Framing People and Planning: 50 years Of Debate.

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Introduction

1969 saw the publication of two key documents which have had major impacts on how participation in planning is both practiced and thought about. One was *People and Planning*, the report of the Skeffington Committee (Skeffington, 1969) set up by the UK government in the previous year to provide recommendations on how local authorities should carry out new legal obligations to consult with the public [1]. The second was Sherry Arnstein's article in the Journal of the American Planning Association on the ladder of participation which famously typified levels of participation from tokenism to citizen control (Arnstein, 1969). Between them these two documents played a key role in establishing public participation as a central shibboleth of planning theory and practice; a 'good thing' symbolizing commitment to progressive, democratic ways of working (Day, 1997; Huxley, 2013). At the same time, however, they also raised key issues about the purposes and challenges involved in participation, many of which remain unresolved today and are still reflected in the contributions to this edition.

Over the subsequent 50 years debates about the possibilities and limitations of participation in planning have continued and evolved, and there have been recurrent attempts by governments around the world to usher in 'meaningful participation' and to resolve the tensions within it. Public participation is still very widely considered a 'good thing' but both academic and public debate persistently also frame participation as a 'problem' in various ways.

Taking Skeffington and Arnstein's contributions as a starting point, this article aims to review the debates about how we can characterise and understand participation with a view to both framing later contributions to this issue and contributing to understanding of the problematic of participation. We do this not to provide a historiography per se or to *resolve* problems in the theory of participation but to develop an account of the 'field of tensions' in

[1] As set out in the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act

which participation sits, highlighting themes, issues and contradictions that shape the possibilities for participation. To do this we focus on four key tensions: the extent to which power can ever be devolved through participation (or, to use Arnstein's terms, whether it represents 'control' or 'therapy'); the clashes between the different modes of governance inherent in planning (representative, legal/bureaucratic, participatory); the role of the planner and the way the public in planning has been constantly made and remade within differing planning regimes and the inclusion and exclusion of differing planning publics associated with this and; the relationship between citizen action within and outside the formal participation apparatus of the state.

We do this by critically reviewing some key approaches to understanding participation and their implications for practice. Throughout we argue that public participation in planning can best be seen as a shifting terrain of underlying tensions/ contradictions which presents both openings and closures for citizens seeking to influence the use of the land. Neither a 'good thing' per se nor any particular kind of problem, participation is instead always situated in a field of tensions and possibilities that must be carefully navigated.

Participation in Context; Skeffington and Arnstein

People and Planning

Following recommendations from the 1965 Planning Advisory Group, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1968 introduced legal requirements for planning authorities to consult with the public in the production of development plans. Planning was the first area of government in the UK to be subject to such provisions and the UK was, therefore, amongst the first countries in the world to legislate for participation in planning. Also in 1968, a Committee had been set up to make recommendations to planning authorities on how they should discharge this new legal duty. Its members heard evidence from community members and practitioners on the importance of participation, and carried out case studies of authorities and agencies which had already been engaging the public, exploring the techniques and procedures they used.

There is much to be celebrated in the committee's report, *People and Planning*, which generated considerable contemporary interest (e.g. Levin and Donnison, 1969). It formally legitimised the importance of participation in planning and set out some practical ways through which it could be achieved, including nine recommendations (see table 1). It thereby

enshrined participation as a ‘good thing’ and a key aspect of state planning activity, acknowledging the rights of citizens to be directly involved in decisions that affect their lives. It made the case for participation in language which is still familiar today, stating ‘planning is a prime example of the need for this participation, for it affects everyone’ ([Skeffington, 1969;para 8]; a phrase repeated in planning reforms in England in 2004 [ODPM 2004]) and ‘people should be able to say what kind of community they want and how it should develop’ ([ibid], which prefigures the 2011 Localism Act in England [UK Parliament 2011]). Noting the impact on people of plans ‘imposed without respect for their views’ (ibid), it set out the need for different ways to engage the public through more participatory forms of democracy (‘it may be that the evolution of the structures of representative government which has concerned western nations for the last century and a half is now entering a new phase’[ibid; para 7]) and called for a new type of active citizen (‘participation offers the opportunity of serving the community’ [ibid]).

*****Table 1 around here.**

So Skeffington put participation in planning on the map but it can also be argued that it marked the start of its ‘long crisis’ (Matthews, 2013). The turn towards participation drew on several different contemporary concerns and strands of planning thought (Damer and Hague, 1971; Thornley, 1977; Huxley, 2013, see also Shapley (2014) for an overview of the Committee and its report). This included growing public interest in the built environment but also increasing opposition to planned redevelopment and professional fears about its impacts on the public image of planning; governmental concerns about the administrative efficiency of the plan-making process; wider interest in developing more participatory forms of democracy, and; the influence of new ideas about, and forms of, citizen politics and participation from the United States and elsewhere that were articulated as an extension of planning’s socially progressive self-image (see e.g. Arnstein, 1969; Davidoff, 1965; Gans, 1968)

From the start, then, participation was seen as a response to a variety of quite distinct problems by government, the planning profession and the wider publics being offered (limited) new opportunities to participate. This ambiguity was perhaps valuable in securing widespread support for the principle of participation. However, it meant that the purposes of that participation were not fully elaborated and, as a result, important choices about the kind of participation being promoted were sidestepped.

