
Effective Community Participation in Urban Development. Is it Possible? Does it Exist?

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Abstract

This paper deals with public/citizen participation and involvement (PCP) in general, while focusing on prospects of advancing effective participation in urban planning and development (UPD)¹ on the community² level (CP). The paper is based on Israeli practice and research of the past 25 years, and on one recent research and development project³ in particular. The methodology of this project employed several research methods. We conducted an experts' interview survey and two separate opinion surveys and studied sixteen distinct cases. Our study integrated lessons from international knowledge, with local trends and characteristics. It concluded with an adaptation of existing tools and with the promotion of new modes to effect progress in this field. This paper presents and discusses several findings and conclusions significant to communities and to decision-makers both in Israel and in other countries.

Initials

- CP – Community Participation/Involvement
- PCP – Public/Citizen Participation/Involvement
- UPD – Urban Planning and Development

Introduction

Community Participation (CP) is a most desirable component of a democratic society. Since the 1960s, the tendency has increased to give consumers a say in different aspects of community life—in the field of education, in health and welfare services and in urban planning and development (UPD) on its diverse levels and most recently in the design and implementation of new technologies as well. CP is assumed to be a necessary component of public policy-making. This subject is complex.

On one hand it bears the potential of improving the decisions, the plans and their implementation. On the other hand its application is likely to embody not a few risks, including damage to groups and individuals within the community.

This paper draws on 25 years of Israeli research and practice, and in particular on a recent research and development project aimed at advancing effective CP in UPD (Vraneski *et al.* 1999, 2000). Following a preliminary investigation, we defined our goals as follows: a) to characterise and analyse existing patterns of community involvement and non-involvement; b) to define criteria of successful CP; c) to identify the factors that influence success in CP; d) to identify factors that can be changed, and to recommend strategies for creating the desired changes; e) to develop alternative models and intervention tools for effective CP based on the lessons derived from this research. Accordingly, the methodology was designated to integrate several research methods. We conducted an experts' interview survey and two different opinions surveys and studied sixteen distinct cases. The insights and products of the study deal with the subject of CP in general, and in the context of UPD in Israel in particular.

In the past decades, much experience has accumulated regarding CP. Our study integrated lessons from international knowledge, with local trends and characteristics, and focused on the adaptation of existing tools and on the promotion of new modes to effect progress in this field. Israel is a good case for studying these questions for four reasons:

First, Israel is a heterogeneous, relatively new state, still disputing its democracy's features. *Second*, Israel may be seen as situated mid-way among the world's industrialised democracies in the degree of transparency of its government institutions—not quite as open as the USA and Canada, but more open than, say, France or Japan. *Third*, Israel exemplifies conflicts over UPD that are more intense than in most countries. *Fourth*, most of the reported research on public/citizen participation⁴ (PCP) relates to western democratic nations, and to the USA in particular. Our projects are intended to broaden perspective concerning systems typified by diversified characteristics.

This paper aims at mutual learning. Its insights might also be seen as a stage in knowledge and understanding accumulation, towards the development and application of appropriate and effective participatory patterns in young democracies and in developing countries. So, if this research suggests models, and strategies to advance effective CP, its lessons could be of significance to other countries in the ranges mentioned.

From theory to practice

PCP is a basic value in any democratic society. An underlying principle of planning is that it is always done for the 'public good'. UPD is an interdisciplinary field; it might have serious impacts on limited and non-replenishable resources; it carries the hazard of irreversible processes and painful realities of failure; and by conflict of interests and potential injury to various groups. In the 1960s a new demand emerged for PCP in planning above and beyond the promise of planning to serve the 'public good'. Simmie (1974) wrote that even though institution-alising public planning was intended to serve the general public good, its operative experience over 50 years indicated that it might be a first-rate instrument of discrimination. Theoretical and ideological analyses in the field of PCP were presented during the 1960s and 1970s (Arnstein 1969; Burke 1968, 1969; Fagence 1977; Churchman *et al.* 1979).

In recent years awareness as to the complexity of the planning process has increased. There is overwhelming scepticism as to whether planners and planning authorities can, as they did in the past, honestly state that they know what is best for the public. (Friedmann 1987; Gertel and Law-Yone 1991; Ozawa 1993). Vraneski *et al.* (1986) defined six underlying motivations for PCP in UPD: a) the increasing awareness regarding the complexity of the planning field; b) the heightened awareness with regard to the motivation of the individual; c) the existing separation of planners and public; d) the awareness of planning failure based on the assumption regarding the 'public good'; e) the increasing awareness that planning might be a discriminatory tool; and f) the

reduction in public support for planning, resulting from failure and criticism.

Once a plan is approved it is hard to change it, and even more difficult to reverse the effects of an implemented project. As an interdisciplinary field, teams of professionals from a wide range of expertise carry out planning work, nonetheless it is the public that often knows best what its needs are. Consequently, letting the public express these needs may prevent the slowing down of the planning and implementation process in later stages by objections to plans. In Western democracies, there is little need to justify PCP in planning. As Alterman wrote in 1982, 'the concept of public participation has gone a long way to becoming an acceptable component of public decision-making' (p. 311). Various opinions exist regarding the extent to which PCP is necessary. One opinion considers PCP to deal with the planning of functions, services and priorities to meet the needs and requirements of the end users. According to another, the public needs to actively participate in the planning process and in assessment and follow-up after its implementation. Furthermore, some believe that the public should also have influence over policy, decision-making and allocation of resources (Vraneski 1994).

Campbell and Marshall (2000) claim that most of the reasoning underlying current debate about PCP seems to be founded on the belief that it is simply a 'good thing'. While PCP has expanded, new problems and challenges have come forth: a) although emerging as a desirable, necessary and sometimes indispensable mode of activity, PCP is often ineffective in achieving its goals; b) some participation initiatives and processes turned out to be discriminatory instead of inclusive, quite the opposite to the vision of the participatory trend theoreticians and pioneers. The new challenges are deeply linked to effectiveness considerations and criteria.

