

UPAT

URBAN PLANNING ADVISORY TEAM

TEN YEARS OF UPATS: REFLECTIONS AND RESULTS

EDITORS

BERND SCHOLL MARTIN DUBBELING ANA PERIĆ

Editors:

Bernd Scholl
Martin Dubbeling
Ana Perić

English text preparation:

WordsWork, Beverly Zumbühl

Layout:

Philipp Neff
Ana Perić

Printing sponsored by:
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology,
Zurich, Switzerland

Bibliographic information published by:
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie. Detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at www.dnb.de

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in computerised systems in any form or in any manner, including electronic, mechanical, reprographic or photographic, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN 978-3-7281-3717-3 (Print)
ISBN 978-3-7281-3718-0 (E-Book)
DOI 10.3218/3718-0

© 2015, vdf Hochschulverlag AG, ETH Zürich
(www.vdf.ethz.ch)

Contents

Preface

9 The UPAT Programme Initiative

- 11 UPAT: Bettering Cities around the World | [Alfonso Vegara](#)
- 13 Why UPAT? From Problems to Action | [Bernd Scholl](#)
- 21 Expert Advisory Platforms: A Critical Analysis of Collaborative Planning Procedures | [Ana Perić](#) and [Mahdokht Soltaniehha](#)

39 Ten Years of UPATs: Overview

- 41 What Are UPATs All About? | [Martin Dubbeling](#)
- 51 The Variety of Spatial Problems: Topics, Scope, Scale, and Planning Conditions | [Martin Dubbeling](#)
- 67 The Young Planning Professionals Perspective: Reinvent Planning | [Martin Dubbeling](#)

73 Ten Years of UPATs: Reflections

- 74 Cancun: Planning to Mitigate Hurricane Damage
[Jim Reilly](#)
- 90 Rijswijk Zuid: Cultural Design
[Ric Stephens](#), [Ineke van der Wel](#) [Markerink](#) and [Nira Sidi](#)
- 102 Zurich: Action-Oriented Spatial Planning for Spaces of National Importance
[Bernd Scholl](#) and [Peter Jonquière](#)
- 114 Szczecin: Prospects for the Metropolitan Area
[Krystyna Mieszkowska](#) and [Stefan Netsch](#)
- 130 Singapore: Beyond Cities: Is an Urban Planet even Possible?
[Jeremy Dawkins](#)
- 150 Perm: Towards Perm as a Science City of the 21st Century
[Pietro Elisei](#), [Andrei Golovin](#) and [Nicole Wirz Schneider](#)
- 164 Shantou: Organic Regeneration of Shantou's Historic Downtown
[Amos Brandeis](#) and [Hongyang Wang](#)
- 182 Nanjing: Towards Improving the Planning Framework for the Jiangbei New District
[Awais Piracha](#) and [Dhiru Thadani](#)

197 Ten Years of UPATs: Outlook

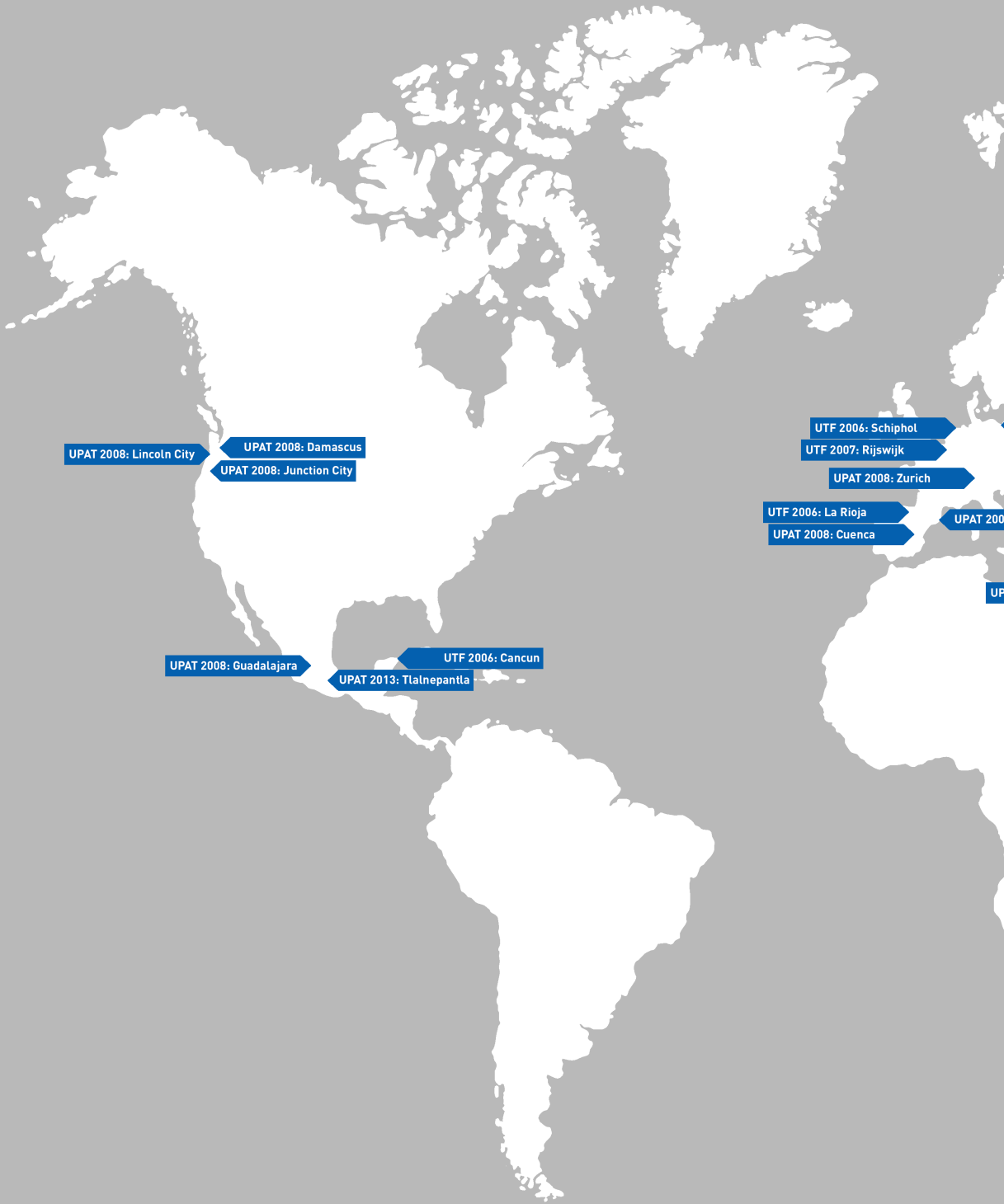
- 198 Towards Effective Multidisciplinary Cooperation: Lessons from the UPAT Symposium in Zurich, 2014 | [Ana Perić](#)
- 211 Future Advances in the UPAT Programme | [Martin Dubbeling](#)

