

# **CONTEMPORARY DEMOCRATIC INNER-CITY PLANNING AS A QUEST FOR SUPPORT OF THE DIVERSE PEOPLE**

**The importance for democratic planning to gain unity and support in the fragmented society by staying closely connected to this society**



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**VOX POPULI, VOX DEI**

**OR**

**VOX PERITUS, VOX DEI**

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\*The painting on the cover was given by a Groningen art gallery to the city council of Groningen. It shows ironically the beauty of the square side that will be torn down for the redevelopment plans of the city planning department and city council. City counselor of spatial planning Frank de Vries states: "The painting shows where we are now on this point." unsure of if he was happy with the gift. The painting did receive a prominent place in the city hall.

\*\*transl. The voice of the people (is) the voice of god [OR] The voice of the expert (is) the voice of god.

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# 1. Introduction

*“The ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.”*

*Gandhi*

**I**n the aftermath of the recent elections of the British parliament, which resulted in the first hung parliament since 1974, debates about representative democracy are raised again. What does it mean that the representation of this democracy is divided more between the three main parties? Is there maybe a trend in representation as more divided? Is therefore society more divided? A divided outcome of elections is not a recent phenomenon as history points out. Moreover this divide is exactly what democracy made able, to vote on more than one party to represent the different ideologies the people have. But, how much divide can democratic society handle in order to keep democratic decision-making possible? Can support of the majority still be found?

## **The greater division of parliaments all over Europe**

The trend of more representative parties needed for the majority in votes is not only notable in Britain, also in the Netherlands this trend can be noted. As a three party coalition is more common these days, decennium ago two parties were mostly enough (ROB, 2010). The trend of Britain and the Netherlands can also be noted in Germany. Since 2005 the coalition needed three parties, as this was never the case before. In Italy a three party coalition is also a more recent phenomena, before 1994 Italy's 'Camera dei Deputat' coalition never consisted of more than two parties. France is a different story. Although three parties historically take most of the votes, the amount of parties running the elections expanded. So throughout Europe it can be noted that a great deal of countries find themselves in greater division of political parties if the national parliament.

## **Representation of the ordinary**

This divide of parties reveals the divide of society in different ideologies on how the state should function and most important of all; on which ideology nationwide decisions should be made. Because that is the main purpose of the elected representatives: represent the ordinary people in governmental decision-making, as the essence of democracy is that the political rule should be in the hands of the ordinary people (Barnett and Low, 2004). In other words, the ordinary people should support the decisions representatives make for them. This ideal has almost become universal in a remarkably short space of time. But how it works in practice varies widely (Schaffer, 1998). Although most forms do try to resemble the ideal of the political rule in the hands of the ordinary, in some ‘democracies’ this is very hard to discover. Think about North Korea, which calls itself the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Thus the word ‘democracy’ sometimes seems unattached to the ‘political rule in the hands of the ordinary people’. This is therefore not a democracy as this research follows the ideal Barnett and Low express. This research does recognise different forms of democracies as Schaffer (1998) states (as cited in Barnett and Low, 2004):

[T]he meanings ascribed to democracy vary across cultures and contexts, but without losing their universal resonance (Schaffer in Barnett and Low, 2004; p. 12).

This universal resonance can be seen as the common ideal of the ordinary people that should have the political rule. The most used form to practice this ideal in Europe is representative democracy. In this form of democracy agents and parties take the role of representatives of the ‘ordinary people’.

## **Implications for representative decision-making**

Thus important to find is that as the trend of more divide of representation continues, more different agents and parties enter it. This extension of different agents and parties is the result of the system of representative democracy keeping itself legitimate as representative of the people. This also means that representative democracy will receive more pressure as the extension of political agents and parties divides the parliaments more. As the ordinary people start to differ more in choosing more different parties suited to their needs or ideas, the ideal becomes

more difficult to reach for the political decision-making process as majority on decisions get more difficult to reach.

Representative democracy started in most European countries with only a handful parties and most of the time only two received enough votes to govern, but that seems to change. Never in history the representatives in parliaments throughout Europe have been so diverse as today. This asks representative democracies to work on full power. In this it is the main question: as democracy was designed for the rule of the ordinary and against the singular ruler, can representative democracy keep functioning in the increase of diversity? How much pressure of different opinions can representative democracies handle?

### **Democracy means concessions**

It is important to understand that living in a democracy always means encountering opinions and interests of others that ultimately and inescapably lead to concession. In greater division of the democratic society this will only increase. This implies an increase in the political game of dialogue and negotiation in governmental decision-making. This decision-making is the central feature of representatives in a representative democracy (Setälä, 2008), but different countries have different ways of fulfilling this task. Most countries strive toward reaching consensus in decision-making rather than more opposition among the different parties. Especially the Netherlands is known for this with their ‘Polder model’ creating broad supported consensus. It is argued that this broad corporation and supported consensus was born in the nationwide unifying fight against the water by building dykes, but this model now seems rather dated in the Netherlands (ROB, 2010).

The trend of more diverse representatives and increasing need for concessions encounters a certain danger. Because an increase in concessions will mean that the decisions that must be made nation wide can lose their ability to be strategic and powerful. Greater concessions have less direction, as they contain the more diverse opinions and ideas of society. There must be a sense of knowing what direction the country must head or else the country will lose competition with other countries. Consensus creates only the average of all parties involved and thus will not create real vital decisions. A major consequence of greater concessions is that big decisions are more difficult to find a way in democracy because big decisions need big support.

## **Democracy means convincing the majority**

‘Luckily’ in many cases these big, nation-wide decisions only need the support of the majority, meaning that ‘half plus one’ of the people already legitimates the decision. This undoubtedly is agreed to keep representative democracy function, because in this form representatives only need to convince one more than half of the people in big decisions. On the other hand it can easily set 49% of the people offside. There are some interesting examples of voting’s whereby majority of real big decisions depended on only a few or in some exceptional cases only one vote. In The Netherlands a bill of the introduction of the ‘corrective referendum’ resulted in the ‘Night of Wiegel’ (Parlement & Politiek, 2010). The bill did not pass when it did not reached two-third of the lower chamber. The pass of this bill would imply that the people could ask for a referendum on choices already made to rewind. This bill therefore was fundamental in how the representative democracy in the Netherlands would function, but rejected by only one vote against too much.

The system of ‘half plus one’ is the only way for representative democracy to be able to legitimate big decisions. But in increasing diverse representation also this ‘half plus one’ may become in danger as the country is not divided between two but rather three or more same size parties. ‘Half plus one’ gets impossible to reach and greater concessions therefore need to be done, losing societies vital, strategic and competitive decision-making.

It may be the case that the only other way to still find enough support for big decisions is to (re)create some sort of unity in society again. Unity will find the majority again and therefore powerful and big decisions will be possible. This of course is more easily said than done. It has also something ‘undemocratic’ sticking on to it. In liberal democracies people are free to think what they want and therefore influencing the way they want to vote is not that democratic. The primate in decision-making must lie in the hands of the people, and representatives serve the people (ROB, 2010). But if this means that the country will have no power at all to keep nation-wide decision-making possible, something, one way or the other, needs to be done.

Therefore politicians have the task to keep the nation in a certain amount of unity. It is also for the countries own sake to stay united if it wants to make certain progress or stay competitive. Democratic society needs both ‘unity’ as ‘diversity’

as Gandhi points out: ‘The ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization’. This fight for unity in the diversity of society is exactly what the representation of democratic society is struggling with. As support for representative decision-making is fundamental in representative democracy the question ultimately is posed: Is this what we want? If the majority supported it by giving their vote, this is what we, or at least the majority, want. In keeping the support of the majority the most essential basis of representative decision-making the nation keeps himself remote from the political rule of the elite. This is the ultimate essence of democracy that the political rule is in the hands of the ordinary people and not the small elite. Flyvbjerg (1998) notices in his Aalborg case study:

Democracy is not something a society “gets”; democracy must be fought for each and every day in concrete instances, even long after democracy is first constituted in a society (Flyvbjerg, 1998; p.5).

It is therefore most important to keep representative decision-making based on the support the particular decision gets from the people of society. This can best be achieved when society keeps their certain amount of unity. Every decision made without support of the people can be seen as a crime against democracy and should be fought against.

### **Overview of the thesis**

This thesis will deepen the question on how representative democracy can react on the change of society towards more diversity and the ideas of the fragmentation of society, ongoing individualism and the increasing critical view on contemporary form of representative democracy. In this society it is more difficult to find support for plans or ideas to implement. This leads to more intense forms of campaigning and persuasion of the people. Especially the in the planning of the inner city the people need to be involved, as it is their city, which leads to the confrontation of the planning department with the widely range of opinions and views over what is best. Support for the ideas stated by the planning department as best for the city is hard to find. Planning the inner city therefore becomes an intensive quest for support. In a more abstract way, the goal is to find a certain amount of unity in the diversity of democratic society. This unity is essential for representative decision makers to keep their decisions supported and therefore democratically legitimized. The deepening of the strange antithesis between the apparent diversity and the

need for unity in representative democracy therefore is important. To still find enough support on how to plan and create the physical space of the city, this research tends to recommend that governance should be visionaries and also, based on the theory of Throgmorton (1996), persuasive storytellers about the future in which the people can find a unifying context.

The thesis will be built up starting with the theoretical framework in the next chapter, *chapter Two*, that examines representative democracy in the light of representing the diverse in planning. This connects the theory of the fragmenting society to the role the planner in representing society in his or her duty to create a physical society that suites society. This role of the planner was different in modern times were the planner knew exactly what was best for society and thought that utopias started on their drawing tables. Planners historically draw upon their expertise rather than what the ordinary people want. But in the growing recognition of the more complex processes involved in the creation of high quality physical spaces the planner found it unable to create universal working plans. Every context is different thus the great concepts lost power and the process became more important. Planners therefore go back to society in dialogue to find out what they want. In this context of the decline of planning and increase of societal influence, the fragmentation of society again asks the planning department to have visions.

*Chapter Three* gives an overview of the key questions and of the methodology used for the thesis. This consists of a description of the data used in the case study and the way this data enables the possibility to conclude on the raised issues of this thesis.

*Chapter Four* contains the in-depth case study of a planning project in the city of Groningen, the Netherlands. Analysis of this case study begins in *Chapter Five* relating it to the theoretical framework presented in chapter two.

The final chapter, *Chapter Six*, will examine whether spatial planning can take lessons from studying representative democracy in relation to the spatial planning project case. The quest for support that planners get caught in will be discussed in this chapter as also the strange antithesis within democracy of creating unity in a space of diversity. The importance of keeping the whole nation to certain amount of unity for the countries own sake is the main message of the thesis.

## 2. Finding Support in a Fragmented Society

*Eendracht maakt machtig. Hoe een klein land groot kan zijn. Is dat niet prachtig!*  
(Transl.: Unity creates power. That such a small country can be so big. Isn't it beautiful?)

*A. Hazes*

**T**his chapter provides a theoretical framework that grounds the question what the diversity of society means for finding enough support for the governmental decision-making. Based under this discussion is the reach for certain amount of unity in the diversity of society. Representing the diverse in planning focuses first on the diverse people of society that representatives need to support their decisions. This society is in much research typified as fragmented and driven by the post-modern thought of 'celebration of difference'. This diverse society implies difficulties for the representatives as their support fragmentises. Support is the basis of democracy. Support of the majority gives in most representative democracies the representatives the legitimating power to decide and implement. As noted in the introduction, to find support in nationwide decision-making becomes increasingly difficult. This eventually seeks to some sort of community sense or unity for nations to keep enough support for big decisions and therefore to keep functioning. In theory this also is the task of representatives and politicians to be in some sense keepers of unity. They need to keep these people united for the sake of decision-making and the best and maybe only way is to persuade people of certain visions of what is best for society. The best way is to stay closely connected to the people.

## **Close connection to society and search for unity**

In representative democracy it is necessary to ask the question: in what amount are representatives representing the people? That can be best measured by turning the question around and ask how much the people support what their government does. If majority agrees, democracy turns that into the voice of god. For keeping the support of the people the representatives need to be closely connected to society. That can be seen as a democratic task of representatives, to be closely connected to the people. They need to facilitate active involvement and the people may not become merely spectators.

For reaching enough support certain unity in society needs to be found again. But this confronts the normative discussion of which vision is told in which the people can find unity. To create unity certain visions on what is best for the country over certain issues must find enough support to legitimate nation-wide decision-making on these certain issues. Nations do not easily find broad support over issues without certain powerful leaders telling their visions on the solutions of the problems. Visions therefore are needed, and this in a time of the lost of faith in big stories.

Also planners need to be closely connected to the people and need enough support for their actions as they are too servants of the people. Today, post-modern planners serve society more than in modernity because in post-modernity the way forward, the big visions are let go of (Healey, 1994). This turn in planning from planning out of visions that knew what was best for society toward more serving society and finding support was grounded in the recognition of the complexity of physical creation of society in post-modern thought. It created a more pragmatic view on the creation of the physical space. But now in the fragmentation of society and the need for more unified people again to keep the support, there is a need for visions on which people can agree again. New movements in planning (Throgmorton 1996, Sandercock 2003) therefore claim planning as persuasive storytelling in order to find enough support by persuasion of the people.

## **Theoretical framework**

Next figure (2.1) overviews the theoretical framework as it puts support in the centre to emphasise that support is most important in democratic governmental decision making. Support of the majority is in most representative democracies

legitimizing the implementation of the decisions. The upper ‘fragmented society’ and ‘planners lost of visions’ push the support down while a more sense of unity and persuasive storytelling by planners can push the support up again. The level or threshold is in most representatives the line of ‘half plus one’, meaning already the smallest amount of majority, is enough support to decide on nation-wide and nation-affecting issues. To find this majority, to go on the quest for support, the governing parties need to convince, persuade, campaign and frame the context of the people to find certain unity. This brings governing parties also back to their place of representatives of the people and gives the people the ultimate political rule. In this chapter, first the fragmented society will be explained. Secondly the involvement of the people that are needed to support the decisions. Thirdly the necessary search for unity in the diverse society will be explored. After that the lost of visions in planning will be explained and ending with the movement of planning as storytelling that can help to keep the support above the threshold.

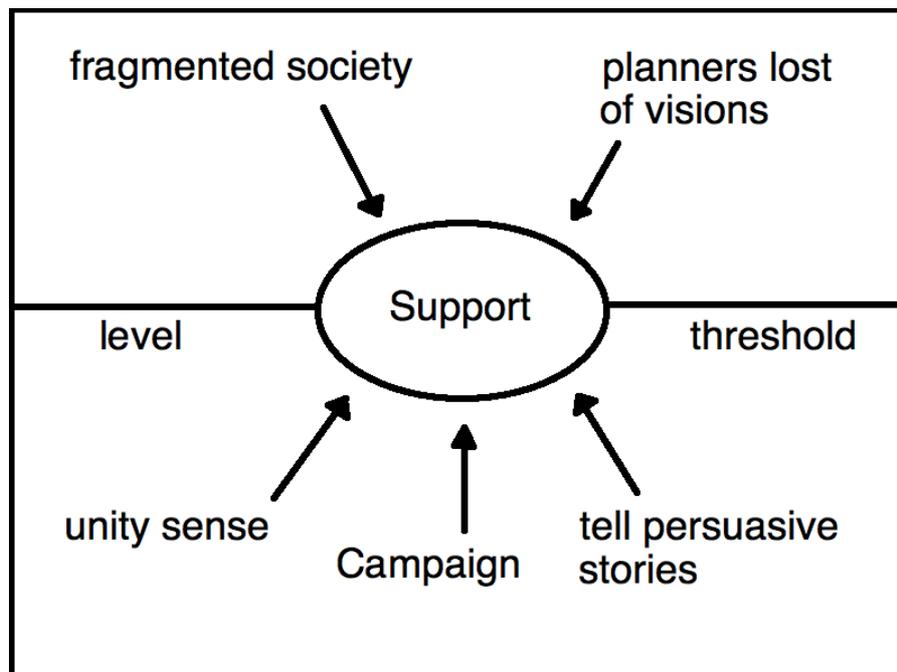


Figure 2.1 Overview of the theoretical framework.

## **The Fragmented Society**

The trend of more divided voting in various countries in Europe as noted in the introduction can be seen as only the tip of the iceberg. This trend is part of a change in society as broadly discussed in especially sociology but also political science and social geography (Healey, 1994). The changes in the composition of the ruling parties confirm the thought of the fragmentation of society and increasing pluralism as a reflection of post-modern thought. As Patsy Healey puts it in the mid-nineties:

**Contemporary social orders are often described as 'fragmented', reflecting a change from a 'modern' period of shared objectives, to a 'post-modern' time of lifestyle diversity and the celebration of difference. (Healey, 1994; p.32)**

The recognition of the diversity of every person as unique individual is something that boomed in post-modern times and in the Netherlands started already in the sixties, especially in counteracting on the strong pillar model of society in the Netherlands. The individuals made them free of the collective they should belong to (ROB, 2010). The overall tension between the individual and society increases by the ongoing fragmentation, heterogeneity and most of all the 'celebration of difference' in society.

