

# **HOW PUBLIC NORMS HELP TO COPE WITH UNCERTAINTY IN COMPLEX PRACTICES OF PLANNING**

by **WILLEM SALET**

**27th May 2021 + 13.00 - 15.00 CET**

\*Zoom link will be provided in May newsletter.

With presentations by

**AYDA ERAYDIN**

**SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES: WHAT IS A WAY OUT OF THE  
IMPASSE IN PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE?**

**FATMA UNSAL**

**PLANNING PAST OF ISTANBUL AND PROMISING NEW INSTITUTIONS**

Panel Discussion

**REINSTATING PUBLIC NORMS: A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ISTANBUL?**

Moderators: Zeynep Enlil & Yigit Evren

Panelists: Willem Salet, Ayda Eraydin, Fatma Unsal, Iclal Dincer, Ferhan Gezici

## HOW PUBLIC NORMS HELP TO COPE WITH UNCERTAINTY IN COMPLEX PRACTICES OF PLANNING

Planning has become more fallible in the transitional stage of post-modernity. Facing errors and increasing uncertainties does not give an alibi to abandon purposive planning strategies. The public would not accept a flaw of public action when social problems increase. Rather, it is an incentive to make planning strategies more resilient and corrective. Planning always has been tentative and adventurous rather than relying on given certainties. When the problems of time become more intractable, more agility of pragmatism is in the line of expectation. However, what if the purposes and solutions become part of the problem instead of bringing relief?

Today, planning and public action are challenged in depth. In his main work *Public Norms and Aspirations* (2018) Willem Salet argues that improving on pragmatic agility is a permanent drive for planning, it is necessary and worthwhile but not adequate and might even become a problem in itself when taken as the sole point of orientation. The lone preoccupation with problem solving and targeting purposive aspirations has become one of the main concerns of planning practices today. It has become matter of urgency to re-appreciate the role and the meaning of public norms in planning and public action.

Public norms differ strongly of goal-specific or problem-solving aspirations; they are normative conditions to social interaction rather than performing purposive action and solving problems. They provide a normative antenna of the public in its permanent search to value 'what one might expect from another' providing reliability in uncertain situations, justifying what is 'appropriate' to do rather than performing outcome oriented planning processes. Both processes of social normalisation and purposive strategies of problem solving are needed in planning; it is in their dialectic interaction that the answers must be found for the problems of planning in our time. However, the normative dimension of planning is deeply neglected today in the prevailing managerial practices of planning and public action (and even in law and legislation). As a result, the purposive and problem solving strategies themselves have become nomadic and fragile.

Willem Salet will discuss the contemporary dilemmas of planning by confronting the prevailing approaches of urban and regional planning with challenges of public norms and social normalisation. He will discuss major topical issues of public planning practices in city-regions and raise attention to the normative dilemma's with regard to recent climate policies; the normative dilemma's regarding housing policies for low- and middle-income groups in European city-regions; the normative dilemma's of mobility planning, facing particularly challenges of multimodal infrastructures; and the normative conditions of landscape and heritage to purposive processes of urban development.

**Willem Salet** is professor emeritus Urban and Regional Planning, at the department of Planning, Geography and International Development Studies, University of Amsterdam. He chaired Urban Planning from 1998 to 2017. He was the Scientific Director of the Amsterdam study center for the Metropolitan Environment AME (2008-2013). He was the President of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) 2008-2010 and was awarded AESOP Honorary Membership in 2016. As a sociologist and urban planner, Willem Salet specializes in the institutional aspects of metropolitan development. Institutions are conceived in sociological sense as the patterning of public norms. He investigates the cultural, legal and political dimensions of public norms in the making of sustainable metropolitan spaces. His recent publications include:

- Salet, W. (2018). *Public Norms and Aspirations: The Turn to Institutions in Action*. New York: Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Public-Norms-and-Aspirations-The-Turn-to-Institutions-in-Action/Salet/p/book/9781138084957>
- Salet, W. (ed.). (2018). *The Routledge Handbook of Institutions and Planing in Action*. <https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Handbook-of-Institutions-and-Planning-in-Action/Salet/p/book/9781138085732>
- Salet, W., D'Ottaviano, C., Majoor, S., and Bossuyt, D. (2020). *The Self-Build Experience*. Bristol: Policy Press

## PRESENTATION BY AYDA ERAYDIN

# SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES: WHAT IS A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE IN PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE?

