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BACHELOR THESIS

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Post-political Dimensions of Urban Planning in Prague

Post-politické dimenze městského plánování v Praze

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Prague 2023

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Mgr. Jan Sládek, Ph.D., for guiding me through the process of writing this thesis and for his advice on the importance of structuring one's argumentation. I would also like to thank my family for helping me with the editing of this thesis and especially for their emotional support. I am also grateful to my closest friends, who helped me find the motivation to complete this thesis.

Declaration:

I declare that I have prepared my bachelor thesis independently, that I have properly cited all sources and literature used, and that the work has not been used as part of other university studies or to acquire a different or the equivalent degree.

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracoval samostatně, že jsem řádně citoval všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

17th May 2023, Prague

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to provide a theoretical synthesis of the current literature reflecting upon the post-political critique of urban planning in the theoretical section, which is then applied to the context of urban planning in Prague in the empirical section. The post-political line of thought takes a critical view of recent efforts to render urban planning more inclusive, asserting that by focusing on consensus-building, planning practices exclude the emergence of the political; the fundamentally conflictual nature of politics as described by Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Rancière. The critique suggests that participatory planning practices can be effective at upholding the hegemonic order by which the city is constituted, by pacifying the antagonistic forces that challenge it. In the empirical section, the applicability of this critique within the context of Prague's urban planning process is examined. This is achieved through a case study of the efforts of the Prague Institute of Planning and Development (IPR) to develop a new land use plan, while dealing with dissent from a prominent antagonistic actor – the NGO Arnika.

Abstrakt

Cílem této práce je poskytnout teoretickou syntézu současné literatury reflektující post-politickou kritiku územního plánování v teoretické části, která je následně aplikována na kontext územního plánování v Praze v části empirické. Post-politická myšlenková linie kriticky nahlíží na nedávné snahy o dosažení inkluzivnějšího městského plánování a tvrdí, že plánovací praxe svým zaměřením na budování konsensu vylučuje vznik politična neboli zásadně konfliktní povahy politiky, jak ji popisují Chantal Mouffe a Jacques Rancière. Kritika naznačuje, že postupy participativního plánování mohou být účinné při udržování hegemonického řádu, kterým je město konstituováno, tím, že pacifikují antagonistické síly, které tento řád zpochybňují. V empirické části je zkoumána aplikovatelnost této kritiky v kontextu pražského procesu územního plánování, na základě případové studie pojímající snažení Institutu plánování a rozvoje hl. m. Prahy (IPR) vypracovat nový územní plán, které naráží na silný odpor ze strany významného antagonistického aktéra, neziskové organizace Arnika.

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Introduction

This Bachelor thesis is concerned with the post-political critique of urban planning, a line of thought that problematizes the extent to which urban planning processes and practices are truly transparent and democratic. The critique revolves around the notion that planning institutions, through their strong emphasis on achieving *consensus* through various prescribed methods of participation inhibit the possibility for *hegemonic practices* – the established social institutions that constitute the order by which the city is governed (Mouffe, 2005) – to be challenged by citizens through *conflictual* or *antagonistic* means. In this thesis, my main aim is to assess whether the post-political critique is applicable to the analysis of planning practices in Prague and the ways in which they are contested by antagonistic actors. In the theoretical section, I provide a relatively deep theoretical outline of how the post-political critique delineates the problematic aspects of current consensus-oriented planning practices and the ways by which opposing conflictual actors tend to counteract these practices. This theoretical outline is then used in the empirical section, which attempts to apply the concepts presented in the theoretical section to specific aspects and moments of Prague’s planning process. The overarching research question (**RQ0**) of this thesis is: *can the post-political critique of planning be applied in analysing the opposition between the practices of consensus-oriented planning institutions in Prague and the actions of conflict-oriented actors challenging these practices?* The answer to this overarching research question is provided through the evaluation of four hypotheses (**H1-4**), which correspond to more specific research questions regarding the nature of the planning processes employed by Prague’s planning institutions (**RQ1**); the applicability of the post-political critique to the planning practices exercised by Prague’s planning institutions (**RQ1.1**); the nature and intensity of the antagonism exhibited by a prominent conflictual actor focused on land use planning (**RQ2**); and the extent to which post-political concepts are applicable to the conflictual actor’s critique of Prague’s planning institutions (**RQ3**). The empirical section is based on a case study of the methods of participation practiced by the city’s main expert planning institution – the Prague Institute of Planning and Development (IPR) and the antagonistic actions of a prominent conflictual actor – the NGO Arnika – aimed at challenging the city’s efforts to finalize a new city-wide land use plan: the Prague Metropolitan Plan (MPP).