Alterman (1982), and Alterman *et al.* (1991) suggested that in order to create an effective PCP strategy, the following sets of variables should be used in the decision-making process: a) the planning subject and the context of participation; b) the goals of participation; c) the balance of power between the decision-makers and the public; d) the definition of the public; e) the planning phase; f) the resources needed for participation.

All these variables are crucial in the area of CP in UPD. In the following, I will expand on the sets most relevant to the questions this paper relates to: *Why* participate, or what are and should be the different goals of participation? *Who* is the 'public' to whom the participation processes should relate? Alterman *et al.* (1991) indicated twelve main goals and objectives, which might be attributed to PCP in UPD.⁵ They also provide thirteen different possibilities with regard to who might be the citizen a PCP process addresses.⁶ For effectiveness concerns, queries that bear on processes and methods of CP (How to participate?) should keep the defined participation goal in mind, otherwise an effective, efficient or functional process might be impossible. Nevertheless, we must accept that the goals of participation might differ between and within parties; that goals tend to be flexible rather than constant; and that each party might be motivated by more than one goal at any time, either hidden or apparent.

Theoreticians and professionals have continued to research the field in recent years. It now includes more diverse aspects, such as collaborative planning based both on PCP and conflict resolution. The contemporary trend is known as the communicative turn in planning thought (Forester 1993; Innes 1996). William *et al.* (1998) suggested that shared decision-making had an important role to play in sustainable land use planning, development and management. The inclusion of integrative conflict resolution approaches and consensus building technique in the planning and development curricula and agenda, is a source of great hope for improvements in the field (Dotson *et al.* 1989; Godshalk 1994; Susskind *et al.* 1999; Innes and Booher 1999). Forester (1999) explores the challenges and possibilities of deliberative practice. He shows how skilful deliberative practices can facilitate practical and timely participatory planning processes.

Our late 1990s research, on which core parts of this paper rely, aimed at identifying and developing measures for reducing the gaps between individual and communal interests, needs and concerns, whilst endorsing effective CP and promoting high quality UPD. The CP concepts, strategies and tools promoted by our research and development project, are mostly associated with the deliberative democracy rationale for PCP.

PCP within the framework of Israeli UPD

PCP in UPD differs from country to country. Contemporary research only scantily addresses PCP issues 'outside the empire of English' (Vraneski *et al.* 1999). Shmueli and Kipnis (1998) claimed that the practice of PCP on a significant scale was limited primarily to nations with long democratic traditions. While participatory planning techniques are used more routinely in many democratic countries, they have been employed selectively and infrequently in Israel (Sassoon-Buras 2000). The limitations of 'top-down' planning and the need for active PCP have commanded attention in Israel as they have done worldwide.

In contrast to the US and many other Western countries, the Israeli planning system is ultra-centralised and hierarchical. Planning in Israel is predominantly practiced according to a rational, statutory, hierarchical, 'top-down' approach. The system is governed by numerous bodies with the power to decide on the majority of development and environmental issues (Alterman 2000). Besides the Planning Authorities, many other governmental Ministries and public agencies, are involved in all planning issues. The mandated participation of affected communities and individuals is minimal. Nevertheless, those penetrate decision-making processes through a variety of formal and informal channels (Vraneski and Alterman 1994; Vraneski *et al.* 2000). Planning processes are very slow, while both development pressures and geo-political uncertainty are higher than in most developed countries. Extremely high density of population on the one hand, and ideological conflicts that stem from the larger Jewish-Arab conflict and from social rifts on the other, are major components in this complicated situation.

PCP has been a controversial issue worldwide. Its practice is tremendously challenging for both communities and decision-makers within the extremely polarised Israeli society. PCP is anchored in the Israeli Planning and Building Law of 1965, which does not prohibit PCP at any stage (Vraneski *et al.* 1986). This paper relies on a study that focused on examples where CP in planning occurred without necessarily originating in processes mandated by that law.

PCP in the planning process is very limited. The public is neither involved in considerations which guide the planning, nor is it invited to provide input to the UPD processes. The requirement for PCP occurs in four sections of the Planning and Building Law. There is a notable difference, for example, between the type of 'public' participating in the process. Having public representatives in the planning institutions is compulsory, yet the representation by elected officials, which is generally enforced, can be considered 'PCP' only in the broadest and most inclusive definition of this term. The public is placed in a defensive position and can only voice objections (Vraneski *et al.* 1986). Only those who are injuriously affected have the right to participate. At the relevant stages the plans are already complete and commissions will have decided that the plan is worthy of approval. The objectors are generally individuals or small groups on the one hand, and representatives of authorities on the other.

Although substantial in regard to individual interests and rights, the previously mentioned processes make only marginal contributions to the community's welfare. This might be seen as the starting point, for the informal participation that flourished during the past two decades in Israel. It is perhaps also one of the core motivations for the diversified CP practices that our study discovered, on which I will expand later.

Interest in PCP in planning increased in Israel during the 1980s. The first empirical research that addressed planning in Israel (Vraneski *et al.* 1986) was devoted to PCP. It revealed that PCP beyond the statutory requirements already existed at the beginning of the 1980s, although it was limited in scope. Contrary to our expectations, based on the general atmosphere, we found that the PCP procedures had no statistically significant effect on the time it takes to have a plan approved.⁷ That study stressed the need both to expand non-statutory PCP, and change statutory planning, with an emphasis on introducing PCP in early stages of the planning process. Although some legislators have given serious consideration to this matter, no substantial change has actually occurred. While other Western planning systems have changed dramatically towards more participatory concepts and practices, the Israeli legislation, because of high development pressures and fear of delays, has scarcely

been altered in regard to PCP since the legislation was introduced by the British in 1922 and 1936, during their Mandate over Palestine (Vraneski and Alterman 1994; Sasoon-Buras 2000).

Israel's Project Renewal is a significant example of PCP that occurred without originating in the law. This was a unique, joint Israeli government and Jewish Diaspora-sponsored neighbourhood rehabilitation program, which included residents' participation as both concept and goal.⁸ In this program approximately one hundred communities were involved in early phases of planning and decision-making (Churchman 1990; Carmon 1990). Churchman (1985) stated that parallel to the PCP in the organisational framework formed by the establishment, 'bottom-up' social-political organisations began operating in approximately half of the neighbourhoods.

