Roar Amdam

The HEPRO
Healthy City project approach

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Introduction

The HEPRO project is a part of the Healthy Cities approach that seeks to put health high on the political and social agenda of cities, and to build a strong movement for public health at the local level in the Baltic Sea Region (Østfold County Council 2005). The concept is underpinned by the principles of the Health for All strategy and Local Agenda 21. Strong emphasis is given to empowerment; including equity, participatory governance and solidarity, intersectoral collaboration and action to address the determinants of health. HEPRO is further a project which aim is to integrate health consideration into spatial planning and development and to make an important contribution to a sustainable public health policy in Europe. The HEPRO project approach is characterised by:

- A spatial and cross-sectoral focus on public health
- A system theoretical approach to policy production
- A circular understanding of planning

The spatial and cross-sectoral focus

The HEPRO project builds on the understanding that the public health is influenced from every sector in the society and that the main purpose of the public health work is to obtain collaboration processes between the sectors in order to prevent negative and promote positive consequences on people's health. This process is a combination of top down and bottom up policy making, and is a broad social learning and mobilisation activity that is supposed to enhance the individual and collective capacity in local and regional communities to take care of the public health.

This understanding is similar to the recent understanding of regional planning and development work. The regional planning systems in the Nordic countries can illustrate a number of recent changes which point towards increased similarities with other European planning systems. The most obvious one is the emergence of a regional level, a trend which is definitely related to European spatial development policies (Böhme 2002). In addition, Bőhme points to another trend that has become evident, the increasing cross-sectoral perspective. It may be too early to talk about a trend towards overcoming the strong sector orientation of Nordic spatial policy, but there are at least initial signs of approaches to a more integrated spatial planning.

The term *regional planning* is used to cover the *spatial regional planning* and the *sectoral regional planning* (Amdam 2004). The spatial planning focuses on the region as a society, and sectoral planning focuses on planning in organisations in the society (municipalities, counties, etc.). I find this use of the terms to be in accordance with a common understanding of spatial planning:

> *Spatial planning refers to the methods used largely by the public sector to influence the future distribution of activities in space. It is undertaken with the aims of creating a more rational territorial organisation of land uses and the linkages between them, to balance demands for development with the need to protect the environment, and to achieve social and economic objectives. Spatial planning embraces measures to co-ordinate the spatial impacts of other sectoral policies, to achieve a more even distribution of economic development between regions than would otherwise be created by market forces, and to regulate the conversion of land and property uses.* (European Community 1997:24)

The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) was adopted in May 1999 in Potsdam by the informal Council of EU Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning, and the shaping of the perspective has been a fragile and uncertain process. ESDP creates a common vocabulary of symbols and visions in the discourse of the European spatial development, and the perspective has a triangle of objectives linking the following fundamental goals of European policy (European Community 1999:10):

- economic and social cohesion,
- conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage,
- and more balanced competitiveness of the European territory.

These objectives are further developed in spatial development guidelines and specified in a number of policy aims and options (European Community 1999:11). One of the guidelines is the development of a polycentric and balanced urban system and strengthening of the partnership between urban and rural areas. This involves overcoming the outdated dualism between city and countryside. In order to understand these perspectives and guidelines, we have to remember that the long-term spatial development trends in the EU are above all influenced by three processes:

(1) the progressive economic integration and related increased co-operation between the Member States,

(2) the growing importance of local and regional communities and their role in spatial development, and

(3) the enlargement of the EU and the development of closer relations with its neighbours.

The translation of the objectives and options into concrete political action shall take place gradually. The European Spatial Development Perspective shall, therefore, periodically be subject to review. However, we have to remember that European Union polity is a complex multilevel institutional configuration that cannot be adequately represented by the theoretical models that are generally used in international relation and comparative policies (Scharpf 2001: 20). The models that exist will have specific implications for how we regard the institutional capacity and legitimacy of the European governing functions. The separation of political power between the different levels will anyway be an important issue in spatial planning and development. The integrated policy concept of ESDP, as mentioned above, requires new ways of co-operation between levels and new ways of handling sectoral and spatial conflicts. The application of the policy options is based on the principle of subsidiarity and according to the ESDP's principles; the implementation shall be on a voluntary basis. There is thus a need for close co-operation amongst the authorities responsible for sectoral policies; and with those responsible for spatial development at each respective level (horizontal co-operation); and between actors at the Community level and the transnational, regional and local levels (vertical co-operation).

