Spatial planning as 'co-evolution': linking expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts

A case study of supra-local plans in the Catalan Pyrenees (Spain)

Ignasi Domingo Pastó

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Abstract

The planning process is gaining importance due to the increasing complexity of making plans. During the process, planners have to deal with multiple expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts (EUCs). These concepts are widely discussed in theoretical planning literature, but the relationships between them are rarely explored. This research provides a better understanding of these concepts and their relationships with the study of real planning practices. Three cases of supra-local plans in the Catalan Pyrenees (Spain) are analysed. The main planning actors and other stakeholders are interviewed in order to describe the different EUCs generated during the planning process. The cases show the different perceptions about EUCs, the strong interrelationships between them, and different ways of dealing with them. Finally, a new concept is introduced to provide understanding about the way people's perceptions of EUCs change during the process: 'planning as co-evolution'. The concept stimulates reflections about the importance of interaction and communication to deal with EUCs in spatial planning.

Keywords: regional planning, Catalonia, *'planificación territorial'*, *'ordenación territorio'*, *'pla territorial'*, *'pla director urbanístic'*

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Preface and acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of a long trip. A trip that started the 16th October 2007 and took me to a strange place with an unpronounceable name: Wageningen. It was a difficult decision to move to the Netherlands, and full of uncertainties. Yet, I am an optimistic person and I was moved by my high expectations about the master and about starting a new life in a different country. I have to admit that I was quite shocked during the first lectures, which were curiously with my current thesis supervisor. The discussions about planning and politics, planning and power, and planning and the role of knowledge generated conflicting feelings in my 'engineering-shaped' mind. Two years after, I believe my mind has suffered an important evolution (or co-evolution). I have just finished writing the kind of thesis I would have never expected two years before. From my point of view, this thesis is a good summary of what Wageningen brought to my way of thinking.

Before starting to write the thesis, I had many different ideas about what to do. Finally, I decided that it would be interesting to 'go back home'. I wanted to translate what Wageningen brought to me again to where I came from. Being abroad, you have a different perception and understanding about your own country and culture. The distance makes you realize about the things you miss, but also the things you dislike. This thesis would have been different if written from home. For me, it has been a very interesting exercise of translation between different 'planning cultures' and contexts. On day one, I was sitting in my desk in Wageningen looking at the flat landscape and experiencing the wild Dutch weather. On day two, I was in Barcelona, experiencing the contrast of the cool air conditioning in the interviewee's offices and the thirty degrees outside. On day three, I was in the Pyrenees noticing the difference in people's life pace and looking at the impressive mountains. Despite the high contrasts, I realised that planning problems are similar in different social and physical contexts. It was good to discover that what I learned in Wageningen can be applied in the Catalan Pyrenees. And the other way around, planning stories in the Catalan Pyrenees can be interesting to the people in Wageningen, or elsewhere.

To finish this preface, I would like to thank all the people that helped me during this two-year trip. First, I want to thank my family for their support and for always being there. I want to thank Joana for the courage and patience to start and share this trip with me every day. I also want to thank my friends from Wageningen and all the others from Utrecht, Tàrrega, Barcelona, etc. for always asking how my thesis was going. I also want to thank Raoul for his enthusiasm, his comments, and for always helping in keeping my motivation high. I also want to mention Joan Ganau from the University of Lleida, who acted almost like a second supervisor helping me with the selection of the interviewees and giving me interesting feedback. Finally, I want to thank all the interviewees for their availability, openness and interesting reflections. Their contributions are the essential part of this thesis, and also helped me in enjoying the work.

I hope you enjoy reading the thesis,

Ignasi Domingo Pastó

Summary

Spatial planning is a complex exercise. In most situations, it involves dealing with multiple expectations, a high level of uncertainty, and always a certain degree of conflict. The present thesis explores the concepts of expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts (EUCs) in real planning practices. These are very relevant concepts in current discussions about planning, but they are rarely analysed together. The relationships between the concepts are important to provide a better understanding of the concepts. The focus of the research is the study of EUCs during the planning process, while plans are seen as the 'meeting point' between different stakeholders. The main research question of the thesis can be formulated as it follows:

- How can spatial planners deal with the presence of multiple expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts about plans/planning processes?

The research combines the use of theoretical literature and qualitative analysis of case studies. The literature research provides a better understanding of the concepts and a way to look at the case studies. Three case studies about regional planning are used in trying to answer the research questions. These are three recently developed supra-local plans in the Catalan Pyrenees (in Spain). The plans and the planning process are analysed with the help of in-depth interviews with the main planning actors and other stakeholders. A total of seventeen interviews were realised trying to cover the maximum range of relevant, critical, and confronted opinions.

From the literature research, a framework is elaborated with emphasis on the concepts of expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts (EUCs). The importance of other concepts related to contemporary planning, such as 'governance' and 'networks', is also stressed in the theoretical chapter. The most important discussions about EUCs and related concepts are described as a theoretical basis to analyse the case studies. A first conclusion from the literature review is the importance of communication to correct false expectations about plans among stakeholders. Second, uncertainties are increasingly perceived as something that can not be fully addressed, and has to be 'accommodated' in the planning process. In the same line, conflicts tend to persist but communication can generate agreements and new frames of reference during the planning process.

The results from the three case studies show different ways to deal with EUCs. In the first case (PTP *'Alt Pirineu i Aran'*), the planners adopted a prudent attitude to correct too high expectations about the plan. This strategy and the inclusion of flexibility were effective to deal with uncertainties and to avoid antagonistic conflicts about the plan. The other two cases (PDUs 'Pallars Sobirà' and 'Cerdanya') affected a more local scale, and generated stronger reactions from local people. In the 'Pallars' case, the expectations about the plan were very high and the outcome did not fully satisfy them. However, the involvement of local stakeholders was valuable to reframe existent conflicting views during the process. In the 'Cerdanya' case, the planners faced negative expectations about the plan, particularly from the local authorities. This fact generated antagonistic conflicts about certain aspects of the plan. The conflicting opinions persisted, which generated uncertainties about the future impact of the plan. Some interviewees pointed at the importance of the use, the promotion, and the interpretation of the plans as key aspects to future success.

The discussion of the cases illustrates the importance of interactions between actors in dealing with EUCs. From the analysis, it can be observed that EUCs are interrelated and perceived in different ways by the planning actors. During the planning process, the perception of EUCs changes as a result of different types of interactions. Communication is important to set reasonable expectations about plans. It is also essential to reduce uncertainties, while at the same time managing a necessary degree of flexibility in planning. Finally, the acknowledgement and reframing of conflicts can only take place through interaction.

The concept of planning as 'co-evolution' is introduced to understand how the perception of EUCs changes during planning processes. The concept pretends to generate reflections about the importance of interaction and communication strategies to deal with EUCs. Planners can just adapt their plans to the 'external' planning environment without the need of a real communication effort. For instance, they can lower their expectations as a way to reduce uncertainties and avoid conflicts. From the point of view of the research, this is considered as simple 'evolution' of the planners' perception as a response to a particular planning context. In contrast, co-evolution implies that the actors' perception of EUCs evolve together during the planning process through interaction. Differences may persist, but common understanding, reframing, and learning are facilitated. This can be a better strategy to deal with the presence of multiple EUCs, while at the same time, providing a long-term 'sense of direction' to planning.

1 Introduction

1.1 *Problem description*

Spatial planning professionals, as those working in other disciplines, have to deal with the complexity of the world in which we live. In today's society, knowledge is partial, situations change rapidly and satisfactory outcomes in planning processes are difficult to achieve (Hillier, 2008). Traditional top-down planning approaches, sometimes known as 'blueprint planning', have a limited capacity to deal with complexity. In the era of the 'network society', there is a call for a more flexible and pluralistic view of planning. In the present context, the planning process is gaining more attention in planning research and practice. The process becomes a goal in itself, not only a means to elaborate a plan. Planning in complex situations involves dealing with multiple expectations, a high level of uncertainty, and always a certain degree of conflict. Thus, the understanding of expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts is essential to reflect about the way to improve current planning practices.

The case studies are about regional (or supra-local) planning in the Catalan Pyrenees (Spain). The cases are exceptionally complex, thus, exceptionally interesting. First, the case study area is very sensitive to changes because of the singular environmental conditions and the particular socio-economical context. Second, the spatial planning experience at regional level in Spain is still poor, compared to other European countries. The latter also applies to research about planning practices. And third, the selected plans are one of the first developed under a new planning philosophy in Catalonia. The plans are introducing a new territorial vision and new decision-making processes. The real implications of the plans are still uncertain. However, reflections are needed to evaluate the progress of such an important planning initiative.

To start clarifying the topic of the research, first, it is necessary to describe some basic concepts. This may help to understand better the context and scope of the thesis. Secondly, the problems with expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts in spatial planning are introduced.

What is spatial planning at regional level?

The concept of spatial planning is broad, and includes social, economic, and environmental aspects. The tendency, at least in the EU, is to include regional policy and land use planning at local and regional level under the concept of spatial planning (Glasson and Marshall, 2007). The EU European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) is helping to popularise the term 'spatial planning' as a broad concept, especially in countries with less tradition. There are numerous definitions and interpretations about what spatial planning is. Spatial planning can be formal or informal, strategic or physical, urban or regional. However, a common feature is an integrative vision of regions or cities, in other words, a multi-sectoral approach. And of course, planning is about the will to influence, to steer, to control the future spatial development.

There are multiple definitions of the term 'region' that can lead to confusion. A region can be a whole continent, a city and its surroundings or a small area of countryside (Glasson and Marshall, 2007). Its definition can be influenced by many reasons, such as historical, cultural, physical or political. Countries may have official definitions of regions, but these take different forms and scales. In Spain, regions can be administrative divisions like 'autonomous communities', provinces or even other

supra-local realities. Moreover, other terms are used instead of the concept of region. The term 'territory' is very popular, and regional plans are often referred as 'territorial plans'. In the same way, spatial planning is mostly known as '*Planificación territorial*' (territorial planning) or '*Ordenación del territorio*' (territorial ordering). In the present research, region is understood as a flexible spatial concept which is in between two administrative layers or scales: the state and the municipality. The concept of territory or territorial plan will be equivalent to region or regional plan in this thesis. To refer to the case studies, it is perhaps more accurate to use the term 'supra-local' plans to avoid interpretation problems about the concepts of 'region' or 'territory'.

Why expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts?

The complexity of spatial planning can be observed in the discussions within the 'planning theory' field. A non academic reader may be surprised to discover that discussions are not about technical aspects of planning. Instead, current discussions are about concepts like consensus-building, power relations, storytelling, or stakeholder involvement (see Allmendinger, 2002). These theoretical reflections are important, although they are often too distant from the immediate problems of daily planning practices. In particular, normative theories that seek to prescribe ideal solutions are rarely applied in practice. Instead of ideal solutions, this thesis wants to contribute with new ways to understand and reflect about planning practices.

As mentioned before, the planning process becomes central in complex planning situations. This does not mean that the content of the plan is less important than the process. The role of the plan can be seen as a 'meeting point' for different and sometimes conflicting points of view, a framework for decision-making (Hopkins, 2001). During the planning process, stakeholders express different expectations about the content of the plans. Plans also generate uncertainties and conflicts among stakeholders. These concepts are widely discussed in contemporary planning literature as will be further explained in the theoretical chapter. Thus, the concepts of expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts are chosen because of their significance in current planning research and practice. The interrelations between them are also important to understand the evolution of the planning process. The latter is not well studied and can form a solid framework to reflect about the problems with real planning practices.

1.2   Research objectives and research questions

The thesis general objective is to explore ways to understand and to reflect on spatial planning practices at regional level. More specifically, emphasis is made on the possible ways to deal with expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts. The thesis analyses how these concepts occur and evolve in a real planning context. The discussion will be useful to understand the relationships between these concepts and to reflect about different ways to deal with them. The context of the research is the development of regional plans in Catalonia (Spain), more specifically, in the Catalan Pyrenees. The use of specific theoretical concepts makes possible the generalisation of the results to understand other contexts. The analysis of concrete situations is opposed to general laws, but not to generalisation from one context to another (Donaghy and Hopkins, 2006).

The thesis main objective can be translated into the following question:

> *How can spatial planners deal with the presence of multiple expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts regarding plans and planning processes?*

This is a broad question that can only be approached by asking specific research questions in our planning context. First, sub-questions are formulated to analyse the planning process and the outcome (the plan). Secondly, the thesis pretends to explore relationships between the selected concepts. The ultimate objective is to propose new theoretical perspectives to understand and reflect about planning practices:

Expectations

- *What are the different expectations about the plan/planning process?*
- *How do planners/stakeholders deal with multiple expectations about the plan/planning process?*

Uncertainties

- *What kind of uncertainties are generated by the plan/planning process?*
- *How do planners/stakeholders deal with these uncertainties?*

Conflicts

- *What kind of conflicts are generated by the plan/planning process?*
- *How do planners/stakeholders deal with these conflicts?*

Relationships

- *What are the relationships between expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts?*
- *How can expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts be used to understand and reflect on spatial planning?*

1.3   Outline

After the introduction, the thesis is structured in the following chapters:

- *Chapter 2. Theoretical framework*: in this chapter, the theoretical basis of the thesis is presented. An elaboration of the selected theoretical concepts is made and the main discussions about them are described.

- *Chapter 3: Spatial planning in Catalonia (Spain)*: this is an introductory chapter to the planning context and the case studies. The spatial planning system in Spain and Catalonia is explained. The new regional planning philosophy and the types of plans are described in the different sections.

- *Chapter 4: Supra-local plans in the Catalan Pyrenees:* this is a large chapter in which the results of the case study analysis are presented. The three cases are introduced and explained with the help of the interviewed actors. For each case, a reconstruction of the planning process and the most relevant aspects of the plans are described. The last part is a general reflection about the planning context and the new planning philosophy with the help of opinions from other interviewees.

- ▪ *Chapter 5: Discussing expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts:* the discussion about the case studies try to answer the research questions. In this chapter, the results are related to the concepts introduced in the theoretical framework. The relationships between these concepts are explored, and a new way to look at spatial planning is introduced: 'planning as co-evolution'.

- ▪ *Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations:* the last chapter synthesises the most relevant findings of the research. First, it includes a reflection on the research objective and research questions. General conclusions are presented, which can be valuable in different planning contexts. Second, recommendations for further research and considerations about the research context are made.

1.4   Methods

As mentioned in the research objectives, the thesis pretends to explore ways to understand and reflect about spatial planning practices. This thesis does not seek to produce a general theory about spatial planning. As Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 73) states:

> *Predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals*

To achieve this objective, a qualitative research approach is used based on the analysis of three case studies about regional planning. It should be remarked that qualitative research is interpretative. This type of research is characterised by a high involvement of the researcher and the participants in the study. The context of the research and the personal involvement influence the development of the research and the methods used (Creswell, 2003). The selected methods of data collection combine literature research with in-depth interviews.

Literature research

The first part of the research was the examination of scientific literature about regional planning in order to clarify the research objectives. The main concepts to analyse the case studies were selected: expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts. There are many interpretations of these concepts, from different theoretical perspectives. Specific literature about each concept was used to cover the main discussions and ideas about them in the theoretical framework part. The intention was not to focus on a particular view or normative theory about planning, but rather to select 'horizontal' concepts. In other words, the selected concepts are adequate to study planning processes in depth, and applicable to any research context.

Other literature was used to look into the planning context and the case studies. First, literature about spatial planning in Catalonia and Spain was examined. Second, literature and documentation related to the case studies was also collected. The literature included scientific articles, books, local publications, newspaper articles, online material, and documentation about the plans. The material is used in chapter 3 to describe the planning context, and in chapter 4 to describe relevant aspects about the plans. The literature was also useful to identify the main actors and to prepare the first interviews.

Case studies

Case studies possess 'the power of the good example' and enable an advanced form of understanding due to the proximity to the context being studied (Flyvbjerg, 2001). The selection of the case studies was made with the help of the previous literature research and also the help from informants involved in spatial planning in Catalonia (Spain). The motivation to select this context was to study the

development of a new planning philosophy at supra-local level. Other reasons are exposed previously such as the complexity of the planning context, little planning experience at supra-local level, or the need of more research about planning practices.

According to Flyvbjerg (2001), the selection of 'extreme' or 'critical' cases often reveal more information than the typical or average case. The first approved plan under this new philosophy was selected as a case study ('*PTP Alt Pirineu i Aran*'). The plan affects the Pyrenees area in Catalonia, where interesting problems occur related to urban development and tourism. Besides, two other supra-local plans were approved affecting two counties within the same region. The coincidence of the development of three supra-local plans at the same time in the same region represented an opportunity in trying to establish comparisons between them, and to analyse their interrelationships.

Interviews

The realisation of interviews is essential to analyse the planning process thoroughly. It was necessary to interview the main planning actors in order to explore the concepts used in the research. Expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts are concepts that are perceived and interpreted in different ways by the people involved in the panning process. This type of information can not be obtained by analysing the plans or other documentation. The purpose of the interviews was to gather information and opinions about the most relevant issues from the point of view of the interviewees.

The selection tried to cover the most important actors in the process and the maximum number of different opinions. It included planning authorities, planners, local authorities, local associations, local institutions, academics, and other relevant people connected to the area and the subject. In the analysis of every case study (see chapter 4), the selection of the interviewees is explained in more detail. In total, seventeen interviews were realised. Obviously, it was impossible to talk with all the people involved, and bias can not be avoided in the selection. The suggestions from informants and the same interviewees were taken into account as a selection criterion.

The interviews were in-depth, based on a topic list and open questions. The interviewees were free to tell their own story about the planning process and the context. The main objective was to generate opinions, points of view, and discourses about the case studies. The topic list was based on the research questions and other specific issues about the plans. The interviews were recorded and the most interesting findings were used to present the results. Some misinterpretation can take place due to translation and selection of specific passages. Other aspects can influence the results such as the interview settings, the adaptation of the topic list and questions to the interviewee, or the length of the interview. In general, the interviews lasted from half an hour to one hour and a half, and all of them were face-to-face. The interpretation of the results is subjective, but the inclusion of interview pieces in the results helps to support the ideas expressed in the thesis. This information also facilitates other possible interpretations and reflections about the case studies.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 *An emerging planning context: governance and networks*

The context for spatial planning has changed notably during the last decades. This has produced rich debates in planning theory with the emergence of different planning 'schools' or 'perpectives' (see Allmendinger, 2002). Even if planners may feel more indentified with one 'planning school' or another, they face the same problems in reality and deal with particular social contexts. Instead of describing the different perspectives, it is more interesting to put emphasis on the recent developments in planning theory. These discussions are the basis to understand the problems and challenges of contemporary planning. Two broad concepts are very influential in recent planning literature: the 'governance' perspective and the rise of the 'network society'. Both emphasise the complexity of today's society, which is dependent on the relationships between many formal an informal institutions and actors.

Governance

The word 'governance' can be generally understood as the '*management of the common affairs of political communities by active collaboration of various interests'* (Roo and Porter, 2007, p. 69). A governance perspective implies shift on the focus from formal government planning to less formalised planning practices (Beunen and van Ark, *in press*). The governance context has led to a variation in the roles of planning actors, and to the existence of various models (coordinative, competitive, communicative) (Roo and Porter, 2007). Instead of a rigid top-down approach, governance is based on shared responsibilities, and a shift from object-oriented planning to an inter-subjective approach.

Governments do not have the 'monopoly' in spatial planning and need to cooperate with other actors and organisations. They do not have the capacity to decide by themselves and need to involve the public, establish partnerships and share decisions. According to Healey (2005), formal planning systems based on authoritative power are not valid instruments any longer. Planning systems depend more and more on networks and governance structures at different levels. This is specially true for regional planning because of the amount of different levels and actors involved in decision-making.

The change of paradigm in planning is also influenced by postmodernist ideas (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). The emergence of post-modern thinking provoked a shift in planning theory from a technical approach towards a communicative one. The new 'planning theories' reject basic modernist assumptions regarding the objectivity of knowledge and the separation between 'means' and 'ends'. Instead, they emphasise the importance of context, the subjectivity of knowledge and the role of power and politics in the planning process (see Allmendinger, 2002). Planning has to deal with multiple understandings and interpretations of reality. According to Roo and Porter (2007), this creates 'fuzziness', or lack of clarity, in many aspects related to planning. As examples of 'fuzziness', they present concepts like 'sustainability' or the 'compact city' which are subject to multiple interpretations and without a straight forward meaning. They also argue that fuzziness is present in the planning processes (e.g. participation, communication), and in planning levels, particularly the 'intermediate' ones.

How to deal with conflicting views and power in planning processes have become central themes in planning theory discussions. In the governance approach, power is not centralised or always coming from above. Networks play a major role and society is seen as less hierarchical, more pluralistic.

Networks

The ideas of Castells (1996) about the 'network society' concept have influenced contemporary debates about planning (see Albrechts and Mandelbaum, 2005). Castells argues that new technologies, and particularly internet, have increased the communication possibilities between actors. This has created new trends that are changing the characteristics of our society into a 'network society'. Under this perspective, social structure is open and decentralised, hierarchy and bureaucracy are reduced, and participation and demonstration are enhanced. Another characteristic is that spatial barriers become less relevant because of the development of information and communication technologies. This implies the flexibilisation of administrative boundaries. Finally, 'virtualisation' replaces the physical space of interaction by the virtual space. However, the virtual space needs a physical space of flows and places to enable interaction. These ideas are considered by some academics a new framework or 'paradigm' for contemporary planning (see Albrechts and Mandelbaum, 2005).

The network society approach implies a focus on the dynamics of interrelations, but networks are not the same as society. Society still consists of individuals, groups and organisations (Albrechts and Mandelbaum, 2005). According to Lipnack and Stamps (1994, cited in Albrechts and Mandelbaum, 2005) networks will not substitute the hierarchies of the world, they are additions to them. The addition of a relational approach based on networks with existent planning systems (more or less hierarchical) is an issue to be explored in depth. According to Albrechts and Mandelbaum (2005), planning authorities need to adapt the traditional systems to this new context.

New challenges for planning

Patsy Healey (2005) argues that, under a governance context, there is a need to rethink the relationships between governments and society. Urban regions are increasingly conceptualised in terms of relational webs, less hierarchical, and authoritative power is balanced with 'network power' (Booher and Innes, 2002). There is a certain tendency to include organisations, civil society and economic agents in spatial planning processes. Relationships are becoming more horizontal with the introduction of ideas about 'multi-level governance', 'partnerships' and 'participation' (Healey, 2006). However, planning episodes are sometimes characterised by the creation of 'lobbies', or the inclusion of only critical voices (the 'usual suspects') (Healey, 2006). The planning authorities are not always keen to broaden established arenas and to include new participants (Healey, 2006).

There is also tension between ideas about territorial and sectoral organisation (Healey, 2005). Some spatial planning initiatives aim to establish a territorial focus against the traditional sectoral organisation, they seek 'integration'. According to Healey (2006), this process is more effective when resources (financial and regulatory) are concentrated at local or sub-regional level. In other cases, a long term institutional effort is needed to succeed. Thus, the institutional context is important to achieve an effective territorial integration. Especially, the sectoral organisation is a barrier that must be overcome with a new type of relationships characterised by coordination and cooperation.

The emergent 'governance' and 'networks' concepts call for a flexible approach to planning. The existence of hierarchical planning systems is challenged by the increasing of horizontal relationships between governments and society. Institutions and actors at different levels are demanding to play major role in spatial planning processes. This context adds complexity to planning because of the involvement of many stakeholders and the emergence of all kinds of networks. The shift towards a

more inter-subjective understanding of planning affects the role of plans as well. The plan is still the central issue of discussions. Thus, it is important to reflect on the function of plans in the current planning context.

2.2   The role of plans

Hopkins (2001) tries to answer the questions of 'what can plans do?' and 'how do plans work?' in his book '*Urban development: the logic of making plans*'. Plans provide information about decisions, and it is only useful to make plans when these decisions are *'(1) interdependent, (2) indivisible, (3) irreversible, and (4) face imperfect foresight'* (Hopkins, 2001, p.5). According to his view, plans are about important interrelated decisions that are uncertain. Plans provide information, but do not make decisions. It is important to keep this in mind to distinguish the role of plans from related functions, such as decision-making.

The context is central to determine if it is useful to make a plan and what kind of plan is needed. The importance of the context is stressed by many authors (e.g. de Roo, 2003, Healey, 2005, Van Assche, 2007). The dominant theories of planning provide generalisations, and are focused on specific problems. They provide a perspective, mainly from 'north-western' countries, which may be not suitable to other contexts (Yiftachel, 2006). Van Assche (2007) warns about the 'modernist' tendency to produce 'context- insensitive' plans. Hoch (2007) also recognises the importance of the context, and he is critical about the adoption of 'a priori' planning styles:

> *Instead of matching planning style to context, many planners insisted on using the same style without regard to changes in complexity, resulting in unnecessary conflict (Hoch, 2007; p.28)*

Donaghy and Hopkins (2006) introduce the notion of a 'coherentist' approach to planning. They argue that planning has to cope with particular problems that arise in the real world. This approach is based on coherence for action, rather than consistency among plans. In other words, plans do not need to be formally mandated or always in harmony between them following hierarchical planning systems. Alternatively, an 'emergent web view' sees plans having inconsistencies in content, changing, serving different interests that may conflict, being created through formal and informal procedures, and influencing action by providing information (Donaghy and Hopkins, 2006). One main distinction between the two views is the aspiration to achieve consistency when 'making plans' or to achieve coherence of reasons when 'using plans'. The dilemma between 'consistency' and 'coherency' represents a key question about the reasons to make plans. Plans can be made to control action or rather to present information about what to do in particular situations.

Another example to illustrate this discussion is presented by Hajer and Zonneveld (2000). They discuss the legitimacy and effectiveness of the well-known Dutch planning system. Many different plans made by different institutions are emerging in the Netherlands as a way to deal with a highly dynamic context. This threatens the legitimacy of the formal spatial planning system and makes coordination among plans and institutions more complex. Instead of the hierarchy, consistency and often passivity of the formal planning system, the new situation is characterised by complex interrelations and a more proactive and strategic attitude in making plans. These 'emergent' plans can be perceived as overlapping, incongruent, a failure of the planning system, or either as a new way to plan which gains effectiveness and legitimacy (a 'coherentist' view).

The complexity of current planning contexts makes more important to reflect on the role of plans. Particularly, the legitimacy and effectiveness of plans that are part of hierarchical planning systems is questioned. Formal planning systems can not control all the actions and uncertainty. Moreover, the involvement of stakeholders is essential to achieve legitimacy and avoid conflicts. Formal and

informal plans can coexist, it is not a choice of one approach against the other (Donaghy and Hopkins, 2006). Yet, plans need justifications for action, in other words, to be able to answer the questions: 'why plans are made?' and 'why plans are useful?'. These questions can not be answered from a single perspective. Plans can be approached as ways to accommodate multiple expectations of various stakeholders.

2.3 Expectations

Plans can adopt different forms. They can works as an agenda, policy, a vision, a design or a strategy (Hopkins, 2001). People have a lot of expectations about plans, but little notions about how plans work, what plans are, and what can they accomplish. Clarity about the role of plans can lead to reasonable expectations (Hopkins, 2001). In planning processes, it is important to distinguish between what plans are from what they are not:

> *In simplest terms, plans provide information about interdependent decisions, governance makes collective choices, and regulations set rights (Hopkins, 2001; p.5)*

Planning creates expectations, without expectations there is no plan possible. Expectations about plans are different between people, and these can be social, symbolic and material as well (Healey, 1997). Expectations can be about the content of the plan, the planning process, and the use of the plan. Actors tend to base their expectations and actions on their previous planning experiences, and on implicit frames of reference without questioning them (Roo and Porter, 2007).

The initial expectations of the different stakeholders are different, and may be unknown. Moreover, people and institutions tend to change their expectations through interaction. It is important to coordinate expectations and actions to reduce uncertainty about the future (Hopkins, 2001). Forester (1979) is particularly concerned with the role of communication to shape attention and expectations during the planning process:

> *Planners must routinely argue, practically and politically, about desirable and possible futures. If they fail to recognize how their ordinary actions have subtle communicative effects, they will be counterproductive, even though they may mean well. They may be sincere but mistrusted, rigorous but unappreciated, reassuring yet resented. Where they intend to help, planners may instead create dependency; and where they intend to express good faith, they may raise expectations unrealistically, with disastrous consequences. (...) When planners recognize the practical and communicative nature of their actions, they can devise strategies to avoid these problems and to improve their practice as well. (Forester, 1979, p. 203)*

The way planners communicate is a way to shape others' expectations. Particularly, '*shaping the listener's sense of truth (beliefs), sense of rightness (consent), sense of sincerity (trust), and sense of understanding (comprehension)*' (Forester, 1993, p. 31). Forester, inspired by Habermas critical theory, argues that unrealistic expectations are a barrier to effective communication (Forester, 1979). The contribution of critical theory to planning is '*pragmatics with vision to reveal true alternatives, to correct false expectations, to counter cynicism, to foster inquiry, to spread political responsibility, engagement, and action*' (Forester, 1979, p. 221). Criticism is a way to defeat deception and false expectations. Thus, planners must acknowledge the existence of different expectations about plans. The shaping of beliefs, understanding, consent and trust is essential to the success of the planning process.

Innes (2004) also argues that interaction may change the expectations of stakeholders in a positive way. The sharing of knowledge and interests can lead to the discovery of mutual benefits. Negative

expectations because of the need to 'compromise' can be fixed through the acknowledgement and provision of those reciprocal benefits.

Other authors are more sceptical about the capacity of planners to deal with multiple expectations. For instance, the notion of 'bounded rationality' defends that the existence of many constraints in real planning practices always leads to meet lowered expectations rather than optimisation (Simon 1957, cited in Forester, 1993). This approach is connected to the incrementalism view, an approach to planning characterised by the idea of 'muddling through' (Lindblom, 1959). Forester (1993) criticises this incrementalist approach by stating that planners should go beyond the '*that's the way it is*' affirmation by adding '*here's what we could do*'.