A significant type of PCP has been created by grassroots organisations. In Israel grassroots organisations and citizen action groups of many kinds have been established since the early years of the state. During recent years a shift from multi-issue to one-issue organisations has become prominent. Ben-David and Tal (1996) found a dramatic rise in public consciousness of environmental issues. Various small, local organisations were established to contest specific planning issues. The number of organisations continues to increase exponentially. The new trend is the establishment of coalitions and joint forums of citizen organisations. Fundraising is a prominent problem of local volunteer organisations. In order to help with this crucial problem, several funds, such as the New Israel Foundation, began to supply some financial backing (Liav, 2000). Ben-David and Tal (1996) found that local organisations were instrumental in passing on information to the public, in encouraging local activity and in the early solution of local conflicts.

The research layout, goals and methodology

Our late 1990s research and development project aimed at advancing effective CP in UPD. We also defined the following secondary goals: a) to characterise and analyse existing patterns⁹ of community involvement

and non-involvement¹⁰ in UPD and education;¹¹ b) to define criteria of successful CP; c) to identify the factors that influence success in CP; d) to identify factors that can be changed, and to recommend strategies for creating the desired changes; e) to develop alternative models for effective CP and intervention tools based on the knowledge derived from this research. To meet those goals, the methodology was designated to triangulate several research methods.

The methodology design was also stimulated by three basic assumptions derived from former research and experience: a) In an unstable world characterised by uncertainty, impermanence and contradictions, the need to belong to a community persists, and may even be strengthened. b) Paradoxically, people are little involved in most of the matters affecting their environment, their and their children's future: The authorities prefer not to involve citizens in the decision-making processes. Furthermore, most residents' motivation to participate is limited. c) A change in the previously mentioned pattern is possible and it may catalyse effective CP.

The citizens and the municipality are the main 'actors' on the town's stage. Therefore two of the empirical studies included in the research particularly addressed citizens' and mayors' perceptions and opinions with regard to CP.

The empirical stages were implemented during 1997–1999. Following a comprehensive literature survey (Vraneski *et al.* 1999), we investigated sixteen CP case studies. Additionally, we conducted twenty in-depth interviews with experts (scholars, central government officials, developers, change agents, etc.); an opinion survey of eighty Israeli mayors; and a random opinion survey of three hundred residents from seven authorities.

The mayors' survey

The research instrument we developed for this survey addressed the mayors' perceptions and opinions with regard to the existing, the desired and feasible CP, in UPD and education in general, and in their town/township in particular.

There were 264 local authorities in Israel at the time of the survey. We sent letters with a questionnaire to the heads of all those authorities, and followed up with reminders by telephone and fax to those who had not responded within a month. All in all we received 80 answers.¹² Examination of the characteristics of the authorities that answered showed a matching spread with that of all authorities from geographical aspects, size of settlements, types of population, and so on. Nevertheless we cannot claim that a representative sample was made. The research findings should be regarded with this reservation in mind, since we do not know what motivated authorities to respond to us or not.

The case studies

The interviews and other sources revealed dozens of cases of CP that have taken place in Israel in recent years. After screening the patterns of those cases, we decided to investigate sixteen of them in depth, which might be seen as characteristic of the diversified CP practice in Israel. The cases we chose to investigate occurred in different geographical/socio-economic, ethnic and political backgrounds. The participatory strategies and the implemented methods differed as well. The investigation of each case included document surveys, interviews with participants, and—when appropriate—observation. The case studies constitute the core of this research.

The residents' survey

The literature on PCP and CP focuses on those who have a say in participatory processes, although the uninvolved generally make up the majority of the population in any community. Bearing in mind that both supporters and opponents¹³ of CP and of PCP in general are highly concerned with regard to representatives and inclusiveness issues, we examined studying features, needs and views of the non-involved as an essential phase towards achieving the goals of the project. Our methodology was designated to reach people whose voice is not usually heard. Three hundred

random interviews were conducted by telephone in seven out of 16 of the local authorities where cases of CP had been investigated through the case studies of this research. We aimed to highlight similarities and differences between involved and non-involved persons, as well as potential measures to extend CP in general and its effectiveness in particular.

The research instruments we developed for this survey included questionnaires on CP in UPD and education, designated for three different types of residents: a) those who were involved at the time of the survey; b) those who were involved in the past and stopped; c) those who were not involved either at the time of the survey, or beforehand.

Since the samples were not chosen by a statistically random method, the 300 interviews are not representative. The research findings should be regarded with this reservation in mind. Nevertheless, this survey provides the first empirical knowledge relating to a previously non-surveyed issue. This knowledge is based upon data from different communities and from several groups across communities. I would suggest using this study as a pilot for a comparative study between CP in different countries and for a more in-depth investigation, which will include representative samples and will enable advanced statistical tests to be made.

Selected findings and discussion

I will expand now on core findings from a triangulation of our study data. Apparently, our research refutes several well-established assumptions. Some of the findings were surprising and even astonishing. Yet, in a way we could have predicted this. The study's initiative and the methodology design were motivated by consciousness of the fact that little was known of the current CP situation in Israel. Hence this research sought to investigate and characterise it.

High rates of involvement—low impact on decisions

Contrary to previous reports (i.e. Vraneski *et al.* 1986 and Shmueli and Kipnis 1998): a) we found an unpredicted high level of CP in urban

decision-making; b) our research revealed a great variety of PCP and CP modes, patterns, methods and tools. CP existed in all kinds of urban and rural communities, including the under-privileged ones; and c) the mayors who participated in the survey almost all declared that they themselves often initiated CP and were convinced that it is most important to expand it even more.

