

THE JUST CAUSE FOR PLANNING.
SIX PERSPECTIVES ON THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN
(7000)
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Keywords: justice, decision-making, public interest

1. Introduction

Planners are a special kind of professional. They are not just knowledgeable experts who draw up plans for urban or regional development, commissioned by municipalities, private companies or anyone else who pays them. Planners do their work in a strive for a better world. They hold a firm set of beliefs about what this better world should look like and they want to contribute to this better world. The cities they build and the developments they promote are the cause. But planners are also normal people. Like any other professional, experts and laymen may think differently on what precisely is a better world. In other words, there are different views of what is the just cause for planning.

The ethical concerns underlying planning efforts and spatial policies are often framed in terms of justice or other moral frames. In practice, many planning efforts relate to the public interest and their contribution to the public interest. This paper focuses on this broad perspective on the public interest and aims to give insight in the variety of views people have on the public interest when it comes to the physical domain of urban and regional development. Based on empirical research with a value-oriented approach, in which the variety of normative views on the public interest in spatial planning is defined, six perspectives on the public interest in the physical domain are presented. Each of these perspectives reflects a distinct combination of underlying values.

This overview of six perspectives on the public interest in the physical domain of urban and regional development is a better plan. Plans that present a substantial normative choice on spatial development can be tested in social debate and decided upon in the political arena. The six perspectives on the public interest will be characterised with a view to contemporary spatial development. The public interest will be positioned in view of social, economical and political preferences and values. Interventions will be positioned in view of social, economical and political preferences and values. This helps to draw up plans and decide upon the appropriate role of government in dealing with spatial development issues, either in collaborative processes with communities, or with a clear-cut division in responsibilities between government organisations and private parties.

2. The normative background of planning approaches

Spatial planning is traditionally driven by strong normative beliefs in creating better working conditions for the poor. Planning for urban development needed to provide housing and amenities, as well as for industry and offices to provide enough people with work. Urban and regional planning served the public interest with this social aim. In which there was a self-evident role for government intervention in the physical domain. Justice has been a dominant underlying value of these traditional planning approaches. In the growing post-war prosperity, even more prosaic social aims for planning could be pursued by governments, in order to create pleasant spaces for leisure and beautiful landscapes.

Decades later, this social and economic agenda gave way to more focused economic regional development and real-estate driven inner city projects, as well as environmental and ecological concerns. With this change in normative background, the evident role for government has changed. A variety of planning approaches has emerged over time. In the more entrepreneurial public-private partnership approaches, the role of government in negotiation with private investors. Environmental concerns have an explicit role for government with environmental legislation, in which planning has a strict and regulatory role for government and identifying the specific physical areas for safeguarding. In contemporary processes of transformation of existing urban areas, it is to define the division of responsibilities between community initiatives, private investors and government.

In this variety of trajectories for planning policies and planning practice, the role of government in dealing with spatial development issues. There are also different definitions of the public interest that is being pursued. It is not always the economic agenda, with social justice as its guiding principle for redistribution. The public interest defines the public interest. The public interest may also be facilitating economic growth, it is possible to create added real estate value or preserving basic environmental quality. What is to come.

Recent developments show an even bigger variety in government involvement in urban development issues. An active civic society in cities often takes matters into its own hands when it comes to the transformation of disused space or derelict buildings. People do not claim a say over redevelopment areas in their vicinity. Local entrepreneurs develop new business cases, often in the creative industry. Newly founded cooperatives of neighbours develop sustainable energy and dedicated residential complexes are developed for people to live in a sustainable lifestyle. With these approaches come different conceptualisations of the public interest at stake, and what role and responsibility governments need to take for.

In the contemporary pluralistic western society, people have different notions of the public interest. Some are particularly keen to foster small-scale creative business opportunities, while others focus on climate neutral housing. Many people seem to want to see the vision for their own community, whether traditional or culturally diverse. For planners to translate this variety of views on the good society into plans that help make urban development. The question therefore is, what is the just cause for planning and whom should this good society be created?

To find an answer on this fundamental and philosophical question, this paper explores a practical concept of the public interest. Using the outcomes of value oriented research, it recognises the variety of normative views on the role of spatial planning (Brenner & Weide 2014), six perspectives on the public interest in the physical domain are identified. One of these perspectives reflects a variety of underlying values. It shows that values like safety, care are not the only values that are represented in the normative beliefs of the public. Values like safety, diversity or autonomy. The six perspectives on the public interest are characterised in terms of spatial development issues and will be positioned according to economic and political preferences for government interventions.