I. Theoretical section

1. Theoretical context

Over the course of the last few decades, urban planning has seen a paradigm shift toward an attempt to democratize the processes by which it organizes and reorganizes space in urban environments. Urban planning is a discipline which, along with regional planning, more generally referred to as spatial planning or just planning, is concerned with a variety of practices which involve the designation of how land is used, usually regarding the built environment, which forms the outcomes of land use decisions. Most often, these practices include land use regulation (usually through a land use plan; also referred to as zoning in some contexts), the urban design of new neighbourhoods, designating space for key infrastructure, permitting new development, or the design of public space. In democratic countries, it is often the case that while policy is a realm which often accommodates conflict, planning, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with achieving consensus between key stakeholders in a given area (Innes, 2004; Kühn, 2021). This is achieved primarily through *formal* mechanisms enshrined in construction and planning laws; the processes by which planning institutions prepare new land use plans or issue permits to develop land usually include mechanisms allowing key institutions and stakeholders (e.g. historic preservation, or land owners) to influence the process by submitting comments, which must be reviewed (Özdemir & Tasan-Kok, 2019). Recently, however, there has been a tendency within many planning institutions of cities around the world to extend the formal mechanisms of public involvement by various techniques of *participation* (Legacy, Is there a crisis of participatory planning?, 2017). These aim to broaden the scope of public input in the achievement of a consensual agreement involving a more diverse field of societal actors (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012) – often including those who have no formal claim to the area in question but use it in their day-to-day lives (Logan & Molotch, 2007).

This approach, however, is not devoid of criticism. Recent scholarship on planning theory has problematized not only the efficacy of participation in accommodating less powerful voices into the planning process, but also the very premise that consensual agreements can be attained between a wide range of societal actors within city environments. This critique most often draws from the political philosophy of Chantal Mouffe, specifically her theory of *post-politics* (2005), and Jacques Rancière, who devised a related theoretical framework of *post-democracy* (1999). While not primarily concerned with planning or land use, the core thesis of

these theoretical frameworks revolves around the assertion that what is fundamentally *political* always involves *conflict* as its constitutive force and this conflictual nature of the political cannot be eradicated or replaced by attempts to solve disagreement through consensus. Land use decisions, the critique following Mouffe and Rancière argues, are always political in that they produce spatial outcomes in which power relations are embedded and are therefore by no means neutral, always benefiting some and disadvantaging others (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012). The consensus-oriented practice of public participation then often masks the existing power relations at play in any land use decision (Legacy, Is there a crisis of participatory planning?, 2017) and, by eliminating conflict as a valid force, perpetuates, reinforces and legitimizes the existing order by which the city is governed and controlled (Ormerod & MacLeod, 2019; Purcell, 2009), while also legitimizing the goals of decisions already made or projects already decided upon (Kühn, 2021; Pløger, 2021).

An important aspect to the post-political critique is not only emphasizing the shortcomings of participatory planning in exacerbating the *democratic deficits* – the rift between the promise of allowing citizens to influence the planning process and the exclusionary arrangements that it nevertheless falls into (Metzger, Allmendinger, & Oosterlynck, Planning against the Political: Democratic Deficits in European Territorial Governance, 2015) – but also how this situation ignites the political – activities by which residents and activists oppose the dominant order via protests, through the media or by politicizing the participatory process on their own terms (Legacy, Is there a crisis of participatory planning?, 2017; McAuliffe & Rogers, Tracing resident antagonisms in urban development: agonistic pluralism and participatory planning., 2018). Some of the newer literature departs from a mere criticism of the post-political nature of current planning practices, arguing for a deeper understanding of the interstitial *space* that exists between conflict and consensus (Steele & Keys, 2015). By viewing consensus and conflict not as a binary, but studying the various and shifting positions, roles and motivations consensual and conflictual actors take within the planning process, we can form a more balanced picture of how decisions come to form in the city which is often post-political and adheres to a neoliberal logic of governance, but is nonetheless still quite democratic; where even the less powerful, when they coalesce, possess the agency to influence their environment (Legacy, Metzger, Steele, & Gualini, 2019). This effort, however, is not removed from the post-political framework. In the attempt to develop an understanding of how some actors oppose the current hegemony governing the city, Mouffe’s conception of *agonism* and Rancière’s ideas on political *subjectification* are drawn upon to explain the conflictual nature of their conduct,

illogical from the standpoint of a planning apparatus attempting to attain consensual agreements (McAuliffe & Rogers, 2018; Van Wymeersch, Oosterlynck, & Vanoutrive, 2019).

