



Public participation – different rationalities and the need for new strategies in wind power planning

Wind 2050 Seminar 2016

2th of February, Skovskolen, Nødebo

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Public participation – different rationalities and the need for new strategies in wind power planning

- **Focus of attention:**
- **The purpose of citizen participation: what is participation seen as the answer to?**
- **A critical approach to the issue of public participation and the related methods**



A critical view on the issue of public participation

- **If participation is the answer, what is the question?**
 - The idea of public participation has attained great interest in planning
 - It has a glow of good intentions (democracy and humanity), but it happens often that citizen participation projects do not result in the expected success
 - Conflicting perceptions of citizen participation between citizens and planning creates the conflicts



Planning and participation – a short history

- **The rational planning model 1700 –**
- Based on rational efficiency considerations about steering planning towards specific goals
- Rational process flow: status-forecasting- target-plan-implementation
- Top-down approach: authorities are able to identify, what serves society best



Planning and participation – a short history

- **The critique**
 - Inflexible and undemocratic
- **The paradox**
 - Rational planning often leads to the production of even more plans – and to conflicts
 - Democratic legitimacy crisis: Simultaneous with a tighter and more centralistic regulation of planning, there has been an increasing recognition of the need to legitimize planning in order to avoid conflicts



Planning and participation – a short history

- **The pressure on rational planning**
- 1980's: the pressure on rational planning starts to grow
- In order to maintain the legitimacy of planning, the regulation of physical planning in Denmark was delegated to regional and local governmental levels
- The introduction of new methods to involve the citizens in planning



Planning and participation – a short history

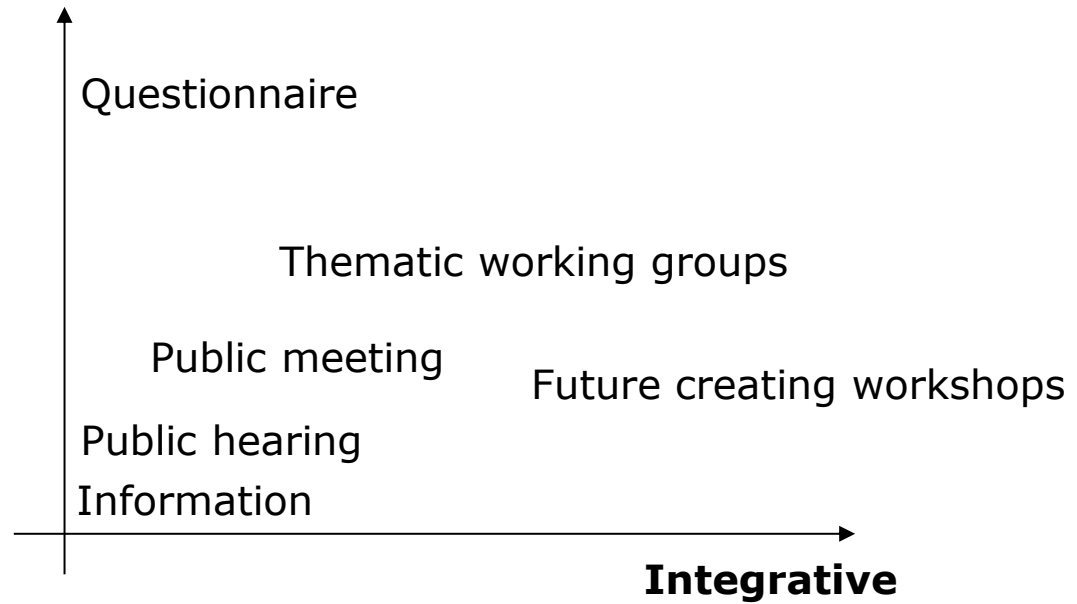
- **Dialogue tradition**
- Based on a more democratized planning model
- Ranging from a focus on cross-sectional planning to a more integrative approach
- **Cross-sectional:** Participants participate as representatives for networks or specific stakeholder interests (network approach)
- **Integrative:** Democracy can only survive if it is constantly developed through direct active participation in all kind of community contexts (roots in Grundtvigianism)
- **Methods used:** public hearings, advisory committees, thematic working groups, future creating workshops etc