Gunder and Hillier (2004) are also critical about the role of the professional planner. There is the implicit expectation that planners act with responsibility regarding the public interest and good. And more recently, planners are also responsible to act in favour of future sustainability. However, they argue that planners can contradict these expectations in real practices. Planners are not neutral because they may have strong personal identification with particular groups and ideas (Gunder and Hillier, 2004).

The evolution of expectations during the planning process is an important aspect to analyse in real practice. This can be useful to understand the planning context and the way the planners deal with others' expectations. What people expect from the plans and from the planning process can be a first way to approach the case studies. As explained before, the setting of reasonable expectations about what plans can do is a first step towards success. Unrealistic expectations may occur when there is no common understanding about what plans can achieve. Expectations can be even negative when there is no agreement about the role of the plan. Yet, expectations evolve during the process through interaction. Unrealistic and negative expectations may change resulting in satisfaction. If not, they can be a barrier to engagement during the process leading to frustration about the outcome. Hence, the analysis of the case studies will help to explore the concept of expectations, trying to answer the following research questions:

> *What are the different expectations about the plan/planning process?*
>
> *How do planners/stakeholders deal with multiple expectations about the plan/planning process?*

Expectations can be reasonable and coordinated during the planning process. However, the success of the plan will still depend on the capacity to deal with other related issues. Particularly, the presence of uncertainties and conflicts are considered to be major threats to the satisfaction of expectations in planning.

2.4   Uncertainties

Introduction

> *The twin hazards of uncertainty and disagreement form an essential context for planning's ambitions of shaping the future (Myers, 2001, p. 365)*

According to Myers (2001), two main difficulties constrain planners' actions: uncertainty and disagreement (or conflict). Both concepts have been widely discussed in planning literature. They will be explored in the following sections, beginning with 'uncertainties'. As a clarification, the plural

form of these words is preferred in order to emphasise the existence of multiple perceptions, in practice. In scientific articles or in theoretical discussions, the singular form is also used as an abstract concept.

What is uncertainty?

> *Our worlds are characterized by complexity and uncertainty. Knowledge is partial. Situations are fluid and contingent, action consequences cannot be reliably predicted and satisfactory outcomes cannot even be defined in many instances. Somehow, however, decisions must be taken. (Hillier, 2008; p.38)*

Planning aims at changing the future, thus, a major challenge for planning is the understanding of what can be known about the future and what is unknown (Abbott, 2005). Uncertainty related to planning can be defined as '*a perceived lack of knowledge, by an individual or group, that is relevant to the purpose or action being undertaken*' (Abbott, 2005, p. 238). Forester (1979) establishes a distinction between uncertainty and ambiguity. The first is caused by doubts about truth claims. Ambiguity, on the other hand, is the result of doubts about legitimacy, expressive, or meaning claims. Forester states that to solve uncertainty, information is needed, while ambiguity needs political and social judgement. Ambiguity can not be treated as uncertainty, because there is a risk of obscure depoliticizing effects.

John Friend was one of the initiators in drawing attention to uncertainty in planning (Faludi, 2004). His approach is opposed to the notion of 'blueprint' planning, by focusing more on the decision-making process rather than on the content of plans. The role of the plan, according to Friend, is to be a guide for decision-making rather than a rigid document to be implemented (Faludi, 2004). Friend and Hickling (1987) distinguish three types of uncertainties: *about the working environment, about guiding values, and about related decisions*. The distinction is made according to the different responses needed in the strategic choice process (more information, clearer objectives and more coordination).

Hopkins (2001) elaborates on the above mentioned uncertainty types including a fourth one: uncertainty with respect to '*available actions or alternatives*'. Alternatives can not be taken as given, they are not known *a priori*. Sometimes, ideas about alternatives manipulate and affect values, and both should not be confused. Hopkins (2001, p. 64-65) provides definitions to the other uncertainties previously mentioned. Uncertainty about the environment refers to '*events that can not be known with certainty and are not under the direct control of decision makers*.' Uncertainty about related decisions refers to '*other decisions faced by the same decision maker or decisions over which other decision makers have authority.*' Uncertainty about values refers to '*incomplete knowledge of preferences among different outcomes.*'

De Roo and Porter (2007) argue that multiple interpretations of reality cause uncertainty in planning situations. Uncertainty is about the planning issue, the planning process and people's behaviour and actions. Abbott (2005) distinguishes uncertainty that arise from the environment (or planning context) and the uncertainty from the planning process itself. The first is perceived by everyone in the environment and the second is only perceived by the actors involved in the planning process. For instance, when a new plan is being developed there is a lot of uncertainty about what should be the character of the plan or what would be the role of the different stakeholders. The understanding of the types of uncertainty and the interrelations between environmental and process uncertainty are helpful for planners to establish and manage the planning process (Abbott, 2005).

The main types of uncertainties are summarised in the next table. The classification and definitions are re-elaborated from the previous discussions:

Table 2.1 Types and definitions of uncertainties

Types of uncertainties (*)

Uncertainties about the environment	Lack of knowledge about the external environment or events that are not under the control of decision makers (natural and human aspects)
Uncertainties about values	Incomplete knowledge of preferences about desired outcomes or futures
Uncertainties about related decisions	Incomplete knowledge about other decisions faced by the same decision maker or decisions in which others have authority
Uncertainties about available actions	Lack of knowledge about available actions and alternatives

(*) Based on Friend and Hickling (1987), Hopkins (2001), and Abbott (2005)

Dealing with uncertainties

One of the planning classical fundamentals (or illusion) is the search for certainty (Gunder, 2008). Technical or functional approaches are being restricted to solve only very straightforward or 'simple' situations. These situations are characterised by a high degree of certainty and control (Roo and Porter, 2007). The growing complexity of spatial planning calls for ways to cope with the inevitable presence of uncertainty. Most of the planning situations are 'complex', meaning that uncertainty prevails.

The need to provide flexibility and address uncertainty at the same time constitutes a paradox in planning (Beunen and van Ark, *in press*). Some degree of flexibility provides a balance between certainty and uncertainty. For instance, plans can adopt different forms, such as design type plans or strategies. Design focus on the outcome, while strategies emphasise the decision-making (Hopkins, 2001). In reality, plans combine both aspects finding a balance between certainty about the desired outcome and uncertainty about future decisions.

Dealing with uncertainties brings special attention to the process of planning. A major contribution to address uncertainty was done by John Friend and colleagues (see Friend and Hickling, 1987) who introduced the 'strategic choice approach' to planning.. Planning is seen as a continuous process of strategic choice through time. Dealing with the problems of decision-making in reality, is typically a demand for more information, for clearer objectives and for more coordination. These demands represent attempts to manage uncertainty about what should be done. However, the responses needed to reduce uncertainty involve costs, at least time, and that may conflict with pressures to make decisions.

The strategic choice approach does not consider an 'a priori' established planning process. The design of the process must take into account social and economic actors who are influential about decisions and strategies (Glasson and Marshall, 2007). Friend and Hickling (1987) argue that against the longly established planning norms of 'linearity, objectivity, certainty and comprehensiveness', we must learn to work with 'ciclicity, subjectivity, uncertainty and selectivity' to deal with complex situations.

Planning theorists are developing new concepts to work with uncertainty. For instance, Hillier (2008) sees spatial planning working with trajectories rather than end-points, trying to accommodate 'fluidity and immanence' with 'dynamism and flexibility'. Similarly, Gunder (2008) suggests that planning has to recognise uncertainty as an ontological state of the world. He acknowledges the limitation to plan and to control the unknowable. Charles Lindblom (1959) introduced the 'incrementalist' approach (the 'muddling through') as a way to progress through trial error in complex situations.

De Roo and Porter (2007) argue that increasing uncertainty requires a shift from a functional-rational approach towards a communicative-rational approach. Functional-rational approaches seek for certainty through complex evaluation processes and methodologies. An inter-subjective approach enables the expression of emotions and intuitions, thus, accepting the presence of uncertainty (de Roo, 2003). As complexity increases, the focus should go from the object to the inter-subject or institutional perspective. In other words, the optimisation of the process becomes more important than planning according to predefined goals. They mention the 'scenario' and the 'actor-consulting' approaches as methods that accept a certain degree of uncertainty. The first is used when uncertainties are about the 'object' of planning and the second is concerned with uncertainties about the actors participating in the planning process.

Abbott (2005) alerts about the risk that under uncertain conditions, people tend to adopt an 'incrementalist' approach, which is not effective to plan the future. He criticises incrementalism as only seeking for agreement with short-term actions, instead of raising problems. Hillier (2008) also criticises the lack of a 'vision' or a direction for planning. Abbott suggests that, paradoxically, the level of process uncertainty needs to be raised initially to push the bounds of possibility. This may increase the risk of disagreement and failure, but will most likely be able to change the future and to reduce environmental uncertainty.

Christensen (1985) states that planning processes have to be match to problem characteristics, instead of applying predetermined theories and methods. The variables to define the problem conditions are means (technology), ends (goals) and certainty. Technology is understood as how to do something, the knowledge, while goals are desired outcomes, or ends. Means are uncertain when an effective way to reach a goal has not been proven. Goals are uncertain when there is no agreement about them. Theories of planning or 'planning schools' are ways to look at reality. Rationalist approaches aim to achieve certainty about goals and means, while critics argue that such a situation does not exist in planning. Other theories, such as pragmatism or incrementalism, emphasise uncertainty about means: the 'trial-error' approach. Alternatively, consensus-building or advocacy perspectives focus on accommodating divergence about goals (Christensen, 1985). This separation between goals and means represents a classical vision of planning, and it is difficult to establish in reality. However, Christensen already acknowledged that all planning situations contain uncertainty, and only temporarily certainty about technology and goals can be achieved.

Planning conditions are not stable, since agreed goals can change or technologies can become ineffective under different conditions (Christensen, 1985). Complex situations are characterised by multiple goals, unknown means, ambiguity, change, sometimes even chaos. To avoid a continuous process of action and reaction, some order must be established and a direction must be chosen. From the analysis of planning practice in the US, Christensen argues that the planning system is prone to premature consensus and premature programming. In other words, the system fails to recognise uncertainty by imposing goals and technologies. This can lead to failure and conflicts because of unexpected consequences of applying technologies or resistance and disagreement about goals. This situation should be prevented or unravelled by the widening of discussions and the open search for

solutions. Additionally, agreed solutions should be treated as working hypothesis rather than certain technologies (Christensen, 1985).

A strong conclusion arises from the literature: seeking for full certainty in planning constitutes a utopia. Uncertainty can be assessed but it is always there. Particularly, planning at regional level has a high degree of complexity, which is an important source of uncertainty (Glasson and Marshall, 2007). Uncertainties can be perceived in a different way by the stakeholders involved in the case studies. The strategies adopted by the different actors to deal with uncertainty are also important for the analysis. As explained, there are multiple ways to accommodate uncertainty in the planning process. From the planners' perspective, different planning approaches to the case studies can represent different ways to recognise uncertainties and to deal with them. Therefore, uncertainties will be explored in the case studies trying to answer the following research questions:'

> *What kind of uncertainties are generated by the plan/planning process?*
>
> *How do planners/stakeholders deal with these uncertainties?*

The correct management of uncertainties during the planning process is important to meet the expectations about plans. It is also important to prevent conflicts and failure. However, uncertainties are not always correctly acknowledged and conflicts may dominate planning processes. Trying to reduce uncertainty is not sufficient for conflict resolution. Disagreement may persist, and this requires different ways to deal with it (Forester, 1989). Thus, the analysis of conflict will be another focus of the research.

2.5   Conflicts

> *A strong democracy guarantees the existence of conflict (...) Planning is inescapably about conflict: exploring conflicts in planning, and learning to work effectively with conflict can be the basis for a strong planning paradigm. (Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002, p. 62)*

What is conflict?

A definition of conflict is a difficult task because conflict is always perceived within relations between subjects. The work of Sauer (2006) to analyse conflicts in the implementation of European nature conservation policy in Germany can be a good example for 'conflict analysis' in spatial planning processes. Conflict is understood as opposite to acceptance, defined as the 'positive attitude of an actor towards an object' (Sauer, 2006, p. 175). Acceptance, to be complete, must be followed by action. Building on Hofinger, Sauer considers different levels of non-acceptance: 'active resistance, rejection, antagonism, indifference, and sufferance'. This idea of conflict is inclusive, and not only considers explicit and manifested disagreement between people. It is in consonance with planning perspectives that see conflict as something permanent, in society, as will be discussed in the next section.

There are also different types of conflict which require different ways to deal with them in planning practices. Sauer (2006, p. 175) distinguishes the following types of conflicts:

- *Factual conflicts (F) have often an objective solution: the involved actors share the same goals, but due to information differentials they do not agree upon the way to achieve them.*

- *Conflicts of interests (I) are mostly perceived as zero-sum games: the involved actors compete for the same object, resource or position.*

- *Conflicts of values (V) cannot be objectively resolved: the involved actors do not share basic beliefs or norms and claim the 'right view' for themselves.*

- *Relational conflicts (R) occur mainly on the interpersonal level: the involved actors and their relation become more important than the initial conflict trigger.*

The concept of frames and framing is used in many disciplines to explore the nature of conflicts, negotiations and inter-group interactions. Conflicts are related to framing differences between participants, and framing affects conflict resolution or perpetuation (Dewulf et al., 2009). People's frames of reference are a result of the following factors (Te Velde et al., 2002, p. 206):

- *Convictions (opinions about 'the way things are', assumptions that are taken for granted)*

- *Values (opinions about the way things should be)*

- *Norms (the translations of these values into rules of conduct)*

- *Knowledge (constructed from experiences, facts, stories, and impressions)*

- *Interests (economic, social, and moral interests)*

Dewulf et al. (2009) present a review in framing research, distinguishing between scholars who focus on frames as 'knowledge structures' and those who see them as 'interactional co-constructions'. The first are cognitive representations of knowledge that are stored in people's minds and applied to new situations. The second are rather seen as ways to communicate, to negotiate and to interpret interactions. Both perspectives can be valuable in research about planning processes. The idea of reframing can be understood as individuals moving from their own frames to a common frame through interaction (Dewulf et al., 2009). The balance between a personal frame and a co-constructed frame is a key issue to reach agreement. Interaction is needed in order to share opinions and generate new shared meanings. With no interaction, people tend to stick to their own frames.

Conflicts vs. consensus

Theoretical discussions about how to deal with conflict in planning diverge according to different planning perspectives or 'schools'. Conflicts are seen either as something to be eliminated or as a guarantee of democracy in planning. Following one or other perspective, discussions emphasise consensus-building strategies or the role of conflict in planning processes.

A first theoretical perspective to deal with conflict is the communicative or collaborative approach to planning. This approach emerged as a new form of planning based on deliberation and consensus-building between different actors. These ideas were developed into planning in different ways, with main contributions from John Forester and Patsy Healey. Their ideas are highly influenced by those from the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas about communicative rationality (Allmendinger, 2002). Other sources are the work of Giddens and post-modern ideas about the role of power in planning practices (Healey, 2003). The critics to this approach point out the consensus failure to reduce the pluralistic nature of society and the abstraction of Habermas 'ideal speech situation' (Allmendinger, 2002).

The meaning of consensus in practice is a controversial issue as in most of the situations it is practically impossible to build a 'real' consensus. Hillier (2003) explored other meanings of consensus far from the idealistic communicative process described by Habermas. Hillier states that in planning practice, most of the situations do not end with harmonic consensus between actors. Sager (2006) states that consensus always implies 'transactional costs'. Post-modern approaches go further in

saying that consensus is not desirable at all, because it is used in an instrumental way to legitimise the 'status quo' (Allmendinger, 2002).

Judith Inness (2004) responds to the critics arguing that consensus building is grounded in the practice of interest-based negotiation and mediation, rather than in the Habermas' concept of communicative rationality. Consensus building is only a part of these negotiation and mediation practices since it is only possible under certain conditions. Consensus is only possible if reciprocal interests, open dialogue and shared information between stakeholders is present. Iness agrees (with the critics) in that discussions do not usually follow the force of the better argument. Instead of logical deductive argumentation, planning processes are rather characterised by mutual learning and collective storytelling. Consensus building does not seek 'harmony' but a way to discuss and address differences that are 'paralysing'. In such situations, no one can produce results alone (Innes, 2004).

Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002) explore the 'dark side of planning', as opposed to the 'ideal' situations like those presented by Habermas. According to their perspective, it is more interesting for planning to focus on the type of real practices in which conflicts can not be solved through argumentation:

> *Habermas, among others, views conflict in society as dangerous, corrosive and potentially destructive of social order, and therefore in need of being contained and resolved. In a Foucauldian interpretation, conversely, suppressing conflict is suppressing freedom, because the privilege to engage in conflict is part of freedom. (Flyvbjerg and Richardson, 2002, p. 23)*

According to Van Assche (2007), real consensus is impossible because the interpretation of consensus itself will never be identical among various stakeholders. Van Assche stresses the central role of context in planning as it influences the meaning of communication. Interpretation is complex and dynamic, and it is determined always by a particular communication context. Thus, the planning process must be understood as a context in itself, framing a particular construction of reality. He states that planning processes are arenas where different interests, languages and worldviews interact through the practice of discourse. Yet, communication does not occur in a transparent and direct way. The histories of the participants, their culture, their role in institutions, or their power-relations frame their actions and thoughts. Thus, a plan can not be sensitive to all the contexts of every stakeholder (Van Assche, 2007).

Conflicts and power

How to deal with conflicting views and the influence of power in planning processes are central themes in contemporary planning theory discussions (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002) argue that conflict and power is needed to understand planning. They see the rationality of planning as a source of conflict. Instead of focusing on 'what should be done' in planning research, the focus must be in 'what is actually done'. The work of Foucault about the role of power and post-modern thinking has been highly influential to current planning approaches. The Foucaldian perspective sees power not only as a top-down force but acting in all directions (Glasson and Marshall, 2007). Collaborative planning and Habermas' ideas are often criticized for giving little attention to power relations (Healey, 2003). Low (1991, cited in Allmendinger, 2002) states that undistorted communication is not possible as human interactions are embedded in forces of domination.

Criticisms have led to an increasing emphasis to the power issue within communicative approaches to planning (e.g. Healey, 2003, Sager, 2006, Booher and Innes, 2002, Hillier, 2003). The commitment of communicative planners is to challenge power distortions in the planning processes. Healey agrees

with some critics that Habermas 'ideal speech situations' are difficult to conceive in real planning practices because power is unequally distributed between actors. However, Healey argues that 'the ideal speech situation' provides a good tool to evaluate communication processes, which is more valuable than dualistic visions about power and rationality in the line of Flyvberg (Healey, 2003). Innes (2004) clarifies that consensus building processes can balance the power 'around the table', but not the distribution of power outside the process. Powerful stakeholders who can achieve their interests without collaboration do not need to sit on the table.

One important contribution to the discussion of the role of power in planning processes is the concept of network power introduced by Booher and Innes:

> *Network power can be thought of as a flow of power in which participants all share. It comes into being most effectively when three conditions govern the relationship of agents in a collaborative network: diversity, interdependence, and authentic dialogue (Booher and Innes, 2002, p. 121)*

Shared interests between actors can enable cooperation and power to implement creative and adaptative solutions. Booher and Innes (2002) present cases of collaborative planning in California that based success in the construction of networks of power among the actors involved. In a different position, Sager (2006) argues that the role of planner should be to alter the power relations in the process and counteract manipulation or strategies that seek to perverse communication. Sager developed his ideas departing from the critical communicative planning of Forester. Sager indicates that the approach supported by Booher and Innes suits only for consensus-building oriented planning. This discussion can exemplify the multiple interpretations about the role of power in planning. These interpretations see power either as an 'enabling' or either as a 'disabling' force (Glasson and Marshall, 2007).

Power can not be neglected in planning processes, and not only in situations characterised by open conflict or highly politicised processes. Some authors argue that the 'governance' approach privilege some actors and interest over others. The state collaborates with some influential groups in a way called 'corporatism' (Glasson and Marshall, 2007). At the end, the goals of governments would be more subordinated to those of private corporations, to business. Participation or collaborative planning efforts are neither a guarantee of a more fair distribution of power in decision-making. These processes are not free of power forces and participation may be used in an instrumentalist way (Glasson and Marshall, 2007).

Collaborative or communicative planning theorists sustain an optimistic view about planning balancing or changing the existent power relations. They emphasise the communication process as an arena to forge networks between actors and to fight current forces. The role of the planner is central as a mediator and should have a critical attitude. However, power is unequally distributed and in most of the situations argumentation cannot combat power (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). Moreover, planners are also embedded in the social structure, so they play the game of power and represent power at the same time.

Dealing with conflicts

Healey (1998) argues that stakeholder involvement can be a way to address conflict. An important thing is that encounters with stakeholders should not assume fixed interests or positions. They should aim at learning to think differently to generate mutual understanding and even consensus. It is important, thus, to start 'processes of social learning' to encourage collaboration at the start of the process and avoid the 'costs' and 'institutional damage' of adversarial conflict (Healey, 1998). However, as noted earlier, understanding does not necessarily mean agreement. Some sort of conflict

may be inevitable and, indeed, positively productive of change under conditions of inequality and oppression (Huxley, 2000).

Planning deals most of the time with conflicting actors and discourses articulated in adversarial ways. Thus, planning needs arenas where conflicts can be reoriented to discussion in a less antagonistic way (Brad and Gaffikin, 2007). Hillier (2003) explores a more realistic meaning of consensus and introduces the possibility of the permanence of conflict. Divergences should be domesticated rather than eliminated:

> *The implication is that we could rethink the notions of consensus-formation and agreement in a different way, incorporating both collaboration and competition, both striving to understand and engage with consensus-formation while at the same time respecting differences of values and areas of disagreement (Hillier 2003, p.54)*

Their ideas are inspired by authors such as Lacan and Moufflé and the theory of 'agonism'. In planning, agonism represents an alternative to 'antagonism' in dealing with conflicts. Healey (2003) agrees with Hillier in recognising the importance of 'agonist' strategies in situations where consensus may be a fragile and incomplete outcome. Conflicts, thus, can be managed to achieve positive agreements. A more realistic approach could be based on the construction with divergences, rather than conventional consensus-building that seeks to eliminate them.

> *For 'agonistic pluralism', the prime task of democratic politics is not to eliminate passions from the sphere of the public, in order to render a rational consensus possible, but to mobilize those passions towards democratic designs (Mouffe 2000, cited in Brand and Gaffikin 2007, p.292)*

Ploger (2004) also developed an agonist perspective, analysing a case of urban regeneration in Denmark, and suggested the consideration of 'strife' as an interesting planning force. Ploger states that planners perceive most conflicts as antagonistic ones. Under this perspective, planners believe that conflicts are product of irreconcilable views and interests. In contrast, the suggestion is an 'agonist' view of conflicts as disagreement between adversaries, instead of enemies. According to Ploger, the main difference is that antagonism can not be solved and can only be addressed with power (or legal means). Then, the goal is to solve conflict through the acceptance of a compromise, a majority, a political decision or by law. On the contrary, agonism respects the legitimacy of conflict, demanding a stronger communication effort towards agreement or consensus between adversaries (Ploger, 2004).

The theoretical discussions illustrate the different ways in which conflicts are perceived in practice. These perceptions influence the strategies adopted to deal with conflicts in planning processes. In general, there is the recognition that antagonistic conflicts represent obstacles to reach positive outcomes. Consensus is not always possible, because disagreement is legitimate and may persist. Conflicts appear during interaction as the result of different 'frames of reference', or worldviews. Thus, working with conflict can be seen as a process of 'reframing' to generate new common frames. Power can also play a role to generate and deal with conflicts. Conflicts will always persist, but divergences can evolve through interaction to achieve agreements. In the case studies, conflicts will be explored by trying to answer the next questions:

> *What kind of conflicts are generated by the plan/planning process?*
>
> *How do planners/stakeholders deal with these conflicts?*

Conflicts are interrelated with the previous concepts of expectations and uncertainties. The analysis of these concepts together can provide a better understanding of their relationships in practice. After exploring each concept individually, there is a need to create links between them.

2.6 Conclusions: the missing link

The theoretical discussions presented form the basis to look at the case studies. The research questions will try to be answered in the light of this theoretical framework. To sum up, the most relevant conclusions from the theoretical frameworks are:

- There are emergent concepts, such as 'governace' and 'networks', that call for a less hierarchical and more flexible approach to planning to deal with complexity

- The role of plans has changed because of the shift from an 'object' or 'technical' orientation towards an 'inter-subjective' planning approach with a stronger emphasis on the process

- The planning process, in complex situations, involves dealing with expectations from different stakeholders, a high degree of uncertainty, and the presence of conflict.

- People have different expectations about plans and these expectations are shaped through communication and interaction during the planning process

- Planners can not fully address uncertainty regarding plans, but there are different ways to accommodate uncertainties during the planning process

- Conflicts can not be completely solved because divergences between stakeholders tend to persist, but communication strategies can generate agreements and new frames of reference during the planning process

In the next table, the most relevant aspects and discussions about the concepts of expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts are also summarised. In the discussion chapter, these findings from the literature will be confronted with the results from the case studies.

Table 2.2 Theoretical aspects and discussions about expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts

Expectations
- Expectations are shaped by past experiences   - Fixed expectations (or goals) vs. shaping of expectations during the planning process   - Importance of reasonable expectations   - Shaping expectations through: ➢ Sense of truth or 'beliefs'   ➢ Sense of rightness or 'consent'   ➢ Sense of sincerity or 'trust'   ➢ Sense of understanding or 'comprehension'   'That's the way it is' vs. here's what we could do'

Uncertainties
- Illusion of certainty vs. uncertainty acknowledgment   - Types of uncertainties   - Environment   - Values   - Related decisions   - Available actions   - Focus on object/design vs. focus on inter-subject/decisions   - Linearity (plan-implement) vs. ciclicity   - Comprehensivness vs. selectivity   - Importance of flexibility   - End-points vs. trajectories   - Incrementalism (trial-error) vs. long-term visions (possibility)
Conflicts
- Planning aims at solving conflicts vs. conflict as a legitimate planning force   - Consensus vs. permanence of conflict   - Fixed frames of reference (convictions, values, norms, knowledge, interests) vs. reframing to generate shared frames of reference   - Conflicts as antagonistic (solved by power or legal means) vs. agonism strategies to achieve agreements   - Power as disabling, top-down vs. power as enabling, network power

After discussing the concepts of expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts, evident connections can be observed between them. For instance, expectations about plans can be influenced by the presence of uncertainties and conflicts. Or the other way around, conflicts may appear in the presence of different expectations and uncertainties about plans. The way these concepts are connected to each other is not sufficiently explored in the planning literature. To provide a better understanding of the planning process, it is important to establish links between the concepts. Hence, the final research questions will focus on these relationships, trying to contribute in new ways to understand and reflect on planning:

> *What are the relationships between expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts?*
>
> *How can expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts be used to understand and reflect on spatial planning?*

3 Spatial planning in Catalonia (Spain)

3.1 Introduction

Spatial planning at regional level is essential and problematic at the same time. There are spatial problems which demand solutions at different scales. However, the monopoly of normative spatial planning has been traditionally controlled by states and municipalities. On the one hand, urban development is historically a local issue. In Europe, that trend can still be seen in the power that municipalities have to define land use at local level in many planning systems (see Busck et al., 2008). On the other hand, states controlled the power to decide about policies, big infrastructures and important protected areas. The regional level is important to find a balance between the two. Planning from the state level often implies centralised visions and top-down approaches. Planning from the local level can have the problem of a too narrow perspective.

International institutions and decentralisation processes have changed this situation during the last decades. In Europe, the EU Comission determines important policies affecting spatial planning. Some initiatives at European level are changing the institutional landscape of spatial planning, and particularly giving more importance to regional planning (Alden, 2006). For instance, the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) promotes new planning concepts to emphasise the role of regions (Adams et al., 2006). Countries in northern Europe, such as the UK, but also new EU members and southern-European countries like Spain are experiencing an impulse in regional planning. In the case of Spain and other countries like Germany or Belgium, decentralisation is important and regional governments have a lot of competences in spatial planning. In Italy, UK, or Ireland regions have important competences about spatial planning, but the control of the state is stronger. In Nordic countries, decentralisation is even higher and municipalities are gaining resources and power to decide about land use planning (Larsson, 2006).

In Spain, sectoral visions are still predominant with spatial planning having a secondary role. Important national or regional plans are about transport infrastructures, water management, natural areas, or energy. Comprehensive land use planning is a competence in the hands of municipalities, which are obliged to elaborate local plans with a more or less supra-local control depending on the region. Local plans are mainly focused on 'urbanism', with the most important goal being to decide about the 'developable' or 'non-developable' land in most of the cases. The excessive power of municipalities to decide, sometimes under the influence of developers, caused often excessive land consumption, speculation, and environmental problems (Bosch et al., 2007). However, decentralisation in Spain brought the emergence of a new regional planning scale as it will be explained in the next sections.

3.2 The regional planning framework

The current spatial planning framework in Spain starts with the political decentralization process after the reestablishment of democracy. The 1978 Constitution gave full competences to regions ('*Comunidades Autónomas,* CAs') in spatial planning. The state kept the competence to decide about major infrastructures affecting more than one CA. Spain moved from a completely centralized state, during the Franco dictatorship (1939-75), to function almost as a federal state (Benabent, 2006, Dasí et

al., 2005). The decentralization process is still continuing nowadays. Historical regions with a strong identity and economical power, such as Catalonia and the Basque Country, are the ones with more ambitions to have a higher political autonomy.

Catalonia was the first CA to pass a spatial planning act in 1983, while Extremadura was the last one in 2001 (Dasí et al., 2005). The amount of regional plans approved is still low and clear differences exist between regions (see figures 3.1 and 3.2). In general, the elaboration of regional plans has not been successful in changing the planning tradition in Spain. Urban planning and sectoral planning still control the competences to decide about land-use in most cases. The capacity of the new regional plans to influence other plans is still limited. According to Toribio *et al.* (2005), one big problem is the lack of a culture in territorial cooperation and coordination in Spain. This is a general picture, but the analysis of particular case studies can provide a deeper understanding, especially about the way plans are developed. Then, it would be possible to evaluate the real value of regional plans and their contribution to a new form of territorial governance in Spain (Feria et al., 2005).

