

Social Media Channels in Communicative Planning

- Based on the Case Study of the Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+



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Abstract

The thesis examines how have social media channels been used to further public participation in the planning process of the Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+, and how can the channels be used to support planning processes more generally according to the theory. The project will link both theoretical and empirical types of analysis.

The thesis has two substantive parts. Theoretical analysis covers communicative planning and usage of social media channels in it as a context for empirical analysis. Empirical analysis is exercised through a single case study of Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+. In order to understand the case study, Estonian planning context in terms of communicative planning and use of social media channels is introduced.

The thesis concludes that the social media channels could benefit planning processes and help to involve more participants, but they should be used together with other public involvement methods. Through the empirical analysis merged that the channels are best for information sharing, and secondary for encouraging public discussions.

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The List of Appendixes (added on DVD):

Appendix A – An interview with Kaur Lass;

Appendix B – An interview with Anni Konsap and Tavo Kikas;

Appendix C – An interview with members of non-profit organisation Linnalabor – Teele Pehk, Kadri Vaher, and Regina Viljasaar;

Appendix D – An interview with Aveli Ainsalu.

Preface

The thesis is written from February to June 2012 by Piret Veeroja. It is master thesis for the curriculum of Aalborg University's M.Sc study programme in Urban Planning and Management.

The thesis contains eight Chapters, Bibliography and four Appendixes. Chapters are numbered from one to eight and divided into paragraphs, Appendixes A-D are added separately on a DVD. Appendixes involve voice records from the interviews.

The Harvard Reference Style is the basis for the reference system in the thesis. Authors' names and year of the publications are presented after the referred text. Full references are outlined in Bibliography.

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- Teele Pehk, Kadri Vaher and Regina Viljasaar from non-profit organisation *Linnalabor*.

1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of public involvement is currently a widely discussed issue in Estonia. Different actors, such as planners; organisations and citizens are speaking about it, but they do not understand its actual meaning (Appendix C). The state together with National Foundation for Civil Society has funded several projects in order to publish educative booklets; and different organisations have organised trainings in order to raise the actors' awareness. Some of the materials are introducing methods for encouraging public participation. Therefore the well known methods, such as workshops, group works; meetings; and citizen's panels are already discussed in the booklets and it would be interesting to find a new angle for promoting public participation.

The Internet is widely accessible in Estonia: almost everyone could get the connection to their home; free WiFi is available in coffees; restaurants; shopping centres; schools; and in some cases even in cities' public squares. As the author of thesis is interested in public participation methods, hence it is interesting to examine whether the Internet could be the new angle: could Estonian public participation processes benefit from it. This is the main focus of the thesis.

1.1. COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING

In modern times the meaning of urban planning has changed. A planner is no longer an authoritative expert who makes planning decisions alone. This kind of old fashioned planning process is challenged by approaches that are based on communication among stakeholders and mutual learning from experience. Modern planning values participation of different interest groups and negotiations among them. Attention is given to people's opinions and everyday knowledge. (Healey, 1997)

The need for this new kind of planning approach lies within changes in the society. Western cities are becoming multicultural; people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds live side-by-side and this creates need to build bridges among them and negotiate in planning processes. People are more educated and organised in interest groups; the modern citizen is aware that they have a right to speak and be heard in public matters. (Sager, 2005)

According to Jauhiainen (2005), a large number of European countries are using this kind of negotiation-communication planning process. They have been stressing the importance of public participation in their planning legislations. The interests of different citizens, groups and factors are connected with future development goals.

The communicative planning theory is a broad concept, which has been explained and applied differently by various authors. They all emphasise the importance of participation in planning processes, but have different understandings about planning in general. (Jauhiainen, 2005) This project investigates approached from John Friedman; John Forester; Patsy Healey; Judith Innes and David Booher, in addition some of the topics investigated have also input from Susan Fainstein and Leonie Sandercock.

1.2. SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

Technology is developing rapidly and the Internet is growingly accessible for citizens. Therefore, if a planner desires to establish a communicative planning process, he has to be aware that the various channels for information that people use are changing - the Internet is one of them. Hence, in order to involve as many participants to a planning process as possible, the planner should consider the Internet channels.

Tuzzi, et.al (2007) have explained that the Internet could promote public participation in three levels, the first is the informative level, which means that participants are gathering information about plans from Internet channels; the second is the consultation level, where participants can share their standpoints and discuss over the planning issues; and the third level is active participation, where participants are actively engaged in plan making. (Cammaerts & Carpentendier, 2007)

Citizens are using the Internet actively, but a planner must be aware that the method should be practiced together with other public engaging methods for planning processes (Hinsberg & Kübar, 2009), because there are still people who are not using the Internet and the method might not give as desirable results as face-to face meetings could offer. In some cases a planner should create a summary about web involvement and discussions that were held in it, in this way the participants who did not participate in the discussion are informed about its results (Ibid.).

The thesis is focused on social media channels that could contribute for communicative planning. Social media are online environments that allow users to create and share content by themselves (Luik, 2011). The social media channels investigated in the thesis are blogs; videos; and online forums.

1.3. THE CASE OF ESTONIA 2030+

The Estonian Planning Act states that the public should be involved to planning processes (*Planeerimiseseadus*, 2002). Therefore the law establishes requirements for public involvement in Estonian planning processes. Currently, the Estonian Ministry of the Interior is creating a new national spatial plan – Estonia 2030+. The process was initiated in February 2010 and currently, in the end of May 2012, it is reconciled with Estonian ministries and as the next phase the plan will be discussed by the Government before its final adoption.

Estonia 2030+ was chosen as a case study for the thesis, because on the one hand it was in the phase, where majority of public involvement was done, but at the same time it is still in process, therefore the data about public participation is still accessible and the organisers can remember clearly the involvement processes they have carried out and the reasons behind them.

In addition, the author of the thesis had preliminary knowledge that during the compilation of the plan several public participation methods had been applied, including social media channels. The empirical part of the theory presents and analyses the processes for the public involvement in Estonia 2030+ with the stress on social media channels - the Wordpress page; video and online forum.

1.4. THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The main focus of the thesis is to examine the opportunities that social media channels are offering in order to encourage communicative planning processes. As theories are often highly broad then the theory part will be exemplified with the case of Estonia 2030+. Therefore the research question is:

How have social media channels been used to further public participation in the planning process of the Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+, and how can the channels be used to support planning processes more generally according to the theory?

The research question will be answered through theoretical and empirical analysis. The question has multiple angles; therefore in order to facilitate answering to the question, it is divided into five sub-questions.

Theoretical analysis is concerned with answering the two questions:

- 1) What is communicative planning according to the academic literature?;
- 2) How can social media channels contribute to the communicative planning?

Empirical analysis is concerned with the three questions:

- 3) What is the current spatial planning situation in Estonia in terms of communicative planning and the use of social media channels in planning?;
- 4) To what extent does the Estonian national spatial planning process reflect the ideals of communicative planning?;
- 5) How have social media channels contributed to the Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+?.

The next two chapters are establishing the theoretical framework for the thesis – hence the first two sub-questions will be answered here. Chapter 4, Methodology, will explain the research design more widely and in Chapter 5 and 6 the empirical analysis is carried out. The thesis ends with discussion (Chapter 7) and conclusion (Chapter 8) that are connecting and presenting the main findings from the theory.

2. THE CONCEPT AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING

In recent times the nature of planning has changed: hierarchical planning that ground's on experts' rational knowledge is challenged by approaches based on communication and mutual learning processes. The new theories are valuing public participation and dialogues; also, citizens' local knowledge is taken into account. The communicative approach is used extensively in European countries – simply because the planning laws are stressing the importance of public participation. (Jauhainen, 2005) The first part of this chapter introduces the concept of communicative planning through the ideas of its proponents. The list of communicative theorists presented here is not universal – due to the time limitations of the thesis, the author has chosen to introduce ideas from John Friedman; Patsy Healey; John Forrester; Judith Innes and David Booher. In addition some of the topics investigated have also input from Susan Fainstein and Leonie Sandercock. The key topics of the theory, such as: planners' role in the process; the idea of stakeholders; and methods for encouraging communicative action, will also be introduced. Nevertheless, often theories are not flawless; therefore, in order not to idealize the communication process, critics about the theory will be presented. Already stated in the Introduction, the main focus of the thesis is to investigate social media channels that could contribute to communicative planning, and therefore the chapter ends with discussion about the necessity of using these channels.

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING

Already in the beginning of 1970's John Friedmann wrote in his work, *Retracking America* (1973), about the rising gap between planning experts and actors (such as local organisations and citizens). The experts' science based knowledge was opposed by experiential knowledge from the actors. Until then the knowledge from actors was not taken into account on planning processes. Furthermore, planners often used complex language that was not understandable to ordinary citizens. According to Friedmann either of the sides did not have complete overview about the issues and in order to use the knowledge from both sides he recommended the process of *mutual learning*. He advised using *transactive style of planning*, which emphasises impersonal relationships and skills; particularly important is dialogue between different sides. "He wrote of accepting the authenticity of the other person; of a necessary fusion of thinking, moral judgement, feeling, and empathy; of a recognition of the importance of the non-verbal; and the acceptance of conflict as inevitable and something that must be dealt with rather than denied." (Sandercock, 2003: 63) In the next decade his work grew to a way more complex model – *social learning*. This model emphasises knowledge gained through action and therefore he recommended planners to develop "a transactive relationship between planner and community". (Ibid.: 95) In short, it can be explained as *learning by doing*.

Influential communicative action theorists, such as Judith Innes, Patsy Healey and John Forester (whose ideas will be introduced briefly in following sections) are proponents of German social philosopher and political theorist Jürgen Habermas (Ibid.) and his discourse of ethics; dialogue; and; principles of deliberative democracy (Hiller & Healey: Sager, 2010). Habermas's idea of communicative reason is based on a question: "how can people with different concepts of the good life reasonably shape their co-existence in a pluralist society?" (Hiller & Healey: Versteeg & Hajer, 2010: 164) He claims that a norm is valid when all influenced parties are agreeing on the validity of the norm. "Validity claims are based on sincerity (the absence of deceit), rightness (or appropriateness within a given dialogical context) and truth (or representational adequacy). Thus,

every form of authority has to be legitimated by a process of intersubjective judgement, governed by the force of better argument and a system of discursive ethics.” (Ibid.)

John Forester has spent a lot of time for observing planners’ work and their everyday working environment. “He concludes that planning is, more than anything, an interactive, communicative activity” (Sandercock, 2003: 64). Based on Habermas’ writings, especially on Theory of Communicative Action (1984), Forester recommends a new method of knowing, which has four elements. First is *self reflection* that determines one’s own beliefs. Second element is that “*emancipator knowledge comes from discourse and dialectic*” (Ibid.: 65). The third element states that *knowledge comes through practice* and finally, *power relations are always part of planning processes* and the result is always unequal - not in favour of less powerful stakeholders. He recommends that participants should be aware of the unequal power relations and they have to work together in order to improve the situation of less powerful parties. Important is to pay attention that all stakeholders are receiving information about the plan equally and all interests are represented. He recommends to listen other words critically (pay attention on speaking techniques, listening and questioning others’ statements) and on the same time to follow their non verbal behaviour. (Ibid.) He is interested in the stories that has been told during planning procedures, “because these stories embody and enact the play of power, the selective focusing of attention, the presumption of ‘us and them’, the creation of reputations and the shaping of expectations of what is and is not possible as well as the production of politically rational strategies of action.” (Ibid.:96)

Another proponent of communicative planning, Patsy Healey (2006) claims that planning in practice needs to be ‘refreshed’ with new ideas: different types of knowledge and being should be valued. Planning has to have power to go deeper than just an identification of society’s common problems. She developed the concept of collaborative planning. Collaborative planning emphasises the necessity of dialogue that can open discussions between different social groups. It helps to understand the reasons why people think or act in a certain way. Through dialogue people learn about possible ideas and their effects on the living environment. This kind of cooperation ensures better understanding about local problems and helps to find suitable solutions for all parties. (Ibid.) “An attempt to inject an element of spatial awareness and understanding into communicative approaches to planning theory is one of the defining characteristics of collaborative planning.” (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones 2002: 34)

Innes and Booher (2005) are agreeing that dialogue is a powerful tool. They are adding - when inclusive group of citizens with equal rights and the same base information are holding a dialogue, where everyone is listened and all participants are working towards the same goal, but on the same time they follow their own principles; then the process ends with everybody’s changed opinions. The participants are learning new ideas and often they realise that other’s opinions are also justified. This could lead for overcoming the issues that participants with different background might have and it results with developing shared understandings and joint actions. (Ibid.)

Example: The power of dialogue can be exemplified through the experiment called Choice Work Dialogues. Randomly selected habitants formed groups of 30 and held a dialogue about growth policy in San Diego. They followed the path that is introduced below. They “started by opposing growth and ended by agreeing that regional management was needed. They also came to see themselves as people who could make a difference as their end-of the day testimonials made clear” (Ibid: (Yankelovich, 2001): 428)

Collaborative actions are helping to create new personal and professional networks. Participants will understand each other's principles and this helps to develop mutual trust. (Ibid.) Innes and Connick (1999) found in their research that participants of collaborative process often use new networks for other purposes that are not part of the collaborative process. "(...) collaborative, networked processes contribute to building what Healey and others have called *institutional capacity*, which is a combination of social, intellectual and political capital (Cars et al., 2002; Chaskin, 2001; Gruber, 1994; Khakee, 2002)." (Ibid: 428) The social, intellectual and political capitals are growing through networks and collaboration in planning processes, the result is that the civic society is more knowledgeable and they believe that they can make a difference. (Ibid.)

The material introduced above states clearly that one of the key elements of communicative planning is public participation. Innes and Booher (2005) are pointing out seven purposes in order to justify participation in planning processes:

- 1) Politicians are informed about public opinion, which can be used for decision making;
- 2) Proposals and decisions can be improved through using habitants' local knowledge;
- 3) Fairness and justice is promoted through involving less advantaged groups into planning processes;
- 4) Decisions are legitimated, because "if a planner can say 'we held dozen public hearings and reviewed hundreds of comments and everyone who wanted to had a change to say his piece', then whatever is decided is, at least in theory, democratic and legitimate." (Ibid.: 423)
- 5) Planning laws are requiring public participation;
- 6) Participation encourages rise of civil society;
- 7) Adaptive and self-organizing polities are developed, which can manage with complex issues.

Tore Sager states that theorists that are favouring communicative planning are focusing on processes, because they are aware that the subjects are political and therefore the affected (interest) groups should participate in order to protect their rights. Furthermore, processes are usually affecting the final plan that will be accepted. He states that "this planning style is commended as a respectful, interpersonal discursive practice adapted to the needs of liberal and pluralist societies where one social group cannot legitimately force its preferred solutions to collective problems on the other groups." (Hiller & Healey 2010: 187) This means that communicative action is something more than communication with stakeholders and informing public about a planning process. It encourages deliberative aspect of democracy. (Ibid.)

2.2. PLANNERS' ROLE IN THE COMMUNICATIVE PROCESSES

Innes and Booher (2010) are claiming that it is essential to have leader(s) in order to get started with a collaborative process: there has to be someone who has an idea about the process and possibility to involve other stakeholders and leaders who are able to start and design the process. The most effective are the leaders who are willing to encourage other participants to grasp initiative: when the process proceeds they step back and allow others to continue with leading and they also allow the process to take its own course. (Ibid.)

Planning conflicts are based on the fact that people are in different power positions and they do not share cultural backgrounds, even though they might be neighbours in space. The task for a planner is to create a framework that helps to cross these problems. A common solution is to find a connection

or links between different groups and create an arena where these people can meet and work towards a mutual goal: to improve their living environment. (Healey, 2006) According to Sager the role of a communicative planner is to establish a creative process where stakeholders are collaborating with each other. This kind of action ensures that every interest group will achieve better solutions than participating by itself in alternative process. "The planner facilitates the process, mediates conflict, and exposes domination by recognizing and avoiding distortions." (Hiller and Healey: Sager, 2010: 188) Planners like all other participants in communicative planning process have to be honest and open, moreover, they have to be prepared that stakeholders are examining and criticising their values and therefore the process might end with results that other participants are finding more convincing. Hence, the planners have to support plans that are fair and design the process where all the arguments are sincere and honest. (Ibid.)

Susan Fainstein sees the role of a planner from slightly different perspective, she finds that the main task for a planner in communicative action is to listen citizens' stories and assist them in finding consensus between different worldviews. "Rather than providing technocratic leadership, the planner is an experimental learner, at most providing information to participants but primary being sensitive to points of convergence. (Campbell and Fainstein, 2003: 175) In brief, planners' role is to reach an agreement between participants of a planning process and ensure that no social-economic hierarchy group will dominate. (Ibid.) John Forester agrees with Fainstein, "the challenge we face, as planners and policy analysts more broadly, is (...) to listen carefully to practice stories [i.e. stories of planning practice] and to understand who is attempting what, why, and how, in what situation, and what really matters in all that. That challenge is not just about words but about our cares and constraints, our real opportunities and our actions, our own practice, what we really can, and should, do now. (Forester 1993: 202)" (Ibid.: 177)

Innes and Booher (2010) are adding that often planner's task is to be a facilitator: they have to make sure that all stakeholders understand each other's standpoints. Therefore sometimes they have to repeat participants' unclear statements with slightly different words and then make sure that the repeated phrase was in compliance with the original statement. Another possibility is to ask questions or examples about the statement and encourage other participants to do the same when something remains unclear. On the other side some of the participants might be emotional or angry and they will be fighting for their position. In this case the process managers have to guide them to talk in terms of their interests rather than attacking others verbally. (Ibid.)

Finally, it is important to remember that communicative processes are not only about collaboration and public participation; there are many things that are carried out 'behind the scene'. "Robust agreements and collaboratively rational decisions and capacity building do not solely occur around the table. There are agendas to be written, meeting summaries to prepare and distribute, experts to invite, information to gather, phone calls to be made to participants to ensure their needs are being met, and meetings to attend or facilitate, as well as data to gather and analyze." (Ibid.: 94) Hence, staff has many meetings with key stakeholders, group leaders and among themselves in order to follow the progress of the process; find alternative ways for carrying out the process; or to discuss the possibilities to deal with difficult stakeholders. (Ibid.)

2.3. STAKEHOLDERS IN THE COMMUNICATIVE PROCESSES

Patsy Healey (2006) states that planning processes should be cooperation between government, involved enterprises and social groupings. It is necessary to reflect different understandings, because they are basic for political, intellectual and social development inside an area. This kind of cooperation helps to improve existing policies. "We are all involved in some way, and have experience of managing collective affairs. This experience, though largely neglected by those writing on politics and planning, provides resource through which new forms of governance can be invented." (Ibid.: 210) People's worldviews are very different and this is the reason why a government should not generalize or narrow down the circle of stakeholders nor systems of knowledge and understandings. (Ibid.) Innes and Booher (2010) claim that diverse range of stakeholders ensure that different concerns are covered. Various participants might bring new approaches that show the process in a completely new light. "A diverse and conflictual group trying to reach agreement often comes up with ideas that are not merely marginal adjustments but creative solutions to problems." (Ibid.: 93-4)

Example: Judith Innes participated in a collaborative dialogue that was assessing academic departments. Usually, after long hours of discussions, the participants found an agreement, but this time there was one person that disagreed with others. The "(...) person was not the most forceful or knowledgeable in the group (...)"(Ibid.: 94), so others managed to push through their decision. Some months later the decision was threatened with a court case. The other members of the group realised that the objection by that person was relevant and there is a high possibility that if they had not overlooked the protest then they would not have to deal months with reducing the damage they had done. (Ibid.)

Roberts, 2002 adds, that all spheres of community should be involved to collaborative processes, not only the ones who are the most organised, displeased or with some very specific interest. After well organised and performed dialogue all parties should agree with the fairness of the final decision, even if they personally might not like it. All parties should see their impact in the process, because the process is open (Innes & Booher, 2005), which means it is inclusive and transparent (Hiller & Healey: Sager, 2010), therefore is easier to accept the final decision which might not be favourable at the first place. (Innes & Booher, 2005)

In reality it is impossible to find and involve all stakeholders. Stakeholders who are silent or do not realise that they could participate are often left out of the planning process. (Healey, 2006) Healey (2006) suggests some methods for overcoming this problem of silent stakeholders; one possibility is to use the 'snowball technique'. It means that stakeholders involved in the process have the task of finding new stakeholders. Another possibility is to use stakeholder mapping which identifies who could be influenced by this plan (such as residents or workers in the area). They might have information about various unidentified stakeholders. The strategy/planning process has to be open at all times for new stakeholders, even after making the final agreements. For involving stakeholders a planner should think:

- who are the members of stakeholder community?;
- how are they to get access to the arena in such a way that their 'point of view' can be appreciated as well as their voices heard?;

- and how they have a stake in the process throughout? (Ibid.: 271)

Finally, participation in a planning process is not always boring obligation, as a matter of fact, Innes and Booher (2005) are claiming that there is a high possibility that planners and participants are rather enjoying than hating the collaborative processes, because of the learning experience. During the process, still, emotions will be expressed, but through collaborative process everything will be explained and listened which helps to move on. Even if the issues will not find the final solution, the participants will find a common ground and the gaps between them will decrease. (Ibid.)

2.4. METHODS IN THE COMMUNICATIVE PROCESSES

There is no 'unique method' for practicing communicative planning. Mostly, the theorists introduced here do not point any specific framework for achieving communicative process, rather they are stressing thinking points that organisers of the process should consider. Every process is unique and therefore approaches should be chosen dependent on its context.

Healey (1997) states, that it is necessary to notice that communication is practiced through various forms: such as a quantitative data analysis, storytelling, words, pictures and sounds. This is the reason why the collaboration process has to be exercised through different methods in order to gather knowledge from all participants. She believes that collaborative techniques offer possibilities to overcome differences between various social groups. (Ibid.)

There are a limited number of fanatical citizens who will always participate in the whole planning process, which can last months or even years; but there are more citizens who might show up once for workshops or dialogues. "Larger groups can develop visions, sense of direction and priorities. Many techniques deal with large groups of citizens, including town meetings, interactive cable and web-based dialogues, citizen panels, workshops and focus groups (Lukensmeyer et al., 2004; Susskind & Zion, 2002). These can be used in combination with smaller representative groups which follow-up to produce workable proposals" (Innes & Booher, 2005: 430)

Before any collaborative actions can be carried out, the organizers should make a conflict assessment. It points out the barriers that a process might run against and ascertains the possibilities for overcoming them. Firstly the conflict assessment identifies possible stakeholders, their interests and resources. Thereafter, follows an analysis of the costs of the process and potential political support or disagreement with it, this assesses the probability that reached agreements will make a difference. The conflict assessment shows realistic costs of such a process and compares it with possible lawsuits, loss of time and possible continuing conflicts. (Ibid.)