Planning and participation – a short history

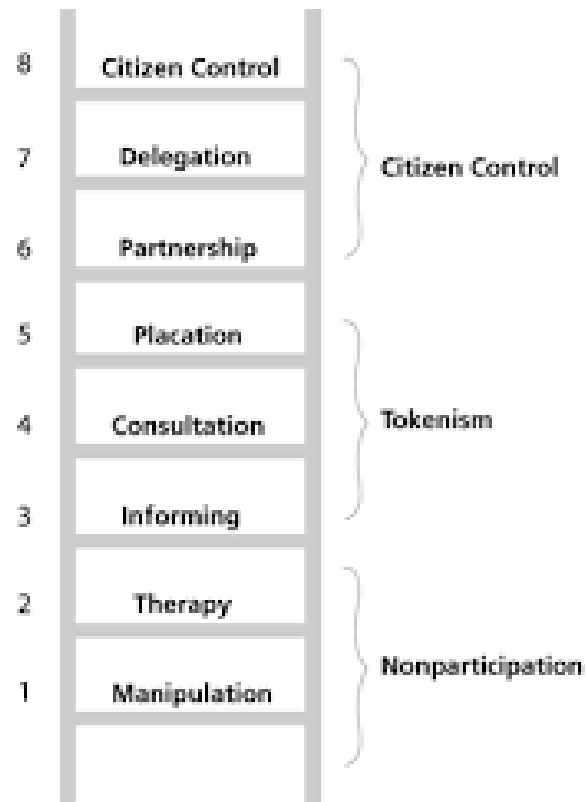
- The vertical vs. the horizontal dimension:

Representativity



Planning and participation – a short history

- Ladder of participation (Sherry Arnstein, 1969):



Arnstein's Ladder (1969)
Degrees of Citizen Participation

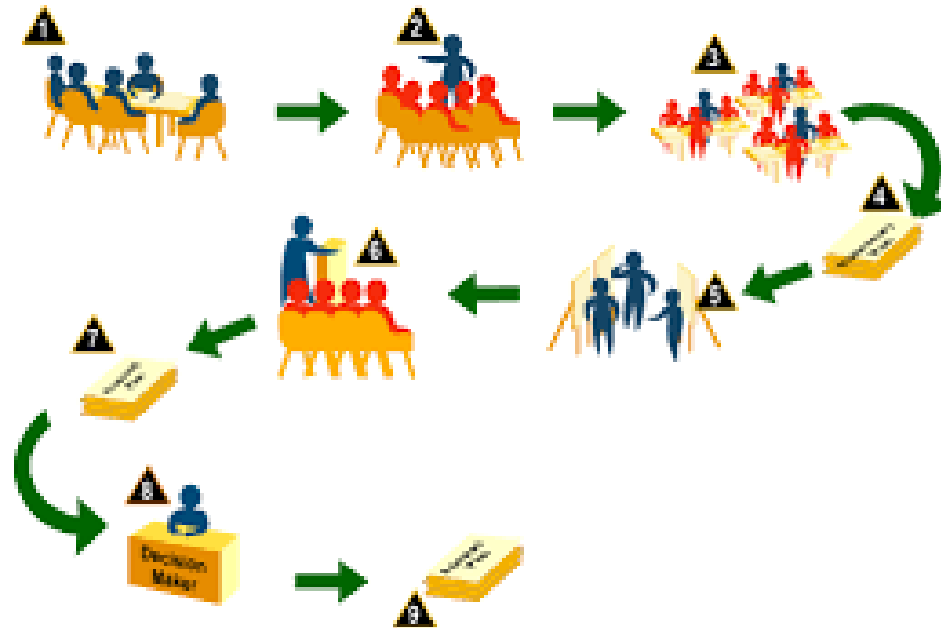
Planning and participation – a short history

