/1999). Came to force 1st Jan 2000. <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1999/19990132> (accessed 30 Aug 2019).
Larner, W. (2003). Neoliberalism? *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21, 509–512.
Lehtinen, A. (2017). Kaupunkisuunnittelu ja kasvun keskittämisen rajat. *In* Lehtinen, A. & I. Pyy (eds.): *Mitä on laadullinen kaupunkisuunnittelu?,* 67–76. Tutkimusjulkaisu-sarja nro 104. KAKS Kunnallisalan kehittämissäätiö, Keuruu.
Lehtinen, A. (2018). Degrowth in city planning. *Fennia* 196: 1, 43–57.
Leino, H. (2000). Vuorovaikutus ja kansalaisten osallistuminen koetteella: Tapaustutkimus Tampereen Vuoreksesta. *In* Koskiaho, B., Leino, H. & T. Mäkelä (Eds.): *Urbaani osallisuus. Tarkastelussa uusi maankäyttö- ja rakennuslaki,* 65–95. Civil Society Papers 2. Tampereen yliopisto, Tampere.
Luukkonen, J. & H. Sirviö (2017). Kaupunkiregionalismi ja epäpolitisoinnin politiikka: talousmaantieteellinen imaginääri aluepoliittisten käytäntöjen vastaansanomattomana viitekohteena. *Politiikka* 59: 2, 114–132.
Majamaa, W., Kuronen, M., Kostiainen, J. & C. Heywood (2008). A new customer-oriented participation method for communicative planning. *International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis* 1: 1, 68–80.
March, A. & N. Low (2004). Knowing and steering: Mediatization, planning and democracy in Victoria, Australia. *Planning Theory* 3: 1, 41–69.
Marcuse, P. (2009). From justice planning to commons planning. *In* Marcuse, P., Connolly, J., Novy, J., Olivo, I., Potter, C. & J. Steil (eds.): *Searching for the just city. Debates in Urban Theory and Practice,* 111–122. Routledge, New York.
Marston, S. A. (2000). The Social Construction of Scale. *Progress in Human Geography* 24: 2, 219–242.
Marston, S. A. & N. Smith (2001). States, Scales and Households: Limits to Scale Thinking? A Response to Brenner. *Progress in Human Geography* 25: 4, 615–619.
Mattila, H. (2016). Can collaborative planning go beyond locally focused notions of the “public interest”? The potential of Habermas’ concept of “generalizable interest” in pluralist and trans-scalar planning discourses. *Planning Theory* 15: 4, 344–365.
Mattila, H. (2017). *Revisiting Habermas. Exploring the Theoretical Roots and Contemporary Challenges of Communicative Urban and Regional Planning.* Aalto University publication series. Doctoral dissertations 91/2017. Unigrafia Oy, Helsinki.
Mattila, H. (2018a) Public participation and legitimacy management in planning. A Habermasian Perspective to Finnish Welfarist Planning Tradition. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 100: 4, 309–328.
Mattila, H. (2018b). The “Aesthetic Turn” as a Bridge between Communicative and Agonist Planning Theories: Exploring the interplay of “consensus” and “dissensus” with a view on its implications for Finnish planning. *Architectural Research in Finland* 2: 1, 94–113.
Mattila, H. & J. Hytönen (2016). Lost in translation? *Yhdyskuntasuunnittelu* 54: 2, 113–115.