■ Approved plans
■ In elaboration
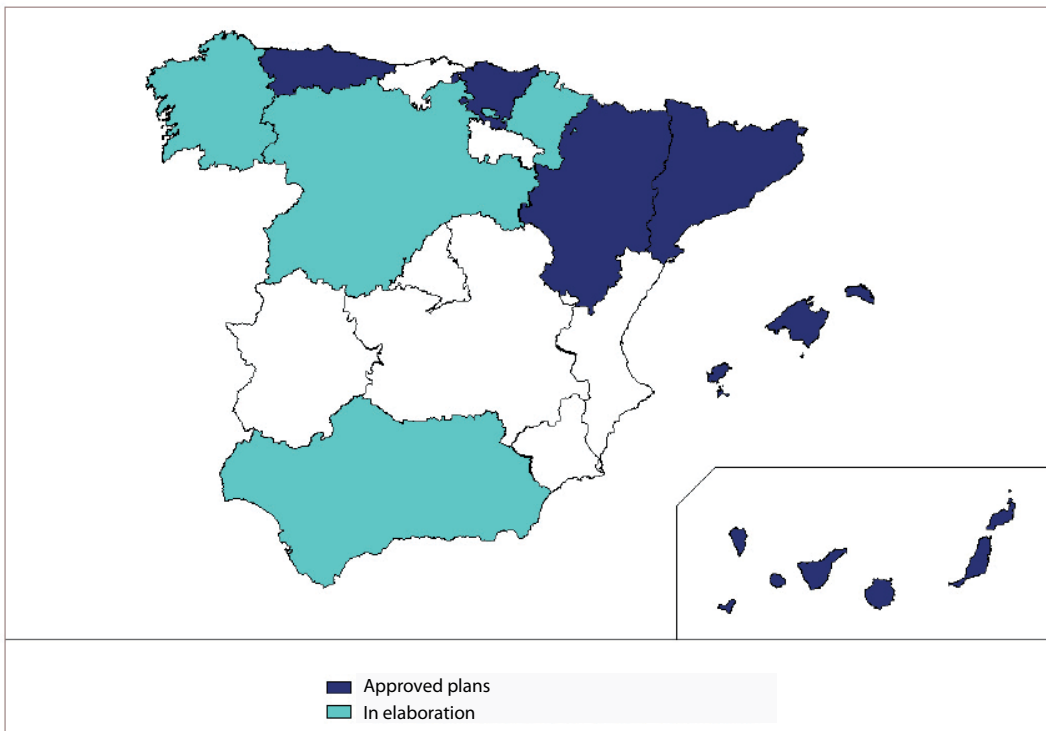
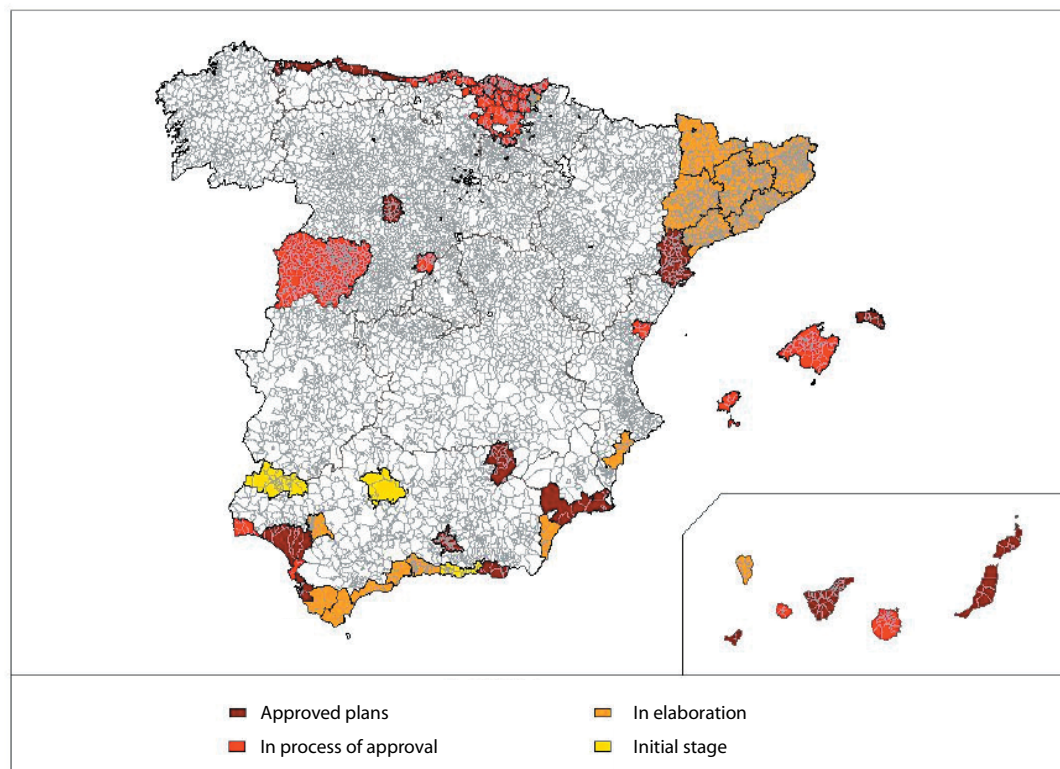**Figure 3.1 Regional plans in Spain** (adapted from Feria et al., 2005)

Figure 3.2 Sub-regional plans in Spain (adapted from Feria et al., 2005)

3.3   *Spatial planning policy in Catalonia*

The experience in spatial planning at supra-local level in Catalonia is still small. On the contrary, great progress was made in urban planning during the last decades (Nel·lo, 2007). Urban planning was controlled to great extent by municipalities, which are responsible for the elaboration of comprehensive local land use plans, known as general urban plans ('*Plans Generals d'Ordenació Urbanística Municipal, POUMs'*). The recent Catalan '*llei d'urbanisme'* (urbanism law) establishes the mechanisms to guarantee supra-local control to local land use plans (POUMs) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006). The current legal framework for spatial planning at supra-local level was established in 1983 by the '*Llei de política territorial*' (spatial policy law) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 1983).

The recent spatial planning policy in Catalonia has lived different phases. After the reestablishment of democracy in Spain, the regional government was also restored in Catalonia. A Catalan conservative party (CiU) was in the government during the period 1980-2003. The first regional plan in Catalonia ('*Pla Territorial General de Catalunya*, PTGC') was approved in 1995. The PTGC took many years to be approved and has received many criticisms until now, especially because of its rigid character (Marshall, 1995). The plan has also a poor normative content (Nel·lo, 2007), hence his general impact has been scarce. However, the PTGC established the planning framework in the region. It included the mandate to elaborate a series of comprehensive sub-regional plans, called territorial partial plans ('*Plans Territorials Parcials, PTP*') and other related plans with more sectoral character. The first PTP was approved in 2001 and other sectoral plans concerning infrastructures and protected areas were approved during this first political period.

25

The formal planning system is completed by two other types of plans at a lower scale: '*Plans Directors Urbanístics, PDU*' (urban director plans) and the above mentioned POUMs (local urban plans). These two are regulated by another legal framework, the '*llei d'urbanisme*'(Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006). The first are only elaborated to solve specific problems at a supra-local scale. The latter are elaborated by municipalities, and they have a compulsory character (like the PTPs). The formal planning system including the different types of plans is illustrated in the next figure:
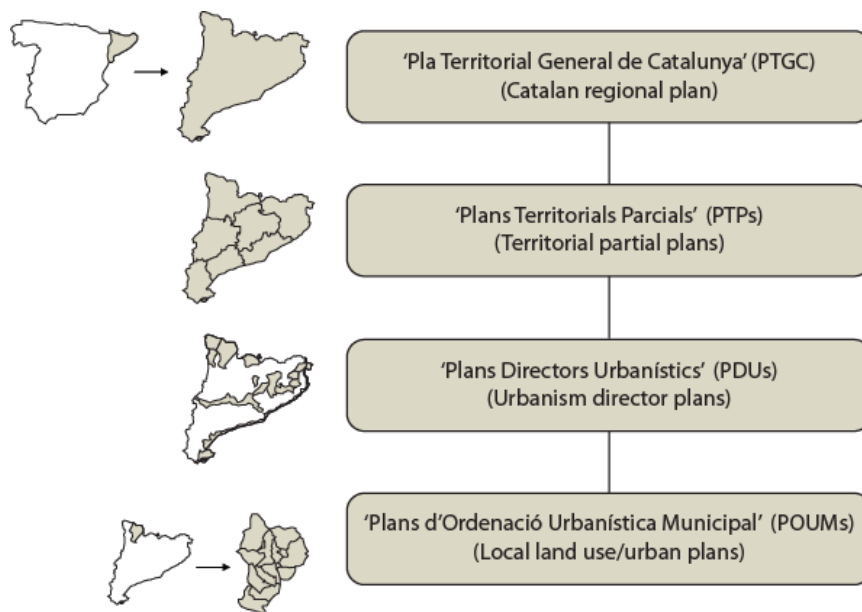
Figure 3.3 The formal system of regional and urban plans in Catalonia

A change in the Catalan government in 2003 led to the political commitment to elaborate the rest of the PTPs. The new government created a Spatial Planning Program (SPP) to complete the elaboration of the PTPs and to modify the PTGC (Nel·lo, 2007). The SPP office depends on the Spatial Policy and Public Works Department ('*Departament de Política Territorial i Obres Públiques, DPTOP*') of the Catalan regional government ('*Generalitat de Catalunya, GC*').

The SPP acknowledges great potentialities for the development in the region. Yet, it diagnoses three main dynamics that represent threats to a sustainable development (environmental, social and economical). These are urban sprawl, spatial specialisation and social segregation. To combat those negative dynamics, the three basic principles according to SPP should be: compacity, complexity and cohesion (Nel·lo, 2007). These three principles are developed in a set of general criteria to elaborate the PTPs (see Generalitat de Catalunya, 2004). The main aspiration is to create a basis for the organisation of Catalonia: '*a network of reasonably dense cities and villages, rich in diverse functions, and with a good social coexistence… like a city of cities*' (translated from Nel·lo, 2007, p.197).

3.4   *'Plans Territorials Parcials, PTPs' (territorial partial plans)*

As mentioned previously the PTGC defined the need to elaborate 'territorial partial plans' (PTPs) in seven subdivisions (or functional areas) of Catalonia (see Figure 3.4). Those sub-regions are not yet political-administrative divisions, which officially are provinces, '*comarques*' (counties), and municipalities. However, there is an ongoing debate to reorganise the region and substitute the four Catalan provinces by seven '*vegueries*', which would correspond to the mentioned spatial planning

sub-regions (see Tort i Donada et al., 2008). This is important to keep in mind because there are still uncertainties and conflicts about the new territorial division. This situation influences spatial planning practice because the planning areas are not fully supported with political and administrative institutions.

The case study area is the '*Alt Pirineu i Aran'*, which was recognised as a functional area a bit later than the other six areas (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2001).

Figure 3.4 The territorial division in Catalonia (adapted from DPTOP, 2009)

The first approved PTP was in '*Terres de l'Ebre'* (2001), during the previous government, partly as a political reaction to the social pressure against the Ebro water transfer project in the area (Nel·lo, 2007). The mentioned Spatial Planning Program (SPP) goal was to elaborate the other six PTPs during the period 2003-2007 and to modify the PTGC and the PTP '*Terres de l'Ebre*'. The first PTP elaborated under the SPP (2003-2007) was approved in 2006 (PTP 'Alt Pirineu i Aran'). This PTP is selected as a case study, which is analysed in chapter 4. Two other PTPs have been approved ('*Ponent'* and '*Comarques centrals'*) and the rest are in different elaboration phases. Besides, specific territorial plans have been approved to respond to social demands in three councils: *Alt Penedès, Garrotxa i Empordà*. (DPTOP, 2009).

The PTPs have a common philosophy with the establishment of three main systems: open spaces, urban settlements, and infrastructures (Nel·lo, 2007). For each system, spatial strategies are developed. These strategies include norms to be applied, or either recommendations to take into account in other plans or programs. The PTPs describe a basic territorial structure, which still could be improved and changed. This structure can be complemented with the elaboration of sectoral plans (e.g. energy, water management, hospitals, etc.) and the incorporation of related policy tools (e.g. landscape catalogues) (Esteban, 2006). According to the spatial planning authorities (Nel·lo, 2007), it would be unrealistic to try to plan everything in one single exercise, with such little previous experience in Catalonia.

The PTPs are not conceived as rigid documents, but rather as strategic tools to achieve the agreed collective goals (Nel·lo, 2007). This is an evolution of the conception of the PTPs as purely 'physical

plans' by the 1983 spatial policy law, which followed the dominant urban planning tradition in that time. The new PTPs are still 'physical' but in a strategic way, and they try to incorporate the basic economic and social aspects as well (Esteban, 2006). The large scale of the plans requires a different type of maps and language than the local land use plans (POUMs). The PTPs articulate a 'global discourse' to orient the territorial development, through a diverse range of related plans and actions. Besides, supervision and adaptation mechanisms are incorporated as a response to future uncertainties and changes in context during the time horizon of the PTP, which is 20 years (Esteban, 2006).

A new methodology was developed to elaborate the PTPs, which did not follow completely the hierarchical directives from the PTGC (general regional plan). This strategy responds to a pragmatic approach. The first need was the elaboration of the PTPs and later, the modification of the PTGC (Nel·lo, 2007). The process of working with particular planning areas would also help to improve the general vision, the PTGC (Esteban, 2006). This strategy emphasises the elaboration of the new PTPs as a learning process. The coherency between the PTPs was guaranteed by the elaboration of common criteria (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2004) and socio-economic scenarios see (Bosch et al., 2007), which had to be developed in detail for every PTP. Finally, the Strategic Environmental Assessment process must would guarantee the environmental sustainability of the PTPs regarding the availability of energy, water management, and waste treatment facilities (Nel·lo, 2007).

3.5 *'Plans Directors Urbanístics, PDUs' (urbanism director plans)*

Catalonia possesses a consolidated tradition in urban planning, as mentioned before. However, there have not been effective supra-local plans to coordinate and steer local land use planning. Supra-local control was only made through the compulsory approval of the local plans (POUMs) by territorial commissions ('*Comissions Territorials d'Urbanisme*'). The PTPs aim at assuming the functions of guiding, coordinating, and controlling POUMs in the long term. Yet, some areas required concrete an urgent planning actions at supra-local level. These areas were particularly sensitive because of a high urban development dynamism, high complexity, or either the presence of relevant natural and cultural values that could be threaten. A specific planning tool was created to give specific responses to the problems in these areas: the '*Pla Director Urbanístic, PDU*' (urbanism director plan) (Nel·lo, 2007).

The PDU is an intermediate planning tool between the territorial partial plans (PTPs) and the local land use plans (POUMs). The PDUs do not pretend to cover the whole territory of Catalonia, as the PTPs and POUMs should do. They are adapted to the specificity and immediate demands of each area (Nel·lo, 2007). The PDUs are regulated by the legal framework of the previously mentioned 'urbanism law' (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006).

During the period 2003-2006, about twenty PDUs were initiated, affecting one third of Catalonia's surface (Nel·lo, 2007) (see Figure 3.5). This fact created a new generation of plans which have the following common characteristics (Nel·lo, 2006):

1. Common goals in consonance to the Spatial Planning Program criteria (the same of PTPs)

2. They cover significant areas with global problems, beyond administrative limits

3. They provide an integrated vision, comprehensive rather than sectoral

4. They keep the equilibrium between the spatial planning criteria and the local autonomy, guiding and coordinating the local land use planning

5. They are conceived as tools to participate and to create agreements between administrations, which transcend the plan-making phase
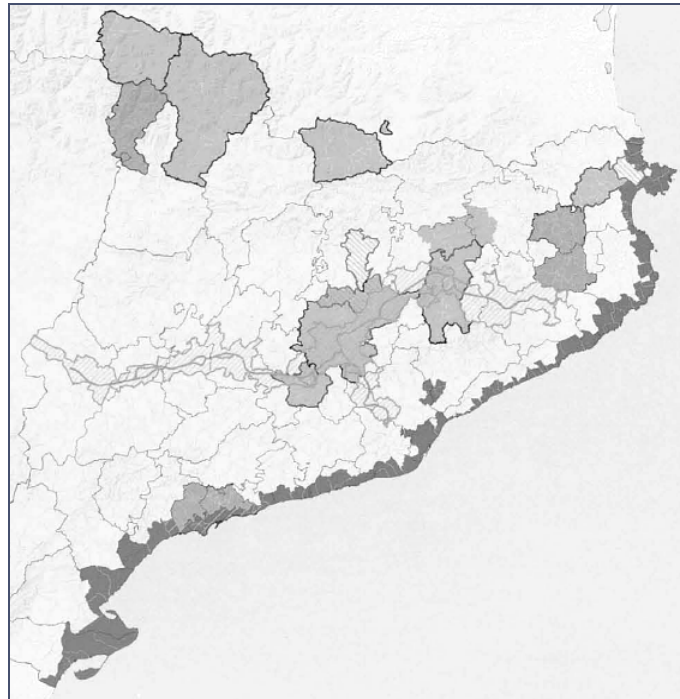
Figure 3.5 The distribution of PDUs in Catalonia (from Nel·lo, 2006)

According to Nel·lo (2007), there is a high diversity in PDUs types. The main differences are on the size and type of areas which they affect. The first generation of PDUs can be classified in the following groups:

1. The first group of PDUs tries to organise the development of emerging urban areas which will have an important role in the future as 'key urban nodes'. For instance, this is the case of middle-size cities in the central area of Catalonia, such as Igualada, Manresa and Vic. These urban areas will have an increasing role as polarities in the previously mentioned Catalan 'structure of cities'.

2. The second group aims at the conservation and promotion of areas with sensitive natural and cultural heritage. For instance, the PDU '*Gallecs'* protects an open area with high landscape values that is threaten by urban development pressure in the Barcelona metropolitan area.

3. Third, there is a group of PDUs which affect some councils in the Pyrenees. Particularly, they are located in touristic areas that suffer a high urban development pressure, especially due to the high demand of second homes. The first PDUs under this group were approved in the Cerdanya and Pallars Sobirà councils. These two plans are used as case studies in the present thesis, and are further analysed in chapter 4.

4. There are two PDUs that affect the Catalan coast. Its main objective is to preserve the remaining open spaces from the process of urbanisation. The PDUs include declassifications of existent 'developable land' to 'non developable'.

5. Finally, there are those PDUs aimed at integrating future key transport infrastructures in a coherent way with the rest of land uses. There are two PDUs in this group concerning new railway infrastructures.

4 Supra-local plans in the Catalan Pyrenees

4.1   Case 1:'PTP Alt Pirineu i Aran'

The area

The '*PTP Alt Pirineu i Aran*' affects the 'functional area' delimited in the Pyrenees as explained in the previous chapter (see section 3.3). The area is located in the north-west part of Catalonia. To the north, it borders with France, and to the west, with the Aragón region. Physically, the area is characterised by a series of valleys created by the rivers that flow from the Pyrenees to the south. Only the Aran county is located in the north side of the Pyrenees. That position makes this county a singular case within the region, remaining historically isolated from the rest of the counties. That fact even originated a different language and a particular status within Catalonia. This example illustrates to what extent the physical conditions in the Pyrenees affect human relationships. The river valleys originate all kind of flows, while the mountains limit them. Counties can be very close to each other in terms of distance, but can have a lack of relationships between them. As we will see, this limits the capacity to think beyond the local perspective, and to generate global visions about the Pyrenees.

Figure 4.1 Map of the PTP 'Alt Pirineu i Aran' area (elaborated from ICC, 2009a)

The Pyrenees area has some particularities that influence its territorial structure and future development. These are summarised in the following points (DPTOP, 2008):

- **Geographical position**: poor accessibility in general, mountainous character, and location in the border with other regions and states (France and Andorra).

- **Geomorphology**: fragmentation due to morphological barriers, lack of flat land suitable for urban development, and presence of natural risks.

- **Climate**: dominance of a rigorous climate, four different climate types, and three different biogeographic regions.

- **Land use**: dominance of forests and pastures, scarce agricultural land (12%), and presence of important natural and landscape values.

- **Demography**: concentration of population in few municipalities (5 municipalities = 50% population), and presence of a large number of disperse small settlements (86% settlements < 100 inhabitants; 33% < 10 inhab.; 7% abandoned).

- **Comunication networks**: main infrastructure routes north-south, difficult communications east-west , three main trans-border roads, two railways in poor conditions, and no airport infrastructures.

There are also important socioeconomic factors which illustrate the reality in the area. The population is scarce (1% of total in Catalonia) compared to its surface (18%). In general, population declined since the 19th century, but some areas are currently recovering population thanks to tourism. The actual population can increase three times during touristic seasons. The unemployment rate is low (2,72% in 2002) compared the rest of Catalonia (around 6% in 2002). The household income is also higher than the average in Catalonia. The economy is in a transformation process with agriculture and farming activities in a general decline. Services are already dominant, with the remarkable presence of touristic activities. The development of ski resorts played a key role in the transformation of the economy in the Pyrenees (DPTOP, 2008).

The context and objectives of the plan

As explained in the previous chapter, the PTPs are legally regulated and must be elaborated for all the sub-regions in Catalonia. The '*Generalitat de Catalunya: GC*' (Catalan government) assumed the initiative to elaborate the PTPs. More specifically, the previously mentioned Spatial Planning Program (SPP) office, created in 2003, was in charge of the coordination and elaboration of the PTPs. The PTP 'Alt Pirineu i Aran' was the first one to be elaborated by the SPP. This is a relevant fact because both the content and the process of the plan-making were a pioneering experience. As the plan coordinator said, they had to 'invent' a new product.

The Pyrenees represents a paradigmatic case with a very small population and a large territory. The resources of the municipalities are very limited, while at the same time they have to deal with a strong urban development pressure because of tourism. Although local land use plans are obligatory, 36% of the municipalities still do not have a complete local plan. During the last decades, a lot of second homes were built causing a big socioeconomic impact, and environmental problems in the region. The construction of new homes was above the average in Catalonia during the period 1991-2001. The sum of second homes and empty homes exceeds the number of permanent homes in the region. Besides, the amount of approved developable land could still allow the building of 29.000 new houses in the region (DPTOP, 2008) The decline of farming activities is also causing important landscape

transformations. The developments generated preoccupation among local institutions and associations in the Pyrenees. Local reactions occurred against some urban development plans and some social movements in the Pyrenees were created to protest against this situation (SCOT, 2005).

The planning authorities, with the PTP, aimed at the maintenance of agricultural activity and biodiversity, the concentration of growth in the main urban settlements, and the readjustment of the housing market. The problem with the housing market in the Pyrenees was the unsustainable proliferation of touristic second homes. Second homes are only used during specific periods, mainly during the ski season. The idea of the authorities was to promote touristic activities during all the year, establishing a priority of hotels or apartments rather than the construction of more second homes. (SCOT, 2005).

The planning actors

The most important actors regarding the PTP are the representatives of the political institutions. On one side, there is the *Generalitat de Catalunya* (Catalan government) represented by the Spatial Planning Program office (SPP) in this case. On the other side, there is the local administration represented by the '*Consells Comarcals: CC*' (county councils) and municipalities. In the case of the '*Alt Pirineu i Aran*', there are 6 counties and 76 municipalities in total. There are other stakeholders which also played a role in this case study, such as other administrative departments, local institutions, local corporations, farmers, or universities.

To the purpose of the research, the selection of the interviewees was made trying to represent the most relevant actors. These are the planning authorities, members of the most important institutions in the area, and other actors which could bring alternative visions from local institutions or universities.

The research focuses on two specific counties within the region: Pallars Sobirà and Cerdanya. Those counties are interesting because apart from the PTP, other supra-local plans (PDUs) were developed afterwards, which are also analysed later (see chapters 4.2 and 4.3).

The interviewed actors are:

- Ferran Miralles: representative of the government planning authorities, coordinator of the PTP 'Alt Pirineu i Aran' (SPP office)

- Xavier Ribera: political authority (president) from the 'Pallars Sobirà' County Council

- Joan Pous: political authority (president) from the 'Cerdanya' County Council

- Technicians from the main municipalities (Puigcerdà and Sort) in both counties

- Tomàs Torrent: chairman of local cultural institution from the Cerdanya county ('*Institut d'Estudis Ceretans, IEC*')

- Vanesa Freixa: promoter of local association ('*Rurbans*'), local development office ('*Montanyanes*') and participant in a local social movement in the Pallars Sobirà county ('*Plataforma Pallars Viu*')

- Joan Ganau: team member of the PTP participatory sessions coordination (University of Lleida)

Other sources are used to obtain information about the reactions from other planning actors. Mainly, the documentation included in the plan, meeting minutes, and the reviews published yearly in the '*Anuari Territorial de Catalunya*'.

The planning process

The plan-making process was ruled by the Decree 142/2005' (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2005). As mentioned, the initiation and elaboration of the plan corresponded to the SPP office, within the '*Departament de Política Territorial i Obres Públiques, DPTOP*' (spatial policy and public works department) (DPTOP, 2008). According to he Decree, the planning process must guarantee social and institutional participation through the different phases:

- *'Avantprojecte' (preliminary plan): a*ccording to the law, includes informative sessions about a preliminary version of the plan, public debates and consultations with, at least, municipalities, '*Consells Comarcals*, CC' (county councils), and other departments within the Catalan regional government (GC). Then, there is a period of official public consultation, no shorter than two months, so that institutions and the public can present objections to the plan (DPTOP, 2008).

- *'Aprovació inicial' (initial approval):* after the public consultation period, the objections to the plan are analysed. A new version of the plan should be elaborated taking into account the objections. The new version includes a report explaining how the objections to the preliminary plan are considered and what are the modifications (DPTOP, 2007c). Then, it is published and new version consultation and public consultation starts.

- '*Aprovació definitiva' (final approval):* there is a second analysis of the objections presented to the second version. After that, the PTP is approved with the conformity of a spatial policy commission and the mandatory environmental pronouncements.

In the following sections, the plan-making process is analysed focusing on the concepts of expectations, uncertainties and conflicts.

Initiation of the plan: expectations and uncertainties

The need for planning tools at supra-local level was legally mandatory but also acknowledged by the main planning actors. According to the PTP coordinator, '*Catalonia is very much subdivided and every municipality wants to solve problems independently. We need to plan at a bigger scale to work coherently and efficiently*'. The problems and the need to 'do something' about it were acknowledged by the interviewees:

> *The old model in the Pyrenees, based in agriculture, is no longer possible. Besides, there is a problem of land consumption due to the construction of second homes. So, what should be the future of the Pyrenees? (Plan coordinator)*

> *The urban development was not working well. Every municipality has the competences and the county councils can try to coordinate, but there was the need to do something. The previous urbanism law was too permissive and undesirable situations occurred. It is not possible that in a small village with 4 or 5 families, they plan 200 or 300 new houses, as it happened, without any justification. Something had to be done, but always respecting each municipality. (Pallars Sobirà County Council)*

> *There is a problem with urbanism, particularly in fragile and complicated regions, such as the Pyrenees. Here, we have to be very careful with every action. It is like an ink drop in a glass of water, which changes the colour of the water. (...) There is the widespread idea in Barcelona that they should control the Pyrenees. But, watch out! Control can not mean to drown us... We are not an indigenous reserve, we have to develop and find an equilibrium. (Sort municipality)*

> *I believe that there must be someone above to look after the common interest. Regulations are necessary because one municipality or one person alone can not decide where and how to grow. It*

makes sense, and it is stated in the urbanism law. We should start from the same point of view, urbanism must be coherent and sustainable. In the last 20 years, in Catalonia, we have built as much as in all our history. Something is going on… This had to be regulated, controlled. (Puigcerdà municipality)

The municipalities are the first ones that want to grow. The politicians want to be elected so they want everybody happy, also the land-owners that want to develop. Municipalities also receive money with the licenses. This is the democracy of urban development! (…) Planning is important, and order is needed. Luckily, in Cerdanya we had urban development norms that allowed us to preserve order and the character of the landscape, otherwise… (Cerdanya County Council)

Local people are not protectionist in general. We are lucky to have larger administrations and institutions, like the government or the territorial commissions. If local people could decide, Cerdanya would look like Manhattan. Fortunately, there are people that plan and establish limitations from outside. (Cerdanya local institution)

The different opinions show that local authorities expect planning tools or regulations from higher administrative levels. They acknowledge that municipalities look for their own benefit, which not always represents the common interest. Larger institutions are seen as less influenced by particular interests. The different points of view show the expectations about the role of the administrations. Local authorities want to keep autonomy to decide and do not like restrictions to develop. They perceive the planning authorities as willing to control too much. On the other hand, the planning authorities sometimes show a 'paternalistic' attitude. They do not trust that local authorities are capable of deciding their future and organising themselves.

The first discussions and debates about the plan took place already with the previous government. The change of government brought an impulse to start elaborating the plans. The initial reflections about the role of the plan were made from the SPP office. According to the plan coordinator, the PTP worked as a 'guinea pig' because it was the first plan of the new generation of PTPs. Therefore, there were a lot of uncertainties about the plan and about the process.. The type of uncertainties the planners were facing were: *'How far can we go without interfering the local autonomy?, What should be the scale of the plan?, What should be the character of the plan?, How do the Pyrenees want to develop? According to which model?* The planners' strategy was to try to answer these questions internally before starting the process:

We spent a year 'closed' to discuss. During this period, we invented the product: the type of maps, the scale, etc. It was difficult because we needed to find an equilibrium between the obligation to say important things, while respecting the local autonomy. And if you look at other countries, there are no standards. Each country has a different approach and responds to a particular context. Yet, I think we found that equilibrium of saying things but in a strategic way. (…) Before asking the local people, we had to be sure about what the plan could say to avoid problems later on. (Plan coordinator)

After the definition of the product, the planning process and the participation mechanisms were approved. The planners' idea was to present a preliminary plan to the local authorities, so that they could have something concrete to discuss in the meetings:

If you go there with a blank sheet, they will criticise you because you don't have ideas: 'we meet and they don't have anything to say…'. If you go there with a map, then they would say 'this is already decided from Barcelona, it doesn't matter what we say'. The key of the success was a process organised in two rounds. First, asking: 'if we do this type of plan, what would you think? It's not decided yet, we can discuss it, change it or throw it away (…) That was a success because we had enough time to generate common understanding and to work without tension. (Plan coordinator)

The preliminary plan

The first version of the plan contained already the main documentation and the most important aspects that after were included in the final version. The planners proposed a 'territorial model' or future vision of the area, plus strategies to develop. The strategies of the PTP focused on three main areas or 'systems' (DPTOP, 2008):

- **Open areas (or non-developable land):** they were divided in different degrees of protection. The main criteria responded to the presence of values to be preserved (natural, ecological connectivity, agriculture, landscape), natural risks, or strategic interests.