The thought of post-modernity made society gain in freedom in expressing differences towards each other but in democratic governance this implicates growing complexity of finding support in democratic decision-making. Post-modern time and this 'celebration of difference' have implications for the representation of society making democratic decision-making more complex. Since the mid-nineties this fragmentation continued in growing towards pluralism and individualism. This change of society has an impact on representative democracy. It is easy to represent a group that is very united about certain ideologies, as was presumed in the 'modern' period of shared objectives, but becomes more complex as these people differentiate in ideology among each other. Healey states that:

Modernity was in itself a cultural project, with significant political consequences,

organizing how we thought and acted as well as what we thought we wanted, our 'preferences'. (Healey, 1997; p. 41)

In the rejection of this cultural project that determined our preferences, post-modern thought of 'celebration of difference' individualism keeps growing. This has severe implications for democratic decision-making, as involvement of the diverse people will lead to difficulties in reaching an agreement over the decision.

That society was also fragmented in modern times is highly possible, but only unnoted. Dear (1995; as stated in Healey, 1997; p. 41) confirms this idea:

'Modernity' has 'floated away' leaving us to see the diversity in cultures, understood as systems of meanings and modes of thought and action, which was there all along, but invisible to us (Dear, 1995; as stated in Healey, 1997; p.41)

Thus the idea of a fragmented society may only be recognised in post-modernity but sure will increase the actual difference among the peoples ideas as the idea inspires to think differently and also the possibility for being different is in western society more and more accepted, also by the grace of post-modern thought.

### ***Involvement of the People and find support***

Representatives represent the (ordinary) people in governmental decision-making. The most important demand for doing this well is to know what the people want. That would than form the basis of representative action. Involvement of the people is therefore essential what means a close connection to the people. But this close connection seems to be insufficient visible in governmental practice as the next will explain.

#### **Lost connection with society**

In a advise written by Dutch counsel for public governance (*raad voor openbaar bestuur*; *ROB*) the representatives, politicians, are seen loose from society. The tension between the representatives and the 'voice of the people' increases (ROB,

2010). This because society changed into more horizontal relationships and the representatives is still vertically organised. This change of society is also due to more individual behaviour, fed by post-modern thought. To regain the connection with society and to be true representatives the ROB (2010) describes three fundamental characteristics representative democracy should have. First representatives (or politicians) need to operate out of values and principles:

Politics therefore need to become an exchange and collision of values and principles and less policy and measurements. Or to say: In the political arena first and especially the public values must be weighted. (ROB, 2010; 45)

The exchange and collision of values and principles need to be the most visible in the acts of representatives. The way of representatives act in policies and measurements is based on the fiction that the future predictable and possible to plan. Thus, the ROB argues that when the underlying values and principles are the bases, a framework of values and principles gives grip instead of a fast dated party programme can deal with the future issues. Secondly the people must have more influence in policy and decision-making. The voting once in the four years is simply not enough and need supplements of more participative and/or direct forms of democracy. The counsel argues that people need to have the primate in policymaking, namely strong influence in agenda setting and policy preparation. Thirdly the counsel suggests that citizens should have more influence in choosing their political leaders.

The counsel emphasises the need to do something; ‘doing nothing is not an option’. They passionately state that the distance between the people and the representatives will only grow even further if non of these possibilities will be used.

### **People involved as spectators**

The lost connection of the people and society is also drawn in a research of Green (2010). He researched the everyday life experience of democracy presented in his book ‘The eyes of the people’ proclaiming that ordinary people do not get something to say, but something *to see* in the decision-making process:

In any case, the key point is that the vast majority of our political experience, whether voter or non-voter, is not spent engaged in such action and decision making, but rather watching and listening to *others* who are themselves actively engaged. Such spectatorship is inscribed in the very nature of political action itself. [...] [M]ost citizens most of the time are not decision makers, relating to politics with their voices, but *spectators* who relate to politics with their eyes. (Green, 2010; p.4; original italics)

This claim of people as spectators rather than decision-makers can be seen as alarming. Green (2010) further extends his thought on the growing gap between the spectators and actors in political democratic decision-making. He refers to the technical level that reflected the spectatorship in the rise of mass communication technologies, and hereby especially the television, that according to Green, ‘cemented spectatorship into the very structure of daily political experience.’ This rise increased the distance between actor and spectator. Green argues:

Whereas in the past, as in Athens, the spectating citizen could easily step forward and become a political actor, today most political spectators are addressed by political messages in ways that make it impossible to respond directly and extremely difficult to respond at all. The relationship between actor and spectator, in its current form, threatens the political equality prized by democracy. (Green, 2010; 4)

In our spectating culture, enhanced by mass media, stepping forward is more difficult. But active participation of the ordinary people in decision-making can be seen as fundamental to keep democracy work. The connection between representatives and the people they represent must be as direct as possible. This means that the people must be actively involved.

### **Representatives need to facilitate active involvement**

This active involvement of the people can also be found in how Fung and Wright (2003) criticizes the contemporary system of representation and thereby state four central ideas of democratic politics:

Yet, increasingly, this mechanism of political representation seems ineffective in accomplishing the central ideals of democratic politics: facilitating active political involvement of citizenry, forging political consensus through dialogue, devising and implementing public policies that ground a productive economy and a healthy society, and, in more radical egalitarian versions of the democratic ideal, assuring that all citizens benefit from the nations wealth. (Fung, 2003; p.1)

The first two ideals make clear that in democratic politics it is important for representatives to be severely connected with the people, the society. Representatives have the task to facilitate active political involvement because to act as democracy the people should not be solely spectators but actively involved. This is grounded on the simple but important distinction Walzer (1970) made between passive and active citizen. The active citizen takes part in common deliberations on both his own good and on the good of all, is interested in who governs him and why, in the adopted policies and why they are adopted, and is finally prepared to exercise power himself (Walzer, 1970). But both citizens are part of society thus important for representatives. The second ideal creating political consensus through dialogue is also marking the involvement of the people in the decision-making process by going into dialogue. It must be clear that involvement of the people is fundamental for democracies. The third ideal asks the representatives to be also the expert, knowing what to do to create a 'productive economy and a healthy society'. The last ideal marks the normative discussion always sticking to democracy and the role of the state.

Thus, the people of society have no real connection with the representatives and the mindset of the people is focussed on being just a spectator and not able or willing to be actively involved in decision-making. Here the representatives have the task to facilitate active involvement of the people to ultimately legitimate their role as representatives of these people. There must be noted that the little power citizens have in the process can also be a simple but important barrier for the people to get involve (Fung and Wright emphasise this and propose their Empowered participatory governance model, see Fung and Wright, 2003).

### ***Find support of the diverse***

## **Unity fundamental for democratic decision-making**

Beside that, and part of it, the representatives also keep the people united to keep nation-wide decisions possible. As said earlier on, to keep big decisions possible in a democratic way, big support is needed. Big support for certain decisions can be pointed as certain amount of unity on certain decisions in society. But as society gets fragmented and the former 'collective' is lost, the unity is lost. This implies that the nations 'big wheel' is rudderless. The nation-wide decisions must be made without being the average of the people but rather be strong, strategic, vital and competitive. This means that to be democratic, unity of the nation is essential. Therefore, for nation-sake, the task of the different representatives is to keep all the people united.

## **Forge one out of many**

More unified people is clearly a concept of the mind. Abstract minded this concept in essence makes 'one out of many'. MacKendrick says about the concept 'one out of many' the following:

[W]hen we wonder about the world, amazed by it and attempting to make sense of it, one of our deepest impulses is to try to cover the dizzying range of evident phenomena with the elegance of a single principle: to make one out of many. There is a great intellectual security in this simplicity, an elegant absence of confusion (MacKendrick, 2008; p.10)

The simplicity of the concept avoids the complexity of the one versus the many and secures academic intellectual thinking about the many. This is deeply rooted in the way we think and make sense of the world. It is a concept to simplify reality. It enables us to think about the singular 'society' that consists of the many. It can be said that the representatives act for the many based on this concept. Therefore the concept of unity is a necessity for states or nations, tribes and even families or relationships. But what creates the unity? What makes the many to one? The will for the individual one's to be part of many is fundamental. But from there on this 'one of the many' is not an easy concept to elaborate. Representing the many in a single decision is philosophical quite unable to do. Moreover, even inside individuals the decision-making process sometimes seems to consist of many persons discussing what to do.

## **Certain ideas that bind the people together**

The task of politicians to keep the people united is hard to underlie in creating a

real unity of the many individuals. But what makes sense is that unity can be found in something that binds the many. This creates unity on certain ideas, views, ideologies, policies, discourse, etc. Representatives can bind people if they persuade people for these certain ideas, views, etc. Beside this unity between certain people on particular ideologies, the unity of the entire nation must not be out of sight. High competition between ideologies can decrease the stability of the country. Certain overall visions or concepts of truth, put aside right or wrong, can keep the diverse people together.

### **Democracy stresses both dissenting and agreeing**

That both unity and diversity are inherent features of democracy can also be found in the writings of Schaffer (1998, As cited in Barnett and Low, 2004). He makes clear that democracy includes the rather strange antithesis of unity and diversity. Schaffer argues that democracies emphasises:

[D]emocracy emerges as a modality of rule that emphasizes talking, agreeing, arguing, dissenting, getting things done, and holding account. (Schaffer in Barnett and Low, 2004; p. 12)

So it emphasise certain pragmatic behaviour in ‘getting things done’ and the representatives should be held responsible in ‘holding account’. But what is more notable is that democracy both emphasises ‘agreeing’ as ‘dissenting’. This clearly brings back the struggle and antithesis of the representation of society between finding unity through agreeing and the ‘celebration of difference’ in dissenting. Democracy gives the freedom to conflict with each other, but on the other side seeks ways to agree with each other. Thus, the essence of democracy lies in the folding together of diverse interests and plural identities (Barnett and Low, 2004). This space of both extremes of dissenting and agreeing is the arena in which the quest for support takes place.

### ***Planning and the lost of Visions in Post-Modern times***

As democracy is the political rule of the ordinary people, every governmental organisation is in service of the people. The department of spatial planning serves the people by creating as high as possible qualitative physical space (Allmendinger, 2009). Although this task is surprisingly enough not stated in the

Dutch constitution (Tunnissen, 2009; p. 28), planning is ordered to be responsible for creating high quality environments of tomorrow by regulations and policies of the nation (Forester, 1989). To execute this responsibility, the spatial planning department has unavoidable certain visions over what is best for society. But, it can be said that these visions are rooted in different ground than before. Spatial planning started as a product of modernity (Healey 1993). But, in short, as product of modernity, the lost of the shared objectives in post-modern thought forced planning therefore into more communicative and collaborative ways (Healey, 1994; Allmendinger, 2009). Claims are made that is not a matter of technical rationality anymore how society should be planned.

The next figure (Figure 2.1) gives an overview of the lost of visions of planning in modernity, and also the society as more collective in modern times. The first is based upon the lost of knowing what is best for society. Planning started as product of modernity, based upon technical rational, knowing what was best for society, but started to recognise the complexities of social behaviour. Plans from behind the drawing table made by the expert increasingly did not work out the way this expert promised. Planning today emphasises more the communicative side as the people who are affected can help the creation of a plan better (Healey 1993, Allmendinger, 2009).

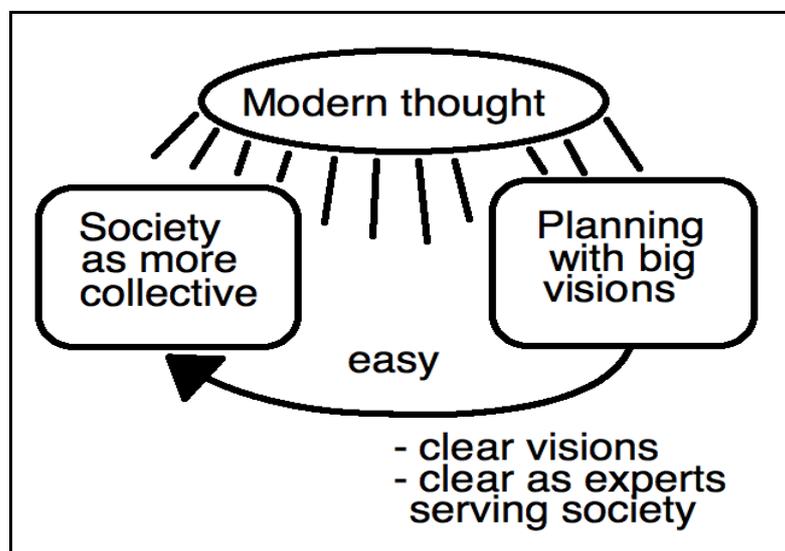


Figure 2.1. Modern thought influencing planning in a positive way for the planner

In modernity big planning projects, especially whole new city designs, famously the city of Brasilia by Oscar Niemeyer, or closer to home, the planning of the new

land of the province of Flevoland in the Netherlands, were believed to bring utopian societies. In the recognition of the complexity underlying the seemingly perfect blue-print designs of the planners a critical view emerged against the roots of planning in modernity. But the creation of the perfect society through physical interventions lost his absolute in post-modern thought. The visions that planners now have over the future are not based upon technical rational, but rather based upon the persuasion of the people over certain ideas. The planner takes a more moderate position in his claim on what is best for society. As Throgmorton (1996) argues:

[...] that planning can be thought of as a form of persuasive and constitutive storytelling about the future.” (Throgmorton, 1996; p. XIV)

The visions planners have degraded to ‘just’ stories about the future, which they try to sell as persuasive as the planner possibly can. The next figure (Figure 2.2) overviews the impact of post-modern thought on planning and society. It makes clear that the ‘lost of visions’ and fragmentation of society both increased the difficultness of the planning department. The ‘planning without real visions’ means that planners can still have visions over the future, but this is merely based on what Throgmorton calls ‘persuasive and constitutive storytelling’ and not based on the visions planners had in the past over utopian ideals.

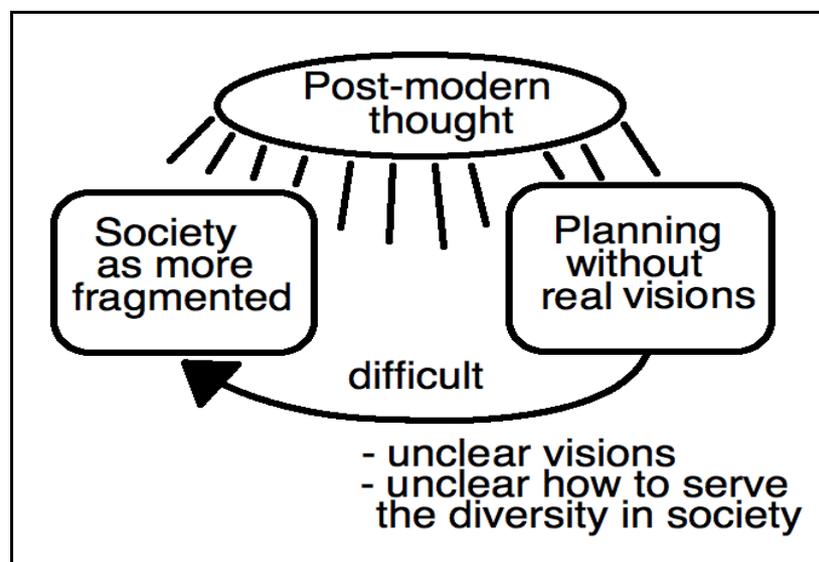


Figure 2.2. Post-modern thought influencing planning in a negative way

Even though the visions of persuasive storytelling are not ‘real’ visions anymore, this might be the basis in which unity on planning decisions can be found again.

Beside that planning retreat itself to a more modest form of visions, in the form of storytelling (Sandercock, 2003), planners try to find the way forward closer to the people. This is called the communicative turn in planning. Collaborating, participation, communication, dialogue, the process and deliberation became the buzzwords of the communicative turn in planning and offered the way out of the modernity crisis in planning. This established a closer link with society both because the way forward was not clear anymore as to regain the legitimacy of planning as being in service of democratic society. But this closer link to society made planning also enter in the problems of the fragmented society.

A change in society should therefore directly affect the objectives of the planning department as planning exists in service of society. This is also true according to Allmendinger (2009): 'as the world has seemingly become more diverse and fractured along social, cultural and political lines so planning and planning theory has had to account for and reflect such multiplicity'. Also as John Forester (1989) asks himself already back in 1989: 'In a world of conflicting interests – defined along lines of class, place, race, gender, organisation, or individuals – how are planners to make their way?'

Today post-modern thought increased the recognition and actual existence of conflicting interests by the 'celebration of difference', what makes this question only more important. Forester reacts on his own question by bringing in the concept of 'making sense together', which was already proclaimed by Habermas. 'Making sense together' states that if the way forward is not that clear anymore the only way left is conversation and the use of certain political rationality to ultimately make sense together. This notion evolved into more the more communicative and collaborative ways of planning (Healey, 1994).

Most important is the lost of solid ground, of clear visions of planners in the post-modern times and the change of the society in this same post-modern thought to be more different. This double problem of planning led the planning theorists to think about planning as persuasive storytelling rather than experts that know what is best (Throgmorton, 1996; Sandercock, 2003).

## **The planner acts between both power and rationality**

Bent Flyvbjerg (1998) describes the ever-forthcoming tension between power and rationality in his extended case study of the city of Aalborg. In this research he states that rationality is context-dependant, in contrast to the Enlightenment tradition, and that this context is power. Power can influence rationality, or moreover, can put rationality offside in the heat of the ‘battle’. He based this on how everyday politics, administration and planning is actual experienced. This research tries to think in line with this thought of the importance of the actual experience.