Mayring, P. (2014). *Qualitative Content Analysis: theoretical foundation, basic procedures and software solution*. Klagenfurt. <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/39517> (accessed 30 July 2019).
McGuirk, P. M. (2004). State, strategy, and scale in the competitive city: a neo-Gramscian analysis of the governance of 'global Sydney'. *Environment and planning A* 36: 6, 1019–1043.
Ministry of Environment (2018). *Keskustelupaperi maankäyttö- ja rakennuslain uudistamisen suuntaviivoiksi.* 12.4.2018. <https://www.ym.fi/download/noname/%7B221ACCBE-9D43-4424-B74D-BE5BC07FCB46%7D/136705> (accessed 19 March 2019).
Moisio, S. (2012). *Valtio, alue, politiikka: Suomen tilasuhteiden sääntely toisesta maailmansodasta nykypäivään*. Vastapaino, Tampere.
Moisio, S. & A. Paasi (2013). Beyond state-centricity: Geopolitics of changing state spaces. *Geopolitics* 18: 2, 255–266.
Molotch, H. (1976). The city as a growth machine: Toward a political economy of place. *American journal of sociology*, *82:* 2, 309–332.
Mouffe, C. (2000). Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism. Political Science Series 72. Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna.
Mulligan, M., Steele, W., Rickards, L. & H. Fünfgeld (2016). Keywords in planning: what do we mean by 'community resilience'? *International Planning Studies* 21: 4, 348–361.
Mäkelä, T. (2000). Perustuslain turvaamat osallistumisoikeudet ja niiden toteutuminen maankäyttö- ja rakennuslain mukaisessa kaavoitusmenettelyssä. *In* Koskiaho, B., Leino, H. & T. Mäkelä (eds.): *Urbaani osallisuus. Tarkastelussa uusi maankäyttö- ja rakennuslaki,* 49–64. Civil Society Papers 2. Tampereen yliopisto, Tampere.
Mäntysalo, R. (2008). Dialectics of power: the case of Tulihta land-use agreement. *Planning Theory & Practice* 9: 1, 81–96.
Mäntysalo, R., Kallio, O., Niemi, P., Vakkuri, J. & J. Tammi (2012). Suuruuden ekonomiaa ja repaleisia kuntarakenteita: yhdyskunta- ja kustannusrakenteiden kytkentöjä Paras-kaupunkiseuduilla. *Kunnallistieteellinen aikakauskirja* 40: 4, 327–345.
Mäntysalo, R., Kangasoja, J. K. & V. Kanninen (2015). The paradox of strategic spatial planning: A theoretical outline with a view on Finland. *Planning Theory & Practice* 16: 2, 169–183.
Mäntysalo, R. & H. Mattila (2016). Elinkeinoelämän kilpailunäkökulman huomioiminen kunnan maankäyttöpolitiikassa. *In* Puustinen, S., Mäntysalo, R. & I. Karppi (eds.): *Strateginen eheyttäminen kaupunkiseuduilla: Näkökulmia kestävän maankäytön ja julkisen talouden kysymyksiin,* 62–86. Valtioneuvoston selvitys- ja tutkimustoiminnan julkaisusarja No. 4/2016.
Mäntysalo, R., Peltonen, L., Kanninen, V., Niemi, P., Hytönen, J. & M. Simanainen (2010). *Keskuskaupungin ja kehyskunnan jännitteiset kytkennät. Viiden kaupunkiseudun yhdyskuntarakenne ja suunnitteluyhteistyö Paras-hankkeen käynnistysvaiheessa.* ARTTU Studies 2. Acta Publications 217. Centre for Urban and Regional Studies and Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Helsinki.
Mäntysalo, R. & I.-L. Saglie (2010). Private Influence Preceding Public Involvement: Strategies for Legitimizing Preliminary Partnership Arrangements in Urban Housing Planning in Norway and Finland. *Planning Theory & Practice* 11: 39, 317–338.
Mäntysalo, R., Saglie, I.-L. & G. Cars (2011). Between Input Legitimacy and Output Efficiency: Defensive Routines and Agonistic Reflectivity in Nordic Land-Use Planning. *European Planning Studies* 19: 12, 2109–2126.
Nyman, K. & R. Mäntysalo (2014). Patologisia piirteitä maakäyttö- ja rakennuslain sovelluksissa. Tapaus Savonlinnan Kasinonsaari. *Kunnallistieteellinen aikakauskirja* 42: 3, 324–339.
Olesen, K. (2014). The Neoliberalisation of strategic spatial planning. *Planning Theory* 13: 3, 288–303.
Peck, J. (2001). Neoliberalizing states: thin policies/hard outcomes. *Progress in Human Geography* 25*:* 3, 445–455.
Peck, J. & A. Tickell (2002). Neoliberalizing Space. *Antipode* 34: 3, 380–404.
Peltonen, L. & J. Kangasoja (2009). Konfliktien kartoitus suunnittelun apuvälineenä. *Yhdyskuntasuunnittelu* 47: 4, 88–97.
Peltonen, L., Verkasalo, A., Mynttinen, E. & J. Kangasoja (2012). *Sovittelu osana paikallisten ympäristökiistojen hallintaa. Maankäyttö- ja ympäristökiistojen sovittelun kokeiluhankkeen (SOMARI) kokemuksia, tuloksia ja arviointia.* Aalto yliopiston julkaisusarja Tiede + teknologia 9/2012. Aalto University, Helsinki.
Peltonen, L. & S. Villanen (2004). *Maankäytön konfliktit ja niiden ratkaisumahdollisuudet kaavoituksessa – Osa I: katsaus käsitteisiin ja kirjallisuuteen.* Suomen ympäristö 723. Ministry of Environment, Helsinki.