In order to engage with the propositions of the post-political critique, it is first necessary to gain an understanding of the current consensus-oriented planning practices that it scrutinizes. Any planning practice consists of a *techne* – the procedures, techniques and vocabulary by which it operates within a legal system of property rights and legislation that delimits the scope of its power – and an *ethos* – the truths, norms and morals by which it is guided (Pløger, 2021). The planning systems of democratic cities rarely exist in a vacuum: apart from the influence of political pressure from the elected public administration (Kühn, 2021), many systems have *formal* participatory mechanisms, usually mandated by law, to deal with disagreements over decisions or proposals made by planning institutions. Besides participation through *democratic representation*, such as local elections or referendums, and writing letters to councillors, participatory processes that *require an invitation* are also used to manage disagreements between the three aggregate actors present in the planning process: the public administration, the private sector, and citizens and resident action groups (RAGs). These include participation in council meetings, public hearings, and even the judicial system; disputants can always resolve their disagreements by going to court (Özdemir & Tasan-Kok, 2019).

2. The collaborative-deliberative model of urban planning

The currently dominant planning paradigm, variously referred to as *communicative* planning (Kühn, 2021; Healey, 1992), *collaborative-deliberative* planning (Van Wymeersch, Oosterlynck, & Vanoutrive, 2019), or planning by *consensus-building* (Innes, 2004; Purcell, 2009), itself represents a progressive shift in planning practice away from the *comprehensive-rationalistic* planning model, which rarely involves participation, except through the aforementioned formal mechanisms. This older model had come to dominate in the context of post-war governance and is characterized by a scientific and technocratic approach to planning, emphasizing that optimal planning outcomes require extensive expert knowledge. By focusing on the use of advanced techniques to gather comprehensive information on physical and social space, the ability to coordinate between different administrative bodies, and the definition of long-term development and land use goals in the preparation of land use (zoning) plans, this model derives its *legitimacy* almost exclusively from its own techne and ethos, and rarely sees the need to involve the public in the process, except through *formal* mechanisms, as this could provoke conflict and thus threaten to disrupt the planning process; a danger best avoided (Kühn, 2021).

The shift towards collaborative-deliberative planning corresponds with the ‘zeitgeist’ of late modernity, where a variety of phenomena – such as the fall of Soviet communism, the spread of globalism and the changing constitution of societies in the developed world – have given rise to what Beck, Giddens and Lash call *reflexive modernization* (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994). The ambivalent and uncertain nature of late modernity has led to a decline of trust in expert systems, resulting in the loss of their position of societal guidance (Giddens A. , 1990). Similarly, Habermas’s work on *communicative action* highlighted the colonization of the *communicative* rationality of the lifeworld – values and assumptions shared by a society, which, through *communicative* rationality, give meaning to everyday experiences – by the *instrumental* rationality of the system world, emphasizing goal-attainment and efficiency (Habermas, What Is Iniversal Pragmatics? Communication and the Evolution of Society, 1981). The conclusions that Beck, Giddens and Habermas have drawn from their respective theories bear a strong resemblance to one another – they all emphasise the need to transform expert systems into democratic public spheres and to resolve disagreements, which are indeed inevitable, through dialogue rather than adversity, and helped lead to the consensual turn in politics, embodied by the New Left and the decline of class-based politics (Mouffe, On the political, 2005).

The collaborative-deliberative model owes its theoretical framework in particular to Habermas' theory, as it seeks to democratize planning by incorporating a key innovation – techniques of *informal* participation – into its processes (Kühn, 2021; Özdemir & Tasan-Kok, 2019). In contrast to the instrumental rationality of the comprehensive-rationalistic model, it emphasizes the need for decisions to be based on democratic consensus, rather than expert knowledge, in order to achieve political legitimacy. This model also sees formal participation mechanisms as insufficient to achieve this goal, as these as they favour powerful groups – given that they have more resources to use and exploit these mechanisms – while marginalising weaker actors (McAuliffe & Rogers, Tracing resident antagonisms in urban development: agonistic pluralism and participatory planning., 2018; Özdemir & Tasan-Kok, 2019). Drawing from Habermas's concept of an *ideal speech situation*, the role of planning has shifted from one which is primarily expert-based and technocratic, to a role which proactively attempts to accommodate a wider range of actors into the planning process than the comprehensive-rationalistic model. The ideal speech situation, being an *ideal*, is not one which can be easily attained, but it represents a core value that anchors all methods of consensus-oriented participation. The ideal speech situation requires an environment in which discussion is based on reasoned argument; in which all those affected by a decision can be present; in which measures are taken to minimise coercion and to balance power inequalities between participants; in which participants must be willing to empathise with each other's values, positions and arguments; and in which all those present seek the common good rather than their own self-interest (Habermas, 1990; Purcell, 2009; Van Wymeersch, Oosterlynck, & Vanoutrive, 2019).