## **Persuasive stories**

The ideas of especially Throgmorton (1996) but also Sandercock (2003) emphasise the changing role of planners toward planning as persuasive storytelling. Telling a story is creating the context thus not creating direct opinions. The story tries to let the reader do the interpretation and induces itself a sort of discourse of thinking about the future. In persuasive storytelling it is very important that the stories become supported and that it than frames the context of the newly emerging planning projects. As in earlier times big planning visions were seen as truth, thus supported heavily, in persuasive storytelling this support must be fought for by telling a good coherent and strong story. The support for the planners’ story must be found by the representatives of the people who have the decision making power to implement projects according that particular story.

To gain the representatives support, instead of technical rational visions, the ideas must be told persuasively in stories. When the representatives get convinced, he or she can base his or hers action on this story. In that way the representatives can also tell this story towards the people they represent. This becomes more and more an activity of campaigning as support for planning projects becomes increasingly fragmented. Persuasive stories must find support of the majority again which is necessary in democracies.

## ***Finding support in a fragmented society (summary)***

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What we’ve seen is that society is fragmented and differentiated around the post-

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modern thought of ‘celebration of difference’ and the rejection of universal truth. This same line of thought made it difficult for planning, as product of modernity, to keep holding on to big visions over what is best for society. Therefore planning theory made the communicative turn towards making sense together rather than knowing what is best as expert. This made support very important as certain ideas get supported and communicated and other ideas not. It made it also more democratic as support of the majority legitimizes a decision. The view on planning as persuasive storytelling is based on this quest to support, as representatives of the people need to be advised. But, this time not as expert but rather as someone who frames the context by telling stories. In these stories the people can find a certain common past and practice and have a frame in which new planning projects can be put in. This will raise the unity of the people that democracy so desperately needs. The quest for support is a quest for unity among different people. An important tool for reaching more unity in diversity is telling persuasive stories that confirm your idea of how to plan the world and in which people can join you in that thought.

### 3. Key Questions and Methodology of the research

The line of thought of the Introduction (chapter One) and the theory found (chapter Two) on the fragmented society, and the influence of post-modernism on representatives and planners lead to some key questions. The fragmentation and ‘celebration of difference’ in society leads to a broader range of opinions thus puts more pressure on the democratic system of the political rule of the ordinary people. This leads to more difficult decision-making and harder to legitimate big decisions. Big decisions can be managed to be quite the average of all the opinions of the ordinary people, but this just would not create strategic, vital and competitive decision-making.

#### *Key Questions*

Thus, unity in certain overall visions is a necessity. But this is exactly what post-modern thought is fundamentally fighting against in their rejection of universalism and their ‘celebration of difference’. First key question is therefore:

- 1. How can representatives in decision-making cope with the fragmented society and differentiation of opinions based on post-modern thought, that leads to not enough support, while this support is fundamental in representative democracy decision-making?**

It is quite impossible to change the democratic principle of enough support for representative decision-making because that is an essential feature of representative democracy. But will representatives be able to find a way to still find enough support also in the fragmented society that celebrates their differences? In modernity experts knew what was best for society based on technical rational, but post-modern times rejects technical rational to be possible in highly complex issues. Planning is such complex field of decision-making and therefore planners lost their solid ground in post-modernity. This brings us to the second question:

- 2. How can planners still be the experts in the field and be responsible for the creation of the physical space as their visions over the future lost their**

### **base in the recognition of the complexity of the planning objects?**

Unity on certain nation-wide norms and values is important to still be able to find enough support for nation-wide decision-making. In this the representatives can hope that the people will find these norms and values together in time, and if not, the nation just does not work. This is really hard for representatives to let happen and it may be that unity in a way that is quite arguable is better than no unity at all. Besides, it is hard for representatives not to stand up for what vision they stand for, especially in our spectating culture of mass media. Thus, visions or aspirations that keep the nations unity are necessary for representatives to be still able to do what they are for, make nation-wide decisions. The third question arises:

#### **3. How much may the unifying persuasion of representatives cost society in giving up freedom of having own aspirations or visions, totally different from the nations aspirations and visions?**

The fourth question continues in thinking about the possibility for the people to be different and both stay united for the sake of the possibility of big or nation-wide decision-making; unity and diversity. Planners serve society in respecting the diversity but at the same time act as expert for unity.

#### **4. Can there be a balance found between the two seemingly opposing essential features of democracy of creating unity and respecting diversity?**

The final question is simple but severe:

#### **5. Is for representatives and planners ‘Vox Populi, Vox Dei’ (The voice of the people (is) the voice of god)?**

## ***Methodology***

To explore these questions the research conducts various research methods. The found theory on the decision-making in representative democracy in the fragmented society, the tasks of the representatives and planners in representative democracy and the role of the planner will be reflected in a in-depth empirical case study on a planning project in which representative democracy was clearly struggling with how they could act as true representatives of the people in deciding over the project. Also the planners had to act in the tensional role they have between the both forces of rationality and power.

The political representatives made decisions on the project while the city was very divided on what needed to be done, as showed in the held referendum on the projects. The project is about the centre of the city of Groningen and the most important place of the city, representing the historical and cultural core of the city. Therefore, to be democratic, this planning site needed to be planned for the people and the affected. The case study shows the divided city over 'what is best' and the highly political 'game' of persuasion of the plan promoted by certain political parties of the city counsel. It gives a feeling of how representatives try to persuade the people for certain ideas and moreover use campaigning activities to still find enough support over their visions of how the city should be planned. This highly difficult persuasion game of planning is the product of post-modernity, leaving the planning department without real power and the political representatives with even more. Thus, the case study is not meant to advocate certain way of dealing with planning the inner city, but rather to give an insight in how the fragmentation and divide of society impacts on big decision-making, in this case on the level of the city. Representatives and planners are bound by democracy to find enough support for their ideas as these kind of planning projects can be done in a thousand different ways, including doing nothing.

An interview is the primary data and other writings on the 'Grote Markt' redevelopment project and statistical data of the city of Groningen are the secondary data. The statistical data consists of the socioeconomic data of the different neighbourhoods of the city of Groningen that will be compared to the voting pattern of the people of Groningen on the two referenda of 2001 and 2005. This is to gain an insight in how the diverse people of Groningen are thinking about the redevelopment of the square.

Bent Flyvbjerg and his importance of researching the actual existing situation made this research aim at the importance of the quest for support. The research follows the line of Nietzsche and Machiavelli in having a big eye for what actual happens in contrast to models in theory and the found importance of planning as a quest for support therefore is emphasised. Therefore the intensively involved mayor of the city mister Wallage tells the actual existing planning process in a narrative out of first hand. What is difficult is that all the told narratives, also out of books about the process, are all coloured by the writers themselves. I tried to let you, the reader, do the judgements, because the questions that arise out of the campaigning method of planning the inner city compared to the genuine concept of democracy are intensively difficult to puzzle into each other.

The case study will show democracy in practice in which representatives get confronted with the fragmented society. Above all, the case study underscores the need for campaigning to create certain unifying visions over the planning object that can bind the people together again. If it becomes impossible to find enough support for planning decisions, planners may be condemned to become pragmatic and an era of visionary planning will come to an end.

## 4. The Case study – Planning the People’s city centre

*“Tegenwoordig worden burgers steeds meer democratisch geraadpleegd,  
maar burgers willen niks.”*

*(Transl. “These days the citizens increasingly are asked for advice, but citizens do not want anything.”)*

*Piet Pellenbarg*

*(as quoted in Hermans et al. 2003; p.56)*

In governing the planning of the city, representatives take a deciding role. In genuine democracies the representatives and planners are in the quest for support, enhancing that the people of the city ultimately have the power, as without support of the majority of the people the representatives cannot exercise any power. Planning the city therefore is highly political, especially for the inner-city, as also this chapter will show. Highly political means playing the game of forging together different opinions into one supported decision. The planning of the city centre is in most cases highly contested as this space has high meaning for the people of the city.

This chapter describes a case study about the democratic redevelopment of the city centre of an old European city whereby the representatives and planners encounters the diversity of peoples opinion and the democratic search for support of the majority. The referendum that the city counsel held on the Eastside of the square will be examined closely to take a closer look at the diverse society and their diverse opinions on the project. This will try to show that the support for planning projects, such as the redevelopment of the Grote Markt eastside, is fragmented into different socioeconomic groups and different political preferences. It shows that society is fragmented along lines of education, income, political preference, unemployment, prices of the house and even distance to the project itself. This means that the support for the project must be found in these different socioeconomic groups and ideologies. This complicates the

quest for support and the search for the majority. Therefore to still reach this democratic majority severe campaigning and persuasion is the core of inner-city planning projects. This is the main line of the case study.

### ***Introducing the ‘Grote Markt’ case study***

#### **The cultural heart of the city**

In the start of this millennium the department of spatial planning of Groningen, a city of 190.000 people in the north of the Netherlands, widely announced their idea to renew the inner city centre square. This space is called ‘De Grote Markt’ (The Big Square) and known as the historical and cultural heart of the city. Ashworth (2008) writes passionately about the importance of the square:

*“This space, small in area, came to represent, not least symbolically, perceptions and aspirations of what the city is for, what it should represent and in whose interests does it exist.” (Ashworth, 2008; p. 261)*

The square, with the two most important buildings of the city attached to it – the City Hall (18<sup>th</sup> century) and the city hallmark medieval church (Martini-church; 15<sup>th</sup> century) – is already the centre of the city for thousand years, which equals the beginning of the city (Ashworth, 2007). From the beginning this place was the main junction of the roads coming from the surrounding regions. It became the city marketplace, as it still is on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.



Fig. 4.1 The “Grote Markt” with the city hall on the left claiming the square (Source: Google Maps, 2009)

Although the city square can be dated back a thousand years ago and formed the heart of the city ever since, two sides of the square today are only 58 years old. In 1952 the city rebuild these two square sides (the north and eastside) and the space behind the city hall as these were destroyed in the liberation of Groningen out of the hands of the Nazi empire. Today the north side is used for a big retailer and bank office and the eastside (see figure 4.2) is now used for the city information centre, a bank, the club building of the biggest student organisation of the city (‘Vindicat’) and a small café. The south side kept his old buildings and contains several big cafés and nightclubs. The west side is taken by the City Hall standing loose from other buildings and therefore claiming the main position of the square. Behind the city hall is a shopping street that was built in the start of the nineties. Last but surely not least, the medieval hallmark building of Groningen, the Martini Tower of the Martini church, stands in the corner of the north-eastside. All these different elements of the square together form the living room of Groningen (Ashworth, 2003).



Figure 4.2 Eastside of the Grote Markt as it is today (2010, photo by J.C. Voorberg)

## ***The Planning Process***

### **Introduction Jacques Wallage**

The held interview with the former mayor of the city of Groningen, mister Jacques Wallage, gives a detailed insight in the planning process of the redevelopment of the Grote Markt. Mister Wallage was involved as mayor of Groningen in the project from 1998 until his depart in 2008. He was openly defender of the Eastside plans and was involved in the campaign around this plan. In the redevelopment plans of the north side he was not that much involved because as Lunsing states about the campaign on the north side:

“Even mayor Wallage kept himself quite. According to Vellekoop [political reporter for the northern journal] not only because he was just mayor, but also because he has a fine feeling for what is alive in the city.” (Lunsing, 2008; p. 70)

The next gives an overview of the process based upon the interview with mister Wallage. In caps the parts literally out of the interview. For the sake of the story some parts from other sources are added, mainly from Wagenaar et al. (1987) and Lunsing

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(2008).

## **Historical context**

As every project is framed in time, also the Groninger inner-city project. Mister Wallage starts by putting the project in the historical context of the destroy of the square in 1945.

To start right, the project needs to be put in the historical context of the first redevelopment plans that renewed the square after the big destroy of most of the square in the Second World War. The famous Dutch city architect Grandpré Molière from Delft made the overall plan for the rebuild, just like Berlage did in his 'Stadsuitlegplan'. He thought that this miserable state of the square was a perfect opportunity. 'Make a virtue of a necessity'. Make the Big Square even bigger. The places that are torn down can be used. Also the Martini Tower needed to come in the middle. Create some sort of Italian Piazza with the tower in the middle and a big square in front. This was brilliant and gigantic. But the city counsel rejected this plan in a late stage. What they did do is accept the new building alignment of the eastside of the square to move 17 metres backward. Molière retreated himself as the counsel accepted only some points of the plan but not like he wished. The market now was a bit taller but not broader. Than the debate about the function of the east and north side was evoked.

When Molière started with the project he proposed three main functions on the Grote Markt. This would be the city hall, the church and the economic function that the exchange centre would symbolise. But the exchange building sited did not want to move to the Grote Markt thus a new function replaced this economic function and that was the cultural function. This cultural function that Molière envisaged found agreement of the majority of the city counsel but in the implementation of the plan the fear for a overcrowding of cars of the inner-city made the plan change into a garage for cars on the place where the cultural centre should have been built. Therefore the cultural centre became built just outside the old city centre Molières idea of the extension of the city hall did not reach majority of the city counsel. The final disagreement over the design and architecture of the new square made Molière end his involvement in the project. The style that the city counsel wanted was of the hand of modernist architects, standing diametrical against Molières ideas. In this architectural style 'form follows function' and buildings were called "Machines for living" (Le

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Corbusier, 2007). This idea of ‘Machines for living’ and forthcoming legacy is heavily rejected in our post-modern times and therefore this legacy is widely destroyed and replaced. Molière favoured more traditional architecture, as his ‘Delftste School’ also was famous about. Architecture needed to be simple and humble and should express their function. City halls and churches should express their monumental function. The style was not happy with the new thinkers of functional architecture in which the Grote Markt finally became rebuild. After Molière retreated the main function of the eastside became what the north side was before WW2, the student society of the university received a new building. Beside the new north and eastside also the city hall became extended at the back, but again far differently as Molière pleased.

### **The rejection of the North side plan**

When this plan became implemented in 1952 the square stayed the same for a long time. In the eighties the city counsel started making some redevelopment plans as the dissatisfaction of the square increased (Lunsing, 2008; Hermans et al. 2003). First the attachment of the city hall was rebuilt to make room for a shopping street called the ‘Waagstraatcomplex’. This redevelopment was purely a city counsel agreement and the people were hardly involved, as the city counsel asked the people advice over the four different designs in a so called ‘preferendum.’ But that would change as the other parts of the Grote Markt were next to be redeveloped. The city counsel decided that redeveloping the north and eastside at the same time would be too big of a project. Therefore it was chosen that first the north side would be redeveloped. This time the people would receive a more prominent place as the site of the redevelopment also has a more public prominent character, as Ashworth already noted earlier in this chapter. This started to take form around 2000 when the new city counsel was focussed on the redevelopment of the north side. Mister Wallage was just mayor when this started.

The new city counsel that started in 2000 was faced with two dysfunctioning sides of the Grote Markt. The main reason for this was that there were not enough retailers on these sides. The Grote Markt, that forms the heart of the city, is only used for a small part. It has almost no shopping abilities. The big public is not pulled to this high value side. A proposal for a cultural centre for the city was supported as the ‘culture-function’ was still missing on the city centre square and it would give the Grote Markt allure.

The cultural centre that did not made the implementation because of the urgent need

for a parking space was now back on the agenda to bring life to the Grote Markt. The placement of this cultural centre was thought at the eastside, but this was put at rest as first the north side was going to be redeveloped. This north side redevelopment plan was very ambitious. Underneath the square would be an underground parking space that would be connected to the new shopping centre of the north side. The retailers of the new north side itself would pay almost all the costs. A big retailer was prepared to invest big. Also the city government could cover a lot of costs by the parking money of what would probably be the most popular parking space of the city. The built would take up to six years.

Beside the idea for a cultural centre there was a total renewal plan for the north side of the square. But this plan was not accepted as a referendum on the plan was rejected by 80%. The main reason for that was the idea of a parking space under the square, which received a lot of resistance in the city. Someone said to me that mayor Wallage lost of 'wethouder' Wallage because when I was 'wethouder' I introduced the traffic regulation plan that wanted to ban the car from the inner-city and now this plan pulled the car to the inner-city. After this plan there became a taboo on redeveloping the north side because of the big resistance. The plan for the demolition of the 'Oosterpoort' and the replacement on the eastside did not received enough support because demolishing the 'Oosterpoort' was thought of a sin; demolishing a functioning building is not something for the people of Groningen. Thus, the city counsel was stuck.

### **The Eastside plan by the 'Forum Group'**

The clash with the people in the first referendum was clearly a shock and putted the city counsel on its place. The strategy needed to be revisit as the plans were thought of to be still great, but without support of the people it just would not work. Also the plan must be possible to implement, meaning that the owners of the buildings on the eastside needed to be convinced to be part of the change. This time that was not a big problem, as the city government already owns almost all the buildings of the eastside, except the student organisation building. But this also meant that big investors would not cover the costs of the plans but the city needed to raise the money itself. But this money was easily found as a big infrastructural project was just refused and therefore 'left' money possible to spent on another project for the city. The next part describes

the change view towards the eastside of the Grote Markt and a different strategy by involving the people more early in the process in putting up a broad public debate as Wallage calls it.

After the first referendum the new line of thought became: “As we manage to successfully develop the eastside, the north side will follow naturally”. Other initiatives will follow; we can make it work than. The substantial decision than was made, I still think that was right, not to create a governmental plan for the eastside but rather first organise a broad public debate with participants from very different groups and angles: science, art, politics, and business. This resulted in a group of forty people that formed the ‘Forum Group’. The question was simple: “What is the problem of the eastside and what solutions can there be found?” The question was open and the counsel did not take the lead. This was a change of role as before when the counsel made the big north side plan giving the people the feeling that they are already bound and have nothing to say. I can clearly remember that we sat at a city counsel meeting and my colleagues asked me: “Do you know what will happen tonight? No, I really have no idea!” The meeting was directed independently. We found it all very scary.