2.5. CRITICS FOR COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING

An open process with many stakeholders might end up as a greatly polarized issue which leads to time expenditures and might end up with bad decisions. On the one side planners might not have knowledge that locals have about their neighbourhood, but on the other side inhabitants might not be aware of political and economic realities and future directions for an area which leads to bad decisions. Moreover, the habitants' general and limited interest about the process will be run over by the deep and high interests of organized groups. (Innes and Booher, 2005)

Tewdwr – Jones and Allmendinger (1998) are going even deeper than the previous statement, as they do not believe that individuals that are “(...)participating within the discourse arena should possess either the same knowledge about issues to be discussed, or else perfect knowledge, to enable debate to occur with honesty and integrity.” (Mohhamadi, 2010: 30) They also are in doubt whether in reality the individuals have necessary skills to participate effectively in planning processes; and whether they are prepared that their ideas and standpoints are criticised by others and rejected. (Ibid.)

Planning theorists such as Fainstein (1995); Fieldman (1995, 1997); Lauria and Whelan (1995) have criticized communicative planning theory, because it does not turn any attention to problems in the structure-construction - it emphasises single agents, that may lead to individualistic and naive planning solutions. Lauria and Whelan (1995) are adding that proponents of communicative planning have neglected integration among individuals; institutions; and society, this kind of behaviour does not favour wider connections between the mentioned agents, which leads to relations that are unfinished, balkanized and dislocated. (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones, 2002) Versteeg and Hajer are also stressing that a communicative process overestimates individuals in the process, because usually local actors are having NIMBY syndrome, which means that they might not consider wider picture. (Hiller & Healey, 2010) Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002) find communicative planning being “more typically characterised by non-rational rhetoric and maintenance of interests, than by freedom from domination and consensus seeking.” (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002: 45)

Fainstein (2000) finds that proponents of communicative planning avoid dealing with a question – what to do when the process ends up with unfair result. She reproaches them that the theorists do not consider the possibility that sometimes bureaucratic ways may result with desirable decision. As a second problem she points out the lengthiness of a communicative process: as the process is long, then citizens get tired of participating there and they feel that nothing will be accomplished, which is not in harmony with the goals of communicative planning. (Fainstein, 2000)

As already stated before, Forester; Fainstein; and Sandercock are favouring storytelling in planning processes, but Sandercock (2010) points out the necessity of questioning whether the stories that others or a participant himself is sharing are true or not (Sandercock, Attili: Sandercock, 2010), sometimes the participants even do not have to lie, but individuals can choose what kind of stories they share and how they do it, which can change meanings and understandings (Hiller & Healey, 2010). Furtherer, power relations may determine what kind of stories can be told or heard and which of them will be actually considered in plan making. (Sandercock, Attili: Sandercock, 2010)

2.6. SUMMARY TO COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING

This chapter has investigated how different planning theorists have described communicative planning. Table 2.1. presents the key features the theorists have identified as being part of communicative planning.

Table 2.1. Key features of communicative planning

Theorist	Key features
John Friedman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ mutual learning; ▪ social learning;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ importance of dialogue; ▪ importance of non-verbal behaviour; ▪ understandable language; ▪ dealing with conflicts.
John Forester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equal information for participants; ▪ public participation; ▪ critical listening; ▪ importance of non-verbal behaviour; ▪ unequal power relations; ▪ storytelling.
Patsy Healey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ collaborative planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ importance of dialogue; ➤ open discussions; ➤ mutual understanding; ➤ public participation; ➤ all knowledge is valued.
Judith Innes and David Booher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ learning experience; ▪ importance of dialogue; ▪ public participation; ▪ open process; ▪ understanding original statements;

The table pointed the keywords that can help to identify communicative planning processes. Besides that it is important to understand a planner's role in the communicative action. Planner's role is to be a facilitator of the process (Healey; Innes; and Booher), mediator of a conflict (Healey) and he has to listen stories the participants are telling (Fainstein; Forester). Participants for the process are everyone from a community, because in this case different concerns are covered and planning solution will be suitable of everyone. The theorists understand that it is not possible to involve everyone to the process, but all participants of the process should seek for the goal. None of the theorists are offering any specific frameworks for designing a collaborative process, but as information is shared through different channels (words, sounds, stories, pictures, videos etc) then organisers of the collaborative process have to be creative and use different methods for achieving the information.

Collaborative planning is criticised for emphasising single agents and therefore forgetting wider picture. Implementing this kind of process might lead to individualistic, naive and vague planning results. The process is criticised also because of its length and non achievability due to existing power relations in society.

2.7. DISCUSSION FOR CONNECTING COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

First of all, it is important to point out that the Internet has become an important part of people's everyday life. Already in 2003, Campbell and Fainstein were stating that planners need to understand and adapt themselves to the importance of the digital revolution. Currently, approximately nine years later this issue might be even more relevant, because laptops are not luxury goods, but a normal and necessary commodity; the Internet could be accessible in any home by diverse ways; and equipment stores are offering smartphones for every taste. Campbell and Fainstein (2003) meant that planners cannot be just facilitators anymore: they also have to be webmasters- monitor virtual

chat-rooms and forums; and share planning information/material via the Internet with interest groups. This all can be seen as new opportunities for planners for increasing public involvement and understanding dynamics of spatial processes. (Ibid.) Sandercock (2010) continues that multimedia offers high potential for encouraging public participation: it helps to open up dialogue and public discussions; and affects policies. "Multimedia tools create the opportunity for urban researchers to discover new realities, to expand the horizons of both qualitative and quantitative research and to represent the city in multidimensional and polyphonic ways. And multimedia products can offer transformative learning experiences (...)." (Sandercock & Attili: Sandercock, 2010: xii)

In order to be more specific with the previous statements, it could be exemplified with storytelling, already introduced before; it is one of the methods for practicing communicative planning. Leonie Sandercock states "(...) I trace the evolution of storytelling techniques 'from the campfire to the computer,' leading to the suggestion that multimedia is fast becoming the 21st century's favoured form of storytelling and to illustrate its many applications to the planning field." (Sandercock & Attili: Sandercock, 2010: 19) Therefore planning professionals should make themselves comfortable with this method, too. Digital world opens a whole new window for interpretations; possibilities for participation; different forms for meaning making; and various ways for creating a stronger dialogue. (Ibid.) To go furtherer with the storytelling, the previous paragraph ended with the critics that due to the power relations some stories might never become public. The Internet might be helpful for solving this problem, because it eliminates the situation where loud voices are smothering all other opinions. When an individual or a small group of persons are sitting in front of computer, then, normally, he is (they are) in an environment where he (they) can think in calm atmosphere and write down all his (their) thoughts, without anyone interrupting. In addition, before publishing, the person(s) can read the writing through and add or remove something when necessary - that is not possible while having a real conversation. It reduces the problem of reminding something important after meeting that definitely should have been stated. Moreover, the Internet offers possibility for persons that are modest in public speaking for any reasons – now they can express themselves in (online) discussions. All the statements above are in accordance with the goal of communicative planning – to ensure that diverse number of opinions is gained and different kind of stakeholders involved to the process.

To continue with offering social media channels for overcoming some of the critics presented in previous paragraph, then the Internet might help to solve the issue with citizens' little knowledge about materials that are related with the plans, which Innes & Booher (2005); and Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger (1998) found highly problematic. If a planner consistently uploads materials about plans to an Internet site and citizens are aware that they can always find the materials there then it might increase the number of people that will read the materials through and raise their knowledge about the issue. Of course, the described situation can happen only with prerequisite that the shared documents are understandable for average citizens. Moreover, when the site offers possibilities for active participation through commenting and online dialogues then the users can share their viewpoints and might start understanding other's principles. It could be seen as groundwork before gathering in the meetings. If the participants have knowledge about the plan; the process and other's standpoints, it might fasten the length of the process that Fainstein (2000) marked as a problematic issue in communicative planning.

In 2010 the author of the thesis carried out an interview with the City of Copenhagen's municipal planner, Tue Rex. The interview was about public participation. He pointed as a problem that only elder people tend to participate in public discussions. It is widely known that young people are the most frequent Internet users and therefore the Internet, and especially social media channels, might help to involve younger people to the processes. Social media channels are offering various possibilities to inform many people quickly and at the same time, as well as simultaneously invite them to give feedback. Another good reason for using the Internet is that the uploaded materials are accessible from everywhere; therefore people who cannot participate in public meetings due to long distances or any other reasons can still familiarize with the materials and leave their comments. In addition, if a person has Internet connection at home or work then information gathering and sharing is comfortable, because one can do it without leaving his habitual atmosphere. Furtherer, usually social media channels are free to charge and it might lower the costs of the processes.

To sum up, the author of the thesis believes that social media channels could make an effective contribution for adopting actions from the communicative theory to reality. Of course, it cannot be the only method applied for encouraging communicative actions, but it could give a better result when applying it together with some other methods, such as different forms of meetings, public forums, workshops and dialogues. As already stated, people spend growingly more time in front of computers and in the Internet – simply because often it is related with work tasks, but it offers a countless number of possibilities for other actions: a person can do there any kind of shopping (from airplane tickets till flowers); find entertainment (from movie watching till chatting with a friend); keep updated with news (via online newspapers, -TV and other webpages); find information and learn something new – then it is inevitable step that stakeholders of planning processes can participate (at least partially) online.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS IN COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the possibilities to use social media channels for communicative planning processes. According to Tuzzi, et.al (2007) Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are supporting at least three levels of citizens' participation, that were already presented in the Introduction:

- Information level – through webpages, search engines, electronic newsletters citizens can find information about plans, which provides meaningful choices and decisions;
- Consultation level – through online forums, web platforms and e-mail lists government can communicate with citizens. This ensures informed decision making processes;
- Active participation – potentials and challenges are emphasised for active engagement in policy making (Cammaerts & Carpentendier, 2007)

It is important to remember, that the Internet does not exclude or replace other channels that can be used in public participation processes. The Internet helps to spread information, but it does not mean that it raises the number of participants in planning processes. The best result occurs when virtual and non virtual methods are used together. (Hinsberg & Kübar, 2009) This could mean that it is more difficult to build consensus through virtual channels than in face-to-face communication, because, as Forester and Friedman argued (see Chapter 2.1.) communication in reality is based on both - verbal speech and non verbal behaviour. Virtual channels, perhaps besides video conversations, are not able to present emotions and body language behind statements. This might seed confusion and non-understanding, which can lead to conflicts and it might be more difficult to solve the conflicts.

Nevertheless, communication via the Internet is nowadays natural, like mentioned in the previous chapter, it offers possibilities to participate actively in community's decision making processes. (Hinsberg & Kübar, 2009) Organizers of communicative processes should be aware about the downsides of social media channels and make use of its most useful aspects in planning processes. This chapter presents the possibilities that social media channels could offer. It starts with introducing virtual communities, then follows an introduction to different social media channels such as videos, online forums, blogs and some well known social media channels, such as Youtube, Facebook and Twitter. The chapter ends with critics about the channels.

3.1. VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

The Internet develops rapidly every day; it offers a countless number of possibilities to search for information. People are using its possibilities regularly; inevitably they are looking for other users with similar interests in order to communicate with them, this kind of connection creates 'virtual communities'. "These 'virtual communities' can be looked upon as a functional alternative to real communities in which people know one another through face-to-face interaction and shared activities." (Berger, 2007: 122) This kind of communication form helps to see each user as a potential participant while creating collaborative solutions. (Leadbeater, 2008) According to Klaus Frey the Internet, and more broadly Information and Communication Technology (ICT) introduces a potential possibility to involve citizens and communities to decision making processes, it can help deepen democracy and preserve local public sphere (in reality). (Albrechts & Mandelbaum: Klaus Frey, 2005)

Breakenridge (2008) recommends using this kind of social networking for promotion, because it needs small investments and a person can share large amount of information. Albrechts & Mandelbaum (2005) are adding that virtualization is helping to leave spatial barriers behind: it gives opportunities to coordinate network's actions better and do it over large distances. According to Frey, through electronic network information is shared in real time and immediate contact can be established despite distance in space. (Ibid.: Klaus Frey, 2005) But on the other hand people can communicate without face-to-face contact. (Ibid., 2005) This is favourable for citizens who are avoiding public meetings, because they are afraid of conflicts or expressing their opinion. (Ibid.: Klaus Frey, 2005) "You can give your opinions and you don't have to wonder how your audience feels, or guess if they like or dislike something. They tell you what's good or bad in instant." (Breakenridge, 2008: 18-19)

Furtherer, usually in mass media information is provided 'from top to down', it means that politicians or 'powerful agents' are responsible for distributing information and opinions; or they are creating and leading public debates in a way that participants cannot really express their opinions - in these cases one way communication occurs. The Internet should provide an interactive virtual sphere, where multilateral communication can take place. (Albrechts& Mandelbaum, 2005)

However, virtual sites cannot produce collective intelligence. They can just provide conditions for it through connecting a large number of citizens with shared interests. "Blogs and other tools allow people to contribute. Social networks allow them to connect. Still other tools are needed, however, for sustained creative collaboration to take off." (Leadbeater, 2008)

3.2. SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

To start with, it is important to understand the vague term of social media. Social media is online environment that allows users by themselves to create and share content, it is based on the idea of social networks between people: the more active users are involved, the more vital is a web platform. (Luik, 2011) Dave Evans (2012) has defined social media as "a *collaborative process* through which information is created, shared, altered, and destroyed." (Evans, 2012: 33) Social media channels are for example sites as Facebook; YouTube; Wikipedia; and Twitter. (Ellis, 2011) Mike Ellis (2011) points out five ideas that are often attached to social media:

- 1) Users are 'prosumers' not consumers – this means that people who are using social media are not only passive readers – they have possibility to participate actively in content making;
- 2) User focus – the channels are 'user- centred', because, first of all, its content is social, but also the sites have designed to attract users, as they are "friendly, big, usable and colourful". Moreover, the user-friendliness of social media channels has also made large companies to use them in personal manner (*that could converge them with their customers – editor*).
- 3) Collective intelligence – it follows the principle that 'two heads are better than one' and offers possibilities for organizing without organisations;
- 4) Web as platform – "with the growth of fast data transfer (...) web applications ('apps') become much more like their desktop counterparts. We can now effectively log on to a web server and edit pictures, read e-mail or compose documents much as if we were using desktop software.";

- 5) Open and distributed – on the one hand it offers open dialogue in communities, but on the other hand shared data can be accessed openly as well by second or sometimes even third parties.

(Ibid.: 119-121)

Ellis (2011) points that social media channels are increasingly used by organisations and companies, because the channels allow interacting with users in informal ways, which encourages possibilities to have honest dialogue with them and hence receive information about their actual opinions.

As already stated online content attracts users to connect with each other. “Content is a broad term that refers to anything created and uploaded to a web site: the words, images, tools, or other things that reside there.” (Handley & Chapman, 2011: 6) Thus, everything on a web site, e.g. the About Us page; the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ); videos; photographs; but also blogs; eBooks; podcasts, are content. All information that is published off the web site, but in social media channels, like Facebook; Twitter; LinkedIn, are forms of content. (Ibid.)

It is very important to have a good content. “You do that by deepening your relationships with them (users- editor), over time, by repeatedly and constantly creating content they care about and want to share freely with their friends or colleagues, and by encouraging them to engage with you and to sign up for thing you publish (like an e-mail newsletter or a webinar) or to download a white paper or an eBook” (Ibid.: 7)

Handley & Chapman (2011) points out some instructions in order to create a strong content. These points could be related with the informative level of participation (which was introduced in the beginning of this chapter), because Handley & Chapman are presenting ways for engaging users with a content, but are leaving users’ contribution for content making out of the main focus. Originally they are meant for PR purposes, for companies to promote their goods or services, but they could also be useful in the planning context, because planners desire that the content they produce invites users to read the material, share it with others and produce feedback. All the statements presented below might be relevant for planners, but some of them are emphasised by the author of the thesis, in this case the comments are written in *Italic* font:

1. Embrace being a publisher;
2. Insight inspires originality – first of all, the publishers must know themselves very well: What exactly they want to say? What is their point of view? What is their mission? At the same time it is equally important to know their users too: “What are their concerns and objectives? What do they care about?”;
3. Build momentum – a good content is created with certain objective and consciously. *Planners should be constant while creating online content, in this way citizens are aware that they can always find material about plans from some certain places, which ensures that citizens can familiarize with materials and raise their knowledge about the plans;*
4. Speak human – the publishers should use simple terminology and language that is familiar to their customers. “Speak in conversational tone, with personality, empathy, and true emotion.” *This could be very relevant for planning, because as already stated in Chapter 2.1., complicated use of specialist language might confuse and scare participants;*

5. Reimagine, don't recycle – "recycling is an afterthought; good content is intentionally reimagined, at its inception, for various platforms and formats.";
6. Share or solve, don't shill – the publishers should not try to 'sell' their idea, instead they should improve the content in a way that the users know- it is always reliable and valuable source. *Another important statement that planners should keep in mind, because this kind of behaviour builds trust which is important element in communicative planning;*
7. Show, don't just tell – the content should show how the idea fits to real life, it can be done through case studies, user narratives etc. *Planners could use videos or 3D pictures, which could help citizens to understand the spatial placement of planned objects and it could be helpful tool for explaining different planning scenarios;*
8. Do something unexpected – a surprising or innovative element illustrates the personality of an idea (or publishers) and might attract users to share the content;
9. Stoke the campfire – a good interaction between users and the publishers should be created. *Planners should find time to participate in online discussions in order to keep the discussions alive and encourage citizens to participate;*
10. Create wings and roots – "Ground your content solidly in your unique perspective and point of view but give it wings to soar freely and be shared across social platforms, (...)"
11. Play to your strengths – The publishers do not need to use all web tools at the same time: they should choose just some of them and concentrate on a very good content.

(Ibid.: 15-16)

Follows introduction about social media channels: videos; online forums; blogs and specific social media channels such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, with every tool is firstly presented its essence and then pointed principles for creating good content.

3.2.1. VIDEOS

Historically films have played a noticeable role in political propaganda making and social communication. The field is also known by urban planners, as they have used the tool since 1930's, of course "almost all these films were made on the occasion of a public exhibition for the mass circulation of ideas, programmes and town plans. The most obvious aim of all was to convince the public of the social duties and potential of town planning." (Sandercock & Attili: Ciacci, 2010: 4)

As stated in Chapter 2.1., in order to ensure that different parties are able to participate in planning processes it is important that people understand the language of specialists and also other participants. Videos are presenting facts and situations; it is more about creating emotions: "(...) film narrates, offers interpretations, produces expectations and triggers the capacity for judgement in viewers who thus feel included in a project that involves them." (Ibid. 2010: 13) Videos have power to reduce distances between the author and audience. Viewers are participating, although indirectly, because they have given the possibility to place themselves inside the storyline (about a plan), they start understanding the language of video makers. The language of video could be understandable to anyone. (Ibid.)

Miller (2012) states that the most prosperous are the videos that are offering material that is useful or entertaining. "Success in video marketing, however, requires more than just getting the technical

details right. It's all about what you put on the screen, producing videos that current and potential customers want to watch." (Ibid.:?)

A video should offer a content that is valuable for a viewer, better if it is able to engage the viewer with the video (Ibid.). It might mean that the video raises interest - the viewer will be searching for more information about the content and, hopefully, regularly comes back to use the site or will share the video (or information sources of this video) with colleagues and friends.

Miller (2012) divides effective videos into three categories:

- 1) Informative videos – The purpose of this video is to spread information among users. It can be similar with a newscast, where a reporter imparts information about something, e.g. industry issues. An informative video can also be a video brochure; in this case it introduces thoroughly an organisation, company or its products. The most important is to share information that is important to the user;
- 2) Educational videos – This video presents instructions, it can be also called as a "how to" video. An educational video provides viewer with the information how to do something useful. The content has to be helpful, it should be presented in a step-by-step fashion that usually means multiple shots and camera angles;
- 3) Entertaining videos – the previous two types are important, but everybody likes entertainment – this is the reason why entertaining videos are usually most watched. It is problematic to define what is entertaining, a thing that makes one laugh can lean leave another one cold – this is the main complexity with this type of videos.

Miller (2012) offers tips for video making. First of all, a video has to **be entertaining** (even if one is producing informative or educational video). No one will watch a boring video. The organisation that wants to produce a video should find a way to present its product from entertaining angle. It has to be enjoyable, not even necessarily funny, but the viewer should want to watch the video from the beginning to its end. Secondly, a video should **be short**: too long video loses its entertainment value. Usually people who are watching videos online do not have long attention span, therefore Miller (2012) suggests to make the videos as short as possible: up to two or three minutes at maximum. If a message is longer than this time frame, he recommends dividing it to multiple short videos. Thirdly, a video should **be simple**, it does not necessarily need very high expenses, for sure it should not be overproduced. Often it is enough when a person is speaking directly with a viewer. (Ibid.) One way of doing it is vlogging (video blogging) "It will just be you and the camera, so talk right to the lens, be animated, speak clearly, and really engage your audience.(...) Short (a minute or less) vlog entries can be interspersed with slides to create a virtual power point presentation." (Noll & Brashier, 2010: 130) This is a way to bond with viewers. (Ibid.) Miller (2012) also recommends **staying focused**, as pointed out earlier a video has to be brief and simple, hence the producer has very short time frame to introduce his products. He should focus on presenting a single product – and commenting its strengths. It is enough to have one video per feature. Another way of staying focused is to clarify the target groups to whom the video is for, and concentrate the content for them. A video should also **be fresh**, it is important to remember that video uploaded today is forgotten in a month; therefore the video library should be updated constantly with refreshing older videos or posting new ones. Finally, it is wise to **add URL** to a video, in this way the video uploaded to social media channels will lead the viewers to producer's homepage. Some channels, like YouTube, do not

allow links from a video to some other web pages; therefore the data should be added to video's content. The URL or phone number in a video should be noticeable: preferably written in contrast colours and with a big font. (Ibid.)

There is a great number of opportunities where to upload the produced video. The first place to share it should be on organisation's webpage. (Noll & Brashier, 2010), because some of the users will watch it here. (Miller, 2012) It is essential that the video loads fast enough and viewers do not have to wait for too long time; therefore the uploader should consider increasing web page's bandwidth costs. The video uploaded on a webpage should start playing only if the user has chosen to press the 'play button', it is not a good practice if video starts with full volume after opening a webpage. (Noll & Brashier, 2010)

YouTube

Miller (2012) recommends sharing videos via YouTube. YouTube could be related with informative or consultation level of participation. It is informative level when the video is informative or educational. If a video-maker wants to share his video with many people then it is reasonable to do it via YouTube. "If you want to get your video viewed, no other site comes close in offering the number of eyeballs and ease of access" (Ibid.: ?). In addition when a person likes a YouTube video, he can pass it around to others: the sharing mechanisms are below the video, therefore it can be easily posted to Facebook or alternative social media channels; shared through e-mail; or posted to a blog or web site. (Miller 2012) This helps to share the informative or educational video with users from other social media channels.