Epilogue

- 219 Making Spaces and Places – and Learning from It | [Bernd Scholl](#)

Appendices

- 223 I List of the twenty-four UPATs held between 2004 and 2015
- 229 II About the Authors
- 239 Photograph Credits



UPAT 2008: Lincoln City

UPAT 2008: Damascus

UPAT 2008: Junction City

UPAT 2008: Guadalajara

UTF 2006: Cancun

UPAT 2013: Tlatnepantla

UTF 2006: Schiphol

UTF 2007: Rijswijk

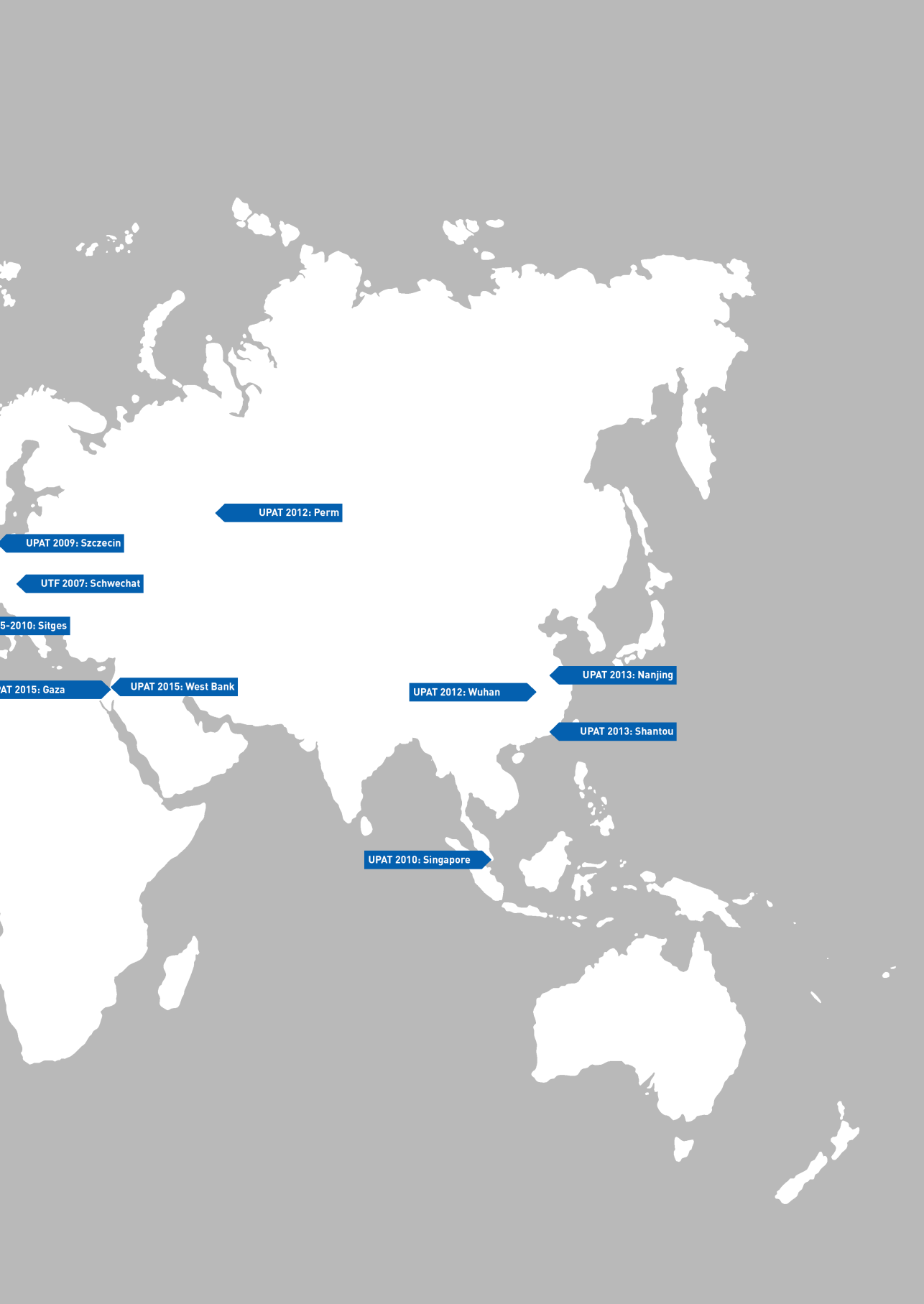
UPAT 2008: Zurich

UTF 2006: La Rioja

UPAT 2008: Cuenca

UPAT 2008: Cuenca

UPAT 2008: Cuenca



UPAT 2012: Perm

UPAT 2009: Szczecin

UTF 2007: Schwechat

5-2010: Sitges

UPAT 2015: Gaza

UPAT 2015: West Bank

UPAT 2012: Wuhan

UPAT 2013: Nanjing

UPAT 2013: Shantou

UPAT 2010: Singapore



Preface

Ten years ago, the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) took the initiative to form an Urban Planning Advisory Team (UPAT) for the first time. The idea had come into being because hindsight had revealed that too often planning processes for difficult tasks of city and regional planning did not have access to the independent viewpoint of experienced experts from different disciplines. Cities and regions often do not possess the kind of information needed to put together appropriate teams for a short-term intensive collaboration on a specific problem, especially not with an international composition. This is where the UPAT format comes in: the one-week Think Tanks lead to interesting ideas and solutions for difficult tasks and continuing processes.