In order to gain an understanding of the variety of perspectives in society about the public interest in the physical domain and the extent to which the government has to assure the public interest, firstly the notion of public interest needs defining. In general, an interest is an advantage or benefit for one or more individuals, a wish that is fulfilled or a demand for justice. An interest derives from a certain action or structure that is offered to a community or collective (Stone, 1997; Barendrecht and Beukering-Rosmuller, 2000). Most of the time, in the fields of planning, law and economics distinguishes between three types of interest:

interests, societal interests (public interests in which the government has a prominent role) and private interests (in which the government has a prominent role).

Individual interest refers to the own interest pursued by the individual, which is part of the individual's private sphere such as relatives and close friends. It is often focused on the short term (Barendrecht and Beukering-Rosmuller, 2000). Bound to the private context, the individual's interest is characterized by the affective ties to relatives and close friends and by a bond of unconditional loyalty. When an interest moves to a higher level of the private sphere, it shifts to a group's perspective. Group formation and group activities indeed bring benefits, sometimes to the level at which none of the members of the group is excluded, in which case there is some form of common interest or even a collective interest.

Common interest can be distinguished from shared (combined individual) interests. It is about specific choices. When the common interest no longer relates to a specific individual or a significant larger part of society or to the society as a whole, this interest is no longer a social interest or public interest. The next paragraph further investigates the concept of public interest, with a specific focus on the various societal perspectives on public interest in the physical domain.

3. The public interest in the physical domain

In most literature, a clear distinction is made between social interest and public interest. According to the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR, 2000), social interests are those interests that are considered important for the society as a whole, such as education, an inclusive health insurance system. Individual interests and social interests are almost each individual needs (and profits from) such basic facilities. The public interest is distinguished from social interest, in the sense that it concerns an interest for which the government is primarily responsible. Only government can define and legitimise a public interest (Moore, 1995; WRR, 2000: 57). However, in most societies public interests are not exclusively as a government responsibility. The public interest is often seen as a shared responsibility of government, societal institutions, businesses and communities.

Public interests can therefore be seen as social interests, for which government has a primary responsibility (Baarsma & Theeuwes, 2009: 27). The traditional characterisation of public interest in which the government either has a major or a minor role, therefore does not account for the historically strong involvement and responsibility of societal institutions and businesses in the physical domain. Public interest as a shared responsibility, based on mutual interests, can be distinguished as a third type of public interest.

3.1 Public interest as a government responsibility

A classic perspective on public interest in the physical domain is that in which the government appropriates the final responsibility of providing the interest, based on the principle that otherwise this interest would not (properly) be provided to all (WRR, 2000: 57). National and coastal defenses are common examples, based on concerns of health and safety. It is a complex of social interests which in the long term best serve the well-being and safety of the collective, perceived as the public, including those of future generations (van der Vlist, 2000; Smit, 2010). According to Bozeman (2011: 12): (...) the public interest is not group-dependent, but not different for various groups or individuals. It exceeds the interests of any individual level, as well as their temporal constraints. Public interests can match the interests of individuals in conflict as well, since the individual tends to focus on its own rights and interests, while the public interest focusses on (the distribution of) rights and interests. According to Moore (1995), within a democratic society the government, as the representative of its citizens, is the sole actor which is legitimated to define and protect public interests.

process of political decision-making. This emphasizes the formal legitimacy of public interest. The government takes full responsibility for this type of public interest. It can be seen as an active government assurance and structural engagement, on which people may establish their long-term expectations (WRR, 2000).

Economic arguments focus on collective goods that are neither excludable nor rivalrous. Examples include prevention and military defence, which must be provided to every individual in society (van den Noort, 2003; Korsten, 2014). The government guarantees and provides these goods, because of the risk of free-rider behavior or due to (positive or negative) externalities that are not internalized by the market (van den Noort, 1986; Baarsma & Theeuwes, 2009; den Butter, 2014). Quasi-collective goods, such as highways, which the market cannot provide, are provided by the government on the basis of socio-economic arguments and arguments for the distribution of resources (Baarsma & Theeuwes, 2009; van den Noort, 1986).

This closely relates to the social or political arguments, according to Talbot (2005). Public interests with government assurance not only improve welfare, but also have a redistributive content. Defining the public interest is justified if technical provision of goods or services through the market, while it is a prerequisite for social justice (Moore, 1995). This relates to preferences of solidarity and redistribution (Talbot, 2005; Baarsma & Theeuwes, 2009; den Butter, 2014). Government intervention, which results in an increased well-being or welfare benefits on the long term, where individuals in society do not or cannot provide for. Defining and guaranteeing public interest, such as security by well-maintained dikes and health through a hygienic environment, and welfare growth, individuals are able to participate in society. Environmental arguments relate to concerns of common goods, wherein goods are rival but not excludable. The role of government that follows from this is to guarantee that activities are organized in such a way that exploitation or pollution of the environment is prevented, and their availability for future generations is secured.