The ‘Forum Group’ took as main point that the eastside was the dead side of the square thus a building is needed that can attract the public and make it more alive. The idea was that city library, that yearly attracts 650 thousand people, was almost out of contract with the place that is has now and actually also a bit too small, could be the nucleus of the new development on the eastside of the Grote Markt. Thought was of not just a traditional library but to make a crossover of library, theatre, information technology and a sort of debate centre. That became than the substance, the function that would attract people to the new eastside.

Although mister Wallage describes the process here as a leap of faith in the people, the strategy behind the plan sure was thought out and directed by the city counsel and mister Smink. The counsel understood that it was necessary to involve the people in such an early stage to make it their plan in order to get more support this time. That was the main function of the Forum Group, to increase the support for the plan by letting the ordinary people to be involved in the plan making and think about a new function. The Forum Group remarkably came to think about the same function as Smink had already in mind. Wallage says about the process of the redevelopment plan

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of the eastside the following.

To put the planning process in the way of creating a 'Forum Group' and an early referendum, not on the complete plan but on the function of the eastside, was thought of by mister Smink, the former 'wethouder' of spatial planning. The rejection of the complete plan of the north side, that already had found an impressing amount of financiers out of the market, could not happen again. This 'plan' could not peter out on a referendum because then we should be left with nothing and it would take years before we could do something again. That was exactly what we experienced on the north side. When the plan finished, the city rejected the plan; that feels like we petered out. Thus, a referendum is fine, but about the basic question – namely: do we want these functions on this location and is it acceptable to spend public money on it? That is what happened in the second referendum and the people against could not manage to mobilise enough votes against what made the 'plan' possible to execute. That's the small visions on the whole.

If we made the plan more detailed and you see a tower that is as high as the first arcade of the Martini-Tower, the resistance would be higher and the change to peter out was much bigger. Smink most certainly was involved in thinking about the process but the not in what kind of cultural centre it should become or everything of the substance of the plan, that was the Forum Group.

The problem was that the investment in the building itself was only half the costs of the investment on the whole plan. The other half needed to come from the private sector. We had experienced that before in the redevelopment of the north side of the Grote Markt, in which we had to find enough investors in the private sector to invest. But they would only do that if they were sure the plan would be executed. Thus the creation of the plan can be called tactical or vague, but it was highly practical. We needed 60 to 70 million euro out of the private sector and people to build there on own risk. Besides, it all needs to be profitable like a hotel or a bookshop. Thus, if this all depended on if the plans would get through, that would have been a great risk for the city. I think we did not have much of a choice than keep it a bit vague.

## **The referendum and the political Quest for support**

That mister Wallage thinks about the Forum Group plan as their own plan is not surprisingly. The Forum Group was deeply entangled with the political process. Different political parties were busy in making a stance for what they thought about the whole project. As noted earlier, inner-city planning is highly political and therefore the political parties would not just watch the Forum Group from the sideline. The Forum Group itself became by several political parties under heavy critique. The socialist party (SP) leader criticised:

“Those people [of the Forum Group] were watching a presentation of the government, did not understand it, thought it was good, and finally enjoyed a good dinner afterwards.” (Verschuren as cited in Lunsing, 2008; p.83)

This Forum Group was thought of to be not enough to involve the people. Two parties of the Groninger city counsel argued that a referendum on the eastside project was necessary. These parties, SP and the Stadspartij, had, also with the support of D66 (Democrats party) and ‘Student en Stad’ (student party), not the majority of the city counsel and therefore could not force a referendum. But the other parties, PvdA (Labour party), Groenlinks (left-ish party), CDA (Christian democrats) and VVD (More elite freedom party) knew they could not do this project without referendum as they already started with holding a referendum on the north side. Thus as unavoidable, the referendum had to be held as quickly as possible so the people could vote on the principles of the plan and not the detailed one. The new ‘wethouder’ spatial planning, Frank de Vries, made this strategic move by creating a starting note about the eastside project. That meant that the people against needed to evoke a referendum on this point, as this was their last opportunity. This came very early for the opposition, but they had no other way; the referendum would be held the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2005.

## **Campaigning for the referendum**

But there were problems in the organisation of the upcoming campaign. There was no organisation at all behind it, in contrast with the solid organisation of the north side anti campaign. After a while a group started to form around the motto: “Do more with forty million”(M40M) with as core the political parties of the Socialist Party and their youth department (Red), ‘Student and City’ and the ‘City Party’. Between the parties was certain dispute as the City Party accused the SP of languor in the campaign.

The campaign in favor was organised in a better way than before. They did not want to lose this campaign and therefore the campaign group 'Grote Markt Ja' (GMJ) was set up by Willem Smink. He did a great deal of lobbying and tried to work all his connections towards joining his side. People that were independent were chosen to be spokesmen. On the first meeting there was the quest for new 'allies'. The Groninger Museum, the youth departments of the VVD and PvdA, the president of the department of hotel and catering industry of the Groninger City Club of retailers and the director of the Public Library all became to support the redevelopment. After this meeting the political parties 'Groenlinks' and 'D66' joined the GMJ. The GMJ tried to be a civil society club. Therefore two different sides of GMJ were active. The independent spokesmen handled the press and the more political parties organised the activities. Willem Smink, as brain behind the campaign, said that the referendum campaign was just like marketing. The GMJ needed to put a new product on the market. Also the people against must be put in bad light, and this was done by emphasising that they were political parties with the SP functioning as the brain. The product of the people against the plan was negative and it must be avoided that the parties against should use important symbols or famous people. Smink saw the quest for support completely in the light of marketing, with the people buying your product. It was based on the theory of buzz-marketing were the alpha's convince bees to do advertising for you. Those trendsetters than would buzz in the city. The bees where mainstream media personalities and authentic residents of the city of Groningen. Smink thought that it would not be easy to reach enough support for the plans. He stated: "the route to success is a very small pathway" (Lunsing, 2008; p.91). The group GMJ was behind the scenes driven by the Labor Party, Groenlinks and less intensive by the Christen union, CDA and VVD. The logo and campaign title song were both very professional done and this made the campaign look professional.

The battle between the two groups, the M40M and GMJ, started when the M40M started officially their campaign on the second of June. The referendum would be held on the 29<sup>th</sup>. The M40M wanted the famous Groninger footballer Martin Drent to kick-off the campaign but the GMJ reacted very quick by saying that Drent already was filmed for the GMJ campaign were he told he was in favor. Drent therefore refused. The GMJ enjoyed some positive media attention from it too. Secondly the M40M campaign team launched a website were people could receive a voting advice out of several questions. The GMJ reacted by claiming that it was impossible to get an advice out of this website to vote in favor of the plan. They openly redirected people from their own site to try it out.

The GMJ started to give guided walking tours on the location and really promoted their product. Wethouders Koen Schuiling and Willem Smink and mayor Wallage himself personally acted as tour guides. Wallage also 'acted' in a popular programme of the Groninger television where he was guided himself by the popular city historicist. In The M40M organised the same tours to show the beauty of the site today. The GMJ had on several important events stands where kids could throw over a billboard of the eastside. The title song of the GMJ campaign was brought to the people by a van that toured around Groningen stopping by every major city mall. Their commercial spot on the local news channel was quite professional. The M40M commercial was not that professional as someone offered to make it for free. The GMJ stucked posters every in the city first by volunteers and later by a professional advertising company. Later, the director of this company stucked the M40M campaign posters next to them for free. He thought that to be more democratic.

Beside the GMJ and the mayor and wethouders other departments of the campaign were active. The Public Library held an own campaign aiming at their own visitors of the library and members. Several meetings were organised and a contest for the best new name for the library was held. The youth departments of VVD and the Labor Party were also active. They created a monopoly game and held a questionnaire for students to show that students were also in favor of the plans. Their questionnaire showed that 76% of the 292 participants were in favor of the plan.

Thus the campaign in favor consisted of different parts reaching loose from each other the media. The GMJ campaign aimed on having fun with it and against the M40M, the youth departments of PvdA and VVD against the Student and city party and the other parts just glorified the plan. The campaign against was started in a late phase and did not find a way to emphasise the negative aspects of the plan in contrast with the campaign on the north side. This was also due to the not very detailed version of the plan. There was also no consistent story as they first emphasised that small neighborhood houses would be negatively affected by the big culture centre and later on about the height of the new building. The campaign leader of the City Party also apologised for the bad campaign. The GMJ was also not very consistent but Luning describes the force of the campaign to that they reached the news in different ways and were represented over the whole line being reasonable gentlemen and ladies. Every citizen could identify himself with someone of the campaign. The campaign never received the critique of being sponsored by the political parties. The M40M was 95%

sponsored by the political parties while the GMJ was more civil, being 80% sponsored by political parties. Smink also acted as a wethouder that was more involved by the people.

Also in the campaign the mayor and wethouders promised the people that as they would vote in favor, they could choose the architect of the cultural centre building. According to Wallage this increased the support for the plan.

Next was the question: Do we get enough support of the city for this plan? Most interesting was that we, in our campaign for the plan – or better to say; the plan of the ‘Forum Group’, it feels like our plan – we did an extra promise. When you do not vote against we come back to you to ask what architect you like. You get another change to choose. That was risky to do because to let the residents choose over an architect is heavily rejected in the architectural professional world.

Seven different architectural designs of the building that would come on the new square and would attract the people were exposed. These designs were of some great architects. They were exposed in the Martini church attracting 30 thousand people. Incredible. The architects came to talk about their designs and there were debates about the architecture. Finally an Internet vote was held and, I believe, 30 to 35 thousand people gave their vote. Interestingly the jury, consisting of professionals, vote the same way as the residents did, creating a unanimous winner. This gave the process a boost but there was still some critic about the height of the building, it kept nagging. But in essence the participation helped the creation of the plan.

The severe campaign resulted in a 53 percent of the city being in favor and 47 percent against. The majority therefore was in favor and the plan can be implemented. The next deepens the results of the referendum to show the fragmentation of society between different socioeconomic groups and political preference. The quest for support of the diverse society focuses on this diversity and fragmentation of society. Different incomes, unemployment, price of the house, level of education, political preference and even distance give quite clear the line between supporters and non-supporters of society. The campaign may convince enough people, but it shows that especially certain socioeconomic groups, political preferences and even residents that live more near the project were convinced to support the project.

## Deepening the referendum of 2005

To deepen how the people thought of the project, the second referenda held on the redevelopment of the eastside of the Grote Markt will be deepened and examined. The referendum made clear that 53 percentages of the people of Groningen are supporting the plan. Although the referenda only tells the voting's between 'yes' or 'no', it gives an indication of how a city can be divided between supportive and critical or rejecting the planning project. The percentages of the voting bureaus will be related to socioeconomic statistics of the people. How do the people consisting of different socioeconomic groups think about the redevelopment? The next figure (4.3) gives an overview of the voting pattern of the second referendum showing the head-to-head race between the two campaigns. The red dots are the voting bureaus and the numbers is the percentage of voters against the plans. Interesting about this map is that the range of percentages is wider than the referendum on the north side, thus more difference between the different parts of the city. Also the inner city seems more in favour of the plans than outside.

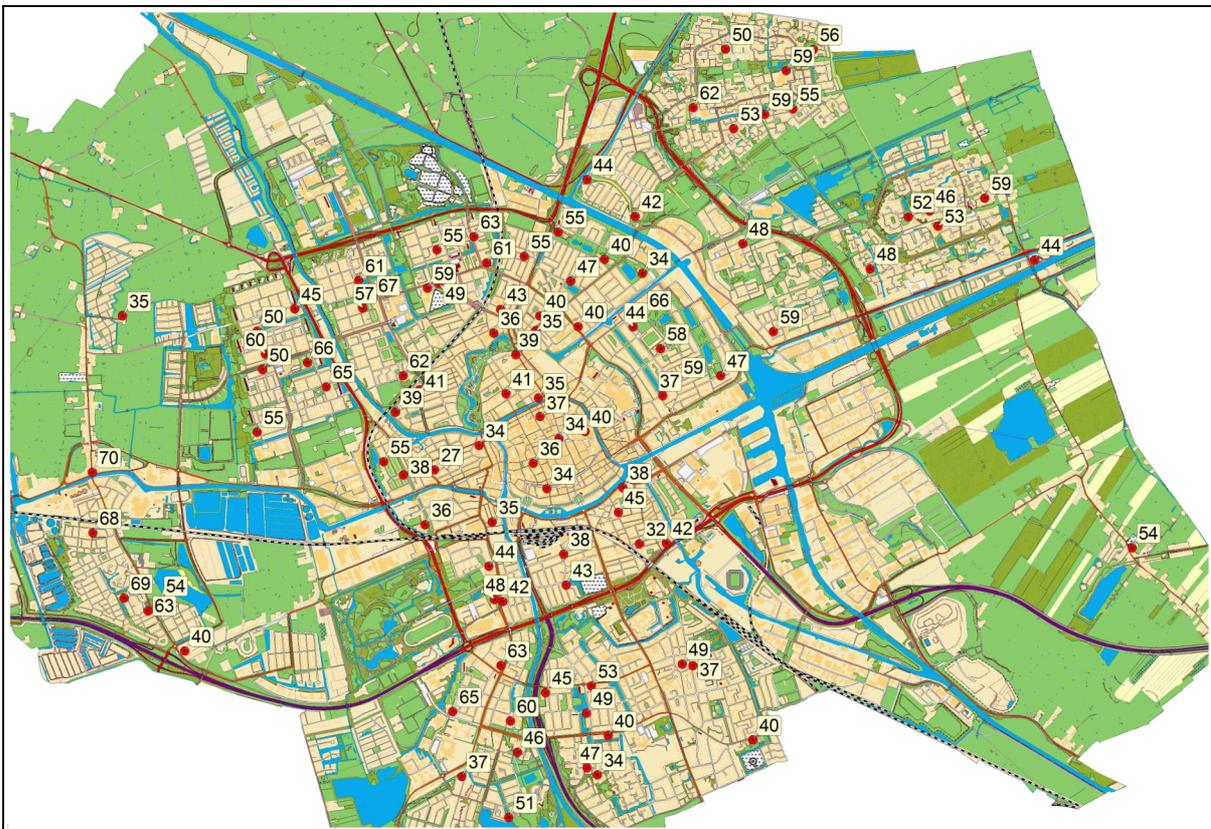


Figure 4.3 Voting pattern of the referendum of 2005 on the redevelopment of the eastside of the Grote

The next part of this chapter will deepen the voting pattern by relating these voting patterns to the socioeconomic situations of the different parts of the city to find out whether there is a relation between them. The following will be compared to the referendum result; the distance to the project site, the level of education, income, unemployment, price of the house and the political preference.

## Distance

First I want to find out whether distance is influencing to support the plans or not. Therefore I have used the ArcGis Toolkit to calculate the distance of every voting bureau to the Grote Markt. To be practical I have set up a range of 1750 metre around the Grote Markt and this resulted in forty voting bureaus within this range. It was stunning to find out that of these forty voting bureaus only four (10%) had more voters against. This compared to the voting bureaus outside this range of 1750 metre from the Grote Markt, which contains 58 voting bureaus, 36 voting bureaus voted against, which equals 62%. This confirms heavily the idea that distance to the project is an important factor in supporting the project or not. The next graph (Figure 4.4) gives an overview of the increasing distance from the project and also none or less a rising line of voters against. Figure 4.5 gives the range of 1750 metre around the Grote Markt. It is visible that only four voting bureaus voted against the project, as outside the range much more do.