YouTube could be related with consultation level of participation, because it allows the users to communicate with each other. David Gauntlett (2011) states that the community on YouTube serves a framework for participation: it is a database, where users can share data through "(...) files, comments, tags, and links between different bits of information (notably user profiles and video content". (Ibid.: 89) The positive factor about YouTube is that anyone can watch uploaded videos for free. Every video is accessible on a separate video viewing page, therefore all users are able to comment and vote for it, if they like or dislike the video. (Miller 2012)

All uploaded videos are hosted on the uploader's YouTube channel page, which is his homepage on YouTube – there are presented all the videos he has uploaded to YouTube, therefore it is wise to reflect also branding on the channel page. (Ibid.) It is important that organisations who have uploaded a video to YouTube are also participants in the community – "they invite and respond to comments on the site, make links with others, and refer to community comments, responses and events within the videos themselves." (Gauntlett, 2011: 94)

3.2.2. ONLINE FORUMS

As stated before, for different reasons people are sometimes not comfortable with expressing their opinions publically. Online forums could be a tool that helps to overcome this issue.

An online forum offers a virtual space for discussion, where a user can post his idea, question or comment about some topic and other users can replay to his post. (Farkas, 2007) It connects a group of people and allows them to discuss about topics they are interested in. (Gunelius, 2011)

The forums are organized hierarchically: they are divided into *thematic areas* or *domains* that in turn contain many discussion *threads*. A thread is a conversation around some specific topic. (Magnan: Anja Wanner, 2008) For example, a thread is when somebody has asked a question and eight people have answered to it. (Harwood, 2011) In order to post something in a forum, the user has to decide under which thematic area he should make the post: it can be easy, when topics are very clear and specific or difficult, when topics are broad. “The strict thematic organization encourages information – oriented styles of communication, such as problem-solving, questions and answers, or discussing the pros and cons of a controversial topic” (Magnan: Anja Wanner, 2008: 132)

Forums can be private (or semi private), in this case only users can see the posts; or completely open – then anyone can follow the conversations. (Gunelius, 2011) This is dependent on *moderators’* choices. Moderators are people who have the power to delete posts from participants, if they are in conflict with forum rules; and block users- in this way they are not able to post anymore. (Magnan: Anja Wanner, 2008) “The moderators of social websites draw their credibility from their objectivity” (Okonkwo, 2010: 53) Users of a forum are expecting moderators to be unbiased and fair while they are performing opinions and facts. (Ibid.)

Often participants of a forum have their own personal account that enables them to share their thoughts and ideas, ask questions or comment on other users’ posts. Nevertheless, there is a group of users, who are not registered, but (dependent on a type of forum) they are able to follow others’ conversations. (Gunelius, 2011) According to Marcoccia (2004) there are three types of participants in a discussion forum: firstly, *senders* are regularly posting something; secondly, *readers* or *eavesdroppers* or *lurkers* join with a forum, but they never post anything, therefore they are not leaving any trace of their presence in the sites; and finally, *hosts* are steering discussions. (Magnan: Anja Wanner, 2008)

According to Harwood (2011) online forums could offer benefits for businesses, all the benefits could be transferred for the planning field, but some of them are emphasised by the author of the thesis, in this case the comments are written in *Italic* font:

- Encourage repeat visits – links published in online forums might leave participants to homepage of businesses. *Seen from the planning perspective, the forums should inform users about plans and different standpoints, e.g. in a forum is presented a link to a webpage that offers material about plans; in this way participants are able to get knowledge about the issues and have stronger basis for online discussions. In addition, when online discussions are informative and constructive then the users are interested in visiting the forums again.*
- Enhance SEO (Search Engine Optimization- editor) marketing – it is important to use keywords that are related with company, products or services that “attracts search engines and promotes higher search rating”
- Draw potential clients – if a forum requires an e-mail address from a participant to register, then there is a higher possibility that after registering he is coming back to use the forum;
- Provide demographic data – registering to a forum gives demographic data about the users, beside the age and gender, also their likes and dislikes. *This might be important information source that planners could consider while compiling plans. As communicative planning concerns about gathering opinions from different stakeholders, then it might help to understand the users and their stories;*

- Build relationships – “by participating in online discussions, you can build relationships with visitors. This builds trust and goes a long way to getting conversations”
 - Showcase your expertise – “ if you take the time and respond to online discussions, you can demonstrate your knowledge. This makes visitors confident in your ability (...)”.
- (Ibid.:93)

Okonkwo (2010) states “The first rule of thumb is that the owners, founders or moderators of the social networks must be known to the participants. Whether it is an individual, association, company, group of friends, a family or whoever, they must show their face and tell their story. People will not participate in a social forum if it is not clear who is behind it.” (Ibid.: 50)

Gunelius (2011) recommends to publish only content that is useful; owners, founders, moderators, hosts or senders should be personable and they should not promote themselves. It is also important to register a profile that is comprehensible: if posts from a forum are interesting, then other users want to see who has written them, in this way they can evaluate credibility and usefulness of the posts. (Ibid.) Okonkwo (2010) adds that trust in social media, including forums, is grounded on the knowledge that real people with verified identities are connecting to each other. Participants are expecting that other users do not have any hidden agendas. If the trust is abused in social forums, especially by moderators, then with high possibility the virtual community will extinct. (Ibid.) The user of a forum should make sure that his profile is public and his (or organisation’s, company’s etc) homepage and e-mail account visible. A correct profile ensures that other members can contact for extra information or they can initiate a private conversation. This helps to establish new contacts. (Gunelius 2011)

Bryson (2011) criticises online forums for having a lack of nonverbal cues. This means that it will take more time and effort to achieve the same level of mutual understanding that would be reached in face-to-face discussions. (Ibid.)

3.2.3. BLOGS

People are displaying each other’s profiles and making online connections all the time. A blog enables users to move further than profiles; it introduces the writer himself and his thoughts. (Breakenridge, 2008) “Over time, the use of blogs has extended: whereas originally blogging was often about individuals writing a personal online diary, now blogs have been taken up and are being widely used by institutions, corporations, individuals and charities (...)” (Ellis, 2011) Likewise with videos and online forums, it is wise to link a blog with organisation’s homepage or other social media channels that they are using (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn). (Norris, 2012)

Sometimes is difficult to draw a sharp line between a website and a blog. Nevertheless, Ellis (2011) introduces five characteristics that are typical for blogs, they are:

- 1) Rapid – usually bloggers are creating content that is changing. It means that on the one hand blogging software is usually simple to use, therefore one can quickly produce and upload new content to a blog; but on the other hand a blog’s content is usually time-specific (“e.g. when watching a TV programme at a certain time”);
- 2) Time- stamped – recent posts are normally displayed first in blogs. “Entries are usually dated, tagged and categorized so that the user can scroll back through the archive (...)”;

- 3) Personal –normally blogs are representing personal opinions (with some exceptions), posts are signed with authors' (user) names and "(...) often the content is written in first person - 'I...';
- 4) Two-way – readers can usually comment blog posts, it is not only communication with author(s) of the post, but with other readers as well;
- 5) Feeds – “blogs usually have RSS feeds which allow users to 'subscribe' to the blog using feed-reading software. “ In this way the users' feed reader displays new content of the blog as soon as it is published.

(Ibid. : 137)

Harris (2008) finds that best blogs are able to keep up a public debate. Rowse and Garrett (2012) have divided blogs content into six categories, (first three are the same as for videos):

- Entertainment – people are using blogs to relax: they are looking for content that is fun, comic or intrigues;
- Education – some of the users are expecting to learn something from a blog post;
- Information – many people want to gather information about a specific topic or issue;
- Debate – some readers are interested in finding a place to have a good discussion, debate, or even argument over a topic;
- News – users want to be updated with the latest news about a topic of blog;
- Community – people like to belong somewhere. Some of the users use blog for being connected with other people that are interested about the same topic. Sometimes the feeling of belonging is even more important than the topic.

A blogger should start with finding a good title to a post – it should invite a user to read the opening line. The title should be simple to understand; grab reader's attention; describe the content; and use relevant keywords (this helps people that are interested in the topic to find the post through the Internet search engines). Next crucial thing is to get opening lines right; this is the place where readers decide whether or not they will read the rest of a blog post. “Opening lines should pique interest and curiosity, highlight a need that your reader has, show a benefit or reading on, and/or make some sort of promise to entertain, inform, teach, or offer something of value. “ (Rowse and Garrett, 2012: ?) A blogger should also consider length of his blog post, he should think about:

- Comprehensive coverage of the topic – this is the most important criteria that a blogger should follow: he should offer enough material to cover a topic and then stop writing;
- Reader attention span – typical online readers' have a short attention span. Rowse and Garrett (2012) are stating that average readers are spending 96 seconds for a blog post;
- Search engine optimization – arguably very long and - short posts are not ranked as high on the Internet search engines as posts with reasonable length. Rowse and Garrett (2012) are pointing that reasonable post is around 250 words, and it should not be longer than 1000 words;
- Topic/genre – the content of a post determines its length. If a blogger is describing a product then the post will be longer than writing a news related post.

(Ibid.)

Leadbeater, (2008) states that “blogging is high on participation, low on collaboration.” (Ibid,?) It means that many people are able to share their views and mostly they are doing it online, but their goal is not to create something with others - they just want to leave a mark on digital space. (Ibid.)

Twitter

“Twitter is so- called ‘micro- blogging’ service – it allows users to post short and rapid-fire updates of 140 characters.” (Ellis, 2011: 141) According to Steve Johnson, Twitter’s technology author, it is a social network that bases on the idea of followers: a user can follow posts (or Tweets) by another user; these posts will then become instantly available on the followers main page. (Ibid.)

One way of Using Twitter is to share links through it: “(...) links to blog posts, news, articles, images, videos, and so on. It can thus be an incredibly effective way of pushing content out to large number of users.” (Ibid.: 141) It gives a way of turning news viral – if an institution has 5000 followers on Twitter and if 10 % of them are re-tweeting the institution’s tweet then the post reaches X number of new people and some of them might re-tweet it again. (Ibid.)

While using Twitter is important to maintain personal nature of the posts – it is more effective to invite followers to a discussion than just broadcasting about institution itself or its activities. (Ibid.)

Facebook

According to Ellis (2011), Facebook is the best known social network site in the world. The site is free for everyone to join. (Kernek, ?)It is based on networks of friendships- a person makes Facebook profile; then adds his friends that already are using Facebook – now he can interact with them (send messages, post information, -images, -videos, chat etc). Most of the actions in Facebook are happening in so called *wall* – it is a space in Facebook, where users can see their friends’ updates, it creates traffic in the site. The site has key concepts, as pictures, status updates, events and links, “(...) and because it is driven by users who are part of trust networks, these updates have much more currency than they would ‘out there’ on the wider web. “ (Ellis, 2011: 142)

Organisations can also use the social network site, they can create their Facebook Pages, that enables to upload material and data that is important for an organisation (Ibid.), it is important to remember that the organisation publishes information about itself on their Facebook Pages’ profile (Kernek, 2009). The activities of Facebook Pages are similar to the personal profiles. All individual users and other organisations can follow their actions in Facebook. Another feature the site offers is Facebook Groups, they are somewhat similar to the Pages, but they are concentrating on users with similar interest and providing space for publishing ideas and topics and discussions around them. (Ellis, 2011)

Besides the features described above, Facebook offers possibilities to use it beyond itself: it has like buttons that any other website owner can add to their site: when a follower of this site presses the like button, then appears on his Facebook wall that he has liked the webpage and his network of friends can explore the site as well. The site also offers Facebook authentication, so the users of another webpage can log in to this webpage by using their Facebook username and password. (Ibid.)

3.2.4. CRITICS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Every action done in the Internet leaves a mark and can be tracked, even years after, which means that all the actions should be considered carefully, especially operating in social networks. The pages are fairly public and it is important to remember that someone's eye may record all senseless actions. It is a sort of loss of freedom. (Leadbeater, 2008) Berger (2007) goes even more in depth with the previous statement. „The darker side of the computer is that it enables governments to store information about people – and some communications theorists worry that the power of a government to gather and to store information about people will lead to abusive behaviour by government agencies. (Ibid.: 118-119)

Berger (2007) also points out that the keyword for current digital- times is separation. Technical devices for the digital revolution are growingly more powerful, they are improving possibilities for being connected with others online constantly, but this tendency increases individualism and fails in creating a sense of community. „We say that global communication means can be connected to everyone; the question is, are you connected to anyone? Are people less stressed in our new digital world or more stressed? Do they have less time for themselves, their loved ones, and their communities, or more time? (Ibid.: 121) Baum also doubts that people linked electronically are able to offer social and psychological connections that are essential for personal identity and good participation process (Albrechts& Mandelbaum: Baum, 2005) This issue also has another side: it was stated before in this chapter that social media is contributing for collaboration: “people coming together, do creative things that otherwise would have been difficult or impossible to organize.” (Gauntlett, 2011: 197-198) Jaron Lanier argues that usually creative solutions do not just occur when different opinions are stated, because, online, statements definitely exist, but they are fragmented. Social media with online discussions and participation cannot replace old fashioned face to face meetings with emotions and mutual content-sharing feeling. (Ibid.)

Baum continues that on the one hand the Internet has offered millions of possibilities for people to participate in networks, but on the other hand underprivileged people might not have enough resources to be connected online, which leave their standpoints outside. (Albrechts& Mandelbaum: Baum, 2005) However, Frey points out another obstacle for fluent participation: when citizens who are able connecting in online networks, then some of the communities may become exclusionary and elitist. “Such groups usually comprise like-minded people; `bonding` instead of `bridging` might become the dominant characteristic of technology – mediated social relations.” (Ibid.: Frey, 2005: 191) The problem with this kind of communities is that they tend to discuss always around same issues, with that they reinforce already existing ideas and ignore the concept of diversity of opinions. (Ibid.: Frey, 2005)

Stephen Gram points out that every aspect of urban life may need communication, information sharing or electronic representations and it can be relatively easily done through the Internet – convince people and organisations to join with the community, but the wide variety of people with opinions on the one side and multiple problems on the other side might result with mess and a lack of focus. (Ibid.: Gram, 2005) This statement can also be seen in wider concept: currently people have many channels to share their opinion online (they can be connected via laptop or mobile phones; they can publish their ideas writing in blogs, taking photographs and making videos etc). Almost everyone has a possibility to share their views in public, but this creates loads of information, which

makes the Internet rich but messy. The result is that it is more difficult to find the pieces of information that one is looking for. (Leadbeater, 2008)

3.3. SUMMARY TO SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

The above section introduced different ways for using social media channels for promoting communicative planning. First at all, the channels could generate participation in three levels: 1) information level – information about plans is shared through webpages and search engines; 2) consultation level – discussions among users are created through online forums and web platforms; and 3) active participation – users are involved actively to policy making processes.

Virtual communities promote participation, because:

- 1) Information sharing is easy;
- 2) Information sharing requires small investments;
- 3) It is possible to share many documents at the same time;
- 4) Uploaders' or receivers' location is space is not important;
- 5) Information is shared in real-time;
- 6) Discussions could be established in real-time;
- 7) It is an opportunity for people who are avoiding public meetings;
- 8) Top-down communication is excluded.

Second part of the chapter introduced social media channels, which are online environments that allow users to create and share content by themselves. Table 2.2. presents the main social media channels introduced in the thesis and the features the channels should have in order to create a content that attracts users. Besides the channels presented in the table, the thesis introduced well known social media channels as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook that a user can apply in order to make information viral and encourage public debate.

Table.2.2. Content for promoting social media channels

Social media channel	Good content
Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Entertaining; ▪ Short; ▪ Simple; ▪ Focused; ▪ Fresh; ▪ Linked with organisations' URL.
Online Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Useful; ▪ Considered keywords for SEO; ▪ Registered users; ▪ Demographic data; ▪ Hosts' profile is public; ▪ Hosts' are participating in discussions; ▪ Hosts' are not promoting themselves; ▪ Hosts' posts are personable; ▪ Linked with organisation's URL.
Blog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong title; ▪ Strong open lines;

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Comprehensive coverage of topics;▪ 250-1000 words;▪ Liked with organisation's URL. |
|--|

It is essential to note that to encourage public participation the social media channels should be used together with other involvement methods.

Finally, the channels have been criticized because they separate people from each other and it might be difficult to reach a desirable consensus in conditions like that. Moreover, if all users are sharing a lot of information online then it might be difficult to follow everything.

4. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the methodology and methods that have chosen to carry the research from the beginning to the final conclusions and justify these choices. Methodology is essential, because “it provides a sense of vision, where it is that the analyst wants to go with the research” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 8) and methods are the tools that are helping to obtain the researchers goals. This chapter presents the design of the research.

4.1. SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND – TAKING THE HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH

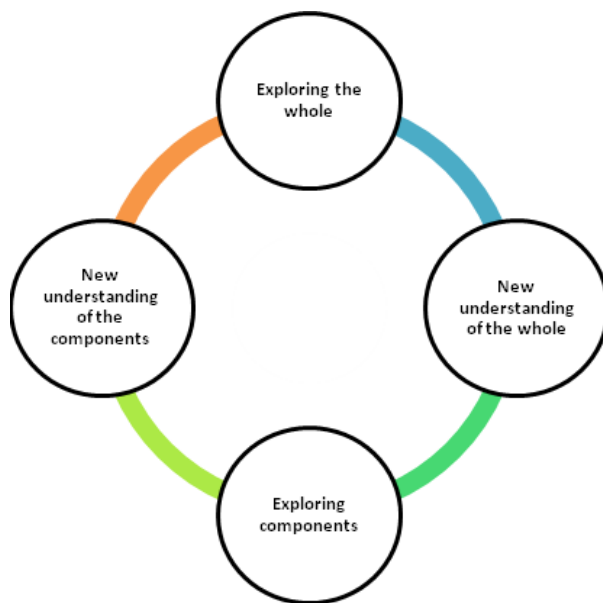
The purpose of the thesis is to examine social media channels that contribute to the communicative planning. The empirical analysis investigates the phenomenon in Estonia, selecting Estonian National Spatial Plan “Estonia 2030+” as a case study. Chapter 2 examines the theories of communicative planning and social media channels, which establishes ground for analysing “Estonia 2030+”. After investigating each part is turned back to previous parts and answered the questions that have risen in the ongoing research. The main purpose is to understand the phenomenon and create authors own practical knowledge. Process described ahead can be linked with the hermeneutical scientific approach.

The main idea of the hermeneutical approach is to gather knowledge and understanding through the process that continues to infinity. (Unt, 2004) “Understanding is a basic way of existing for every human being, since we must continually keep orienting ourselves in our situation in order to stay alive. It means we need to understand in order to stay alive” (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000: 56). The hermeneutic research process has no ending, because every time the researcher obtains more information, the interpretation of the phenomena changes. (Unt, 2004) The approach sets its focus on interpretation - the object of interpretation can be a text that consists written or spoken words; but also social phenomenon; process etc. The objects mentioned above are starting points and results for interpretation are facts and data, never vice versa. (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000)

The researcher has a pre-knowledge before starting the research process, but in order to understand the phenomena one has to examine it in depth. (Unt, 2004) This is attached with the hermeneutical circle, shown in the figure 3.1.

On the one hand, in the hermeneutical circle, understanding the phenomenon is attached to interpreting its single elements, but on the other hand understanding the single elements is related to understanding the whole. There is always pre-understanding about the whole that is basis for understanding parts of it. Exploring parts more deeply, in turn, helps to frame the first vague image of the whole. Understanding moves from the whole to its parts and vice versa. This kind of process enlarges understandings, but final understandings are not achievable. (Tool, 2006) See the hermeneutical circle in the figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1. The hermeneutical circle



(Tool, 2006)

In this paper the starting point for the hermeneutical circle is the research question, already stated in the Introduction. In order to gain understanding about the issue, firstly, is necessary to analyse theories about communicative planning and follows investigation about the possibilities to use social media channels in order to strengthen the processes for communicative planning. As the new material peels out during the theoretical analysis, the researcher has to move back and forth from the two theory parts, likewise described in hermeneutical circle. The thesis writing has time limits, therefore at one point the researcher has to stop gathering new information. The first ground for the empirical analysis is established. The

empirical analysis is concerned about the same topics as the theory, but uses the Estonian National Spatial plan “Estonia 2030+” as a case study. In order to understand the aspects from communicative planning in the national plan is important to present the Estonian current planning context. It gives the overview about public participation and introduces the social media channels that have been used in Estonian planning. As in the theory, new material appears all the time and therefore follows back and forth process among the three parts of the empirical analysis. In order to ensure that the theory is in accordance with the empirical part also the theoretical analysis is carried out simultaneously with the empirical analysis. As already stated the thesis has a handing in deadline and this is the ending point for this research, but it is not ending point in the hermeneutical circle; the next researcher has possibility to continue this analysis and make his own interpretations.

Final truth is not the goal in the hermeneutics, because the result of the research is dependent on the researcher’s knowledge and interpretations. (Tool, 2006)

4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The thesis is an example of qualitative research that is “...any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 10), it means that the main emphasis is on understanding the theory and the case study. According to Bryman (2008) a research design introduces (and frames) a chosen methodology for collecting and analyzing data. The research starts with finding an interesting topic to investigate. The chosen topic is usually broad; therefore it should be narrowed down with a specific theme and a focused research question. (Neuman, 2006) The process of leading researcher’s initial ideas to the concrete research question decides the form, course and progress of the research. (Andrews, 2003) The research question should be framed “[...]in a

manner that will provide the flexibility and freedom to explore a phenomenon in depth” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 40) As already stated in the Introduction, the main question is:

How have social media channels been used to further public participation in the planning process of the Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+, and how can the channels be used to support planning processes more generally according to the theory?

It is complicated to solve a research question without dividing it into smaller questions. (Walliman, 2006) In order to answer the multi-faceted research question, five sub-questions were formulated, see table 4.1, the first two are addressing to the theoretical analysis and the remaining three to the empirical analysis. The second column presents the methods that have been used in order to find solutions for the questions. The methods are described later in this chapter.