By introducing informal participation to the planning process, planning institutions take on the role of the proactive facilitation of deliberation. Especially in urban contexts, the agendas of different actors can complicate spatial interventions proposed or assessed by the process of governance. Planners can counter this by taking into account the *pluralistic interests* present in every land use decision. An assessment and accommodation of the interests of diverse actors in a particular space into all activities conducted by a planning institution – whether it be land use, urban design, or street design – is a necessary precondition to obtaining consensus (Özdemir & Tasan-Kok, 2019). In addition to assessing existing interests and power relations present in the space in question, the collaborative-deliberative model requires planners to take on a role of “mediated negotiation”, facilitating deliberation between landowners, residents, the city government, and finally, the *techne* and *ethos* that the planning institution itself brings to the table. Instead of *avoiding* conflict, the collaborative-deliberative model *reacts* to conflict and

attempts to *anticipate* the threat of it arising, often responding to citizen protest by orchestrating discussions, public meetings, and participatory processes, in which planners open their work to public criticism (Kühn, 2021).

Public participation can be carried out in a variety of ways, requiring planners to take on different roles in the process. As *brainstormers*, planners can attempt to build consensus by providing tools for the public to express their needs, wishes and concerns by engaging in and providing space for discussion. Opinions and ideas can be gathered through questionnaires and surveys, which planners use to gather public opinion on a project or to gain consent for its implementation. By organizing informal debates and discussions at venues, a topic can be discussed between the planners involved, city representatives, key stakeholders, independent experts, and the public. In addition to the presentation of design proposals through exhibitions or presentations by the planners themselves, the common practice of holding workshops to gather ideas and insights from local people affected by a proposed scheme is used as a key input into the subsequent design process. By visiting citizens in the area affected by a proposal via roadshows or public walks, planners act as *professional companions*. In this role, their objective is to understand the views of local citizens and to inform, demystify and explain what the proposal will bring to the local neighbourhood to passers-by, many of whom would not bother to attend a designated event elsewhere. A crucial aspect of this role involves informal contacts between planners and citizens, where planners meet the serious opposition by visiting neighbourhoods or even homes (houseboats in the case described in the paper) of individual residents to understand how proposals affect unique situations. Finally, as *co-creators*, planners develop multiple designs based on input from different stakeholders, or design continuously in response to multiple workshops where feedback can be provided in real time (Özdemir & Tasan-Kok, 2019).

3. The post-political critique of current planning practices

While the collaborative-deliberative model's attempts to democratize planning outlined above are well-intentioned and often succeed in producing land use outcomes that are accepted by a wider range of actors than the comprehensive-rationalistic model, the post-political critique points to the fact that its focus on achieving consensus does not take sufficient account of the existing power relations at play in any land use decision (Legacy, 2017). Focusing specifically on the consensualist approach that many cities and planning institutions have adopted in recent decades and drawing largely on Chantal Mouffe's theory of post-politics and Jacques Rancière's theory of post-democracy, the post-political discussion problematizes the notion that genuine consensus is being reached within planning processes, arguing that participation practices are often designed to pre-emptively identify potential moments of contention, disagreement and conflict, and to mitigate their potential to disrupt the existing order in the city (McAuliffe & Rogers, Tracing resident antagonisms in urban development: agonistic pluralism and participatory planning., 2018; Ormerod & MacLeod, 2019; Pløger, 2021; Purcell, 2009).

The argumentation of Mouffe (2005) and Rancière (1999) forms the conceptual core of this critique. In their theories of *post-politics* and *post-democracy*, respectively, both describe the political as a process that is essentially conflictual in nature and, when it arises, cannot in principle be resolved through consensus-building. The conflictual nature of *the political* forms an opposition to what Mouffe terms *politics* and Rancière calls *the police*. The nuances this distinction and the respective approaches that the two authors bring is worth further investigation, as both provide the post-political critique with key concepts by which to understand how existing power relations constitute today's cities.

The liberal understanding of pluralism, which acknowledges a plurality of perspectives and values, but emphasizes the possibility for their reconciliation into a "harmonious and non-conflictual ensemble" (Mouffe, 2005, p. 10), is according to both thinkers not only a utopia, but a notion that masks the *hegemonic* nature of any decision or agreement taken (Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 2000; Rancière, 1999). A consensus always implies a common ground of shared values and visions which must form the basis of any negotiation, is it to be successful. This isn't to say that consensus is unattainable – far from it – only that it is contingent on the existence of a *natural order* – the common ground from which it can be built. However, it is, along with the 'common sense' accompanying it, by no means *natural*, but the result of *sedimented* practices, which have come to be *perceived* as natural. These practices are solidified into what Mouffe identifies as *hegemonic practices* - "the articulation and establishment of

social institutions constituting a certain order” (Mouffe, 2005, p. 21). Related to *hegemonic practices* is Rancière’s conception of *the police*, defined as a “set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectives is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution” (Rancière, 1999, p. 28). Hegemonic practices and the police are terms which are not to be understood as pejorative or as functions necessarily instituted by a rigid state apparatus – they form the *implicit law* that governs every society, defining the roles that different actors take on, the share of power they are allotted, and the logic by which they think – a ‘law’ that is upheld just as much by the “assumed spontaneity of social relations” (p. 29) as by what is explicitly mandated by the state or the legal system. Just as importantly, the police is an “*order of bodies* that defines the *ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying*” (p. 29) and determines what “activity is visible and another is not”, which “speech is understood as *discourse* and another as *noise*” (Rancière, 1999, p. 29).