The situation is not so positive as it might appear from these outstanding findings, because integration of our findings points to low impact of most participatory initiatives and processes on decision-making. The interviewees revealed varying images of 'the reality' of the situation. The integrated picture emerging from our research cannot in many senses be compared to any of those images, nor with previous reports. The reason for this is twofold:

First, 'reality' is changing. During recent years democratic processes have been penetrating Israeli society more rapidly than ever before. This includes new legislation (e.g. the new Freedom of Information Law that was passed by the Knesset [the Israeli Parliament], on May 19th 1998); the citizens' demands for transparency, and also a tendency of politicians, at least declaratively, towards increased openness of the decision-making processes in order to be 'politically correct'.

Second, no previous comprehensive study has been made on CP in Israel. Each of the existing reports have addressed and investigated one or two cases only (e.g. Vraneski 1988; Schori 1992; Shmueli and Kipnis 1998).

Many of those we interviewed were deeply convinced that the CP case they were involved in was just one of very few in this country. Some praised European or North American examples of 'true' participation they had heard about. Due to deficiency in monitoring and follow-up, few lessons could be learned from practice, both within and between communities. It seems that the proverbial wheel has been reinvented many times in Israel in the past decade. This study aims at changing some of those patterns.

Integration of our interview surveys with experts, mayors and citizens and sixteen case studies of CP in UPD in recent years in Israel has led to the following main findings:

On the local authority level

The high-ranking officials who participated in the survey of local authorities expressed a very positive approach to CP. More than 80% of the interviewees declared that a significant, long lasting CP in UPD existed in their town/township. Approximately 80% stated that CP is often initiated by the local authority itself. Close to 95% of the respondents stated that it is most important to encourage CP. 80% of them stated that CP must be expanded in their respective local authorities.

The motivation¹⁴ for increasing CP stems mostly from practical and pragmatic reasons. Over 60% of the officials included in our sample stated that 'moderating conflicts' and 'pinpointing a population's needs' are very important goals for CP in UPD, far more than those who viewed goals like 'fostering democratic values' and 'achieving social change' as very important (approximately 40% and 35% respectively). In the opinion of most mayors and other officials that responded to this survey, the main advantages of CP are practical: to prevent opposition and to accelerate implementation of plans.

On the community level

The survey of interviews with residents presents an interesting image of CP, as reflected in the eyes of the subjects that are supposedly its focus—ordinary citizens. Our study emphasises important differences between the authorities surveyed in many aspects. One of those is the percentage of CP. For education and UPD taken together, it ranged from 8% in Haifa¹⁵ to 35% in the Misgav Regional Council¹⁶ for 'present involvement' and from 10% in Haifa to 32% in the Misgav for 'previous involvement that stopped', while the average rate within the seven surveyed authorities was 15% for each of the two classifications. The remaining 70% of interviewees were not involved in CP either during the survey, or at any time previously.

Although we only interviewed residents in settlements where we knew from other sources that there had been significant CP in UPD, 30% of interviewees did not know at all whether any kind of CP existed

or not. Only 40% of those interviewed stated that they knew about CP in UPD or education in their place of residence.

Approximately one third of interviewees declared that their local authority did not include residents—neither in UPD, nor in education issues. Close to 30% were sure that the local authority did not consider the residents' needs and desires in these matters.

The rate of CP in education at the time of the survey was higher than in UPD at the same time. Our survey revealed a change in tendency. Among the non-involved that considered CP in the future, 70% referred to UPD, and fewer than 30% mentioned education. It seems that in the eyes of residents, the importance of CP in UPD has risen disproportionately compared to the recent past.

Our research revealed a 'hard core' of residents involved in community activities, who declared that they will continue under all circumstances (close to 30% of those involved at the time of the research). On the other hand, we found a different 'hard core', approximately 35% of the sample, almost half of those who have never been involved, who declared that they are not interested in being involved in any case or circumstances whatsoever. In addition to these findings, almost 40% of the sample—more than half of the respondents that have never been involved—expressed willingness for future CP, in defined conditions and situations. In my view, this finding was of special importance, as our further analysis has indeed proved.

A large number of those asked specified appeals from other residents, or from local authorities, or positive impressions of the results of other residents' actions as their motivation for becoming involved. This finding, greatly reinforced by other parts of the research, is an indicator of good odds for recruiting activists and for expanding CP.

The citizen vis-à-vis the authority

Our surveys indicated a gap between the mayors' statements and the situation on the ground, as perceived by the residents. It revealed much distrust between the authority and the citizens, some frustration on the part of the community, and significant distress on the part of the mayors.

The authority is usually aware that CP has important advantages in the context of UPD, and also in the political/electoral context, but awareness of the risks accompanying PCP and CP, severely limits initiatives in this respect. Scarcity of information regarding tools that could reduce the disadvantages, and an absence of any positive incentive for CP on the part of central government,¹⁷ widen the gap between the desired and the declared objectives on the one hand, and 'real life' on the other.

In several issues similarity exists between the residents' and the mayors' answers or they complement each other: a) Both the survey of mayors, and the interviews with residents reveal a great deal of informal activity.¹⁸ b) Most of the residents' motivation for CP stems from practical reasons, like the motivation of the mayors to encourage CP. Very often, CP is connected with a specific issue ad hoc and close to the interviewee. Approximately half the residents characterised their motivation for CP as 'to prevent or solve problems connected to me or my living place'. c) However, some of the reasons for CP were more ideological and long-term. The motivation of approximately one quarter of the interviewed citizens who were involved in CP, was so for the sake of effecting progress in a subject or an idea that they believe in. A significant minority of the mayors view CP from a value charged perspective as well.

General

Our research also revealed several outstanding general findings: a) In Israel, as in other democratic countries, CP in UPD has expanded greatly. b) Informal CP expanded much more than formal participation. c) CP is usually carried out inefficiently and tends to be non-effective. d) It often worsens relations between the community and the authorities, and sometimes within the community as well. e) Despite declarations of interest in CP, most authorities are in no hurry to share essential information about UPD with the community, and even less to include the community in making decisions regarding that development. f) The previously mentioned phenomenon is especially prominent in authorities under a high degree of development pressure. g) Few people are participating actively, even in the communities characterised by high

CP, and very few are involved continuously as activity erodes and frustration sets in. h) In the great majority of CP cases, documentation is very scant. k) Learning the lessons from accumulated experience, and reciprocity were almost entirely absent.