Also legislation, the institutions of government and the institutional and procedural aspects of public policies serve a public interest. This refers to the necessity of justice and fairness in the legal domain in particular with respect to property rights and land use. Legislation should provide the transparency of public decision making and should provide the possibility for citizens to participate in decision-making processes of government (Beukering-Rosmuller, 2011).

3.2 Public interest as a shared responsibility

The public interest as a shared responsibility of the government and society is often represented in corporatist structures in the economy, such as the former agricultural cooperatives. In contemporary form, around the issue of the transition towards sustainable energy, examples can be found of new forms of shared responsibilities for a particular public interest. This often concerns a complex of group-exceeding or social interests, aimed at both short and long term, which are of significance for a particular business sector or community. The public interest is characterised by the decentralised control of the government and the creation of preconditions that facilitates collaborative approaches, with businesses, social organizations and individual residents. When the government subsidises projects, compensation is provided in such a sense that this facilitates collaborating in and executing of projects.

Economic arguments often focus on the creation of optimal welfare, which can be achieved through a mixed or hybrid economy, wherein private initiatives, businesses and public services interact with each other. Public and private actors jointly provide goods and services that benefit society as a whole. This also allows for semi-public or merit goods and services.

by government, such as social housing, recreational parks and public transport (1986).

Based on social arguments, defining the public interest can be seen as the outcome of negotiation and agreement with the involved stakeholders. The shared responsibility often focuses on achieving a welfare optimum for a community or area, which includes activation of vulnerable groups. The government aims at joint agreements with businesses, industry and social organizations. The use of, for instance, green and renewable energy. It concerns initiatives that relate to spatial planning and land use, in which the identity and the area-specific qualities are taken into account. Legal instruments can be based on private as well as public law, aimed at providing a clear and procedural framework within which public and private parties can cooperate. (re)development public-private partnership (PPP) is a commonly used instrument. Subsidies and concessions enable (semi-)private organizations to provide (by a defined quality of) services such as social housing and public transport. With clear rules and preconditions for subsidies, the government also provides the substantive framework.

3.3 Public interest as a system responsibility

A form of public interest with emphasis on the demarcation of tasks and responsibilities between the government and society, in which the government is assigned to a more limited role. This interest is often formulated in terms of system responsibility. This refers to a complete set of services relevant to the community, with a limited role for the government because: the government is not the one that interest is desired for the society as a whole (WRR, 2000: 20). Unlike individual and group interests, these forms of social interests do not differ for individuals. They are a balanced complex of their (sometimes competing) individual and group interests. The government may focus on the short as well as the long term.

An example is the demand for bread in a community provided by the bakery. There are clear rules required in order to meet this need, unless there are quality issues of the bread. This is the tipping point for public interest. In this definition, the private or civil law goods and services of public interest. This may involve, for instance, self-organized housing and nature reserves by private organizations or foundations, but also housing cooperatives in which (groups of) individuals are the independent producers of goods and services. Involvement of the government is often required to provide preconditions in a legal framework or policy system, which creates the context for the provision of unsubsidised services.

Economic arguments tend to focus on the welfare optimum, which can best be achieved through the market that can create an optimal allocation of goods and services, for which the government creates the necessary preconditions (Baarsma & Theeuwes, 2009; den Butter, 2009). From social arguments, the public interest is related to the creation of optimal welfare, such as adequate health and employment opportunities. Here, the individual (also the community). Environmental arguments relate to the community that strives for optimal welfare through organisation of the market, inter alia through tradable land use- and planning instruments. Legal instruments that relate to this type of public interest, consists of a framework of civil law. This needs to provide for a proper functioning of market mechanisms. The government is limited to facilitate projects (both by legal and planning conditions).

4. Six perspectives on the public interest

Decision-making on spatial development issues (or any other issue) requires the interests of all stakeholders to be taken into consideration, with a view to the public interest. This is always a political decision. This political decision is not a redistributive act, in which mutual gains are acknowledged and divided among stakeholders and the wider public.

decision-making is a normative act, in which a variety of points of view consideration and a choice is made on the preferred development, the design and urban territory (Buunk 2010; Buunk en van der Weide 2012). Decision-making development issues with a view to the public interest is based on value rational perspectives on the public interest that play a role in plans and projects in therefore needs to be based on the variety of values people relate to in society.