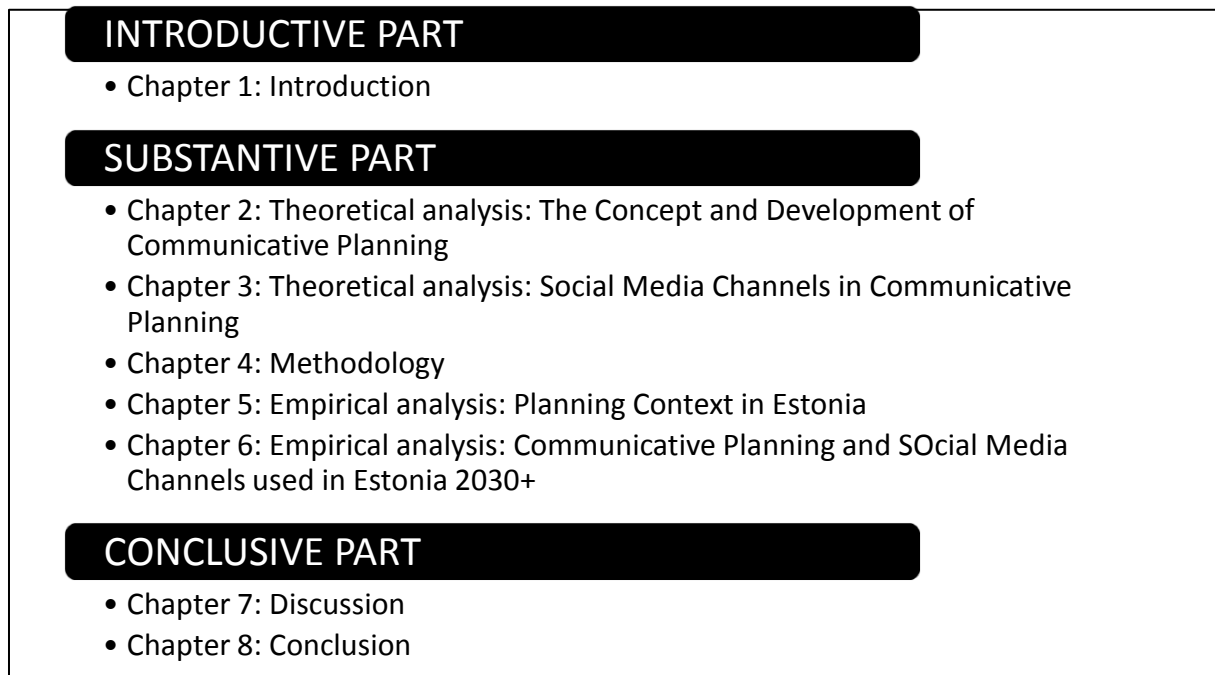
Table 4.1. Overview of the sub-questions.

Theoretical Analysis:	Method
1. What is communicative planning according to the academic literature?	Literature review
2. How can social media channels contribute to the communicative planning?	Literature review
Empirical Analysis:	Method
3. What is the current spatial planning situation in Estonia in terms of communicative planning and the use of social media channels in planning?	Literature review; interviews
4. To what extent does the Estonian national spatial planning process reflect the ideals of communicative planning?	Literature review; interviews
5. How have social media channels contributed to the Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+?	Literature review; interviews

In order to follow the process of answering the research question it is important to understand the research design, which is outlined in figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2. presents the research design for the thesis. The first part of the thesis, Chapter 1, states the purpose of the research; indicates the main problems; and establishes the background for the topic. Chapters 2 and 3, the theoretical analysis, are laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research. It is followed by Methodology that justifies the structure of the thesis and indicates the researcher’s approach for answering the main research question. The theoretical analysis and Methodology are laying structure for the empirical analysis in Chapters 5 and 6. The theory is used as a tool that develops basic knowledge for the empirical analysis. Methodology chapter presents the chosen methods to find empirical evidence for the theoretical study. Finally, the Discussion and Conclusion are connecting the theoretical and empirical analysis and presenting the main findings of the thesis.

Figure 4.2. The research design



4.3. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

Denis McQuail (2003) claims that theory is a systematic set of ideas that helps to understand a phenomenon, - lead actions or - provide consequences of the actions. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) theory presents an explanation about a phenomenon. Theory has to be well explained and developed in order to exemplify actions from reality (Ibid.). It “[...] could be seen as having a number of elements; it abstracts from reality a set of general or specific principles to be used as a basis for explaining and acting with the theory being tested and refined if necessary” (Allmendinger, 2002: 1).

Figure 4.3 Structure of the theoretical analysis

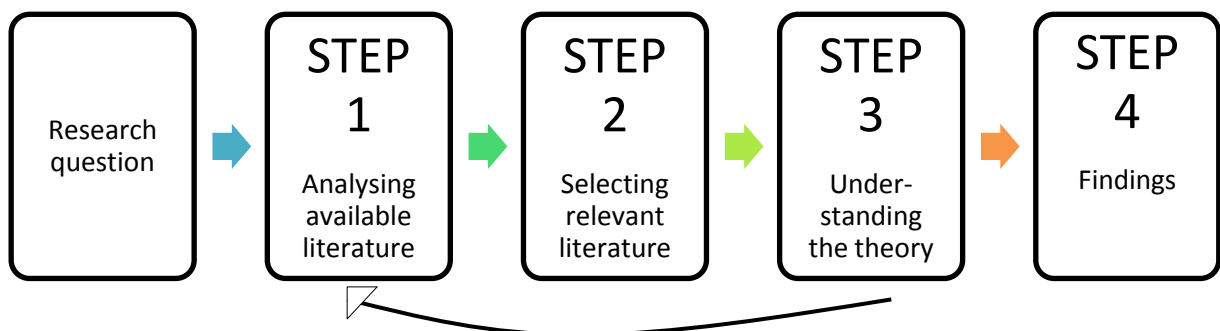


Figure 4.3 introduces the framework for the theory chapter. After establishing the research question the first step is to analyse available literature. Due to the time limitations the most relevant literature is selected according to the abstracts. Next step is to understand the selected theory. This leads back to the first step, because more relevant material peels out during the reading process. Likewise described with hermeneutical approach, follows back and forth

process between the three steps in order to ensure that enough material has gathered to understand the phenomenon. The last step is formulating the findings from the previous analysis - in the thesis the theory chapters are concerned about communicative planning and social media channels that can contribute to communicative planning.

4.4. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Analysing communicative planning can create a lot of different issues to investigate, but due to the time limitations this project concentrates on public participation and possibilities to use social media channels for encouraging it.

As the public participation is one of the keywords for the communicative planning and part of the theory chapter is also concerned about it, then the empirical analysis starts with introducing the current Estonian planning situation with the main emphasis on the communicative planning in it. Follows a brief overview about social media channels used in Estonian planning and then the case study is presented. A single case study of the Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+ is applied to establish the empirical analysis.

According to Flyvbjerg (2001) case study helps to generate specific and practical knowledge about a phenomenon. Practical examples are often better understood than theoretical discussions (Ibid.) and they support the theory that can be universal and vague. "In brief, the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events..." (Yin, 2009: 4) A case study is a good example of qualitative research and seeing it from the hermeneutical angle, a researcher has a greater possibility to familiarise with the phenomenon of a study in its context.

Figure 4.4. The construction of the empirical analysis

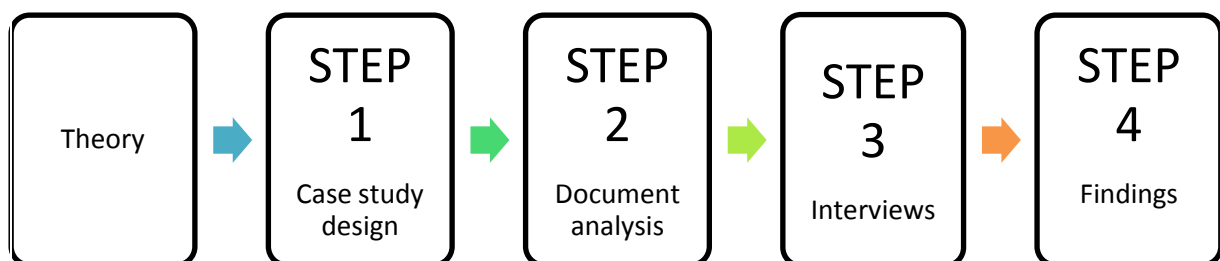


Figure 4.4 presents the framework for the empirical analysis. As already mentioned, the theoretical analysis creates ground for the empirical analysis. After understanding the theory, the first step was to develop the structure for the case study with stating the issues to investigate in depth. Follows the document analysis - gathering information from handbooks, newspapers, webpages, laws, etc. about the phenomenon. Next step is to carry out interviews with the persons who have information about the phenomenon. The final step is to analyse the collected information and formulate the findings.

4.5. RESEARCH METHODS

This section describes the research methods applied in the thesis. A research method is an technique for gathering data. (Bryman, 2004) The used methods are a single case study, literature review and interviews. These methods are explained and justified in this section.

4.5.1. A SINGLE CASE STUDY

The key component of the empirical research is a single case study. According to Yin (2003): “A case study is an empirical inquiry that:

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident;
- Copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result;
- Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result;
- Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collections and analysis.”

(Ibid.: 13-14)

This means that the case study method is chosen, because the researcher believes that the context of the phenomenon is highly relevant for investigating it. Often, in real-life, it is not possible to separate context from the phenomena, therefore a case study method includes several technical characteristics, such as collecting and analysing data. In other words, it means that the case study method concentrates different methods into one – it begins with the logic of the case study design and ends with concluding the case study. (Ibid.)

In the research, a single case study method is used. The reliability of the outcome of the single case study method may be criticised, but according to Flyvbjerg (2001) it depends on the case and how it is chosen. Moreover a single case study is made thorough by using different methods and sources while carrying it out and the outcome may be linked in many different ways. A case study can be chosen randomly or based on pre-knowledge about the phenomenon; this depends on the purpose of the research. If the purpose is to collect the maximum amount of information on a given topic, it should be chosen based on the pre-knowledge about the case. (Ibid.)

The case has chosen, because the creation of Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+ started in the end of 2009 and it is still on the process, therefore the organisers should have fresh memories and emotions about the process. The researcher had pre knowledge that the organisers have attempted to involve wide groups of stakeholders to the planning process and they have used different methods, social media channels among them, for reaching the goal. In addition national spatial plans are prepared seldom, for example the last national plan for Estonia was adopted in 2000, hence 12 years ago, therefore is it interesting to investigate the process.

Within the case study document analysis and interviews have applied, the methods will be introduced with the following two sections.

4.5.2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Literature review informs about already existing material in the research field, it assists on developing the analytic framework for the research and helps to interpret findings from the empirical research (Bryman, 2004). According to Neuman (2006) the literature review has four purposes:

1. To demonstrate a familiarity with a body of knowledge and establish credibility;
2. To show the path of prior research and how a current project is linked to it;
3. To integrate and summarize what is known in an area;
4. To learn from other and stimulate new ideas. (Neuman, 2006: 111)

The literature review is used to develop the theoretical analysis. Communicative planning has many proponents - the topic is discussed in a great number of theory books and scientific articles, therefore plenty of material was accessible about the topic. It was somewhat complicated to find materials about social media channels that are contributing to communicative planning. Therefore the author has decided to use, besides the few found material from the planning theory, books and scientific articles from the field of public relations (PR) and interpret the material to the planning context. The theories from public relations are relevant, because one of their goals is to create wide events with many participants; this is desirable also in communicative planning. In order to invite a great number of participants to the planning processes the events should be promoted, therefore if a planner has also knowledge from the field of PR he is able to use several channels and make them to work together in order to achieve the wide events. If an event is widely promoted then people start talking about it, hence they already start sharing information and discussing the topic which is also a goal in communicative processes. To explain it in another way: a purpose for adopting PR methods is often to attract consumers to use more goods (or services); therefore they have to inform users about their products and one possibility is to do it through social media channels. Communicative planners' have a purpose of involving as many stakeholders to a planning process as possible and collect their opinions, therefore they have to share the information about the planning processes and receive participants' feedback. Thus the entrepreneurs and planners have the different final goal, but they can use similar methods to inform about their "goods" and gather feedback about it. All the material interpreted from the PR is considered carefully and the author has used her pre-knowledge about planning to select the most relevant materials. As the info technology is developing rapidly and constantly, the author has attempted to use only the material that is not older than five years.

Document analysis has been used in order to conduct the empirical part of the thesis. It is similar to literature review, but different documents are used instead of scientific books and -articles. Official publications (plans, regulations and laws), newspaper articles, presentations, reports, videos, broadcasts; and web pages have been used in order to establish the empirical knowledge.

All selected literature is chosen with critical mind. Publishing dates have been controlled in order to ensure that all the data is up-to-date. Sources that are older than five to 10 years are used with extra considerations about their validity. Critics about selected materials have always attempted to find and present in order to ensure that the material is not idealized.

3.5.3. INTERVIEWS

Three face to face interviews were conducted for the empirical analysis. Besides the mentioned interviews the author used materials from one of her previous interviews that were carried out in May 2011. The interview was relevant for the thesis, because it was concerned about public participation in Estonian planning processes. Neuman (2006) states that “face-to-face interviews have the highest response rates and permit the longest questionnaires”. (Ibid.: 301) According to Stake (2010) the main reason for carrying out interviews is to obtain unique information that offers different visions about a phenomenon. The method might give data that never appears in other documents. Furtherer, an interview enables to receive various opinions and explanations from different people about the phenomenon. (Ibid.)

Interviews can be seen as a part of the hermeneutical approach. Before an interview the researcher has a basic knowledge that is gathered through the literature review and document analysis. During the interviews often the interviewees are mentioning something that raises new questions; in this case the researcher has a great opportunity to ask additional information. The new knowledge can change the researcher’s pre-understandings and she has the possibility to ask more clarifying questions. Finally, this kind of process leads back to the theoretical analysis in order to update the material according to the new information that has peeled out during the interviews.

Information for the thesis is gathered through semi-structured interviews. In the semi-structured interview “the researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an interview guide, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway to reply” (Bryman, 2004: 321). Topics for interviews were chosen according to the material from the theoretical analysis. The interview questionnaire was ranked according to these topics- in this case the interviewees can follow it easily and they see it as a logical procedure. Before the interviews a general introduction about the thesis and topics for the interviews was sent to participants.

Interviews took place:

- 1) 10.05.2012 with **Aveli Ainsalu** – the head analyst in the department of local - and regional management in the Estonian Ministry of the Interior. The main topic for the interview was public involvement in Estonian planning;
- 2) 10.05.2012 with **Anni Konsap** and **Tavo Kikas** – both of them are advisers in the department of planning in the Estonian Ministry of Interior. Anni Konsap is responsible for managing the Wordpress page and online forum for Estonia 2030+, and Tavo Kikas is coordinating the compilation of Estonia 2030+ from the ministry’s side. The main topics for the interview were public involvement processes and social media channels used for Estonia 2030+ ;
- 3) 15.05.2012 with **Kaur Lass** – the project manager for the Estonian National Plan 2030+. The main topics for the interview were public involvement processes and social media channels used for Estonia 2030+ and public participation in Estonian planning.

Additionally was used a previously conducted interview with non profit organisation *Linnalabor* that is dealing with urban issues in order to create a better city.

- 4) 02.05.2011 with *Linnalabor* – (**Teele Pehk**, **Kadri Vaher** and **Regina Viljasaar** - all of them are board members of *Linnalabor*) The main topic for the interview was public involvement in Estonian planning.

Interviews were carried out in a friendly atmosphere: the questionnaire was followed, but also additional conversational questions asked. All the interviews were recorded, the voice records can be found in the appendix of the thesis (separately in the DVD).

5. PLANNING CONTEXT IN ESTONIA

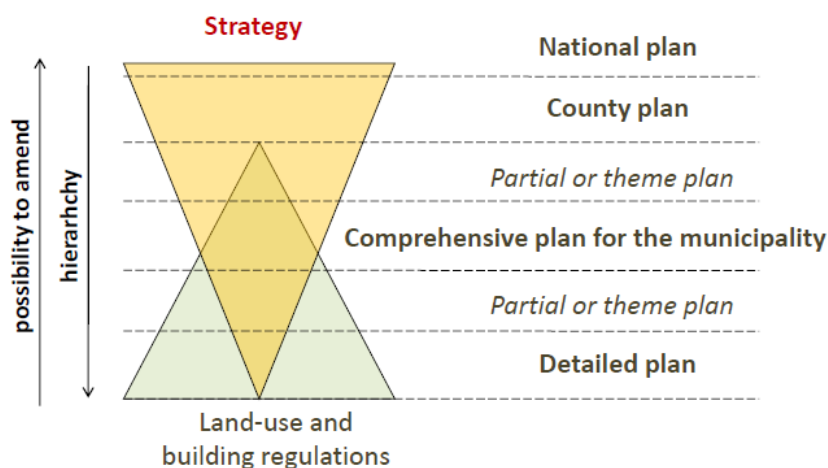
This chapter will acquaint the current planning situation in Estonia. It is an introductory chapter to the case study of the National Spatial Plan 2030+ (Chapter 6). The Estonian Planning Act is binding to every plan, therefore firstly is presented a brief introduction about it. Follows an overview about inclusive planning in Estonia at the present times and finally the chapter ends with an overview of online channels that have been used for Estonian planning.

5.1. ESTONIAN PLANNING ACT

Estonian Planning Act regulates spatial planning in Estonia. The law was adopted as a single document in 2002, before it was connected with Construction Act. After separating Planning and Construction Act, both of the documents are more specific in their field and in accordance with the corresponding documents from the European Union (Sauks, 2005). This paper follows the law adopted in 2002 and its latest changes from 2011.

The law regulates the plans that are pointed out with the bold font in figure 4.1. Partial or theme plans are compiled while gaps between detailed- and comprehensive-; or comprehensive- and county plans are considerable. (Lass, n.d.) Firstly is the broadest level, national plan that is responsible for overall development inside the country. The plan is initiated by the Estonian Government and compilation is managed by the Estonian Ministry of The Interior. Then a county plan follows that covers the whole county or just part of it. It is initiated by the Estonian Government or alderman of the county and managed by the alderman. Thirdly is a comprehensive plan that is drawn up for a municipality or city. Finally is the detailed plan that is made when needed and it covers smaller districts of a municipality or city. The two previous types of plan are initiated and managed by local government. (*Planeerimisseadus*, 2002) As shown in the figure 5.1. national plan is very broad, it can be seen as a development strategy while detailed plan regulates land use and construction conditions.

Figure. 5.1. Estonian planning system



(Metspalu, 2011)

As shown in the figure 5.1. Estonian “(...) planning system is hierarchical and interactive in the same time”. (Metspalu, 2011) On the one hand the system is hierarchical: it is important to follow regulations from a broader type of plan while drawing up a more detailed type of plan. This principle guarantees consistency for spatial development. On the other hand it is interactive, because with a more detailed type of plan is possible to make amendments in a level broader plan to ensure prompt response for changing needs. (Lass, n.d.)

The Planning Act does not establish very rigorous boundaries between different types of plan: for example, it is possible to create a comprehensive plan for several parishes; or a county plan just for a part of the county. The plan type is chosen according to its substantive and legal purposes that it eventually should fulfil. (Ibid.)

“Planning activities are public. Public disclosure is mandatory in order to ensure the involvement of all interested persons and the timely provision of information to such persons and to enable such persons to defend their interests in the process of planning.” (*Planning Act*, 2002, § 3. [1]) As the thesis uses the national spatial plan Estonia 2030+ as a case study, the public involvement requirements for that level of plan will be introduced more specifically in the next chapter.

In order to create a good planning process with wide public participation, planners should do more than required by the law. The Planning Act does not establish a standard for coordinating involvement and participation procedures. Therefore planners should follow guidelines based from experience. In 2005 different Estonian ministries, but also representatives from civil society groups agreed on the ‘*Kaasamise hea tava*’ (Good Practice for Involvement). This is not a mandatory document, but it gives guidelines for conducting a process with public participation. The document presents mainly instructions for ministries for submitting draft bills to interest groups, but other organisations (such as local governments; civil society groups; political parties; and other organisations that need to involve interest groups to decision making processes) can also use the document. (Hinsberg & Kübar, 2009)

5.2. INCLUSIVE PLANNING IN ESTONIA

According to Albrechts, planning theorists are often offering interesting and innovative planning approaches, but practitioners are not aware of the theories or simply do not want to use them. This phenomena justifies the little effect planning theories have to planning practice. (Jauhiainen, 2005) “Similar situation is also in Estonia, where planners’ theoretical and methodological planning education is usually rather incomplete. “ (Ibid.:228) This chapter introduces inclusive planning through practitioners view in the context of Estonia. The section is based on face-to-face interviews and document analysis.