While quite abstract, this framework provides a key to understanding that building consensus is never a neutral process which accommodates all voices equally. Although what Rancière calls *consensus democracies* constitute one of the least violent and oppressive forms of hegemonic order or police regime, allowing *parties* – individuals or social groups – to negotiate for their fair share, there are *objective givens* in any consensus-building, the most important of which is which parties are offered a seat at the table in the first place (Purcell, 2009; Rancière, 1999). In other words, if the ideal is to opt for consensus, rather than to engage in conflict, “parties must first *exist as parties*”. An attainment of consensus presupposes that there is no gap between a “party to a dispute and a part of society” (Rancière, 1999, p. 102). The post-political critique emphasizes that this gap is not to be neglected, arguing that the hegemonic or police order designates who has a part in any discussion and the common ground on which it is to be built (Ormerod & MacLeod, 2019; Pløger, 2021). What then constitutes the existing hegemonic/police order in contemporary cities is a specific constellation of how *power relations* shape accepted and valid *discourses* and access to *knowledge*, all of which combine to form the contingent status quo that the hegemonic/police order strives to maintain (Legacy, 2017; Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 2000; Pløger, 2021).

The work of Harvey Molotch (1976) provides key concepts that can be used to uncover the order by which cities in today’s capitalistic democracies are governed. Economic growth and neoliberal ideology have played an important role in city governance for the past decades. Land, the basic *stuff of place*, is a crucial market commodity within any city and since it is a definitive

source of wealth and power, it constitutes one of the defining factors of the interests at play in land use decisions. A core interest that diverse members of what Molotch calls the *land-based elite* share, is to strive to profit through the *increasing intensification* of the land use in a given area (Molotch, 1976). The value of place as a commodity however, can be derived from two opposing logics: in addition to *exchange value* – the market value of a place and the value it can further generate in terms of economic transaction; the elevation of which is the primary concern of the land-based elite, as it is a means to generate profit – a place’s value can be thought of in terms of *use value* – the value ascribed to a place according to how it is and can be used by persons and communities living in the city. This distinct nature of use and exchange values gives rise to two fundamentally different positions of those who have a stake in the city: that of those, who on the one side, primarily use it “as a place to live and work” (Logan & Molotch, 2007, p. 50), who are primarily concerned with the upholding, creation and defence of use values of their neighbourhood, and for whom this effort presents the “central urban question” (p. 99), and that of the land-based elite on the other (Logan & Molotch, 2007). It is always in the interest of the second group for the city to *grow* – both in terms of population and geography on the one hand, and investment opportunity on the other – as an increase of the potential of land to generate profit increases the wealth of those who possess it (Molotch, 1976). For the land-based elite, the increase of the exchange value of their land is not a zero-sum game; its value extends to the parcel’s surroundings, and by extension to the entire city, this state of affairs giving rise to a *growth coalition*, striving to ensure that government decisions – mainly regarding land use, attracting outside investment, and the allocation of public money – serve not only to determine positive land use outcomes toward the various land use interest groups *within* the city, but also to alleviate the preconditions of growth of a given area relative to *other cities* which they are in competition with. To a certain extent then, the city government becomes an *arena* where organized efforts to affect the outcomes of how the city’s growth distributes to key stakeholders in the city plays out (Molotch, 1976). As the people who stand to benefit from growth are disproportionately more active in public affairs, since they have the most to gain or lose from the outcomes of land use decisions, the issue of growth is on that “consistently generates consensus” (Logan & Molotch, 2007, p. 50) among them and they strive to extend this ideology to the political system and the general public (Logan & Molotch, 2007).

This argumentation corresponds to a similar narrative regarding the project of neoliberalization as a hegemonic discourse in urban government. This paradigm rests on two principles when assessing the relationship of the state or city to market capitalism: The *laissez-*