In the current era of presumably post-democratic times marked by the dissemination of boredom, frustration and disillusion, the predominance of powerful minority groups in decision-making processes, manipulating people's demands by relying on publicity campaigns, instead of contentious political dispute, there seems something pretty wrong with the political in contemporary democracies. The current debates emphasise the disappearance or 'retreat of the political', which has for many been considered a direct consequence of the rise of neoliberal governmentality that has replaced debate, disagreement and dissensus, in other words, the post-political condition (Eraydin and Frey, 2019).

I believe that although the theorisation of post-political provides an explanation of the crisis in planning and governance, still there is a need for a better understanding how the political is manifested in the planning contents, shaped by institutional arrangements, and played out in the planning processes. Therefore, in this presentation, I try, first, to discuss spatio-temporal specificities of planning in order to enhance knowledge about concrete planning practices in the context of post-politics, the institutional arrangements and relations that uphold and reproduce them over time and space. The aim is to "crack open the black box of the post-political condition" as suggested by van Puymbroeck & Oosterlynck (2014: p.103) and to discuss how we can deal with it in practical terms.

Second, I will address several questions: Under the neoliberal rule, is there still sufficient room for manoeuvre to enact planning and governance practices in a political and democracy-intense perspective? How it can be possible to democratise planning in contemporary times defined by intensified police order, the spreading of authoritarian practices and the rise of populism, which give little room for struggling against an increasingly repressive social and political order?

Although there are manifold difficulties in introducing a new type of politically intensive planning processes (Eraydin and Taşan-Kok, 2019), I claim that there is need for generating counter-reactions that can be positively channelled and contribute to a revival of democratic engagement, sharing the ideas of Raco (2014: p.168), who contends that "the present obvious failure of post-political governance arrangements sparks publics into being which may hopefully contribute towards reinvigorating democracy". Therefore, the third section of the presentation is on the possible ways out of the present crisis in planning and governance by taking planning and governance at the core rather than the political stance that searches for the possible. Three main principles are addressed that are connected to the attempts at re-institutionalisation when strengthening the capacities of self-expression and self-organisation in people who are excluded from urban decision-making (Eraydin and Taşan-Kok, 2019): *Justice, re-institutionalism* stemming from relational perspectives and action and *practice* considering power relations. In the final section of the presentation, a brief discussion on how these principles can be used in re-institutionalisation of governance and planning in Istanbul Greater City Municipality will be introduced.

## PRESENTATION BY FATMA UNSAL

# PLANNING PAST OF ISTANBUL AND PROMISING NEW INSTITUTIONS

Planning of Istanbul has always been a challenging task as it has been a rapidly urbanizing mega-city throughout history, with its unique cultural assets to be protected and natural boundaries restraining spatial expansion. The challenging planning task has been even more complicated by the intruders, such as massive migration waves, global economics-based poverty and climate change. The new challenges as well as the current development dynamics beyond the limits and legality of the recent Environmental Order Plan of Istanbul approved by the Council of the Greater Municipality of Istanbul (2009), necessitated a new planning process to be started targeting to restructure the conventional approaches and methods.

In fact, the planning past of Istanbul reveals that the rational planning decisions were not always coherent with the political expectations. The skepticism of the society about the fairness of the Plan has been fueled by the lack of pioneering projects, which has prioritized the genuine needs of the society, even if they have taken place among the objectives of the Plan.