According to Pille Metspalu, the chairman of Estonian Planning Association, couple of years ago during the real-estate boom (in 2005-2007 - editor), planning was often based on mapping developers’ or landowners’ interests. It was rather determination of very optimistic future developments than assessing the possible impacts of implementing the plans. She thinks that in current times, planning is more balanced: plans should help to preserve and offer development possibilities for existing values. (Metspalu, 2009) *Praxis*, a non-profit Centre for Policy Studies, has made a research about citizen involvement; in the paper Annika Uudelepp (2010) states that in

recent years the public involvement has improved. Towards the phenomena has contributed the state officials' and stakeholders' grown awareness about the issue and their improved co-operation skills. Citizen organisations are progressively conscious about their rights to be involved to the processes and their initiations are more often funded. (Uudelepp, 2010) The easiest way for citizens to be involved is through civil society groups, because when individuals are grouped then communication with state officials is more effective and their voices are better heard (Appendix D). Siim Vahtrus, an jurist in *Keskkonnaõiguse Keskus* (Estonian Environmental Law Centre) agrees that public involvement has improved because of the crowingly stronger and active civil society groups. He believes that if citizens are requiring more, then municipalities are willing to make more efforts. (Huvitaja, 2012)

Kaur Lass, a planner (and the project manager of national spatial plan Estonia 2030+) states that citizens are very aware of their rights and they know how to use them. In the end on 90's people came to planning processes to state their opinions and ask questions, but normally they did not contest the planning solutions, "today is opposite, we have a group of professional testers and advocates who make living out of it" (Appendix A). National Foundation of Civil Society is contributing on "enhancing the capacity of non-profit associations and foundations acting in the public interests of Estonia in the development of civil society and in formation of the environment favourable for civic initiative" (*Sihtasutus Kodanikuühiskonna Sihtkapita*, n.d.). In April 2011 the foundation had together with the Estonian Ministry of the Interior a call for applications to improve participatory planning in Estonia (Ibid.). The idea was to develop models where the field of planning is explained to citizens as simple as possible. (Appendix D) All in all were 11 applications (Ibid.), and they funded 10 of them, all of them concerned about different places in Estonia and resulted with a model or handbook for participation. (*Sihtasutus Kodanikuühiskonna Sihtkapita*, n.d.) Aveli Ainsalu, from the Estonian Ministry of the Interior, estimates that there were few applicants, because the field is very complicated (Appendix D). Kaur Lass criticises the project, because mainly the funded projects were applied by 'old practitioners' of NGOs, "I don't see benevolent information sharing and training, rather I see exploiting money and raising the level of own contests skills. It is a bit regrettable." (Appendix A)

On the other hand, in March 2012 was published *Tallinna planeeringute juhend*, it is a guide for understanding plans in Tallinn, which is created by non-profit organisation *Linnalabor* and architecture company *b210*. The research concluded that public involvement in Estonian spatial planning is not really part of the planning procedures. Civil society is not entirely rooted in Estonia, yet. Currently, municipalities are fulfilling only minimum rules for public participation that are stated in the law, hence involvement is rather a formality. (*Linnalabor & b210*, 2012) Kärt Vaarmari, an jurist in *Keskkonnaõiguse Keskus* (Estonian Environmental Law Centre), believes that municipalities are not willing to go further than required by the law, because it extends duration of the processes; and in addition, if citizens do not exhibit interest to participate, then the municipalities do not find it necessary to make the effort and carry out the processes. (Huvitaja, 2012)

Teele Pehk, a board member of *Linnalabor*, a non-profit organisation that assembles urban activists, states that inclusive planning is presently popular term and people/organisations are speaking about it, but they do not understand its actual meaning. Kadri Vaher, also a board member of *Linnalabor*, thinks that background knowledge about the term is tenuous. On the one hand organisations are interested in participating in planning processes, but on the other hand municipalities have not fully

understood the meaning of public involvement and have not found good solutions for doing it. Planners are not used to deal with these kinds of problems. (Appendix C)

Valdur Lahtvee (2011), a member of Estonian parliament, agrees with the previous statements. He adds that in different fields (for example in making policies, development plans and strategies) public has to be involved, but it is done formally: organizers are informing about possibilities to participate in this kind of processes; standpoints and opinions are collected from citizens and organisations, but, finally, in decision making, these opinions are not taken into considerations. (Lahtvee, 2011)

The main problem is that planning as a separate field is not taught in Estonian universities. It is not possible to produce qualitative plans without specific education. People have to understand what planning is; how it is done; how to involve participants to the process; and why the law is necessary. Currently in Estonian planning is guiding a principle, the planner is an expert who creates plan solutions in his office, and thereafter the municipality organises public meeting where already existing solution is presented and explained. It is not allowed with the planning law, but as the supervision of the plans is not very strong then this kind of behaviour is possible. (Appendix A) Ainsalu adds that, in reality, if an involvement procedure is skipped, then nothing happens with official that is responsible for that (Appendix D). The report from *Praxis* supports the previous statement, as it reveals that the major shortages in the field are public involvement in late stages of planning processes; and inadequate communication between stakeholders, which hinders discussions and mutual respectful partnership. (Uudelepp, 2010) The current situation can be turned by changing participants (included politicians and planners') attitude, which is a hard task. It can be done through good examples from reality; direct contacts among participants; and trainings. (Appendix D)

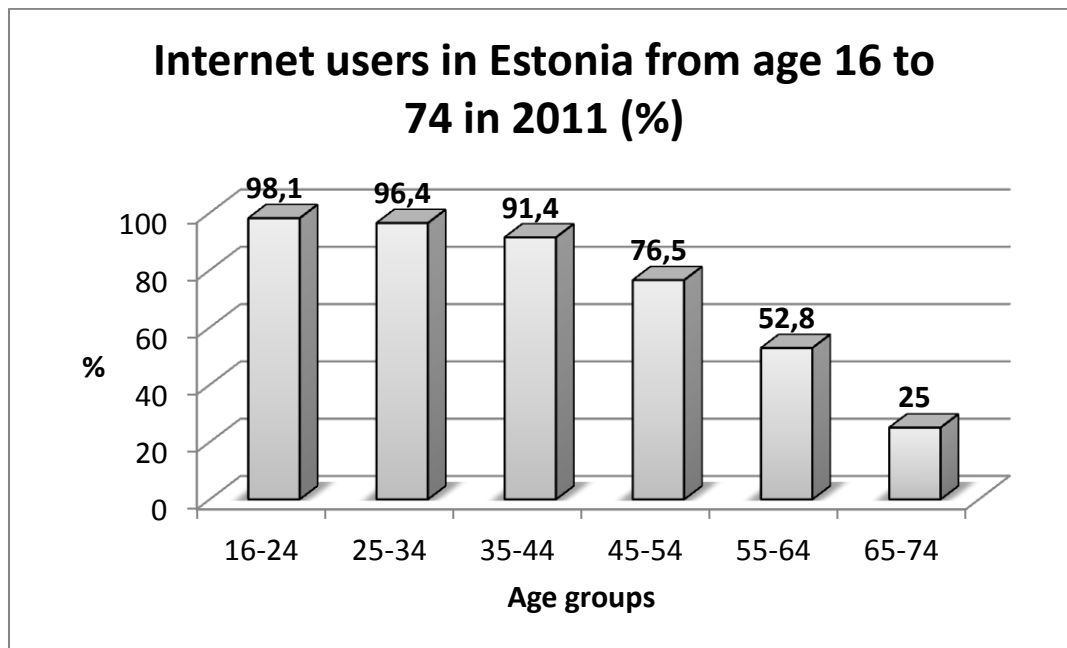
Estonian constitution states that private property should not be used against public interest. Thus, since the first planning law (in 1995) has had the principle that planning is public activity: it should involve different stakeholders and everyone has a right to be informed -; and express one's opinion about the plans. In reality planning is a complicated process with specific legal and forming requirements, therefore often only people working in the same field are able to understand the documents. This is the reason why it is not enough that materials about the plans are public and regular announcements about the documents are published in newspapers – citizens do not understand them. Another problem is that citizens often are not interested about development in their living environment, but in order to organise successful involving process is necessary to have co-operation between many stakeholders. (Linnalabor & b210, 2012)

To conclude, public involvement in Estonian planning is required by the law and practitioners have held theoretical discussions about it. However, the principles from the theoretical discussions are not often practiced in reality. Nevertheless in recent years has been raise of civil society groups and this might benefit to involvement processes and lead to better practices in public participation.

5.3. SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS USED IN ESTONIA

The purpose of this paragraph is to explain the practice of social media channels, introduced in the theory chapter, in Estonia. According to Statistics Estonia (2011), the country's population is 1, 34 million; among them are 76, 8% computer users and 76, 5% Internet users (data from 2011). Figure 5.2 shows the percentage of Internet users in the age groups.

Figure 5.2. Internet users in Estonia, 2011



(author's own figure, data from Statistics Estonia)

The graph shows that from the age 16 to 44 more than 90% of people are using the Internet. In the age group 45-54 are more than 75% -; and in the age group 55-64 are over 50% of the Internet users. This means that opportunities offered by the Internet has a great potential in the field of planning, especially for involving young and middle aged citizens; therefore it is normal course of events that in Estonia the Internet is used also for spatial planning purposes.

Aveli Ainsalu states that officials are using increasingly the Internet, because it offers easy and fast opportunity to transmit information. On the other hand the Estonian Ministry of The Interior created a Facebook account, approximately a year ago (in 2011 – editor) but despite of promotion of the page, in the end of the year, they had just 1500 fans, which was 10 times less than they expected. (Appendix D)

It is essential to remember that people are using diverse sources for gathering information; therefore it is important to share it through different channels. On the one hand, it is important to remember that there are still people in Estonia, who do not use the Internet on daily basis; but on the other hand, the number of printed newspapers' readers is shrinking, because of online newspapers. The choice among different information channels is dependent on the age of a person, therefore it is important to ensure that all age groups have been included in the planning processes. Planners should choose channels for information sharing according to participants' habits, needs and possibilities. The most significant is to ensure that the interested parties are receiving all the announcements about the plans and the information arouses reaction among them. (Vahtrus et. al, 2012)

Follows an overview about the social media channels that the state, local authorities and civil society groups have used in order to improve public participation in urban planning processes. Social media channels, such as videos; blogs; forums and other social media channels will be introduced, every

tool is exemplified with cases. As the purpose of this chapter is to acquaint with the common practice in Estonia then the cases are introduced briefly. Next chapter will introduce the main case study of the paper. The cases chosen in this chapter are from every level of planning; and the list of cases presented here is not definitive: due to the time limitations the author of this paper has chosen from two to three examples to illustrate the usage of the each tool. The examples are attempted to choose in a way that they are offering overview about the current practice with social media channels in Estonian planning.

5.3.1. THE STATE

The Office of the State is administering the webpage *Osalusveeb*, on which all laws and law drafts are uploaded. Citizens can comment on the documents, but also make their independent proposals to the government. In order to encourage citizens to use the webpage, but also to encourage public participation in general, the Office of the State has uploaded four educational videos about the topic; among them is a video from a webpage user, who talks about the importance of participation, hence it is a video from a user to user, which might bring the web closer to a regular user. Another video clip presents a proposal to create the National Foundation of Civil Society. Initially, the idea was voted down, but after several years the foundation created. The video stresses that it is important to promote ideas through other channels than the web and give time to people in order to get them used with new and innovative ideas. The webpage *Osalusveeb* has also a blog where registered users can write their concerns and ideas, however, the last post in this blog is from the year of 2009 (Riigikantselei, nd.) Aveli Ainsalu from the Estonian Ministry of the Interior estimates that the page offers a good opportunity to be involved to the processes, but in reality there are few users. This might be due to reason that in the page are uploaded documents that are already done and it might be difficult to comment 30 pages long finished product. (Appendix D)

Currently the Estonian Ministry of The Interior is drawing up the national plan 2030+. The ministry has used Wordpress blog as the plan's homepage. In the page is shared information about plan, but it also has a forum, where all Estonian citizens can write their opinion about the draft documents of the national plan. There are 30 posts and latest is from September 2010. (*Siseministeerium*, 2010) The ministry has also used an entertaining video in public discussions in order to create an open atmosphere where participants could freely express themselves. (Appendix A) It is a short silent movie about the times of maestro planning. (*Siseministeerium*, 2012) The Estonian national plan 2030+ is the main case study for the thesis and the three methods introduced above will be elaborated in depth in the next chapter. In addition, in YouTube is reachable an informative video where the Regional Minister of Estonia, Siim Kiisler is speaking about the plan in national morning television. The clip is not extra ordered to inform public by ministry, but as it informs about the plan it is uploaded in an easily accessible format. The video has 64 views. (headandlead,2011)

5.3.2. LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Every municipality in Estonia has its homepage and according to Estonian Planning Act the municipalities have to use it for sharing information about comprehensive and detailed planning processes. (*Planeerimiseseadus*, 2002) A recent study by Vahtrus et. al (2012) reports that subpages about spatial plans on municipalities' webpages, considering the number of the Internet users, are important channels in order to help raising the public participation. In such a way public materials about the plans are assembled together; it helps to easily find information about the process and

therefore the users have better overview over it. In order to help the users to find the material, the front-pages of municipalities' homepages should refer to the subpages. (Vahtrus et. al, 2012)

Often besides information sharing the pages are offering a place for online discussions, where usually inhabitants can share information, propose ideas and write about their concerns. For example in Lähtse village has a forum linked with municipality's homepage. Habitants are discussing all kind of topics there and among them are questions for officials about plans, discussions about spatial plans, pointing out problematic issues from the living environment etc. (*Lähtse küla*, n.d.) Another social media feature that some of the municipality's homepage offer is blog. For example Are parish has a blog, where information about the village is shared: some of the posts are concerned about plans. (*AreVallaleht*, 2011)

Written documents are not the only possibility for sharing information about the plans. 3D visualisations are widely used by local authorities for demonstrating planned future development. Mainly the videos are produced by planning companies. Through the Internet's search engine Google appeared that mainly the models are created for detail-, comprehensive- and thematic plans. For example (see Figure 5.3.) is uploaded a vision about a market place in Mustamäe (a city district in Tallinn) to YouTube and Vimeo.

Figure 5.3. 3D visualisation of a market place in Mustamäe



(YouTube: gerdtarand, 2010)

In addition there are accessible web pages with a content that allows citizens to map constantly their interests, propose new ideas and share their concerns. An example of this is from Viljandi (town in middle Estonia with 19 600 habitants), the municipality; Estonian Design Centre; and the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organizations have created a web page, where citizens can point out problems from the urban environment and see how they are solved or make proposals how to improve the town. All comments are displayed on a map with written descriptions about them. The webpage is based on the Community Tools software. (*Viljandi Linnavalitsus*, et.al., nd)

For compiling plans has also used social media channels. In 2010, the municipality of Kuresaare (approx 17 000 habitants) ordered a survey from a non-profit organisation *Linnalabor* that investigated habitants' values about their living environment in order to create a new comprehensive plan. For data collection *Linnalabor* carried out interviews and organised questionnaire (which was

accessible both online and on a paper version). The results of the survey are accessible online and in January 2012 the comprehensive plan was adopted. (*Kuressaare Linnavalitsus*, 2012)

5.3.3. NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

As stated in the previous paragraph, the civil society in Estonia is increasingly strengthening. Many of the groups have created in order to ensure that the living environment in their neighbourhood is maintained in good condition. For example, *Telliskiviselts* (a local community in Tallinn) has created exactly for these purposes. The group has its own webpage and online forum on it. The page informs about local issues in the area, but mainly about plans. Every registered user can comment all posts in the homepage and make one's own posts in the forum. (*Telliskiviselts*, nd.)

The previous was an example of a community that is concerned about the local district. Another example is from a non-profit organisation, Estonian Green Movement that besides other issues often participates in planning processes to protect citizens' rights. (*Eesti Roheline Liikumine*, nd) Besides the homepage that shares information about the projects they have done, they have created a web page *Osalusaabits*, it is a guide for citizens who are interested in participating in planning processes or would like to be involved in designing their living environment. The web page offers examples from previous processes for citizens to find inspiration from them; guidelines for participating in planning processes and an access to seven educational videos where planners, experts and the organisation by itself talks about planning and participation in the processes. (*Eesti Roheline Liikumine 1*, nd)

In 2010, *Uue Maailma Selts* (a local community in Tallinn) has created free software, Community Tools, for managing local communities' activities. The reason for developing Community Tools was simple – *Uue Maailma Selts* found it is easy to find active community members who are interested in the fate of their neighbourhoods, but it is difficult to manage communication among them. (*Eesti Kodanikeühenduste Selts*, 2011) The software helps to develop online environments to share information and communicate with other community members. (Community Tools, 2011) "Software designed for hassle-free creation of online environments. (...) Users can create forums, exchange files, post news and add events to the community calendar on a democratic basis and with no prior training in nerd science." (Teesalu, 2011) The shared information is tied with geographic data- the data appears both in text and on a map. According to the Community Tools web page about a dozen local communities are using the software, but also some interest based communities. Currently the software is available in Estonian and English. (Community Tools, 2011) Figure 5.4. presents an example of a page that is developed with the Community Tools. The administrators of Community Tools have created a short movie in order to promote the software. The video was presented in the World EXPO 2010 Shanghai in Estonian Pavilion, which theme was save city (Expo2010, nd.). The entertaining video presents that it is easy for a community to come together and improve their living environment when the information comes through online channels that everybody is using. (Community Tools, 2011)

Figure 5.4. An example of Community Tools



5.4. SUMMARY TO ESTONIAN PLANNING CONTEXT

The Estonian Planning Act establishes minimum rules for public participation, but it is widely known that in order to create a strong process, planners should do more than requested by the law. Practitioners are estimating that the state officials' and stakeholders' awareness about the importance of the topic has grown in recent years.

Even though the awareness is grown, practitioners are claiming that public involvement in reality is rather a formality. Currently in Estonian planning is guiding a principle, the planner is an expert who creates plan solutions in his office, and thereafter the municipality organises public meeting where already existing solution is presented and explained. In addition stakeholders are often involved to planning processes in late stages and planners and participants have poor co-operation skills.

The state officials and representatives of non profit organisations have used social media channels in order to involve public to planning processes. Table 5.1. presents overview about the phenomena and the last column of the table presents the level of participation the channels are creating.

Table 5.1. Social media channels used in Estonian planning

Actor	Social media channels	Level of participation
The state	<i>Osalusveeb</i> - laws and other documents are uploaded; - 4 educational videos; - Possibility to share one's idea and see what others' are thinking about it; - Blog.	Informative and consultation level
	Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+: - Wordpress page; - Online forum; - Video.	Informative and consultation level
Local Authorities	Municipalities' homepages; Online forums; Blogs; 3D visualisations; Webpages to map citizens' interests; Online questionnaires.	Informative level Informative and consultation level Informative and consultation level Informative level Informative and consultation level Consultation level
Non-profit organisations	Homepages Online forums <i>Osalusaabits</i>: - Documents - Educative videos	Informative and consultation level Informative and consultation level Informative level

6. COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING AND SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS IN ESTONIAN NATIONAL PLAN 2030 +

The previous chapter introduced the Estonian planning context. The short overview demonstrated that Estonian planners and other civil servants, non-profit organisations and civil society groups have used different social media channels in order to involve public to planning processes. However, the previous analysis did not point out the reasons behind using these channels neither the benefits the methods have brought. This chapter deals with these issues. Surely within the time frame for this thesis is not possible to investigate all the channels introduced in the previous chapter, therefore the author has chosen the Estonian National Plan 2030+ as a case study. The case is chosen, because on the one hand it is currently an ongoing process and therefore the initiators remember clearly their ideas, opinions, concerns and emotions about the plan, and on the other hand within the case several social media channels have been used, such as Wordpress blog environment as the plan's homepage; video; and online forum in order to involve stakeholders to the planning process.

6.1. ESTONIA 2030+

The Estonian Planning Act, 2003, §6 states that the national plan concerns about the whole territory of the country.

The national plan:

- 1) defines the principles of and directions in sustainable and balanced spatial development;*
- 2) creates the spatial bases for the regional development of the state;*
- 3) directs the development of settlement systems;*
- 4) directs the creation of a national transport network and the development of technical infrastructures;*
- 5) creates the basis for a system ensuring the preservation of various types of ecosystems and landscapes and balancing the impact of settlement systems and economic activities which is comprised of natural and semi-natural biotic communities (hereinafter green network);*
- 6) establish objectives for county plans.*

(Planning Act, 2002: §6 (2))

Compilation of the new Estonian National Plan started in February 2010. The law box on the side introduces the aims of a national plan in Estonia according to the planning act.

The National Plan Estonia 2030+ “focuses on the entire land and water area of Estonia as well as on its spatial connections with other countries. The main purpose of the plan is therefore to tackle the most general and principal matters of spatial development for the country as a whole. It will provide guidelines for county plans and international planning co-operation as well as for spatial development of infrastructure, energy production etc.” (Siseministeerium, 2010) It is second time for Estonia to prepare the national plan, in the year 2000 the current plan, Estonia 2010, was adopted. (Ibid.)

The current national plan is criticised for its out of date content (Keskkonnaõiguse Keskus, 2010) and it has been followed selectively, as some of the strategic decisions are not in accordance with the plan: for example, the plan states that in Kuusalu parish is a core area for green networks, but in that area decided to develop Estonian Defence

Force's polygon. (Lass, 2010) Kaur Lass pointed out two main problems the plan had, first of all it had action strategy, but it was not updated (mainly planned actions ended there in the year 2003) and it was accessible only by the Internet, which was inadequate, as 10 years ago Estonians did not have that wide spread habit of using the Internet. (Ibid.)

With the current national plan are covered topics such as:

- settlement pattern, structure and landscape;
- spatial connections with rest of the Europe
- transportation;
- energetic;
- green networks and natural environment.

These topics will be developed further in the new plan. In addition to Estonia 2030+ will be added topics about:

- marine areas;
- city centres and networks;
- suburbanised areas;
- and rural settlements. (*Siseministeerium*, 2010)

In the webpage, that is settled to Wordpress blog environment, for the national plan 2030+ the ministry states that they aim for open planning process that gives opportunity for all interested stakeholders and persons to participate in the process. Following paragraph analysis the planning process and public involvement in it.

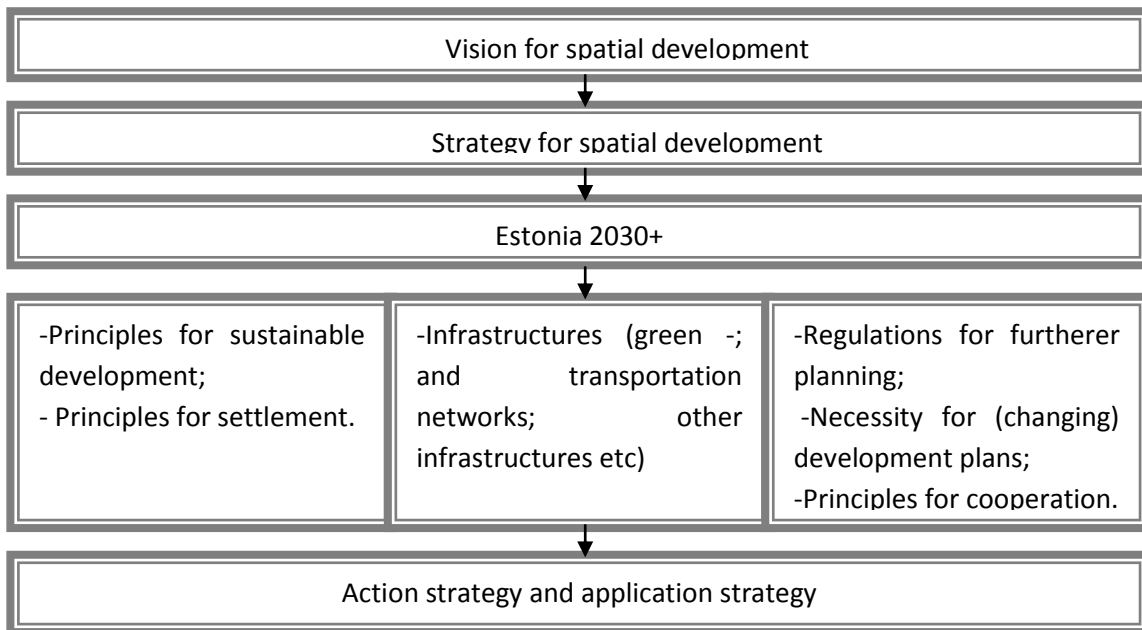
6.2. THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS FOR ESTONIA 2030+

Compilation of the plan was conducted by the department of planning in the Estonian Ministry of the Interior and was coordinated by Kaur Lass, the project manager for Estonia 2030+. (*Siseministeerium*, 2010) From the ministry's side four persons were involved for the compilation of the plan, and due to low budget only one of them, Tavo Kikas, had it as the whole work responsibility, others did the job among other tasks. In addition, sometimes participated PR department and for the whole planning department was used for organising public discussions. (Appendix A) The project manager, Kaur Lass, states, "from the side it can be seen that the resource is insufficient, completely insufficient." (Ibid.)