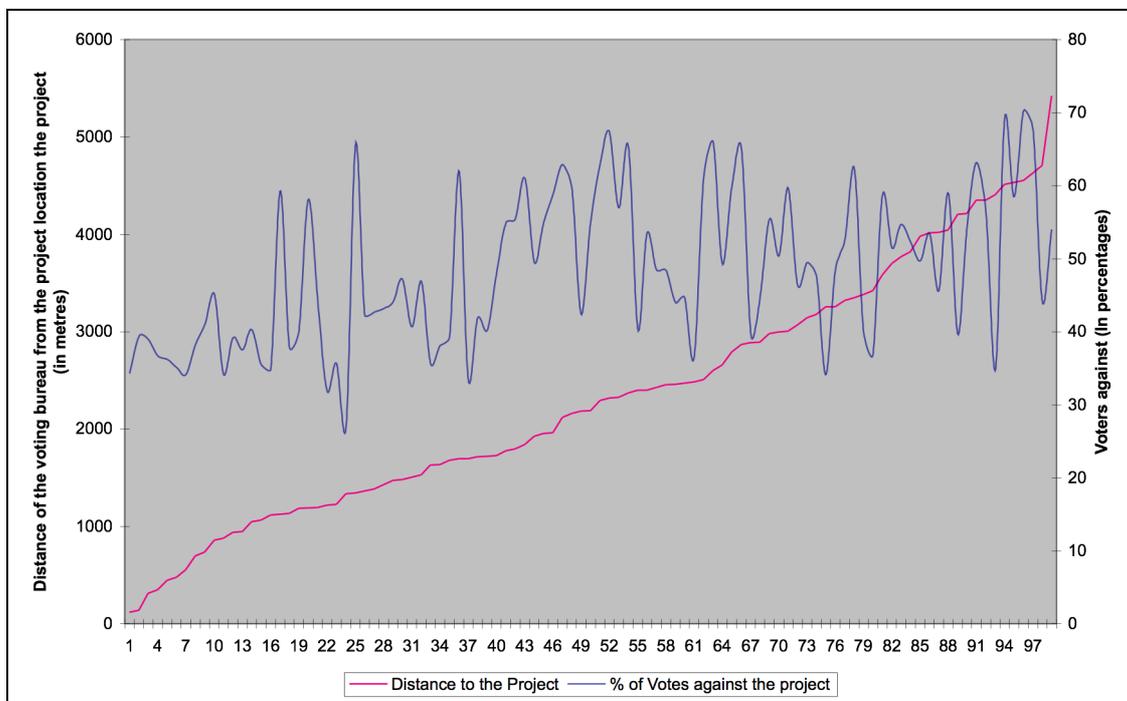


Figure 4.4 Relation of the distance to the project with the percentage of voters against

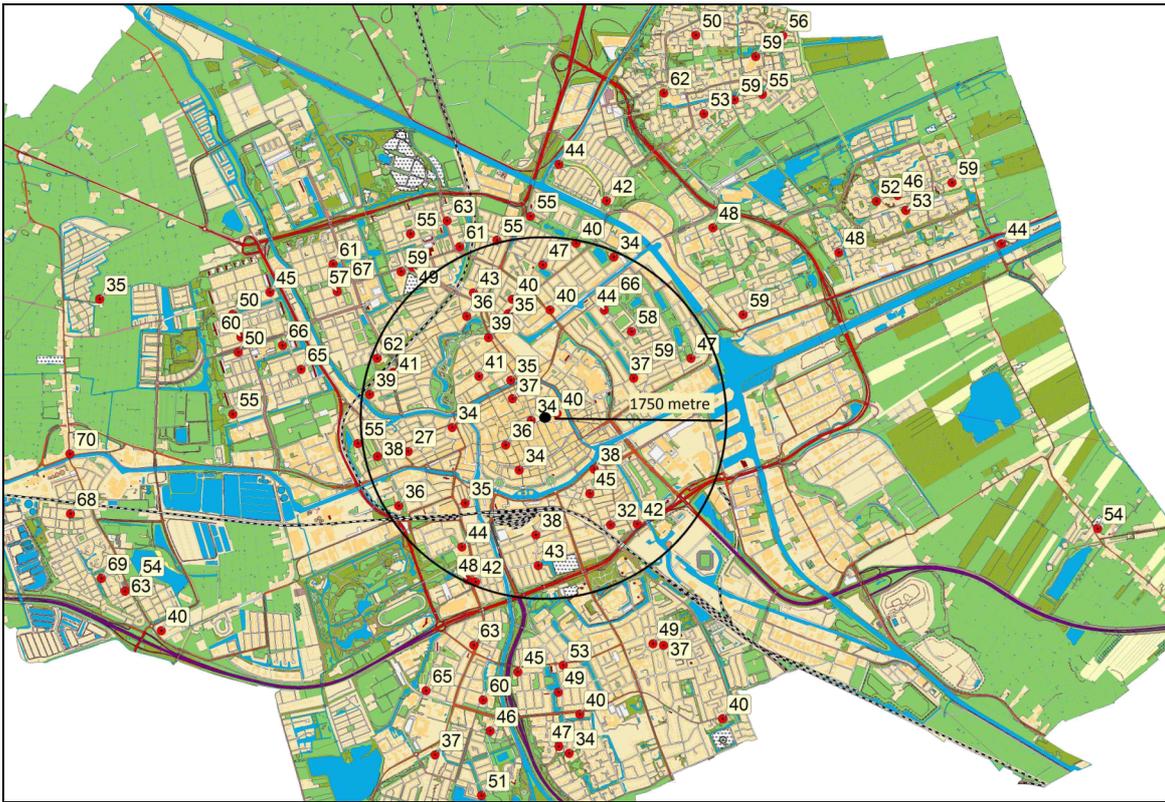


Figure 4.5 The distance from the project seems to count for higher support

### Level of education

Secondly I want to find out whether level of education is influencing support of the plans or not. Therefore I collected the data of the 14 different neighbourhoods and made averages of the voting bureaus for these neighbourhoods so I could compare them. The next table (Table 4.1) gives an overview of the percentage of a higher degree in education of the 14 different neighbourhoods of the city of Groningen in 2008 compared to the percentages in favour and against. The green fields mean that majority was in favour and red means the majority was against.

Name of the Neighbourhood	% Higher Degree	% In favour
Nieuw zuid particulier	64	59
Oosterpark	61	38
Oranje-/ Schilderswijk	57	61
Centrum	55	63
Nieuw oost	54	55
Oud zuid	49	60
Nieuw west	49	57
Korreweg/ De Hoogte	47	57
Nieuw zuid corporatief	46	45

Beijum	40	44
Paddepoel	37	41
Hoogkerk/ De Dorpen	26	38
Lewenborg	25	48
Vinkhuizen	21	44

Table 4.1 Level of higher education compared to support of the plan of the eastside of the Grote Markt

What you see is that, with high exception the neighborhood ‘Oosterpark’ and Lewenborg a bit, the higher the education, the more the people are in favor of the plan. When looking at the lower educated people (table 4.2) again the neighbourhood ‘Oosterpark’ deviates much and ‘Lewenborg’ also a bit. ‘Nieuw zuid corporatief’ also has relative few lower educated but the majority does not support the project.

Name of the Neighborhood	% Lower Education	% In favour
Centrum	4	63
Oranje-/ Schilderswijk	6	61
Oud zuid	11	60
Nieuw zuid particulier	12	59
Oosterpark	14	38
Korreweg/ De Hoogte	15	57
Nieuw west	15	57
Nieuw zuid corporatief	16	45
Nieuw oost	17	55
Beijum	19	44
Paddepoel	24	41
Lewenborg	31	48
Hoogkerk/ De Dorpen	37	38
Vinkhuizen	38	44

Table 4.2 Level of lower education compared to support of the plan of the eastside of the Grote Markt

## Income

Thirdly I want to relate the disposable income of the 14 neighborhoods of Groningen to their voting’s whether they support the plan or not. The next table (table 4.3) gives an overview of the comparison. This time the relation is not that clear, but still visible that higher income tends to create more support for the redevelopment plan.

Name of the Neighbourhood	Yearly disposable Income per household	% In favour
Nieuw zuid particulier	39.591	59
Nieuw oost	39.210	55
Nieuw west	39.053	57

Hoogkerk/ de Dorpen	29.640	38
Oranje-/ Schilderswijk	28.393	61
Centrum	27.100	63
Lewenborg	26.142	48
Beijum	25.341	44
Oud zuid	24.766	60
Nieuw zuid corporatief	24.483	45
Vinkhuizen	23.631	44
Paddepoel	22.795	41
Oosterpark	22.700	38
Korrewegwijk	21.300	57

Table 4.3 Income per household compared to support of the plan for the Eastside of the Grote Markt

## Unemployment

Fourthly I want to relate the percentages of the neighborhoods unemployment to whether the neighborhood supports the plan or not. This gives again a strong relation. The next table (table 4.4) gives an overview of this. It is clear that ‘Hoogkerk/ De Dorpen’ and ‘Korreweg/ De Hoogte’ deviates from the relation.

Name of the Neighbourhood	% unemployed	% In favour
Nieuw zuid particulier	2	59
Nieuw oost	2,2	55
Nieuw west	2,5	57
Hoogkerk / De Dorpen	3,5	38
Oranje-/ Schilderswijk	3,6	61
Oud zuid	3,8	60
Centrum	4,1	63
Nieuw zuid corporatief	5,2	45
Vinkhuizen	5,6	44
Lewenborg	5,8	48
Paddepoel	5,8	41
Korreweg/ De Hoogte	6,5	57
Beijum	6,6	44
Oosterpark	6,8	38

Table 4.4 Percentage of unemployment compared to support of the plan for the Eastside of the Grote Markt

## Price of the house

Fifthly I want to relate the price of the house to the voting pattern and whether the people support the plan or not. Again it gives a clear relation with the neighborhoods ‘Hoogkerk/ de dorpen’ and ‘Korreweg/ De Hoogte’ deviating. The next table (4.5) gives an overview.

Name of the Neighbourhood	Average price of the house	% In favour
Nieuw west	214.974	57
Nieuw zuid particulier	191.893	59
Nieuw oost	183.998	55
Hoogkerk / De Dorpen	149.477	38
Oranje-/ Schilderswijk	144.133	61
Centrum	135.785	63
Oud zuid	122.317	60
Nieuw zuid corporatief	113.822	45
Lewenborg	106.650	48
Vinkhuizen	105.075	44
Korreweg/ De Hoogte	102.985	57
Oosterpark	102.226	38
Paddepoel	101.535	41
Beijum	100.437	44

Table 4.5 Average price of the house compared to support of the plan for the Eastside of the Grote Markt

### Political preference

In comparing the voting pattern of the 2005 referendum with the political preferences of the city council voting of 2006 some interesting relations can be drawn. This of course are merely indications, but sure the political preference of the same voting bureaus related to how the people voted on that same voting bureau on the referendum. Voters on the VVD (more elite party), S & S (Student party) and D66 (Democrats party) are in favor of the plans, while voters on PvdA (Labor party), Stadspartij (city party) and the CU (small Christian party) are not supporting the plan. The next three figures overview the statistical data with the first figure (figure 4.6) gives the relation between the votes against (As put in the X-axe in a row of all the voting bureaus going from high percentages (70,3 % against) to the lowest (27%) and the rest in between) and the VVD, Student Party (Student en Stad) and D66. This shows that these parties, especially D66, rise on the voting bureaus where the percentage of voters against was low. The second figure (figure 4.7) gives the same relation but now with the PvdA, Stadspartij and the CU. This shows that the voting bureaus that where these parties scored high, the voting against the plans also scored high. The third figure (figure 4.8) shows the accumulation of the two groups compared

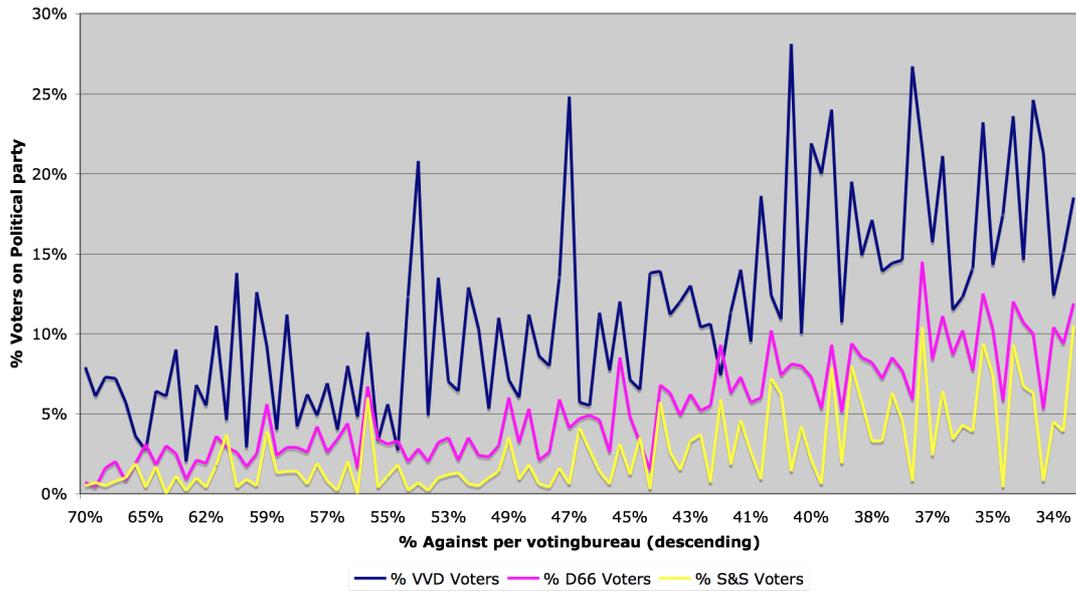


Figure 4.6 The referendum compared to political preference of VVD, S&S and D66.

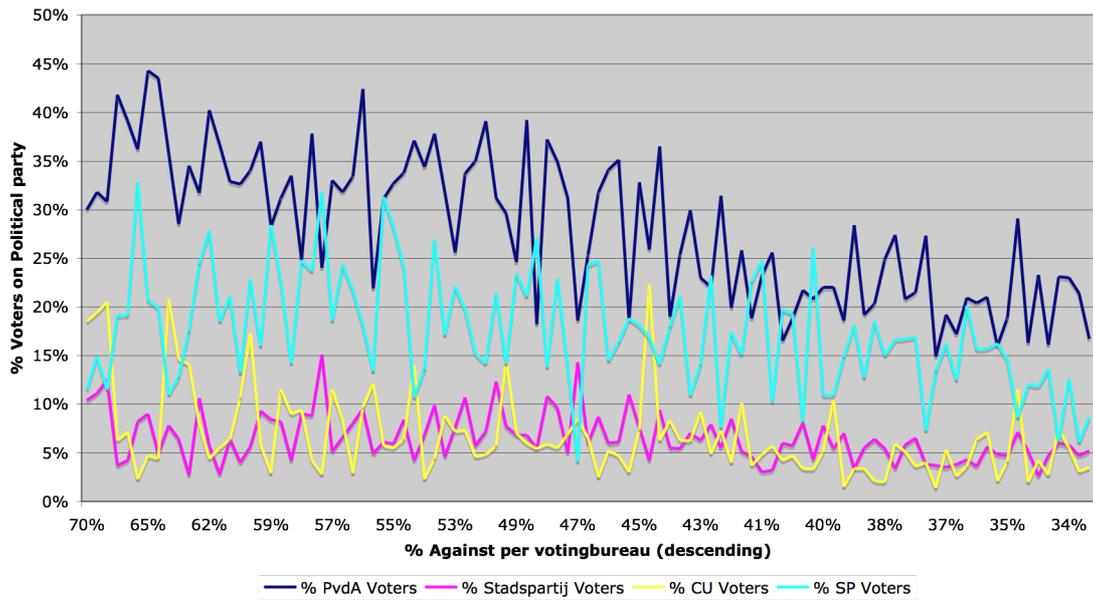


Figure 4.7 The referendum compared to political preference of PvdA, Stadspartij and CU.

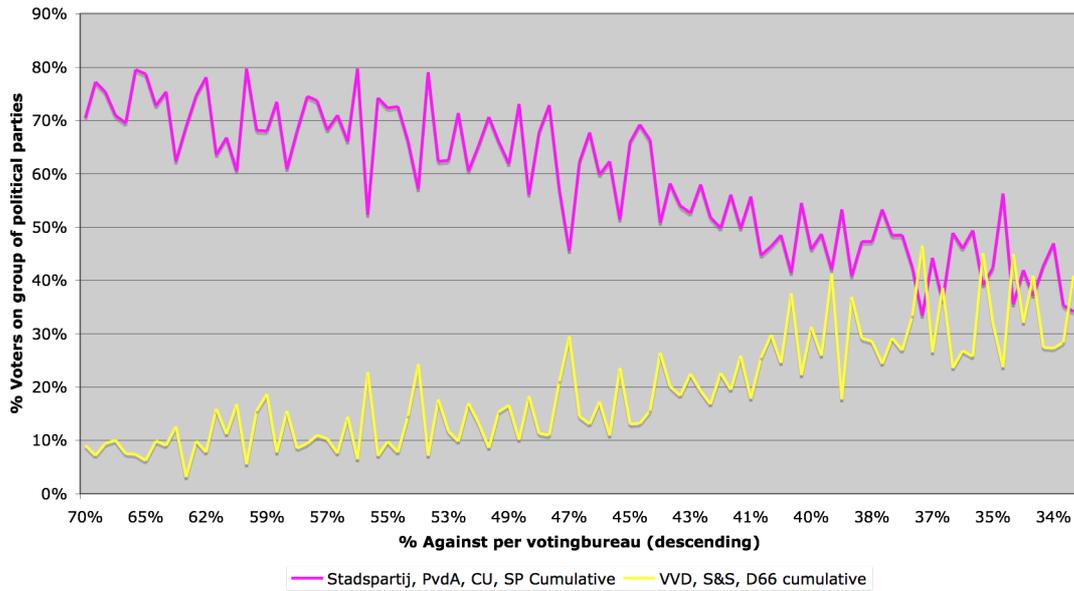


Figure 4.8 The referendum compared to two cumulative political preference groups

### Overview of the people’s opinions about the referendum

The local newspaper of Groningen gave an overview (Table 4.6) of a few opinions given by the people of the neighborhoods Paddepoel and Lewenborg on the day of the referendum. These both neighborhoods both voted against (Lewenborg not convincing with 52% against and Paddepoel with 59% against). The remarks given in the questionnaire may be drawing the picture of the people as not really interested and highly critical.