Conclusions and recommendations

Strategies and involvement patterns

An analysis of the research findings indicates three basic models of CP: 'Top Down'—through the initiative of the authority; 'Bottom Up' community initiative and with a 'Third Party' through initiatives of agents of change.¹⁹ The study revealed two basic strategies of CP: a 'Struggle Strategy', side by side with a 'Cooperation Strategy'.

Prompted by the findings briefly described so far, we recommend development and application of two kinds of strategies and tools: those that lead to *fast achievements and results* on the one hand; and those leading to *long-range* products that influence civic culture and public policy, on the other hand.

The success of CP—how can it be enhanced?

Our research defined measures for the success of CP according to criteria of fairness and efficiency in CP processes, and the effectiveness of its outcomes.²⁰ The basic assumption is that this refers to success from the point of view of the community. Nevertheless, having in mind a sustainable success, it is desirable that it should not be at the expense of other parties. The CP should serve other relevant parties as far as possible, and more widely, the general public and future generations.

In the short term it is possible to judge success with concrete results, such as removing a damage, preventing a nuisance, or by setting up a project or realising an enterprise that benefits the community.

In the long run success is characterised by influence on processes and on future CP that will accumulate and contribute to the community. Short-term activity may create a trigger and lever for CP of a wider

scope. Programming and intention are necessary for creating a shift from a short-term to a long-term approach, from the level of resolving a concrete problem to that of learning and influencing processes.

As conclusions from our study, the main factors that influence the success in CP are:

- (a) The involvement of agents of change that empower, facilitate, mediate etc., catalyses greater success.²¹
- (b) Adapting strategies and tools to the characteristics of each case raises the chances for success.
- (c) Cooperation strategies lead to more gains than struggle strategies. The latter are necessary when cooperation is impossible. A controlled struggle strategy may serve as a stage towards transition to a co-operative approach.

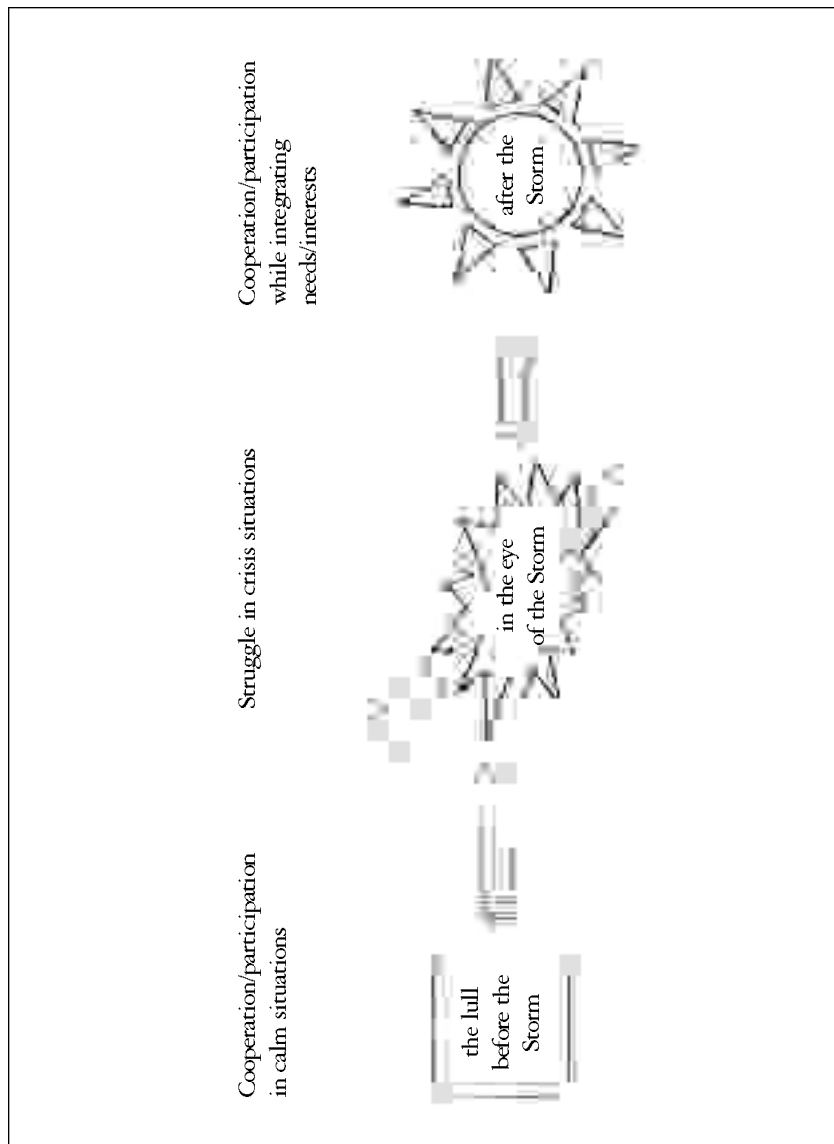
Although we concentrated on the central parties on the urban stage—the community and the local authority, our study addressed three additional ‘actors’ which affect the CP patterns and achievements. Those groups are: a) various authorities in the central government; b) public and private entrepreneurs; c) the agents of change.

CP according to local characteristics

Our research brought to our notice an outstanding division between towns/townships, in their characteristics in given circumstances and periods, in regard to community-authority relationships and PCP. We identified three kinds of interrelationships between the local authority and its citizens (see Figure 1 for a schematic illustration of those options):

- (a) Cooperation/participation in calm conditions (‘the lull before the storm’)
- (b) Struggle in crisis situations (‘in the eye of the storm’)
- (c) Cooperation/participation while integrating needs/interests (‘after the storm’).

Figure 1. Interrelationships between three existing patterns of Community Participation. Basic 'linear' relationships



Occasionally, these patterns appeared in sequence within a given community/town. The interrelation dynamics sometimes changed drastically, following changes in the town's features, for example, a significant rise of development pressures.