This section introduces the involvement procedures the organisers have used in the process. Firstly the public involvement requirements for national spatial plan according to Estonian Planning Act are presented. The law establishes that the ministry has to inform the public about the initiation and purposes of a national spatial plan within one month after initiation of the plan. The note has to be published in *Riigi Teataja* (the State Gazette) and at least in one daily nation-wide newspaper. The content of the plan has to be accomplished in cooperation with county governments; associations of local governments; ministries; and other affected state officials. Follows coordination of the content with county governments; associations of local governments; and ministries. Then the ministry introduces the main principles of the plan in at least one daily nation-wide newspaper and finally, the Estonian Government accepts the plan. (*Planeerimiseseadus*, 2002)

Before introducing the involvement procedures it is important to understand the process for compiling Estonia 2030+, which is shown in the figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1. Stages for Estonia 2030+



(Siseministeerium, 2010)

The figure 6.1. presents that the process starts with compiling vision, which is an agreement about spatial development in Estonia for the next 20-25 years. (Lass, 2010) The vision states the main development goals and the strategy presents the ways for reaching the goals. These two documents are the basis for compiling the national spatial plan Estonia 2030+. The plan is concerned about principles for sustainable development; infrastructure; regulations for furtherer planning; necessity for development plans and principles for cooperation. Finally the ministry creates action and application strategies that are presenting how the plan will be reached in reality. (Siseministeerium, 2010)

Figure 6.2. Timeline for public involvement process in Estonia 2030+

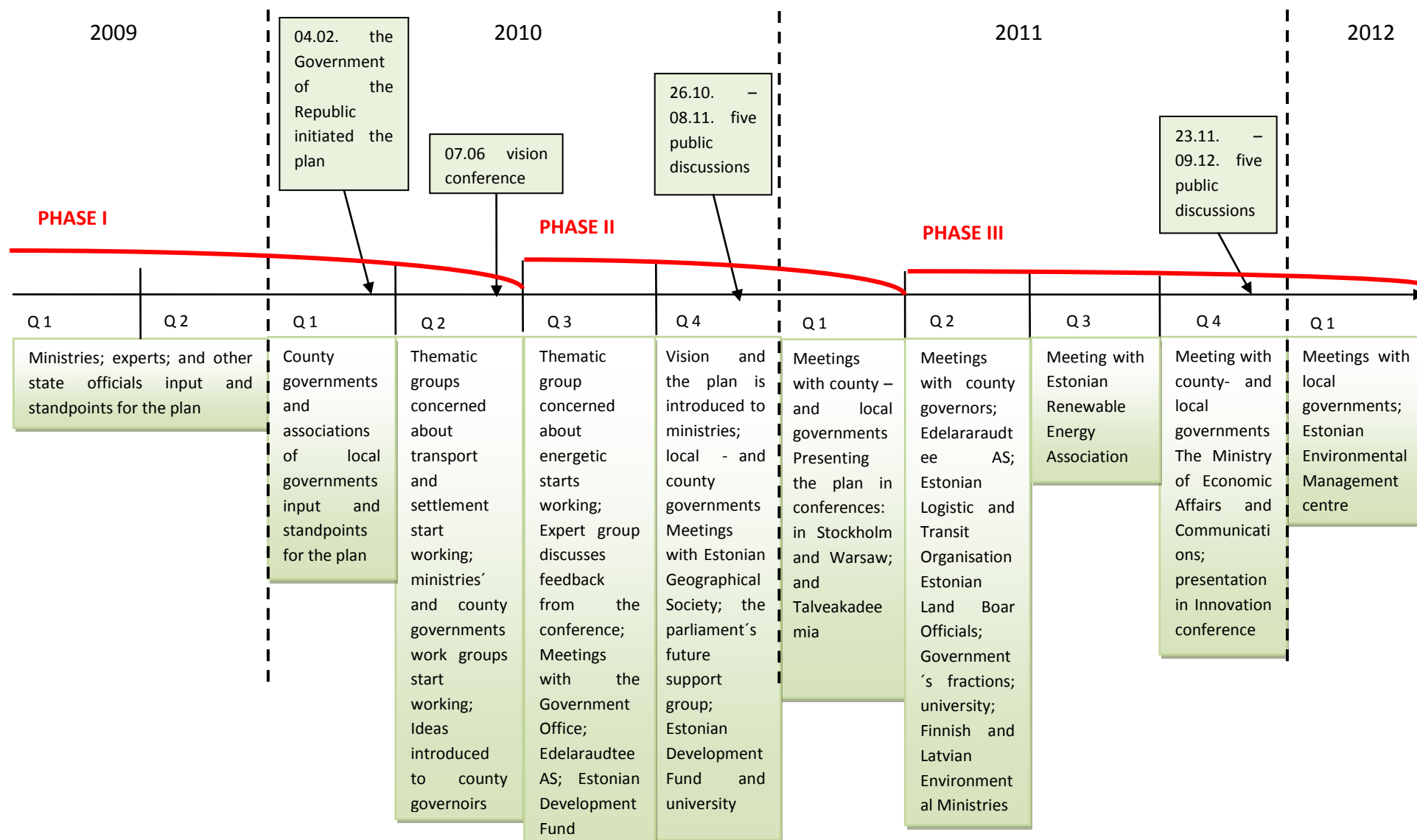


Figure 6. 2 presents involvement plan for Estonia 2030 +. As seen from the figure the compilation process could be divided into three phases. Follows description of every phase.

Phase I: Preparing the plan and drawing up the vision – Before initiation of the plan, from August until October 2009, Estonian Ministry of the Interior asked all Estonian ministries, experts and other state officials to send their standpoints and input for the plan. In 04.02.2010 the Government of the Republic initiates the plan, after that, from February to March 2010, county governments and associations of local governments have also asked to send their standpoints and input for the plan. (Siseministeerium, 2010) Kaur Lass, the project manager for Estonia 2030+, claims that at first the organizers created an **expert group**. The purpose of the expert group was to coordinate the planning process; decide who should be involved for compilation of Estonia 2030+; prepare meetings; and check the final version of the vision. (Appendix A) In the group was 15 experts (Siseministeerium, 2010) from different fields (e.g. from county governments until universities) (Appendix A), some of them took part in compilation of the previous Estonian National Spatial Plan. (Appendix B – Anni Konsap) During the discussions between the plan's organisers and the expert group, the parties reached an agreement that all public materials about Estonia 2030+ should be reachable from a plans' webpage. The expert group's working format was meeting: before every meeting they got an agenda and topics that should be discussed. Kaur Lass states that the expert group was not the decision maker, or the one who was responsible for drawing up Estonia 2030 +. (Appendix A)

Thematic groups were responsible for creating content for the plan. Three thematic groups were formed: thematic group for settlement; thematic group for transportation and thematic group for energetic (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas), later added a group concerned about marine areas (Appendix A). In every thematic group was 10- 15 specialists, "that, in principle, were involved only for 'thank you' ('thank you' is an Estonian expression when work is done without payment- editor)" (Appendix A). With this statement Kaur Lass meant that the budget for Estonia 2030+ was low and therefore they could not pay too much for the specialists. Tavo Kikas, adviser of the department of planning in the Estonian Ministry of the Interior, stated that experts in thematic groups had very different backgrounds: from scientists until officials and representatives of NGOs. (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas) Kaur Lass adds that in the thematic group for marine areas were involved only state officials, because no one has deep down knowledge about this field and therefore the purpose was to start discussing the development directions for it. (Appendix A)

When the groups were formed then the process for developing a vision for Estonia 2030+ started. The expert group offered a preliminary vision, where the plan should go and what the goals were, and in the thematic groups the substantive parts of the vision were discussed. (Ibid.) After that "despite the fact that we had good experts, but no one could not say the final word which is sole right, that something has to be exactly like that, then for the next round we invited together **county governments** and **associations of local governments**. Majority of them came and the preliminary vision was discussed through." (Ibid.) Kaur Lass claims that as the result of these meetings at least one third of the content of the vision was changed. Then the changed vision was presented to representatives of **all Estonian ministries** and the content was modified one more time. (Appendix A) Tavo Kikas adds that for the discussion described above were created separate working groups for county governments; - associations of local governments and – ministries (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas). After those meetings the vision was discussed in the expert group – they corrected and rephrased the document in a way that it could be understandable for ordinary citizens. This version was

presented in 07.06.2010 in **public discussion** at *KUMU* (Art Museum of Estonia), see figure 6.3. Invitations for the conference were sent to 220 people, and all other interested citizens/organizations/ officials could join the event, because advertisements were added to all bigger Estonian newspapers and Siim Kiisler, the Regional Minister of Estonia introduced the plan in Estonian Public Broadcasting 's morning programme (Appendix A), the clip is also uploaded to YouTube and were introduced in informative videos (see Chapter 5.3.1.) According to Kaur Lass, approximately 150 people participated in the vision conference: there were represented members of the parliament; ministries; county governments; local governments; NGO-s; university students; key organisations (such as an Estonian railway company 'Edelaraudtee' and an energetic company 'Eesti Energia'); and media. The key companies were always invited to public meetings (and later they had individual meetings), because it is not realistic to hope that the plan will be used without reaching agreements with them. (Ibid.)

In the conference were held 6 presentations about Estonia 2030+ and Estonian development possibilities, the day ended with a discussion for supplementing the vision. (*Siseministeerium*, 2010) The vision was presented in full length together with comments about it. Every participant of the conference got a folder with the vision and two sided questionnaire, where participants could write their opinions and state the things they like and dislike about the vision. Furthermore, the vision was uploaded to the homepage of Estonia 2030+ and everyone could comment it also from there. After the conference the expert group discussed the feedback and complemented the vision which, in turn, was discussed with thematic groups and representatives from ministries. This phase resulted with two pages long vision that is the starting position for Estonia 2030+. (Appendix A)

Figure 6.3. Vision conference in KUMU



(*Siseministeerium*, 2010)

Phase II: Drawing up content for Estonia 2030+ - The vision was established and the **thematic groups** started to discuss about concrete issues in settlement, transportation and energetic. The purpose was to ensure that all of the fields were working together and they could ensure development for Estonia. In this phase the thematic groups considered one more time the **input** that all Estonian **ministries; experts; other state officials; county governments; and associations of local governments** sent in the very beginning of the process. (Ibid.)

Based on the vision and specified input from the thematic groups, the organisers of the plan set up **five public discussions**, see figure 6.4. (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas) The discussions were held from 26.10 – 08.11.2010 in different Estonian cities. The cities were chosen in a way that all citizens and officials from Estonian 15 counties could participate in meetings close to their county. (Siseministeerium, 2010) Tavo Kikas, believes that it was not a problem, that meetings were not held in every county, he believes that this would have been too much (Appendix B - Tavo Kikas), because as already stated before the budget for the plan was not large and organization team was little. Kikas adds, that as the plan is broad then it is reasonable to connect many counties for these kinds of meetings (Ibid.). In the discussions were held four presentations about the vision and Estonian development directions. All the meetings ended with discussions and a group work. (Appendix A) In addition all citizens had the possibility to write their opinions via homepage or send it through an e-mail. (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas)

Figure 6.4. Public discussions and group works, held in fall 2010



(Siseministeerium, 2010)

All participants of the meetings had the possibility to take part of group works, according to Kaur Lass majority of the audience used the opportunity, he estimates that approximately 10 % of them did not want to participate. (Appendix A) People were divided into four or five groups (Appendix B – Anni Konsap), organisers followed the principle that in a team is maximum 10 people to ensure that everyone could be part of discussion and they all are not coming from the same circle (Appendix A). Every team had a leader from the organisers; whose task was to make sure that the discussion is on track (Appendix B – Anni Konsap) and make notes from discussions inside the group, “because sometimes there was not enough time to present all the important and good things and sometimes the most active (group member – editor) was dominating, for example in one presentation in Tartu (the second biggest city in Estonia - editor) there was a man who did not speak the things that were discussed (in the team – editor), but his own opinions. So, on the one side public involvement is a good thing, but on the other side, the thing that someone is speaking on behalf of public might not be always correct” (Appendix A) Every time the teams got the same three questions (Ibid.) where participants had to point out and discuss important issues of settlement, transportation and energetic in their region and after present and discuss their findings with others (Appendix B – Anni Konsap). The teams had to consider the scope of national spatial plan, but the main problem was that sometimes they got too detailed during their discussions, then the team leader had a task to guide them back. (Ibid.) Kaur Lass states that they asked only three broad questions, because citizens are not experts, they can state rather general opinions. He believes that the discussions were good,

because audience was interested in discussing about other's presentations and they got good input for the plan: there appeared ideas and problems that organisers would never figure out by themselves. (Appendix A) The workshops were a way of involving public actively in the planning process, but in this phase social media channels were not used. Thematic groups started to work with the ideas from the public discussions (Ibid.), notes and protocols were used to adjust and change the plan (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas). After several meetings understandings about the priorities in settlement, transportation and energetic emerged. Followed negotiations with **ministries** and **key local governments** (bigger regional centres or cities that are strategically important) and drawing up the content for Estonia 2030+. (Appendix A)

Phase III: Correcting and coordinating the plan – After establishing the plan solutions the organisers started writing it together. In this phase they had several meetings with **the Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications**, because they are responsible for economy and without coordinating the topics with them the plan would not be realized. (Ibid.)

Figure 6.5. Public discussions held in fall 2011



(Siseministeerium, 2010)

This version was presented in five **public discussions** that were held from 23.11. – 09.12. 2011, see figure 6.5. Again, the cities were chosen in a way that all citizens and officials from Estonian counties could participate in meetings close to their county. (Siseministeerium, 2010) In the discussion were three presentations about Estonia 2030 + (Ibid.) and one presentation where someone from the region spoke how the plan could be tied with the region (Appendix A). All meetings ended with discussions, between presentations and discussions was used a short entreating video as a 'icebreaker' (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas), it will be discussed further in the next section. The discussions were meant for all Estonians, but ministries; county governments; associations of local governments (Ibid.) and well known experts got separate invitations. (Appendix B – Anni Konsap). In addition information about the discussions was published in local newspapers and was accessible from plan's homepage. (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas) Kaur Lass points that the main participants were officials from local and county governments and few citizens. He claims, "at the first time there were many ordinary citizens, I don't know, whether the involvement bugged them so much or information was very accessible, and there were no big conflicts (...)" (Appendix A), and therefore the citizens did not come to the discussions (Ibid.). Tavo Kikas believes that the reason behind not showing up is that the plan is very broad and ordinary citizens are not able to connect themselves with it. (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas). This time in discussions they did not organize group works, because the content for the

plan was already developed, but nevertheless the organisers listened and considered all the opinions that participants stated. (Ibid.) The lower citizen participation might also be reasoned with the fact that it might be more exciting to participate in a workshop than being just informed about it.

After the public discussion the working groups considered the ideas and made the necessary changes. The plan presented to **ministries** and with their inputs the organisers improved it one more time. The final version of the plan emerged from this basis, which, in the beginning of 2012, was discussed with key parties (officials and organisations that were affected of the changes). Followed coordination with all Estonian ministries; county governments; and associations of local governments. (Appendix A) Currently the coordination of the plan is finished and as the next step the plan goes to the Government of the Republic for discussion and approval. (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas).

Kaur Lass discusses that the most complicated thing during the whole process is to gain acceptance from the Government (Appendix A). “We went (presented the plan – editor) two times to the Parliament of Estonia, (...), but the representatives of the Government Office has preferred the role of bystanders, so to take a weak spot here (...) it is a question of political will ” (Ibid.). The Government cannot leave the plan aside, because it is, by law, a compulsory document, but they have a possibility to extend the process. Lass understood already in the very beginning of the plan’s compilation process that politicians do not want to be engaged with the vision of the plan. (Ibid.) “The absence of the vision gives the government freedom (...) to do what they want. (...) Presence and acceptance of the vision means, that if they are coming along, then they limit themselves. It is complicated to say then, that we did something completely differently” (Ibid.). In fact, this was one of the reasons for the wide involvement process, because if the organisers make the plan extremely visible and therefore, even a bit tedious, then it is not possible to stop the process. Lass estimates that public involvement is the thing that gains the acceptance of the plan from the government, because it is difficult to reject when the things presented in the plan are economically reachable and generally desired. (Ibid.)

To conclude, Tavo Kikas believes that during the compilation of 2030+ they have involved many stakeholders and more than required by the law. He would not do anything differently in this field, because they have done maximum they could possibly do. “Considering the minimum the planning law establishes, we have done a lot. And what personally, for me, made a good impression, was that from the beginning was established a plan for involvement and we have kept it. (...) I think it should be done, already when a plan is initiated, it is really necessary.” (Ibid.) Kaur Lass adds that their budget was low, but the involvement was wide. All in all more than 1200 people were involved in different meetings, conferences, discussions. In addition all Estonian daily- and county newspapers have written an article about the plan. “there was enough media coverage, it was distributed for so long time, even if you did not happen to read one (article- editor), did not happen to read second, and did not happen to read third then finally you had to hear something about the plan from somewhere (in media – editor)”. (Appendix A)

Lass discusses that currently, after receiving input for the plan by different involvement procedures, he would not build the process up with major changes. If they had higher budget and more resource for the process, then the PR side might have been better. “ If there would have been people, who have proper PR skills, then it (the plan- editor) would have been more visible in media” (Ibid.) In the budget was no money for publishing newspaper articles, the organisers had to convince journalists to

write the articles or to use their personal connections for that. He adds that he expected better work from the ministry's PR department, because they were only responsible for publishing information in county newspapers. Lass claims that the department received the information about the plan constantly, but the organisers had to remember them often to share the information. For example in *Ida-Virumaa* (one of the Estonian counties) was public meeting and the organisers had written an article to publish it before the discussion, but it did not happen, hence it was re-written to be published in the same day as the meeting was held, but also this time it was not published, then the article was re-written one more time and finally it got published couple weeks after the meeting. (Ibid.) "These are the stupid mistakes that are not conditioned by resources, but rather because of a single official's or somebody's unwillingness to do the thing" (Ibid.) PR department was also responsible for photographing the whole process, but finally Lass himself had to make the pictures. He thinks that it would have been nice to have more pictures about the public meetings and discussions, because they could have upload more pictures to the Wordpress page with explanatory texts, then the process might be more interesting for ordinary citizens. This is the thing that probably will not change the final result a lot, but it might help to be open towards the citizens. (Ibid.)

6.3. SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS USED IN ESTONIA 2030+

The main purpose for using social media channels for compilation of Estonia 2030+ has been to ensure that information about the plan is widely spread, because only newspaper notes and - articles might not be enough for fulfilling that purpose. Social media also ensures feedback about the plan (Appendix B – Anni Konsap) (Ibid.) In addition the Ministry of the Interior's is responsible for supervising county- and municipal plans, therefore they have the knowledge that public involvement is a weak spot in Estonian planning and the ministry can use the Estonia 2030+ as an good example of how planners could do more than required by the law. (Ibid. – Tavo Kikas)

The previous paragraph introduced the involvement process the organisers have done and this paragraph presents social media channels they have used for public involvement. The social media channels have been Wordpress page as a homepage for the plan; an entertaining video and online forum.

6.3.1. WORDPRESS

Public materials about Estonia 2030+ is accessible from a Wordpress page. The page has been public since May 2010, but the organisers started to use the page actively before the vision conference in KUMU (in June 2010, see figure 6.6.). The Wordpress format was chosen because it is easy to manage; free; it has a possibility to publish all the materials, use it as a homepage and create an online forum; and besides the site is known among the people who are used to blog. (Appendix A) As the planning department of the Estonian Ministry of the Interior has to manage the webpage with its own forces, then the easy managing was very important. Anni Konsap is responsible that all the data is uploaded and comments answered. (Appendix B – Anni Konsap)

Konsap finds that the Wordpress has not always been the best solution, because it is limited in some ways, for example she had trouble with uploading the video and the ministry had to pay fee in order to get the video uploaded, „all these kinds of small things, and as I am never blogged before, then it was first time for me, so making all these menus and the technical side, it was sometimes complicated.“ (Ibid.) Tavo Kikas believes that despite the fact that the page has been public for two

years, it needs to be re-done constantly, because when the new material is uploaded the page gets often confusing. It is difficult to see the structure and intensity of the material from the beginning of the process, but they have been working to make sure that the page is structured clearly and understandably. (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas)

Figure 6.6. Wordpress page for Estonia 2030+

Eesti 2030+

Uue üleriigilise planeeringu
koostamine



Värske teave Mis on Eesti 2030+? Mida arvad Sina? Eesti 2030+ koostamine Avalikud arutelud Meediakajastus In English По-русски

Värske teave

Üleriigilise planeeringu Eesti 2030+ eelnõu ja tegevuskava planeerimisseaduse § 17 lg 1 kohane kooskõlastusring ministeeriumide, maavanemate ja maakondlike kohalike omavalitsuste liitudega on lõppenud!

Kooskõlastamise tulemuste alusel täiendatud ja parandatud üleriigiline planeering ja selle tegevuskava avaldatakse lähiajal.

★ Like Be the first to like this page.



REGIONAALARENGU TOETUSEKS

Siseministeeriumi regionaal-
valdkonna planeeringute
osakond
siseministeerium.ee/planeeringud

Lehed

- Avalikud arutelud
 - KSH aruande avalik arutelu
 - KSH programmi avalik arutelu
 - Muud tutvustavad arutelud 2010
 - Muud tutvustavad arutelud 2011/2012

(Siseministeerium, 2010)

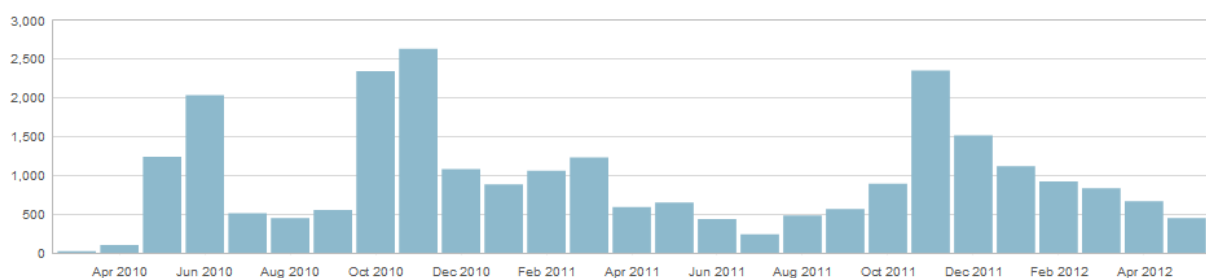
The page is in Estonian, but the user could change the language to English or Russian, in these cases the page presents an overview about the plan and some links to presentations in English or Russian, but the rest of the material remains in Estonian. The front page has two menus: one horizontal and other vertical (see figure 6.6.) Both of the menus have the same topics but in different order: „Värske teave“ (New Information); „Mis on Eesti 2030+?“ (What is Estonia 2030+?); „Mida arvad Sina?“ (What Do You Think?); „Eesti 2030+ koostamine“ (Compilation of Estonia 2030+); „Avalikud arutelud“ (Public Discussions); and „Meediakajastus“ (Media Cover). The difference between the two menus is that the vertical menu is more detailed: sub-topics are pointed out and listed below the main topics. (Siseministeerium, 2010)

From the page is accessible among other things information about:

- Compilation of the plan:
 - link for the previous plan, Estonia 2010;
 - link for the Estonian Planning Act and to other Estonian and international documents that should be considered while compilation the national spatial plan;

- the initiation decision;
- the expert opinions; opinions from the state offices, county governments and other interested organisations;
- the involvement plan;
- the list of the experts that were working in the expert group and thematic groups; the list of the state officials that were working in ministries' and county governments' working groups;
- draft of the plan and its action plan;
- main standpoints from the thematic groups;
- presentations from different meetings that Kaur Lass or Tavo Kikas have held;
- presentations about Finnish and Latvian national spatial plans.
- The vision conference:
 - the vision for the conference;
 - changed vision after the conference;
 - the presentations and pictures;
 - agenda for the day.
- The public discussions in 2010 and 2011:
 - the list of participants;
 - the protocols about the meetings;
 - the presentations from the meetings;
 - agenda for the meetings.
- The dates of meetings the organisers have had with ministries, county governments, associations of local governments, local governments, other state officials, organisations, businesses and universities and for some of them are also linked the presentations that were held there;
- Information about the strategic environmental assessment. (*Siseministerium*, 2010)

Figure 6.7. The number of views in the Wordpress page



(*Siseministerium*, 2010)

Figure 6.7. presents monthly statistic about views of the Wordpress page. When to compare the statistic with the timeline (see figure 6.2.) then it is clearly seen that the most visits the page had during public discussions: in 07.06.2010 was held the vision conference and in May (2010) are approximately 1250 views and in June (2010) 2000 persons have visited the page. In October and November 2010 the views are raising over 2500 and it can be explained with five public discussions that were held from 25.10. – 08.11.2010. Next five public discussions were held from 23.11 – 09.12. 2011 and from the figure is seen that in November at the same year the page had more than 2250

visitors and in December around 1000 visitors. This might also relate to media coverage that was higher during the public discussions.