<u>Paddepoel</u>	<u>Lewenborg</u>
<p><i>-It is only about prestige with all those tall buildings. They do what they want. The money rules.</i></p> <p><i>-I did not know what to vote. It is all so unclear...</i></p> <p><i>-You choose politicians to do the decisions for you and they come back to us all the time. They do not dare to make decisions themselves.</i></p> <p><i>-I find the referendum nonsense. For important cases they do not need the opinion of the residents.</i></p> <p><i>-I did not receive a voting billet Of course I did receive the advertisements of the both campaigns.</i></p> <p><i>-My daughter said; just do not vote</i></p> <p><i>-I find the plan worthless.</i></p> <p><i>-I just voted something. I do not understand the idea.</i></p> <p><i>-It is all fine by me.</i></p>	<p><i>-I am neutral. I have no opinion about this.</i></p> <p><i>-I don't have time to vote.</i></p> <p><i>-I think I did not receive a map about it at all.</i></p> <p><i>-Oh yes of course! That is today, thanks for reminding me.</i></p> <p><i>-I don't think I am going to vote. If you did not ask me I forgot to vote anyway.</i></p> <p><i>-I don't vote ever.</i></p> <p><i>-I have no interest in this.</i></p> <p><i>-I am not going to vote. I find it to difficult.</i></p> <p><i>-This isn't a real plan. I don't get it.</i></p> <p><i>-It does not matter what we vote anyway.</i></p> <p><i>-If I go I vote against. Just tore down the place.</i></p> <p><i>-They leave us no real choice.</i></p>

Table 4.6 Overview of a few opinions of the people of Groningen about the referendum of 2005 (Lunsing, 2008)

## Summary deepening referendum of 2005

Distance to the place of the project, level of education, income, price of the house and unemployment all seem to be related to the way the people of Groningen voted on the referendum of 2005. In the relations with distance from the project, voting bureaus further than 1750 metre away from the project vote with 62% against, while inside this range only 10% voted against. This enforces the statement that the greater the distance, the less the support. In looking to the level of education the percentage of higher degree has a clear relation with supporting the project. With exception of the Oosterpark and Lewenborg neighbourhoods is the relation stunning. This enforces the statement that the higher the degree of higher education, the higher the support. Also the percentage of lower education has a clear relation with the percentage voters against the project; the higher the percentage of lower educated people, the lower the support for the project. The relation between disposable income and degree of support is, except the neighbourhoods 'Hoogkerk/ de dorpen', 'Korreweg/ De Hoogte' and 'Oud zuid', very clear. Households with disposable income of 27000 or higher tend to support the project, while lower than 27000 reject the project. Unemployment shows this same relation with again the neighborhoods 'Hoogkerk/ de dorpen' and 'Korreweg/ De Hoogte' deviate. Neighborhoods with an employment rate of 5% or higher tend to support the

plan less than visa-versa. Price of the house gives again the same relation with the neighborhoods 'Hoogkerk/ de dorpen' and 'Korreweg/ De Hoogte' deviating. Neighborhoods with their average price of the house less than 115000 clearly support the plan less.

Here must be noted that the relations between the different are merely indications of what is going on and are meant to show the fragmentation of society along lines of different socioeconomic groups. The questionnaire may emphasize that much people were not interested in the project at all but this also tells a lot. The people of the questioned neighborhoods were both quite low educated and quite low income and price of the house. These socioeconomic groups tend to have no interest in the project and therefore just vote without real motivation or argumentation. This can be seen as either alarming or just reality, that is a matter of how radical democratic one ideology is.

### **Campaigning**

Especially low income, low house prices and unemployed voted against the plans. Comparing this with the held campaign against the plans, it is interesting to notice that this was exactly what the anti campaign was all about; the high costs of the city. As there were also no other real points to have critic on, as the plan was not detailed already. The slogan of the campaign against the redevelopment of the eastside was "Do more with forty million", to stress that the city can use the money better elsewhere. This, not a real surprise, attracts the low incomes and made them vote against. This makes clear that the campaigning and therefore the communication of the plan towards the people of the city is very important.

### ***Recent developments***

The referendum was not the end. Recent developments in the elections of the city counsel of 2010 brought a certain change in power relations of the political parties. In the elections of 2010 the City Party rose in seats from 2 to 5 (39 in total) and was the biggest winner. Their main point was still trying to stop the redevelopment plans of the eastside of the Grote Markt. The result of the referendum of 2005 did not stop them from being against the plans. Wallage has his opinion about this political party.

The City Party used to be ‘constructive critical’ but turned into populist arguments when the former leader of the Stadspartij, Geert Spieker, resigned from the party. But this populist behaviour had success. Apparently there is also in Groningen ‘employ’ for groups that criticize everything the government does and who sees the government as opponent. This party made the eastside of the Grote Markt their *litmus*, which is absolutely fine as the people may surely fight the plans. But they did it not on only business arguments but also on the general view of prestige and wasting money turning on the view of a government that is no good. The debate on the redevelopment of the Grote Markt never had this kind of load. But I would not say that we, as government, called this upon ourselves.

The employ for the City Party in Groningen may link to the still alive resistance against the eastside plan. Interpreted in that way it is still not very convincing that the city is supporting the plan. That the city counsel formed the coalition with parties that are only in favor of the eastside plans is remarkable. The plans therefore are not affected and still scheduled for implementation.

## 5. Analysis Findings

This chapter connects the theoretical framework of chapter Two to the case study as described in chapter Four. Hereby it focuses on the questions posed in chapter Three in an attempt to make sense. This chapter starts off with relating the Grote Markt redevelopment planning process, as told by mister Wallage and Lunsing and Wagenaar et al, to the theory. First the case study of will be compared to the theory by discussing the found similarities and differences in the actual existing situation of the Groningen Grote Markt project. What seems to actual exist is that the quest for support is tough and persuasion of the people necessary for important planning projects.

### **Grote Markt case study compared to theoretical framework**

The redevelopment of the Grote Markt was one big quest for support of the people of Groningen. The city counsel and the planning department tried to convince the people of the benefits and necessity of the plans to gain the support of the people (Wallage, 2010; Lunsing, 2008). In putting the projects in a referendum the city counsel gave the people the power and therefore made this project one of the most democratic planning projects of the Netherlands as no other Dutch project in the inner city ever was put referendum. Other comparable referenda are held in the Netherlands (Nijeboer, 2008), but they all have some fundamental differences. The referendum in 2008 in Duiven about redevelopment of the inner city of Duiven gave the people no choice to be against, as it was a multiple-choice referendum. The referendum in Wijchen in 2004 made it interesting by giving three options of rebuild of the big city square to choose from. When option 1 was chosen by 47,3% and the other to option had respectively 29,1% and 23,6%, the city counsel choose for the second option. They legitimated this on the statement that option 2 and 3 together were clearly different from option 1, and these options together raised 52,7% of the voters, thus the majority was for these plans, thus one of these plans will be implemented. The referendum in Nieuwegein in 1999 about the rebuild of the inner city was also most interesting as it resulted in 74,3% against but the city counsel ignored it, as the threshold was not reached by only a few percentages

(Nijeboer, 2008). Thus, compared to the other held referendum in the Netherlands the referendum of Groningen comes out not that bad and can be seen as the most democratic referendum about the inner city of the Netherlands. But this did not mean that the city council and representatives of certain political parties did not try to influence the people's opinion over the plan. Campaigning started in a way even fiercer than Groningen was used in city council elections (Lunsing, 2008). This campaigning stresses the importance of the quest for support. In Groningen there were two distinctive quests notable on two ideas: first in 2001 about the north side of the square, and secondly in 2005 on the eastside. This quest for support is the most fundamental feature of the planning process. This planning process will now be related in more detail with the theories of chapter Two.

### **Fragmented society of Groningen**

The quest for support logically becomes fiercer in a society that is by Healey (1993) stated as fragmented and that 'celebrates his difference'. The question; is Groningen also became more fragmented is hard to answer and would require a study of Groningen in earlier days to compare the two situations. What would plead in the favour of increasing fragmentation is that in the second referendum the opinions varied more between the voters. This means that the range was wider and more spread in the second referendum (70% - 27% and a standard deviation of 10,5) than in the first referendum (90% - 69% and a standard deviation of 4,2), which can be interpreted as a more divided society. With more certainty can be said that Groningen clearly is fragmented today, as showed in of the relation of the referendum of 2005 with the different socioeconomic groups and political preferences. The city is fragmented in different incomes, education levels, price of the house, unemployment and political preferences. It is very important to keep that in mind in the quest for support, as these groups will probably support you for different reasons. The different socioeconomic groups and political preferences of Groningen determine the fragmentation of the city and, as we saw, these influence how they think over supporting the planning project or not.

### **Lost connection of the Groningen city council**

This lost connection of the representatives that the ROB is stating is clearly

visible in the Groningen case study. The first plans of the renewal of the north side was agreed upon with great majority of the city council, but through the referendum of the north side it was clear that the people thought differently over what is best for the city. This marks that the city council, as representatives of the people, do not know what the people want and therefore seem to have lost their connection with them. This connection is fundamental in democracy to legitimise the role representatives have. In genuine democracy the representatives are depended upon the support of the people before they can exercise their power in the decision-making process (ROB, 2010).

### **Spectator or actively involved?**

In comparing the Groningen case study to the theory of Green (2009), about the people as spectators, the people were not merely spectator in the redevelopment project of the Grote Markt. They got involved in both the redevelopment plans by referenda and in the second plan the people could also choose the winning design for the building as some people got involved in the 'Forum Group'. Thus, it can be said that the people were clearly more than spectator of the city councils show. The representatives did facilitate active involvement as Fung and Wright argue that the representatives should. But the limitations were also visible. The people still had more to *see* than to *say*. The city council directed the whole process in order to reach their goal. But this is exactly what a quest for support is aiming at, to reach your goal. But as the planning process of the eastside was kept on purposely vague, this involves the people on slightly the wrong manner.

### **Power and support**

As Flyvbjerg shows in his case study of the city of Aalborg that power can bend rationality, the Groningen case study shows the same exercise of power to reach a certain goal, rather than rationality is determining the goal. The quest for support of the city for both plans, and more intensive in the second plan, was the way to find in a democratic way the power to implement the project. In democracy support equals power, although reality may show that support of certain people is more important than support of other people. But by putting the plan in a referendum this became wiped out, as every vote was equal in power. But as in most democracies the majority have the ultimate power, only the majority is needed to persuade to support the plan. This was finally reached by the 52,7 percent in favour and thus felt for the mayor like a victory of the city

counsel. This is how it in reality goes as every plan that manages to get support of the majority can be implemented. The real benefit of the need of support of the majority implementation, the basis of democracy, is that power of the small elite is limited and that the ordinary people have the ultimate power. This is constrained by two things, first that the elite can manage to put on a big campaign while that is more difficult for the less fortunate. Secondly the context of the process is in the hands of the powerful. In this shaping of the context the people can be played as spectator of the show of the city counsel as they get involved in only one real important part were they can exercise their right as citizen of a democracy. This shows that rationality may not be the driving force. It is mostly forgotten to ask the basic questions of the need of the project as this is presumed as too logic to ask. But who really wants it and why? To support a project or idea this must be clear to the people or else the people may be manipulated.

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter will give a short summing of the overall thesis, answering of the five key questions, the implications for theory and also policy and politics after this study to the actual existing process of inner-city planning. Besides that it gives suggestions for further research and end with a few concluding lines.

### Summing of overall thesis

The trend of the more fragmented parliaments shows that society itself fragmentises. This has severe implications for the democratic representative decision-making process, as support of the majority is harder to reach. The inner-city planning project of the redevelopment of the main square in Groningen started back in 1945 when the north and eastside of the square became heavily damaged and it became decided that the old fronts of the old buildings would be torn down as they were a danger for the people. This essential choice led to a big open space in the middle of the heart of the city. Not surprisingly it became heavily contested how to rebuild this place. All over Europe old city centres became rebuild in the same old style as before but not in Groningen. After seven years of heavy discussion a plan was adopted and implemented that would mainly the same till today. But since the start of this millennium plans started to find a way to redevelop the square. These plans were cut out in two plans, first for the north side of the square and later on the eastside of the square. These plans were put in two referenda, which resulted in heated campaigns about the plans. In the first referendum in 2001 the people of Groningen voted with 81% against and therefore in the second campaign of 2005 the city counsel putted up a very severe campaign based on marketing ideas. A Quest for support started that was like selling a product to the people. The majority of the people would need to buy the product of the redevelopment of their square. This resulted in 53% in favor of the project and therefore it could be implemented. This puts democratic planning in a whole different perspective. Good planning ideas created by the experts still need the majority of the people in democracies. I cannot stress enough that this majority is difficult to find in a wide fragmented society consisting of widely different socioeconomic groups

and ideologies. To get an insight in how these different socioeconomic groups and ideologies think about the planning project the referendum is very useful. Relating the socioeconomic statistics of the people of Groningen to the result of the second referendum shows that the more low income, low educated, unemployed, low price of the house and also living further from the project and certain political preference (voters on the City Party, Labor Party, Christen Union and Socialist Party) tend to vote against the project.

### **Answering of the five Key questions**

Below I try to answer the key question posed in Chapter Three. As this research tries to give the reader the chance to form his own answers and opinions based on the insight the case study gives through the Groninger inner-city planning project, the answers are indications of how I think the case study must be interpreted.

- 1. How can representatives in decision-making cope with the fragmented society and differentiation of opinions based on post-modern thought, that leads to not enough support, while this support is fundamental in representative democracy decision-making?**

Representatives must go on a Quest for support to still find the majority. In referenda this Quest comes to the surface as campaigns start to influence and persuade the people quite clearly. In planning projects without referendum, this persuasion is less visible but still necessary to act democratically. Democracy is about the rule of the ordinary people, therefore they must agree upon the decisions representatives make for them. The Quest for support is therefore necessary for every decision representatives make. To be successful in this quest a close connection to society is necessary to keep of the track of manipulation of the people as also this connection would give the representatives the biggest chance of success.

- 2. How can planners still be the experts in the field and be responsible for the creation of the physical space as their visions over the future lost their base in the recognition of the complexity of the planning objects?**

As postmodernism rejects the ideas of universalism, embraces the idea of multiple personal truths and understand the complexity of certain planning objects, the planner must redirect his modernistic roots of expertise from

universal models that made the planner ‘know what is best’ toward a more modest view of ‘thinking what is best’ based on the experiences the planner had in the past and comparing the projects to similar projects. This modest view must also be put next to the Quest for support as planning must be democratic. Therefore the majority of the people must support your ideas before they can even be implemented. Otherwise they are only ideas.

**3. How much may the unifying persuasion of representatives cost society in giving up freedom of having own aspirations or visions, totally different from the nations aspirations and visions?**

This question touches the very core of democracy and what Gandhi already thought of being the beauty and test for our society to reach unity in diversity. Unity over certain ideas, different people thinking alike, is in contemporary society not something that is easy to find. To be one society consisting of many different persons needs certain unifying visions, stories, symbols and ideas. In the physical planning for these diverse people these visions come to the very surface and therefore show the tip of the iceberg of what visions, in genuine democracies, enjoys the support of the majority of the people. The persuasion for these visions and probably the manipulation and exercise of power finally creates this physical space. It should, as Allmendinger also states, reflect the diversity of the people. As this is reached, planning is truly democratic. But the question is; can one singular building, or square reflect the diversity of people? In ongoing fragmentation of the democratic society big planning projects may become impossible to implement in a democratic way, as the majority is impossible to reach. Than unifying persuasion may become more necessary than democracy would like.

**4. Can there be a balance found between the two seemingly opposing essential features of democracy of creating unity and respecting diversity?**

**5. Is for representatives and planners ‘Vox Populi, Vox Dei’ (The voice of the people (is) the voice of god)?**

These last questions merely state a hope of future governance. To reach unity and keep respect for the diversity of society is very important. Without unity a country had no binding and is therefore very unpowerful, without respecting diversity a country will slowly slide toward ruling of an elite group and certain small groups will be marginalised and expelled out of society thus both are

essential.

That representatives need to keep the voice of the people the voice of god will be partly covered by that the people have the (voting) power to support the decisions or not, but also that the representatives will not try to manipulate this voice of god. Enough support sure is a must for planning to keep functioning especially for big projects, but to enter the path of manipulation is not what democracy is about, I think. In those cases doing nothing is a better option or doing less and be more pragmatic.

### **Implications for the theory**

The different found theories on society, democracy and governance framed the inner-city project and are mostly all found as probably actual existing. The by Healey stressed fragmentation of society after the modernist period of shared objective towards a more celebration of difference is clearly visible in the contemporary severe need to campaign to reach the majority of the society. That society is in fact more fragmented in opinions today than in modern period is not possible to answer with this research; the celebration of difference emphasises the possibility for people to be different as also the referendum gives the opportunity for people to choose different and therefore in this context people can act different.

To claim certain implication for the theory of the ROB that the representatives lost their connection with society is difficult to say. A close connection of society with the representatives is not that easy to enable as representatives encounter the hard antithesis of unity an diversity of society, both necessary for democratic societies. The single big decisions cannot handle too much concession. Representatives must be strategic and keep the unity of society and therefore not blindly follow what the people they represent want. Earlier work of the ROB also emphasise this stating that representatives need to be interactive, democratic and also a leader. Interactive means the communication and connection with society, democratic means that the majority is 'right' and leadership means that representatives must have vision and keep unity. This is a difficult but probably genuine democratic mix of how representatives should be. Thus the connection with society is important but more difficult in a fragmented society with far different opinions and ideologies.