A group of experienced experts from science, administration and planning practice, taken from the Society, can create a rich repertoire of ideas. Creative and highly productive teams that can work together for about a week in the respective planning areas can be put together in a short time. ISOCARP is a global society, which means that experts from all the continents and all relevant problem areas can be called upon to participate. Moreover, an intensive collaboration in an international interdisciplinary team is a special challenge that experienced and enterprising members of the Society would happily take on. The benefits of UPAT participation make it then possible to promote special projects within ISOCARP.

The UPATs have become a very successful format. This publication not only features the 50th anniversary of ISOCARP, but it also covers the ten-year existence of the UPAT format with the experiences, findings and perspectives of the 24 UPATs introduced since its inception. However, in connection with the upcoming challenges of our discipline, the UPAT experience needs to be organised and classified. Therefore, the basis for this publication are the reports from the various UPAT cities and regions, as well as the results of a special UPAT symposium held at ETH Zurich in June/July 2014.

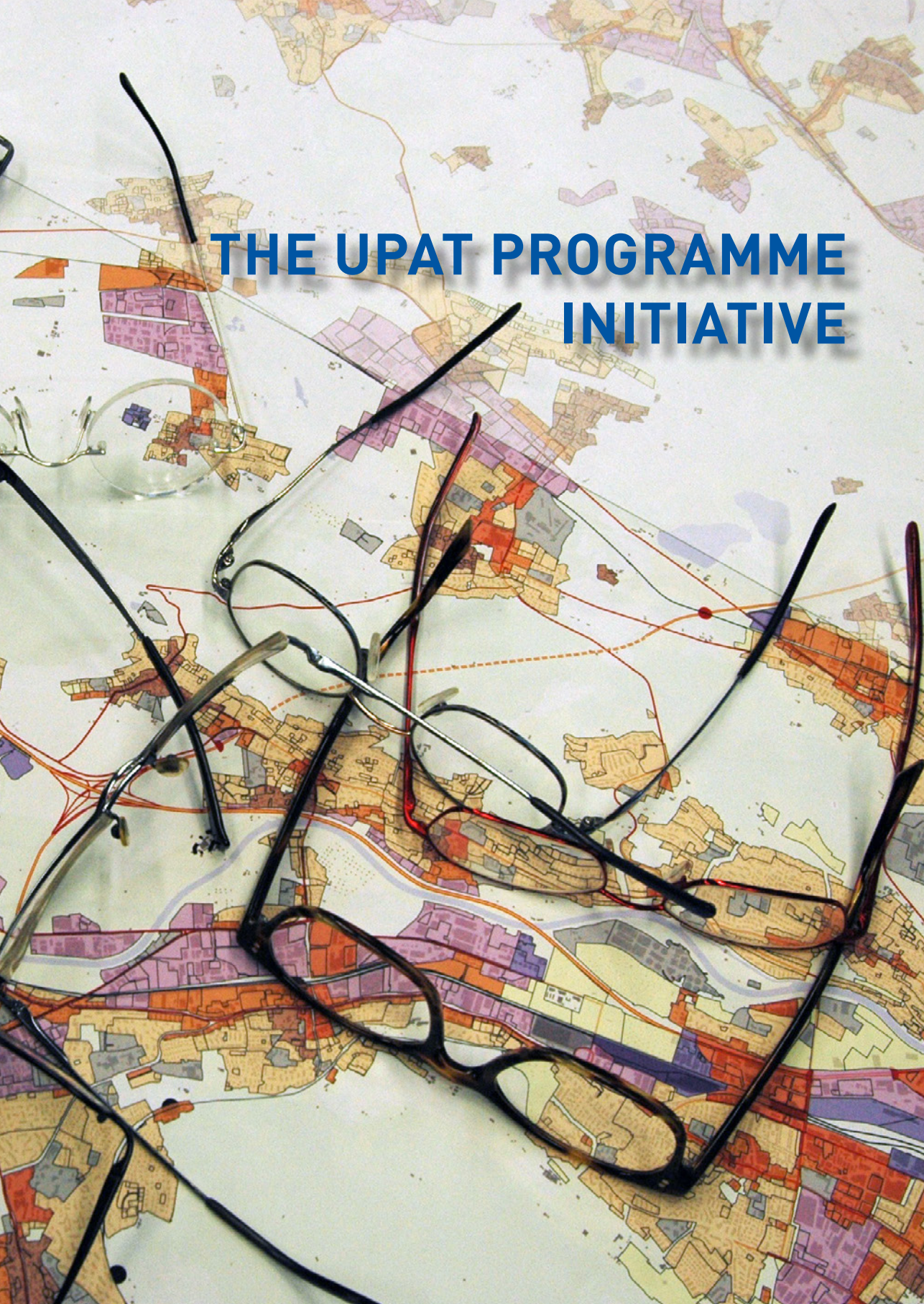
We want to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of the UPAT initiative in the last ten years and, in one way or another, contributed to this publication.

We would be very pleased when this publication leads to increased participation from ISOCARP members and serves to motivate and inspire cities, regions and institutions to commission many new UPATs.

Zurich / The Hague
August 2015

Martin Dubbeling
Ana Perić
Bernd Scholl





THE UPAT PROGRAMME INITIATIVE



UPAT: Bettering Cities around the World

Alfonso Vegara

A UPAT is a truly bottom-up initiative that mobilises the collective planning intelligence and experiences of ISOCARP members to help communities accelerate innovation with ideas, concepts and projects. As we celebrate ten years of success in bettering cities around the world, let us pause to trace and reflect on the origins of the UPAT initiative.

UPAT started as the Urban Task Force (UTF) initiative in 2004. This initiative provided a mechanism to activate ISOCARP members who then highlighted opportunities and found sponsorship for UTFs. ISOCARP then assembled the UTF teams, comprising ISOCARP members who volunteered their time. The team members were chosen for their familiarity with the planning issues involved. UTF teams were multi-disciplinary and able to give a holistic and objective view of the topic.