The European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) has been set up with the purpose of providing an analytical base for ESDP agenda, and has produced significant data. However, meanwhile the work on establishing a Constitution for Europe has identified territorial cohesion as an objective for the Union, and the ESDP agenda has been modified under the flag of territorial cohesion (Faludi 2006).

Anyway, from my point of view there are several problems in the planning system deriving from the ESDP and territorial cohesion policy. First of all, we have the *horizontal coordination problem* when the regional policy making and implementing is expanded from the public sector to include voluntary and private sector in networks and partnerships. Then we have the *vertical coordination problem* with the extreme difficulty balance between top

down and bottom up policy in the multilevel power structure of the union. At last, we have the problem with creating processes and institutions with enough accept, power and legitimacy to coordinate vertically and horizontally, this can be called the *policy instrument problem.*

Public health work and regional planning and development do in this field face the same challenges in the modern societies. The regional territorial and horizontal power seem to be weak compared to the sectoral and vertical power, and it can be argued that the situation in general is a consequence of the modernization process in our societies (Giddens 1997, Habermas 1984 and 1995). In this process, instrumental rationality and top down policy seem to dominate over the communicative rationality and bottom up policy. In order to fully understand these challenges, we have to clarify the terms instrumental and communicative rationality. Instrumental rationality tells us how to combine the means to achieve given ends, and is appropriate for goal-oriented behaviour within a means-end structured problem area. Planning based on instrumental rationality can lead to bigger local and regional dependency on external institutions and forces. It can also weaken the local communities' capability to learn and to handle challenges (Stöhr 1990). Dryzek (1990) blames the instrumental rationality for many of the crisis in the world, and argues that the cure is communicative rationality and discursive democracy with participatory democracy, communicative action and practical reasoning. The term communicative rationality comes from Habermas (1984 and 1987) who argues that communicative rationality is a property of inter subjective discourses, not individual maximisation, and it can pertain to the generation of normative judgements and action principles rather than just to the selection of means to ends. Communicative rationality is rooted in the interaction of social life, and is oriented towards inter subjective understanding, the co-ordination of actions through discussion, and the socialisation of members of the community. Communicative rationality is found in speeches meeting the validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, rightness and sincerity, and at the same time aiming for mutual understanding and agreement. Habermas argues that this ideal speech situation can promote democracy and personal growth. However, communicative rationality cannot totally replace instrumental rationality, it can only restrict the latter to a subordinate domain (Habermas 1995).

Instrumental rationality points towards the gains that the society can show through economy and science and has formed the foundation for understanding modernising as an expression of progress, and that progress is associated with better efficiency and rationalising. If we use the instrumental rationality as a foundation for reforms in the "modern state", the state would

become a more efficient instrument to produce output and outcome. But many argue that this is not enough to legitimate the modern state. I addition we have to raise the question to what extant the state has become more democratic, just and humane. Eriksen (1993) substantiates this by asking if there is done enough to ensure that every group and their needs, interests and demands for respect are being looked after. Eriksen also asks if the public sector activities are in accordance with valid moral and the standard court justice. He finds great shortages in today's presumption of modernising, and he argues strongly for the usage of other forms of rationality, especially communicative rationality.

Friedmann (1992) states that the modern societies suffer under the instrumental rationalities and the neglect of communicative rationalities and collective processes. He argues that the solution to the problem is to mobilize the territorial power to meet the sectoral power in a political process. In a regional policy context and in public health work this means that the bottom up and mainly communicative power can equalise the top down and mainly instrumental power and thus contribute to building of adequate regional development institution.

But local and regional communities cannot be seen as units that are more or less independent of central government and external companies. Nor are communities that lag behind necessarily units that are strongly dependent on superior governing institutions and external enterprises. The promotion of a community development in general and in public health policy requires that the communities itself take more responsibility for its development as a political actor. Thus the communities have a strong need for regional institutions, which can work on a collective level to promote the communities' needs, interests and values in the mainly political power structure where the different sectors' knowledge and actions dominate.