- **The typology raises questions such as:**
- **Are the ones participating actually representative of the community?**
- **What is the method of communication or decision-making?**
- **How much influence or authority is granted to the participants?**



Planning and participation – a short history

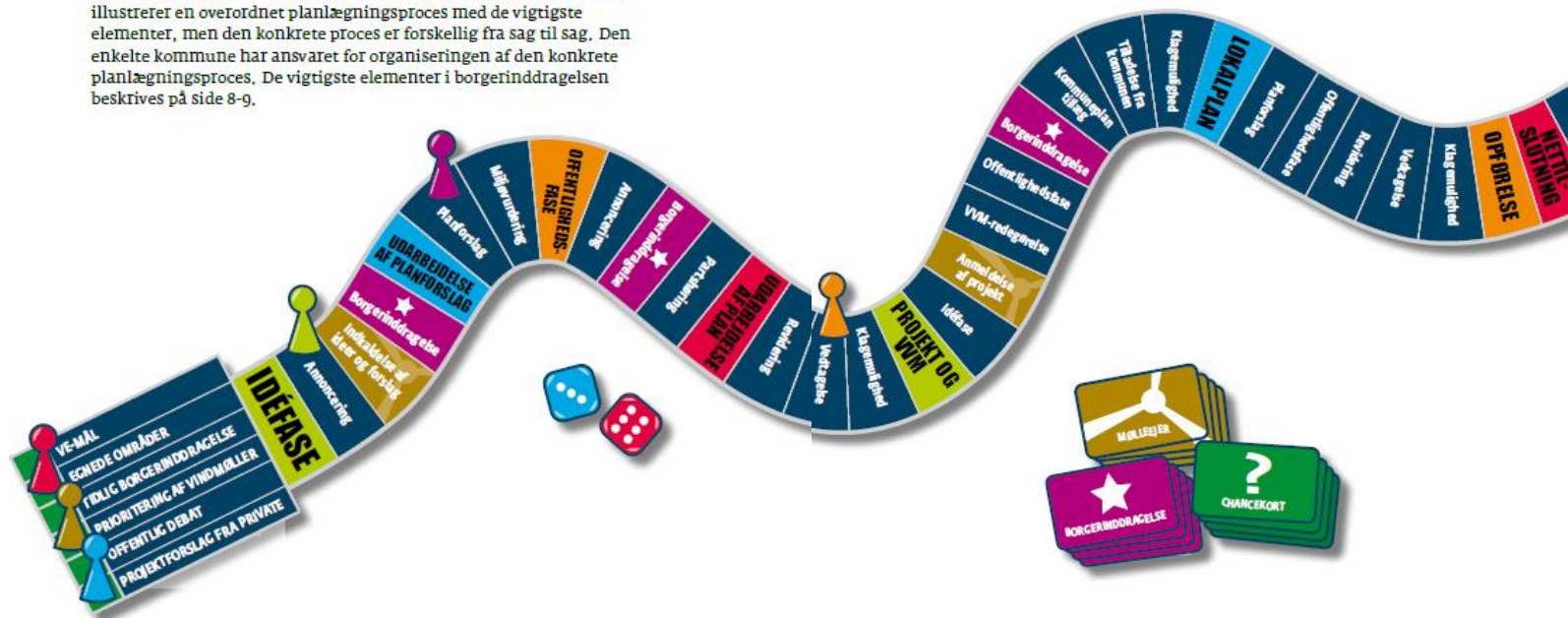
- Combination of planning approaches and methods:



Planning and participation – a short history

”Den gode proces”

Vindmølleplanlægning kan organiseres på forskellige måder, men alle planlægningsprocesser indeholder de samme elementer. Figuren illustrerer en overordnet planlægningsproces med de vigtigste elementer, men den konkrete proces er forskellig fra sag til sag. Den enkelte kommune har ansvaret for organiseringen af den konkrete planlægningsproces. De vigtigste elementer i borgerinddragelsen beskrives på side 8-9.