The inaugural UTF in November 2004 offered suggestions to the Regional Government of La Rioja, Spain for the development the Alto Cidacos Valley, one of the most depressed areas in La Rioja. The Enciso area is an attractive rustic rural environment, and one of Europe's most important sites for prehistoric dinosaur icnitas (trace fossils). The existing economic realities notwithstanding, the UTF identified an opportunity to develop new activities that could stimulate local investment, with the support and expansion of rural tourism and the strategic development of Enciso as a services centre for the Alto Cidacos valley, as well as part of the adjacent Soria province. The UTF was initially conceived, not as a work of typical urbanism performed by the professionals of our discipline in their daily work, but as a voluntary and experimental contribution to help the authorities and citizens explore future opportunities in their territory.

Shortly after La Rioja, the second UTF was convened for Sitges to envision how the city could be positioned internationally, moving from being merely a tourist town in the vicinity of a city like Barcelona, to becoming a space for attracting talent and creative activities. This commitment of ISOCARP to the city of Sitges lasted several years and I can say that it has been a relevant experience with a major impact on the international positioning of Sitges as a vanguard of spatial planning through this partnership with ISOCARP (Fig. 1). This UTF offered suggestions on the optimum usage and urban design of the freed-up strip of railway land; and possible financial arrangements for such a project. It is a project that has changed the vision in Catalonia today in relation to the opportunities for transforming Sitges into one of the most emblematic tourist destinations in Spain.

The success of the first engagement with Sitges led to four subsequent UTF/UPAT projects with the city that were concluded in 2010. During this period, various issues relating to a dialogue between Sitges and the surrounding municipalities to achieve a more diversified and attractive metropolitan structure were addressed. These issues included the internal mobility of Sitges and its connection with its region, the integration of Sitges with Garraf Natural Park and the impact of changes in Barcelona's urban profile on the emergent opportunities for Sitges.

The pioneering UPATs addressed diverse territorial challenges, and reflected the potential of a bottom-up initiative by ISOCARP members to provide concepts and urban solutions for a specific territory. In particular, this partnership with the City of Sitges reveals the potential of UPAT as a fresh, neutral and powerful model in helping a city to establish a long-term vision for its urban and territorial systems. These efforts have shown that a new dynamism has emerged through ISOCARP initiatives, with the ability to integrate local planners in developing ideas and projects that would otherwise not have been initiated.



Fig. 1: The ISOCARP Executive Committee meeting with the Mayor and the planners of Sitges in January 2005. (Source: ISOCARP)

As cities continue to take on a leadership role in defining the global economy and society, the UPAT initiative will be ever more important in addressing more complex problems in the years to come. Building upon the successes of its past decade in inspiring solutions for cities around the world, the next challenge for UPAT in the coming decade would be to address issues that transcend traditional administrative boundaries and political structures. By considering the new scale of cities when developing urban and metropolitan solutions, we can inspire platforms for cities to work collectively together to develop a more competitive, cohesive and resilient territory.

Why UPAT?

From Problems to Action

Bernd Scholl

1 Introduction

Urban Planning and Advisory Teams (UPAT), which is a service and format started by ISOCARP, are invited by host institutions to contribute in solving challenging, many layered tasks of urban and regional development. For a successful result of the collaboration, the composition of the teams, i.e. different academic disciplines and cultures and various levels and kinds of experience, should create the best possible prerequisites.

The teams have little time: as a rule, just one work week is set aside to get an overview of the situation, identify the central problems, develop ideas for a solution and present it to the members of the host institution. Writing a meaningful report requires additional time and the report is usually expected some weeks after the end of the UPAT week.

Concentrated and intensive collaboration during the UPAT week requires very good preparation. Essentially, preparation consists of the identification of central tasks and conflicts. An initial exploration through discussions with key actors and open attempts at problem solving can achieve this step. The open questions that surface from this initial exploration help in reviewing the prepared foundation and, in particular, the formulation of the task assignment. An indispensable component of a thorough preparation is an inspection of the project area. Experience has taught that several months of advance preparation work is necessary in order to achieve a solid foundation: The better the preparation, the better the results of a UPAT week.

Some are of the opinion that a week is hardly enough time to come to an advanced result in an interdisciplinary group with different kinds of expertise and different mother tongues. They say there is too little time for a proper analysis and clarification of the task, never mind agreeing on a cooperative work arrangement.

The experience with the UPAT format and other action-oriented approaches demonstrates the contrary. It is possible in one week of concentrated collaboration to develop ideas for a spatial strategy and solutions for difficult problems. In order to achieve this, a definitive understanding of planning and an approach

that is built on this understanding is necessary, which will be sketched out in the following paragraphs. The central starting points are the spatial problems and a judicious approach to them.

2 Problems

First, it is important to clarify the term 'problem', which goes back to the Greek *πρόβλημα*, *próblema* and designates a proposed task, a question of conflict. However, the term also means a promontory overlooking the sea that creates dangerous shallow waters; the navigation of the seacoast important for survival has thus become a synonym for a heavy struggle with the task at hand. The philosopher Karl Popper understands problems simply as 'unsolved difficult tasks', whose solution takes place through 'speculative hypotheses and refutation'. He proves, in an example about human understanding, that a problem can only be understood against its background. According to Popper (1972: 174), this background "is made up of at least one language, whose use regularly touches on theories, and from many theoretical suppositions, which, for a quick glance, are not questioned. A problem, together with its background (...) forms what I call a problem situation."

Personally, I use the term 'problem' in spatial planning as a synonym for 'difficult, unsolved, spatially relevant tasks'. *A spatial planning problem is then: a difficult unsolved spatial planning task along with its background.* This connection is of eminent practical importance for the solution of complex tasks. For the solution of problems, it is implicit that a background must be established, which makes it possible to identify, understand, and solve problems at all.

A too strong work division at the beginning of planning project, as can be observed directly in the treatment of complex planning tasks, is not conducive for finding integrated solutions. One of the usual work divisions is made up of extensive, consecutive tasks in which various actors, by discipline, investigate the 'state' of the inventory, analyses, the formulation of goals, and the development of measures to be assigned. This approach leads to fractures and interruptions in the clarification process.