- **Urban settlements:** the main strategy concerning the urban settlements was to potentiate a group of urban 'polarities' in the region with a structuring function. These urban nodes will guarantee enough population to provide services and maintain the systems. For the rest of settlements, urban expansion was optional or limited. Different strategies were given depending on the current situation and the future role of every settlement in the 'territorial model' (see figure 4.2). In other words, a growth strategy is assigned to every urban settlement. The strategies had be developed in detail by the related plans (basically POUMs, but also PDUs).

- **Mobility infrastructures:** special attention was given to the structuring function of mobility infrastructures. The proposals were complementary to those of the existent sectoral plans concerning infrastructures. The model established different types of 'structuring' infrastructures and strategies to develop them.
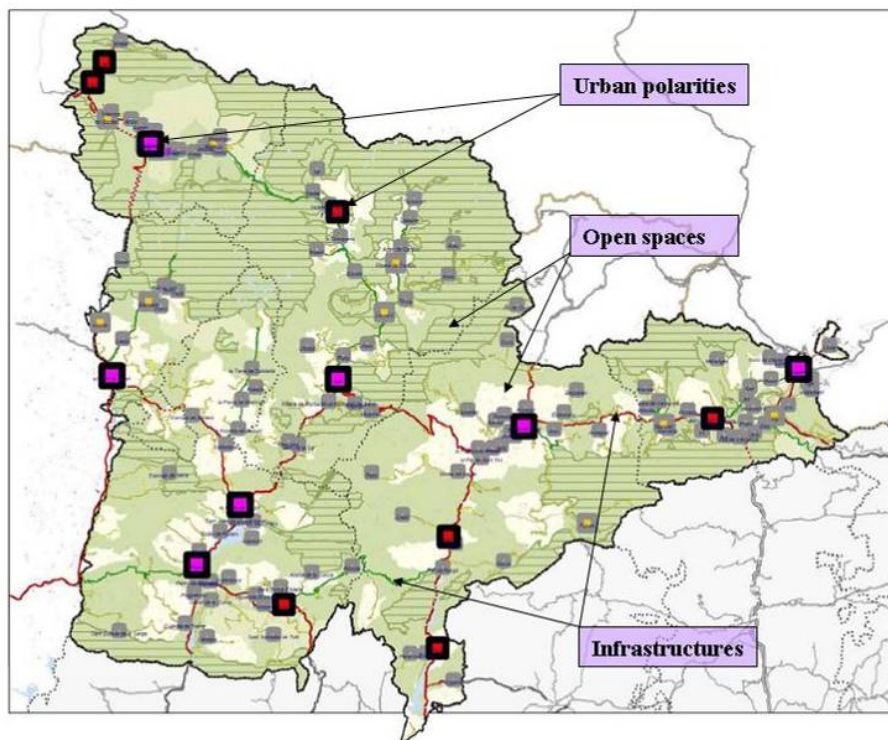
Figure 4.2 The PTP 'territorial model' (adapted from DPTOP, 2007c)

There was a meeting to explain the planning process with the local autorities in October 2004. During this period, six informative sessions were organised in each of the counties with representatives of the

local authorities (municipalities and counties). The official information and consultation period for the preliminary plan started in April 2005 and lasted four months. The documentation of the plan was available to the public, and the planners were accessible to attend specific interviews with municipalities (SCOT, 2006). Besides, public informative sessions were organised to explain and debate the plan. At the end of this first phase, a total of eighty objections and suggestions were presented to the preliminary PTP.

Reactions: uncertainties and conflicts

The preliminary PTP caused a lot of uncertainty among local authorities. According to the plan coordinator, more than half of the problems were caused by a wrong interpretation regarding the planners' intentions. As one of the local authorities said, '*it was the dialogue of the deaf*' and '*there were no clear ideas about the role of the plan*'. The local authorities protested: '*they want to freeze our villages*' or '*we should develop, we can't live like an indigenous reserve*'. The planners also perceived that local authorities did not like the lack of concretion of the plan. They were not used to that kind of plan, with a strategic character, and sometimes flexible and ambiguous in the normative.

Another problem was the different expectations about what a territorial plan should be. The local authorities were more concerned with their local problems and expected that the plan could solve a long list of local problems. That was the first conflict about the type of plan both parts expected:

> *They wanted concretion, infrastructures, investments, schools, hospitals, etc. or they asked: what shall we do with the forest? And with tourism? Their problems are not about ecological corridors. Yet, the PTP is not a program, and it can not solve all the sectoral problems. (Plan coordinator).*

> *We asked for a prevision, investments, we demanded schools, accessibility, a calendar, to improve local roads, services… but they did not want to discuss about it. (Pallars Sobirà County Council)*

The planners perceived that maybe they '*had chosen the wrong product*'. Yet, they had the mandate to elaborate a plan with a strong 'physical' character, mainly addressed to establish guidelines to local plans (POUMs). Because of its nature, the plan could not address some type of local demands.

Other reactions to the plan by specific municipalities and counties were (SCOT, 2006):

- Lack of participation and information (Organyà, and Bossost municipalities)

- The PTP only dealt with second homes but did not take into account the needs of local people (Pont de Suert municipality)

- Acknowledgment of improvement in communications, touristic uses, and urban areas; critical about restrictions and demand for public housing (Sort municipality)

- Discrimination in comparison with other counties (Alta Ribagorça County Council, and municipalities in the county)

- List of demands, need of more investments, more participation, and PTP only focusing on urbanism (County Councils together)

- Development only in towns and discrimination of villages (Pallars Sobirà County Council, Alp, Bolvir, and Fontanals municipalities)

- Need for more infrastructures, public transport, public housing, enlargement of ski resorts, and others (Various municipalities and County Councils).

In parallel to the political meetings, five public participatory sessions were organised in different Pyrenean towns (July 2004-January 2005). Two of the sessions were organised with the collaboration of the University of Lleida (SCOT, 2005). According to the organisers, they tried to involve as many people as possible and the assistance was acceptable. In one of the sessions, emphasis was made in the regulation of second homes and the promotion of hotels and other economic activities as alternative (SCOT, 2005). The impact of the sessions in the decision-making was limited. The sessions were only useful to explain the PTP, and to receive some feedback:

> *There were presentations, and after an open debate. If participation is not structured, the discourses are very different and you end up discussing local issues. (...) It was a process to legitimate the plan. The PTP was already thought, and that was an opportunity to explain it and receive some feedback. It did not bring important modifications or consequences. (...) There was no continuity in the sessions. People could give their opinion, but after: 'let's finish the plan'. (...) There is still a lack of interest and a poor participatory culture from both parts (the planners and the public). They do not trust each other, and there are also methodological problems. (Participatory sessions coordinators)*

Dealing with uncertainties and conflicts

During the first year of the process, the main task of the planners was to explain the plan so that people got used to it. In other words, they had to shape others' expectations about the plan and explain what the plan could do and what could not. This pedagogical process served to reduce uncertainties about the plan. According to the plan coordinator: '*the first problem was not understanding the plan and the second, thinking that the plan could solve all the problems*'.

A report was published (March 2006) to explain how the objections to the preliminary plan were taken into account. The new PTP proposal was analysed by a spatial policy coordination commission (governmental organism) before the initial approval of the PTP (DPTOP, 2008). The initial approval was done in April 2006 and a new period of public consultation of two months started. At the end of this second consultation process, a total of one hundred objections and suggestions were presented to the initially approved PTP (DPTOP, 2007c).

After the initial approval, the second round of conversations between the planners and the local authorities started. The planners noticed that '*they started speaking the same language. Local authorities understood the PTP and learned how to read it, though, there were still demands*'. During these meetings, the participants acknowledged the positive evolution of the PTP:

> *There was a general agreement that the evolution of the document was good, they congratulated us (the local authorities). We made an effort to 'start walking' and we included all the local demands we could.(Plan coordinator)*

> *First, there were no clear ideas about the role of the PTP. After, the perception was different (Pallars Sobirà County Council)*

> *The PTP accepted many of the things that we demanded together with the other councils. There was agreement, the planners were receptive to accept our comments. They also included our demand to allow the possible development of economic activities in the villages (Cerdanya County Council)*

> *It is true that there was a positive evolution of the document (Sort municipality)*

The new version included the demands of some of the towns to reinforce their role in the 'territorial model'. It also emphasised the development of some new infrastructures, although the County Councils still demanded more definition and more projects. The mechanisms to supervise and to update the PTP were also improved (SCOT, 2007).

Later, the harmony was interfered by the context of the elections in the Catalan government (in 2006). The CCs authorities asked to stop the PTP, and to wait after the elections to approve it. However, the planners argued that the PTP was a result of years of work and that, previously, a high degree of consensus was perceived (SCOT, 2007). The influence of politics is acknowledged by the interviewees:

> *The consensus disappeared suddenly because of the elections. The same authorities that were first positive, then wanted to stop the plan. This makes working together difficult because there is no trust. There are moments of political peace when it is easier to discuss. In other moments, everyone starts making politics and that influences the discourse (Plan coordinator)*

> *The process was politicised at some point. The government authorities presented the PTP to the County Councils (controlled by the opposition party). The CCs authorities tried to stop it because the PTP was affecting a lot of interests in some municipalities (Pallars Sobirà County Council)*

Despite the mentioned conflicts, there was a general agreement among the interviewees about the capacity of the planners to listen to the local demands. The evolution of the process was positive and the demands were, in general, taken into account. An effort to promote participation and dialogue was also acknowledged. However, the general perception is that there is still much room to improve. Particularly, the involvement of citizens and local stakeholders is seen as insufficient by some interviewees:

> *In the PTP process, they tried to change and promote dialogue and participation already from the beginning (Participatory sessions coordinators)*

> *We talked about the PTP just once, and the possibility to intervene was limited. They opened an official process for objections, then they approved the plan and that's it (...) We understood the plan but there was no dialogue (Pallars Sobirà County Council)*

> *The citizens did not know or find out about the PTP, or just the minimum (Sort municipality)*

> *Local associations understand participation in a different way (...) I would have liked a richer participatory process, but I don't believe this would have brought anything more. The main reasons are that there is still a cultural limitation, and it was a new product. So, we needed first to invent the plan before discussing it. Despite we did not follow a sophisticated participation mechanism, at least everyone had the opportunity to participate. I'm sure that participation and interlocution will be highly improved when we revise the plan in 10 years. Then, people will know better the type of plan and its implications. (Plan coordinator)*

> *There was no mobilisation around the plan. In general, there was unawareness and indifference about the PTP. Also, we didn't have many chances to participate.(...) It's a shame because the lack of democratic culture limits the generation of new ideas and discourses. We are few people, we would have liked to do more but we couldn't study and debate the plans well. This is still science fiction for us. (Cerdanya local institution)*

> *The participatory sessions were scarce, and a pure formality. They were only informative without a real participatory character. (Pallars Sobirà local association)*

> *In the PTP process, information, participation and communication was poor.(Sort municipality)*

The outcome and future expectations

A second report was published in July 2006, explaining the consideration of the second period of objections (DPTOP, 2007c). The final text of the PTP was approved the 25th of July, after the conformity of the spatial policy coordination commission and the Catalan government environmental department (SCOT, 2006).

From the preliminary version of the plan, the main changes included in the 'initial' and final versions were (DPTOP, 2007c):

- **General:** mechanisms to supervise, update and change the PTP are better defined; inclusion of new inter-municipal cooperation areas; more promotion of cooperation concerning new economic activities and public housing.

- **Open spaces**: more concretion in the normative of open spaces; more recognition to agriculture and farming activities; more emphasis in the landscape; changes in the surface and definition of open spaces categories; more possible uses in open spaces; and inclusion of recommendations to develop new plans and programs for a better management of open spaces.

- **Urban settlements**: more precision and development of growth strategies, including more possibilities for a certain growth in small villages; change of strategies in particular cases; definition of maximum urban extensions; more possibilities to develop economic activities; recommendations to develop related plans and programs.

- **Mobility infrastructures**: changes in some infrastructures; definition of different priorities to develop the infrastructures in coordination with sectoral plans; more emphasis about local roads, greenways, and telecommunications; inclusion of recommendations to develop related plans and programs.

During the process, some conflicts were made visible and the planners dealt with them in a different way in the final plan. Some conflicts appeared as a result to the many uncertainties that the plan generated. In some cases, the plan remained strict, while other issues were softened. The local demands were mainly included as recommendations in case they could contradict other sectoral plans. The flexible character of the plan leaves room for future interpretation. That can be perceived as a good strategy to deal with conflicts or as a new source of uncertainties. The different perceptions depend on the level of trust between local and governmental administrations. To many of the interviewees, the real consequences of the plan are still uncertain and they will very much depend on interpretation:

> *The PTP needs to be flexible and leave space to the local autonomy. It is impossible that everyone agrees. At some point, we needed to define some rules. It is not that dramatic! In the future, I believe that more people will agree with our ideas. (Plan coordinator)*

> *The PTP don't have a clear implication, it's like a plane view, while PDUs and POUMs go more into detail. The PTP establishes tendencies and general guidelines, particularly in three aspects. The open areas were basically the existent ones, adding biological corridors. There was not much controversy in this issue, because it affects mainly mountainous areas, and a little bit of the river valleys. Regarding infrastructures, they maintained the planned ones. There were divergences about the layout but that was corrected later. Finally, there are the urban areas, which is the most interesting issue to the municipalities. The PTP reinforces some polarities and establish a tendency to restriction in the rest of settlements. The problem is that all municipalities want to grow! (Cerdanya County Council)*

The planners, though, have positive expectations about the consequences of the PTP. The plan defines important things, while respecting the local autonomy:

> *The first plans have a degree of surprise and uncertainty about how they are going to affect our lives. Once municipalities elaborate the POUMs, they will see that the PTP say a lot of things, and that the plan is not so unclear (...) The PTP gives directives, there is not that much interpretation, they orient and define the rules of the game to elaborate the POUMs. The PTPs also include recommendations, but they are not compulsory (...) Some people said that we destroyed the local autonomy, while others*

> *demanded more regulations and more definition. I think we've reached an equilibrium. In the future, they will see that the plan is good and that it can be used for many purposes. Now, they only see it as regulatory.(Plan coordinator)*

The planners also acknowledge that the plan still contains many uncertainties because it was a completely new product. They assume that it is a 'trial and error' process in which the plan will be changed and revised often:

> *After the approval, there have been already four revisions of the normative. There are always unpredicted particular situations. It is a new tool that must be calibrated, it was a experiment. The important thing was to start walking with the new product. The plans can be improved, modified and changed. Once we started the process, everyone understood better the plans. (…) The planning process is important to generate discussions, conflicts and agreements. It is the way to learn and to generate ideas to improve it. It is not a finite process, we need to experience the elaboration of POUMs. Then, we will know better how to improve the PTP, what are the important things and what not. (Plan coordinator)*

One of the remaining uncertainties about the plan concerned the lack of capacity to promote local cooperation. The planning authorities aimed at the creation of areas for economic activities in cooperation between municipalities. However, local cooperation is currently poor and difficult. Sometimes, there are even conflicts between municipalities, or competition. Under this context, the PTP could only recommend or promote cooperation as a way to work more efficiently. The PTP could not oblige to cooperate because of the existent local autonomy to decide. Legal and financial problems are also seen as an obstacle:

> *The PTP facilitates things if they are done through cooperation, but the local dynamics are difficult to change (…) There is a strong fragmentation and only local visions. We must generate global reflections (Plan coordinator)*

Despite the complexity of certain issues, the planners consider uncertainties and conflicts as part of the process. Regarding important issues, conflict can become a planning force to raise problems:

> *We couldn't oblige municipalities to cooperate because of legal problems. The SPP director said to me: 'don't worry, maybe we won't solve the problem, but at least we will create it'. Sometimes we need to create contradictions, and maybe the laws will change in some years. It is important to start, you can't pretend to control everything and be a hundred percent certain (Plan coordinator)*

From the interviews with the different actors, we can see that the PTP raised a lot of uncertainties and different expectations. The potential conflicts were made visible but could be managed with a flexible approach to the PTP. The real implications of the plan were still difficult to visualise because there is still room for interpretation. That may have helped in preventing open conflicts and facilitated the approval of the PTP. Some of the content was only made visible when related plans were developed, particularly, the PDUs in the Cerdanya and Pallars Sobirà counties. The more detailed scale and more definition of the plans generated clearer implications and caused more explicit conflicts. In the next sections, those two plans are described and analysed.

4.2   Case 2:'PDU Pallars Sobirà'

The area

Pallars Sobirà is a Pyrenean county, which is physically defined by the north part of the Noguera Pallaresa river watershed. The north part of the county is delimited by the high mountains of the Pyrenees, acting as a border between France and Spain. The connections with neighbouring counties are through mountainous roads. To the north, the Bonaigua pass (2.070 m), and to the east, the Cantó pass (1.720 m) communicate with Val d'Aran and Alt Urgell counties. To the south, there is the main road which follows the valley towards the Lleida plain. The closest capital city is Lleida (125 km, 2 hours by car), while Barcelona is at around 3 hours by car (more than 200 km).

The main settlements and human activities are located in the valley. The secondary valleys follow a tree-configuration with smaller villages. The agricultural land is scarce and competes in space with the main urban and infrastructure developments in the valley. The highest parts are attractive because of tourism activities. There are two ski resorts in the county, and two natural parks. The rivers are also used intensively in summer to practice water sports.

Figure 4.3 Map of the PDU 'Pallars Sobirà' area (elaborated from ICC, 2009b)

The administrative division of the county is very fragmented. It includes 15 municipalities with a total of 134 urban settlements. Pallars Sobirà is the fourth biggest county in Catalonia, and it has the lowest population density: 5,2 inhab./km2 (Catalonia average: 229,4 inhab./km2; Netherlands: 397 inhab./km2). The decline of traditional agriculture provoked a demographic drop during a lot of years. At the end of the twentieth century, tourism activities changed this dynamic. The population concentrated in the valley, while the less accessible parts became almost deserted (Llop and Jornet, 2006). Currently, the total population in the county is around 7.000 inhabitants and the main 'towns' are Sort (1.551 inhab.), Esterri d'Àneu (754 inhab.) and Rialp (464 inhab.).

The context and objectives of the plan

The facts presented before contrast with the urban development dynamic in the county. During the period 2004-2007, Pallars Sobirà was the county with the highest building rate in Catalonia (60 started houses for each 1000 inhabitants) (SCOT, 2006). Obviously, these new houses do not respond to the internal needs of the county. They are mainly aimed at second homes for tourism. While the offer increased, the demand increased even more because the housing prices were doubled between 2000 and 2005 (SCOT, 2006). That caused a strong environmental and social impact in such a fragile territory. Although the recent crisis stopped this land speculation, this was the main problematic that planning authorities had to deal with when the PDU started.

The idea to elaborate the PDU 'Pallars Sobirà' was an answer to the local preoccupation about the future in the county. The spatial planning authorities promised to start the PDU during a public debate about a project in the Pyrenees in July 2004 (Llop and Jornet, 2006). The elaboration of the PDU was officialised with an agreement between the Catalan government planning department ('*Departament de Política Territorial i Obres Públiques*, DPTOP') and a university ('*Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya*, UPC'). The agreement was signed in September 2004 (Llop and Jornet, 2006). The PDU, thus, was elaborated by a team of experts with the supervision of the spatial planning department.

The PDU would be coordinated with the SPP office and had to follow the same philosophy as the PTP. On the one hand, the PDU had to develop in detail some of the PTP guidelines and directives. For instance, there was a specific goal to analyse and even change existent developable land, according to the PTP criteria and scenarios. The promotion of hotels and economic activities instead of second homes was one of the main objectives.

On the other hand, the planners (the authors of the PDU) intended to go beyond the regulatory character of the PDU. They wanted to emphasise the interest of heritage in mountainous areas as central to economic development. The strategy was to promote and improve this heritage to ensure quality of life and wealth in the county. The planners acknowledged the high diversity of landscapes and physical conditions in the county. According to them, the different conditions explain inequalities in the capacity to develop and in the economical characteristics of the different areas or 'types of mountain' (Llop and Jornet, 2006).

The planning actors

As in the PTP case, the most important actors regarding the PDU were the political institutions. On one side, there is the Catalan government represented by the spatial planning department and the hired team of experts (planners). On the other side, there is the local administration represented by the Pallars Sobirà County Council and the different municipalities. In the Pallars Sobirà case, there are 15 municipalities in total.

The selection of the interviewees was made trying to represent the most relevant actors. These are the planning authorities, the hired team of planners, local authorities, and members of active local associations in the area. The interviewed actors are:

- Ferran Miralles: representative of the government planning authorities, coordinator of the PTP 'Alt Pirineu i Aran' (SPP office)

- Gabriel Jubete: architect, and member of the PDU planners team (hired by the spatial planning department)

- Xavier Ribera: political authority (president) from the 'Pallars Sobirà' County Council

- Christian Lladós: architect from the main municipality in the county (Sort)

- Vanesa Freixa: promoter of local association ('*Rurbans*'), local development office ('*Montanyanes*') and participant in a local social movement in the Pallars Sobirà county ('*Plataforma Pallars Viu*')

Other sources are used to obtain information about the reactions from other planning actors. Mainly, journal articles, the documentation included in the plan, meeting minutes, and the reviews published yearly in the '*Anuari Territorial de Catalunya*'.

The planning process

The PDU planning process is regulated by the 'Urbanism law' (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006). The formal process includes, at least, the following main steps:

- *'Aprovació inicial'* **(initial approval)**: includes a preliminary plan with the main objectives and strategies. Previous to the approval, there is a consultation period with municipalities, councils, and other administration departments. The approval is made by the '*comissió territorial d'urbanisme*' (territorial urbanism commission). There is an open period of 'public consultation' to present objections to the plan.

- *'Aprovació definitiva'* **(final approval)**: after considering the objections, a new version of the plan is elaborated which should be again approved by the territorial commission (provisional approval). The final approval is official when the rest of requirements are passed and the legal text of the PDU is published.

The planners, though, wanted to make an effort to improve communication with local authorities and local people before the initial approval of the plan. The working methodology and actual planning process was designed by the planners' team and included the following main parts (Llop and Jornet, 2006):

- Research about other plans in the area (PTP, POUMs, etc.)

- Documental and territorial information research

- Interviews with local people and local authorities

- Consultations to other governmental departments and public institutions

- Field work

- Public informative and participatory sessions (coordinated by local association: *Rurbans*)

- PDU elaboration (different phases)

Initial expectations and uncertainties

As mentioned before, the PDU was born as an answer to local demands. Previously to the planning process, local initiatives appeared to promote public debates about the future development in the county. In this context, the government assumed the commitment to prioritise the elaboration of the PDU in the area as an answer to the local requests. Although apparently there is a formal hierarchy of plans, the elaboration of PDUs is not obligatory and they are aimed at solving specific problems:

> *The PDUs appeared as an answer to specific problems and demands which had a supra-local nature. In the Pallars case, the PDU started as an answer to the preoccupation about the destruction of the landscape in the county. Particularly, it was a requirement from local social movements ('plataformes') that wanted to avoid excessive urban development in Pallars, as occurred in other Pyrenean counties (Planners)*

> *During one year, we were organising participatory tables to generate ideas about the future development in the county. (...) In one of the sessions, the head of the governmental spatial planning department came. Although the elaboration of the PDU was already planned, he noticed the preoccupation of the people and decided to start the plan as a priority (Local association).*

The PTPs follow the same philosophy as the PDUs, covering the whole territory. Instead, the PDUs are only elaborated in specific areas and depend more on the particular problems to solve:

> *The PDUs were born from different needs, while the PTPs have a tendency to unification. The PDUs created their own language, and in each case, solved problems in different ways. (Planners)*

As in the case of the PTP, the planners faced a high level of uncertainty about the content of the plan, and about the planning process. However, they had a high level of expectations about what the PDU could achieve:

> *Our ambition was to create a plan with a multisectoral/horizontal character. We wanted to involve other administration departments and reproduce their proposals in the territory. The idea was to generate a 'territorial archive' with a lot of information. (Planners)*

The planning process was not specifically regulated as in the case of the PTP. In the PDU case, the public consultation period was only one, instead of two rounds. However, the planners wanted to make a dialogue effort with local authorities and local people. The planners tried to adopt an intermediate position as a response to the different expectations about the PDU. They wanted to satisfy both the mandate from the planning authorities and the local demands. The planners acknowledged the difficulty of the task during the process:

> *On the one hand the planning authorities' mandate was to solve specific problems. On the other hand, municipalities and local people demanded other things. It was a difficult position, because ones said: 'don't go that often to the territory, because you will end up doing the plan they want' and the others: 'you don't solve our problems because you come from Barcelona'. (...) Another problem was that we did not know exactly what the PDU can determine and what not. (...) Dialogue was less than expected because of the long distances from Barcelona and the extension of the territory. We also realised the level of dispersion and complexity of the territory. The local vision and the consciousness of the place are also very important. (...) The planning process was not clear, not regulated, but we wanted to inform and explain. We gave the municipalities a 'blank sheet', which perhaps was naïve. (Planners)*

Apart from meetings with local authorities, an open participatory process took place as a response to local initiatives. A local association (*Rurbans*), which also requested the elaboration of the PDU, asked to coordinate the process. The planning authorities agreed with the idea as a parallel initiative, rather than as a formal procedure. There were a total of eight informative and participatory sessions

between June and September 2005, which were open to everybody (Llop and Jornet, 2006). The process was acknowledged as a positive experience to generate debate and ideas. The coordinators mentioned the difficulties to elaborate proposals because of the early stage of the plan. The process also shows the lack of experience in organising participatory sessions. This fact may cause uncertainty and distrust about the results:

> *After the poor participation in the PTP process, we demanded to coordinate the PDU participatory process ourselves. The spatial planning authorities agreed but did not support us formally. (...) However, the team of planners had an excellent attitude and followed all the sessions. The problem was the poor basis to discuss. The plan was not enough elaborated and people had problems to make proposals. The promotion and attendance were quite good, but the final results were limited. (Pallars Sobirà local association)*

> *We were open to the demand from Rurbans (local association) to coordinate a participatory process. (...) It was an interesting process with an important pedagogical function. We had the opportunity to explain the PDU and receive suggestions (Planners).*

> *The process is being quite interesting. These sessions serve to create awareness about the plan, so that you can feel it as your own plan. (...) Probably, such an open process never took place before. (Meeting moderator; from meeting minutes)*

> *The problem is that we don't believe it, we don't believe that the proposals we formulate here will be taken into account (Intervention; from meeting minutes)*

The preliminary plan

In the PDU case, the formal planning process does not include an official version of a 'preliminary plan'. In July 2005, a first concept about the PDU objectives and strategies was elaborated. This was subjected to consultation of the local authorities. Besides, it was the basis to start the public participatory sessions (SCOT, 2008).

The initial approval of the plan was made in June 2007. Then, the official public consultation period started, which lasted 2 months for particulars and was extended to 3 months for institutions (SCOT, 2008). The total number of objections presented at the end of the process was 121 (DPTOP, 2007b).

According to the planning authorities, the preliminary plan main lines were to define territorial systems, to analyse the possibilities of settlements to grow, to modify problematic developable sectors, and to give guidelines about facilities and services. It was a tool to coordinate urban planning, and to precise some of the PTP directives (SCOT, 2006).

The PDU followed the same division in systems as the PTP (SCOT, 2006). In some cases, it included more precision or other categories to the PTP ones. The three categories of the PTP were transformed into six (Llop and Jornet, 2006). Following the same PTP division, the main proposals described in the preliminary plan were (SCOT, 2006):

- **Urban settlements**: developed the PTP strategies in every settlement. Besides, it included modifications or declassifications in some developable sectors. In small villages, the redefinition of the urban area limit was proposed. It also included a normative to protect and to improve the heritage and the landscape in the county. Finally, proposals to locate new facilities, services, and economic activities were made.

- **Open spaces**: developed and specified the PTP definitions. A heritage and landscape network was created.