Pierson, P. (2000). Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics. *American Political Science Review 94*: 2, 251–267.
Pløger, J. (2004). Strife: Urban planning and agonism. *Planning Theory* 3: 1, 71–92.
Purcell, M. (2006). Urban democracy and the local trap. *Urban Studies 43*: 11, 1921–1941.
Purcell, M. (2009). Resisting neoliberalization: communicative planning or counter-hegemonic movements? *Planning Theory* 8: 2, 140–165.
Purcell, M. (2016). For democracy: Planning and publics without the state. *Planning Theory* 15: 4, 386–401.
Puustinen, S. (2006). *Suomalainen kaavoittajaprofessio ja suunnittelun kommunikatiivinen käänne. Vuorovaikutukseen liittyvät ongelmat ja mahdollisuudet suurten kaupunkien kaavoittajien näkökulmasta.* Publications of Centre for Urban and Regional Studies A34. Doctoral dissertation. Helsinki University of Technology, Espoo.
Puustinen S., Hirvonen J., Niemi P. & R. Mäntysalo (2013). *Selvitys alueidenkäytön suunnittelun ja ohjauksen voimavaroista.* Reports of the Ministry of Environment 22/2013. Ministry of Environment, Helsinki.
Puustinen, S., Mäntysalo, R., Hytönen, J. & K. Jarenko (2017). The "deliberative bureaucrat": deliberative democracy and institutional trust in the jurisdiction of the Finnish planner. *Planning Theory and Practice* 18: 1, 71–88.
Puustinen, S., Mäntysalo, R. & K. Jarenko (2017). The Varying Interpretations of Public Interest: Making Sense of Finnish Urban Planners' Conceptions. *Current Urban Studies* 5: 1, 82–96.
Rannila, P. (2018). Relationality of the Law: On the Legal Collisions in the Finnish Planning and Land Use Practices. *Journal of Planning Education and Research.* Online publication ahead of print 29.6.2018. doi.org/10.1177/0739456X18785443
Ridley, M. & B. S. Low (1993). Can selfishness save the environment? *Human Ecology Review* 1: 1, 1–13.
Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2008). The rise of the "city-region" concept and its development policy implications. *European Planning Studies* 16: 8, 1025–1046.
Saaranen-Kauppinen, A. & A. Puusniekka (2006). Narratiiviset tarkastelutavat. *KvaliMOTV - Menetelmäopetuksen tietovaranto*. <Tampere: Yhteiskuntatieteellinen tietoarkisto. <https://www.fsd.uta.fi/menetelmaopetus/kvali/L7_3_6_4.html> (accessed 30 July 2019).
Sager, T. (2005). Communicative planners as naïve mandarins of the neo-liberal state? *European Journal of Spatial Development* December 2005. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.454.9713&rep=rep1&type=pdf> (accessed 20 March 2019).
Sager, T. (2009). Planners' role: Torn between dialogical ideals and neo-liberal realities. *European Planning Studies* 17: 1, 65–84.
Sager, T. (2012). Collective action: Balancing public and particularistic interests. *In* Weber, R. & R. Crane (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Urban Planning,* 25–45. Oxford University Press, New York.
Sager, T. (2013). *Reviving Critical Planning Theory: Dealing with pressure, neo-liberalism and responsibility in communicative planning.* Routledge, New York.
Scharpf, F. W. (1997). Economic integration, democracy and the welfare state. *Journal of European Public Policy* 4: 1, 18–36.
Scharpf, F. W. (2000). Institutions in Comparative Policy Research. *Comparative Political Studies* 33: 6–7, 762–790.
Smith, N. (1990). *Uneven Development. Nature, Capital and the Production of Space.* Basil Blackwell, Cambridge.
Smits, J. (2007). Nordic law in European context: Some comparative observations. *In* Husa, J., Nuotio, K. & H. Pihlajamäki (eds.): *Nordic Law – Between Tradition and Dynamism,* 55–64. Intersentia, Oxford.
Staffans, A. (2004). *Vaikuttavat asukkaat. Vuorovaikutus ja paikallinen tieto kaupunkisuunnittelun haasteina.* Publications of Centre for Urban and Regional Studies A29. Doctoral dissertation. Helsinki University of Technology, Espoo.
Syrjänen, O. (2005). *Osallistuminen, vuorovaikutus ja muutoksenhaku kaavoituksessa.* Rakennustieto, Helsinki.
Taylor, N. (1998). *Urban Planning Theory Since 1945.* SAGE, London.
Toivanen, T. T. & J. Venäläinen (2015). Yhteisvaurauden uusi aika. *In* Jakonen, M. & T. Silvasti (eds.): *Talouden uudet muodot,* 24-48. Into Publishing, Helsinki.
Trägårdh, L. (2010). Rethinking the Nordic welfare state through a neo-Hegelian theory of state and civil society. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 15: 3, 227–239.
Vatilo, M. (2000). Käskyvallasta kumppanuuden aikaan – Reunamerkintöjä Kaj Nymanin puheenvuoroon. *Yhdyskuntasuunnittelu* 38: 2, 17–24.