Ultimately, Skeffington codified participation within a legal bureaucratic and democratic system with inherent limitations (of which more below) and it focused solely on the role of the local planning authority under the town and country planning acts, divorced from the wider activities of local government (Damer and Hague, 1971; Ward, 2004). It therefore represented a particular, narrow remaking of the relationship between the state and its citizens which encapsulated a variety of contradictions and tensions, including those between participatory and representative democracy, and how different kinds of knowledge would be combined in decision-making (e.g. professional, technical, local, political). As such it also largely ignored the long traditions of community action and community-led planning outside the state and the wider political implications of calls to reshape power relations in society. Whilst aware of the dangers of empowering the already entitled middle-classes, the report also encapsulated particular (essentialist) views on who constituted the public and the nature of community. The Committee itself was composed largely of white, middle-aged men (not unusual for the time) whose understandings of the issues was perhaps reflected in the drawings in the report which tend to represent respectable-looking objectors holding placards emblazoned with slogans like 'why develop'; 'we want theatre not bingo' or 'old town preservation society'. These images were perhaps inspired by the growing civic society movement of the day but were also imbued with nostalgia for a traditional village life and urban form which probably did not exist in 1969, if it ever had.

When introducing the 1968 Act, Anthony Greenwood, then government Minister for Planning, declared '(the government was) determined that there should be more real participation in planning' (emphasis added, quoted in Shapely, 2014). However, in practice it seemed the Government was less sure how to proceed. Straddling a major reorganisation of local government administrative units, it took three years before further advice on how to approach public participation finally emerged and when it did the requirements were considerably more limited than those proposed in People and Planning, perhaps reflecting growing realisation of the political complexities raised but also concerns about whether participation would in practice hinder or aid the search for administrative efficiency (Thornley, 1977).

In normatively positioning citizen participation as a 'good thing', the Skeffington report elevated the participation above questioning and critique. How many times since have we heard that a new initiative would result in 'real' or 'meaningful' participation without consideration of what that would *really* entail, how we would know when it had been achieved or whether the public would get their voices heard as a result?

People, Plans and Power

As a government report, Skeffington was never going to produce a critical appraisal of state-led participation. For the beginnings of this we can look to that other document from 1969, Sherry Arnstein's article on the ladder of participation (see Figure 1). Writing in the aftermath of 1968 which saw the impact of new citizens' movements and some of the immediate social policy responses to them, this article set out two further crucial dimensions to debates about participation.

The first of these was about the extent to which participation programmes actually led to increased influence over decisions by the public, or not. The longevity of Arnstein's article is not just that it was the first but that it precisely identified something that remained almost entirely unacknowledged by Skeffington, that debates about participation are debates about power; '*my answer to the critical **what** question is simply that citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power'* (Arnstein, 1969 p 216). She then went on to typify different categories (or rungs) of participation representing varying degrees of power, with citizen control at the top. Crucially, at the bottom of the ladder, were not only examples where citizens exerted less power, but where agencies of the state and other organisations used participation as 'therapy' and 'tokenism' to incorporate, co-opt and manipulate citizen action. In this way she identified that participation could take varied, even contradictory forms when mobilised for different purposes.

***** Figure 1 around here**

The second was Arnstein's concerns for the 'have-nots' and the role of participation in '*inducing significant social reform which enables them to benefit from the affluent society'* (ibid). This positioned her argument in relation to the wider political implications of the civil rights movement and the challenges of planning for a diverse, pluralist society marked by profound racial inequalities (Davidoff, 1965; Reardon and Raciti, forthcoming).

For Arnstein, participation was about achieving more equitable outcomes for disadvantaged groups from federally-funded urban programmes not just ensuring more citizen involvement. Participation, as a result, had to be more than just a process; it had to be a *just process* which rebalanced power between the state and its citizens in order to realise more *just outcomes*. Arnstein therefore problematised participation and the motivations of governments in initiating programmes, challenging normative assumptions about

participation necessarily being a 'good thing' whilst advocating stronger forms of citizen control over the core resources then shaping urban change. Her argument has been hugely influential both within and beyond the planning field. The article's page on the Journal of the American Planning Association's website counts 3654 citations, making it one of the most widely referenced pieces of work in the history of the field.

By focusing on direct relations between state programmes and citizens and viewing poverty as the primary source of inequality in society, Arnstein's argument arguably failed to anticipate either how power would shift towards the market or how identity politics would reshape understandings of marginalisation (see e.g. Sandercock, 1998; Beebeejuan, 2006). The ladder has also been criticised for being overly simplistic, and for lacking an explicit theorisation of power (see e.g. Sharp and Connelly, 2002). Anyone who has ever tried to place an initiative on the ladder will also know that it is notoriously difficult to apply; some participants (and theorists) will place it at the top, others at the bottom; halfway through it is getting near the top by the end it is down at the bottom again. And some citizens don't ever get near a ladder, let alone step foot on a rung. Paradoxically, by tantalisingly setting out the golden heights of the top rung of the ladder as an achievable ultimate goal of participation it also repeated the tendency to normative thinking about what participation *should be* as opposed to what it is, thereby blurring boundaries between ideals, theory and practice in ways that have continued since 1969. Various wheels, triangles, frameworks and grids have been proposed to improve on Arnstein's ladder and offer more sophisticated typologies (see e.g. non-formality.org, 2011), recognising that different goals are appropriate to different forms of participation and different actors (Cornwall, 2008). However, despite these efforts, the ladder retains an enduring elegance and capacity to represent the contradictory potential of participation between therapy or control.