From this perspective, it becomes logical to empower local and regional communities to oppose the dominating vertical and instrumental power structure (Friedmann and Weaver 1979). This process can be called an *empowerment* process. However, empowerment is used in different ways by different authors, and need to be clarified. In the HEPRO-project the definition of empowerment is very simple: Helping people to help themselves, or leading people to learn to lead themselves. This involves a strengthening of the horizontal power structure through activating the civil society, the elected representatives, and through local embedding of private businesses. In this way, horizontal political power can be organised to supplement and oppose the sector dominated and vertical power structure. Many researchers agrees upon this point of view and see the local community with a strong civil society and a

strong democratic process as the main key to a empower local and regional communities; see among others Bennett and McCoshan (1993), Putnam (1993), Forester (1993) and Storper (1997).
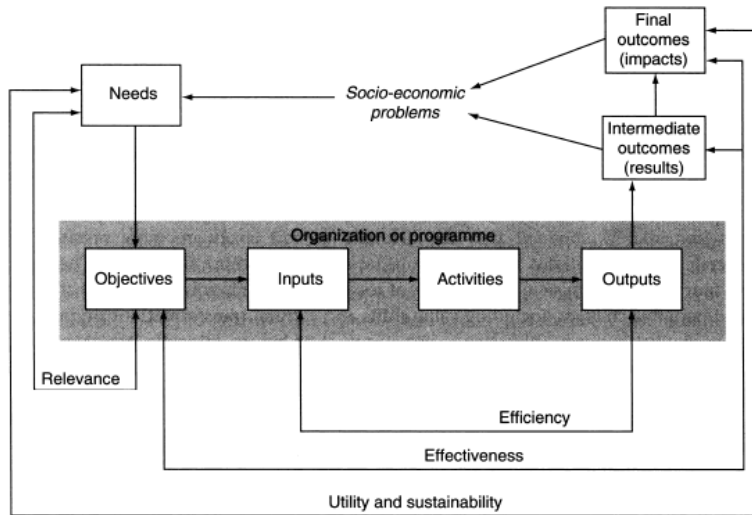
However, in this perspective communities as regions are not a fixed structure, and regional institutional capacity building is a process (Paasi 1986, Healey 1999, 2001). Regimes, partnership, networks, coalitions and institutional thickness have to be constructed and managed (Amin and Thrift 1995). Thus, the new regional political institutions need a political capacity building process to make them legitimate political actors (Healey 1997). Regional planning and public health becomes a policymaking process and a question about having political power.

The systemic approach to policy making

The HEPRO regards public health work as policy making and views the policy process in a system theoretical perspective. The systemic approach to policymaking processes is well known form different authors, and has been developed since Easton (1965), as one of the first, used it. In the simplest form, the system model has an input, production and output element, and a feed back loop from the output to the input element. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) have one of the latest contributions to the systemic approach, and a much elaborated model that puts focus on important political and public issues (see figure 1).

According to this system model, political processes can as a rough sketch be illustrated by the left side representing the input for the decision process. The decision process is an arena where certain rules for how to make decisions can be introduced, and the right side of the model is the output of the decision process. The model catches the fact that actors outside the system of power through fighting for their values, interests and needs can influence the structural power that in time has been integrated in the system of power, i.e. presumptions, action patterns, routines, rules and so on. In addition, the model catches the fact that the structural power can influence and socialise actors trying to achieve changes. Consequently, the model also gives an illustration of power not being a fixed variable, but subject to changes in both time and space.

Figure 1: The policy process

Source: Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004:106)

The model illustrates the different dimensions of power as defined by Lukes (1974). He has made a fundamental statement on this topic, and distinguishes between three dimensions in the execution of power. Actors in this context can be individuals, groups, organisations and political institutions, and they can act both intentionally and unintentionally. This dimension involves an instrumental attitude towards power where the practising of power involves that actor 'A' gets actor 'B' to do an action 'a' even if he would prefer action 'b'. One criteria for being able to talk about the execution of this sort of power is that it is observable. This means that there has to be a visible conflict between actor A and B, and that the action executed can be separated from the action superseded. This form of execution of power represents an operational form of power where one actor has the power to control another actor's actions. We can also say that in relation to the model, the one-dimensional form of power represents the output side of the model. In other words, to what extent the political institution has the power to control how its solutions for actual problems are being carried out. The output side of the model can involve problem solving in relation with the resolution, but can also involve symbolic problem solving, escaping from the problem and unintended consequences. The execution of power can involve different asymmetric forms where one of the parts dominates

the other, for instance through commandments, requests and teaching. But it can also be negotiations between equal parts. Lukes (1974) calls this form of execution of power one-dimensional, because it disregards other important forms of the execution of power.

In addition to the dimension above, this form of execution of power also focuses on the fact that power execution can be not making any decisions at all. In the model this is called the activity and in other models it can be called the throughput side of the policy process. The third dimension of power represents control of the political agenda. In relation to the model, this involves having control of the input side, that is to have a significant influence on for instance what people think and care about and how strongly people argue their case. Execution of power of this dimension can prevent minorities from developing into majorities and consequently it involves some anti-democratic patterns of action. On the other side does the three-dimensional view of power allow people to mobilise and put their problems and solutions on the political agenda, eventually replace actors or set up new political institutions. For the HEPRO Healthy City project on the main goals are to put health high on the political and social agenda of cities and to build a strong movement for public health at the local level. This goal is a concrete expression of the three-dimensional view of power.