Lass points out as an achievement that the Wordpress address was presented in every media article that were published about the plan. It is an achievement, because usually homepages are considered as hidden commercials and therefore are not published in articles. Through the articles every reader got information where to find additional material about the plan. In addition the initial creators of the Wordpress page made an effort, with using keywords, that the page appears as a first thing when one types "Eesti 2030+" to Google.ee (the Internet search engine). (Appendix A) The author of the thesis tested the claim and it is true - first two results are links to the Wordpress site, third is a link to the Estonian Ministry of the Interior homepage and fourth is Wikipedia link.

Kikas and Lass are agreeing that the Wordpress page presents enough material for public. Kaur Lass states that if one is interested then he could get a full overview about the process. (Appendix A) Kikas adds that there are many different links, in which some are more and some are less relevant for the plan (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas). Still, there is not presented all materials, because „who will read all this thick material? There is no sense to put everything on the Internet“ (Appendix A).

Tavo Kikas believes that the Wordpress page has fulfilled its purposes, as it is „a place, where people, who are interested, even a little, can find the materials and read them“ (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas) Lass believes that if the ministry would have higher budget and more working force then the homepage could have been used even more actively, because currently in the ministry is a situation that the person who is responsible for the page has also other work tasks to do and she has time to manage the homepage only when other urgent issues are solved. (Appendix A)

6.3.2. VIDEO

The organisers used a video as a tool for public discussions that were held in fall 2011. Tavo Kikas claims, “the purpose was very simple, we wanted to use it, and we used it, in public discussions for ‘ice breaking’: to tune participants openly think together, so they are not closed and stuck with their everyday problems, to release their thinking” (Appendix B - Tavo Kikas). The idea for the movie appeared, because Tavo Kikas is an amateur actor; and the acting club, he is part of, had made a silent movie as a ‘trailer’ for one of the plays. Highly by accident the manager of the planning department in the Estonian Ministry of the Interior saw the video and ever since they had an idea to make something similar for presenting the Estonia 2030+ in public discussions. (Ibid.)

Currently the video is reachable from YouTube, Facebook and in Estonia 2030+ Wordpress page. (Ibid.) As described shortly before, the video is 3.06 minutes long silent movie, which is uploaded to YouTube in 6th of January, 2012, see figure 6.8. Inside the video is not presented any material about the Estonia 2030+ , only its headline states that it is “*Üleriigilise planeeringu klipp*” (a clip for a national spatial plan) and below the video is noted that more material is reachable from Estonia 2030+ Wordpress homepage with link for the page. All in all it has 412 views, 2 likes and 2 comments. (Siseministeerium, 2012)

Figure 6.8. Video for Estonia 2030+



(YouTube: *Siseministeerium*, 2012)

The movie reflects the maestro planning times and has two actresses: a planner, Tavo Kikas by himself; and a housemaid. The planner has lined Estonian outline and infrastructure to a huge paper and placed different symbols openly on it. He is clearly in a hurry, but he leaves from the table. The housemaid wants to serve tea, but she cannot find space for that, therefore she shoves the signs away. When the planner notices it, he is furious and starts fixing the situation. Next time the housemaid takes by accident a stick (that holds the paper on the table) away from the plan and it rolls up – the work is ruined again and the planner furious. On the third time the housemaid opens a window to ventilate the room and wind blows the symbols away. Finally, the planner manages to finish the plan and the movie ends with a cadre of the peacefully napping planner. As it is a silent movie, between the cadres are slides for direct speech, which are written in old Estonian. (Ibid.) It is clearly an entertainment video.

According to Tavo Kikas, the movie making, from the idea until the final product took three weeks: the video shooting took one day, but before that was work with the scrip and followed editing and search for fitting music. (Appendix A – Tavo Kikas) Kaur Lass adds that the budget almost did not exist for the movie: a university student recorded and edited it; Tavo Kikas was starring and his friend

from the acting club did the second part. “It is not possible to do video like this with any lower costs” (Appendix A).

Kaur Lass adds that first, in the public discussions, they gave a detailed overview about involvement procedures in the Estonia 2030+ and then they presented the video. He claims, “the film shows, that, yes, back in Soviet times was it done like that and some-when in Estonian times (the first Estonian Republic from 1918-1940- editor) was also done like that, but we have done differently, to show the contrast clearly. And to make the understanding that we are here, to ask (questions about the plan – editor), not for sitting by ourselves without wanting to know anything.” (Ibid.)

Tavo Kikas estimates that the video filled its purposes. In one discussion, they could not show it and this discussion was not as successful as others. (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas) Lass believes that the video made atmosphere in the discussions a bit more joyful, even though at the first place he was sceptic about it, because, “if someone starts making a fun video during compilation of a plan, it is a bit funny, but it turned out better than I expected” (Appendix A) He believes that entertaining video could be useful tool for a planning process that is with high scope as national spatial plan is. (Ibid.)

6.3.3. ONLINE FORUM

The online forum is reachable from the Wordpress homepage, in the front-page are two menus and both of them are having a link to the forum. In addition under some topics, such as materials for public discussions; environmental strategic assessment; and press covers are separately presented a possibility to leave a comment. (*Siseministeerium*, 2010) The forum has been accessible since May 2010. It is an extra opportunity for expressing opinions (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas) and possibility to do it in a simple way (Ibid. – Anni Konsap). It is meant using for everyone (Appendix A) and perhaps, especially for the citizens and organizations who could not participate in the public meetings or were not involved in other ways (Appendix B – Tavo Kikas) or were afraid to express their opinions publically (Ibid. – Anni Konsap).

Every post in the forum has its response from the ministry. Anni Konsap was responsible for the technical side of the web-page, she sent the questions to Tavo Kikas, who answered them and then Konsap uploaded the responses. (Ibid.) Lass adds that he had often to remind the ministry to write answers (and sometimes he wrote them by himself), he expected that the ministry deals with the forum more. (Appendix A)

Mainly experts and representatives of the organisations have used the forum for expressing their opinions, ordinary citizens have not used the possibility actively. (Appendix B – Anni Konsap) This might be, because the level of the plan is too high for the citizens and they do not feel connection with it. (Ibid. – Tavo Kikas) Konsap believed in the beginning of the process that the forum will be actively used and there will be many questions and comments. (Ibid. – Anni Konsap) Lass also thought that there will be a lot of critics, but mainly there were questions. (Appendix A) In reality, in the forum page are 30 comments, together with responses from the ministry. (*Siseministeerium*, 2010) The reason behind few critics might be that the organisers excluded the possibility to make anonymous comments. Before commenting everyone had to insert his e-mail address (Appendix A), name and web page, if one has it (*Siseministeerium*, 2010). The e-mail did not appear in the post, but in this way the ministry knew who was behind the post. (Appendix A)

Kaur Lass believes that the forum filled its purposes, as there were comments, but the solution could have been better. (Ibid.) Anni Konsap adds that some users sent their questions directly to e-mail, therefore she believes there were also other sources where people could express themselves. (Appendix B – Anni Konsap) The organisers did emphasise always that in the Wordpress page are all the materials and everyone could send the feedback from there. (Ibid. – Tavo Kikas)

All the comments from the forum were considered during the compilation of the plan (Ibid.), but only few of them were actually used and for some ideas they said directly 'no'. (Appendix A)

Anni Konsap, Tavo Kikas and Kaur Lass are agreeing that social media channels are helpful for information sharing. (Appendix A, Appendix B) Konsap states that it has been the best opportunity to share information about the plans and announce about the public meetings (Appendix B – Anni Konsap) and as seen from the forum, where has not been very much feedback, it might not be as useful for discussion purposes. (Ibid. – Tavo Kikas)

6.4. SUMMARY TO COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING AND SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS IN ESTONIAN NATIONAL PLAN 2030 +

The Estonian National Plan 2030+ was initiated in February 2010. The purpose of the plan is to settle spatial development principles for the whole country. It covers topics as settlement; spatial connections; transportation; energetic; natural environment; and marine areas. The Estonian Ministry of the Interior is responsible for creating the plan. The ministry has stated that they aim for open planning processes in order to involve all interested parties to participate in the process.

Compilation of the plan was conducted by the department of planning in the Estonian Ministry of the Interior and was coordinated by Kaur Lass, the project manager for Estonia 2030+. From the ministry's side four persons were involved daily with compilation of the plan. For the compilation of the plan were involved stakeholders, as:

Required by Estonian Planning Act:

- Ministries;
- County Governments;
- Associations of Local Governments;
- other affected state officials.

Additional stakeholders:

- Expert group – 15 experts with different backgrounds;
- Four thematic groups – in each group were 10 to 15 experts with different backgrounds;
- Local governments;
- Key entrepreneurs;
- Experts;
- Public;

The stakeholders were involved to the planning process through:

- Meetings;
- Presentations;
- Questionnaire;
- Group work;
- Television;
- Newspaper articles;
- Conference;
- Public discussions;
- Wordpress;
- Video;
- Online forum.

The three last mentioned methods, social media channels, Wordpress page; video; and online forum were investigated in depth. The Wordpress blog environment was used as the plan's homepage, where public materials were uploaded. The page was chosen, because it is free; easy to manage; it has a possibility to publish all the materials, use it as a homepage and create an online forum. The organisers of the plan estimated that the page fulfilled its purposes.

Video was used in public discussions in order to create friendly atmosphere and encourage participants for open discussions. It is short entertaining video. The organisers of the plan find that also the video fulfilled its purposes.

Third used social media channel is online forum. It is accessible from the Wordpress page and its purpose is to invite everybody to leave a comment, proposal or question about the plan and the organisers are answering to every post. In the forum were several discussions, but the organisers expected more.

At the current moment, in May 2012 the coordination of the plan is finished and as the next step the plan goes to the Government of the Republic for discussion and approval.

To conclude, the involvement process for Estonia 2030+ was not common practice in Estonian planning context, because wider public was involved to the process already in its early stage and in different stages. As turned out in the previous paragraph, normally, in Estonia the wider public is involved after the plan solutions are already established. Nevertheless, it is important to remember, that the level of the plan is also wider than in any other plan. Therefore it might be difficult to compare the process for Estonia 2030+ with processes to detailed plan. Secondly, uploading materials to a webpage and having online forum about plan is often used in Estonian planning, but using an entertaining video in a planning process as 'icebreaker' is a new feature.

7. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the discussion is to connect theoretical and empirical analysis and discuss to what extent social media channels could contribute to communicative planning. First part of the chapter debates about communicative planning elements in Estonian planning and especially in the case of Estonia 2030+; and the second part of the chapter discusses about social media channels used in Estonia 2030+ and their contribution for encouraging communicative planning.

7.1. COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING AND ESTONIA 2030+

This paragraph discusses over the fourth sub-question: to what extent does the Estonian national spatial planning process reflect the ideals of communicative planning. The key topics of communicative planning will be discussed. The topics are: public participation; process orientedness; dialogue; mutual understanding; the role of a planner; and methods for communicative process.

All the planning theorists introduced in the thesis - John Friedman, John Forester, Patsy Healey, Judith Innes and David Booher - are agreeing that one of the key elements in communicative planning is public participation. The public is everyone who has a stake in a planning process. The Estonian Planning Act states that public participation is mandatory in order to protect different interests. Thus the two points are matching. However, for compiling a national spatial plan, the law does require neither public meetings nor discussions: the plan should be drafted in accordance with ministries; county governments; associations of local governments; and other affected state officials. From this perspective, the law does not require as wide public participation as the communicative process would recommend. Nevertheless, the organisers of the Estonia 2030+ have chosen to carry wider participation process than required, by adding different experts; key entrepreneurs in Estonia; and wider public to the process, because on the one side the Estonian Ministry of the Interior is responsible for compiling the plan, and at the same time they are responsible for the whole planning field in Estonia, hence by involving more participants than required they can demonstrate good planning practice. In addition, the organisers of Estonia 2030+ are hoping that through public participation the final acceptance from politicians will be gained more easily than without this kind of process. Through the wide process the plan is a public issue, and thereby it is known for everyone; different parties have worked together to achieve the best solution for economically realistic future development. Therefore politicians are in trouble with rejecting the plan; or if they choose to reject or change it then it has to be strongly reasoned. Innes and Booher (2005) have also pointed that one of the reasons for public participation is to inform politicians about the public opinions. As politicians' desire is to be elected again, they cannot set aside wide documents like the plan or refuse accepting it without reasonable explanations.

Another keyword of communicative planning is process orientedness. The theorists believe - if as many sides as possible are involved to the process as early as possible and they are involved in an open and respectful dialogue, where they try to understand each other's standpoints, then the process ends with a plan that is favourable for everyone. The first part of the empirical analysis demonstrated that it is not practiced in Estonia. The planning experts claimed that, in most times, the experts are developing planning solutions and then the solution is presented to public, which is not in accordance with the theory, because it leaves out all three elements that were stated before: early involvement; respectful dialogue; and mutual understanding. Firstly, without further

explanations, it is clear that the processes are setting aside the criteria of early involvement. Secondly, it is difficult to consider a dialogue as open and respectful if one of the sides is involved when the main decisions are already made. Thirdly it might be complex to create understanding among the parties, as probably some of the stakeholders feel upset, because their opinions were not considered before, and therefore they start the discussions with defending their standpoints rather than generating ways for creating a plan that is acceptable for everyone. One could argue that a communicative process could also start with angry participants who are defending their rights, but with time passing, through listening and learning from each others, theoretically, the understanding is gained. The difference is that in the communicative processes the understanding is reached through dialogues that are lasting from the beginning of a process until the end, but in Estonia often stakeholders are not able to participate from the beginning of the process and therefore it might be difficult for parties to reach the understanding.

Based on the knowledge that budgets for planning processes are often low in Estonia; developers are in hurry to reach acceptance from politicians and therefore the planning processes should be fast; and finally planners are not educated nor motivated to develop inclusive planning processes then, in most cases, the understanding among all parties is not reachable. The previous statement might be the reason why participants of the Estonian planning processes are contesting the plans and the civil society groups see the necessity to train people's contesting skills. As a contrast for the previous statement, for Estonia 2030+ the involvement started already before initiation of the plan and involvement plan was created in the early stage of the process. Therefore it is not correct to state that all planning processes in Estonia are in conflict with the principles stated before. On the other hand, for example, Healey claims that all stakeholders of a planning process should compile a plan together, which is in conflict with the case of Estonia 2030+ (or any Estonian planning process), because even though public was considered as stakeholders and their opinions were taken into account, only wider questions were discussed with them, because they do not have specific knowledge that specialists have. Therefore specialists developed the main topics and public had possibility to add their input for the topics, the topic will be discussed further in this paragraph. Nevertheless, the thesis investigated only the participation process for Estonia 2030+, not the results, and therefore it is difficult to state that the understanding was gained and all opinions were considered, but the author of the thesis could state that the conditions for it were created. The results of planning processes in Estonia 2030+ could be a topic for another thesis.

The theorists presented in the thesis do not propose any specific framework for achieving a communicative process. Rather a planner should be creative: consider each process individually and accordingly choose the methods that will conduct a successful communicative process. In the case of Estonia 2030+ it was done, because before starting the process was conducted a plan for public involvement. This shows that the organisers together with experts considered who might have a stake in the process and in order to reduce objections in the late stages of the process they decided who and in which stage should be involved. For example the expert group and the thematic groups established the main topics for the plan and coordinated it with ministries and local authorities and then they presented topics and preliminary content to the public. According to communicative planning theory everyone should be involved from very early stage of the process, but in reality it might not be reasonable, because often ordinary citizens have rather general than specific understandings about very broad issues like the national spatial plan is concerned about. Therefore, at this stage of the plan the public discussions and group works within them were organised. The

participants had to point out the main issues about their region in given topics. The organisers of the process claimed that they got a feedback that they would never be able to figure out by themselves, which they were considered while drafting the plan, therefore, local knowledge was taken into account. When the plan evolved, the organisers arranged another series of public discussions, but as the main standpoints for the plan were already created then the group work method was not necessary anymore and the public had a chance to share their opinions and ideas about the plan in regular discussions. An issue that arises is that both times the public discussions were held in five places. Estonia has 15 counties where there are 226 local governments. Even though Estonia's area is not big, only 45 227 km², it requires using car or public transportation in order to reach the meetings. The organisers stated that in the meetings were not so many citizens (especially in the second one) and reasoned it with the broad level of the plan that does not concern the citizens, but another reason could be the issue that the meetings were far from some citizens. On the one hand it left out citizens who were not able to find transportation, but on the other hand the distance might reduce the number of people who did not feel really connected with the plan, but would have gone to participate in the meetings if they were held close to their homes. In reality it might not be considerable loss, as if people are not interested about the process then they might have nothing to say but it is certainly an issue in terms of communicative planning. The communicative process should raise people's interest towards a process, because when people are involved and they start discussing and listening to each other then they feel connected with the plan and are more interested about it; the process also raises the level of knowledge about the plan and other's standpoints therefore people who did not have standpoint before the process, they might reach them during the process.

Finally, as stated in the beginning of this paragraph, the planner's role in the process is another key topic for communicative planning. Innes and Booher (2010) have recommended that leaders of a planning process should be changed during the process. It is neither in accordance with the Estonian Planning Act nor practice. The Estonian Ministry of the Interior; county governments; or local governments are responsible for Estonian planning processes, they are allowed to delegate the task to a planning company, but they are still responsible for coordinating the processes. Other theorists, presented in the theory, are placing a planner to facilitator's or mediator's role. These roles are more realistic and could be related to Estonian planners. Even though if some of the plan solutions are created behind a table and without cooperation among participants, the law states that the plans should be discussed publicly (except for national spatial plan, but for the Estonia 2030+ they still held public meetings, therefore the case is still relevant) hence theoretically the planners should listen to participants; mediate different opinions and facilitate the process.

To conclude the author of the thesis believes that the communicative process is not fully reachable in reality, but some of the elements could be adoptable and they would benefit planning in general.

7.2. SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS FOR COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING IN ESTONIA 2030+

This paragraph discusses about the fifth sub question, how have social media channels contributed to the Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+.

The theory chapter states that social media channels might have potential for promoting public participation, but they will offer the best result when used together with other public participation methods. According to the case study of Estonia 2030+ the organisers have used besides the social

media channels also meetings; presentations; discussions; group work; questionnaire; newspaper articles; and TV broadcast in order to promote the participation. From social media channels the organisers have chosen to use Wordpress blog environment as the plan's homepage; video and online forum. All the three channels had different purposes. When to divide them according to Tuzzi, et.al (2007) categorization then the Wordpress page and video are promoting informative level of public participation, because in the Wordpress are uploaded materials about the plan that are accessible for everyone, therefore everyone has possibility to familiarise with the plan, its process and background. The video was produced to lower tensions and reduce gaps between performers and other participants. It is a short entertaining video about maestro planning times in Estonia, which does not introduce in any ways the current planning process. Kaur Lass explained that purpose of the content is to inform participants that in past planners were drawing behind table and public was not involved to the process, but this time it is different, public is welcome to express their opinion. The online forum is an example of consultation level of public participation, because it offers possibility to be involved to online discussions in the Wordpress page. Thus the users are included in two levels to online participation process. The interviewed organisers claimed that the informative level gave better results than consultation level, because on the forum are less discussions than they expected. However, this cannot be the final judgement, because on the one hand the plan's budget was low, therefore there was not a person who was managing the page and forum all the time, which might reduce the use of forum as probably managing it (answering to posts, encouraging new discussions, promoting it) needs more time than uploading materials to the page. On the other hand the plan is broad and many people; organisations; and entrepreneurs are not interested in it, therefore an online forum might offer better results when a process is concerned about local issues. This could be topic for another thesis.

One could argue that it is difficult to estimate the usefulness of informative channels, because it might be difficult to track, but as the Wordpress page is the only source where the materials are uploaded all together for public and the organisers have referred to the page in meetings, presentations, discussions and newspaper articles and besides that they have used specific keywords in order to occur first while someone is using Google search engine in order to achieve materials about the plan, and therefore one could assume that a person who needed/wanted information about the plan used the Wordpress page.

It is stated that the channels might be useful tools for public participation, but only if used right. The criteria for it might be dependent on the attractiveness of created content. Follows a discussion about the content of social media channels used in Estonia 2030+.

As already stated the Wordpress page was used as a plan's homepage. Ellis (2011) has presented characteristics that could distinguish a blog from a homepage. Table 7.1. presents the characteristics which are compared to the Wordpress page.