As a matter of fact, society responds to action rather than policies and planning decisions, due to the disappointments of the past planning experience. A maneuver should be undertaken from the project-based planning to planning-based projects in order to rebuild the dignity of planning. The projects embracing the vulnerability of the society and the reformist planning tools instead of the conventional ones will help in addition to the democratic participatory decision-making processes.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

# Reinstating Public Norms: A Window of Opportunity for Istanbul?

Moderators: Zeynep Enlil & Yigit Evren

Panelists: Willem Salet, Ayda Eraydın, Fatma Unsal, Iclal Dincer, Ferhan Gezici

Urban development and planning environment in Turkey especially over the past two decades has been subject to various pressures that stem from a market-oriented vision accompanied by increasingly top-down policies governed by powerful new elites and their interests. Istanbul, as the country's major growth pole articulating Turkey with global markets, has been at the epicenter of these neoliberal pressures and complex dynamics that shaped its urban environment. These pressures were manifested in a variety of forms and scales over the vast extent of this metropolis. Large-scale urban projects and ruthless state-led property oriented urban renewal processes not only has triggered a wide set of social, economic and environmental problems, but also has created a "lock-in" situation, in which all the public norms and planning principals are often ignored for the sake of hasty neoliberal urban development.

With the change of urban administration and the recent establishment of Istanbul Planning Agency (IPA), however, a new window of opportunity seems to be opened for Istanbul. The current efforts toward re-institutionalisation of metropolitan governance and planning in Greater Istanbul Municipality provides a promising ground upon which to shift the path of decades of neoliberal urbanism and reinstate public policies privileging social and environmental justice, equity and sustainability. This AESOP Lecture in Istanbul will provide yet another opportunity to discuss alternatives for making planning strategies more resilient and effective, thus be an inspiration to cities struggling with similar excesses of neoliberal city building. The AESOP Lecture by one of the most distinguished academics specialized in the institutional aspects of metropolitan development, **Willem Salet**, will set the stage for a panel discussion with the participation of eminent Turkish scholars, which will focus on lessons for planning practice and research.

### ABOUT THE PANELISTS

**Ayda Eraydın** is Professor Emeritus in the City and Regional Planning Department at Middle East Technical University, Turkey. She has initiated, coordinated and been involved in some large-scale national and international research projects on various urban and regional issues since 1986. Her research interests are local economic development, socio-spatial dynamics of cities and regions and planning theory and practice. She has published on various aspects of urban and regional development, including the socio-spatial implications of economic restructuring on urban areas, resilience thinking in urban planning and recently on governing urban diversity. Her recent publications are; *Politics and Conflict in Governance and Planning* (2019) (Routledge: London and New York) (co-editor Klaus Frey), *Governing urban diversity in Istanbul: Pragmatic and non-discriminatory solutions of governance initiatives in response to politicisation of diversity*, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 2019, 26(3), 268 –282 (co-author Ö.Y. Yenigün), *Instituting Resilience in the Making of the Istanbul Metropolis* (2018) In: *The Routledge Handbook of Institutions and Planning in Action* (Ed. W. Salet) pp. 347-363, Routledge: New York (co-author Tuna Taşan-Kok), *Dealing with Diversity: The Case of Istanbul*, 2017, Utrecht: Ankara (co-authors İ. Demirdağ, F.N. Güngördü and Ö.Y. Yenigün) <https://www.urbandivercities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Divercities-City-Book-Istanbul.pdf>. *Social Heterogeneity and Diversity, Companion to Urban and Regional Studies*, edited by Anthony M. Orum, Javier Ruiz-Tagle and Serena Vicari Wiley: New York (forthcoming)