The political system model can also be used to illustrate the outcome problem in public sector caused by the New Public Management (NPM) reform wave. The first generation of NPM public reforms brought new thinking and processes into public sector, but much of them in the form of management borrowed from private sector. In this process, the well-established terms public sector and public administration became discredited, and private sector was put forward as an example to follow. The term public sector became very much associated with an inefficient rule-bound system in contrast to the efficient private sector. Hence, the reforms focused on transforming the input managed rule-bund system to a more output and even outcome managed performance system. Management-by-objectives concepts and activity planning became central in the reforms. According to OECD (2003) this approach with emphasis on formal system of specification of ends and measurement of output and outcome failed decades ago, not only in private sector but also in the public sector in the command economies, because in could not address complex problems and because there are limits on how much information human beings can (or do) take into account when they make decisions. In addition, there is no area of activity more complex than the policy domain of government, and it has for a long time been recognised that public service production is controlled more by

values and culture than by rules, a situation that is likely to continue despite progress in performance measurement and contracts.

The NPM reforms have made marked competition an end in itself. Other values as democracy, participation, equality etc. normally become more or less neglected. The NPM reforms have empowered customers through free chooses of services, free managers from detailed political instructions, and strengthen political steering through defining the long-term goals for the public sector and asserting the outcome (Christensen and Lægreid 2003). However, these three tings are difficult to achieve simultaneously (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000), and the consequence is a fragmentation of the national stats and an increased sector thinking and acting (Christensen and Lægreid 2004).

Thus, the NPM reforms make public organisations become more like private sector organisations with a dominance of internal focus. One of the main reasons is that the politicians are not able to hold the public sector managers responsible for the outcome or the results of the policy implementation, only the output. This lack of outcome accountability gives the public sector organisations the possibility to act in an egoistic way, and makes it extremely difficult to realise outcome, such as sustainable public health, through the existing political sector structure. There is a strong need for new institutions based on networking and partnership, but the fragmentation of the political power structure actually reduces the ability and willingness to participate in these network organisations. Then the nearest solution should be more accountability, but then the problem is the lack of causality in production of public sector services. When there is no obvious logical relation between a public sector organisation output and the outcome to the society, you cannot hold the organisations and their leaders responsible.

Demands for better accountability and improved performance have resulted in administrative reforms that emphasise new leadership and leadership development models. In this process we tend to evaluate public and private sector leaders much the same way, i.e. by their ability to lead their organisations to perform. However, it is commonly recognised that public sector has a fare more complex and dynamic value and goal structure, than private sector. There is now a growing awareness that something is missing between the existing public service culture and the public interests. There seem to be a lack of dedication to fundamental values of public services such as separated powers, democracy, transparency, accountability and efficiency. If these values shall guide the public sector actions, they must be embedded in the culture. The public sector seem to have a very strong need for institutional leadership, i.e.

leaders with dedication and ability to put on the policy agenda fundamental values of public services such as separated powers, democracy, transparency, accountability, efficiency. Therefore public health work becomes a leadership issue and it becomes obvious that leaders must be involved in the process. However policy making is a continual process and it is not enough to put the values, needs and problems on the agenda, they have to be kept there and the system must produce adequate outputs and outcomes.

The planning circle

The HEPRO project uses planning as a tool in the policy making process, and in accordance with the understanding of policy making as a continual process, planning is understood as a circular process, see figure 2. I will stress that when the circle is used as a metaphor, is it important to understand that after one circuit, the participants in the process are not back where they started. The situation is changed and the people involved have most certainly been learning. I addition, it is important to stress that the different stages in the circle do not have to follow a fixed order. Implementation of one public health activity can go on simultaneous with efforts to create attention and to put another activity on the political agenda.