▪ **Mobility infrastructures**: included land needed for the PTP infrastructures, proposed two new roads, and to study the possibility of new train connections, and an airport. Included also proposals to improve the landscape integration of existent infrastructures, and to improve mobility.
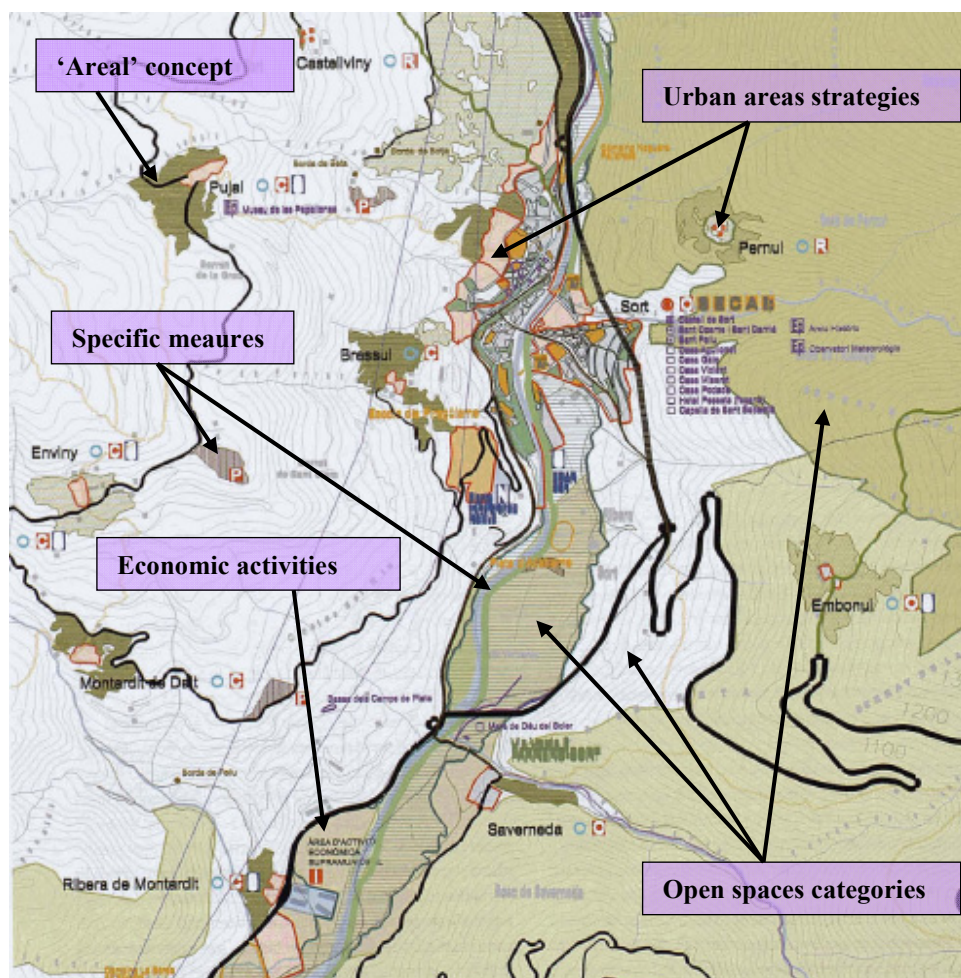
Figure 4.4 PDU 'Pallars Sobirà' map detail (elaborated from Llop and Jornet, 2006)

The reactions: uncertainties and conflicts

In general, the PDU process caused a lot of uncertainty as in the PTP case. From the meetings, the planners had the perception that local authorities were confused about both plans:

> *They (local authorities) were lost, they did not know the kind of document we were doing. Some municipalities did not even have a local plan. Suddenly, they were facing the elaboration of three different documents (PTP-PDU-POUM). They were overwhelmed, it was difficult to situate them and difficult for them to understand. However, the PDU was useful to get a better understanding of the PTP in some aspects. There are a lot of micro-realities in the Pyrenees and we realised that the explanation of the PTP was not enough. (Planners)*

The same type of demands and conflicts that appeared during the PTP process, were made more explicit with the PDU. They were a consequence to different expectations about the role of the plan:

> *The local authorities asked: 'Why do we need a PDU if we already have the PTP? What is left for the POUM (local plan)?' (...) In general, they feel abandoned and they are sceptical with the administration. When there is a plan, they expect that it is going to solve all their problems. They do not know what the plan can do. They ask about the school or the traffic lights in their village. (Planners)*

Some of the reactions and objections to the PDU were (SCOT, 2008):

- Preoccupation because of changes and declassifications of developable land (Rialp and Sort municipalities)

- No respect to local competences and excessive value given to farming and agro-tourism activities (former County Council president)

- Lack of participation, no compensations in protected spaces, no respect to local competences and PTP; they ask to stop the PDU (Consensus between local authorities)

- Need for more declassifications, PDU still maintains a lot of developable land and contradicts with PTP indications; ask for priority of facilities and services (education, health) instead of roads; they are against the possibility to develop golf fields in agricultural areas and the possibility to classify 1 ha of hotel land use in each municipality (*'Plataforma Pallars Viu'* social movement and 100 signatures)

Most of the conflicts that appeared during the process are framed by controversies around ideas about local autonomy and economic development. The first types of conflicts were generated when the PDU tried to regulate or intervene too much in some aspects. Then, local authorities felt that their capacity to decide was attacked. Related to this issue, some regulations of the PDU were also perceived as negative for the economic development of the county. There is a big uncertainty about economic alternatives to the construction sector. The discussion about the growth strategies of small villages is a good example:

> *There was a dilemma regarding the small villages: let them grow a little or either conserve their architectonical heritage as it is. First of all, there is a lot of abandoned heritage that could be restored and improved. If they still need to grow, it must be with proportion. (Planners)*

> *You let the main towns grow and limit the rest. People in small villages are upset, they feel discriminated. What solutions do we have? Picking mushrooms and flowers? This is not a valid alternative. (...) It's better to have houses occupied only one month than nothing. Otherwise, we'll be bankrupt because farmers don't have any subsidies. (Intervention from meeting minutes)*

Another important discussion point was about land declassifications. These were areas of existent developable land which the PDU obliged the municipalities to change. That was a difficult process because of the acquired rights of the land owners. Again, the related conflict about local autonomy appeared in some discussions. However, the general opinion was that those future developments were not sustainable.

> *They (local authorities) acknowledged the excessive expansionist plans in some cases. (...) There were some developable areas which locals did not defend even if later there were still some objections. In the case of local owners, there was a controversy between the particular interests and the local social movements against these developments. (...) Sometimes, local authorities agreed with our proposals, but they still want to decide it by themselves. (Planners)*

> *There were declassifications and changes, but it was not that exaggerated. Those developments were not sustainable, so some regulations were needed to stop that construction craziness (Pallars Sobirà County Council).*

> *In my opinion, it was a good thing because those developments were monstrous. It is hard from the point of view of the owner (...). But this is a social thing that goes beyond urban planning. (Sort municipality)*

Local associations complained about the fact that dialogue about the preliminary plan was only limited to political authorities. They wanted to participate, but they were limited to present formal objections to the plan:

> *After the preliminary plan was presented, participatory sessions were not considered. The informative sessions were only directed to political authorities. The reason they gave was that politicians are the delegates with the power to make decisions. I believe that the PDU is for all the people in the county. We wanted to be there as well. (Pallars Sobirà local association)*

Dealing with uncertainties and conflicts

The planners adopted an intermediate role and tried to find room in the plan to address all the demands. Vertically, they were limited by determinations from above (the PTP) and from the bottom (local autonomy, POUMs). Horizontally, they had little competences and found poor cooperation from other administration sectors. Yet, they wanted to detect territorial problems and start possible solutions:

> *The PTP determines strategies and the POUMs determine urbanism aspects. We wanted to play a horizontal role and try to give a solution or a path to all the demands. Thus, the PDU would have norms, directives, programs to develop (sectoral), and an agenda of important issues in the Pyrenees which are not solved. Our idea even provoked the incorporation of some of these programs in the PTP. (...) There was some coordination with the PTP. We transmitted demands from the territory which were also included in the PTP. And the other way around, from the SPP, they changed or removed things they didn't like in the PDU. (Planners)*

The planners' initial expectations were lowered because of the previously mentioned limitations. Following the recommendations from the planning authorities, they had to restrict their ambitions and focus more on urbanism aspects:

> *The answer from other administration departments was poor. Moreover, there was the mandate form the planning authorities to focus more on urbanism because the rest were competences from other departments. So, we became a little bit discouraged. Most of the sectoral demands and proposals ended up as recommendations or were reformulated according to the planning department legal competences. (...) For instance, we considered a priority to build a new infrastructure, which was not a priority in the PTP. We had to acknowledge that the PDU has a certain horizon and there are other infrastructural plans which can not be contradicted. (Planners)*

In some conflicting proposals, there was an evolution of the initial positions as a result of discussions. The initial planning concepts evolved, including some exceptions as a result of local demands. The different interpretations generated common understanding during the process:

> *We wanted to protect the open spaces surrounding the settlements with the 'areal' planning concept. The urban area should be considered together with the surrounding open spaces. (...) We are proud of it, even if locals interpreted it as freezing the small villages. The final delimitation still must be done through the local plan (POUM). We included some exceptions in case growth is needed. (Planners)*

> *The PDU confined the villages with the 'areals' and that was very hard. There was an unanimous rejection to this concept from the municipalities. You can not confine the villages, zero-growth is a death sentence. (...) We fought to change this, and the PDU included some exceptions that permitted certain growth within the 'areal'. (...) We want to conserve these villages and their heritage but we had claustrophobia if they say zero-growth. (Sort municipality)*

> *During the participatory sessions, the County Council former president pronounced a statement that summarises well what they wanted: 'you have to let the villages grow as what they are: villages'. (Planners)*

The outcome and future expectations

The final plan was approved in August 2008, after considering the objections presented during the public consultation process (DPTOP, 2007b). The main changes in relation to the preliminary plan were (DPTOP, 2007b):

- **General**: more precision about the supervision mechanisms of the plan, and about the obligation of POUMs to adapt to the PTP and PDU.

- **Open spaces**: changes regarding the precision of the limits, small changes in categories of open spaces, exceptions to the 'areal' concept and to the delimitation.

- **Urban settlements**: delimitation of small settlements, recommendations for a building normative, inclusion of more possible uses apart from hotels in some sectors, five indicative areas for economic activities instead of only two possible, possibility of 'organic growth' in villages, formulas to calculate maximum growth surface for each strategy, possibilities to grow if necessary for economic activities.

- **Facilities and services**: more touristic facilities included recommendations for the compatibility between camping sites and flooding areas.

- **Infrastructures**: measures to integrate and permeabilise infrastructures, change from land reserve to indicative layout for new infrastructures.

- **Heritage and landscape network**: addition of archaeological and paleontological sites, other corrections.

- **Territorial programs**: addition of agricultural and farming support program, territorial custody program, and environmental supervision of the PDU.

The dialogue and participation in the plan-making process was seen as positive by most of the interviewees. The PDU generated awareness and common understanding and the local people acknowledged the work done by the planners. Obviously, uncertainties remained in the final plan and not all the expectations generated during the process were satisfied. Participation was limited at the end of the process and the planning authorities decided by themselves how to consider the objections to the plan. The planners implied that perhaps the result of the public participatory sessions was not satisfactory enough:

> *Perhaps, we did not know how to close the process. There was the demand of a report to explain how the PDU took into account the proposals, but finally that was not done (Planners).*

> *The process was useful to understand how urban planning works (...) There was a good participation in the PDU, but after, they just took into account what they wanted during the objections process. Every municipality exposed a list of problems and demands, but the planners included only part of them. (Pallars Sobirà County Council)*

> *The PDU was going very far but it remained in an intermediate point. We did a lot of work with them (the planners' team). They took us into account and I think the final document is good. I don't know if the authors are satisfied or they think it is distorted. They wanted to intervene too much and it was not the type of document to do it. They had to limit themselves. (Sort municipality)*

> *We wanted a plan that could decide 'everything'. After, we acknowledged that we did not have the capacity to do it and we reduced our ambitions. (Planners)*

> *We studied the PDU in depth, and we presented good-quality objections. They accepted about 50% of our objections. They were obvious issues that they did not take into account previously. (…) For us, the PDU could even have gone further with regulations to growth. Some people, though, considered that the PDU limited urban development too much. (Pallars Sobirà local association)*

Uncertainties

The interviewees remained sceptical about the impact of some of the PDU measures. As explained before, the PDU was very ambitious and somehow it had to be limited in certain aspects. Some of the non-solved issues or issues that are subject to interpretation are explained in the following paragraphs. Those include mainly uncertainties about the growth strategies, declassifications, open spaces, and local cooperation.

As described before, the PDU included exceptions to growth limitation in the small villages. Thus, the initial strategy to limit growth in small villages was softened in some cases according to specific criteria. This flexibility is seen as a good thing as long as a good interpretation of the exceptions is done:

> *If the PDU will be a good tool, I don't know… we will see it in the future. In our case, I think there won't be problems. The three plans (PTP-PDU-POUM) will fit well as long as we can apply the exceptions in specific cases. (…) At least, we still have the possibility to interpret the PDU. Now, we can work and play with talent and imagination. There are cases that are interesting because they are a benefit to the village, and you need flexibility in urbanism. Still, the municipalities that want to grow without a real need won't be able to do it. (Sort municipality)*

Regarding declassifications, the land use was changed from residential areas (second homes) to hotels or touristic apartments in some of the cases. That created some sceptical reactions about the future viability of those areas. Again, reflections point at the difficulties to find economic alternatives in the county:

> *The question from some local people was: if we do not live from second homes, what do we do? They were sceptical about the economic viability of building more hotels. (Planners).*

> *The change from second homes to hotels must be better studied. You can not oblige the owner to build hotels if they are not economically viable. Urban planning must set compatible uses and not only limitations. You can promote hotels, offer advantages but no impose them. Even the hotel union was against it. (Sort municipality)*

> *There is a general uncertainty about the future in the county. The PDU promotes tourism during the whole year and hotels, but we depend on external support. The direct jobs related to tourism or ski are still scarce. (Pallars Sobirà County Council)*

Apart from the discussions about urban development, there is a general preoccupation about the future management of the open spaces. Some reactions illustrate the difficulties to interpret the PDU and a certain lack of trust:

> *The urban aspect in the PDU is clear, but we don't know what the regulations for open spaces imply. (…) We need to continue agricultural and farming activities and adapt them to new needs. When we hear about ecological corridors and agricultural protected areas, we wonder: what does it mean? what are the consequences? can we build a farm? They say: no problem, but we'll see… (…) They put all these colors in the maps and they generate doubts. Maybe the philosophy is different, but the text is not*

clear. These situations generate conflict with local people. (…) We presented objections, just in case... (Pallars Sobirà County Council)

One critique to the PDU is about the conservation of grasslands. How will you do that? You can not oblige a farmer to mown if it is not economically viable. (Sort municipality)

There are misunderstandings about the PDU because it was not well explained. People talk and generate uncertainty and fear about the implications of the PDU. I think that the PDU is quite flexible and many decisions are left to the municipalities. (Pallars Sobirà local association)

Finally, the promotion of cooperation between municipalities was a difficult issue. That created uncertainty about some of the PDU proposals, which involved cooperation at supra-local level. Planners tried to rationalise and to define locations for economic activities in the most efficient way. In practice, they confronted reluctance to cooperation between municipalities. Moreover, the complexity of the issue was made evident when analysis is made case by case. The local reality in the Pyrenees is very sensitive and difficult to understand from outside. In some cases, the rationality of planning is difficult to apply:

We wanted to locate areas for economic activities. It was rational to establish priorities, and locate them where it was more efficient. We proposed three industrial areas in the main valleys in association between municipalities. That caused reluctance, because in some cases there were already approved industrial areas (e.g. POUM Vall de Cardós). Then, we proposed two possible new areas with some conditions: a minimum area (3ha), shared costs and benefits, and good communications. It ended up in a recommendation and only obligatory in case the promotion was made from the planning department. (…) We made recommendations to do things more efficiently but that is not our competence. We did pedagogy, but it's up to them to understand that they would be stronger and more efficient if they cooperate. (Planners)

We talked a lot about industrial areas, but the reality is that every municipality wants its own. If you only think in a rational way, then you realise that 7.000 people in 150 settlements, as in the Pallars case, it's not rational at all! It's dangerous because if we only apply rationalisation then we could fit in a couple of big buildings in the metropolitan area. We have to maintain and respect history and the structure of the villages. (…) So, why can't villages have a small industry? There is a case of a wood workshop in a village that wants to grow. With the PDU, the owner is obliged to move to one of the big industrial areas. If he closes, then the activity in that secondary valley will be finished. This has a big repercussion in a small scale like the Pyrenees. (…) The message is excellent, rational, we have to be competitive otherwise… but what happens in these cases? I'm not able to have an opinion… That question must be studied better and in detail. (…) I don´t know what will be the interpretation of the PDU. We should be able to find solutions to those cases that are important to our territory.(Sort municipality)

Future expectations

The future role of the PDU and its character generated different reflections among the interviewees. They recognised the usefulness of the plan to accomplish specific things or as a learning process. However, it is clear that the initial goals had to be reformulated during the process. The PDU is in a difficult position between the PTP and the POUMs. One the one hand, it can serve to clarify aspects about the PTP or to solve concrete problems. On the other hand, it creates confusion and generates frictions with local autonomy. Most of the implications will be seen when the POUMs and related plans will be elaborated. The purpose of a multi-sectoral plan is also seen as difficult to accomplish, but valuable as a reflection:

The first goal was clear: to regulate and declassify some developable sectors which were not sustainable. In this case, the PDU worked as a precise tool. The second goal was more general: to

generate a territorial reflection and to exercise a pedagogical role. We wanted to create networks, emphasise some landscape values, work on multi-sectoral objectives, etc. If we had not pursued the second goal, we would have not achieved any of these other objectives. If we did not obtain the desired results maybe it is our mistake. At least, now we can make better future decisions, with a global vision. (...) It is difficult that local authorities see the utility of the PDU until they don't use it or apply it. (...) At least, the normative will have a direct implication in the POUMs. The creation of territorial consciousness, and the facilitation of transversal decisions are other goals, which are more difficult to evaluate (Planners).

The PDU was useful to clarify some aspects about the PTP. In the case of sectoral aspects in which the PDU had no competences, we included the recommendation to develop specific programs. (...) In the case of open spaces, it's difficult because either you repeat the maps of the PTP or you add confusion with more definition. (Planners)

According to the law, we have to follow what the plans say. No matter if they are well elaborated or not. In a context of financial crisis, I think that they won't affect that much the urban development. (...) I believe the county will follow the guidelines because they make sense. It is not normal to grow a lot in the small villages, that is my opinion (...) Plans need budget, otherwise that won't work. (...) Maybe there is a political movement in the future and all the planning situation changes. (Pallars Sobirà County Council)

They (planners) can define guidelines like in the PTP case, which is strategic. However, I think the PDU is not the right tool to work in detail. We will do micro-surgery when we elaborate the POUMs. They should let us work in detail because they still have a filter to approve the POUMs (referring to territorial commissions). They pretended to say too many things and decide everything, but it was not the right tool. If they create contradictions, after we'll need to change the PDU and this is a difficult process. (...) They say it is not the case, but there is a hierarchy of plans. The POUM has to adapt to the PDU and PTP. (Sort municipality)

The great expectations generated by the PDU are seen as difficult to achieve. The document was very ambitious but the planning authorities had a cautious attitude. A lot of proposals were left as recommendations or suggestions. Thus, there is a big uncertainty about part of the plan content. More ambitious objectives could be achieved in the future if there is a real will to implement these actions. Otherwise, the plan will mainly function as a regulatory tool:

If you read the PDU, it is like a dream! But you know that a lot of things are not feasible. The PDU include a lot of plans and programs to develop, but the question is: where is the money to develop them? Who is going to develop them? Or for instance, local cooperation will also be impossible if it's not mandatory. (...) We demanded to create an office here to help the municipalities to apply the PDU in the beginning. Otherwise, the municipalities will only apply the mandatory aspects of the PDU. (Pallars Sobirà local association).

4.3   Case 3:´PDU Cerdanya'

The area

Cerdanya is another Pyrenean county, with a physical configuration defined by relatively wide valley (Segre river) surrounded by the Pyrenees (north) and the Cadí mountains (south). The valley facilitates connections with France, the neighbouring county (Alt Urgell), and Andorra. Another key infrastructure is the Cadí tunnel which improves the accessibility from the Barcelona metropolitan area (around 2 hours by car).

Figure 4.5 Map of the PDU 'Cerdanya' area (elaborated from ICC, 2009b)

The historical Cerdanya county was subdivided among France and Catalonia. Within Catalonia, the county is also subdivided in two provinces (Girona and Barcelona). There are 17 municipalities and the total population is 17.744 inhabitants (8.949 inhab. in Puigcerdà) (SCOT, 2008). The biggest settlements are located in the valley, but always in elevated places leaving the flat areas and the floodplain for agriculture. There are two ski resorts in the county and interesting natural areas, including a natural park. During the last decades, the county experienced economic growth due to tourism and urban development of first and second homes. Agriculture and farming activities are in decline. Thus, the tertiary sector is already the most important in Cerdanya.

The context and objectives of the plan

The PDU was mainly aimed at regulating the phenomena of second homes. The relative proximity to Barcelona caused that tourism was developed earlier in Cerdanya compared to other counties in the Pyrenees. Thus, the urban development was very fast and had a very important economic impact. The environmental and social problems are similar to other counties. The main difference is a highest level of economic development and a bigger population in Cerdanya compared to the Pallars Sobirà case. The economical and human resources of municipalities are also higher. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons of a stronger position regarding local autonomy as will be explained later.

Another particularity in Cerdanya is the existence of approved urban planning norms previous to the elaboration of the PDU. First, there was a general urban normative affecting the whole county. The norms were approved in the eighties and tried to regulate urban development in the face of tourism expansion. More recently, Puigcerdà (the capital) approved in 2006 its own urban plan (POUM). The plan caused some controversy because contemplates the possible construction of 2.900 new houses, and also a trans-border hospital and industrial activities (SCOT, 2008). A local pressure group was created to protest against what they considered an exaggerated urban expansion.

The 'PDU Cerdanya' faced similar problems as in the 'Pallars' case, but its origin was different. In this case, the PDU was not elaborated as an answer to local demands but as a governmental initiative. The elaboration was again done through an agreement between the Catalan government spatial planning department (DPTOP) and the UPC University (as in the Pallars Sobirà case). However, the team of planners was different and that can be seen in the methodology and content of the plan.

The PDU followed the philosophy of the PTP and was conceived as its reinterpretation and development at a county scale. It was aimed at giving answers to the problem of urban development in the county. The goal was to provide a scenario with more diversity in economic alternatives. The starting point was the PTP and its three main systems: open spaces, urban settlements and mobility infrastructures. On the one hand, the planning authorities wanted to regulate the expansion of urban settlements. Declassifications and changes of uses had to be proposed in the existent developable land, according to the PTP criteria. On the other hand, the planners wanted to emphasise the landscape values of the county. Finally, the study of infrastructures, facilities, and services is also developed at a county scale departing from the PTP proposals.

The planning actors

As in the previous cases, the most important planning actors were the political institutions. On one side, there are the planning authorities from the governmental spatial planning department and the hired team of experts (planners). On the other side, there is the local administration represented by the Cerdanya County Council and the different municipalities.

The selection of the interviewees was made trying to represent the most relevant actors. These are the planners, members of the most important political institutions in the area, and other actors which could bring alternative visions from local institutions.

The interviewed actors are:

- Ferran Miralles: representative of the government planning authorities, coordinator of the PTP 'Alt Pirineu i Aran' (SPP office)

- Miquel Domingo: architect, member of the PDU planners team (hired by the spatial planning department)

- Joan Pous: political authority (president) from the 'Cerdanya' County Council

- Technician from the main municipality in the county (Puigcerdà)

- Tomàs Torrent: chairman of local cultural institution from the Cerdanya county ('*Institut d'Estudis Ceretans, IEC*')

Other sources are used to obtain information about the reactions from other planning actors. Mainly, journal articles, the documentation included in the plan, meeting minutes, and the reviews published yearly in the '*Anuari Territorial de Catalunya*'

The planning process

The formal planning process is regulated by law, and it is the same as in the 'Pallars' case (see chapter 4.2 for explanation).

The planners followed the planning process as established by law. There were no specific informative or participatory sessions open to the general public. Hence, the main phases of the planning process were:

- **Initiation**

- **Consultation phase**

- **Initial approval**

- **Public consultation period**

- **Final approval**

Initial expectations and uncertainties

The formal initiation of the plan was in January 2005. As mentioned before, the planning authorities delegated the elaboration of the plan to an external team of planners.

The planners acknowledged some limitations to the elaboration of the PDU. The existence of local urbanism norms in the county reduced the capacity of the planners to influence local urban planning. Moreover, the municipalities (except the capital) started a process to revise the norms and elaborate a coordinated plan (POUM) in parallel to the PDU process. In the hierarchy of plans, the PDU had not much room between the PTP and the local POUMs. That fact created uncertainties about the role of the PDU and frictions with local authorities during the process:

> *The PTP said a lot of things and at the same time a coordinated POUM was being elaborated. There was a lack of room to elaborate a PDU in between. (Planning authorities, PTP coordinator)*

> *The initial idea for the PDU was to develop the PTP in more detail according to the territorial needs in the county. In the Cerdanya case, there was a big problem with second homes and urban development. (...) The PTP established clear directives, but sometimes in conflict with local logics and realities. In Cerdanya, the reality was defined by local planning norms. The norms were not expansionists, but the interpretation of the norms had been too permissive. (...) Between the PTP and the local norms, there was a very thin space left to elaborate a PDU. (Planners)*

The planners also detected some contradictions between the PTP indications and the local planning reality. The PTP included an estimate of urban development needs, which was in contradiction to the already approved urban plans:

> *The PTP included a quite low estimate of housing needs. The recently approved Puigcerdà POUM already satisfied most of the predictions. We made a higher estimation taking into account the existent developable land. (Planners)*

Acknowledging these difficulties and uncertainties, the planners started to work. They organised meetings to inform local authorities about the plan:

> *The content of the PDU was not regulated and not clear either. We organised a reunion to inform the local authorities about what we were doing. Later, we had meetings with all the municipalities so that they could explain their problems and what they considered important or not. (Planners)*

The preliminary plan

Two preliminary versions of the PDU were elaborated before the final version was approved. First, a concept with the main objectives and strategies of the PDU was made. In May 2006, this concept was subjected to consultation with the municipalities in the county. The responses were taken into account in the next version of the PDU (DPTOP, 2007a). During this phase, the planners had individual interviews with the local authorities to debate the PDU.

The next version was initially approved in June 2007, and later subjected to the obligatory public consultation period. At the end of the process, around 150 objections were presented to the PDU (DPTOP, 2007a).
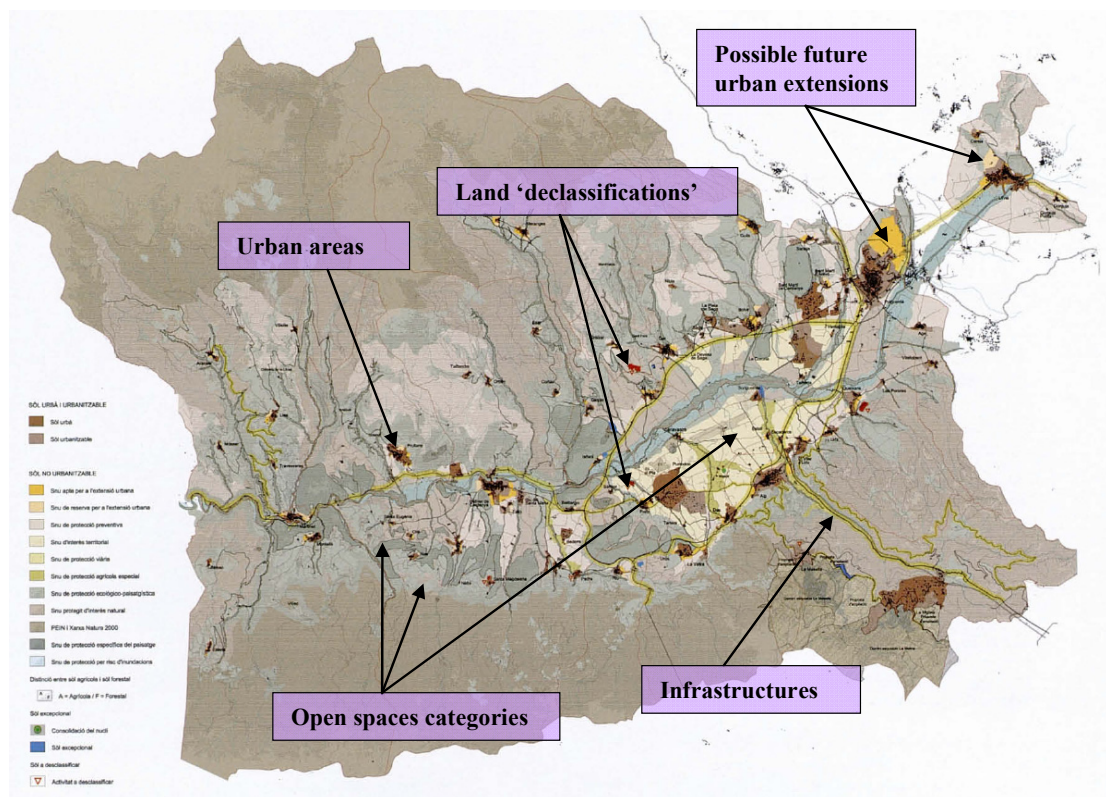
Figure 4.6 PDU 'Cerdanya' general map (elaborated from Fernández et al., 2006)

The PDU departed from the three PTP categories or 'systems': open spaces, urban settlements, and mobility infrastructures. The main directives for each of these categories included in the initially approved PDU were (SCOT, 2008):

- ▪ **Open spaces**: the planners made special emphasis on the landscape protection and regulation of the non-developable land. The PTP categories were developed, including two other subcategories. The landscape was considered essential for the identity and development of the county.

- ▪ **Mobility infrastructures**: improvement of the existing infrastructures rather than big new projects. The PDU included the promotion of communication inside the county and connections with neighbouring counties.

- ▪ **Urban settlements**: the planners considered that there was enough existent developable land to cover all the needs until 2026 (plan horizon). The PDU included limitations and declassifications of existent developable land. The reasons were the exaggerated growth, and landscape and environmental impact. The plan also oriented the possibility of future urban development towards certain areas.