14 | A further consideration of relative importance for solving difficult spatial planning problems is not to wait too long before starting on the first attempts at solutions. Only when one tries to solve the problem alone, can one discover the task's inherent difficulties, knock-on problems and open questions. It is important, to penetrate the decision-relevant problems as early as possible. If these are not discovered and posed right at the beginning, there is the danger that precious resources can be wasted because answers are often sought in areas that can be proven to be unimportant in relation to the important decisions.

Accurate questioning could bring preconceived notions about possible solutions to falter and reveal a false security. This proves that when competent questioning is applied in spatial planning, mostly to our own attempts to solve a given problem, it can materialise any misconceptions and therefore must be allowed

from the beginning. In the sciences, it is often claimed that finding the right question is more than half of the entire effort. Analogue would thus be a good formulation of a task is more than half of the work.

Here, seen methodologically, is where the UPAT format comes in. The one-week time limit forces all the unessential things out and focuses on penetrating to the core of the task, i.e. the problem. Ideas for solutions are the foreground, including the connections in the basic argumentation, the clarification through appropriate principle sketches, the combination of important quantities and, naturally, the critical time aspect. One may not use any deceptions. To penetrate to the core of the problem and manage useful solutions in one short week obviously needs a much longer preparation period.

3 Actions

Spatial planning is a problem-oriented discipline, and at the core, most problems can be traced back to problems of decision-making. One task is to clarify the main possibilities open to spatially relevant decisions and actions.

What are the basic options for action? What conditions should be observed? For example, if one assumes there are sufficient financial resources available for specific plans and then it turns out that no money has been reserved for them, the reason for this oversight should always be the first question. What side effects and consequences might arise as a result? Once an option has been selected, the question of how to implement it brings up operational questions: who should do what with which resources and by when?

The answers to difficult problems, which, of course, are not limited to spatial planning, are not immediately obvious and require, at least in part, longer processes to work them out. Intended improvements are often implemented years and sometimes even decades later. Extensive infrastructure plans in the area of roads and railways, airport expansions and the transformation of settlement areas in urban and regional contexts can deliver clear descriptive examples.

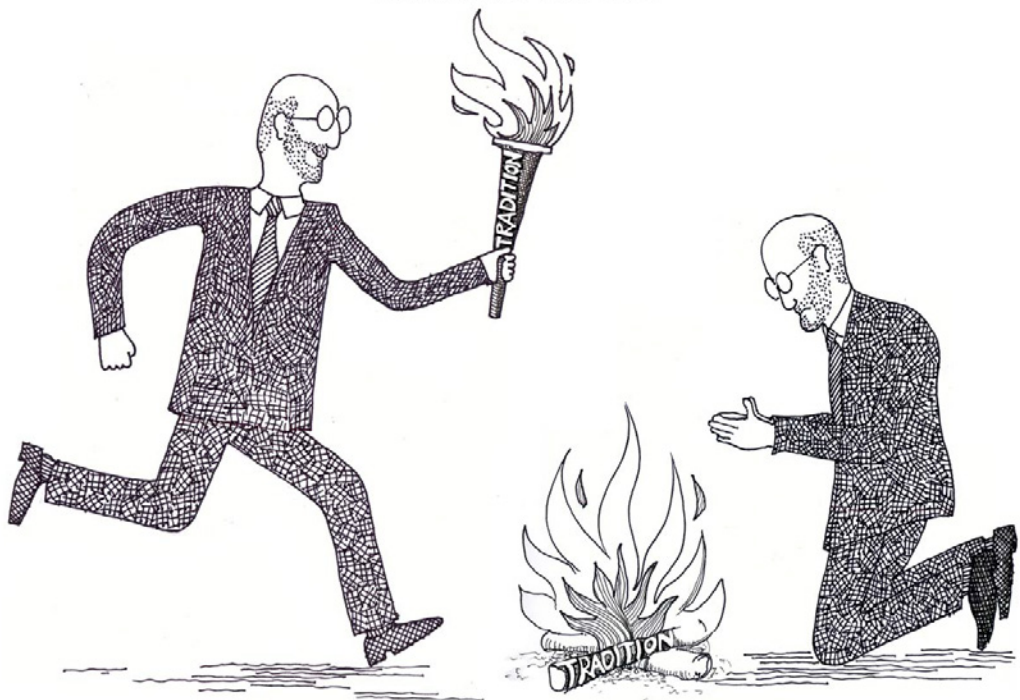
Spatial planning and spatial development are all about initiating decisions that will help solve difficult spatially important tasks while under the restraints of working with continually limited resources, such as time, personnel, knowledge, finances, etc. Decisions are always made about actions, not about the impact of the action. However, whether the desired impact and consequences will actually take place or whether an undesirable impact and consequences can be avoided, cannot be 'decided' beforehand.

The clarification and solution of spatially important tasks should serve the goal of increasing the possibilities of the use of space. The future organisation and design of living space should not limit the opportunities for the existence, behaviour and experience of its users, rather the opposite, to encourage their unfolding. The reality of the space and the orientation of the intended spatial development thus form the framework. In addition, the existing, and expected,

TRADITION

is the passing of the flame,
not the worship of the ashes

Gustav Mahler 1860 - 1911



© 2014 DHIRU A. THADANI

spatial conflicts and the conflicts that arise in the course of planning must be carefully observed. Exploration, clarification and resolution of spatial conflicts also belong to the tasks of spatial planning and, in part, can bring complex problems to the forefront. Physical interventions to solve these kinds of problems are one means, but in no way the only means. In all the solutions to spatially important tasks, it is imperative to pay close attention to finding a solution that has a very economical approach to the use of land, which is in short supply and is not a renewable resource.

How does one move from problems to suggestions for action? The better the possible treatment is prepared, the more effective the result. Maxims can help clarify the effects and consequences of treatments that are being considered through testing and making the planning argumentation as clear as possible. Moreover, maxims can help avoid traps in argumentation (Signer, 2015). According to Maurer (1995), someone who knows about maxims and does not need them is better off than someone who needs them and does not know them.