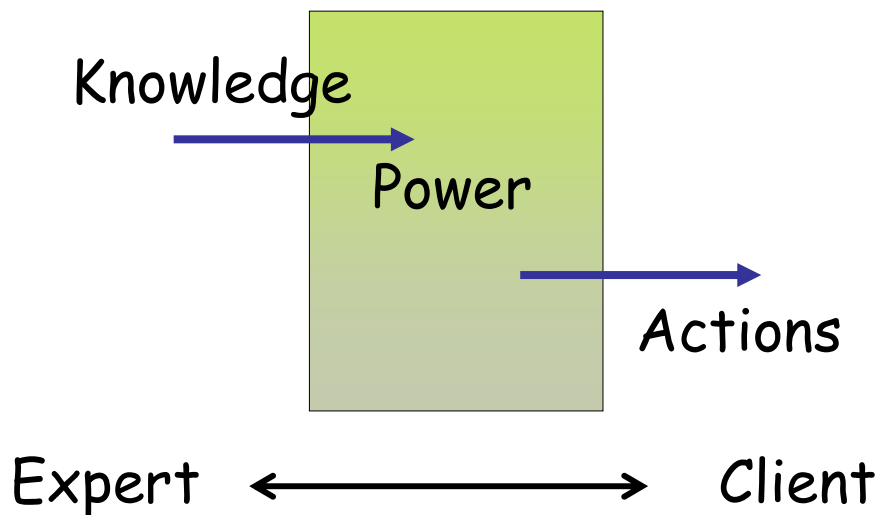**Figure 2: HEPRO Planning circle**

Source: Østfold County Council (2007)

The different stages of the circular process are presented like this in the HEPRO Healty City project:

- Attention; Mapping the situation that has an impact of the public health work through a SWOT- analyse.

- Insight and new knowledge; Mapping the situation gives new insight about local matters through a survey.

- Building a platform for joint action; Based on insight and knowledge from step 1 and 2, the project have to work out an action plan and cross-sectoral workgroups must be established.

- Implementation; Activities will be carried out in cooperation with local partners.

- Documentation; Data from all activities that have been carried out must be collected in a systematic way as a basis for later evaluation.

- Evaluation; The last step in the planning circle is an evaluation of structure, process and results. The results from the evaluation will give input to the starting point for a new planning circle.

The circular model of planning is in contrast to the instrumental rationality and the traditional linear model of planning. In the linear model the focus in on relating means (how to do thing) to ends (what could be achieved), in logical and systematic ways, and scientific knowledge shall provide an objective basis for identifying present problems and predicting future possibilities (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Instrumental and linear planning

Knowledge

Power

Actions

Expert ⟷ Client

A prerequisite for this planning is, among other things, that at the moment of decision there is full awareness of the present situation and clear and unambiguous objectives for the future; so that it is possible to choose which alternative offers the best course of action (Simon 1965).

The instrumental rationality and planning is strongly connected with the positivists' theory of knowledge. The presumption here is that objective knowledge can be gained through a scientific, hypothetical-deductive process. The controlled experiment stands as the methodical ideal. The founding doctrine for positivism is to clear the world of religion and mysticism, and to achieve control of society through knowledge and technique. The only true views of the world were those, which were based on empirical observations. Assertions, which were not testable in an analytical or empirical way, should be disregarded entirely. This positivist science ideal causes an interest towards research aimed at unveiling connections between cause and effect and establishing "laws of societies".

Friedmann (1978) starts by establishing that the positivist epistemology is dominant in our time. It has three levels or worlds as Friedmann calls them: Practice, technology and science (World 1, World 2, World 3). The real science and the objective knowledge can be found in World 3 in this model. World 2 use this knowledge to develop techniques, and World 1 is the

world where this technique is practised. This epistemology is based on the definition of objective knowledge. This means that it is possible to come up with knowledge that is independent of any knowing subject.

Schön (1983) claims that positivism has led to practise as an instrumental professional activity where the process of solving problems is made rigorous by the use of science, theory and technique. The participants have formed professions based on among others the following characteristics: basic knowledge, used science and action competence. Some of these actors have through use of the positivist science ideal made systemised bases of knowledge with four important capabilities. The knowledge is specialised, stabilised, standardised and scientific. These actors have made what Schön calls over-professions based on codified knowledge. Some of the other actors can be called under-professions. I will say that typical examples of these under-professions can be planners, public health and social workers and any other who base their knowledge on participation in social interaction. These people are not capable of making a basis for systematic scientific knowledge, because the same actions will give different results in different contexts. The competence of action is weakened this way, because the coherence between knowledge and actions is complex and labile, and much of the adequate knowledge is tacit, and personally and locally embedded.