faire aspect on the one hand, which urges governments to cede state power to private actors on the grounds that markets allocate resources more efficiently while stimulating innovation and promoting economic growth; and the *aidez-faire* aspect on the other, which implores the state not only to withdraw, but also actively support capital – investing in infrastructure, fiscally controlling inflation, and most importantly for our purposes, establishing exchange value as the dominant gauge by which urban land is valued (Purcell, 2009). In practice, this ideology gives rise to a situation in which the growth coalition leads the government to sustain a consistently *pro-investment climate*; in addition to keeping business and property taxes low (if this is within the jurisdiction of a city government), pressure is applied for the government to support *value-free development*, prescribing that the excess costs brought to the city by new development are borne by the public purse, rather than by the investors and land-owners responsible for them, while the surrounding neighbourhood receives very little benefit. These excess costs involve not only the building of roads, water and sewer lines, and extending public transportation to the site, but also expanding the city’s utility capacity meet increased demand for water, sewage, electricity and transport, to name just a few. Seemingly devoid of any logic, the ideology of value-free development is one of the key elements in securing a ‘good business climate’, through which the city can attract investors who might easily turn away if there were too much regulation or, even more so, if violent class or ethnic conflict broke out. *Dissensus* of any kind severely hampers the ability of the growth coalition to sustain growth – a key motivation for keeping the threat of it arising in check (Logan & Molotch, 2007). Through the establishing of the ideology of neoliberalization as a *positive ethic* that guarantees happiness through wealth creation, thereby positioning growth as a matter of “life and death” (Purcell, 2009, p. 145), that must override all other factors in policy making in order for the city to be successful, the growth coalition strives to maintain this ideology as the hegemonic discourse by which contemporary cities are governed and constitute a crucial element of the cities’ police order (Purcell, 2009).

Whether referring to this state of affairs as the “consensual politics of neoliberal governance” (Swyngedouw, 2009, p. 608), the “neoliberalizing conditions of city governments” (McAuliffe & Rogers, 2018, p. 221), the “neoliberal growth agenda” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012, p. 91), the “hegemonic discourse of neoliberal economic theory” (Ormerod & MacLeod, 2019, p. 333) or a “pro-growth logic” (Legacy, 2017, p. 428), the post-political critique emphasizes that this process isn’t abstract, but translates to how cities are planned in a very real manner. In carrying out the process of zoning – regulating the permitted land use of specific areas or the whole city – planners inevitably intertwine with the growth coalition's ongoing effort to increase

exchange values (the rent generation process), incentivising not only the landed elite, but landowners in general, to attempt to influence the planning process if they are to maximise profit from their land holdings. In zoning, cities *plan for growth*, and while this in itself is fairly uncontroversial, in an environment dominated by a neoliberal growth agenda, the question inevitably arises as to whether developers follow zoning or, conversely, in zoning and rezoning, planners follow developers' intentions. As new growth needs emerge and are anticipated by planners, the needs of developers are also anticipated or met through the common practice of amending or replacing general land use plans or pushing through changes to zoning ordinances (Logan & Molotch, 2007).

If this description is indeed true of the reality of many contemporary cities, what is left – the post-political critic inquires – for citizens to decide through the participatory practices of the collaborative-deliberative model so widely adopted by planning institutions around the world? Not only do scholars who have embraced the post-political as a relevant framework for their thinking claim that the scope of influence promised by collaborative-deliberative participation practices is far removed from their ability to actually *deliver* (McAuliffe & Rogers, Tracing resident antagonisms in urban development: agonistic pluralism and participatory planning., 2018; Metzger, Allmendinger, & Oosterlynck, Planning against the Political: Democratic Deficits in European Territorial Governance, 2015; Pløger, 2021), they often accuse the collaborative-deliberative model of being an effective *tool for legitimizing* the hegemonic/police orders of contemporary cities in face of possible dissent (Legacy, 2017; Purcell, 2009).

Notwithstanding the incorporation of participatory techniques into its system, planning still adheres to its *techne*, which is itself constituted by the logic of a governing dispositif – the set of institutions, procedures and tactics that enable the exercise of power (Foucault, 2007; Pløger, 2021). Its own dispositif, which includes a system of “property rights, morals, ideas of justice, power alliances” (Pløger, 2021, p. 429) existing in the context – *the shared symbolic space* – of the area in which it operates, means that it is still an expert system that determines how planning is to be carried out, so that – almost by necessity – participation functions primarily as a mere extension of the existing planning system (Legacy, 2017; Pløger, 2021). In this sense, the planning institution can and in principle, must determine the scope of public input that it takes into account – the first steps of any participatory initiative often involving decisions on “what alternatives will be touched in the [participatory] planning process” (Pløger, 2021, p.

430), in which phase of planning will participation take place, and the form and nature of the input collected. By adjusting the participation process, the governing planning system can decide who participates, to what extent and the kind of information it wants from the process, not to mention the way that information is applied into decisions (Pløger, 2021). Not only do planning institutions define these parameters, but crucially, powerful *stakeholders* – people who are seen to be deeply affected by a decision, i.e. who have “something tangible at ‘stake’” (Purcell, 2009, p. 157) – are often invited to participate in the planning process beforehand, when its parameters are being decided on. *Pre-meetings*, that are meant to make the intentions and goals of the city’s agenda in a given area clear to *organized* local stakeholders, often take place, and sometimes result in the formation of *strategic alliances* between planners and city representatives on the one side, and local investors, businesses, and housing co-operatives on the other, determining *whether* and *what* projects should even start to be developed, how and by whom (Pløger, 2021). In this sense, the outcome of any participatory process is predicated on them being in line with the outcomes that powerful actors have come to expect (McAuliffe & Rogers, Tracing resident antagonisms in urban development: agonistic pluralism and participatory planning., 2018). The question arises, whether the possible outcomes of planning processes are truly open to the results of a public participation processes that follows the *pre-decisions* that have been made a priori – whether in some or many cases, the inclusion of participation into the planning process isn’t a mere formality (Kühn, 2021). This question is not just theoretical; as participation often takes a mere *educational* form – where planners *explain* the intentions of a planned proposal, rather than collecting input from citizens – participatory processes can come to be perceived by the public as ineffectual at invoking real changes to projects, thus driving citizens’ willingness to participate down (Ormerod & MacLeod, 2019; Özdemir & Tasan-Kok, 2019).