Skeffington and Arnstein therefore encapsulate many key arguments for and about participation. From the outset policy intentions and rhetoric around participation were also met by a critique which questioned its redistributive impact, the extent to which citizens are able to exercise power or whether certain sections of society might be further empowered at the expense of others. The field of tensions within which participation is situated was therefore established during this period and those of us engaged with participation are acutely aware that the questions raised remain fundamental to any understanding of its possibilities and limitations.

In the fifty years since, myriad techniques and programmes to help citizens engage and potentially move up the ladder have been forwarded in theory and practice, often

underpinned by normative assumptions and good intentions. However, a basic level of ambiguity and confusion of purposes has remained. If participation has more and more often been the answer (and not just in planning), it has not always been clear what the question was. It could, therefore, be argued that debates about participation have not moved on significantly. Perhaps we could end our review here. But that would be to ignore the basic fact that participation like planning is a malleable and mobile technology whose meanings are always historically constituted (Huxley, 2013). It would also therefore neglect the ways in which the spaces of participation have changed as forms of government and citizen activism have themselves changed over time. As a result, it would repeat the charges of oversimplification levelled at Arnstein's ladder whilst failing to account for a wide range of nuanced understandings of participation, new areas of research and reflection that have developed in the 50 years since public participation assumed its position as one of planning's 'good things'.

In the rest of the paper we set out to explore these questions focusing on four main areas of tension and contradiction. The first is whether participation is, to use Arnstein's labels, control or therapy. There have been widespread debates among planning theorists about the extent to which participation can ever enable citizens to influence decisions and to account for the variable levels of influence Arnstein recognised as resulting from participatory exercises. As we will see, for some participation can only ever be manipulation while others have tried to move away from ladders in the search for ways of realising its full potential. The extent to which these debates can ever resolve this constitutive tension is, however, questionable.

Secondly are tensions between the different modes of governance and forms of democracy within which participation is situated. This includes the distinction between representative and participatory democracy noted in the Skeffington report. It is also important to consider wider aspects of the governance cultures out of which any specific idea of participation or participatory initiative emerges. Different legal and bureaucratic contexts shape the possibilities for participation in distinctive ways. Arnstein, for example, was concerned with urban social programmes during Lyndon Johnson's 'War on Poverty', not necessarily with the specificities of land-use planning where the nature of property in land arguably creates particular challenges for participation in urban change (e.g. Porter, 2014). Boundaries between different forms and norms of democracy and different modes of governance are also not static; changes over time lead to openings for new forms of participation to emerge while others are closed down. Of relevance here are the ways

successive governments have articulated the role of participation, the development of new types of citizen activism and, perhaps most profoundly, the shift from planning decisions being dominated by experts to being dominated by the market. We also need to consider the role of the planner and other professionals engaged in participation who work in, through and sometimes against these boundaries.

Thirdly, there are tensions in the identity of planning's publics (Abram, 2000) and how they are included or excluded from these contradictory and shifting landscapes of governance. Arnstein's concerns about the 'have-nots' presaged an increasing focus on issues of equity, diversity and representativeness in the operation of participation and its outcomes. Over time these have been added to by new understandings of how planning's publics are made and remade through the process of participation and the implications this has not only for the nature of participation but for participants themselves.

Finally, there is the relationship between participation inside and outside the state. Both Skeffington and Arnstein were largely concerned with government programmes in western democracies; the 'invited spaces' of participation (Cornwall, 2004). There is, however a long tradition of activism outside the state which has had profound impacts on the theory and practice of participation. Focus on these 'popular' or 'claimed' spaces of participation can shed new light not only the nature of participation but on planning itself. Therefore while the field of tensions between people, plans and power remains constant, it is, nevertheless, constantly changing . Differing configurations of these elements reshape the ways in which participation is understood, reflecting and reinforcing its contradictory potential. We now go on to explore each of these areas of tension in more detail.

Therapy or Control?

Arnstein's ladder encapsulated one of the key questions about participation; the extent to which it does, in reality, empower citizens to influence planning decisions. In the years since 1969 the focus on this question has intensified in response both to an extensive literature revealing limitations to citizen influence (see for example Day, 1997; Rydin, 1999) and the evolution of debates about how power and democracy in planning is conceptualised (Forester, 1989; Healey, 1997; Sandercock, 1998). We discuss more practical, technique-based responses to the perceived limitations of participation later. Here we focus on debates in planning theory.

If Arnstein's ladder helped generate acceptance that power is central to understanding of participation in planning, debates have continued since about how power should be conceptualised (Albrechts, 2003; Forester, 1989; Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 1998). In later developments it is possible to see an evolving dichotomy in the literature between seeing participation as a potentially emancipatory project, often within a collaborative or deliberative framework (see e.g. Innes and Booher, 2004) or as a process in which the operation of power inevitably leads to inequalities of outcomes, resulting in a related questioning of the nature and purposes of participation itself (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Davoudi and Mandanipour, 2015).