Schön (1983) asks us to eagerly admit the weaknesses of instrumental rationality and rather seek for an epistemology which is based upon practice in creativity and intuitiveness similar to that which the practitioner use when they face unique situations with uncertainty, conflicts and instability. Schön introduces and uses the word reflective practitioner, and writes that when we reflect during actions we ourselves become researchers in a practical context. We think of what we can do while we do it. We do not depend upon theories or techniques; we make theory out of cases. This way of rationality is suitable for handling uncertainty, because it does not separate ends and means, knowledge and actions, planning and implementation from each other. These are developed interactively. After a while we will have both a codified and a tacit knowledge that we base our actions upon. However, the tacit knowledge can be a weakness with the reflective practitioner. Specialists, for instance, have a great deal of uncodified tacit knowledge based on earlier experiences. Thus, they can be regarded as boring, exhausted and over-educated, and they can also have been dragged into patterns of action with mistakes they cannot correct, and therefore become inattentive to situations not fitting into their established patterns of actions. The reflective practitioner must therefore involve him- or herself with communicative situations where these irrational actions can be

revealed and corrected. Schön (1983) suggests, however, that instrumental rationality is a process for problem-solving, but not for problem-formulating. He claims this by saying that instrumental models of action do not catch the real world. The model cannot handle uncertainty in forms of non-stability and complexity, and it is not capable of handling conflicting needs, interests and values. Towards the end, he ads that instrumental rationality is not the only point of view existing, there are other competing forms of rationality.

Schön (1986) does not refer to Friedmann's work, but the intention of Friedmann (1978) was to make an alternative epistemology for use in social contexts as a substitute for the epistemology occupied with objective knowledge based on the positivist science ideal. Friedmann (1978, 1987, 1992) rejects the positivist science ideal, and thus also the deductive research design's approach to obtain objective knowledge through verifying and falsifying of hypotheses. Friedmann put forward the epistemology of social practise as an alternative to the positivist epistemology. Friedmann means this epistemology can be traced back to Aristotle because social practise refers to moral actions in public connections, and because actions are based on norms regarding how we are supposed to live along with each other. Friedmann's epistemological model has one world and one living theory that place the facts inside the world. In this model, learning is linked to the world of events via social actions and the result of that action. The adequacy of the theory of reality, and/or the political strategy is therefore dependent on the results of action and the extent to which these results satisfy the given social values.

Friedmann argues for a constant critical evaluation and successive revision of the components in the model. This way, the social practise epistemology becomes a model for social learning where the learning happens with interaction between radical practise and critical reflection. The model shows that social practise grows through a continuous critical evaluation and successive revision of the components in the model as they malfunction. The model results in personal growth due to the fact that the participants tie together knowledge and actions when they alter between critical acknowledging and new practise. Friedmann suggests further that even if the epistemology regarding social practise accedes the epistemology dealing with objective knowledge, it is far from a substitute. Friedmann points out the following advantages of this model (1978:87):

- Knowledge and actions can be tied to a model for democratic processes.
- Knowledge grows from conflicting incidents and thus has a political dimension.

- Anyone who wants to can participate, and there exists no monopoly or distinguished elite.

- The separation between objective and subjective knowledge disappears, and abstract and concrete knowledge is combined in a single process of learning and practising.

- Normative contributions will not be smuggled in, but will openly be presented for criticism.

- The model can be used in formulations of theories. What is learned in one situation can be abstract knowledge in another.

Friedmann gets support for his ideas about the reflective practioner by among others Bolan (1980) who writes about the practitioner as theorist. He also starts by saying that the difference between theory and practise, knowledge and actions is bigger than ever. He asserts further that if we make planning a professional and instrumental problem-solver, one effect could be that citizens would become less self-sufficient and that they would come into a structural relationship of dependency towards professional helpers. This effect could eventually become stronger, making the distance between knowledge and actions even greater. He maintains that every incident is special, and the most meaningful theories are those that are constructed in the minds of the practitioners and that have been tried out in practise. He asserts that professional practise is guided by knowledge and that knowledge is formed by practise. However, norms, interests and values control actions, thus, the planner should not only be regarded as an instrumental planner but also as a politician representing norms, interests and values.

Habermas joins the general critics of the modern society. He claims that the positivist cognitive theory increases the distance between theory and practice, and that the formation of policy in modern society is fragmented and instrumental. Habermas uses the terms system and life world to describe this development. By *system* he means economic and political-administrative activity based on the steering media money and power, and demands for results aiming at the goals of functional ability and efficiency. This system is characterised by maximising of individual benefit and instrumental rationality, and it is capable of creating systemic integration. In the *life world*, co-ordinated action builds on consensus created on the basis of ideal conversations. The focus is on the participants, and they are involved in communicative relations with each other. This results in a *social integration*, as opposed to

systemic integration, and builds on an unspoken common evaluation of the situation, common goals and values, etc. The life world is tied to civil society and open, free, democratic processes.