Planning and participation – a short history

- **The phases of participation in wind power planning:**
- Municipalities appointment of potential areas
 - Citizens are invited to provide inputs – but who *are* the citizens and what influence *do* they have?
- Developers selection of location(s)
- Citizens are invited to public meetings
 - But what kind of dialogue is taking place, as it take a point of departure in the EIA?
- The turbines are established and connected to the grid
 - or the project is shut down due to local opposition



Attitudes to public participation

- **Resignation**
- **Lack of trust in planning authorities and developers**
 - **Municipalities are only thinking in economics and subsidies and are cooperating with developers at the expense of citizens**
- **Negative accumulation of experiences**
 - **‘The silence of the majority’ is not necessarily an expression of support – instead they might have given up in advance**



Attitudes to public participation

- **Frustration**
- **Time-dimension:**
 - short deadlines and the need to be proactive in order to *be* on time
- **The content:**
 - The lack of a genuine dialogue
 - There is no room for ideas in the idea-phase
 - The EIA set the agenda for the discussion in public hearings
 - The complexity of participants everyday-life is sorted out

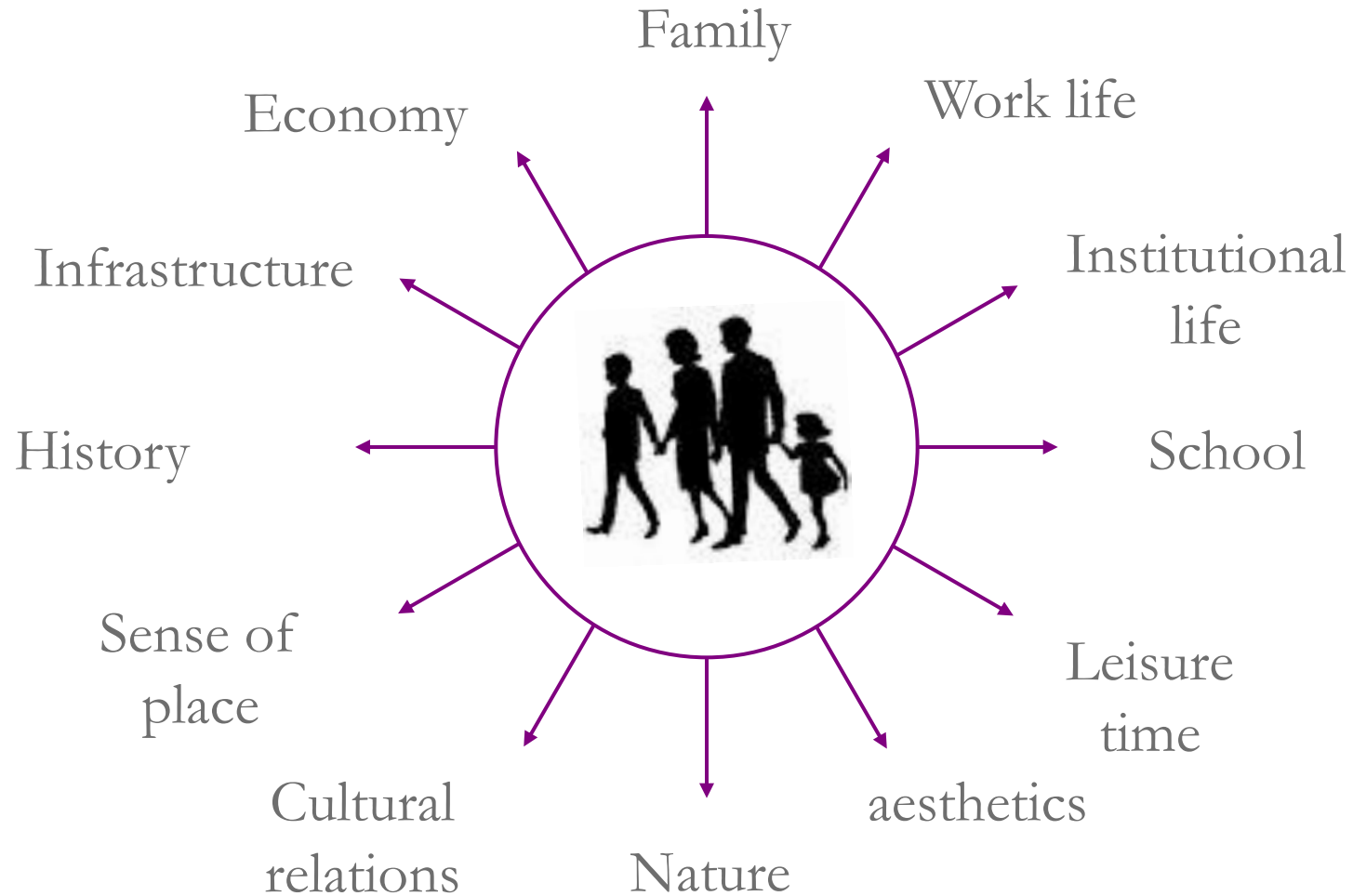


Attitudes to public participation

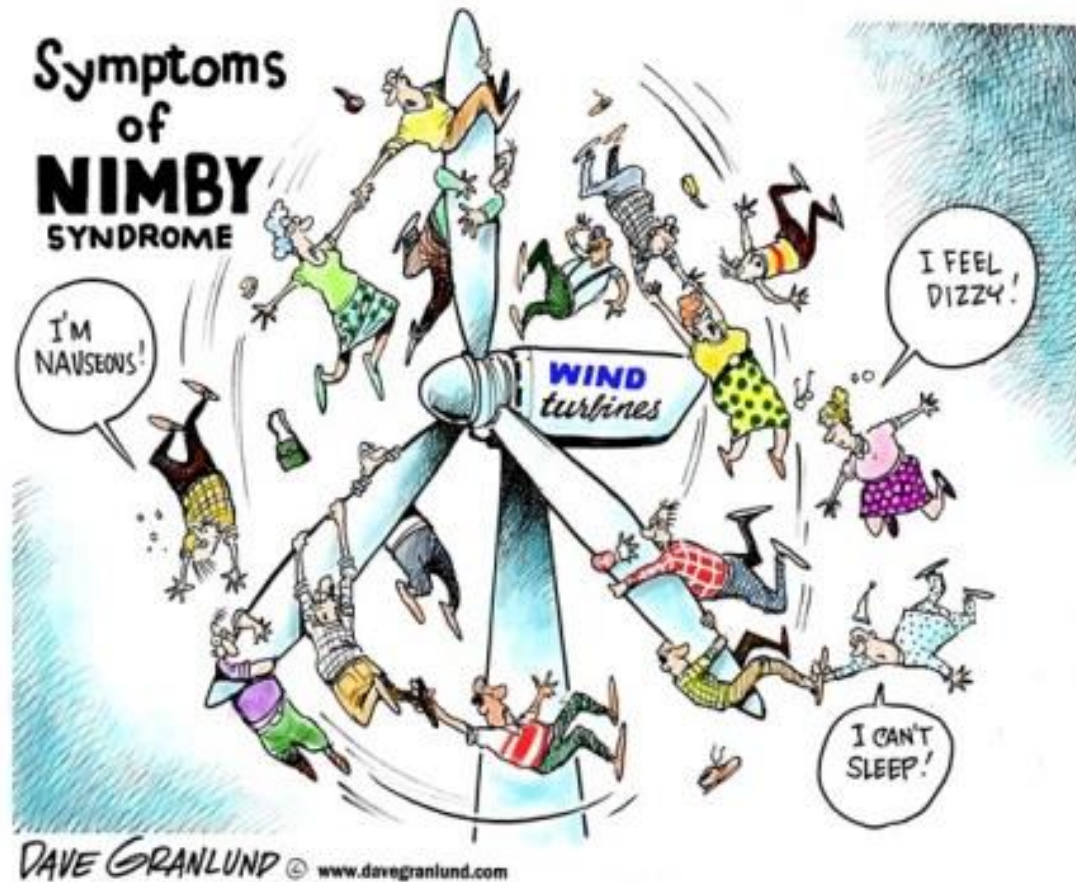
- **The focus of the EIA:**
- The visual impact on the landscape
- Calculations of noise and shadow flicker.
- The influence of nature and environmental issues, including protected (international) areas and the impact of groundwater
- Impacts on land use, air traffic and radio chains
- Socio-economic conditions and non-documented problems such as low-frequency noise
- health conditions; including reduction of harmful substances and the influence of noise and shadow flicker.