In the book *Higher Education in Spatial Planning* (Scholl, 2012), I presented the most important maxims from my point of view. I want to highlight three of them at this point: the three-cycle maxim, the three-level rule and the maxim on mixing codes.

4 The Three-Cycle Maxim

One could sum up this methodological principle in one maxim: create clarification processes in such a way that complex assignments can be processed in three cycles of roughly equal length. It is much more effective to start quickly with the first attempts at finding solutions, even with incomplete information, and test them afterwards, than it is to spend too much time gathering useless descriptive information.

Only those who try to solve a difficult problem by themselves can understand it properly. Further questions and information gaps become clear to them. For many, this is an uncomfortable process, while others are under the illusion that more information will give them more certainty in finding solutions. This, unfortunately, is not the case. On the contrary, putting off attempts at solutions usually leads to more time pressure and can lead to superficiality once the heart of the problem is reached.

The above maxim invites us to develop a rough result in the first cycle and to think through the realisation of these suggested results, then to further explore the critical or fundamental parts of the results in the second cycle and to make corrections and improvements (in the presentation) during the third cycle, in particular, to reserve time for the unforeseen.

The three-cycle maxim stimulates learning through exploration. Exploring solutions is closely connected to the willingness to get involved in adventurous, playful ways of learning. When a creative hypothesis is offered as a solution to

a problem, there should be enough time to test it and if necessary, to reject it in order to try a new approach. Children learn an incredible amount in a short time this way. Trying several times must also be possible in an academic environment.

The three-cycle maxim also fulfils the demand to be able, after sufficient incubation time, to carry solutions inside one's self, to be able to discuss it critically with a group and then, strengthened by criticism, to be able to present it to people outside the group. We encourage this way of working, dividing the time available into three cycles, and at the end of each cycle creating occasions at which the progress of each team can be checked.

It makes sense to structure the UPAT week in the proposed way. At the first event, i.e. the workshop discussion, it is mainly about the participants of UPAT putting questions to the Steering Committee. All kinds of questions are allowed. At the second event, the interim results of the UPAT team are presented in the plenum. Approaches and suggestions for solutions, as well as the presentation itself, receive comments, criticism and feedback from the entire Steering Committee. At the final presentation, the solution stands or falls on the quality of its arguments and judgement of the critics, often the Steering Committee.

5 The Three-Level Rule

Architects and engineers are used to applying different scales to conceive and design a construction project. This has also proven to be true for planning designs. As a rule, three different levels of scale are important: an overview level, a concept level and a consolidation level.

Proposals for solutions should be able to be evaluated separately from the overview, as well as in connection to other significant overarching subject areas. At the same time, a central element of the solution must be tested to find out what difficulties must be overcome if the solution is implemented. This not only concerns material questions, but also questions of organisation and finances, for example. In order to prove the conclusiveness and feasibility of the concept, a change of point of reference is an absolute necessity. The three levels that need to be considered in this context are overview, concept and consolidation.

18 | One could call it the 'three-level rule'. Achieving the ability to move in different levels more or less simultaneously within one week will help the participants out of the traps of non-committal generalities or of getting lost in the details.

6 Maxim of Mixing Codes: Words, Pictures and Numbers

I consider this maxim to be very important because of the following: 1) the codes are different and speak to the different perception channels of the addressees in relation to solution suggestions, and 2) this maxim helps planners come closer to problems through different access channels and to test how difficult circumstances can be presented through simple words, images and quantities.

Because solutions in our field have to be submitted in the form of decision guidelines to the most diverse groups in the decision-making process, it is important that outsiders can understand the solution process and the solution itself through conclusive argumentation. In contrast to other fields, such arguments have to be without insider jargon. The more far-reaching the planning decisions are, the more 'political' they are and must be understood by lay people and politicians.

Planning argumentation should therefore not only consist of conclusive and consistent reasoning, it should also render a translation service from jargon (expert language) into the everyday speech that is the common language. Research has been dedicated to this aspect of communication. Practically speaking, it is recommended that in addition to the written and spoken word for argumentation, illustrative pictures and important numbers should also be presented. In this way, the different perception senses of the audience are stimulated, which leads to more attentiveness.

To stay with this image, the UPAT team is encouraged to take different positions for analysing and solving tasks. During the UPAT week, it becomes apparent that not everyone involved understands all the statements, pictures and numbers. Every form of coding has its own challenges. This is often obvious in spoken language, because it is the most immediate form of exchanging information. Therefore, learning to create clear graphic representations and principle sketches to illustrate complicated topics is one of the more difficult elementary tasks in training for our field. Graphic tools and charts should not be too superficial, nor should they use too much, let alone unnecessary, information.

Good graphic representations in the planning profession should have a level of abstraction that does not reduce the clarity of the message. What is important? What can be left out? What should be the focus of attention? These questions are reminiscent of basic methodological questions. Graphic representations therefore often reflect the current status of clarity. When the graphics are confusing, the planning argumentation usually is too. Therefore, it is worthwhile to pay close attention to the development of the graphical language. An important characteristic of simple graphics consists of thinking in 'forms' or as Dörner (1996) puts it: in 'unreduced totalities' in order to cope with complexity. Caution needs to be exercised here; abstraction is good for the overview, but it can reduce illustrational capacity. Therefore, it is very important to organise the interplay between abstraction and concreteness. This example makes it clear that good graphic representations are always created on a fine line. Modern aids allow the representation of groups of subject areas in different layers and at least make this task a little easier.

It has been mentioned that using numbers in argumentation is essential. During a UPAT week, the use and estimation of important quantities should be stimulated. How much floor space is needed for what kinds of use? How much traffic could be expected? How many parking spaces will be necessary and, of course, what are the estimated costs of the individual arrangements? Quantitative in-

formation is needed to consider suggestions and make decisions for many spatial planning situations. Through simple simulations with programmes for table calculation, most of the numbers needed for a complicated planning task can be quickly obtained. In this context, the danger of anchoring and adjustment has to be avoided.