Table 7.1. Blog characteristics compared with Wordpress page for Estonia 2030+

Characteristic	Wordpress page for Estonia 2030+
1) Rapid	+/-, on the one hand the content is time specific, because new information is constantly uploaded and people can express their opinion in real time, but on the other hand the information remains relevant even if time passes as

	everything is documented and it all together creates archive to the planning process. To compare it with a blog, where a blogger is posting about a TV show, then without seeing the show the content might be irrelevant;
2) Time- sampled	+, all recently uploaded information is presented on the front-page
3) Personal	- only documents and impersonal descriptions of the documents and events are added to the page
4) Two-way communication	+, readers can post in the forum and some posts made on the Wordpress they are able to comment directly
5) Feeds	+ the page offers possibility to join with a feed list and receive information when new material is uploaded to the page

The table results that 3, 5 blog characteristics out of five are foundable from the Wordpress page for Estonia 2030+. The theory investigated the features that are creating a good content for blogs, but not for homepages. As the case represents a bit of both, therefore some of the criteria's established for blogs might not be relevant. The purpose of the page is to share information and invite for a debate through possibilities to comment posts and online forum, which will be discussed later. Table 7.2. compares the features of good content for a blog with the Wordpress page.

Table 7.2. Features for successful blog content compared to Wordpress page for Estonia 2030+

Feature	Wordpress page for Estonia 2030+
1) Strong title	+ all titles are clear and guide a user
2) Strong open lines	+/- some of the posts are introduced in with opening lines, but in other cases only links to relevant information are presented
3) Comprehensive coverage of topics	+ different topics about the plan are accessible on the page and some topics are divided into sub-topics in order to create clear understanding about the issues
4) 250-1000 words	-, as stated, some of the posts are presenting only links and some of the posts (and documents under the links) are longer than 1000 words. In this point it is important to remember that the blog is rather a homepage where public materials are presented
5) Linked with organisation's URL	+ on the front page is link to the Estonian Ministry of the Interior's homepage

The table results that 3, 5 out of five features of successful blog content has been found in the Wordpress homepage. The focus of the blog is to share information about Estonia 2030+, hence the author of the thesis finds that the page is informative and material is easily reachable from the page.

The video was also already presented before in this chapter. It is an entertaining video. Table 7.3. compares features of a video's good content with the video for Estonia 2030+.

Table 7.3. Features for successful video content compared to the video for Estonia 2030+

Feature	The video for Estonia 2030+
1) Entertaining	+, it is interesting to watch the video from the beginning until the end
2) Short	+, 3.06 minutes long
3) Simple	+, two actors were used and the video was produced with low expenses, but the author of the thesis finds it interesting and the organisers claimed that it fulfilled its purposes to be an 'icebreaker'
4) Focused	+, it is concentrated to one storyline
5) Fresh	+, the idea of using an entertainment video is fresh in Estonian planning context
6) Linked with organisation's URL	-, in the video is no information about the organisation; actors; producers etc

The comparison resulted that five features out of six were fulfilled. As Miller (2012) recommended in theory the video was published in YouTube to make it public. Therefore if the video is used in public meetings, where organisers are able to introduce it or comment the purpose after the video, then the missing URL feature does not play a big role. On the other hand when it is uploaded to YouTube, then it might be difficult to understand it's real purpose without knowing it. In the YouTube page is published the link for Estonia 2030+ Wordpress page, but some of not-experienced YouTube users might not notice it and the meaning that is behind entertainment might get lost.

The third social media channel is the online forum. Table 7.4. compares features that a good online forum should have with the online forum for Estonia 2030+.

Table 7.4. Features for successful online forum content compared to the forum for Estonia 2030+

Feature	Online forum for Estonia 2030+
1) Useful	+, every Internet user could leave his comment or question about the plan
2) Considered keywords for SEO	+/-, the online forum was not divided into topics therefore all the posts are displayed in one page, however the forum could benefit from the Wordpress page, which has specific keywords that are helping to display the blog as first in Google
3) Registered users	+, in order to post on the forum every user have to leave his name, e-mail address and web-page if one has it
4) Demographic data	-, the users of the forum do not have to determine their gender while posting
5) Host's profile is public	+/-, it is public that the Ministry for the Interior is coordinating the webpage, but it might be difficult to distinguish by brief look, which of the responses are from the ministry, because they are made under the name of Anni Konsap. She is responsible for managing the page, but a citizen might not know it
6) Hosts' are participating in discussions	+, every comment is answered

7) Hosts' posts are personable	+, the ministry answers politely, but they have used informal language
8) Linked with organisation's URL	+, on the page is link to the Estonian Ministry of the Interior's homepage

The table presents that six out of eight features are fulfilled. However, the discussions in the forum are not highly active, as from the beginning of the forum, there has been made only 30 posts, together with responses from the ministry. The organisers are reasoning it with several possibilities (e-mails, meetings, public discussions) for sharing opinions about the plan and the broad level of the plan. Kaur Lass believes that there might be higher participation rate in the forum if there would be a person whose only work task is to manage the webpage and online forum. However, this statement cannot be proved or denied according to the analysis carried out for the thesis.

The Organisers of the Estonia 2030+ have not actively used Twitter or Facebook for promoting the plan.

According to the case study the social media channels are offering best opportunities for information sharing. First of all, the channels are presenting an easy opportunity to upload all the material about the plan to the same place; do it quickly and share it in real-time with many users. In this way every interested participant (who has the Internet access) is able to familiarise with the planning documents and therefore raise his knowledge about the plan. In this way, when people are prepared, the meetings are more productive and discussions will be stronger.

The case study also presents, the online discussions were not the strongest side of the planning process. However, the possibility for online discussions should be given, because it offers participation opportunities for people that are not able to attend in the meetings or are modest in public speaking.

Finally, it is important to point out the relevance of PR in the field of planning as some of the theory in the thesis is transmitted from this domain. Kaur Lass pointed his expectations - if the PR department of the ministry would have worked more productively, then the Wordpress page would have been even more active or there would have been more press coverage of the plan. This shows that a planner should also have knowledge from PR that could be converted for promoting plans and raising participants' interest towards it. Another possibility is to have personal with knowledge about PR to help him.

7.3. POTENTIALS AND BARRIERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS IN COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING

This paragraph lists and discusses one last time over the potentials and barriers that social media channels have for communicative planning.

7.3.1 POTENTIALS OF SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS IN COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING

Firstly, the potentials will be discussed. Similar discussion is already carried out in Chapter 2.7., hence the points that were discussed there are just listed in this paragraph. The Chapter 2.7. was in the

middle of the theoretical analysis, therefore new understanding about the issue peeled out during the rest of the theoretical - and empirical analysis. These potentials will be discussed below the list.

Social media channels could encourage public participation in informative level:

- Information sharing is fast;
- Information sharing is easy;
- Huge amount of information can be shared at once;
- Through virtual communities the information is accessible for many stakeholders;
- Sharing and receiving information is independent from stakeholders' physical location;
- Sharing and receiving information is comfortable, because often people do not have to leave their habitual atmosphere;
- Through social media channels younger people are involved to planning processes;
- Social media channels do not require high investments.

Social media channels could encourage public participation in consultative level:

- Standpoints can be shared independently from stakeholders' physical location;
- Stakeholders who do not like public speaking have possibility to discuss their opinions with others in online discussions;
- Stakeholders who cannot think fast in stress situation (that a face-to face discussion might turn out) are able to think their standpoints through in a calm atmosphere (as probably they are separated from others);
- All stakeholders have possibility to analyse received information through and after considering all the aspects in a calm atmosphere, they can write their answers;
- Before stating something in online discussions a stakeholder has possibility to ascertain that all necessary points are shared and framed in a way that is understandable for other stakeholders, which is not possible in face-to-face conversations.

As already stated, furtherer analysis issued with new standpoints that will be introduced in the following discussion. Social media channels are facilitating planners to collect and process data. The first four points in the list above presented that the channels allow to share information (in this case, for example, a questionnaire) to many stakeholders at once. First of all, it is easier for stakeholders to answer the questionnaire, because they can do it at home; work; or in public Internet spaces, hence they are not required to bring the questionnaire for certain time to specific place. This feature might raise the number of stakeholders who will answer the questionnaire. Secondly, at current times, most of data analyses are carried out with computers, therefore if the answers are already in typed format, then it is easier for planners to process the data. It also excludes the situation that some of the information will be lost due to non-understandable handwriting. The dark side is that social media channels are producing constantly a lot of new information, hence the questionnaire might get lost in there. In addition, if a person chooses not to answer the questionnaire immediately then it is highly possible that he will forgot to do it. That might not happen when a questionnaire (in the paper format) is on a place where a person sees it. Finally, but the most importantly, the online questionnaire excludes people who do not have possibilities to use computer or the Internet. This is the reason why it might be reasonable to organise both: online and written questionnaires.

It is not possible to talk about information sharing that is fast; easy; and reaches to many people, without mentioning well known social media channels Facebook and Twitter. If information is shared through these channels, then every receiver has possibility to share the information in his wall (or re-tweet it), which, in turn, grows the network that reaches the information. In addition if planners are organising public meetings or - discussions then these channels should be used in order reach many (younger) people. Moreover, Facebook is offering a possibility to create virtual events (about real events) and in this way to share the information among different networks. If someone has chosen to attend in the virtual event then his entire personal network will see the notification which shares the information about the event and might raise the number of participants.

Social media channels are offering possibilities to create interpretations in new ways. Video has a great potential for that. First of all, for Estonia 2030+ the video was used in order to establish a nice atmosphere for discussions. A video offers possibility to share creators' ideas in easy format with audience and create emotions among them. Hence it might be more effective to show an entertaining video, which makes participants feel relaxed; than explain to them that they are expected to be relaxed, because organisers would like to have an open dialogue. In addition a video is helpful for visualising data. For example, when planners are in the stage where they are expecting that participants are considering among different planning solutions then it might be effective to show 3D visualisations about the planned area. This is useful for engaging ordinary citizens with the plan, because, normally, they might not understand how the solutions would look in reality. The visualisations will raise the understanding and therefore the citizens could be engaged more with meaningful discussions. Another idea could be to create educative videos. Often citizens do not want to read legislation, due to its complicated language; or any other kind of long texts. Therefore it might be wise to produce videos that are guided to citizens (because they are easily understandable) about possibilities, for example, how to participate in planning processes. This raises citizens' level of knowledge and planning processes might be more successful. Nevertheless, dark side of videos is related with their costs and time expenditure that is spent for video making. For example filming might take longer than expected, because it is possible that script in paper does not work out well in reality and therefore different solutions might have to be considered. And finally, it is difficult to determine, which video will be successful and a creator can never be sure that audience understands his video in a way that it was originally meant.

Anyone can create content for social media channels. The channels are easily manageable and user friendly, therefore people with very different backgrounds are using them. Hence, it would be little inappropriate, considering the average content, to create material written strictly in formal language. The channels are offering possibility to communicate with stakeholders in their regular environment using 'their' (informal) language. (This could also be done in face-to-face meetings, but the section is focused on information sharing and consultation level in social media channels). The choice of using informal language in the channels is essential, because citizens often do not understand the terminology that is used in formal documents. Therefore it might help to connect citizens with the plans, as they feel that planners are considering them as equal partners, because planners are making efforts to establish connections with them. This might raise the citizens' desire to participate in planning processes and it helps them to understand the plans.

To summarise, the list from the beginning of this paragraph is supplemented with potentials, as:

- Easier to collect data;
- Information can be re-shared by participants;
- New ways for interpretations;
- Informal language.

7.3.2 BARRIERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS IN COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING

Second part of this paragraph is concerned about barriers that social media channels have. First of all it is difficult to build consensus through social media, because, normally, in face-to-face discussions verbal and non-verbal behaviour are playing equally important role in order to understand what other participants are meaning with their statements. Social media channels do not offer the possibility to see others' non-verbal behaviour (except video conversations) and this might result with confusion and non - understanding among participants. In addition, in online discussions all statements are fragmented, because people are making them individually behind their computer and hence they might not have feeling that they are participating in a conversation. Therefore it might be difficult to coordinate the statements and make them work together and solve conflicts among stakeholders.

Another issue is that social media channels are offering privacy. Even if participants' names are public, people are often braver when they are 'hidden' behind a computer than in face-to-face conversations. This means that some participants might use the channels for unloading themselves and therefore they are disturbing other participants and discussions.

Social media channels should be managed constantly. It is important that there is a person whose work task is to coordinate actions in the channels. As appeared from the case study the Wordpress page had to be reorganised often, because new material was uploaded constantly and it changed the cleanliness of the page. The case study also demonstrated that one of the reasons behind the failure of the online forum might be the fact that for Estonia 2030+ was not hired a person whose only job task is to manage and promote the social media channels constantly. This means that if planners have chosen to use the channels for public involvement they have to take it seriously and spend time to make the channels work or make some extra expenses and hire someone with ICT skills to do it.

Finally, social media channels are excluding people who do not have possibility, will, or skills to access them.

To summarise the main barriers of social media channels in communicative planning are:

- Consensus building might be difficult;
- Other's non-verbal behaviour is not seen;
- Individuality;
- Some participants might use the channels for unloading themselves;
- The channels should be managed constantly;
- Some stakeholders might not have possibility, will or skills to use the channels;
- Some of information might get lost;
- Difficult to determine content that might be successful.

7.3.3. SUMMARY TO POTENTIALS AND BARRIERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS IN COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING

To conclude, social media channels are offering possibilities to improve public participation in planning processes, but as every other method they are not flawless. Therefore, planners should be aware of their downsides, take their best features and make them contribute to the planning processes. As with communicative planning, planners should consider every process independently and according to the process choose the channels that are fitting with the context. As the channels are not flawless and everyone does not have access to them planners should use them together with other involvement methods. Nevertheless, the channels should not be left out from the processes, because people are used to gather information from the Internet and contribute to content making, therefore it is natural that planning processes are offering the possibility, too.

8. CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the main findings from the report. As stated in the Introduction, the purpose of the thesis is to investigate *how have social media channels been used to further public participation in the planning process of the Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+, and how can the channels be used to support planning processes more generally according to the theory*. In order to answer to the question five sub-questions were asked.

The first part of the paper established theoretical framework for the thesis. It consisted of two theory chapters. The first of them was concerned about communicative planning, to be more specific the sub-question for the analysis was: *what is communicative planning according to the academic literature?* The concept of communicative planning was explained through ideas from John Friedman; John Forester; Patsy Healey; Judith Innes and David Booher. All of them are stressing the importance of public participation; therefore it is one of the key elements of the theory. Another key feature is dialogue among stakeholders during the planning process. Dialogue offers possibilities to listen to other's standpoints; understand them; and learn mutually from each other, which should ensure that the planning process results with agreements that are favourable for all participants. Friedman and Forester are pointing that besides verbal speech it is important to notice people's non-verbal behaviour in order to understand fully meanings behind their words. Participants in the communicative process are everyone who is affected by the plan. Therefore organisers of the processes should involve also groups that are marginalised or do not know that they have a stake in a planning process or are not interested in participating. The principle is to receive and consider all opinions possible. Healey is aware that the goal of involving all stakeholders is utopian, but a planner should attempt to involve as many of them as possible through different methods. It is difficult to point out any certain methods in order to achieve a communicative process, because all cases are different and planners are receiving information from stakeholders by different channels, for example through statements; sounds; stories; pictures; and quantitative data analysis, therefore a planner should consider every case separately and then choose the methods that would be the most effective in order to receive all the information possible.

The second part of the theory investigated social media channels and answered to the research question: *how can social media channels contribute to the communicative planning?* Planners should understand the importance of the digital revolution and therefore adapt themselves to the new era. The digital world offers new opportunities for public participation and strengthens quality of dialogues. Through the Internet one can receive information about plans; express his opinion online and discuss it with others; and participate actively in policy making.

People who are using social media channels are creating virtual communities that are connecting people with similar interest. The virtual communities are alternatives for real communities and they might help to improve living conditions in real communities. Social media channels are benefiting public participation in planning processes, because information sharing is simple – the channels do not require big investments and they allow sharing a lot of information to many people at once. In addition, the location of people, who are sharing and receiving information, is not important, because the channels are working in real-time – when materials are uploaded then participants of the network are able to receive them immediately, moreover they also have the possibility to comment the materials immediately. Besides previously mentioned, the social media channels are

offering discussion possibilities for people who do not like public speaking as through the channels they are able to send their written comments. As one of the goals for communicative planning is to include standpoints from all stakeholders, then this is an important feature: because, through social media channels, people who would not speak in public are now able to present their standpoints. The channels also reduce one-way communication that could happen in face-to-face meetings. In every society are existing power relations and more powerful agents often do not listen statements from less powerful agents. In social media channels everyone has possibility to state their opinion without other participants' interruptions. Social media channels could be useful for promoting public participation, but a planner should use them together with other methods for public involvement.

The channels are criticised, because they separate people and therefore their statements are fragmented, which makes it more difficult to find creative solutions than in face-to-face meetings. In addition when everyone is stating something in social media channels then the result might get messy and it might be difficult to find necessary information among all the information that is available.

The thesis focused on three social media channels: blogs; videos; and online forums. The author of the thesis concentrated on the content of the channels rather than design or technical features, because she finds strong content as the most relevant feature for encouraging public participation in the communicative process.

Second part of the thesis dealt with empirical analysis that was concerned about Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+. In order to understand the case study, it was essential to introduce current planning situation in Estonia. The research question for this part was: *what is the current spatial planning situation in Estonia in terms of communicative planning and the use of social media channels in planning*. Estonian Planning Act establishes binding rules for spatial planning and divides planning into four levels that hierarchically are: national spatial plan; county plan; municipal plan; and detailed plan. The law states that the planning activities are public and planners should involve all interested parties to the processes. It establishes minimum rules for participation, but planners are expected to do more than it is required by the law. Practitioners stated that even though according to the law the public should be involved already in the beginning of a planning process, planners are often drawing up solutions by themselves and after the plan solution is established, it is presented to public for discussions. This kind of practice creates conflicts between planners and other stakeholders. However, some of practitioners are stating that public involvement practice has improved in recent years - the tendency might be due to citizens' growing knowledge about their rights and activation of civil society groups. On the other hand, other practitioners are stating that the public is involved, but it is rather a formality. Therefore, the issue is known and attempts have been made in order to improve the situation through trainings and informative booklets for Estonian planners and participants.

The idea to use social media channels in Estonian planning is relevant, because approximately 77% of population is using computer and the Internet; and moreover until age of 44, more than 90 % of citizens are using the Internet, which means that they are the target group to whom the planning through social media channels should be guided. As the Internet is widely available then the state; local authorities; and civil society groups have used social media channels, such as homepages; videos; blogs; and online forums in order to improve public participation. In addition one of the civil

society groups – *Uue Maailma Selts*, has developed free software, Community Tools, in order to help managing community's activities online and strengthen information sharing and communication among community members.

The main case study of the thesis investigated the Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+. As the theory was concerned about communicative planning and social media channels, then the case study was divided similarly. The first of the two parts answered to the sub-question: *to what extent does the Estonian national spatial planning process reflect the ideals of communicative planning*. According to the law a national spatial plan has to be completed in accordance with Estonian ministries; county governments; associations of local governments; and other affected state officials. It does not require cooperation with wider public. The Estonia 2030+ was initiated in 04.02.2010 and its content is mainly developed by an expert - and four thematic groups, but input for their work has received by cooperation, besides the mandatory stakeholders, also with local governments; experts; scientists; civil society groups; entrepreneurs and public. The participants were involved through preliminary opinions about the plan; meetings; presentations; discussions; group works; questionnaire; media (TV and newspapers); homepage; and online forum. In order to involve wider public the organisers prepared three sections of public discussions. First was the vision conference: experts had compiled first draft about the vision and it was presented to public: everyone had possibility to participate in public discussion and fulfil the questionnaire. Second time, after the ideas from the conference were considered, the organisers held five public discussions in different regions in order to find the topics that people from the region are finding important that should be added to the plan. Thirdly, again, five public discussions were held in order to discuss over the plan that was nearly in the ending phase. The organisers estimated that the public involvement during the compilation of the plan was good. The plan's budget was low and working force insufficient, hence the organisers' claim that they have carried out maximum involvement process with available resources.

The second part of the case study introduced the social media channels that have been used during the process for Estonia 2030+, or put another way: *how have social media channels contributed to the Estonian National Spatial Plan 2030+*. The organisers of Estonia 2030+ have used Wordpress blog environment as a homepage for the plan. In the page are uploaded materials about the plan and in some places the users have possibilities to comment the uploaded materials, therefore the page offers informative and consultation level of participation. The organisers estimated that the Wordpress page fulfilled its purposes to inform interested parties about the process. The page was not successful for carrying out consultation level of participation, because the commentary was not used actively.

Secondly, the organisers used a short entertaining video. The video was used in public discussions in order to demonstrate to participants that they are invited to participate in the planning process and all their statements will be considered. As the video was presented after presentations from organisers and before public discussions it also had a purpose to establish comfortable atmosphere and encourage participants to present their opinions and discuss them openly. The organisers estimated that the video reached the goals and participants were opened for discussions.

Online forum was used as another social media channel in order to promote public participation. The Wordpress page has a direct link to the forum, therefore everyone who used the page for gaining

information had the possibility to leave comments and questions about the plan. However, the forum was not actively used: it was reachable from May 2010 and until present times (May 2012), there are 30 posts, together with answers from the ministry. The organisers are estimating that the forum fulfilled its purposes, as there were posts, but they expected that it will be more active.

The organisers are stating mainly two reasons why the forum was not successful, first of all, the level of the plan is very broad and therefore citizens might not feel connected with it; and secondly the budget for the plan was very small, therefore the channels were not managed constantly.

To conclude the social media channels could benefit planning processes and help to involve more participants, but they should be used together with other public involvement methods. Through the empirical analysis merged that the channels are best for information sharing, and secondary for encouraging public discussions. In addition, according to the theory the channels might not be good for conflict solving.

Social media channels could contribute communicative planning, because information sharing is fast, easy, inexpensive and do not depend on stakeholders' physical location. In addition huge amount of information can be shared to many stakeholders at once. The channels are offering possibilities to involve younger people to planning processes, as they are the main users of social media, and they could help stakeholders who do not like public speaking to participate in online discussions. In addition, stakeholders who cannot think fast in stress situation (that a face-to face discussion might turn out) are able to think their standpoints through in a calm atmosphere, as probably they are separated from others. Moreover, all stakeholders have possibility to analyse received information through and after considering all the aspects in a calm atmosphere, they can write their answers. Before stating something in online discussions a stakeholder has possibility to ascertain that all necessary points are shared and framed in a way that is understandable for other stakeholders, which is not possible in face-to-face conversations. The channels also invite planners to use informal language and they offer possibilities for new types of interpretations.

The channels have also some barriers. First of all, some stakeholders might not have possibility, will or skills to use them. In addition social media is encouraging separation and individuality, which means that consensus building among stakeholders might be difficult and some of the participants might use the channels for unloading themselves. Moreover, as stakeholders are separated then other's non-verbal behaviour is not seen, which might seed confusion and impede conflict solving. Finally, the channels can be free to charge, but someone has to be responsible that they are managed constantly, therefore it might raise the cost of the process or extend planners' working time.

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