4.1 Interests and values

For a proper understanding of the public interest, it is important to make a clear representation of interests (that were explored in the previous paragraph) and values. The public representation of a public value. It is the larger picture people often like to have of their views. The public interest, to which politicians, bureaucrats, and local government as justification for a particular policy they may advocate, is close to public interest being about the value itself, interest is one of the reasons or reference points for things. People may be said to value something because it is in their interest. The public interest is seen here as an overarching concept that serves to legitimize actions have on others and on society, based on personal interest people have, their interests and, more importantly, their preferences for a good society.

In order to create an overview of the perspectives people take on the public interest, we look at the combination of the interests in and concerns people have for the physical domain, as well as their preferences and the underlying values they represent. A value is defined as an expression of a deep-rooted belief, motive, incentive, desire, or ideal for something (Buunk and van der Weide 2014: 217). Values have a meaning in social interaction and become tangible in emotions and in the argumentation behind points of view and decisions people make. Some people will argue for an extensive role and responsibility for government in preserving the quality of the physical domain as a collective good, thereby emphasizing protection and safety. In previous research, the variety of values that play a role in urban development issues identified (Buunk and van der Weide 2012, 2014). The values that play a role in urban development issues are often abstract, but become much more concrete when they are expressed in perspectives people have on a practical concept like the public interest.

Following this value oriented-approach, six perspectives on the public interest in the physical domain that each reflect a typical combination of three or four underlying values are identified for development issues. For these perspectives to represent the variety of views on the public interest in the physical domain, the dominant value represents one of six moral foundations. These foundations are groups or families of values defined by moral psychologist Jonathan Haidt & Graham (2007; Haidt & Kesebir; 2010, Haidt 2012). These moral foundations are intuitions people have that guide their behavior in social contact with others and the behavior of others and on society. These moral foundations help to distinguish between values and emphasize the orientation of desires people have for a good society. Here we aim to recognise six distinct perspectives on the public interest in the physical domain. Each perspective has a characteristic line of argumentation on what are the issues in the physical domain, the preferred way of dealing with these issues, including a the role for government in the argumentation, underlying values are expressed and the moral foundation to which they relate dominantly can be recognised.



Figure 1 Six perspectives on the public interest in the physical domain

In the best-known perspective on the physical domain as common good, the argument on public interest is an expression of the value of hierarchy. In particular in the Netherlands, where the main urban area is under permanent threat of inundation, the government has an undisputed responsibility for all aspects of the watermanagement. This perspective holds that, when necessary, it surpasses any other interests. In other traditional perspectives on public interest, the physical domain serves to stimulate development economically and to promote the participation of all in society. These two perspectives voice values that underpins many redistributive mechanisms in economy and development opportunities, which can be recognised in a spatial development that meets the needs of different groups in society. In the other three perspectives on the physical domain, it is seen as a common good, communities or individuals that in a variety of ways and with a variety of modes of action for a public interest. The characteristic line of argumentation that runs through these perspectives reflects the variety of collaborative approaches in dealing with development issues.

4.2 Traditional perspectives on public interest

Three perspectives on the public interest in the physical domain can be qualified as traditional, as they reflect strong beliefs in the possibilities for planning and other government actions. In these perspectives, planning efforts are not restricted to the physical domain; they also concern social structures and economic performance of cities and regions. The arguments that are exemplary for these perspectives, reflect a robust trust in the ability of government to meet social and economic ambitions. The institutional arrangements of spatial planning in many countries are grounded in these notions of the public interest.

The first and most well-known traditional perspective on public interest sees the physical domain as a collective good provides a safe and healthy environment for people to live in. These goods that are indispensable for everyone, but neither individual citizens nor communities can provide for these goods on their own. Watermanagement and military defence are amongst these self-evident government tasks in the physical domain. Once

arrangements, zoning and installations for these goods are defined, installed and everyone gains from them. Also when someone doesn't pay their taxes to the water authority or when someone strongly prefers the force of positive thinking instead of force to maintain world peace, they still enjoy dry feet and are left in peace. It is characteristic that government provides it and no one can be excluded. This argumentation often stresses the inevitability of safety, health and other benefits underpinned by values hierarchy, protection (of everything that is vulnerable) and

The preservation of clean air requires national and international legislation that delivers air quality for everyone to enjoy freely. The same counts for the environment even though the actual management of the nature areas is not only done by government but also by NGOs, private landowners and farmers. Some national parks are only accessible by membership or a ticket. The availability of global biodiversity by means of legislation is a perspective on the public interest in the physical domain as a common good provided by government. It is available for everyone, including the preservation of the valuable medicinal herbs someone might benefit from once. For the preservation of nature the same perspective is not always followed. Some nature areas, maybe containing key elements that are legally protected, are owned and managed privately for some to enjoy. This perspective on the public interest shifts towards one in which a division of responsibilities and private responsibilities are preferred.