If Fagence (1977) argued that participation had been incorporated as a tool of planning practice without adequate engagement with democratic theory, subsequent developments in planning theory have owed a great deal to wider strands of political thinking. Perhaps most influentially, the development of various strands of communicative planning theory (CPT) have drawn on Habermas' theory of communicative rationality in combination with other influences including North American pragmatism or new institutional theory (e.g. Forester, 1989; Innes, 1995; Healey, 1997). Responding to the failures of modernist, technocratic planning, CPT has sought to reconceptualise planning as an inclusive process of democratic deliberation centred on producing agreement between all those affected by decisions.

For CPT the aim of communication is not to exercise power over others (a Lukesian level of power,) but to foster agreement about the best course of action based on mutual understanding. The placing of dialogue and communication at the core of planning practice and the importance of involving all stakeholders in the process entails a significant role for participation. Appearing at a time when governments around the world had appeared to rediscover 'community', writers in the 'communicative turn' stressed the emancipatory potential of participation. Thus Innes and Booher (2004, 422) celebrate this 'new paradigm' as a call to reframe the logic of participation away from the 'us' vs 'them' of citizens against government and towards a collaborative paradigm that incorporates all organised interests into 'a multi-dimensional model where communication, learning and action are joined together and where the polity, interests and citizenry co-evolve'. Professional planners therefore lose their privileged position in determining decisions and their claims to expert knowledge become one voice among many. Viewed as an ideal, CPT promises to invert Arnstein's vertical ladder, shifting the balance of power by creating a horizontal network in

which all actors have equal access to decision making and planning processes foster agreement-seeking dialogue.

For some, CPT offers a problematically normative view of what participation *should* do rather than a realistic assessment of what actually happens in practice (see, for example, Harris, 2002, though see Healey (2003) for a response to this). Much subsequent empirical work has questioned whether the ideals of communicative planning have been, or ever could be, realised on the ground (see for example Bedford et al 2002; Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). The widespread embrace by governments of the language of deliberative democracy over recent years highlights the ways in which such ideas can be appropriated by various political projects, with very different and far less emancipatory agendas.

However, it is the critiques of CPT which question its emphasis on pluralism and consensus-building as a means of facing down strategic and economic interests which is of most relevance to our argument. Although the distortion of communicative rationality by different influences is recognised by some (e.g. Forester, 1989; Healey, 1997) and Albrechts (2003) suggests that planners adopt a 'strategy for power' which recognises the differential access to influence amongst stakeholders and the related limits to collaboration, critics have nonetheless pointed to a certain naivety in collaborative approaches when it comes to the operation of power (Harris, 2002; Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000).

Flyvbjerg (1998), for example, emphasises the 'dark side' of planning and the pervasive ways in which power works to shape governing rationalities, rendering any hope of neutral deliberation impossible. His Aalborg case study indicates that, despite the intentions of governments and others to promote participation, the end results reflect the influence of entrenched and powerful interests. Following a Foucauldian perspective, power is seen not as a zero-sum game with 'us' gaining at the expense of 'them' but as a relation that permeates dialogues, strategies, tactics and the very subjectivities of actors. In a similar way, writing particularly about development interventions in the Global South, Cooke and Kothari, (2001) see participation as a 'new tyranny', giving the impression of involvement and localised engagement while simultaneously displacing power from the state to the market and those with real (economic) power.

From a governmentality perspective, the growing emphasis on participation around the world is seen as a strategy of neoliberal government, reflecting a 'will to empower' (Cruikshank, 1998) but only in certain, tightly circumscribed ways. Rose (1996) labels this 'government through community', seeing such exercises as ways of responsibilizing citizens to act in line with prevailing governmental rationalities. In effect this means participation

becomes manipulation and therapy; part of the problem rather than a solution for promoting wider democratic involvement. A further influential strand of recent critique positions agreement-seeking CPT as part of a wider post-political condition where political decisions are increasingly turned into technical or managerial processes, often undertaken by non-elected and unaccountable agencies (e.g. Swyngedouw, 2009; see Metzger, 2018 for a review).

Drawing on various strands of radical democratic theory that have critiqued the focus on consensus in deliberative democratic theory, theorists of the post-political argue for a more 'agonistic' approach to participation (see e.g. Metzger, 2018; Pløger, 2018). Agonism recognises conflict as a necessary element in all political discourse, including that on planning, and views consensus with suspicion as a potentially coercive stabilization of hegemonic power relations. The goal is therefore not to see planning as an arena in which all stakeholders communicate rationally to reach consensus but one in which differences, strife and conflict are recognised and respected. This, it is hoped, opens up spaces for more passionate forms of political intervention to counter dominant discourses.

Notwithstanding the powerful critique of contemporary governance provided by accounts of neoliberal governmentality and the post-political, they have been criticised in turn, most notably for presenting a monolithic view of power which closes down any potential for participation or political challenge (e.g. Barnett 2005, McCann, 2011, Massey 2007). Li (2007), for example, notes that writing about governmentality tends to focus on the abstract, stopping short of exploring the messiness of actual attempts to govern and the extent to which they are always contested and difficult to impose rather than all-powerful. In similar terms, Huxley (2018) calls for scholarship to pay attention to the various forms of resistance, or 'counter-conduct', provoked by all governmental projects. Others have developed similar responses to the idea that the post-political has closed down the space for progressive agency or deepened a 'crisis of participation' (Legacy, 2017; Metzger, 2018), pointing instead to the complex ways in which various forms of political discontent continue to find expression through political activism both in and beyond the 'invited spaces' of public participation in planning.