Cooperation/participation in calm situations was expressed in the authority's readiness to include the community. This occurred in places with low development pressures and few opposing interests, in small and/or peripheral settlements,²² often characterised by low community awareness of the urban affairs. We found this situation to be distinctive wherever a participatory ideology or tradition was prominent, e.g. in cooperative villages (Kibbutzim) and communal settlements (e.g. 'Mitzpim').

Struggle in crisis situations was characterised by serious opposing interests, diametrically polarised, often accompanied by strong development pressures, and an absence of any tradition of CP.²³ Struggle relationships between community and the local authority, extreme distrust, suspicion and disinformation were the rules of the game. The 'bottom-up' activity was never representative, and was therefore actively de-legitimised by the authority. Often the active 'fight' as well as the 'cold war' caused damage to all sides. This sometimes led to the cancellation of all developments, including some that the community strongly needed. Such an extreme may lead to both sides recognizing the need for cooperation. Awareness of available tools to promote and facilitate collaboration may be a good catalyst for this kind of change (Susskind 1987; Gray 1989).

Cooperation/participation while integrating needs/interests. Experience in other democratic regimes, and recently in several places in Israel,²⁴ has taught us about the possibility of cooperation between the authority and the community, even while serious conflicting interests exist and great development pressures persist. This happened when authorities learned to recognize CP as a fact they must live with, sometimes because they had no choice. This situation can arise from learning 'the hard way', after struggle (see above), or alternately, as the result of learning from others' experience. Central and local government policy that guides and encourages this may both catalyse effective CP and double loop institutional learning.²⁵

From struggle strategies towards cooperative strategies

Our research indicated specific components of CP and particular tools which influence success. Furthermore, it pointed to factors that can be changed in order to heighten the chances of success of CP, and to a shift from struggle strategies towards cooperative ones (Vraneski *et al.* 2000).

Target groups

The five 'actors' who affect CP patterns and achievements that I mentioned previously, were also identified as relevant target groups to be referred to in order to promote effective CP. Action on several interrelated levels is recommended for effectiveness and efficiency. We also advocate action on separate levels. Although less effective, this strategy might be more applicable when coordination or communication are deficient or missing. The following interventions and interactions should improve the adaptation of development to the needs of the community, the quality of life, and the efficiency of actions of the different stakeholders as one:

- (A) The *central government* authorities may encourage CP by: a) clearly articulated policy in favour of CP; b) determination and enforcement of participatory procedures; c) new legislation, or amendments to existing laws; d) provision of procedural and financial incentives for CP.
- (B) 'A' may increase the readiness of the *local authority* to involve the communities and improve attitudes to 'bottom-up' activity. The local authority should determine and enforce policies, procedures and by-laws to encourage and enforce CP, and provide resources for implementing it.
- (C) 'A' and/or 'B' may spur authorities and *developers* to inform the communities, and consider citizens' needs, interests and opinions, starting with the conceptual stages of their initiatives, and all the way to and through project implementation.
- (D) 'A', 'B' and/or 'C' may raise *citizens'* motivation for constructive CP, due to increased trust in the other parties' intentions and perceived changes that their voices will be heard and their energy will not be eroded.

- (E) *Agents of change* may catalyse and even initiate the previously described processes.

Operative means to advance effective CP

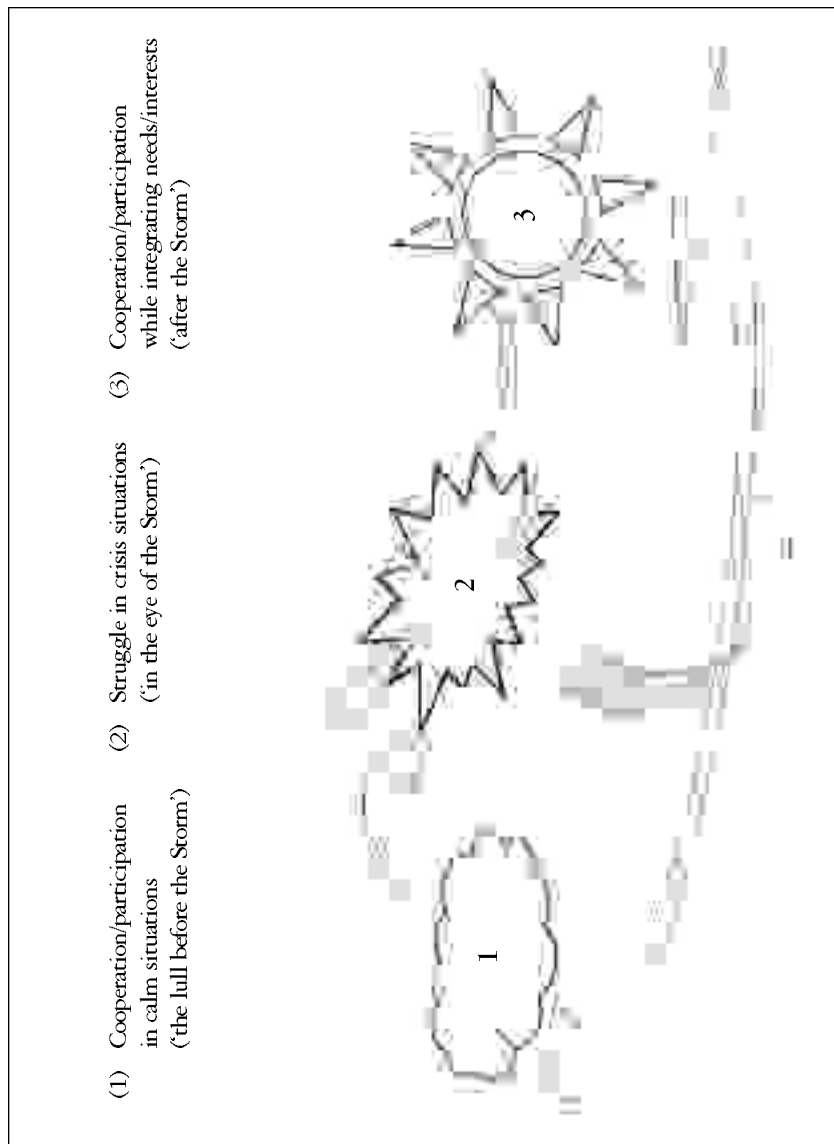
In the last stage of our research we focused on developing a comprehensive, operative model to advance CP. This is aimed at the promotion of effective CP processes. The operative model is composed of three interconnected sub-models. These stem from, and are adapted to the three kinds of relationships/stages in the dynamics of community-authority relationships that our research identified. Figure 2 illustrates the operative model and the interconnection between its components.