The reactions: uncertainties and conflicts

The main reactions to the PDU were similar as in the previous cases. On the one hand, some municipalities complained about the fact that the PDU only concentrated growth in the biggest settlements (SCOT, 2008). The municipalities made a list of demands from a local perspective as well. The meetings also made evident the same problems with local cooperation. Conflicts between municipalities reduced the possibilities to new proposals in cooperation:

> *The municipalities have a lot of confrontations between them. It is difficult to plan logically in this context. There are good local initiatives that would make more sense if planned in cooperation with other municipalities (e.g. sport facilities, public housing). They didn't want to hear about the option of working together because of local conflicts. (…) All their demands were formulated from a local perspective. They demanded infrastructures, services, and facilities. (Planners)*

The dilemma between regulation and respect to the local autonomy was also present during the meetings. The restriction to urban development was a very sensitive issue, and even caused some tensions during the process. However, alternative dicourses in the county are sometimes critical to the role of local authorities concerning urban development. This is the case of the '*Plataforma Salvem Pedra*' local movement. This pressure group presented objections to the PDU claiming for more declassifications of developable land, particularly in the small settlement of Pedra (SCOT, 2008):

> *In some cases, you face difficult situations during the meetings with local authorities because their perception is: 'What a disgrace! These people form Barcelona come here and they decide for us'. In other cases, though, they accept declassifications of existing developable land, because it is not sustainable. (…) Spatial planning has a strong economical implication. We said: we don't want to prohibit development. We want to preserve the values of the landscape and locate uses in certain places under certain conditions. (Planners)*

> *We don't agree to mere urban expansion without any justification. Here, everyone is guilty until proven innocent. We don't believe anymore in discourses about 'progress' or argumentations like 'that will bring money to the county'. This is lucrative for a minority, but a path to impoverishment for the community (Cerdanya local institution).*

The conflicts about local autonomy were related to previous discussions during the PTP process (see section 4.2). As a result of the process, a reaction to supra-local planning was originated from the local level. A coordinated POUM started as a local reaction to defend the capacity of the municipalities to decide:

> *The PTP urban development strategies caused important discussions. (…) At that moment, I suggested that we had to anticipate them. (…) In Cerdanya, we had a common normative that was created to regulate urbanism when tourism started to expand. However, that was many years ago and we had to revise the norms. (…) We offered, from the Council, to coordinate the process in order to avoid that everything was decided in Barcelona and the municipalities agreed (except Puigcerdà). (Cerdanya County Council).*

There should be a hierarchy of plans, and work without contradictions. POUMs should adapt to what the supra-local plans say. In Cerdanya, though, there was no adaptation but a counterplan. They did not wait until the PDU was approved and then adapt to it. It was in parallel. The coordinated POUM was originated as a protest to the PDU. (...) And they did not take into account the PTP, which was already approved six months earlier. (Planners)

I'm sure the coordinated POUM was a reaction: 'otherwise, these people from Barcelona…' But luckily, these people from Barcelona plan from outside and not from the particular interest. (...) I think the philosophy of the coordinated POUM is: 'let's make our own plan so that we could develop the maximum'. If they manage to approve the POUM, then it could not be changed. Hopefully, there is a hierarchy of plans and the PTP and PDU are above the coordinated POUM. (Cerdanya local institution)

Dealing with uncertainties and conflicts

The planners had to deal with a difficult planning context. The lack of room left to the PDU in the hierarchy of plans caused a reformulation of the initial goals. More emphasis was made in the regulation of open spaces, instead of trying to go into much detail with the urban areas. Moreover, the elaboration of the coordinated POUM as a reaction to the PDU created frictions with the local competences.

The POUM was coordinated by the County Concil and the process was parallel to the one of the PDU. Local authorities took the initiative and they did not want to wait until the PDU was approved to adapt the POUM. Both documents influenced each other, and somehow there was an exchange of information between them, not only competition. In the case of Puigcerdà (capital), the POUM was approved previously to the PDU. Thus, the PDU could not change the POUM and had to avoid contradictions with the existent plan.

The PDU was going more into detail than the PTP. We detected that they did not work enough the document. We had our own team to elaborate the coordinated POUM. They already had done a lot of meetings and made a lot of field work. We wanted some dialogue between both teams to prevent future conflicts. (Cerdanya County Council)

The coordinated POUM had an influence in certain things, but not that much. (Planners)

During the process, we detected some deficiencies in the PDU. One was the lack of definition because of the scale. Everything was too generic, too big, and that created some uncertainties to us. A second problem, was that the PDU did not take into account some of the POUM prescriptions. The POUM was already approved so we wanted to avoid incongruence. (...) We wanted to prevent all future problems, and contradictions with our POUM. (Puigcerdà municipality)

The ideas of the planners and the local authorities about the open spaces were similar. The main conflict was again the possible limitations to urban development.

In the meetings, they tried to defend future expansions in a rational way, even if they were complete disasters. There was no conflict about open spaces, only when they were too close to the villages. They accepted to preserve 'la plana' (the valley), and avoid new urbanisations disconnected from existent settlements. However, about the existent developable land, they said: don't touch it! (Planners)

We demanded to include protected areas for agriculture, and aspects about the landscape that were important. They took that more or less into account. I also asked to keep the structure of the villages, with open spaces between settlements and the valley free from urbanisation. (Cerdanya County Council)

As in the 'Pallars' case, declassifications of developable land was an important issue, which generated conflicts. The conflicts, though, were mainly caused by particular interests:

> *There were strong conflicts because of approved developable land with a lot of problems to build, particularly, around ski resorts. The owners tried to defend them but they had no valid argumentations. We reduced and changed some sectors and that generated objections. Some municipalities protested because declassifications could generate unfair situations among the owners who were affected and the ones that were not. (Planners)*

The general impression about participation is that it could have been improved. The information about the PDU was not always clear and there was not a real effort to open participation. The awareness of the general public about the plan was poor. Most of the work was done internally with the local authorities:

> *It is still not clear how to organise participation in PDUs. It is a different case with POUMs because there is more experience. (...) We only talked with the municipalities, rarely other people came to the meetings. The influence of the local people was poor and the only way they have to participate was through the municipalities. Some municipalities were more explicit, others less, but the result was a good information. (Planners)*

> *There was no structured participatory process. In our case, we were permanently in contact with the planners. (...) Other municipalities presented more objections because they were not so involved. In general, the document did not reach the broad public. Only few people saw it because it was published, or saw it in the town hall, or heard about it. (Puigcerdà municipality)*

> *There were sessions and participation in the Puigcerdà POUM process, but in the PTP and PDU cases, almost nothing. We did not make objections, to none of them, but in general we agree with them. (...) The coordinated POUM has had more repercussion among inhabitants than the PDU and the PTP. (...) Mobilisation is difficult and people only react when they see the real implications of a plan. (Cerdanya local institution)*

The outcome and future expectations

The final plan was approved in July 2008, after considering the objections presented during the public consultation process. The main changes in relation to the preliminary plan were (DPTOP, 2007a):

- **Open spaces**: the category of possible future developable land is removed, so that municipalities have more capacity to decide; more precision is added in the normative of open spaces; small changes in the delimitations of categories.

- **Urban settlements**: the recommendation of a particular number of houses in each settlement is removed; building normative has a character of recommendation; the recommendation to classify land for economic activities is included, following some regulations (1 ha each municipality); possibility to certain growth in small settlements under specific conditions; inclusion of other changes concerning declassifications, and conditions to urban development.

- **Mobility infrastructures**: the land reserves for future infrastructures are removed, including only an indicative layout to avoid affections and contradictions with other plans.

Uncertainties and conflicts

The final version of the PDU included some of the local demands and adapted part of its content to the difficult planning context. The initial expectations of the planners were lowered because there was no room for a more ambitious plan. In other cases, the PDU was useful to clarify certain aspects of the

PTP, as in the 'Pallars' case. Yet, important uncertainties and conflicts remained unsolved. The reactions from the interviewees also illustrate different perceptions about the outcome:

> *The conclusions of the meetings were reflected more or less in the plan. We included some of the demands, such as the possibility to build hotels or the inclusion of some settlements not declared as urban in the PTP. (...) We had to remove aspects to avoid contradictions with other plans, such as local norms or infrastructures. There were rights that had to be respected. (...) We could not classify land because there would have been conflicts with the local competences. We gave possibilities to develop and they should decide how and where. (...) We had to focus more on the open spaces. (...) The approved PDU was a lowered one. (Planners)*

> *Another issue was the small settlements in our municipality. The POUM did not contemplate development and the PDU did not even mention them. We wanted to ensure the future possibilities for them to develop and include them. We can not complain, they took into account our demands. They adapted the PDU in the final version and other municipalities had the same feeling. (Puigcerdà municipality)*

> *The municipalities did present objections, which the planners must have ignored. They just approved the plan and end of the story. (Cerdanya County Council)*

> *The PDU was useful as a second opportunity to add things and define better the PTP. For instance, the PDU incorporated more definition in open spaces, landscape protection, or more precision in the calculation of future developments. We add 30 articles to the normative of the PTP. The result was the definition of clearer rules of the game. The PDU should not be a mega-POUM for the whole county. (Planning authorities, PTP coordinator).*

Two different situations can be distinguished regarding the implications of the PDU to local planning. First, in the case of Puigcerdà, the PDU was adapted to the previously approved POUM. Thus, contradictions or conflicts were not relevant.

> *The PDU was not above the POUM in our case. The PDU only orients development to certain areas in case we finish all the developable land in the future. The PDU will be only useful when we elaborate a new POUM. (...) The PDU is completely coherent because it can not contradict our POUM. (Puigcerdà municipality)*

For the rest of municipalities, the PDU have more implications. They were elaborating the coordinated POUM, which was a parallel process to the PDU. Contradictions between the two plans are evident, particularly, regarding urban development possibilities. The coordinated POUM was conceived as a reaction to the supra-local plans. Therefore, there was no intention to adapt the POUM to the PDU guidelines. It is still not clear how the PDU will affect the final version of the coordinated POUM. The interviewees expect future conflicts between the two plans:

> *It is not clear what is going to happen with the coordinated POUM. The municipalities want to develop a lot. The growth previsions are about two or three times the ones in the PDU. We will see if the PDU succeeds in controlling the coordinated POUM or not. (Planners)*

> *Of course we followed the restrictions of the PTP and the PDU, for instance, about risks or protected areas. Yet, the important discussion is about the developable area. This is the important thing to municipalities, the rest, they don't care. (...) We tried to reduce development, but at the end I said to the municipalities: 'Include whatever you want, and they will change it', 'don't restrict yourselves'. That is what happened with the coordinated POUM. For instance, according to the PDU, some municipalities were allowed to develop 7 ha but they included 15 ha. This is a bargaining process. The problems will occur if they have to remove these ha. Some owners will be angry because they have already seen the maps with 15 ha. (Cerdanya County Council)*

Other uncertainties about the PDU proposals were also mentioned by the interviewees. The uncertainties are similar to the ones in the 'Pallars' case. They are related to issues like the management of open spaces, the interpretation of the plan, and cooperation between municipalities:

> *One of the main focuses of the PDU is the landscape conservation. However, that aspect created uncertainties because there is no generalisation possible. There are different landscape scales. At local scale, every settlement is different, so they must be analysed independently. (...) The landscape is linked to some uses (e.g. grassfields). If they stop, the landscape is going to change a lot. The question is: how can we preserve these uses? With a normative? There are references in the landscape that are fundamental. People have them in mind and can not be changed by plans. (Planners)*

> *The PTP organisation of settlements networks as complex cities is a good model. These systems can work efficiently, but they need cooperation. The current situation is not good because of the existent conflicts between municipalities. There are also administrative and legal problems to solve. It is only a first step. (Planners)*

Perhaps, the interpretation problem is perceived as more important than in the 'Pallars' case. As a result of previous experiences and conflicts during the process, there is a clear lack of trust from both sides.

> *The PDU can be interpreted, and the problem occurs when the guidelines of the plan are translated into paper. This is conflictive because interpretation depends on people. (Cerdanya County Council)*

> *The local architects/planners have the possibility to choose. Depending on how they interpret the PDU, nothing is going to change. (Planners)*

Future expectations

The future role of the PDU is still uncertain and it is linked to the evolution of the economy in the county. The current context of economic crisis has stopped the perspectives of more urban development. The philosophy of the PTP and PDU also proposes a possible limit to growth. Critical voices in the county are in the same line and ask for a new economic model. There is a general consensus that the 'good' years for the construction sector are finished. Yet, there are different opinions about the urban development during the last decades in the county:

> *Local authorities think that the local norms helped them in achieving a good urban growth. It has not been a disaster, but planning was aimed at external needs. (...) Now the context has changed. There are people that protest and the PTP proposed a limit to growth. We have to see once the crisis is finished if the PTP and PDU are accepted or not. (...) The philosophy of these plans puts a limit on the table, and generates a debate about a new economical model. (...) Some people accept the discourse of change but the say that it is difficult. They try to take advantage of the immediate conditions, and during some years, they were good. (...) Each municipality looks after its own benefit. They all think that sooner or later there will be possibilities to build more, so they don't want limitations. The example is the coordinated POUM, there was no global vision. In fact, each municipality made a list of demands. There was no work in spatial planning. (Planners)*

> *The problem is that all municipalities want to grow. In the last years, there has been a lot of demand. The development was correct, according to the norms, but very fast. This has been a very lucrative business, so everybody wants a piece. (Cerdanya County Council)*

> *Some people think that expansion has been exaggerated, while others argue that our economy is sustained on that. I think we need diversification because we are seeing what happens in a crisis context. (...) There are conflicst and some people perceive the supra-local plans as: 'they are cutting or wings', or 'we won't be able to grow, to develop'. I think it is not that drastic, regulations are gradual and there is still room to develop. (Puigcerdà municipality)*

> *Hopefully, this crisis can be a lesson to change things and create reflections. In Cerdanya, we have to change the model. We have an economy of a developing country, instead of producing bananas, we build second homes. (Local institutions)*

The cases in the Pyrenees served as a reflection about the future role of the PDU as a tool. According to the planning authorities, the PDUs must be applied to solve specific problems. They are not the right tools to develop the PTPs in detail. However, the process to develop the PDU was valuable as a way to understand better the PTP:

> *The PDUs should not be used as general reflections. They are more useful as specific proposals or to solve particular problems, for instance: big industrial areas, land declassifications, specific strategies for open spaces, coordination of infrastructures, etc. (...) The PDUs are tools to use if needed. It is not a hierarchy of plans with PTPs and PDUs, a lot of people believe that. We realised that there is no room between the PTPs and POUMs. (...) Yet, it's true that the PDUs were useful to prolong the governance of the PTP. People started to work with the PTP, understand it better, and discuss it more. (Planning authorities, PTP coordinator)*

4.4   General reflections and complementary views

In this section, the case study analysis is broadened to present complementary point of views and general reflections. The three cases are considered together with the planning context in the Pyrenees and Catalonia. The selected interviewees were not specifically involved in the planning processes of the cases studies. However, they possess valuable knowledge about the area, the subject, or they are involved in a complementary role to spatial planning. They are professionals from universities, private companies or governmental institutions concerned with spatial planning in Catalonia and the Pyrenees. The interviewed actors are:

- Juli Esteban: director of Spatial Planning Program office (Catalan government planning department)

- Arcadi Castilló: director of governmental development institute in the Pyrenees ('*Institut per al Desenvolupament de l'Alt Pirineu i Aran*', IDAPA)

- Jordi Pacheco: assistant director of the governmental 'citizen participation' department ('*Direcció General de Participació Ciutadana*')

- Joan Ganyet: director of the governmental 'architecture and landscape' department ('*Direcció General d'Arquitectura i Paisatge*') and former major in a Pyrenean municipality (la Seu d'Urgell)

- Antoni F. Tulla: director of geography department, economist, and member of research group about mountainous areas (GRAMP). Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB).

- Marta Pallarès: geographer with publications about the Pyrenees and professional experience in the area.

- Anna Pou: geographer and environmental consultant. Experience with environmental assessment of local urban plans in the Pyrenees.

Reflections about the planning context (The Pyrenees)

The historical planning context

The recent history in the Pyrenees is marked by deep socio-economical transformations. During the 70s and 80s, the area suffered a clear economic and demographic decline. Political institutions tried to improve the living conditions investing in infrastructural projects. In parallel, local pressure groups were formed, which organised debates about the situation in the Pyrenees. These groups originated global reflections in the Pyrenees. Some political leaders also had an important role to start initiatives, for instance, studies about the Pyrenees and strategic plans. These initiatives did not have the desired impact to local development. According to one of the interviewees, the implementation always failed because of the lack technical and human resources. Yet, these movements had an important role in the later recognition of the Pyrenees as an administrative unit ('*vegueria*'), which had a broad political consensus:

> *In the 70s, pressure groups ('Grups de l'Alt Pirineu', GAP) were created in the Pyrenees. These groups played a key role in the administrative recognition of the Pyrenees as a 'vegueria'. (...) The 99% of the municipalities agreed with this status. (A.Tulla)*

> *In the 80s, a lot of villages didn't have basic services. There was a demographic crisis provoked by the decline of agriculture. The County Councils did a lot of work to improve infrastructures. (...) During the 80s and 90s, some initiatives took place in the Pyrenees to promote local development. Some local*

> *authorities developed studies, strategic plans, and other initiatives in the region. Some projects worked well, especially the ones to improve infrastructures and services. When the development of strategies was needed, the results were not that effective. A lot of plans and studies remained in the shelves. The creation of human teams to implement them was always the weakest point. (M.Pallarès)*

In the 90s, the situation changed radically with the arrival of tourism. Big differences were created among counties that received tourism, and the ones that did not. One of the main factors was the presence of ski resorts. Tourism generated the 'construction boom' of second homes. The change reactivated the economy and the demography in the area, but also caused environmental and social problems This was the main problematic when the spatial plans in the area were developed. Local people demanded the elaboration of the PTP. Preliminary studies started with the previous government, but the new government gave the final impulse to its elaboration:

> *In the Pyrenees, there are big differences between the valleys depending on the arrival of tourism. Apart from massive construction, this fact provoked a change in the cultural patterns. Cultural change came from outside, and the weak social tissue in the Pyrenees could not respond to that. For instance, in Cerdanya massive construction occurred with the copy of a pretended traditional style which was fake. (J.Ganyet)*

> *The situation changed with the arrival of tourism and the construction boom. That fact improved the economy and put the Pyrenees in the map. It also caused many internal differences and environmental problems. (M.Pallarès)*

> *At the end of the 90s, there were initiatives to demand the elaboration of the PTP (in the Pyrenees) from the local level. A strategic plan for the Pyrenees was elaborated before the change in the government. In 2003, the government changed and the PTP started. (A.Tulla)*

A complex socio-cultural context

The creation of an administrative unit in the Pyrenees pretended to give an answer to common problems in the area. However, most of the interviewees emphasise the internal complexity in the region. There is a natural separation between valleys that limit communication between them. The Pyrenees is a broader unit with important external relationships, but many administrative borders. Natural and administrative limits created an important social and political fragmentation in the region. Internal disputes between councils and municipalities are common. The rural character and the distance to important cities shaped the Pyrenean mentality. According to one of the interviewees, people tend to be individualistic, and society is conservative and hierarchical. These characteristics make change and innovation complicated. Development initiatives are difficult to originate because the essential conditions are not met. These are important characteristics to have in mind when trying to generalise the results form the case studies to other contexts:

> *The Pyrenees function separately according to the three main valleys. Besides, the 'Cerdanya' and 'Vall d'Aran' counties have a tendency to work independently. The capital was proposed to be shared between 'Tremp' and 'la Seu d'Urgell'. (…) The relationships with France, Andorra, and Aragón should also be taken into account. (A.Tulla)*

> *There are territories, comparable to the Pyrenees, where local development initiatives are working well. I believe that there are three conditions needed: first, the existence of common objectives; second, political leadership; and third, network working. In the Pyrenees these conditions don't exist. There is a strong fragmentation and individualism, which is part of the Pyrenean culture. Internet can help, but the isolation is still strong. People are becoming urban only in consumption patterns. (…) There are internal dynamics that are difficult to understand from outside. The conservative mentality of the people and the existing hierarchies are difficult things to change. (…) Cooperation and collaboration is always made with the same people. The distance to important cities makes difficult the access to universities,*

> *courses, seminars, etc. This situation provokes an isolation that affects the mentality of local people. All these factors limit innovation and change in the Pyrenees. (M.Pallarès)*

The most repeated discourse in trying to explain the social problems in the Pyrenees is the 'lack of critical voices' or 'critical mass'. The population in the Pyrenees is very low and there are no important urban areas. This causes emigration of young people to the cities in order to study. Most of them stay there to have good job opportunities. Thus, there is a lack of qualified and technical professionals working in the Pyrenees. The interviewees refer to that problem with sentences like the Pyrenees society is *drained, weak,* or *poor*. The lack of critical voices affects the spatial planning process, because dialogue is not correctly balanced. The use of the plans will also depend on the local initiatives and the capacity to debate and work on the plans. This is a problem that the planning authorities are trying to solve, reinforcing a network of 'Pyrenean cities'. The improvement of communications and internet are essential to attract independent professionals to the Pyrenees:

> *The problem regarding the effectiveness of public policies in the Pyrenees is the lack of critical voices. The policies are designed from an urban point of view. Thus, there is no knowledge about the problems with real practices in the Pyrenees. The implementation of plans and policies need complementary measures, adapted to a rural context. The Pyrenean society does not have the means to develop those plans. (M. Pallarès)*

> *Spatial planning is important, but it should be complemented with socio-economic decisions. In the Pyrenees, the key question is how to reinforce the social 'fabric'. It is important to attract qualified professionals that could live and work there. (J.Ganyet)*

> *In general, there is a lack of planning tradition. There is a need of tools and more dialogue. In the Pyrenees, it is difficult because the population and resources are scarce. The territory requires more qualified people and technicians to maintain an equilibrated dialogue. (...) The amount of technical professionals working in the Pyrenees is very low. (Development Institution, IDAPA)*

The economic point of view

The interviewees mentioned the economic situation as one of the main uncertainties about the future in the Pyrenees. Urban development and the construction of second homes was one of the most important economic activities during a lot of years. The current economic crisis has changed the situation, construction is paralysed and tourism activities are also affected. The interviewees acknowledge the situation and suggest that the solution is the diversification of the economy. Agriculture and farming should be maintained, not only to maintain the landscape but also as competitive activities. Small industry, tourism, and services should be promoted. The Pyrenees landscape is considered as an asset to attract new professionals and firms. The improvement of communications and internet access is fundamental to attract new activities. Relationships with other regions are important to create development opportunities. For instance, Cerdanya is profiting from the situation between France and Spain to create a trans-border hospital:

> *The Pyrenees are in a difficult geographical position. In other areas, decentralisation of economic activities from the Barcelona area is taking place. The Pyrenees need political support and promotion to attract activities. The opportunities are the attractiveness of the place, and to profit from synergies with Andorra, France, and Aragón. (...) During the last years, the GDP due to the construction sector reached the 15-20% in the Pyrenees. In Catalonia, the average reached the 9%, while in Europe is the 3-4%. Economy needs diversification. Otherwise, it fails as we are experiencing with the current crisis. All sectors should be maintained and promoted. For instance, there are examples of competitive agricultural activities in the Pyrenees to produce and distribute milk products. (A.Tulla)*

The landscape is an essential value in the Pyrenees. Its deterioration would be negative for the future interests in the region. At European level, the Pyrenees are a region with a specific identity. That character must be preserved and agriculture and farming activities are very important. The supra-local plans are not against these activities, but farmers look at them with distrust. (J.Ganyet)

The PTP potentiate polarities, so there is a need for measures to attract investments. There were existent firms that closed because of the lack of promotion. In some cases, the speculation due to second-homes made impossible to buy industrial land at a reasonable price. (A.Tulla)

Reflections about the new supra-local plans

The content of the plans

The case study analysis focused on the plans that were developed in the Catalan Pyrenees. As mentioned before, the PTP was the first to be developed following a new planning philosophy of the government. The PDUs '*Cerdanya*' and '*Pallars Sobirà*' were interesting because they were developed in the same context. Other PTPs and PDUs were developed in Catalonia following the same planning criteria (see chapter 3). The SPP office within the spatial planning department was in charge of the promotion and coordination of the plans.

The PTPs are following a homogeneous philosophy, with improvements made case by case. According to the SPP director, they are satisfied with the product that they created. Altough there were a lot of expectations about the plans, they tried to be cautious and focused on realistic objectives:

The Pyrenees case represented the first PTP and the initiation of the method. After, there have been a few improvements and fine-tuning of the tool. I think we found the appropriate type of plan in the case of the PTPs. (...) We could not solve all the problems in one planning exercise. At least, we created the tools to regulate and limit local urban plans (POUMs). (...) The expectations about the plans were very high. From the beginning, we tried to establish clear objectives and don't pretend to solve all the problems. (SPP director)

The satisfaction with the PDUs is not the same, because they did not find the appropriate tool in some of the plans. The main conclusion is that PDUs are not suitable as an intermediate comprehensive plan between the PTP and the POUM. There is a lack of room in between, and the PDUs add confusion and generate conflicts with local competences. The PDUs were successful, though, when elaborated to solve specific problems. The SPP director perception contrasts with some of the opinions from the interviewed planning actors (see sections 4.2 and 4.3). These opinions emphasised the value of the PDUs to generate debate and information. Perhaps, there is a common feeling that the plans generated a lot of expectations, but the implementation is highly uncertain:

The PDUs are different because we entered a difficult terrain. In this case, we didn't find the right character for the tool. (...) The PDUs in the Pyrenees were useful to declassify land. Apart from that, I don't see a relevant utility. They contained interesting proposals (e.g. 'areals'), but the implementation is uncertain. The scale is still imprecise and we added confusion. If we try to work in detail, then we provoke conflicts with local plans. PDUs have problems when they are conceived as comprehensive plans. Yet, the PDU is a versatile tool that can be useful to achieve specific objectives in other cases. (SPP director)

As discussed in the previous chapters, there were different expectations about the content of the plans. The planners acknowledged that the regulatory character of the plans was a difficulty. Some local people expected a type of plans more oriented towards economic development. Others even demanded more regulations. The planning authorities tried to establish a first basic morphological scheme. According to the SPP director, other 'sectoral' plans should be based on the PTP model. The objective is to create a 'territorial logic' that will be seen as positive in the future:

These plans are more focused on the territorial morphology than economic development. It is a difficult product to sell. The municipalities expected a different kind of plan that could solve all their demands. They don't like to hear about a territorial model that implies limitations. On the other hand, local social movements demand even more limitations. So, nobody seems to be happy but we created a territorial logic that will be positive in the future. We were lucky because there was the political commitment to develop the plans. (...) Most of the municipalities are not enthusiastic, but they are not against the plans. No one can complain that we don't allow him to develop. We did not expect applauses, but we want them to accept the plans. (...) We have enough satisfaction to continue. (...)