Habermas claims that the system colonises the life world, and that instrumental rationality thus displaces communicative rationality. As a counterweight to this development, he wants to strengthen the public sphere in society. By *public sphere* he means the social room created by actors acting communicatively. Thus, the public sphere does not become a separate institution or organisation to which we can relate by studying structure, processes, norms, rules etc. Public sphere is rather a network of communication and a process of interaction which assists in putting issues on the political agenda, ensures that solution are passed and implemented, but also that the consequences are debated and evaluated. It is in the public sphere that moral judgements of what is fair, right, democratic etc. will be expressed most clearly. We can thus claim that the public sphere represents the centre of democracy (Eriksen 1994:16), but it has to be added that the public sphere can be abused and manipulated, but it cannot be subjected to open pressure without the actors having to show themselves and so weaken the force of their arguments.

Through his theory of communicative action, Habermas tries to develop concepts for understanding how norms and solidarity are created communally. In this lies an assumption that consensus is possible and that the actors want to achieve a common will. Many critics of such consensus building claim that this can be possible and desirable only in small groups. In his book "Between facts and norms", Habermas returns to the problems he set out discussing in the fifties: i.e. the necessary conditions for rational communication on the problems of society, and the meaning of democracy (Habermas 1995). The perspective here is that with the construction of the democratic constitutional state in modern society, institutional arrangements for legitimising this constitutional state have arisen. The line of reasoning is that no external authorities exist which guarantee the legitimacy of the democratic constitutional state. It has to secure its legitimacy on its own through *free processes of public will-formation*. However, the public opinion-making process has little chance of being directly transformed into political action. The communicative power from the free opinion-making process in the political public sphere is through the passage of laws and regulations transformed into administrative power in the shape of state power to organise, sanction, and implement. This means that it is not the individual morality of the actors, which decides the ability to act collectively and in solidarity, but rather the procedures for democratic will-formation and

collective decision-making which is institutionalised in modern constitutional. In this way, Habermas arrives at the normative point of view that society should vitalise the connection between civil society and the political system through institutional reforms.

Habermas' theory of communicative action tries to develop an extended universalistic concept of rationality, which not only covers instrumental rationality, but also communicative rationality (Habermas 1984, 1987). This is probably one reason why his theory is strongly criticised, but also eagerly embraced by many. A recurring line of argument in his works is based on the concepts speech act and communicative rationality. He proceeds from the basis that speech is an act. Whoever expresses himself verbally will through this speech act communicate a connection to an objective world of existing facts and circumstances, to a subjective world of personal experiences and emotions, and to a social world of accepted and valid norms. The listeners can evaluate how the statement relates to communicative validity claims, i.e. that a speech act must be true, sincere, right and comprehensible.

The listeners have the option to contradict what is said by means of a new speech act, and the actors thus become involved in a process with a mutual duty to give arguments for one's statements and with rules of procedure defined by the validity claims. To argue against these claims will mean involving oneself in contradictions. The actors thus do not relate their statements directly to existing self-interests or norms, but instead relate the statement to the possibility that the validity claims will be countered by others. In this way, the instrumental rationality with focus on facts and truth, meet with the communicative rationality with focus on sincerity, legitimacy and comprehensibility. Facts and truth are almost always depending on paradigmatic values, moral and views. That is why communicative rationality has to be made superior to the instrumental rationality (Habermas 1995, Friedmann 1992, Dryzek 1990).

The communicative rationality emphasises the meaningful and action-coordinating potential of the speech acts themselves. Through discourse, the conversation partners may arrive at common understandings of correct action, by which one feels bound. Communicative rationality can contribute to building moral forming communities, and to integrate individual and collective values, interests and needs, but such a product assumes that the discourse can be understood as an ideal conversation that in addition to the duty to argue also builds on parity of power and public sphere.

From the work of Habermas (1984, 1987 and 1995), one can draw the conditions for the undistorted discourse. All individuals who can speak and act are to be free to participate, free

to question any proposal, free to make any proposal, and free to express their attitudes, desires and needs. No speaker is to be hindered by force, either from inside or outside the discourse, from making use of these conditions.