There have been widespread debates among planning theorists about the extent to which participation can ever enable citizens to influence decisions and to account for the variable levels of influence Arnstein recognised as resulting from participatory exercises. It is clear that no consensus has emerged over the previous 50 years on the initial questions posed about citizen power. We would argue, however, that it is important to move away from

dichotomous views of participation as having inevitable outcomes either in terms of control or manipulation. Rather it is about exploring the contradictory spaces that are opened up through participation and the 'ambiguous political potential' (Inch 2015; 4) that results.

Modes of Governance and Democracy; The Limits to Participation

Since Skeffington, one of the key things to emerge is a greater understanding of the contradictory position of planning as a form of state activity situated between different modes of governance and forms of democracy. Restricting private property rights in land in capitalist societies is controversial and legally complex (e.g. Porter, 2014). As an area of public policy, planning is therefore often characterised by the complexity of the laws, statutory requirements, regulations and related processes that surround its operation. This makes for particular arrangements around where and how participation fits (or doesn't) within the rest of the planning system. Patrick McAuslan's (1980) classic analysis of the three 'ideologies' of planning law in the UK: public interest, private property and public participation still illustrates this point well, pointing to the evolution of rights to participate as the courts gradually recognised the impacts of planning decisions on wider publics. In effect we cannot look at participation without seeing it as part of the wider legal-bureaucratic systems in which it is situated. This means that participation is ensnared in a complex web of power relations surrounding planning processes. When people engage they come up against more than just the rational arguments of other actors, confronting instead a set of institutionalised logics and procedures that frequently work to defend vested interests. In this regard, the rights of citizens to participate in many places remain subordinate to more powerful claims of the right to develop land in the public interest.

Further, the legal nature of planning brings with it complex 'rules', 'codes' and narratives which participants have to engage with. As anyone who has sat through or presented to a public inquiry knows, one of the most significant barriers to equitable participation in the planning system is the amount of technical expertise, knowledge and resources required, including the ability to speak the highly specialised language of planning. This leads to practical calls to break down these barriers by demystifying planning jargon, building the capacity of participants and providing legal and technical support.

Many writers also point to significant tensions between different modes of democracy, particularly distinguishing between the contrasting claims to legitimacy of representative and participatory modes (Thornley, 1977; Thomas, 1996; Carpenter and Brownill, 2009). Representative democracy gives a mandate to elected representatives to

make decisions and carry out the legal duties of planning authorities, often delegated to planning officers. Within this, participation may serve to inform expert decisions and legitimise decisions. Mirroring the discussion on tokenistic participation, this may result in limited, tick-box participation exercises and the potential for executive power to override the expressed views of participants. However, as noted by Skeffington, there has been an increasing recognition of the limits to representative democracy which has led to the search for new participatory forms. The deliberative democratic theories on which collaborative planning has drawn seek to 'promote *open dialogue* and encourage the emergence of *shared solut*ions through the uncovering of *new forms of knowledge* and understandings' (Campbell and Marshall, 2000, p 317 original emphasis). However, because of the framework in which planning is placed these different modes of democracy often sit in uneasy tension. Such tensions were exemplified in a document on participation produced by the UK government in 2004 which stated in para 1.9 that the 'aim is to build strong, empowered and active communities in which people increasingly make decisions for themselves' while two paragraphs later it argued that 'participation cannot substitute for proper decision-making through the accountable institutions' (ODPM, 2004 pp5-6).

Similar tensions have been identified in related discussions about changing modes of governance. Newman (2001) argues that contemporary governance has become increasingly complex and actually contains within it different approaches and possibilities (see Figure 2). In her typology rational/technocratic processes traditionally associated with hierarchical modes of government (for example, those associated with formal processes for decision-making) often sit uneasily alongside networked forms of governance that operate through collaboration. Movements towards self-governance, which entail community self-determination such as popular and citizen-led plans, and a continued reliance on rational goal models concerned with managerial processes and targets, such as the requirement for speedy planning decisions, further complicate the picture. Following Newman, we can see contemporary forms of planning are frequently subject to tensions and contradictions between different modes of governing. Shifts in emphasis over time over time and across space create a landscape of tensions with significant implications for the scope of participation and the roles imagined for citizens.

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Many of these tensions and dynamics can be illustrated by even a brief survey of changing configurations of participation within the English planning system over the last 50 years (see e.g. Thomas, 1996; Rydin, 1999; Beebeejaun, 2018). Despite the report's acknowledgement of the need for new, participatory modes of governance, the years after Skeffington saw participation institutionalised in limited form, largely as a means of publicising plans produced under the aegis of technocratic rationalities, signed off by elected representatives. The 1980s saw an ideological shift away from participation with a reassertion of hierarchical modes of government and a simultaneous move within these to less accountable more fragmented and market-oriented forms of decision making through, for example, the establishment of centrally mandated 'Urban Development Corporations' with powers to bypass local government in order to leverage private sector investment in designated areas. By contrast the 1990s and 2000s saw the rise of more collaborative modes of governance and a 'turn to community' which sat uneasily alongside a continued reliance on centrally mandated regimes of performance management focused on managerial ideas of participation as a 'consumer experience'. Attempts to 'govern through community' were extended by a marked emphasis on localism from 2010-2015 which led to the introduction of resident-led neighbourhood development plans with statutory authority but limited scope to actually determine the levels of development being planned for (Brownill and Bradley, 2017). Tensions between hierarchical, rational-technical and participatory forms of governance have also been variably felt across different areas of planning and a tendency towards fragmentation has continued. For example, opportunities for participation in major infrastructure planning in England have been significantly curtailed as government has sought to streamline consents regimes (Marshall 2012).