About the development of facilities and services, perhaps the PTP could have said more. The problem is that other departments have specific methodologies and they change over time. We offer a development model that the other departments should take into account. We thought it was more useful to define polarities and priorities on where to develop things. If we try to specify more with concrete actions, there is the risk that things change and we end up doing nothing. For instance, the PTP 'Terres de l'Ebre' (first PTP approved by previous government) was elaborated to satisfy the local people. The plan included proposals that are not viable. Now, it is a problem to change it. (SPP director)

In reference to the main strategies, the plans are considered flexible enough to create a scheme without important restrictions to development. According to the SPP director, the weakest points of the plans are about infrastructures and the promotion of economic activities in cooperation between municipalities He recognized difficulties to influence other departments and municipalities to follow the proposals:

The strategies about the urban settlements are flexible enough. We maintained the proportions and the morphological coherence of developments. In the case of open spaces, the existent economic activities should be maintained. Finally, the infrastructures part is perhaps the weakest. There is an existent methodological tradition, which is very strong. We were not able to change the existent infrastructural plans. At least, we want them to consider our proposals. (...) One of the weak points is the development of areas for economic activities in cooperation between municipalities. It was our desire, but we preferred to go step by step because not all the mechanisms are guaranteed. We only defined possible areas. Perhaps, we can develop more this issue with more precise tools, such as specific PDUs. (SPP director)

Other opinions from the interviews point at the importance of developing plans to solve the existent deficit in spatial planning. In general, they think that the philosophy of the plans is correct. The interviewees mentioned weak points and suggestions about the content of the plans. Some of them consider that there is a need to include sectoral aspects that are relevant for spatial planning, and more detailed information. They consider that the detailed work needed during the elaboration of the POUMs is not always done by the municipalities. Another mentioned aspect is the need to take into account the trans-border relationships within the broader Pyrenees region:

The PTPs and PDUs represent a significant step, together with the development of POUMs in all the municipalities. They do not solve completely any issue, but they go in the correct direction to change the current situation. It is essential to cover the territory with plans to solve the existent planning deficit. (...) In the Pyrenean valleys, there is a natural and historical hierarchy among settlements. Each settlement must play a certain role, unlimited growth has no sense. I think the model is reasonable, nobody is 'frozen'. (...) One of the deficits is the coordination with the bordering regions. The Pyrenees can not be understood from a unique administrative division. (J.Ganyet)

The PTPs represent strategies, directive,s but do not specify the philosophy in detail. I think the PDUs are fundamental because they imply a negotiation at a more detailed scale. The scale of the plans is very important. (A.Tulla)

The PDUs are very helpful, while the PTPs are sometimes too general (regarding environmental assessment of POUMs). The land classifications could have included more categories. Normally, the

POUMs don't develop in detail the non developable land. They just adopt the PTP or PDU categories. (...) There are key aspects like water and natural risks that should be considered better at a regional scale. They are essential aspects that limit urban development. It is very difficult to search for basic information case by case. (A.Pou)

The planning process

The particular planning processes of the three plans were analysed previously. The expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts generated depended on each case. From a general point of view, the discussions are related to different ideas about participation. How the different stakeholders are involved is the key question that influences the planning process. The spatial planning authorities argue that citizen participation is difficult in a regional or supra-local scale. According to them, the most important actors are the local authorities. The dialogue capacity of local people and authorities is seen as limited to a local perspective. According to them, participation was useful to explain and improve the plans. However, the important characteristics of the plan were not substantially changed:

The scale of the plans is too big for the citizens. The normal citizens are not in the conditions to give an opinion, only if they are part of social movements or associations. The main actors are the municipalities. (...) The problem is that we don't have interlocution at territorial level. The municipalities and councils only have demands or preoccupations form the local perspective. (...) The interlocution helped to improve the product, but it did not provoke substantial changes. Participation is important to the formality of the process. We tried to incorporate their demands, but sometimes they could not fit in the plan. (...) We were able to maintain a homogenous philosophy in all the plans. (SPP director)

Other interviewees give a more important role to participation in the planning process. They emphasise planning as a continuous dialogue or negotiation. Most of them acknowledge a variety of interests and people with a right to participate, not only local authorities. The planning authorities' effort is seen as inadequate to promote real public participation. Similar ideas were exposed in the case study analysis. The general perception is that participation can be improved:

There are discussions about the ethics of the landscape, the new 'territorial culture', etc. The territorial agents are diverse, with multiple interests. (...) The owners of the land and the local people think that they are the only ones with the right to decide about land use. This is not true for two reasons. First, there is a need for a global and long term vision, which local people don't have. Second, other people in Catalonia have the legitimacy to give an opinion. Decisions must be taken from outside, negotiating with local people. (...) I'm from the Pyrenees, but I don't live there. When I go to Cerdanya, I feel very disappointed when I see what they did just for speculation. They constructed artificial villages which are only occupied 18 days per year in average. I don't agree with the idea of 'I'm the major', 'I'm the owner' or 'We are the territory'... They don't have the legitimacy to decide alone, and to enrich themselves destroying the landscape. (...) It is important that there is a process of dialogue and negotiation, at different levels. No one may feel completely satisfied at the end, but this process is important. (A.Tulla)

You can not pretend to involve people if you organise only three or four sessions in all the Pyrenees. Perhaps people are passive and difficult to motivate, but the politicians don't put the adequate resources. They seek effectiveness and immediate results. They present the plan, appear in the media, and they always have the excuse that people don't participate. The people that really care are tired of always having to mobilise and see that there is no answer. (...) If you want real repercussion, you have to organise formative sessions, workshops, etc. (M.Pallarès)

A department was recently created to promote citizen participation within the Catalan government. From their point of view, one of the main problems to introduce participation is that it requires a cultural change. The expert, or the planner, is traditionally sceptical about the results of participatory processes. This change is taking place at different rhythms in the public administration. For instance,

there are already positive experiences in territorial issues that are related to spatial planning, such as water management and landscape plans:

> *Our mission was to introduce citizen participation, but each governmental department could decide. In spatial planning, the rhythm to incorporate citizen participation is lower compared to other areas. (...) There are different attitudes towards participation among politicians and technicians. First, political will is needed to incorporate it. Second, the technicians must acknowledge the importance of participation. It requires a cultural change, which is already taking place in the water management agency. The technicians saw that participation brought a valuable contribution to their water management plans. (Citizen participation department, GC).*

According to the interviewee, a second problem is that participation is often made without a good methodology or by non-expert people. A lot of common problems in participatory processes can be solved with the adequate methods. It is important to explain the rules of the game beforehand, to avoid disappointments or discussions about other topics:

> *The problem with participation is that a lot of people feel competent to do it, but you need expertise. A participatory process needs a series of requirements to work well. The spatial planning case is not easy. However, in comparable fields it worked well and people participated. They were complex subjects and large territories, but the method used was appropriate. (...) Citizen participation does not mean a blank sheet because there are initial conditions given by political decisions. It is neither the legitimisation of previously taken decisions. The initial conditions and the rules of the game must be clear. It is important to clarify what are the topics to discuss and how is the decision-making process. This is important in order to focus the discussions and avoid unrealistic expectations (Citizen participation department, GC)*

Finally, citizen participation can be positive to avoid the traditional confrontation between the government and local people. Public participation shows that conflicts are internal, between local people. Sometimes, local people create pressure groups and react because they were not taken into account. In the same way, political authorities do not always represent the diversity of interests in a territory:

> *The openness of a process to dialogue shows social complexity. Then, conflicts are not between the administration and local people. Participation shows that conflicts are internal because local people have different points of view. If a particular vision is imposed from the government, local people will complain. However, the reaction is more emotional than analytical. They react because they were not listened. When you open participation, reactions are diversified and internal divisions made explicit. Final decisions will be a result of consensus or a common sense solution to irreconcilable divisions. The final decision is more likely to be accepted because conflicts are perceived as internal. (Citizen participation department, GC).*

Reflections about the future impact of the plans

The implementation of the plans

The plans have an important first purpose which is to regulate the elaboration of local urban plans (POUMs). Previuosly, the approval of the POUMs was already made by territorial commissions. Now, according to the SPP director, the supra-local plans will establish a clear framework to elaborate and evaluate the POUMs. In that sense, future uncertainties should be reduced with the supra-local plans:

> *There is uncertainty about the interpretation of the plans, but this is not new to municipalities. There was already the need to approve the local plans (POUMs) by territorial commissions. We defined a supra-local model which was necessary to avoid a case-by-case analysis. The PTPs will help the commission with better arguments to evaluate the POUMs. (SPP director)*

The first local plans are being already elaborated within this new framework and the results are satisfactory according to the SPP director. In this first phase, the SPP office is playing a supervision role that may not continue in the future. The SPP is a temporary office that was created to elaborate the plans. In any case, the normative part of the plans can not be ignored:

> *In general, the relationship between PTPs, PDUs and POUMs is working well.(…) In a first phase, we are supervising the approval of the POUMs. We elaborate reports to inform the territorial commissions about the plans. In the future, they can do it directly, it is not necessarily our mission. (…) We are a temporary office, but the department needs someone to supervise the plans. Our mission is to finish the seven PTPs and elaborate the Catalan general plan (PTGC). If we cover the whole territory with the PTPs, I think we will ensure the continuity of the plans. At least, there is a normative that can not be avoided. (SPP director).*

Apart from the regulatory function, the plans are meant to be coordinated with other sectoral plans. According to the SPP director, the PTPs and PDUs are among the 'structuring' plans. These type of plans are easier to coordinate because they are elaborated in the same governmental department ('*Departament de Política Territorial i Obres Públiques', DPTOP*). Other plans are interrelated, and coordination with other departments will be important. The strategy followed with the elaboration of the supra-local plans took mainly into account the 'structuring' plans. Consultations were also made in the case of possible constrains by other departments:

> *There are other plans that should be coordinated. First, there are the 'structuring' plans, which are elaborated in the same department (urbanism, roads, railways, etc.). We should take them into account and work together to elaborate them. The second type of plans are 'constrains', for instance, energy, water, or waste management. We can not solve these issues, but we have to consult the other departments because they affect our proposals. Finally, there are the 'complementary' plans: educational, cultural, sanitary and other facilities. These are important issues that must be solved in separate plans. They should be coherent with the PTPs territorial model. (SPP director).*

The repercussion of the plans is still not clear. In that respect, some opinions are sceptical or critical. From the point of view of the planners, the plans represent a first step and they need to gain prestige through time. There was prudence in the elaboration, and some aspects were softened to avoid conflicts. Political support to the plans is acknowledged as fundamental to achieve the results:

> *The plans need to gain prestige because the first reaction is distrust. People will accept them if they see that they are good for the collective. Some theorists argue that spatial planning should be based on projects instead of this kind of plans. We did them convinced that they are positive and because we had political support. We could have been more radical in some aspects, but some conflicts are difficult to assume. (SPP director)*

Other interviewees recognised the contribution of the plans to create a territorial model. They are seen as a helpful tool, especially to establish criteria to elaborate the POUMs. There was a need to plan at supra-local level, and the regulations could even have gone further. However, the coordination with other sectoral plans and policies is not that obvious. The spatial plans follow a particular philosophy, which may be different to the one used by other departments. The plans also contain recommendations and initiatives to develop. The success in these more strategic proposals will depend on complementary mechanisms that should be initiated:

> *The innovation about the PTPs is the normative about non urban areas. The proposals are not in detail, but they follow a particular rationality. The problem is how other plans that do not follow the same philosophy will fit. Currently, there are some problems to integrate the 'landscape catalogues' within the PTPs. (A.Tulla)*

From an environmental perspective, the supra-local plans are very helpful. Previously, the only important discussion was between developable and non-developable land. The classifications about the non-developable land establish clearer criteria. (...) The growth strategies are useful arguments to establish limits to development. Before, we had to argue environmental impact reasons, which sometimes were difficult to defend. However, there is still flexibility and municipalities always tend to maximise development. (A.Pou)

The plans are not rigid nor imposed from above, so people will adapt to them. There was a void that had to be covered. (...) There was a dialectic process that will continue in the future. The plans will be a good tool for municipalities, institutions, and local people. (J.Ganyet)

The quality of the document (PTP) is good, but the plan arrives late and it is not enough. The Pyrenees have more specific needs and that's what I expressed to the planning authorities. They said that the sectoral plans are the ones that should solve those needs. Maybe it's true, but the PTP has also socio-economic objectives. There are related policies that should be initiated. Who is going to do that in a peripheral region like the Pyrenees? (...) Traditionally, there is no debate between departments and no transversal planning. I wonder if the spatial planning department will work with the culture department, social services, etc. I guess they are working among architects in their office and sometimes they visit a municipality, but nothing else. (...) Together with the PTP there is a need for an organism to promote the PTP, defend it, and explain it. Otherwise, the risk is that the PTP is only applied as a limitation, not as a tool to organise the territory. (...) Without instruments at an intermediate level, the PTP will fall into a void in the case of the Pyrenees. (M.Pallarès)

Local development and networks

The last reflections introduced the idea about development strategies that should complement the elaboration of the plans. Once the planning process is discussed, we can go back to the problems explained about the socio-economic context in the Pyrenees. The idea can be summarised in the following question formulated by one of the interviewees:

In the Pyrenees, there are a lot of existent plans, programs, studies, etc. but the politicians don't create local teams of planners or technical professionals. Who is going to use, to communicate, and to implement those documents? (M.Pallarès)

Apart from regulations, local people demand the development of strategies that could be derived from the plan. As explained before, the Pyrenean society can be characterised by fragmentation, weakness, and a conservative attitude. The government created a local development institution in the region ('*Institut per al Desenvolupament de l'Alt Pirineu i Aran*', IDAPA). Despite its modest resources, the IDAPA task is important to generate a 'territorial consciousness' in the Pyrenees. Municipalities and councils are mainly working from a local perspective. The creation of networks between people, and the promotion of cooperation is essential in the Pyrenees:

The IDAPA is working on the creation of networks, bridges, and supra-local structures. These are the tasks that the County Councils are not doing. The CCs published a lot of studies recommending the creation of institutions to develop and promote the Pyrenees. The demands are always the same: the creation of teams. (M.Pallarès)

There are barriers to cooperation, and we are doing an effort to try to convince municipalities. We show them that is a positive thing. There is a lot of work to do about it, to create cohesion between them. For instance, we are creating a network of museums. This forces meetings between municipalities and linkages. The same could be done with spatial planning (...) There is no global consciousness as a region, at most, as counties. They need external incentives to generate collective reflections. (Development institution, IDAPA).

The IDAPA is working in some of the initiatives included in the plans as a result of the local demands. Their resources are limited, but their continuous presence in the territory is important. The plans generated debates and reflections that should have continuity in the future. This way, the plans can have more impact in the future, and not only regulatory. The Pyrenees will continue to depend on external support, but local initiatives should be encouraged:

We are not supervising the plans, because this task is done from Barcelona. (...) The PTP incorporated complementary recommendations as a result to the local demands. We started to work on these issues. These are interesting topics that did not fit well in such a type of plan. There are also the 'Plans Comarcals de Muntanya' (programs for mountainous counties) which are socio-economic programs with a calendar of actions and investments. We do what we can with only two technicians and six counties. (...) From our perspective, it is more interesting to make progress with the involvement of actors instead of focusing in the planning exercise. The social tissue is weak, but the local people should react and become more proactive. (...)

We want to organise together with the spatial planning authorities more formative sessions in the Pyrenees. This can generate awareness about the plans and opportunities to start initiatives. Then, more local actors will start to see the plans as useful tools for them, not only regulatory. (...) The work made from the territory should be higher. Some local people perceive the plans as made by the expert planners from Barcelona. The challenge is to show that the plans are positive for them. (Development Institution, IDAPA)

5 Discussing expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts

The results from the case studies are used to reflect on the research questions. The theoretical framework is the basis to elaborate the discussions about the concepts of expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts (EUCs). First, the results are analysed with a focus on the individual concepts. Second, the relationships between the concepts are explored. Finally, a new concept to understand planning practices is elaborated: planning as 'co-evolution'.

5.1 Discussing expectations

Expectations about plans

Expectations about plans are different between people (Healey, 1997). In the case studies, different expectations about the plans were observed. The planning authorities aimed at introducing a new philosophy about supra-local planning. The plans express a basic scheme to organize the region, and include proposals to solve specific problems about urban development (e.g. urban expansion with second homes). The plans have a strong regulatory character, which mainly affects the elaboration of local land use plans (POUMs). The expectations from the local authorities were different from those of the planners. In general, they did not want regulations and limitations to urban development. They expected investments in projects and infrastructures to improve the situation in the region. Other local people, mainly organised in associations and social movements, demanded both regulations and investments in the region. To summarise the positions, the planners had the mandate to elaborate a plan focused on 'physical' aspects in order to define a 'territorial model'. On the other hand, other voices asked for a plan that could solve other aspects as well, including and agenda of investments.

Actors tend to base expectations on previous processes and frames of reference (Roo and Porter, 2007). In our case, there were no previous similar planning experiences at supra-local scale in the region. The Catalan general plan (PTGC) and the first approved PTP (previous government) were the only existent regional plans. The planning authorities tried to be more ambitious in the regulatory aspects of the new plans to generate a stronger impact than the previous ones. Other related plans and policies had an influence on people's expectations. The way urban development took place in the last years was also significant to influence expectations. For instance, local people that were critical about the type of urban development in the region expected more regulations from above towards urban planning. In the 'Cerdanya' case, after the PTP approval, local authorities expected more regulations in the PDU case. This is why they started a 'counterplan' to avoid that the people from Barcelona could decide for them. Negative previous experiences with environmental plans created uncertainties among farmers regarding the protection of open spaces. Finally, the lack of impact in the implementation of other plans in the region generates scepticism about the future impact of the new plans.

The frames of reference of the different actors are seen as important to set the initial expectations. The planning authorities developed a particular rationality, which was based on theories about urban planning, geography, and other disciplines. They used expert knowledge to create their own planning methodology, according to given political objectives. Local authorities and local people based their

expectations on their local problems and interests. The local authorities were particularly concerned about the economical development in their municipalities or counties. Thus, regulations would not solve their expectations and they asked for a different type of plan. Other interviewed actors were worried about environmental and landscape protection in their territory. Economic development was not the main concern for them, or at least, they did not agree with the existent economic model. They expected that the plans could change the current situation towards a more environmentally sustainable urban development in the region.

The importance of clarity about plans is emphasised by Hopkins (2001) in order to lead to reasonable expectations. This importance is observed if we compare the PTP case with the PDUs cases. In the PTP case, the planning authorities had clearer ideas about what the plan could achieve and what could not. After defining the 'product', their task was to shape others' expectations, explaining which issues could be included in the plan and which not. In both PDUs, the planners had to lower their initial expectations about the plan during the process. In the 'Pallars Sobirà' case, they were very ambitious and they tried to go beyond the specific objectives from the planning authorities. During the participatory process, they listened to all the people's demands without having a clear definition of what the plan could achieve. As Forester (1979) argues, perhaps expressing good faith, they may have raised expectations unrealistically. In the 'Cerdanya' case, the planners adopted a less ambitious attitude. Their expectations about the plan were shaped during the process when they faced the planning context constrains. They adopted a more pragmatic attitude, similar to the idea of 'muddling through' (Lindblom, 1959).

The way planners communicate is fundamental to shape expectations during the process (Innes, 2004, Forester, 1979, Forester, 1993). In general, dialogue in the case studies led to 'compromise' solutions. This is illustrated with expressions from the interviews like '*we've found an equilibrium*', '*nobody seems happy*', or '*we didn't expect applause, but we want them to accept the plans*'. However, there was an evolution from the initial expectations through interaction. For instance, the local demands that were considered feasible by the planning authorities were included in one way ore another in the plans. Another example is the way the planners softened some of the regulations in the plan, including a higher degree of flexibility.

According to Forester (1993), the shaping of people's expectations through communication means to shape beliefs, understanding, consent, and trust. In our case, understanding and consent was clearly generated because dialogue helped to understand the plan and there was a general acceptance about the outcome. Trust and beliefs are more difficult to change, and no remarkable progress can be observed. The planners may have convinced some actors, while in other cases distrust still remains. For instance, in the PTP case, most of the interviewees recognise that the philosophy behind the plan is good. In some cases, though, they still express distrust about the way the authorities will interpret the PTP. There is still an important distance between the planning authorities view and the local perspective. Proximity and interaction may help to build trust and change beliefs during the planning process. Otherwise, this is something that could be gained in the long term if the effects of the plans are seen as positive.

The discovery of mutual benefits, by sharing knowledge and interests (Innes, 2004), rarely took place in the case studies. Only in the 'Pallars' case, the existence of more proactive actors made possible the acknowledgment of common benefits between the planners and some local people. These opportunities are acknowledged in the plan, but not all the expectations generated could be satisfied. The initial lack of clarity about what the plan could do was a clear limitation to success. The two PDUs cases illustrate the dilemma expressed by Forester (1993) as the planners affirming '*that's the way it is*' (incrementalist approach) or '*here's what we could do*'. The first approach is more

conservative, while the second raises higher expectations about the plan. The 'Cerdanya' and 'Pallars' cases are good examples of advantages and disadvantages of both approaches. The generation of uncertainties and conflicts in the two cases are important aspects that will be analysed later on.

Expectations about the planning process

Expectations about the planning process also vary among different stakeholders. For instance, planning authorities did not expect many inputs from the participatory sessions during the planning process. Their idea about participation can be seen as a way to explain the plan and to convince local people. For them, it was important that everybody had at least the opportunity to know the plan and to give an opinion. They showed certain openness to receive feedback, but did not expect substantial changes from the dialogue with other actors. From the local level, the expectations about the process were different. Previous experiences created some negative expectations about the involvement of local stakeholders in the process. Some of the interviewees expressed a sensation of abandonment with ideas like '*the people from Barcelona will decide*', or '*they do what they want without listening to us'*.

The 'Pallars' case illustrates different expectations about the planning process. Local social movements in the area had a proactive role asking to coordinate a participatory process. Their expectations about the planning process were high, although they were already disappointed by the previous public participation in the PTP case. This is why they asked to the planning authorities to coordinate the process. The planning authorities agreed although they did not officially support them. The planners (hired by the government) participated actively in the process, which was recognised as positive by the organisers. However, the effort was incomplete and the expectations about the planning process were not satisfied. The ideas about participation were different from the beginning between the planning authorities and the local social movements. The good attitude of the planners to listen to the local demands was acknowledged, but the support from the planning authorities was not enough according to the organisers.

In general, expectations about the planning process did not change substantially. The planning authorities acknowledged improvement of the plan due to dialogue with local authorities. However, they still do not fully recognise the need to involve the general public in supra-local planning. Local authorities were more or less satisfied with the process as long as their demands were taken into account. In a different position, local social movements and associations expressed disappointment with the citizen involvement during the process. They argued that the planning authorities could have done much more to promote participation. In the same line, other critical voices expressed the need of a cultural change to promote real participation processes. One of the problems is still the scepticism of some experts, who do not expect valuable outcomes from those processes.

5.2   Discussing uncertainties

Uncertainties about the plan

The interviewed actors expressed many uncertainties about the content of plans. Uncertainty about the plans can not be clearly delimited, because it is a 'perceived lack of knowledge' (Abbott, 2005) by the different actors. The acknowledgment of these multiple uncertainties by the plan-makers influences the role of the plan. Uncertainties can not be avoided, thus, the search for complete certainty in planning constitutes an 'illusion' (Gunder, 2008).This is a key aspect in dealing with uncertainties. The tendency to seek for certainty must be balanced with openness to accept uncertainties. The main paradox in planning is the need to address uncertainties and provide flexibility at the same time (Beunen and van Ark, *in press*).

At the beginning, in the PTP case, the planning authorities had many uncertainties about the type of plan to develop. They had clear objectives and they started to define an adequate tool to achieve them. Their uncertainties about the environment were reduced with more information and expert knowledge. Still, the plan was based on a particular economic scenario, which is not certain and must be updated overtime. The uncertainties about 'guiding values' (Friend and Hickling, 1987) were given by political objectives summarised in a series of criteria (see chapter 3). Uncertainties about 'available actions or alternatives' (Hopkins, 2001) were high, because it was the first experience with this type of plan. However, related plans and policies were important constrains to define the type of plan. They 'invented' a tool which, according to them, could be adequate to achieve their objectives. The remaining type of uncertainties were about the 'intentions of other people and organisations' (Abbott, 2005), in other words, other stakeholders. In this case, the planners tried to solve their own uncertainties about the 'object' of planning before dealing with the uncertainties about the other actors.

The way the planners dealt with uncertainty, in the PTP case, can be seen as a mixture between a 'strategic' and a 'trial-error' approach. They accepted their limitations in the way they did not want to solve all the problems in a single planning exercise. The PTP combines a rigid character in some aspects with flexible strategies in other aspects. In one way is conceived as functional-rational planning (plan-implement), while at the same time includes a long-term strategy, as Hillier (2008) suggests. The planners recognised certain 'trial-error' characteristics, because the first planning experience always needs fine-tuning over time. However, the planners' attitude can not be seen as 'incrementalist', understood as only seeking agreement with short-term actions (Hillier, 2008). The planners also tried to raise problems and to describe a long-term vision in the PTP. It is true, though, that the planners were still conservative in certain aspects, and did not try to risk too much as Abott (2005) suggests: 'to push the bounds of possibilty'.

In the PDUs cases, the types of uncertainties faced by both teams of planners were similar to the PTP case. In the 'Pallars' case, the planners were still facing many uncertainties about the type of plan they wanted to develop when they started facing the uncertainties from other stakeholders during the planning process. Later, they acknowledged the uncertainties about the 'available actions' and they had to reduce their initial ambitions. Their objectives were very ambitious and impossible to concretise in the plan because they were seeking for a high level of certainty. For instance, they wanted to solve sectoral problems, about which the spatial planning authorities had little influence. In the 'Cerdanya' case, instead, the many initial uncertainties were reduced by selection of specific issues. The problem was that the uncertainty about the actions of other stakeholders was not reduced. The dialogue was scarce and the planners (and the planning authorities) avoided including aspects in the plan which could be too uncertain or could create contradictions. For instance, they decided not go too much into detail limiting urban development or in other aspects that were controversial.

The room to express uncertainties about the plans was useful to improve them. During the PTP meetings, local authorities were able to discuss about the content of the plan. For instance, a lot of problems of interpretation were generated in the beginning of the process. These problems were more or less solved with further explanations or adding clarity to the plans. Other uncertainties were about the real implications of the plan. A lot of uncertainties were generated around the future limitations to urban development in the villages. The evolution of the concept during the meetings helped to reduce uncertainty. Sometimes, strategies were softened to include flexibility and exceptions.

The final plans contain uncertainties as well, because they require interpretation to apply them. Some interviewees expressed uncertainty about the capacity to develop complementary actions and recommendations indicated in the plan. In this sense, it is important to remark the distinction that

Forester does between uncertainty and ambiguity (Forester, 1979). The plans contain uncertainties because they affect future decisions that can not be predicted, or that require more information. Ambiguity, on the contrary, will need further political and social judgement to be solved. This distinction is important because the flexible character of the plan can have many future implications.

Sometimes, the plans include ambiguity, and that enhance the possibility to different interpretations. Uncertainties require strategies to decide about future situations, while ambiguity is about possible different meanings of the plan. Perhaps, this is why many interviewees have problems to predict if the plans will be positive in the future. It is essential to create the mechanisms to solve ambiguity and manage uncertainties during the use of the plan. The results reinforce the idea of the plan as a guide for decision-making, rather than a rigid document to be implemented (Faludi, 2004, Friend and Hickling, 1987).

Uncertainties about the planning process

Uncertainties about the planning process can refer to questions like: who should be involved in the process?, or how decisions are taken?. The importance of the planning process is emphasised previously, not only as 'a means to an end (the plan)'. Traditionally, the process receives less importance than the content of the plan. Planning theory literature focuses on how to deal with uncertainties during the plan-making process. However, little is mentioned about the uncertainty about the planning process itself. In other words, the planning process should be designed according to specific rules and methodologies. Most of the authors neglect this part of the planning process (see theoretical framework). Christensen (1985) argues that complex situations are characterised by uncertainty about 'means' and 'ends'. Under this perspective, the planning process should correspond to the characteristics of the context. Instead, the process is normally treated as given context. Uncertainties are about the environment, values, goals, preferences, technology, available actions, or related decisions. Thus, the design of the planning process implies uncertainties as well, which perhaps are not acknowledged correctly.

The results from the interviews confirm that, very often, the definition of the planning process is neglected. The planning authorities mentioned uncertainties about the plan, but not about the design of the planning process. The people with higher expectations about the planning process are the ones that mentioned this aspect. In the 'Pallars' case, the promoters of the participatory process complained about the lack of resources to organise it. They also indicated the problems caused by the fact that the process was not designed together with the planners. In the PTP case, the organisers of the public participation process also mentioned methodological limitations. In general, the planning authorities and the teams of planners encountered problems to manage participatory processes. The dialogue with local authorities was easier to organise, but they did not work enough on how to involve other stakeholders successfully.

The design of the planning process, and specifically participatory sessions, involves expertise as one of the interviewees mentioned. It also involves clarity about the initial conditions, the issues to discuss, and the decision-making procedure. In the analysed cases, these basic requirements were not met in any of them. In general, the sessions had an informative character or were debates without clear mechanisms to incorporate the results in the plan. In the 'Pallars' case, the planners mentioned that they started with a 'blank sheet' and after they did not know how to close the process. The local actors perceived this lack of clarity about the planning process, and about the way the planners took into account the public sessions. In the other cases, the impact of public participation was even less or inexistent. In the case of official procedures such as consultations or official public consultation periods, the uncertainty was reduced because of the existence of a normative process. These

procedures were complemented with meetings with the local authorities that helped to reduce uncertainties about the process. The results show the importance to establish clear rules of the game in order to reduce uncertainty about the planning process.

5.3 Discussing conflicts

Conflicts about the plan

There are different types and levels of conflict that play a role in spatial planning. In this research, conflict is understood as opposite to acceptance (i.e. positive attitude towards an object). Conflicts appear during inter-subjective relationships and can be seen as related to framing differences. The frames of reference of the different stakeholders are influenced by convictions, values, norms, knowledge, and interests (Dewulf et al., 2009) (see section 2.6). Conflicts about the plans emerged during the meetings, discussions, and public consultation procedures of the planning process.

One of the most relevant conflicts that appeared in the three case studies was related to the urban development strategies included in the plans. This can be considered the most important (and controversial) issue of the plans. The planners proposed a scheme to urban development that included limitations to municipalities according to their future role in a territorial model. The model was decided according to the planners' frame of reference. Other stakeholders expressed disagreement based on their own convictions, values, norms, interests, and knowledge. Interaction was needed to create shared meanings and common frames of reference (Dewulf et al., 2009).

The PTP process was useful to address 'knowledge' conflicts and avoid some 'interest' conflicts. A lot of conflicts were generated because of a wrong interpretation about the planners' intentions. The dialogue with local authorities generated an evolution about the way the strategies were defined in the plan. The philosophy of the plan did not change significantly and the planners maintained their convictions. However, some strategies were softened to avoid interest conflicts with municipalities. For instance, the possibility to develop economic activities in small villages was recognised. At the end, the planners mentioned that the PTP generated a high degree of consensus. As Van Assche argues (2007), the idea of consensus is partial because it is subject to interpretation and it is sensitive to the context. This is true because conflicts appeared in other meetings and in related discussion during the elaboration of the PDUs. The outcome, in this case, fits better with the idea of consensus as a way to address differences that are 'paralysing' (Innes, 2004)

In the 'Pallars' case, we found an example of the construction of common frames through interaction, or 'reframing' (Dewulf et al., 2009). The conflict was again about urban development, but with a higher level of detail. The planners defended the idea of limiting urban expansion in small villages, while mainly local authorities perceived it as a way to '*freeze their development*'. During the discussions, a new idea that generated a shared meaning was exposed: '*the villages should grow as villages*'. This idea remained in the actors' minds and was translated into the plan. This example illustrates how interaction can generate new frames of reference, which represent common interests, understanding, and shared values. Some actors may still disagree about the degree of limitation included in the PDU. For instance, in the case of declassifications, there were existent particular interests which were difficult to change from a legal point of view. In the future, though, these expansions may be difficult to develop under the common accepted idea of '*the villages should grow as villages*'.

The '*Cerdanya*' case is different in the way that conflicts occurred during the planning process. Dialogue was only limited to local authorities and new frames of reference were not generated. Local authorities expressed deep divergences with the planning authorities, related to differences about

convictions and values. For example, they considered that they were legitimated to decide and they had a different idea about how urban development in the county should be. This is why reframing was difficult and they started a 'counterplan' to defend their ideas against the PDU. They were not against all the proposals included in the PDU, but they wanted to defend their right to decide about the controversial aspects. They presented a coordinated plan as a way to negotiate with the planning authorities about the PDU prescriptions.

In this process, we can observe the role of power networks (Booher and Innes, 2002) in a competitive way, instead of only collaborative. In fact, the coordinated plan was presented to defend individual interests from each municipality. They did not develop a common vision as a county. Shared interests were created to defend their legitimacy to decide in front of the planning authorities from Barcelona. This case can be an example of what Flyvbjerg (2002) calls 'the dark side of planning'. In most real practices, conflicts can not be solved through argumentation. According to Flyvbjerg, the ideas about conflict as something that should be contained and resolved (like those of Habermas) are trying to suppress freedom. Thus, in the research case, the municipalities expressed their freedom to engage in conflict. This is not the ideal situation from the point of view of the planning authorities, but it illustrates how all kind of conflicts can play a role in the planning process.

The permanence of conflict and the temporality of consensus are observed in the case studies. The importance is not to address conflict, but to deal with it. However, it is important to emphasise that antagonistic conflicts can provoke important costs and institutional damage as Healey (1998) indicates. The legitimacy of conflict should not be an excuse to not putting effort on communication strategies to achieve agreement or acceptance. The results emphasise the need to develop 'agonistic' views of conflict (Ploger, 2004, Hillier, 2003, Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). These views propose ways to deal with conflicts in situations when consensus between stakeholders is not possible or incomplete. In the face of conflicts, there are still possible ways to construct while respecting the divergences.

Conflicts about the planning process

As in the previous parts about expectations and uncertainties, specific mention is made about conflicts about the planning process. These conflicts are not about the content of the plans, but rather about the way the process is organised. Conflicts are linked to the different expectations about the planning process explained before. The main differences were about the need to involve the citizens and local stakeholders in the process. Planning authorities expressed that the main actors of the process were the political local authorities. Alternatively, local associations and other interviewees believe that public participation is essential in spatial planning. The local authorities are not seen as the only legitimated actors to discuss about the plans.