**Fatma Ünsal** is an urban planner, who received her undergraduate, graduate and PhD degrees in the field of City and Regional Planning. She is currently a Professor at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (MSGSU), teaching urban politics, reformist approaches in urban planning and moderating the planning studio at the graduate level. She has contributed to the field with numerous articles and book chapters on planning legislation, heritage legislation, coastal legislation, urban renewal, risk generating development of Istanbul, reformist planning tools and creative industries in mid-size cities. Ünsal completed research projects on rapid urbanization of Istanbul and the legal status of housing developments, inventory of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Historic Peninsula of Istanbul supported by research funds from the University. She has also participated in various EU-funded projects as an associate member, including "Bridging the Legal-Institutional Gap in Mediterranean Coastline Management" and "Social Entrepreneurship and Creativity for Sustainable Urban Development". She has been appointed as a lecturer by ISOCARP in the context of Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council Young Planning Professionals Intensive Training Program. Ünsal is currently the Director of the Urbanism Applications and Research Center at MSGSU. Ünsal is recently appointed as one of the coordinators of the Istanbul Planning Agency, part of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

**Iclal Dincer** is a professor of urban planning at the Yıldız Technical University. She holds a professional degree in architecture from Istanbul State Academy of Architecture and Engineering and PhD from the Yıldız Technical University. Her research and teaching interest include urban and regional geography, urban conservation, urban renewal and urban regeneration. She had been a consultant for the 2006 Istanbul Metropolitan Plan in the fields of culture, heritage and tourism. She co-managed "Istanbul Historic Areas Management Plan" for UNESCO and "Istanbul Tourism Master Plan." She has been involved in JPI Urban Europe and ERA-NET projects. She was the Secretary-General of ICOMOS-Turkey during 2011-2014. Currently, she is the President of ICOMOS-Turkey and has recently been assigned as one of the coordinators of Vision 2050 Office of Istanbul Planning Agency.

**Ferhan Gezici** is Professor at Urban and Regional Planning Department, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey. She has been the coordinator of Regional Planning Master Program of ITU. She studied at Regional Economics Applications Laboratory of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as visiting scholar in 2001-2002. Her research interests are regional development and disparities, regional policies, economic geography and tourism studies. She has been involved and conducted several research projects related to urban-regional development and tourism. She has been involved in two main strategic- master plan processes in Turkey (Istanbul and Bursa) as the expert/advisor. Currently, she is assigned as one of the coordinators of Vision 2050 Office of Istanbul Planning Agency. She has been Editorial Board Member of the journals: Planning; Review of Urban and Regional Studies and Transactions of the Association of European Schools of Planning. She served in the executive committee of Turkish Section of Regional Science; currently, she is a co-rep of AESOP.

## ABOUT THE MODERATORS

**Zeynep Enlil** is a professor of urban planning at Yıldız Technical University. She holds a professional degree in City Planning from Middle East Technical University, M.Sc. from Cleveland State University and a PhD from the University of Washington. Her teaching and research interests include neoliberal urbanism, urban regeneration, planning theory and history, heritage conservation and tourism. She has been a consultant for the 2006 Istanbul Metropolitan Plan, co-leader of the "*Istanbul Cultural Heritage and Cultural Economy Project*," "*Istanbul Tourism Master Plan*" and the leader of the Turkish team of the JPI Urban Europe and ERA-NET projects. She was the Vice President of ISOCARP during 2005-2011. Currently, vice president of Europa Nostra, Turkey and GPEAN.

**Yiğit Evren** received his Ph.D. degree in 2002 from the Department of City and Regional Planning in Cardiff University. Granted three times the Overseas Research Students Awards from the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom, Evren worked for the Istanbul Earthquake Master Plan (2003), Regional Development Plan of Erzurum (2004) and the Istanbul Regional Plan (2005). He also participated in the preparations of the 9th Five-Year Development Plan of Turkey and worked as a senior researcher in the Istanbul Cultural Heritage and Cultural Economy Project between 2009 and 2010. Evren served as the co-editor in the journal of Megaron between 2009 and 2014. Serving as the chair of Regional Planning Division at Yıldız Technical University since December 2014, Yiğit Evren conducts research on economic geography, cluster theory and creative sectors, and teaches courses on urban economics and regional planning.