Many of these changes reflect wider shifts in the ideological context of planning. Most striking here is the shift from the domination of experts, primarily employed in the public sector in the Skeffington era, towards market-led forms of planning (Vigar, in Brownill et al forthcoming). Discussing such changes Pearce (2008) notes the 'ups and downs' of participation over time, while for Lock (2018) it has all been 'downhill' since Skeffington (Lock 2018). We would prefer to see these as openings and closures created by the shifting dynamics of different modes of governance, forms of democracy, planning ideologies and the tensions between them.

Participation, Planners and Planning's Publics

It has to be remembered that the interface between people, plans and various modes of governance in this complex environment is more often than not a person in the shape of a planner. Planning theorists have, over time, paid particular attention to the role of the planner. Writing before Arnstein, Davidoff (1965) argued unequivocally that planners should not be neutral technocrats but 'advocates' for marginalised groups working with them and ensuring their voices are heard. Sandercock (1998) meanwhile questions the status afforded to expert knowledge embodied in the rational-technical professional, seeing this as a major barrier to participation. In the collaborative ideal, by contrast, planners are seen as having a crucial role in facilitating dialogue and bringing all interests to the table. It is perhaps surprising, therefore, that it is only relatively recently that research has focused on the voices and experiences of planners themselves (see e.g. Forester, 1999; Clifford and Tewdwr-Jones, 2013). Perhaps unsurprisingly such accounts reveal many professional planners have ambiguous attitudes towards participation. Clifford and Tewdwr-Jones (2013), for example, note how planners often view participation as worthwhile but also a threat to their role as experts and therefore a task to be managed: 'indeed frontline planners embody and in so far as they are the public face of participation, crystallise the contradictions that run through planning reform' (p 194).

A further key concern throughout the past 50 years has been about who is or, more to the point, is not participating in planning and the underlying patterns of inclusion and exclusion this reflects. Despite widespread intentions towards greater involvement, participation has been criticised for failing to access the diversity of voices and knowledges in the communities it seeks to engage, with overrepresentation from more educated, affluent, older, often white and male sections of the population (Beebeejaun, 2004; Sandercock, 1998; Thomas 1997; 2000). Mention is often made of the 'usual suspects' referring to the tendency for those who are already active and have a certain level of knowledge of how the planning system operates to predominate within the participating public. Counterposed to this are the (erroneously labelled) 'hard to reach'; those who do not usually engage in the meetings, websites or consultation exercises that form the bread and butter of typical participatory activities. There have also been more fundamental critiques by writers such as Sandercock (1998) of the ways in which planning as a technocratic and modernist project has ignored difference and diversity, drawing on seemingly 'neutral' or 'universal' terms such as the public interest which actually reflect dominant interests and mask exclusionary and discriminatory practices. For Sandercock this is also reflected in the forms of knowledge

recognised as the basis for planning decisions, deepening cycles of exclusion. In response, she calls for the inclusion of 'voices from the hinterland' as a way of bringing new knowledge and voices into debates on planning.

Following Davidoff, in some countries 'advocacy planers' have been employed to provide technical support, capacity building and advocacy for under-represented groups (see e.g. Reardon and Raciti, forthcoming on the US and Parker and Street (2018) in the UK, for a critical perspective see Peattie, 1968). This mirrors the recommendation in Skeffington for community development workers and planning education although most 'advocacy' planners have been employed outside the formal planning system. Perhaps because of this the model in most countries has rarely been widely adopted remaining a limited and transitory service leaving the role of the state planner unchallenged. Another common response to critiques of the lack of equity in participation and to other perceived limitations has been a focus on tools and techniques. A wide variety of handbooks and toolkits have been produced, dedicated spaces established and techniques such as 'Planning for Real' and design charrettes developed, all of which aim to enable more active, hands on involvement by all participants. As well as addressing inequalities in access, such techniques are intended to increase citizen power, potentially moving people up the rungs of Arnstein's ladder. More recently there has been a growing emphasis on the potential for digital methods to 'fix' the participation deficit.

But these techniques themselves, however valuable, come up against the same issues of power and co-option we have discussed previously. Simply having more people coming to the table does not necessarily mean that their views will be acted upon. Vigar (in Brownill et al, forthcoming) warns against 'boutique participation' where the use of exciting, fashionable methods takes precedence over critical consideration of the purposes of participation. The capacity for techniques such as charrettes to be used as therapy or manipulation is also well documented (see e.g. McLeod, 2013). Even 'Planning For Real' , which started within community planning groups as a way of demystifying planning, risks being routinised by a growing 'participation industry' as just another tool for governing through community.