The theory of Green about the people as merely spectator is confirmed by critical reactions on the redevelopment project of the Grote Markt. As the socialist party leader stated similarly that the involved people were watching a show of the city council, this confirms heavily the theory of Green. Also the few reactions of the people in the questionnaire mostly confirm the role of the people as only watching the city council act. Interesting is that most people find that not that of a problem as they are not that interested or think the city council does not need the opinion of the people. But beside this the city council did try to involve the people quite well. But this involvement more looks like the support is a necessity to act democratically and not as being really interested in what the people want. The campaign also showed that the primate of the redevelopment of the inner-city does not lay by the people but clearly by the political parties. The campaign for the referendum was stated by the brain behind the campaign in favor of the plan to be just like marketing. The people need to buy the city council's product. It is arguable to say if this is what democracy meant to be this way. But it sure paid off, the majority was found. It does contradict the theory of Fung and Wright that politics need to facilitate active involvement. Campaigning for certain political ideas is not facilitating but more influencing and may tend to manipulating. Where lays the primate in the visions? More pragmatic behaviour of the representatives may be a solution as they than only react on what is needed and than act. The basic question remains; in whose interests is the planning project built? Does the city need it? This answer must be clear before the people vote over this project or else the campaign and persuasive storytelling tend more to manipulation. But this manipulation may be the only way to still create big public works in a fragmented democracy that celebrates his difference.

### **Implications for policy and politics**

For policy makers it is very important to be aware of the fragmentation of society along lines of socioeconomic groups and ideologies. To represent the diversity of this society into policies is tough and may require the certain unifying ideas were people can still agree on. These can best be created in close connection to the society thus the ideas will find enough support out of this society. The quest for support is securing democracy to work but it has the danger that the people get manipulated. Politicians must stay democratic, meaning that it must be clear that without enough support their ideas are worthless and unable to be implemented. Beside that they must not try to manipulate the people too much by severe campaigning but keep facilitating

active involvement in a way that knows that the voice of the people is the voice of god. To manipulate the voice of god to your own ideas, the ideas of the expert, is a repeat of the story of the lost of Eden.

### **Suggestions for further research**

The contemporary trend of democratic inner-city planning as a Quest for support is in most ways a highly democratic way of planning. But the danger is stays that the people get manipulated as city counsels are seeing planning as selling a product to the people. Will planning be just like marketing in the economy? This pathway may seem dangerous, but also seems democratic as everyone had the same amount of ‘money’ in the form of every person has one voting billet. Referenda on planning projects are therefore a great way to workout democracy in practice and give the people the opportunity to raise their voice. But the campaigning around this referendum must be strict into clear boundaries about what is giving information and what is manipulation. These boundaries must be explored in further research, but in that it is not possible to find universal good boundaries, but they must be must be going back to what sort of democracy a country pursuits. There are clear limitations to a form of democracy that is fragmented and that celebrates his difference and also involves every opinion and ideology, as that democracy would have to do way to many concessions ending up with unstrategic and unpowerful decision-making. Democracy therefore needs unifying visions or stories that bind the people, that the majority of the people still supports, in order to keep nation-wide decision-making possible. But these visions or stories must be found as close as possible by the people in order to both not manipulate the people and it also gives the best chance in finding enough support of the diverse people of society.

Further research is also necessary over how to reach and actively involve the lower incomes and lower educated in planning projects. How can the active involvement of this very part of society be facilitated? Perhaps it may be a solution to not involve all the people of society but only the real affected. The affected will be interested and active involved. But the question is where to draw the line between affected and unaffected? This requires also further research if that is possible.

### **Concluding lines**

I want to conclude with the following. It is interesting to note that the former Soviet Union planning was very powerful and could manage great projects. Diversity of opinions was not allowed which resulted in very powerful governance and huge planning projects. The same is notable in China where huge planning projects can be implemented. It therefore looks like countries with powerful leaders have certain advantages in planning the country. The more the people think alike, the bigger the planning projects can get. Not being able to implement such huge planning projects seems to be the price of our freedom of thought and celebration of difference. But, in my eyes a price worth paying.

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# Apendix A

This next appendix gives an overview of the referendum of 2001. This referendum was also important in the redevelopment, but was not essential for the research. Hereby I give a small overview of the result of this referendum.

## Overview of the first referendum

The first referendum held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2001 ended up as a strong voice of the people. The outcome of 81 percent of the people voted against when 56 % of the whole city voted made the city counsel clear that the project, on which the majority of the city counsel was in favour of, had no support of the people of the city. The plans therefore were not executed while much money was already spent on preparing the plan and a great amount of investors had to be disappointed. But the city spoke, and therefore the city counsel needed to listen. The distribution pattern of the referendum of 2001 is put in a map shown in figure A.1. The red dots are the voting bureaus and the numbers attached are the percentages against the plans the city counsel had in 2001 to redevelop the north side of the Grote Markt.

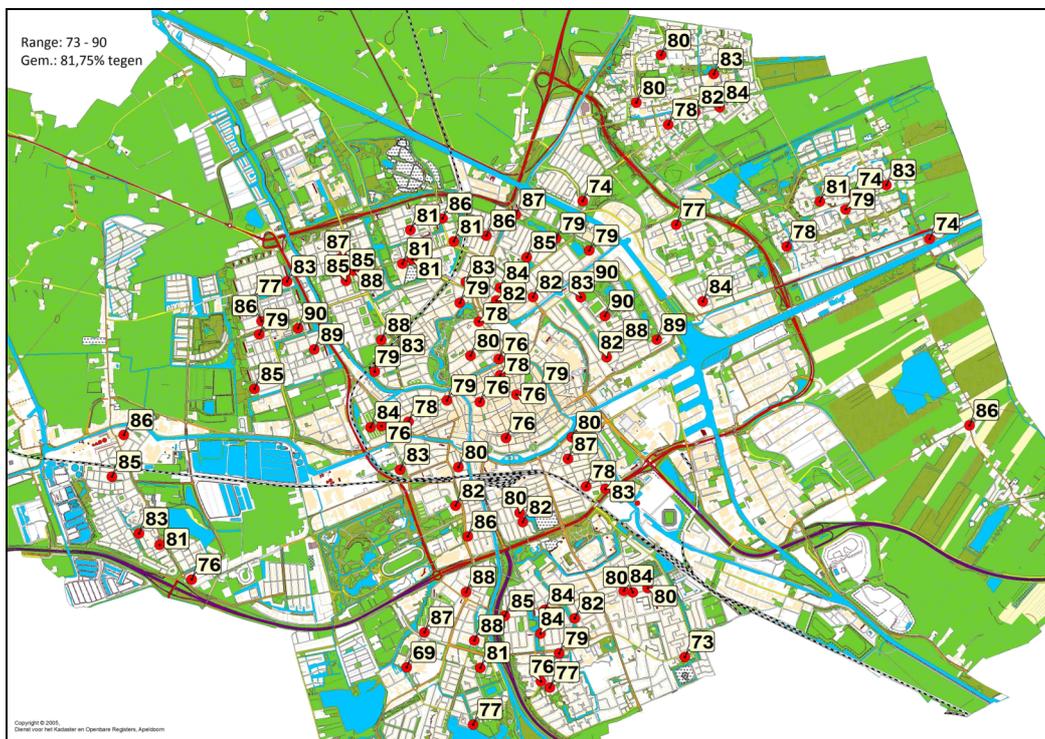


Figure A.1 Voting pattern of the referendum of 2001 on the redevelopment of the north side of the Grote Markt (Source: basic map; Kadaster 2005, Apeldoorn and edited by J.C. Voorberg)

# Apendix B

## Interview Jacques Wallage

Hereby the complete interview with the old mayor of Groningen. Jacques Wallage. In Dutch.

### Interview Jacques Wallage.

**Datum: 31 Mei, 15:00 uur, in zijn huis aan de Quintuslaan in Groningen.**

**Door: Jeroen Voorberg**

*Het herontwikkelen van de Grote Markt. Rondom 2000 begonnen de eerste ideeën ervan. Kunt u hier wat over vertellen?*

Eigenlijk moet je dat in de historische context plaatsen. Het begon eigenlijk in 1946 toen lag de markt in puin. Toen stedenbouwkundige Molière uit delft, wereldberoemd, een overall plan gemaakt, net als het Stadsuitlegplan van Berlage van Groningen gemaakt. Van de nood, de oorlog, moest je een deugd maken. Grote markt groter. Wat nu toch plat ligt moet je gebruik. Zijn plan wou groter markt groter maken. Martinitoren moet midden in het plein komen. Piazza, heb je dan de toren in het midden en dat hele grote plein. Dat was briljant en meganormaal, want heel groot. De raad heeft op het laatste moment dat plan niet geaccepteerd. Wat ze wel gedaan hebben is de rooilijn wel accepteren. Doorgaande ontwikkeling zonder Granpre molière. Zeventien meter naar achter. Markt wel groter maar niet breder. Oké. Toen is er een enorm debat gekomen over welke functie moet nu aan die markt komen. Toen al cultuurfunctie. Allure aan de Grote Markt geven. Zaken leven, bedrijfsleven is er al, dus moet nu ook nog cultuurfunctie. Het nieuwe college dat in 2000 aantrad. aan het wat was nu het probleem. De grote markt, die het hart van de stad vormt, maar voor een klein deel gebruikt werd. Oostzijde disfunctioneel. Geen of nauwelijks winkels. Het hart van de stad is een parkeergarage gebouwd. Geen of nauwelijks winkel. De trek was er niet naar toe. Kostbare grond maar niet echt toegevoegde waarde. Niet dingen die publiek trok. Radicale oplossing door college 2000; Oosterpoort afbreken en brengen naar de Grote Markt. Dat was 1. 2 was de noordzijde van de grote markt. Daar is het plan van Joop Koene bedacht. Dat is afgeschoten met 80%. Naar mijn mening is dit gekomen door de parkeerruimte onder de Grote Markt. Iemand drukte dat uit als: Burgermeester Wallage heft van wethouder Wallage verloren. Want als wethouder had ik het verkeerscirculatieplan ingevoerd en daar horde bij dat parkeren niet kon in het hart van de stad. Maar goed, dat had de stad nu goed begrepen kennelijk. Eigenlijk is er een taboe komen rusten op die Noordzijde door die enorme zeepbak die we daar gehaald hebben. En het plan van de oostzijde kreeg eigenlijk geen draagvlak omdat de

sloop van Oosterpoort als zonde werd ervaren. Het kan goed functioneren, je gaat geen gebouw die goed functioneert slopen; dat is on-Gronings. En toen zat het college dus echt helemaal vast, ---

en na het eerste referendum is dus vervolgens gezegd we moeten niet alleen naar die noordzijde kijken maar eerst die Oostzijde ontwikkelen, als ons dat ons zal lukken dan komt die Noordzijde vanzelf. Dan komen wel andere initiatieven en dan lukt dat ons wel. En toen is, vind ik nog steeds, het wezenlijke besluit genomen om niet meer een gemeentelijk plan voor de Oostzijde te maken maar om eerst een brede maatschappelijk debat te organiseren, dat hete toevallig het forum, met allemaal participanten vanuit heel veel verschillende hoeken en gaten; Wetenschap, kunst, politiek, bedrijfsleven; met de vraag: wat is het probleem van de Oostzijde en welke oplossingen zouden er zijn. Dus dat was een open vraagstelling. Waar de gemeente niet het voortouw heft genomen. En die rolwisseling van de noordzijde met het grote plannen maken vanuit het stadhuis en het gevoel van de stad we zijn al verkocht aan v&d al die grote investeerder dus wat hebben wij arme burgers nog te zeggen dus ik stem tegen. Maar een planvorm die werkelijk open was. Ik kan me nog herinneren dat we een B&W vergadering hadden en collega's aan me vroegen; Weet jij wat daar vanavond gaat gebeuren, werd onafhankelijk voorgezeten. Nee ik weet het niet. Vonden ze doodeng.

Die Forum beraad groep heeft dus als uitgangspunt genomen; het is de dode kant van de Grote Markt, we moeten dus het publiektrekker dat publiek trekt. En toen zijn een paar ideeën ontstaan in die forumgroep namelijk de grootste publiektrekker in Groningen is de openbare bibliotheek, 650 duizend bezoekers per jaar. Het contract met de bibliotheek waar die nu zit loopt af. Hij is eigenlijk ook te klein, dus laten we dat als nucleus nemen van de nieuwe ontwikkeling daar. Laten we niet een traditionele bibliotheek maken maar laten we een cross-over maken van bibliotheek functie, theaterachtige dingen, informatietechnologie, debatcentrum. Dat was de inhoud, de functie.

De tweede discussie die daaruit ontstond was, wat gaan we nu stedenbouwkundig doen. En toen heeft architect Nuitelings uit Antwerpen, of ergens die kant op, die heeft een plan gemaakt met die beraadgroep, dus niet met ons maar met de beraadgroep Forum. En in dat gesprek heeft hij twee dingen gecombineerd; hij zei: als je de oude rooilijn terugbrengt van voor de oorlog, dus het de merkwaardige anomalie zelf dat je niet het plan van Granpre molière pakt maar wel zijn rooilijn, van voor de oorlog. Dan heb je een kleinere Grote Markt, dat is intiemer. Als je dat doet trek je de gebouwen naar voren en als je die parkeergarage sloopt en onder de grond brengt dan heb je daar ineens een plein. Dus je creëert een ruimte waar je wat mee kunt. Op dat plein een interessant gebouw neerzet dan trek je de bezoekers door die gevel heen. En dan gaan mensen wel die route lopen. want dat is zo interessant, daar wil je zijn. En bovendien de Poelestraat, het hart van het uitgaansleven van Groningen krijgt een achterkant of beter gezegd een voorkant aan dat plein, en daar komen terrassen, daar kunnen ondernemers nu aan twee kanten terrassen maken en dan

kun je rond dat nieuwe gebouw een prachtige atmosfeer creëren die als het ware de warmte toevoegt die de Grote Markt een beetje mist. Nou als je dat nu ook nog met niet zo'n enge passage doet maar met een mooie open ruimte zoals de waagstraat dan heb je kans dat je daar de boel aan de rol krijgt.

Dat is in essentie wat er gebeurt en dat plan is aan de burger onderworpen en hebben de tegenstanders het niet voor elkaar gekregen om het plan te blokkeren. Dat is in een notendop wat er is gebeurt.

*Toen kwam het referendum en de open vraagstelling. Is daar echt niemand achter geweest van; zo gaan we het doen. Smink?*

Nee, Smink was natuurlijk de grote architect van het plan van de Noordzijde en heeft zich die zeepkist van het referendum zich natuurlijk flink aangetrokken, die vond dat vreselijk, die heeft wel een move van we moeten niet weer over die noordzijde beginnen we moeten nu de oostzijde bekijken. Dat is weldegelijk door hem bedacht. Door hem is ook bedacht dat als we daar iets gaan doen we zelf een referendum zouden moeten uitlokken in het begin van de procedure en niet zodat we later pas opnieuw dood zouden lopen op een referendum. Heel belangrijk inzicht, strategisch.

*Word het gezien als doodlopen op een referendum?*

Nouja, als je een plan maakt en je gaat naar de bevolking terug voor een referendum. En je hebt miljoenen uitgegeven voor dat plan en het word je uit handen geslagen dan sta je dus met niks. Je moet je bedenken dat het op zichzelf is een referendum geen ramp, maar het gaat wel om het moment waarop. Dat die noordzijde had ons dus een hele dure les geleerd. Niet alleen die miljoenen waren uitgegeven om dat plan te maken, maar er was ook zo gesproken met het bedrijfsleven dat het 300 miljoen gulden beschikbaar was om het plan te maken. Het kostte de gemeente Groningen geen cent, dat hele plan. En als je zover bent en dan zegt de bevolking de groeten we doen het niet ja dan ervaar je dat als stuklopen. Je bent jaren verder voor je weer wat kunt.

Dus de redenering een referendum is prima, maar over de beginsels. Namelijk. Willen we deze functies daar doen en vinden we het een acceptabele redenering om daar gemeentelijk geld aan te besteden, enzovoort enz..

Dus de uitgangspunten voor de ontwikkeling zijn aan hun voorgelegd en daar zat weldegelijk ook die voorontwikkeling in dus als dat actiecomité tegen dat forum van meer doen met veertig miljoen zegt we kunnen beter een clubhuis. Dat is dan wel een reëel debat op een reëel moment. En als men dan niet de handen op elkaar krijgt om dat weg te stemmen, dan ligt de weg open om dat plan uit te voeren. Dat is een smalle visie op het geheel.

Dat plan kan klaar worden gemaakt en dan zie je zo'n toren tot aan de eerste trans van de martini, dat willen we niet dan was de kans dat men dood zal lopen veel groter geweest. Smink heeft zich daar weldegelijk mee bezig gehouden

maar de vraag wat voor soort cultureel centrum moet dat nu worden is bedacht door dat forum en vervolgens is de vraag: Krijgen we de stad mee voor zo'n aanpak de hoofdlijn dat was dus wel zijn idee geweest maar de inhoud was bedacht in die forum groep, hij had ook hele grote vraagtekens bij sommige onderdelen, en Het interessante is dat wij in de campagne voor ons plan, of het plan van de forum groep moet ik zeggen, het voelt als ons plan, een extra toezegging hebben gedaan. Namelijk als u geen nee zegt nu komen we bij u terug met de architectenkeuze voor het Forum. U krijgt nog een keer de kans om iets te vinden. En dat was riskant. want ja architecten keuze bij opiniepeiling dat is nogal wat, de vakwereld was er erg negatief over

*Dat was bij het oude stadhuis ook al zo...*

Ja, die toezegging heeft er mede voor gezorgd dat de mensen niet tegen hebben gestemd. Dus je moet het ook waar maken, dus toen is er een unieke situatie ontstaan dat we zeven ontwerpen hebben gemaakt van zeer gerenommeerde architecten, Saradid, Neutelings, heleboel echt goede mensen. En in de Martinikerk zijn toen in 30 000 mensen komen kijken. Ongelofelijk. We hebben daar debatten gehad over architectuur, wethouders kwamen discussiëren met architecten en zij kwamen hun plannen toelichten. en hebben we een internetstemming gehouden en uiteindelijk, ik geloof, hebben 30 tot 35 duizend mensen hun stem uitgebracht. Het interessante was dat de volgorde van de keuze van de burgers hetzelfde was als die van de vakjury. En dat heeft het proces een enorme boost gegeven en het was interessant en later kwam er nog wel kritiek op het gebouw over de hoogte, het bleef een beetje zeuren. Maar in essentie heeft hier de participatie de planvorming geholpen.