(a) The model suited to *cooperation/participation in calm situations*, is aimed at catalysing new CP initiated by the local authority, and at improving the existing 'top-down' CP. In addition, this model aims at an easy transition to *cooperation/participation while integrating needs/interests*, while shortening the traumatic *struggle in a crisis situation*, or even obviating it. This might be relevant, for example, when a wave of stepped up development is expected.

For *struggle in crisis situations*, ('in the eye of the storm') we adapted a model that comprises improved techniques for struggle. It is aimed at actualising the powers of the community, while demonstrating that the community actions may be damaging, but also to express and generate willingness to work cooperatively. In this situation it is desirable to encourage approaches that restore or create trust, to facilitate transition to *cooperation/participation while integrating needs/interests*. There are many relevant CP tools for this situation, but the most necessary are tools for conflict moderation, and for creating dialogue.

The appropriate model for an *Integrative Cooperative Approach* (cooperation/participation while integrating needs/interests) focuses on stabilising and consolidating cooperation on the basis of mutual interests, and reducing and even preventing tendencies of deterioration into struggle. The suitable tools for this concentrate on increasing opportunities and achievements and reducing the threats related to the parties' involvement. They aim at a transition from a situation of

Figure 2. An operative model to advance effective Community Participation based upon existing patterns



cooperation through lack of choice, towards a public policy and civic culture that include CP as basic features.

Initial responses & further queries

The title of this paper suggested a conceptual uncertainty with regard to the main issues our research and development project attempted to address. To sum up our inquiry and discussion, the conclusions are, as expected—multifarious.

First, the answer to both questions of the subtitle is affirmative. Effective CP in UPD is possible and does exist. *But*: a) Effective CP is very rare—extraordinary I should say in the polarised civic society of Israel, which is characterised by planning and development systems burdened by constant uncertainty and extremely harsh disputes. b) Effectiveness is not a binary concept, either it exists or it does not. There is a wide range of possibilities between the two extremes—from *totally effective* to *totally non-effective*. c) Additional questions such as ‘effective to whom? or, to which party?’ and tradeoffs between CP goals (e.g. inclusiveness vis-à-vis social sustainability) further complicate the issue.

Second, although our research showed that effective CP is possible and that effectiveness can be increased, it also revealed that in order to realise this potential the parties should share a long-term vision and much commitment. They should give priority to CP in the UPD issue on their agenda and invest time and energy in achieving it. Our findings and conclusions might be used to promote a perpetuating process leading to cooperative and effective CP:

- (a) Cooperation strategies have been found extremely effective compared to struggle strategies (it should be clear that this does not rule out struggle strategies, but leads to the conclusion that we should rely on struggle strategies only if and when there is no other choice). Cooperation strategies bear the potential to draw the maximum from the potential embedded in CP, in terms of long-term considerations

and double-loop learning on the one hand, and in dealing ad hoc with problems and nuisances on the other.

- (b) Community–authority relationships tend to move towards an *Integrative Cooperative Approach*, particularly when the transition process from *co-operation/participation in calm situations* and from *struggle in crisis situations* is facilitated by well-trained agents of change.
- (c) Our research uncovered a variety of existing modes of CP in UPD. Most of the mayors we interviewed expressed great interest in expanding it while many of the citizens we interviewed expressed willingness to join in CP. Those, together with the evident failure of traditional ‘top-down’ decision-making strategies, should be seen and used as a platform for further development application and implementation of CP concepts and tools. CP models should be further developed and thoughtfully applied to local and changing circumstances.

Several *high priority issues* to be addressed are: a) Building databases and networks with regard to CP, PCP and UCP interrelations and related fields for Israeli practitioners, decision-makers and communities. b) Development of appropriate strategies and tools to advance CP in weak communities. c) Multi-disciplinary curriculum-building for agents of change, starting from short ongoing education workshops, to full graduate programs for community architects and planners. d) Strengthening collaboration between communities and institutions of higher learning, including the establishment of students’ and faculty members’ research and activities with the community.

Concluding twenty-five years of research on CPC and CP in UPD in Israel, we might say that much has been done, and much more still needs to be done, not only in practice but also academically. The following seem the most salient steps to effectively continue previous and current studies and activities: a) *Comparative studies* in regard to CP in UPD in different countries, including a thoughtful application of our study’s lessons elsewhere. b) A process of *further development*, implementation, and evaluation towards further improvement of CP in Israel, and in other countries.

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Notes

- ¹ By 'Urban planning and development' (UPD) I refer to the fields of planning and plan implementation in all their aspects, from policy decisions and master plans to restoration, renewal and routine maintenance.
- ² 'Community' refers in this paper to a sub-system within the society, which achieves a certain degree of autonomy and control over available resources, priorities, and the effectiveness of its actions. This paper refers mostly to the

kind of communities defined by Hazan (1988, quoted by Shavit and Shapira 1995), according to four dimensions: physical boundaries, a common system of emblems, common targets, and a feeling of permanence. Nevertheless, it should be clear that most communities do not possess all these four dimensions.