7 Conclusion: UPATs Open Eyes and Doors

Extraordinary organisation and a challenging task are of central importance for the success of UPATs. The success of a UPAT can be measured by whether it has managed to arrive at an on-going handling and decision process. The examples in the Epilogue demonstrate this impressively. Perhaps one can summarise it thus: UPAT is an eye-opener for the difficult problems of spaces of regional or national importance and a 'door-opener' for further actions with adequate procedures. It is first and foremost the starting element in a series of actions and decisions in order to solve complex spatially relevant problems.

References

- Dörner, D. (1996). *The Logic of Failure. Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Maurer, J. (1995). *Maximen für Planer*. Zurich: Publikationsreihe des Instituts für Orts-, Regional- und Landesplanung, ETH Hönggerberg (ORL-Bericht 47/1995).
- Popper, K. (1972). *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Scholl, B. (2012). Project-Based Learning – The Core of a University Education in Spatial Planning and Development. In B. Scholl (Ed.), *HESP – Higher Education in Spatial Planning, Positions and Reflections* (pp. 72-83). Zurich: vdf Verlag.
- Signer, R. (2015). Reasoning in a Macro-Level Spatial Context. In: H. J. Drewello & B. Scholl (Eds.), *CODE24. Integrated Spatial and transport infrastructure development on the European North-South Corridor Rotterdam – Genoa* (forthcoming).

Expert Advisory Platforms: A Critical Analysis of Collaborative Planning Procedures

Ana Perić
Mahdokht Soltaniehha

1 Introduction

For the first time in the world's history, the majority of mankind lives in urban areas. Hence, we must be aware of new terms related to human settlements. According to biologists Crutzen and Stoermer (2000), we live in the 'anthropocene age'. Moreover, some authors agree that today's man is a sort of '*homo urbanus*' (Tibaijuka, Maseland & Moor, 2004). A shift in human habitat towards urban living brings great challenges for the sustainable development of cities, as well as for the prosperity of their citizens. In other words, the human race is supposed to cope with complex spatial problems in order to reach sustainability. The critical question that arises here is: How to deal with complexity in a rapidly urbanising world? The possible answer is that we need different 'lenses' for looking at spatial problems. Furthermore, we can assume that different ways of thinking demand different ways of planning from what is considered a traditional planning model (Healey in Perić, 2014). More precisely, over the previous two decades, spatial and urban planning has been based on the principles of communication, collaboration and cooperation among numerous stakeholders (Healey, 1991, 1997, 1998; Rydin, 1994; Innes, 1994, 1996).

Keeping the 'communicative turn' in planning theory in mind, i.e. the shift of focus from the planning product towards the planning process, it is interesting to have a look at planning practice. In addition to observing the communication among a number of interested parties, it is of particular importance to determine the level of continuous interaction between planners and other stakeholders. Therefore, the subject of this paper is collaborative planning procedures in planning practice as revealed through the actions of the most prominent professional organisations.¹ Most of these organisations have special units assigned to finding innovative planning solutions for complex spatial problems in a co-operative way. This article focuses on a comparative overview of the following platforms, selected on the basis of their influence, tradition and spatial scope:

- The Urban Planning Advisory Team (UPAT), ISOCARP (International Society of City and Regional Planners)
- The Implementation Lab (IL), IFHP (International Federation of Housing and Planning)
- Advisory Services (AS), ULI (Urban Land Institute)

The main mission of these three associations can be defined as follows: The UPAT performs as an expert group to diagnose problems in different cities and regions, counsel the local authorities and experts, and deliver the best options for solving such problems.² The IL promotes ideas on understanding human settlement issues in a changing world,³ while AS provide practical solutions for difficult land use issues.⁴

Hence, we can assume that these platforms have similar goals. However, each 'case' actually requires a unique strategy taken from the wide-ranging planning approaches for addressing urban and regional issues. Therefore, the paper aims at elucidating the main similarities and differences in collaborative planning approaches of the UPAT, IL and AS in relation to collaborative planning methods. In general, a comparison of different advisory planning teams' actions is a challenging idea, however, some parameters can be compared relatively easily among the selected platforms, such as: the organisation of the planning process, topics, objectives, and outcomes. In other words, this article aims at clarifying the principles, performance and results of collaborative planning platforms.

The paper is structured as follows. After a general introduction on the research subject and goal, the main features of a collaborative planning paradigm as a theoretical background of the research are briefly presented. The central part of the article describes the main characteristics, i.e. the organisation of the planning process, topics, objectives, and outcomes of the three chosen expert advisory platforms: UPAT, IL and AS. This is followed by a discussion on the similarities and differences that leads to identifying particular features of the advisory platforms that correspond to a communicative and collaborative planning approach.

2 Collaborative Planning Paradigm: A Background of Contemporary Planning Practice

22 | Collaborative planning is deeply rooted in the context of communicative management as a process of debate among the stakeholders involved. The term debate is mainly understood in two ways: as an inclusive argumentation, i.e. a public judgment that takes the contributions of all the members of the political community into account, or as collaboration, i.e. a process in which stakeholders jointly search for actions and strategies (Healey, 1995). Furthermore, communicative management is devoid of any influence of power, rather the entire management process is based on the force of arguments, rational dialogue and consensus. Thus, the formal positions and power sources become less important – all participants are treated equally in the process of communicative management (Allmendinger, 2002).

The theory of communicative action by Habermas (1984, 1987) is the theoretical basis for the legitimisation of planning practices that increasingly acknowledge the interests of various groups. Habermas proposes a transparent, unfettered, 'ideal' communication between the actors, who are equal participants in the

planning process and who acknowledge each other's basic social equality, and where the power of arguments, i.e. communicative rationality, predominates. Hence, conversation and interactions between the members of different cultural layers are of crucial importance for creating the communicative planning paradigm (Sandercock, 1998). Different terms are used to indicate the change of planning in terms of increased participation, such as: a communicative-argumentative turn in planning (Forester, 1989), planning through discussion and cooperation (Healey, 1992), communicative planning (Sager, 1994), inclusive discourse (Healey, 1995), communicative action and interactive practice (Innes, 1995), planning through consensus building (Innes, 1996), collaborative planning (Healey, 1997), discursive practice (Sandercock, 1998), and deliberative planning (Forester, 1999), among others.