As mentioned, the post-political critique also inquires the role participation plays in the legitimization of hegemonic/police order by which the city is governed. Neoliberalization leads to the exponentializing of *democratic deficits* already beleaguering liberal democracy: the rise of material and social inequity; the normative disciplinary force of competitiveness and capital mobility imposed by the neoliberal ideology onto social life and government, giving corporations power over public policy and by extension over democratic citizens; the outsourcing of governance from the state to the private sector, often leading to the decline of public services, and the positioning of competitiveness and economic growth as a guarantee of happiness through wealth creation (Purcell, 2009). The capitalist logic dictating the prevalence

of exchange values over use values in the city, along with the democratic deficits produced by neoliberalization, can sometimes generate political or societal instability and require (like any other police order) means to reinforce their *democratic legitimacy* (Purcell, 2009; Rancière, 1999). Especially when it comes down to land decisions, any member of the growth coalition: land developers, government officials, planners, can achieve legitimacy by *ceding* a certain amount of material gain to ensure that decisions or projects go ahead unchallenged, thereby reinforcing the political-economic status quo. Variations of the collaborative-deliberative model's techniques of participation can provide a particularly attractive tool for doing so, as its processes can be carefully *stage-managed* to emphasize the positive aspects of a project or plan, in order to garner public support for it and legitimize its goals (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Legacy, 2017; Purcell, 2009; Silver, Scott, & Kazepov, 2010). In this sense, the public – and mainly minority actors, who are not deemed key stakeholders of a particular decision or intervention – are “silenced through their inclusion” (McAuliffe & Rogers, 2018, p. 223) as any conflictual opposition from their part can be easily dismissed on the grounds that they were provided with a legitimate platform to express their ideas, interests and wishes.

Not only can the collaborative-deliberative model of participatory planning be a mere formality, serving to mask exclusionary arrangements made prior, and be an effective tool to legitimize the hegemonic/police order, and serve to garner public support and legitimize projects, it can also serve to tame and manage that which Mouffe and Rancière contend to be the essence of *the political* – conflict and disagreement. According to Mouffe, the Habermasian model of deliberation, and consensus-seeking as a hegemonic discourse, eliminates the possibility of conflict as a legitimate means of expression. This is seemingly at odds with the premise stated previously, that the collaborative-deliberative model – unlike the comprehensive-rationalistic model, which *avoids* conflict altogether – *reacts* to conflict and *anticipates* it. But in doing so, collaborative-deliberative planning attempts to *tame* conflict, instead of actually *taking into account* the counter-hegemonic narratives it often attempts to introduce (Kühn, 2021). By viewing conflict and disagreement as a *problem which can be resolved* – and *is to be resolved* – through deliberation alone or through any other attempt at *pacifying* it by consensual means, the collaborative-deliberative model not only misunderstands the nature of *the political*, but also can be easily misused by the police order as a basis for the exclusion of real disagreement to be voiced within provided participatory platforms (Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 2000; Rancière, 1999). If a sense of predictability is one of the core aspects enabling the planning

dispositif to optimally function according to its *techne*, excluding serious disagreement from the planning process is crucial.

Following this line of argumentation, there is a strong case to be made, that in *providing* formal and informal, but prescribed, forms of participation – which are far-flung from the Habermasian ideal of an *ideal speech situation* – as the only legitimate means of public input in the decision making within a planning process, while delegitimizing strong disagreement or opposition on the grounds that a consensual agreement must be reached, the planning system *generates* and *orchestrates* consensus, rather than actually *achieving* it.

4. Antagonistic actors challenging the hegemonic order of the city

The argumentation outlined above isn't to be understood as saying that city governments are unresponsive to the desires of citizens to uphold use values – in fact, quite the opposite is the case. The same applies to the notion that citizens are powerless to affect the outcomes of planning processes – they most certainly aren't. Again, Mouffe and Rancière can provide some key concepts by which to understand how citizens can – and often do – challenge the dominant hegemonies ordering their cities, and again it is worth outlining the nuances of their approaches in order to correctly apply them in analysis.