- 3 Dr. Ariella Vraneski conducted this research during 1997–2000 in the framework of CRRG, the Conflict Resolution Research Group of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS), at the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning of the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology. Dr. Pnina Plaut and Ms. Nilli Schori collaborated in parts of this research. They were assisted by Aviv Beery, Einath Borenshtain, Tanyia Ylensky, Elijior Liav and Einat Fridenberg.
- 4 This paper focuses on CP as a most important segment of the PCP range that includes the entire array from the individual level up to that of a whole society. Our study relied heavily on research and practice on PCP, I therefore use this phrase frequently throughout the paper.
- 5 These are: to promote partnership in decision-making processes; to deliver decision authority to citizens; to suit plans to the citizen groups' desires; to learn about citizens' desires; to educate the public; to advance a community's integrity; to supply information to citizens; to improve a neighbourhood's image; to strengthen the decision's/plan's acceptability; to strengthen the citizens' confidence in authority; to undermine the authority plan's legitimacy.
- 6 These are: delegates elected in general elections, delegates elected for a defined project, sectorial appointed representatives; non sectorial appointed representatives; traditional leaders or leaders of existing organizations; volunteer representatives; existing activist groups; activist groups set up for a defined task or project; a representative sample of the electorate; the entire relevant public; all the members of existing relevant groups; all the potential public—whoever joins; undefined/anonymous consumers.
- 7 This conclusion was based upon surveys of all urban plans (more than 200 cases) and objections (more than 1,600 distinct submissions) that were discussed and decided upon during one year in a representative district commission. It should be noted that the approval process itself was extremely time consuming, lasting for several years for most plans and for more than a decade even for many. During the 20 years since that study, the approval delays have not been significantly shortened. Quite the opposite has happened in several regions.
- 8 The design of this project was influenced by lessons from unsuccessful US rehabilitation projects of the 1960s.
- 9 As an end, with reference to improving knowledge and understanding, and as a means to enhance effectiveness. We aimed to strengthen relevant characteristics

and take advantage of them as far as appropriate, and to minimise negative impacts of opposing trends and patterns as far as possible.

- 10 The literature that we surveyed during the first phase of our study focused both on those who had a say only in the participatory process and stressed non-inclusiveness and even discriminatory patterns within the PCP practice. Our methodology was designated to reach people whose voice is usually not heard—the uninvolved, that generally constitute the majority in any community.
- 11 These two fields were investigated together due to salient interrelations and prospects for mutual progress. This paper reports merely on the UPD field.
- 12 More than half questionnaires were signed by mayors, the others by high-ranking officials who responded on behalf of mayors. It should be noted that almost all respondents expressed interest to be informed in regard to the study's development, more than half expressed interest in further active involvement in the research and development process.
- 13 Does active opposition of, say, ten percent of a community to a disputed project, mean that ninety percent like it or at least agree to it, or on the contrary, might it suggest a much broader latent citizens' opposition? In the absence of 'real' data in regard to the 'silent majority', each party is inclined to adopt an interpretation that meets its needs. Active participants are often suspected of acting on behalf of their private interests only, while claiming to represent a whole community. How could one know? And perhaps, the old 'top down' system is the solution, the establishment knows what's good for everybody, and will care for everyone and not discriminate against the silent (weak ?) majority?
- 14 The respondents were required to choose their priorities from a list of potential aims for CP. This was based on a list developed by Alterman *et al.* (1991), and applied through a questionnaire pilot process to suit this study's characteristics.
- 15 Situated on the Carmel Mountain and the Mediterranean seashore. Main city of the Haifa Metropolitan area and Capital of northern Israel with a population of approximately 270,000 residents.
- 16 New County, created in the seventies in the Galilee—the north of Israel. Residents of nine out of its 29 small communal settlements were interviewed.
- 17 Israeli local governments are—legally and financially—weaker than their counterparts in most Western countries. At the same they are burdened by a whole gamut of responsibilities. Most major budgetary and policy decisions require central government approval. All but the most prosperous local authorities have a weak tax base, and are dependent on hefty central government transfers (Alterman 2000).

- ¹⁸ Our study compared the interviewees that were involved at the time of our study, with those who declared that they were active previously, but stopped. Half of the past activists were involved in some formal framework, compared to only one third of the 'present activists'.
- ¹⁹ In the context of this research 'agents of change' are defined as those who *actively* bring about changes: facilitate, lead, and create processes.
- ²⁰ The development of criteria and measures continued the work of Susskind and Cruikshank (1987), Dotson (1992), and Churchman *et al.* (1996).
- ²¹ One example is the activity of social workers and architects as agents of change within thirteen community councils (partnerships of the community and the local government) in Jerusalem since the early 1980s. During the last decade, additional councils of this kind have been created in different towns in Israel. Following an evaluation of the councils' function, we recommended development training programs—starting from short ongoing education workshops, up to full graduate programs for community architects and planners. These will aim at training and education of planning experts for an effective work with, and within the community and the Establishment, in ways that facilitate and promote appropriate solutions, programs and plans for all the relevant parties.
- ²² The Ashkelon case, is one example of local and other authorities' initiatives in CP. These included a service treaty between the town hall and the citizens (unique in Israel of early 90s), municipality officials periodic meetings with citizens in each neighbourhood for gathering information, requests and feedback and citizens opinions inquiries. The Ashkelon Dynamic Master-plan, intended to consist of an innovative planning model pilot, included rules for stakeholders' involvement in decision-making processes. The planning process itself included active CP methods, e.g. focus groups (Stern 2001; Vraneski 2001).
- ²³ One example is the Naharyia case study: the struggle of a citizens' NGO against the town hall's development initiatives. The local authority ignored the existence of the organisation and its demands (Liav 2000).
- ²⁴ The Master-plan for the Baka neighbourhood in Jerusalem provides a unique example: The plan was initiated and conducted by the citizens and the community council in the 1980s. The planning, approval and implementation processes were unusually smooth, fast, effective, and satisfactory to all the involved parties. We should note that in this case, CP began in response to town hall's planning initiatives which were extremely opposed to the citizens' vision of their neighbourhood (Schori 1992).
- ²⁵ Argyris and Schon (1996) define learning as 'detection and correction of error'. The literature has identified two types of organisational learning: single-loop

and double-loop learning. Single-loop learning involves the diagnosis of and intervention in problems without changing the underlying policies, assumptions, and goals. In other words, single-loop learning results in cognitive and behavioural changes within an existing paradigm (the old paradigm or mindset). Double-loop learning occurs when the diagnosis and intervention require changes in the underlying policies, assumptions, and goals. In other words, double-loop learning involves cognitive and behavioural changes outside the existing paradigm (the new paradigm or mindset).

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