Een binnenstad heeft impulsen nodig. De binnenstad is niet zozeer een status quo. Er moeten nieuwe redenen zijn om er naartoe te komen. Keer op keer. De traditionele redenering is dan er moeten functies zijn en de redenering van deze tijd is er moeten gebeurtenissen zijn. En die moeten steeds opnieuw plaatsvinden. Dat hebben winkels als die gaan radicaal hun concept vernieuwen. Nou zo'n Forum kan dan, inhakend op de actualiteit gebeurtenissen scheppen, soms meer met een culturele inslag, soms met een meer debat inslag, soms meer historisch, soms meer puur Amusement. Maar Dit is een gebeurtenissen machine dat daar neer word gezet en dat is voor de economische ontwikkeling van de binnenstad van groot belang, daar ben ik echt van overtuigd.

*Het besluitvormingsproces van de Grote Markt word door sommige getypeerd als vaag, dat het ook expres vaag werd gehouden?*

Je kunt het anders doen laat ik daarmee beginnen als gemeente zoals; We doen helemaal niks als gemeente bestuur als referendum, we wachten af. Als we dat hadden gedaan had het gegarandeerd een referendumaanvraag geweest als het plan klaar was. Dan kun je dus twee dingen zeggen, dat is aanzienlijker concreter, dat is waar, dan weet je wat je hebt dat is waar, maar het is ook bestuurlijk aanzienlijk riskanter want het is in feite dat je een oordeel geeft over de architectuur, de vormgeving en over de inbreuk op de binnenstad. Mooi of

lelijk.

Ons probleem was de investering in het gebouw was maar de helft van de investering van het hele plan. De andere helft, de nieuwe gevel van de oostzijde moet door de particulieren bij elkaar gebracht worden. Dat is ook zoveel miljoen. Dat hadden we dus eerder meegemaakt. Dat je de markt op moet om geld bij elkaar te scharrelen, nou ja scharrelen, toezeggingen te krijgen om er geld in te stoppen van particuliere beleggers, die dat alleen nog maar zullen doen als ze zeker weten als ze daar kunnen bouwen. En in die fuik waren we dus bij de Noordzijde gelopen. Daar hadden we die toezeggingen en toen werd het plan afgeschoten en dat kon niet nog een keer. Het plan was tactisch, en daar kan die kritiek van toepassing op zijn, het was nogal vaag en had het nu later gedaan, maar het was ook buitengewoon praktisch. We moesten 60 70 miljoen uit de markt zien te krijgen en mensen daar zien te vinden om daar voor eigen risico gebouwen neer te zetten en dan is wel Mutea filus de totale bouwkosten uit het geheel gefinancierd, dus dat is een subsidie aan Vindicat ,Maar de rest moet rendabel worden gemaakt, zoals een hotel, boekhandel. Dat hadden we laten afhangen van het klaarmaken van het plan op onze kosten. Dat had een groot risico van de stad geweest. Principiële kant. We hadden volgens mij ook geen andere keuze.

*Zijn er reacties gekomen op “Vertrouwen op Democratie”? (22:15)*

Dat is interessant. Er is zeer veel op gereageerd. In de media als je het op internet bekijkt zul je zien dat dat echt ongelooflijk is. Maar heel weinig van politieke partijen. Dus wat je ziet is dat dit gaat eigenlijk over het risico dat de politieke partijen de representatieve democratie niet meer kunnen dragen dat de vormen van directe democratie nodig zijn om de representatie in stand te houden, daar gaat dit rapport over. Dat zegt ook wat over de smalle mate waar politieke partijen tegenwoordig staan, dus je zou zeggen dat is een existentieel vraagstuk voor politieke partijen, ik geloof niet dat wij van 1 politieke partij de uitnodiging hebben gehad om dat rapport toe te lichten terwijl ik een wereld aanvraag heb gehad van universiteiten, hogescholen, denktank achtige groepen, Maar niet vanuit de politiek. Dus dat is heel interessant.

*Hmm, nja vreemd.*

Nouja het zegt dus iets over het isolement van politieke partijen. Die gaan dat debat dus niet aan. Die voelen wel dat die daar heel kwetsbaar zijn.

*Word er dan ook een oplossing voor de politiek gegeven?*

Drie aanbevelingen. Politiek moet weer vanuit waarden en beginselen zijn werk gaan doen, weg van het pragmatisme, die moeten weer principiële keuzes. De burger moet houvast hebben in het keuzeproces dat die partijen weer echte politieke partijen worden, en niet partijen die programma's in elkaar flansen en daar een beetje propaganda op gaan organiseren, ze moeten terug naar de basis beginsels van de partijen. Dat is dus aanbeveling een. Twee is. 2,5 % van de

Nederlanders is lid van een politieke partij, dat is echt waar. We rekruteren dus al onze volksvertegenwoordigers en het meest van onze bestuurders uit die 2,5 procent. Maak dat breder. Met andere woorden; activeer de schil die zit om die partijen van mensen die zeggen ik zal altijd VVD of altijd CDA stemmen maar ik ben geen lid. Dat zou als je die mensen erbij zou kunnen betrekken structureel, betekenen dat je niet meer naar 2,5 procent van de bevolking kijkt maar minstens naar 10 en misschien wel meer. Maar dan moet je dus tientjesleden maken, donateurs en die moet je dan stemrecht geven bij de programmaontwikkeling, en stemrecht geven als de politieke leider wordt gekozen. Nou partijen discussieren daar wel over, maar die zijn daar heel huiverig voor om de controle te verliezen. Maar onze aanbeveling is doe dat wel, trek die schil er structureel bij want je versterkt de basis van het politieke partijwezen. Drie. De autonome burger die goed opgeleid is die gemotiveerd is, die in de informatiesamenleving sowieso zijn weg zoekt en zijn eigen boontjes dopt die wil niet alleen maar een keer in de vier jaar stemt. Die wil een betekenisvolle rol spelen in de besturing van de stad en van het land. Dus organiseer nou de besluitvorming zo dat die burger serieus in het dat proces wordt meegenomen. Dat is al 30 jaar 40 jaar lang, sinds de oprichting van d66 is dat een politiek thema, en dat rapport was klaar en ik dacht laat ik ga Hans van Mierlo een briefje schrijven om te zeggen dat ik zijn geesteskinderen niet vergeet, zou ik maar zeggen, en toen aarzelde ik toen ik hoorde dat hij ernstig ziek was dus misschien moet ik hem niet lastig vallen en een week later was hij overleden. Maar het is inderdaad waar, het is voor een zeer belangrijk deel de agenda die van Mierlo aan de orde heeft gesteld, namelijk; de politiek is een deel van het probleem geworden, de manier waarop wij ons systeem hebben georganiseerd bijt zich in zijn staart. En dus moet er iets principiëls veranderen, meer vormen van directe democratie, gekozen burgermeester, enz. Enz. Dus de drie elementen; terug naar de beginsels en de waarden van de politiek, de schil rond die politieke partijen activeren, en de burger serieus nemen in dat bestuurlijke proces dat kan op heel veel verschillende manieren heel veel verschillende niveaus, maar het is nu drie keer niks. He, dus als het kabinet besluit om uit Uruzgan weg te gaan, dan is dat niet nadat we daar een maatschappelijk debat over hebben gevoerd dat dus prima kan, ipv dat ze drie maand ruzie zitten maken gewoon het land in waren gegaan en serieus die zaak aan de orde hadden gesteld en het voor en tegen, en daar een confrontatie over hadden georganiseerd dat wat voorstelt dat was dat een enorm interessant debat geworden. De AOW verhoging staat in geen enkel politiek program. Daar hadden ze elkaar de hals ongeveer voor afgesneden. De PvdA op de FNV bond. Voor als er wat gebeurt. Maar geen structureel maatschappelijk debat. Dus wij zijn in zekere zin klaar met de manier waarop de politieke partijen hun rol vervullen. En de raad heeft dus vrij scherp, vind ik, laten zien dat je veel meer vertrouwen moet hebben op democratie en daarom heet het rapport ook zo.

*Ik betrok ook het rapport op de besluitvorming rondom de Grote Markt*

Vertrouw niet alleen op het partij politieke proces als je plannen maakt. De representatieve democratie is niet krachtig genoeg om de representatie te dekken. Onderwijs is te belangrijk om aan onderwijzers over te laten, oorlog is

te belangrijk om aan militaire over te laten, en democratie is te belangrijk om aan partijen over te laten. Dat is de moraal van het verhaal. En die staat in hoge mate in het program. Want dat cruciale moment zijn die partijen bij elkaar gaan zitten en hebben een deal gesloten. Dus eerste deal van cultuurcentrum aan de grote markt, sloop de Oosterpoort maar, dat heeft de stad dus niet geaccepteerd, daar was een grote meerderheid van de raad voor. Vervolgens een plan van Joop Coene voor de noordzijde, brede steun van de raad, heeft de stad weggestemd. Dus wat je ziet is dat je voor de koers van je plan niet meer uitsluitend op het representatie systeem door politieke partijen mag vertrouwen. En dat maakt het hachelijk want dat zijn die partijen natuurlijk gewend. Maar zo goed als Eurlings zei; ik heb voor rekeningrijden aan neuzen tellen in de tweede kamer niet genoeg, hé, ik heb de stem van ANWB nodig toen viel iedereen over hem heen, van ja; maar dat is niet de democratie, wij zijn de democratie. Maar wat hij bedoelde was ik heb aan neuzen tellen niet genoeg; om draagvlak te krijgen in de samenleving. En dat is het echte probleem. En dat was de link.

*Dat is ook precies wat de representatieve democratie moet inhouden. De gemeenteraad beslist voor ons.*

*Of het iets zegt. De stadspartij is vooral winnaar geweest. Maar dit lijkt niet echt de plannen aan te tasten. Hoe staat u hier tegenover?*

De stadspartij onder leiding van Geert Spieker met 2 zetels in de raad was constructief kritisch, probeerde mee te denken, maar was wel heel kritisch maar was tegen het forum, maar heeft zich niet bedient van populistisch sentimenten. Wel een beetje maar niet echt volledig. Na het vertrek van Geert Spieker is de. Die stadspartij is zich vervolgens wel van populistische argumenten gaan bedienen en heeft succes gehad. En dus wat je ziet volgens mij is dat ook in Groningen employ is voor groepen die alles wat de overheid doet afwijst. Die eigenlijk de overheid als de tegenstander ziet, en dat is wat zij in de naam hebben en dat is de oostzijde van de grote markt de lakmoes van, dat mag, mensen kunnen dat plan bestrijden, maar ze bestrijden dat plan niet alleen op zakelijke argumenten maar ook met het algemene beeld van prestige en geld over de balk gooien en dus een overheid die niet deugt en alles wat daar aan vast zit. En die lading had het debat in Groningen nooit. Dus het feit dat daar nu 5 min of meer fortunistische zetels zijn is een soort, en een .. in het land speelt, van leefbaar Rotterdam en andere, maar ik geloof niet dat dat, uh.. daar zijn de .. en de participatie kant als aansluitingskant als aansluitingspunt te nemen. En er is gewoon emplooi voor dit soort redeneringen, dus ik ben dus niet zo gauw geneigd om dat te wijden aan de manier waarop wij dit proces dus hebben georganiseerd. Alsof we dat uitgelokt hebben ofzo. Dat wou ik me niet verwijten die redenering.

*Makkelijker om plannen af te knallen misschien..?*

Dat staat in ons vertrouwensrapport volgens mij wel goed beschreven. De media stappen eigenlijk tussen de burger en de overheid zogenaamd aan de kant van de burger en bevestigen daarmee staat in het rapport de tweespalk tussen overheid

en burger. En de redenering van het vertrouwensrapport is dat je het proces zo moet organiseren dat het vertrouwen genereert, het proces zelf is zo belangrijk. Nou dat vonden wij dat we dat met de architecten keuze en de vroegtijdige ge.. gedaan hebben, maargoed de nieuwe .. en dat het gebouw daar komt en dat er gesloopt moet worden en dat het veel geld kost. Ja, Nu breekt de publieke opinie opnieuw open. Dat is de een van de wezenlijke kenmerken van deze tijd dat keizers wel kiezen en opvattingen geven maar niet een mandaat. De autonomie van de burgers gaat zo ver dat ze niet anderen meer toevertrouwen namens hen te handelen. Terwijl de representatieve democratie er natuurlijk uit gaat van het feit dat je iemand mandateert om dat voor jou te doen. En daar lopen nu grote projecten vooral een enorm risico. De burger zal niet zeggen ik heb in Groningen PVDA gestemd en die waren voor het Forum dus nu kan het Forum gebouwd worden. Nee die zullen zeggen ik heb weliswaar PVDA gestemd maar ik ben het niet eens met het Forum. En dat betekent in feite dat, nouja dat gaat weer terug naar de hoofdstelling, dat de representatieve democratie ingevuld door de politieke partijen onvoldoende de representatie vertegenwoordigt. Dat is voor een democratie een buitengewoon gevaarlijk dilemma.

*Nog een onderwerp vergeten, filosofische onderbouwing; je kan naar eenheid streven met zn allen als samenleving of je diversiteit respecteren. In rapport staat politiek leiders moeten samenbinden. Moet je nu naar eenheid streven of diversiteit respecteren?*

Ik weet niet of ik het met die tweedeling eens ben. Kijk in het rapport staat en in het rapport dat ik in 2001 heb uitgebracht als voorzitter van de commissie overheidscommunicatie, een rapport voor jou om er ook even bij te betrekken ja dat heet 'In dienst van de democratie' moeite waard om het even te lezen. In dat rapport zegt de burger wij als samenleving als autonome burgers en een ontzuilde samenleving waarin we dus niet meer kaders vastliggen alles beweegt, in Zo'n type samenleving is een ander type leiderschap nodig als we vroeger hadden En we hebben het toen benoemt interactief democratisch leiderschap. Lelijke term maar interactief in de zin van we moeten blijven communiceren, democratisch in de zin van je moet ook je eigen mening tussen haken durven zetten als je er geen draagvlak voor vind maar wel leiderschap, je moet wel zeggen waar je naartoe wil. Dat is dus een hele complexe balans die je daar moet zoeken. Interactief democratisch leiderschap. En ik geloof dat degene die dat het beste kan het meest is toegerust op leiding te geven nu dus degene die alleen maar zegt ik heb een mandaat en ik heb een plan ik ga daar mee door dat is te eendimensionaal, degene met de pet in de hand en die zegt u vraagt en wij draaien miskent zijn leiderschapsrol, degene die zegt we hebben een mandaat dus we gaan het ook doen punt, die miskent de noodzaak voor de interactiviteit. Dus het gaat in feite om die dimensies die interactiviteit in de democratie dat je die bij elkaar brengt en dat is leiderschap. Dat is dus een ander soort leiderschap als macholeiderschap want dat zegt ik vind iets, ik vraag om een .. en als ik dat heb dan ga ik dat doen. Punt. Bindend leiderschap betekent in feite dat je je opvatting ook bereid bent om aan te passen als dat nodig is om draagvlak te vinden. Dus het is veel flexibeler. Het is niet zozeer diversiteit versus een monolieten vorm van denken dat spreekt filosofisch denk wel een rol, maar het

is meer de noodzaak om zowel interactief als een fundamenteel democratisch te handelen en dat je door dat te doen niet hoeft te veronachtzamen dat je leiding moet geven. Je zegt ik wil daar naartoe. Maar of ik daar kom hangt ervan af of ik u overtuig en als ik u niet overtuig moet ik mijn doel bijstellen. Want het is wel democratisch, u bent wel uiteindelijk met elkaar de baas. En die stijlwisseling waarin we nu zitten, Luuk van Middelaar heeft een heel interessant artikel geschreven, daar citeren we ook van personen democratie via partijen democratie naar publieksdemocratie. Nou dat is heel kenmerkend voor de publieksdemocratie dat er dus geen afronding aan het besluitvormingsproces zit. Nou natuurlijk moet alles in de wet vastgelegd worden. Maar in het beginsel is dat een open wisselwerking in de publieke ruimte. En dat maakt het heel verschillend met vroeger.

*Dat krijg ik ook op mijn opleiding dat de besluitvorming een proces is..*

Als je ziet hoe de Berg en ik het verkeersplan hebben in gevoerd in de jaren 70 dat was ruimte plannen. En er was niet zoveel draagvlak in de stad om aanvankelijk. Er is wel draagvlak gegroeid en toen parkeergarage in een referendum kwam is het heruitgeschoten, met andere woorden het is wel tot leven gekomen maar op zichzelf is het een heel opvallend iets dat de democratie manifesteert zich vooral in de dialoog. Als je het wilt samenvatten in twee woorden, en dat hebben we in het rapport ook opgeschreven, vroeger ging je uit van beheersen op basis van regels nu ga je uit van bestuur op basis van een dialoog. En dat is een totaal andere opening.