Ward, K. & A. E. G. Jonas (2004). Competitive city-regionalism as a politics of space: a critical reinterpretation of the new regionalism. *Environment and Planning A* 36, 2119–2139.
Zakhour, S. & J. Metzger (2018). From a “Planning-Led Regime” to a “Development-Led Regime”(and Back Again?): The Role of Municipal Planning in the Urban Governance of Stockholm. *disP - The Planning Review* 54: 4, 46–58.

Endnotes

1. The more general idea was to evaluate the impacts of the so-called PARAS Act (Act on Restructuring Local Government and Services, 169/2007) from the point of view of the functionality of urban regions. For more about the PARAS project and the PARAS Act, see article C and section 5.3.

2. To gain the benefits of data triangulation, for each studied region a GIS-based analysis was conducted to gain an overall picture about the urban structure and its potential sprawl. The analyses were made at the scale of urban region, regardless of the municipal borders. The document analyses were conducted for the same purpose, although from another perspective/with another aim: to gain an overall picture about cross-municipal planning in the region. All the relevant documents about land use, housing and transport planning from each region (from 14 to 22 documents depending on the region) were included in the study, including municipal strategies and land policy programs. I did not take part in analyzing the GIS data or documents. About case study approach and triangulation, see Laine, Bamberg & Jokinen (2007).

3. Actually, Hanna Mattila argues in her broad investigation of Jürgen Habermas' writings that also the idea of Habermas himself was to encourage consensus-seeking mainly at the strategic level or at the level of lawmaking. This level would be a suitable scale to search for "public interest of generalizable interest" (Mattila 2016: 361). Further, Mattila (2017) argues that the communicative focus at the level of everyday life and (planning) practice, however, was not something that Habermas would have encouraged:

   "local deliberations should not replace planning systems and planning legislation as a means to bring about more just planning processes or cities. However, in the field of planning, some amount of discretion is required, and from this, it follows that micro-level communicative practices are needed as well." (Mattila 2017: 86)

   Mattila's own reasoning derives from her reinterpretation of Habermas. I complement this viewpoint with my argumentation.

4. Compare to Purcell (2006), who warns that the local scale or any other scale should not be assumed as inherently more democratic than some other scale.

5. In article C, such defensive behavior was described as "avoiding agonism". *Agonism*, as used in the article to illustrate interaction between the governmental institutions, does not straightforwardly parallel the more common procedural planning theoretical perspective on agonism (see section 4.2).

6. About the need for sophisticated and nuanced understanding of manifestations of abstract neoliberal ideas, see e.g. Larner (2003).

7. The critical views about the concept of public interest are discussed in later sections. I do note here, however, that rejecting the very idea of public interest in local planning practice – because it has occasionally been deployed in a depoliticizing and authoritarian manner – may narrow planning agendas further. This would possibly leave the planning practitioner less room to take into account any wider interests in individual planning cases.

8. On the other hand, if the planner is expected to gain legitimacy for her actions solely and primarily through local communication, she should be aware of the participation gap phenomenon. Different socio-economic groups seem to hold different capacities to take part in non-electoral participatory processes especially (Dalton 2017).

Original articles