Everyday life perspective

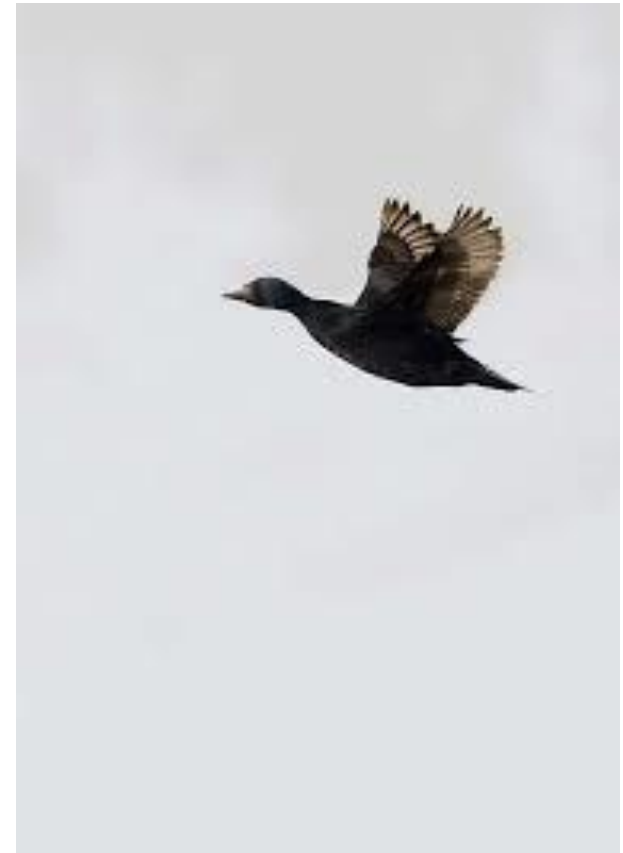


Attitudes to public participation



Attitudes to public participation

- **The story of the black duck**
- Participants were worried about their working life
- The public hearing came to circle around the threat of the turbines for the black duck
- Those without a specialized knowledge of black ducks were silenced by the scientific realm of the meeting



Attitudes to public participation

- **Conflict and resistance**
- **Resistance may exist in advance, but may also be fueled by the process itself**
- **Resignation and frustration can develop into active resistance**
- **Participation is dynamic and can develop into different directions**
- **Paradox: The potentials that citizens might *also* see in wind energy never really unfold**



Attitudes to public participation

- **Anchoring**
- Projects are integrated in the *lifeworld* of the citizens—that is the social, cultural, physical and economical webs of relations in a local community
- Based on thorough initial dialogues about how the projects benefits the communities
- Citizens participate as *citizens* and not as representatives of different stakeholder interests
- Discussions do not escalate into conflicts between different interests because it is a *common* project
- The legitimacy problem disappears when the projects arises from the ideas of the citizens themselves



The need for new strategies

- Experiments and inspirations from specific wind power project and other research areas:
- Need for new models of citizen participation leaving room for the everyday-life orientations of the citizens – not only to avoid conflicts, but also to support innovative thoughts and ideas
- No need to reinvent the wheel
- *Is there a willingness to make changes?*
- Argument: the idealization of a more democratic public planning process will continue to appear more rhetorical than practical as long as the way of thinking ‘rationality’ does not change towards a more genuine participatory planning system



Thank you for your attention!