Recent work on the role of the public within planning has moved from a focus on patterns of exclusion to focus on how publics are made and remade though the structures and practices of participation (McClymont and O'Hare, 2008). Beebeejaun (2004) has shown how notions of ethnicity are constructed within consultation exercises that reproduce essentialist notions, representing ethnic groups as homogeneous, 'marginalised voices' (p.447). In the planning authorities she studied, this resulted in ethnic minorities being

constructed as the ‘other’ (or as hard to reach) and the devising of policies which perpetuated traditional views about undifferentiated ethnic groups and their demands.

Inch (2015) notes a variety of ways in which the ‘good citizen’ is created within planning systems. The very act of labelling citizens, - ‘usual suspects’, ‘hard to reach’, ‘nimby’, ‘activist’ - is one way in which this is done. These labels contrast with normative ideals of the ‘active citizen’ or ‘citizen planner’ that planning systems would ideally invite to participate. Such labelling can act to de-legitimise participants as unrepresentative or obstructive whilst ignoring how systematic requirements to articulate concerns through the language and logic of planning denies people any opportunity to talk about issues that matter to them in their own words.

In related terms, Davoudi and Mandanipour (2015) refer to technologies of governance which seek to shape the public and the demands they make of the planning system. A recent example of this in England is the argument that greater participation, for example through the production of neighbourhood plans, will lead citizens to positively accept rather than object to new housing development. The fact that neighbourhood plans have to conform to local and national policies steers participatory outcomes towards this end, effectively producing ‘responsible’, pro-development publics. In this way it is not just the spaces for participation which are constrained but the very roles afforded to publics within them. This further underlines the tensions in planning between a system which (outwardly as least) seeks to be open and democratic but which operates through ‘rules’ and technologies of governance which both exclude and also seek to actively shape the outcomes of participatory processes (see also Brownill and Bradley, 2017).

Further areas of research have begun to shed light on the lived experiences and emotions of those who participate (e.g. Jupp 2012). Inch (2015, p.31) argues that these experiences, which are often onerous, emotionally draining and personally challenging, ‘have not been widely considered in existing debates’. Listening to the stories of those who participate, particularly in politically charged disputes shows the impact on those who fulfil their duties as a ‘good citizen’ and form the ‘little platoons’ of citizen planners. Such impacts are often ignored in abstract consideration of modes of governance or techniques of participation but seem important to take in to account if we are to have a fuller understanding of why people do and do not participate.

Any such approach requires understanding the variety of different types of citizen activism that can be expressed in participation. Jupp (2012) and Bradley (2017), highlight, very different forms of empowerment and activism based on the personal experience and

positioning of the public. These have the potential to challenge existing labels and introduce new forms of politics, for example, those based around the lived and personal experience of space.

Planning and Participation Inside and Outside the State

These debates lead onto our fourth area of tension and contradiction in participation; between planning inside and outside the state. Skeffington was concerned with participation in the statutory land-use planning system. Arnstein was similarly concerned with how citizens engage with and shape state programmes. However, alongside such formal processes is a more 'hidden history' of citizen-led action beyond the state that has often creatively challenged plans and proposals (see e.g. Sandercock, 1998 on planning's 'insurgent' histories), sought direct community control over land and its development and, in so doing, highlighted the limitations of formal modes of participation. This encompasses a substantial range of initiatives, including the creation of formal and informal community-led developments (McBane, 2008, Tuckett 1988, Roy 2005) popular plans (Brownill, 1988) and community campaigns (Gallent and Ciaffi, 2016). Ward (1996) provides an anarchist intellectual rationale for citizens being empowered to control and reshape their environments, free from state interference. These initiatives have often been conceived as a challenge to statutorily defined planning processes but have also contributed to the development of formal modes of public participation through complex dynamics of recognition and cooption (see e.g. Legacy, 2017).

There is also a rich tradition of writing about participation outside the confines of the western liberal democracies which have tended to dominate the planning literature. Cornwall (2004), for example, draws on experiences of participation in the global-south to make the important distinction between 'invited' and 'popular' spaces. Invited spaces , in whatever format, are officially-provided. Some are transient (for example over a particular development site) and others take the form of 'regularised institutions' such as the discharge of legal participatory requirements in planning as set out by Skeffington. Cornwall claims that these invited spaces have the potential to extend democracy but that this is contingent on a range of factors particular to each example. More often than not, however, that potential fails to be achieved. In contrast 'popular' (or 'claimed') spaces are instigated by people, often in protest at state actions or programmes and sometimes to produce 'their own services for solidarity and mutual aid'. Action outside the state seeks not just to influence decisions

but also to directly provide services, facilities or development in the absence of effective state interventions. Neither of these categories are fixed, with initiatives waxing and waning and the boundaries between them shifting and changing; invited spaces can be claimed for alternative purposes and popular spaces can be appropriated by the state.

Not only does this distinction underline the contradictory potential of participation it also raises possibilities for alternative forms of empowerment, beyond engagement in democratic processes. Instead of merely trying to influence decisions on the use of land, popular actions and citizens organisations around the world have sought to actively take land and other assets into community ownership. Numerous examples can be found of such practices all over the world, from 'informal' settlements, to peasant and land-less movements to Community Development and Land Trusts. We can speculate as to whether these represent the top of Arnstein's ladder to a greater extent than is possible through engaging with the state.