A collaborative planning model focuses on the redefinition of the relationship between the subject of the planning process, a planner, and the object, the environment within which stakeholders operate, whereby the linear relationship of subject-object is changed by the continuous interaction and feedback between planners and other participants. Hence, the ideology of communicative planning is based on intelligent discourse as a medium for overcoming disagreements and conflicts (Allmendinger, 2002). In such a planning process, the central role is assigned to the planner who (Ennis, 1997):

- Is able to negotiate with other participants
- Does not stress his own position
- Does not act on the basis of prejudice
- Shows inventiveness in the planning approach
- Stimulates possible new directions for local activities

Interpersonal skills that are required of planners include the ability to pose a question and critical listening, both of which make them capable of directing the debate. In fact, a meaningful dialogue is the essence of an effective debate.

One of the basic premises of collaborative planning is to achieve consensus around commonly established goals and interests to be further accomplished through the planning action (Davoudi & Strange, 2009). During the discursive practice, professional planning expertise loses its significance and becomes only one of the knowledge forms applied in the planning communication with other stakeholders. Thus, instead of expertise, planning is based on 'practical wisdom', i.e. knowledge that is not necessarily scientific, but also includes experiential, contextual and intuitive knowledge (Sandercock, 1998). More precisely, the planning process should not only help ensure the participation of the local community, it should also secure its constant empowerment. In other words, planning should be recognised as an activity focused on the negotiation process among stakeholders with various interests and cultural backgrounds. In addition to this, we should endeavour to create a planning process that does not promote the public interest, as this can exclude the differences (Allmendinger, 2002). Instead, planning in a multicultural context requires new forms of multicultural literacy (Sandercock, 1998).

3 Expert Advisory Platforms

The central part of the article presents an overview of the expert collaborative platforms, UPAT, IL and AS, which inspire and stimulate sustainable urban environments. Using the lens of a communicative planning approach, the following parameters are covered: the organisation of the planning process, topics, objectives, and outcomes.

3.1 The Organisation of the Planning Process

In terms of organising the planning process, all the selected platforms are established as collaborative practices, whereby the experts of UPAT, IL and AS act as facilitators of planning communication between other stakeholders, mainly local experts and responsible government authorities. In fact, linking up local knowledge with external expertise can improve problem-solving and decision-making procedures. In this overview, we focus on the following central questions: What are the major responsibilities of the team members? How do the advisory teams manage to collaborate with local stakeholders? What is the time schedule?

UPAT. The central idea of an Urban Planning Advisory Team workshop is to gather a rapid response team of professionals to address specific urban or regional planning issues within just one week of intense discussion. The team consists of international planners with world-class knowledge and experience in the planning sector, who are also ISOCARP members (Fernández Mejía, 2007). The UPAT is characterised by differentiated roles in the team, such as:

- The Team Leader, who is in charge of organising the communicative planning process among the team members.
- The Rapporteur, who writes up the final results of the workshop as a report.
- The Local Coordinator, who links the ideas and approaches of the UPAT members and their local counterparts.
- The Senior Planners, a group of five to seven experienced professionals who serve as advisors.

24 | A group of young planning professionals (YPP) and a local organising committee (LOC) complement the core team. The client is often a municipality that hopes to benefit from an international review of the local planning approaches to the spatial problems under discussion⁵ (ISOCARP UPAT Principles, n.d.). One of the advantages the host city receives when organising a UPAT workshop is a tailor-made solution to an issue put forward by the municipality. The UPAT members work closely with local urban planners, making it possible for them to see how the international team faces and tackles the issue.⁶ A UPAT workshop lasts from five to seven days. After the site visit, meeting with planning officials and other stakeholders, taking note of available documents and data, a final presentation of the outcome to the interested local participants usually takes place on the last day of the workshop, followed by a press statement or a conference, as dissemination activities (Fernández Mejía, 2007).

IL. The Implementation Labs of IFHP are laboratories that share and produce expert and experiential knowledge on specific local practical issues.⁷ In particular, an Implementation Lab is a workshop focusing on multifunctional and intensive land use. An IL can be hosted by a city, region or institution, which must clearly identify the urban problem for the participants. In addition to organising the site visit, the host unit is also in charge of preparing all the necessary documents as aids in obtaining integral and objective advice from the group of experts selected for that specific IL (Implementation Lab, n.d.). In terms of the time schedule, the basic form for an IL consists of five main phases:

1. Pre-meeting preparation to identify the sites and key areas of concern by the host organisation and to prepare and distribute the dossiers with background material
2. Site visits to establish context
3. Plenary sessions to include invited speakers
4. Working sessions to formulate concrete suggestions for the sites, as well as recommendations on policy development
5. Concluding plenary session

Except the first phase, all other phases together take one week (Implementation Lab, n.d.).

AS. As the ULI covers a wide-range of professionals from various domains and, more importantly, various sectors (private, public, and civil), the Advisory Services panel consists not only of planners and architects, but also:

- Industry leaders from a broad range of backgrounds and disciplines: developers, funders, market analysts, economists, etc.
- Public officials
- Community development corporations

Together with prospective sponsors, including local governments, private developers, community representatives, and other types of organisations, AS members address the most challenging real estate and land use issues facing communities today, volunteering their time and expertise (Thoerig & Stern, 2013). However, the sponsors play a central role in the success of the AS programme. From the very beginning, sponsors work with the ULI staff to develop a unique panel programme. Furthermore, sponsors participate in all aspects of planning: from defining the panel scope, assignment and development of background materials and resources for panellists, to identifying local resources and stakeholders for the panel to interview (Advisory Services, n.d). In a concentrated one-week effort, the panels bring together the best and brightest from ULI's diverse membership in order to provide practical solutions to complex spatial problems (Thoerig & Stern, 2013). More precisely, the panel spends the week on the following activities: site visit, interviewing stakeholders, exploring options and debating potential solutions before making their final recommendations (Advisory Services, n.d).