Conflicts about the planning process can be seen as differences in frames of reference among stakeholders. For instance, the planning authorities and local associations expressed different convictions about the relevance of citizen participation. Previous experiences with participation and particular interests also influence both perspectives. The same applies to conflicts between the planning authorities and the local authorities about the legitimacy to make decisions. The different values and interests play a clear role. Some authorities accept that regulations from 'above' are needed, but they complained about the lack of dialogue. Other local authorities questioned the legitimacy of the process, because they want to decide themselves. Some interviewees argue that local people are not the only ones that should decide about land use.

The different frames of reference still prevail and the lack of experience is a barrier to change towards a more inter-subjective planning perspective. However, the pressure from local stakeholders

demanding more involvement can have an impact to provoke this change. This is a case of evolution from a traditionally reactive attitude of social movements towards a more proactive role (see Nel·lo, 2003, Alfama et al., 2007). The passivity of local people is no longer a justification to the application of a top-down planning approach. The planning authorities still express scepticism, although the promotion of citizen participation and dialogue is a political objective expressed by the government (DGPC, 2007). The conclusion is that reframing is taking place about 'values' expressed in political objectives, in other words, '*the way things should be*'. The translation into practice still needs reframing about 'norms', 'convictions', and 'knowledge' from experience. Until this process of cultural change is still taking place, '*this is the way it is*' in the context of the research.

5.4   Linking expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts

One of the objectives of the research is to explore the relationships between the multiple expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts (EUCs) generated in spatial planning practices. In the previous sections, each concept is discussed separately, considering both the plan and the planning process. A separate analysis is an exercise to focus on the results that are relevant to discuss each concept. The strong interrelations between them are obvious from the previous analysis. This section focuses in these relationships as a previous step to construct a new planning concept. Thus, the way to understand each concept (EUCs) is explored in relationship to the other two.
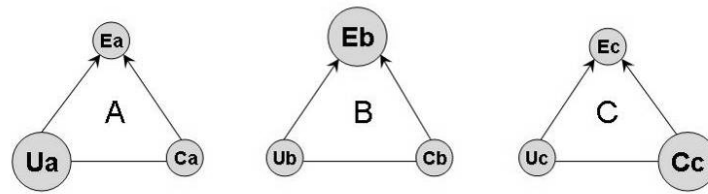
Expectations related to uncertainties and conflicts

Expectations about plans can be understood as a way to deal with uncertainties. This can be seen, for instance, in the way the lack of previous experiences made the planners be conservative about what the PTP could achieve. If uncertainties are perceived as high, stakeholders may react with lowering their expectations about plans. Thus, it is important to acknowledge uncertainties to set reasonable expectations about plans. Expectations can be raised afterwards, but it is difficult to lower them. Unrealistic expectations can lead to frustration in the face of uncertainties.

Expectations can also be understood as a way to deal with conflicts. Previous conflicting experiences influence what people expect from plans. As an example, conflicts around the urban development model in the Pyrenees influenced the different expectations about the supra-local plans. Some actors expected more regulations, while others considered that other priorities were more important. Conflicts have an important role in framing the discussions during the planning process. Therefore, strategies to deal with conflicts are important to meet the expectations about the plan and generate common frames of reference.

A scheme is presented to illustrate the expectations of different actors as a result of the perception of uncertainties and conflicts (see figure 5.1). The planning actors are represented by letters (A, B, C), and each actor has a particular perception of EUCs (Ex, Ux, Cx). In this figure, the different expectations are influenced by the perception of uncertainties and conflicts by each actor. If we compare them, actor A has lower expectations (Ea) because of the perception of higher uncertainties (Ua) (a cautious actor). Actor B has higher expectations (Eb) since his perception of uncertainties and conflicts is lower (an optimistic actor). Finally, actor C perceives higher conflicts (Cc) and that results in lower expectations (Ec) (a pessimistic one). These relationships are not 'cause-effect' ones. The figure is just one example of many different ways in which actors can increase or reduce their expectations as a result of the perception of uncertainties and conflicts.
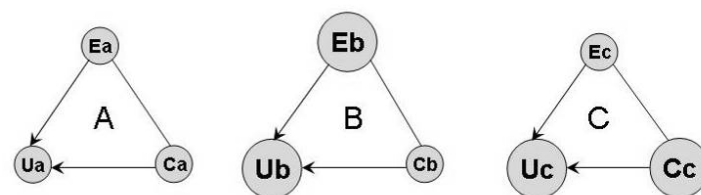
Figure 5.1 Expectations related to uncertainties and conflicts (A,B,C: planning actors; Ex, Ux, Cx: perception by actor x about expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts)

Uncertainties related to expectations and conflicts

Uncertainties can be analysed in relationship with expectations. Expectations about plans generate uncertainties. In the PTP case, the planners' certainty about the plan changed when they faced other actors' expectations. The 'Pallars' case is a plan that contains many uncertainties because the expectations about the plan were initially high. The planners could not solve all the aspects they intended to solve and that generated new uncertainties about the impact of the plan. The way these uncertainties in the plan are managed can lead to different results. Perhaps, the generation of uncertainties can be positive if they are correctly considered in future decisions.

Uncertainties can also be studied as a response to conflict. Conflicts are sources of uncertainty about the planning process. The 'Cerdanya' case is an example of a plan developed in a context of conflict with the local authorities. This context created contradictions between the local plans (in elaboration) and supra-local plans. The way the different plans will fit and coexist in the future is highly uncertain. These types of uncertainties are difficult to manage without reorienting conflicts towards less antagonistic positions.

Thus, uncertainties of different actors can be represented as the result of the perception of uncertainties and conflicts (see figure 5.2). This scheme is analogous to the previous about expectations (see explanations about figure 5.1). Actor A has lower uncertainties as the perception of expectations and conflicts is lower. Actor B has higher expectations and that results in higher uncertainties as well. Actor C has higher uncertainties mainly because of a higher perception of conflicts.

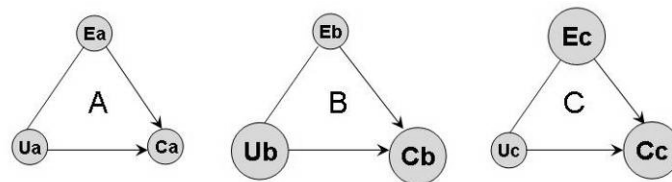**Figure 5.2 Uncertainties related to expectations and conflicts**

Conflicts related to expectations and uncertainties

Conflicts can be linked to the presence of expectations. If there are no expectations about plans, conflicts would not be generated during the planning process. Conflicts can appear as a result of different expectations about the plan. The results of the thesis show how planning authorities and local people had different initial expectations about the role of the plans. Conflicts appeared because the plans included too many or too little regulations, and because some local demands were not taken into account. As mentioned before, conflict is the expression of freedom and to some extent it is permanent in society. Yet, planners can minimise antagonistic or reactive conflicts with communication. The reframing or shaping of expectations can prevent the appearance of 'undesirable' types of conflict.

Finally, conflicts can be analysed as a response to the presence of uncertainties. Conflicts can be generated in the face of uncertainties, because some people dislike uncertainties. Especially, plans are often perceived as a way to guarantee future actions. Spatial planning is traditionally concerned with the search for certainty as well. In the case studies, a new type of supra-local plans was introduced which provoked a high degree of uncertainty. The uncertainties about the plans were high, and the planning authorities adopted a cautious attitude to introduce the new plans, in general. However, local authorities react when they considered that possible future consequences of the plans could damage their interests. They also demanded more clarity about some actions and initiatives included in the plans. The balance between regulations and flexibility is difficult to achieve and always subject to future interpretations of the plans. Uncertainties in the plans can not be avoided, but the perception can be different if the actors trust each other. Communication is again essential to generate trust and prevent conflicts in the presence of uncertainties.

The next figure represents the perception of conflicts by the different actors as influenced by the perception of expectations and uncertainties (see explanations about figures 5.1 and 5.2):

Figure 5.3 Conflicts related to expectations and uncertainties

5.5 *Planning as 'co-evolution'*

Relationships between expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts are described departing from real planning practices in the research context. The established links are complex and different interpretations about the results can be elaborated. The selection and description of concepts in the previous sections served to try to understand and reflect on planning practices with a particular focus. The observed relationships are just examples of many others that can be observed. It is impossible to show how the different concepts interrelate to each other without reference to particular cases. However, the purpose of the research is not the explanation of causal relationships but to suggest new ways to look at real practices. A new concept is presented to generate understanding about the role of expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts in spatial planning.

The concept

Van Woerkum et al. (2007) propose new ways of planning based on creativity to deal with uncertainty, change and complexity. Under these conditions, traditional planning based on the definition of 'ends' and 'means' is no longer a successful solution. Instead of fixed objectives and means, there is a preference for an agreed 'sense of direction' and a well-chosen set of options to find out 'what works' (van Woerkum et al., 2007). One of the approaches is the 'evolutionary approach', inspired on the theories from Darwin. The basic idea is that differentiation provides chances for survival, or success in an unpredictable changing environment. Translated to humans, that means that experimentation is needed to give adaptative responses to emerging requirements. This evolutionary approach is comparable to ideas about 'planning as a process of social learning' (Healey, 1998), or 'planning working with trajectories' rather than end-points (Hillier, 2008). It can also be connected with discussions about implementation (see Pressman et al., 1973, Hill and Hupe, 2003). The way to understand planning is as an adaptative process that continues during the 'implementation' phase.

Evolution suggests continuity between planning and action which is contrary to the linear idea of 'plan-implement'.

To inspire new ways of understanding planning, the concept 'planning as co-evolution' is introduced. The idea of 'co-evolution' differs from simple evolution because it implies necessarily interaction between actors as part of the 'planning environment'. It is also different from a Darwinistic perspective because it incorporates the social aspect. Social individuals have the capacity to learn from experience and interaction, instead of just adaptating through 'trial-error'. Expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts are essential concepts to understand complex planning environments as argued before. These three concepts determine to great extent the actors' perception about a particular planning process.

From the previous analysis of expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts (EUC), the following characteristics were observed:

1. There are multiple EUCs perceived by the different planning actors

2. EUCs are interrelated and influence each other

3. EUCs change or 'evolve' through time during the planning process

The next question to answer is 'how do perceptions of EUCs evolve through time?' The actors' perceptions can evolve through time during the planning process as a result of interaction with the 'external environment'. The external environment is understood as the context in which a planning process takes place. This includes the broader physical, social, political, or economical conditions. Plans, stakeholders, and frames of reference also determine the perception of a particular planning actor. For instance, planners can reduce uncertainties about a plan with more information about the environment or with the establishment of clearer political objectives. This is represented in figure 5.4, in which the perception of an actor about uncertainties (Ua) evolves through different planning phases (A1, A2). The same can occur with expectations and conflicts as a response to changes in the environment. This is a reaction characterised by 'adaptation', which means that the perception of a single actor evolves to fit better in the environment. It is an individual response to the external context.
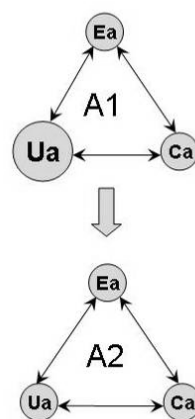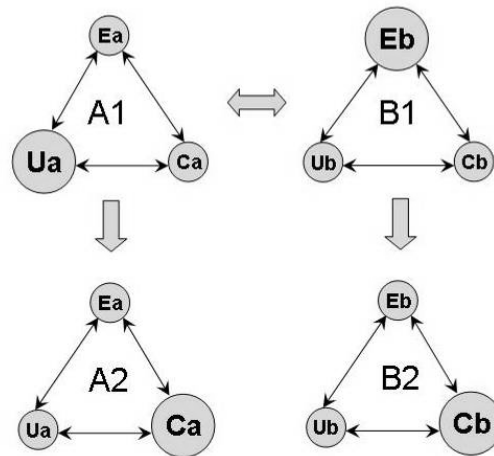

Figure 5.4 Evolution of the perception of expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts as individual adaptation to the external environment

A different kind of evolution (co-evolution) takes place through interaction within the planning process. Actors relate to each other in different ways during the planning process. For instance,

relationships can be antagonistic or either based on coordination, and cooperation. Related issues also play a role in the process as explained in the theoretical framework, such as power, understanding, trust, or the existence of shared interests. Interaction provokes that multiple expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts become visible. Co-evolution is not only adaptation to the environment, but it implies adaptation to others' perceptions. It also means the recognition of mutual dependence to evolve together. As an example, communication can reduce uncertainties about plans generating common understanding and trust. Interaction is necessary to deal with conflicts through reframing, consensus-building, or negotiation processes. Co-evolution does not imply the convergence to the same ideas or the elimination of conflicts. However, the perception of actors changes through the acknowledgement of others' expectations and uncertainties and through the visualisation of conflicts.

In the next figure, the co-evolution of the actors' perceptions through interaction is represented. In a first planning phase, actors have a particular perception of EUCs (A1, B1). In a second phase, actors' perception (A2, B2) has 'co-evolved' as the result of interaction. In this case, actors acknowledged the existence of different expectations (Ea, Eb) and others' uncertainties (Ua, Ub). Through interaction, the actors' perceptions about uncertainties and expectations tend to converge and they become aware of the divergences or conflicts between them (Ca, Cb).

Figure 5.5 Co-evolution of the perception of expectations, uncertainties and conflicts through interaction between two planning actors

The idea of 'co-evolution' through interaction implies a higher degree of evolution than single adaptation to the external environment. Co-evolution is more likely to provide a 'sense of direction' to planning because of the idea of continuous interaction. Interactions between people enhance common understanding and learning, thus, co-evolution. Going beyond the planning process, interaction creates stronger relationships between stakeholders. This is important in the current planning context (see section 3.1) to create governance structures and facilitate networks between actors. The results from the case studies can illustrate better the importance of co-evolution to deal with multiple expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts.

Co-evolution in the case studies

Co-evolution can be observed in the changes of perception as a result of interaction between actors. The multiple expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts (EUCs) are 'accommodated' in different ways in each case study. The three cases are interrelated between them, but they also have context particularities. In all cases, co-evolution takes place although different relationships and balances between EUCs occur. The amount and type of interactions between stakeholders is important to

determine the way co-evolution takes place. During the planning process, relationships of cooperation and competition can be observed. Interpretation is also important because stakeholders perceive expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts in a different way. In some cases, interaction facilitates processes of social learning. Divergences among stakeholders are still observed, but co-evolution in the planning process is a guarantee of a certain degree of convergence in a shared trajectory.

The co-evolution concept can be used to understand the progress of a particular planning processs. In figure 5.6, the previous schemes (see fig. 5.4, 5.5) are translated into a broader representation of a planning process. The perception of the different stakeholders about EUCs (Ax, Bx, Cx) changes through the different phases. The interaction between them facilitates the acknowledgment of others' perceptions. Interaction can provoke convergence in the way the actors perceive EUCs. This is represented by the change of shape in the figure triangles (similar or different shape). The process can generate social learning through understanding and reframing of disagreements. In the figure, different layers symbolize the acknowledgement of others' perceptions, which can generate understanding and reframing. If conflicts are deeper, interaction can also be useful to change antagonistic positions. This is translated in the different versions of the plan and in the development of the planning process. At the end of the process, difference will still exist between actors. However, decision-makers can be more conscious about the different positions, or actors' perceptions. The planners will need to find ways to accommodate these differences in the final plan.
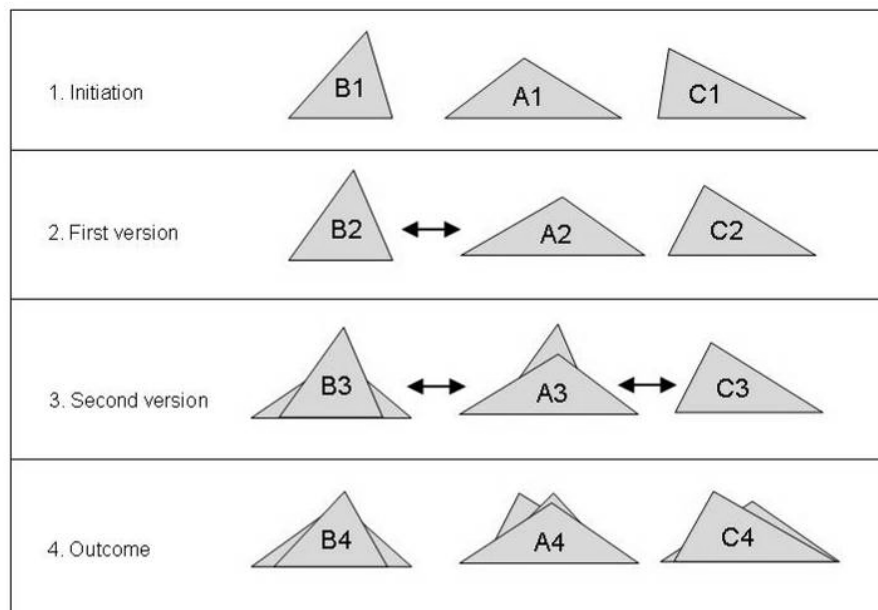
Figure 5.6 The co-evolution of actors' perceptions during a planning process (Triangles represent expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts: EUCs; the change of the shape represents a change on the perception of EUCs; the different layers represent the acknowledgment of others' perceptions)

To finish this chapter, a summary of the most important aspects of the three case studies is presented under the co-evolution perspective.

'PTP Alt Pirineu i Aran'

The first case represents the introduction of a new planning philosophy, which generated a lot of initial expectations and uncertainties. Most of the interviewees agreed that the evolution of the plan was positive during the process as a result of conversations. The different initial expectations were shaped through information, and interaction (mainly between planners and local authorities). The planners introduced flexibility in the plan to deal with some conflicts and to manage uncertainties in the future. In general, the planning authorities found a good balance to deal with others' expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts. The plan generated a good level of acceptance, but a low level of enthusiasm.

There are some aspects in which the planners could have been more ambitious. The plan includes recommendations about related actions, but the mechanisms to develop them are uncertain. The impact of the plan will depend on future interactions related to the use of the plans. The initiative from the planning authorities is important to continue with a process of co-evolution. The involvement of local authorities, stakeholders and citizens is essential to continue in the good direction. One of the threats is that local people feel again the abandonment after the plan being approved. The involvement of citizens was already low during the planning process. There is the risk that the plan remains ignored by the majority of the final 'consumers'. Hence, the promotion of the plan within the region is important to ensure the continuity of the process. Other stakeholders should play a more active role during the plan-use phase. Some interviewees acknowledged the need to create teams with qualified professionals and working networks in the region to ensure the continuity of the measures included in the plan.

'PDU Pallars Sobirà'

The second case study is related to the first, because it represents the continuation of the discussions in more detail for a particular county in the Pyrenees. In this case, one of the most relevant facts is the active involvement of local associations as organisers of a participatory process. The expectations about the plan were very high among some stakeholders and also the ambitions of the team of planners (hired by the planning authorities). The planning authorities, though, remained sceptical about both the participatory process and some of the planners' ambitions. Local authorities had different expectations about the plan as well, and that generated some uncertainties, and conflicts. There was a significant evolution about some conflicting ideas, especially, the urban development strategies. This evolution took place through interaction during the discussions and participatory sessions. Thus, it can be affirmed that co-evolution occurred in the way the different actors perceived the problem.

Although the initial expectations were not completely achieved, the plan generated more awareness than the PTP. A lot of topics were discussed and the plan included a good amount of information and proposals. The main objectives of the planning authorities were achieved, while other objectives were at least put on the table. Many uncertainties remain about the real impact of the plan. Especially, the planning authorities expressed doubts about the future role of the plan. Their idea is that this kind of plan (PDU) is useful to achieve specific objectives, but not as comprehensive plans. They consider that the PTP and the local plans (POUMs) are enough to decide about land-use planning in general. The planners thought in a different way, as other interviewees, and they tried to elaborate a 'transversal' plan that could include 'sectoral' aspects. Thus, the PDU achieved specific objectives and generated a lot of expectations. Yet, the good direction is still not clear because there are divergent views about what the future role of the plan should be between the planning authorities and local stakeholders. Hence, the case is a good example of co-evolution about some aspects of the plan. The

role of the plan, though, was not clear enough and that generated different interpretations among planning authorities, planners, and local people.

'PDU Cerdanya'

The last case is similar to the previous regarding the type of plan and the objectives from the planning authorities. The main difference is that, apart from local authorities, local stakeholders did not have the same proactive role and they were not involved in the discussions. Another relevant fact about the process was the reaction from local authorities with the elaboration of a coordinated local plan as a response to the PDU. Both planning processes were in parallel, thus, co-evolution was not facilitated. In some aspects, adaptation between both plans occurred. In others, the process was dominated by antagonistic conflict. Regulations about open areas and some land declassifications had a high degree of acceptance. However, local authorities did not accept the limitations to urban development proposed by the PDU. In this case, co-evolution about the urban development strategies did not take place as in the previous case.

This is the case in which the relationship between planning authorities and local authorities was more balanced. The coordination between municipalities created a more powerful position to defend their points of view. The involvement of other stakeholders could have been positive to the evolution of the conflict. At the end, the positions did not change and contradictions between both plans are expected in the future. This conflict dominated the whole process and the relevance of the PDU in other aspects is not acknowledged by the interviewees. Competition created certain level of adaptation between the plans, but convergence did not occur in the most controversial aspects. The conflict between actors will probably finish in negotiations or compromise solutions. The PDU generated a reaction from the local perspective. At least, this can be seen as positive although contrary to the planning authorities objectives. The involvement of other actors would have been interesting to show other expectations about the plan from the local perspective. The dominance of an antagonistic conflict between the two main actors did not enhance co-evolution. The planning process was not very successful in terms of social learning, and neither created a clear sense of direction. As mentioned before, a major role of local associations or other stakeholders could have been useful to generate new perceptions.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

The main objective of the thesis was to explore ways to deal with multiple expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts (EUCs) in spatial planning. The concepts were analysed separately as a first step to find relationships between them. Then, a new perspective on planning was elaborated: 'planning as co-evolution'. This concept suggests a new way to understand planning practices and generate reflections on how to deal with EUCs. In this chapter, the most important findings of the research are presented. The conclusions are based on the literature research and the results from the case studies. The case studies are three supra-local (or regional) plans in the Catalan Pyrenees in Spain.

Dealing with expectations

The results from the case studies illustrate that dealing with multiple expectations is important to the correct development of the planning process. People have different expectations about what plans can achieve. Local people tend to demand a lot of things from plans, which are not always feasible. Besides, local authorities dislike regulations from 'above' because regulations limit their capacity to decide. The role of the planners is important to set reasonable expectations to plans. On the one hand, they should acknowledge correctly the mandate and objectives from the regional authorities. On the other hand, they should be aware of the expectations from other stakeholders. The cases show that communication and clarity during the planning process is essential to correct false expectations. Planners can shape expectations explaining what the plan can do or not.

Problems can appear during the process because of high or low expectations about plans. Planners can be ambitious, but they should not be too optimistic about what they can achieve. There is always a balance between the expectations from planners, local people, and regional planning authorities. High expectations can raise problems and provide long term objectives. In the short term, though, they can generate frustration if planning constrains are not properly recognized. Low expectations about plans can be a good approach to achieve short term objectives. However, the repercussion of the plan will be limited in order to change the existent situation and to raise problems. Moreover, a conservative (or incrementalist) approach is difficult to conceive with the existence of multiple expectations. In this case, the result would be more likely the lowest common denominator between the different expectations.

Dealing with uncertainties

The role of planners is also important to deal with uncertainties. Uncertainty is a widely discussed concept in spatial planning literature. The first conclusion from the case studies is that many uncertainties about plans are 'problems' of interpretation. Again, communication during the planning process can reduce these uncertainties providing better understanding about the plan's documentation and the planners' intentions. The acknowledgement of others' uncertainties by the planners is useful to improve the clarity of the plan and the planning process. Yet, plans contain uncertainties about future situations in which decisions will be needed. These uncertainties can not be solved with more communication between actors during the planning process. Local stakeholders often show scepticism and distrust about future interpretations of the plan. These uncertainties can be reduced with appropriate decision-making mechanisms. Previous experiences and trust between actors are important factors that influence the perception of uncertainties about future consequences of the plan.

A second important conclusion is the importance of flexibility to deal with uncertainties. In all the case studies, the plans included more flexibility during the process to 'accommodate' uncertainties from other actors. Planners tend to have the idea of planning as a way to control and to decide about the future. When planners conceived a detailed regional plan to decide about land use, they collided with local plans and local authorities. When planners tried to include 'sectoral' aspects, they acknowledged contradictions and a lack of capacity to influence other policy areas. Instead, effective regional plans are observed to be based on clear strategies and selection of objectives. It is important to have a clear 'sense of direction' and specific objectives to deal with uncertainties. It is not feasible to pretend to control everything and to solve all the problems in a single plan.

Dealing with conflicts

The discussions in the case studies show a dominance of conflicts between the regional and the local perspective. The existence of this conflict can be understandable, but it is often a partial perception of the actors involved in the planning process. Some actors play a major role during the planning process and opposed views between the main actors frame the perception of conflicts. The opening of discussions to other stakeholders and to the public can show a higher diversity of opinions. Participatory processes can be useful to acknowledge conflicts between local people. Then, polarised conflicts between the regional planning authorities and the local authorities could be reframed.

Divergences between actors in the planning process can not be fully solved, but there are many ways to work with conflicts in planning. Perhaps, consensus would be desirable in planning, but it is a very fragile state subject to different interpretations. Thus, a broader strategy to deal with conflicts in planning is necessary. Interaction can generate new frames of reference to deal with conflicting opinions. This is more likely to happen when actors or participants have a positive attitude to the planning process. The cases studies show how dialogue can generate new ideas and common understanding. However, some actors may have a negative attitude towards the planner's intentions or the way the planning process is organised. These conflicts require a stronger communicative effort to reach positive outcomes. If antagonistic views can not be reconsidered, negotiated or 'compromise' solutions are the only options. However, it is important that decision-makers acknowledge the different opinions. They should be conscious about the possibility of permanence of conflict about plans.

Planning as co-evolution

Expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts (EUCs) are interrelated and perceived in different ways by the planning actors. The results show how the perception of these concepts changes during the process. First, expectations about plans are influenced by the perception of uncertainties and conflicts. Second, different expectations and conflicts can generate uncertainties. Third, conflicts may appear if expectations about plans are not satisfied, or in the presence of uncertainties. The way these concepts interrelate and influence each other form a solid basis to understand a particular planning process. Thus, the evolution of EUCs during the process should be considered together.

The concept of co-evolution is introduced as a way to understand planning. Co-evolution is understood as the way the perceptions of planning actors evolve through interaction during the planning process. In the research, perception can be analysed by the way EUCs change according to the actors' perspective. Co-evolution implies the recognition of mutual dependence between actors. It also means evolving together, although differences may persist. From a Darwinistic point of view, evolution means adaptation of one species to the external environment. Instead, co-evolution is mutual

adaptation between species that evolve together. Thus, interaction is essential to the co-evolutionary process.

The co-evolution perspective is also useful to reflect about how to deal with EUCs in planning practice. The results illustrate the importance of interaction to deal with EUCs. Interaction provides acknowledgment of others' perceptions about EUCs. Expectations are corrected and shaped through interaction. Interaction is a way to deal with uncertainties, providing understanding and generating trust. Interaction can generate new frames of reference and is necessary to deal with conflicts. As mentioned, plans at regional level need a flexible character and continuous interaction is essential during the 'implementation' phase. In a broader sense, current planning practice is increasingly based on interaction through governance structures and networks. Thus, interaction is the key planning force to stimulate co-evolution in planning. Obviously, interaction can take place in many different ways, which can produce more or less effective results. Planners need to think better on the importance of their communication strategies to deal successfully with expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts.

Further research

The results of the research raised further questions to be answered about the future of the plans. The conclusions support the idea of planning as a process that continues during the implementation phase. As Hopkins (2001) states, the ideal situation in which plans are made and after implemented is far from reality. Plans are used, interpreted, supervised, changed, or simply forgotten. There are a lot of debates about the implementation of plans (see Pressman et al., 1973, Hill and Hupe, 2003) and some interviewees mentioned problems related to it. This is a very important planning phase, particularly in areas with little resources such as the Pyrenees.

In the research context, it would be interesting to analyse the real impact of the plans after being approved. The current research was limited to the plan-making process in the selected case studies. The idea of co-evolution can also be used in further analysis about the 'implementation' of the plans. It could be analysed what are the consequences of the different observed approaches in dealing with expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts. For instance, the dilemma about focusing on specific objectives in plans (lower expectations) or either raising problems (higher expectations) could be better evaluated in the long term. The impact of the different degree of flexibility in the proposals included in the plans could also be analysed. The interaction with other stakeholders may also change through time, which influences the future of the plans. The plans should be effective to achieve the desired objectives, but also to deal with emerging uncertainties and conflicts. With further analysis, a better understanding of the relationships between expectations, uncertainties, and conflicts could be elaborated.

Reflection on the research methods

The research approach used in this thesis was based on a combination of theoretical concepts and empirical information. Theories help to look at practice with a particular focus. Before analysing the cases, it was important to have an idea of what were the relevant concepts to study and what was the main research objective. The use of theoretical concepts facilitates the generalisation of the results to other contexts and the contribution to theoretical discussions. The analysis of the case studies was based on in-depth interviews and a small degree of topic control from the researcher. This means that the interviewees were free to tell their own stories, underlining the aspects that they considered more relevant in the planning process. It was more important to get their own impressions about the planning process than to ask about specific issues which perhaps were not relevant from their point of view. This openness helped in selecting the theoretical discussions that were more relevant to the

cases. Using the interviewees' opinions, the theoretical concepts were further elaborated and the relationships between them, explored. Thus, theories were useful to look at practice and practice was essential to build on theories.

The results of the research are influenced by the selection of the interviewees, the selection of particular opinions, and personal interpretation. Yet, the objective was not to present an unbiased and fair description of the cases, but rather to present relevant, critical, and contradicted opinions. This type of information is considered more valuable to reveal new knowledge and to stimulate reflections.

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