Parity of power is important for the conversation to become a dialogue where the force of argument in the relationship between the actors decides the outcome of the conversation, not the power of one participant to force his views and norms on others. Furthermore, the ideal conversation presupposes a public sphere, so that the duty to argue applies even outside this particular group of persons in this particular discourse. This means that none of the actors are to execute any power in the discourse that makes any other actor become structurally subordinate, and that the weightiest argument ideally should be given the most weight in the process of making consensus. The demand for reason together with the demand for publicity, force the participants to defend their statements towards citizens that are not taking part in the discourses.
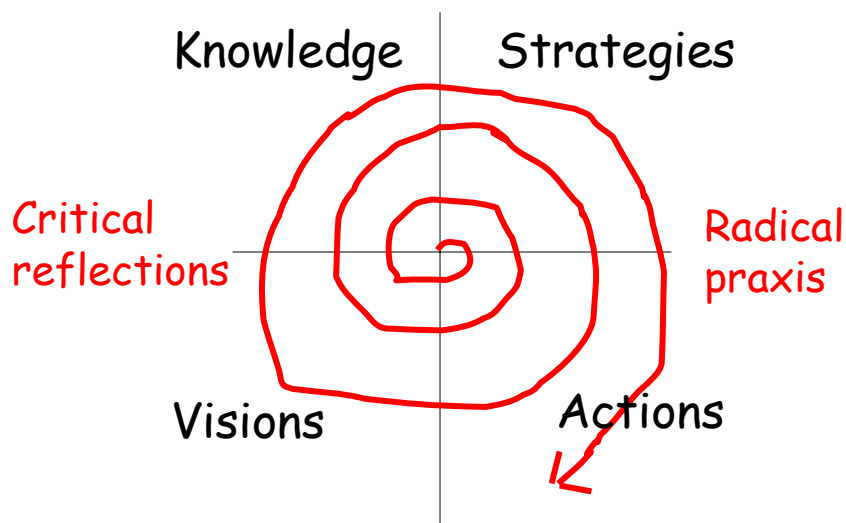
In this will-formating and legitimating model, Habermas talks about different discourses with their respective rationalities, which together form a political legitimating process. Habermas understands the political process as a will-forming process starting with pragmatic discourses that further leads to ethical and to moral discourses depending on the kinds of conflicts present. These discourses can lead to juridical discourses, which are oriented towards the consistence of laws and regulations. Procedure-regulated negotiation can be an alternative to discourses if these do not produce sufficient consensus (Eriksen 1994).

However, ideal conversations and policy legitimating processes are not an easy way to create a regional collective will (Jacobsson 1997). In societies and communities which are based on democratically values, the communicative actions is the main approach to legitimating politics, laws and plans. Democracy and publicity is the best guarantee against illegitimate execution of power.

Communicative planning is not carried out by experts for the object of the plan, but in face to face dialogue between those involved and interested. Personal growth and joint action are the key elements in this planning. The planning process transforms knowledge into action through an uninterrupted sequence of relationships between people. The planning is not divorced from other social action in which the aim is to gain control over social processes that effect one's welfare. Communicative planning emphasises a broad grass-root mobilisation to gain the strength to take greater responsibility for one's development and to influence the conditions under which one is working. Knowledge and action can be linked through critical

understanding and radical practice, and that the planning process is a far-reaching learning process in which everyone can participate. Without a vision there is no radical practice, without radical practice no formation of a theory, without a theory no strategy, and without a strategy no action. These relationships can be illustrated as a learning spiral (see figure 4).

Figure 4: The communicative planning

Discourses, mobilisation, participation, partnership, action and learning are key issues in communicative planning, and the communicative planning is an institution building process. The process serves to build up social, institutional and political capacity, which can become a new local and regional institutional resource and political power. Healey (1997:314) calls this a *soft infrastructure*, but without attention to the *hard infrastructure* represented by the formal policy structure, it will be difficult to change the current policy. These formal systems are often seen as immovable constraints that simply are just "there". However, the communicative and institution building approach emphasis that the constraints are never fixed. They are social constructed and reconstructed through dialog, mobilisation and learning and by the use of social, political and administrative power.

Conclusions

From my point of view the main questions in the HEPRO Healthy City project is how to empower individuals, organisations and communities so they can contribute to a sustainable public health policy in Europe. In order to achieve this it can be fruitful, as the HEPRO project does, to regard the project as a cross-sectoral and cross level policy making and institution building process supported by a circular planning approach. However, empowerment is used in different ways by different authors, and need to be clarified. The project understand empowerment as balanced combination of soft and hard infrastructure, or of top down and bottom up policy and of instrumental and communicative rationality. There is no single answer on how this balance shall be, but need to be sort out in the actual situation and context. The implication of this understanding of empowerment is that after the project, the communities shall have a better capacity to lead themselves, to focus their challenges, organise themselves, implement actions and to learn from their experiences. To what extent the project has fulfilled this goal, is an empirical question that must be answered later.

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