These initiatives illustrate a long line of thinking in planning theory from Friedmann (1987) through the work of Sandercock (1988) and Roy (2005) which sees alternative forms of planning emerging through citizen action. Miraftab's conceptualisation of insurgent planning and the 'invented' spaces they create is also of relevance here (Miraftab 2009, 2016). She sees these as counter-hegemonic planning practices challenging the colonization of planning in the global south (and it can be argued elsewhere) by neo-liberalism and its use of 'dominance through inclusion' (p 32). In this way participation becomes a contested practice in which 'grassroots movements use the hegemonic system's political openings to make counter-hegemonic moves' (p 34). Such arguments return to the question of the purposes of participation and in this case its ability not just to have a redistributive impact in line with Arnstein's original intention but also to promote the more transformative possibilities that can result from radical planning. Participation in this sense is about empowering citizens but it is also, therefore, about remaking planning. Similar arguments have been made about the potential role of grassroots or neighbourhood planning in the global north in challenging the market-led domination of current planning regimes. (Rydin, 2013; Brownill and Bradley, 2017).

This can be seen as a continuation of the expectations placed on participation since 1969 for producing a 'better' planning system. In the 1960s this was about introducing elements of participatory democracy and allowing citizen's voices to enter the planning arena and challenge a state-led practice dominated by unaccountable experts. Today it is about reasserting the social and redistributive purposes of planning which have been undermined by

its move towards facilitating the market. Whilst recognising that there is no automatic or necessary relation between just processes and just outcomes (Fainstein, 2010) and the limitations of achieving structural change at the very local level (Davoudi and Mandanipour, 2015) to those who would advocate for participation, just and democratic processes remain a key means of securing just outcomes. As we have argued, however, normative commitments to inclusive processes and just outcomes are not the only purposes being articulated for participation within planning. Mainstream growth-oriented planning practices continue to use the language of participation as a means of manipulating or placating publics, thereby legitimizing injustices. We are back once again, to the contradictory and context-specific potential of participation.

Conclusions

It may seem from this review that, fifty years after Skeffington and Arnstein, we are no closer to resolving the debates they did so much to define. Rather, paradoxically, participation continues to be understood as both a 'good thing' and a persistent problem by governments, professionals and citizens alike. Contradictory hopes continue to be invested in participation, so much so in fact that it is impossible to match up to the weight of expectations placed on it. Claims continue to be made that better techniques, more deliberation, more committed professionals or the right sort of citizens can finally resolve the problem of participation. Without denying that such efforts can make a difference, we have argued here that it would be missing the point to think any such resolution to the problem of participation is possible.

However, rather than seeing this as a fifty-year old story of repeated failure, we have sought to argue that public participation in planning can best be seen as a mobile and malleable governmental technology that creates a series of rich and complex spaces of possibility for citizens seeking to influence the use of the land. Participation itself, therefore, remains a contested terrain, marked by a series of underlying tensions. In this paper we have explored four key areas of tensions: the question of power and participation; clashes between the different modes of democracy and governance inherent in planning; the role of the planner and the ways planning publics are constituted, and the relationship between citizen action within and outside the state This is not an exhaustive list by any means. As we have indicated, debates over, for example, the purposes and intended outcomes of participatory practices are equally significant and contested. More detailed consideration of these and related themes would, we believe, reveal further complexities and lines of contention.

In conclusion, we can, however, identify three key contributions emerging from this review which we consider significant. Firstly, it is vital in a discipline such as planning which looks to both theory and practice that we problematize practices such as participation and look beyond normative assumptions. Recurrent attempts to 'fix' the problems since Skeffington and create 'meaningful' participation (Lock 2018, Brownill et al 2019) have repeatedly come up against the shifting configurations of tensions we have identified here. It is therefore dangerous to celebrate participation but equally dangerous to write it off. The politics of participation requires a 'pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will' amongst academics, practitioners and communities alike. Hope needs to sustained but framed by a realistic and critical perspective on the possibilities and limitations of participation. As a result, and as we have argued repeatedly throughout this paper, the contradictory position and possibilities of participation need to be recognised. Secondly, and related to this we have argued that there are great dangers in dichotomous thinking and trying to typify participation as, for example, control or therapy. Rather participation has to be framed as a contested terrain within which a range of tensions and contradictions create openings and closures which vary over time and space. Following from this, we have argued for the significance of context and of the way in which these tensions play out differently over time and space. Given this, it is vital to explore the messiness of actually existing forms of participation as they emerge, develop and are enacted on the ground, drawing out the implications and possibilities presented by shifting configurations of state-society relations, approaches to governance, planning ideologies and personal testimonies that lie behind the diversity of participatory experiences. Moving forward into the next fifty years it can be hoped that such explorations will not only be able to shed new light on existing debates but also reveal how changing contexts for participation including at present, for example, the rise of austerity governance and populism, present new challenges and opportunities within the always contested terrain of participation.

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Figure One: The Ladder of Participation (Source, Arnstein, 1969)
Figure 2: Modes of Governance in Planning (Source, Newman, 2001)

1	People should be kept informed
2	Information on opportunities for involvement should be available
3	Participation should be continuous but key ‘pauses’ should focus on discussion of choices and local authority proposals
4	Local authorities should consider setting up community forums
5	Plans and proposals should be clearly publicised
6	Community development officers should be employed to widen involvement
7	People should be informed of the effects of their participation
8	People should be involved in background research to inform plans
9	Efforts should be made to educate the public about planning matters

Table 1: Recommendations of the Skeffington Committee (1969)