The second traditional perspective on the public interest defines that the public domain is a stimulus for development. In this perspective, the role of government and the extent of its intervention in urban and regional development is less self-evident, but motivated by economic growth opportunities and the requirements for people individually and socially to develop. Investing in roads and railroads to improve accessibility of regions, zoning and other prerequisites for investors to develop business estates and the development of amenities are the type of interventions that help business and people, as well as other development opportunities. The motivation often leans towards economic theory, with notions of welfare and utility at their core.

When the public domain is a stimulus for development, the role of government is to provide quasi-collective goods. Providing for subsidised affordable public transport is an example. Not everyone gains from it directly and travellers need to pay fare. It makes an accessible and well-connected urban region. It allows people to go about their work and any other activity they wish to pursue. Public investments in a specific area, like a business district improve the accessibility of a location, where private developers choose to invest. In the motivation behind this perspective on the public interest (with linkages to a notion of justice in terms of reciprocity) are combined economic development (in terms of offering opportunities to learn and improve oneself) and social stewardship and careful consideration of economic, environmental and social aspects.

The third traditional perspective on the public interest emphasises that the public domain promotes participation in society. In this perspective there is an important role for the state to take care of people that need some help in their lives, because they otherwise cannot take care of themselves. It is a perspective in which the planning and realisation of social amenities play an important role. Public transport is seen as a social provision for those who do not have access to private means of transport. This perspective also includes free public transport for elderly. Government, semi-government agencies and social cooperatives are seen as institutions to provide for these developments in cities and social services. In the motivation that is applied in this perspective on the public interest solidarity is dominantly recognisable, often dubbed in terms of justice, and cooperation. Other values that may be recognised in arguments are the importance of providing services for people. In the institutional approach, with many semi-public organisations, a different way of working can be seen.

4.3 Perspectives on public interest for contemporary challenges in spatial development

The challenge for urban and regional planning is three contemporary perspectives on public interest in which private initiative and a variety of new social collectives are prominent. In particular in many cities, the redevelopment of derelict areas and former industrial sites have become the focal point of local entrepreneurs and artists. These representatives of the creative industry often join forces with local community groups to take initiatives, sometimes to incorporate developers and sometimes in close cooperation with these private actors. A variety between these new perspectives comprises the typical role that is played by the government. Sometimes initiatives demand an actively participating and subsidising role of the government for the public interest. Sometimes refraining from intervention is required. A variety of concerns the nature of the challenges or the issues that are seen as important.

In the first of the more contemporary perspectives on the public interest, the focus is on self-organised space. A variety of forms of collective action actively look for a role of the government. This can be public-private partnership with a business-like way of working. Local community groups often wish to work together with government on equal terms. A driving force behind this type of collective action is often a creative idea or something completely new, with better urban quality or exceptional architectural value. Many initiatives involve the energy transition, which spurs a variety of co-operative initiatives. People invest in solar panels on the roofs of public buildings and other available roof space. This often also involves the claim to have a say in developments, with a strong emphasis on community values that can be recognised in this perspective are diversity, in combination with a value as such and equity of position of actors.

In the second of more contemporary perspectives on the public interest, the focus is on self-organised space. This concerns collectives that aim to design, create and manage a part of a city, including public amenities. Examples are sporting clubs that manage a sports ground, accommodation or companies taking over responsibility for the management of an estate from a municipality. This type of collectives seeks to pursue a public interest through a clearly defined division of responsibilities between themselves and government. Values that are recognised are singularity of a community, freedom and say.

In the third of the more contemporary perspectives on the public interest, the focus is on self-organised space. This operates autonomously. This is a rather extreme variety, in which private initiatives overtake almost all of the more traditional government responsibility for some public interest. These are the more radical collectives that address the challenges of climate change, by producing their own electricity but want to stay independent therefor do not need a public energy network. The motivation for this type of initiative for public interest will often strongly be based in a belief system. Values that can be recognised in this approach are above all autonomy, but also community values, harmony and responsibility. These values are represented.

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