Mouffe centres her argument on the basis that the consensus paradigms of Beck, Giddens and Habermas underestimate the realities exhibited by *the political*: democratic political subjects are fundamentally adversarial and strictly reducing them to a rational entity seeking consensus would be a fallacy, as – in line with Carl Schmitt (2007) – they are always constituted on the opposition between a *we* and a *they*. Therefore, there is an identarian aspect to every political struggle: the opposing camps of any dispute carry the potential for people to identify with one of the sides, while disidentifying with the other. A dispute often emerges as a result of fundamentally different visions, values and understandings of the world being at play and these aren't reconcilable by virtue of deliberation or making compromises – a rift there can be no rational solution to. Political opponents aren't mere competitors, whose interests can be negotiated, but irreconcilable belligerents. The antagonistic element of any political dispute cannot be simply eliminated, as it often involves *countering* the very *sedimented* practices constituting the hegemonic order. The antagonistic struggle is one of “opposing hegemonic projects that cannot be reconciled rationally” (Mouffe, 2005, p. 21), but which, instead of being *eliminated*, can be *replaced* by its less destructive alternative: *agonism*; achieved by offering opposing sides legitimate channels by which they can dissent and challenge the existing hegemonic order. The various sides within the agonistic struggle recognize that it involves opposing hegemonic projects that cannot be reconciled rationally and acknowledge the antagonistic dimension present but agree for the dispute to be carried out on a common ground – played out in regulated democratic procedures accepted by the adversaries. Conflict plays an integrative role in modern democracy and while consensus is necessary, it *must* accommodate channels for dissent (Mouffe, 2005).

Picking up where we left Rancière – at the idea that the police order separates *speech* from *noise* and at the assertion that for consensus to be achieved between respective parties it is first necessary to ask whether their *existence as parties* is truly acknowledged – it suffices to broaden

what has been already introduced by his concept of *subjectification*. *Political activity* is antagonistic to policing; it attempts to shift a body from the place assigned to it by the police order, making “visible what had no business being seen ... understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise” (Rancière, 1999, p. 29). The political isn’t always present, it emerges to expose a *wrong* – a gap between the equality of a body not being represented accordingly in the social order – via *subjectification*, a subject speaks out and *disidentifies* itself with the way it is defined within the ‘*natural*’ order of the police. This exposure of a wrong cannot be settled by a compromise between the parties, as the very existence of the political subject is a manifestation of the wrong of it not having a place within the given order, a position from which it can even begin to negotiate. It is through the mechanisms of subjectification, however, that a party gains substance as a force to be reckoned with; it is only through a ‘shift in the playing field’ that an ‘alterable relationship’ between the parties can form, through which a settlement can be processed (p. 39).

Following the thought of Antonio Gramsci, “any hegemonic project is always open to challenge from counter-hegemonic projects” (Ormerod & MacLeod, 2019, p. 334). It would be a mistake to argue anything other than that the growth coalition, or any other form of hegemonic order described above, is often the most powerful of many other forces vying for influence in the contemporary city. It is important to analyse the forces that challenge and attempt to destabilize the hegemonic order of the city, what are the strategies by which they do so and what land use outcomes are they often able to achieve. *Resident action groups* (RAGs) are one of these key forces, usually bottom-up; initiated by active citizens. This is an umbrella term for a wide variety of groups, ranging from NIMBY (‘Not in my backyard’) initiatives – often single-issue-oriented and vigorous in their opposition to new development or infrastructure in their area – to non-profit organizations, think-tanks or activist collectives, which may even have paid staff to bring erudition and professionalism to their efforts (McAuliffe & Rogers, *Tracing resident antagonisms in urban development: agonistic pluralism and participatory planning.*, 2018). Citizens can find agency in non-formal settings – outside the platforms prescribed by planning institutions that are designed to keep conflict at bay – and via activities that are *antagonistic* to the hegemonic order of the city, can oppose not only concrete proposals – private development, new zoning plans or infrastructure projects – but also the dominant narratives and hegemonic discourses that form the *socio-ecological* visions of what constitutes the ‘good’ city (Legacy, 2017; McAuliffe & Rogers, 2019; Van Wymeersch, Oosterlynck, & Vanoutrive, 2019).

These citizenries, which can act on the level of a specific locality or, when more established, often ally to gain influence and effect action on a metropolitan level, opt to effect change through both *formal and informal political acts*, using a diverse set of strategies by which they organize opposition, shift dominant narratives and influence decision makers (McAuliffe & Rogers, 2018). Formal political mechanisms can include campaigning in local elections, attending public meetings on new land use proposals, submitting formal comments or objections to proposals within specified timeframes, or launching petitions. While these strategies can be effective, they are often met by counter-efforts from the growth coalition and its allies, which often prevail because it has more resources to engage in them (Özdemir & Tasan-Kok, 2019). While the demarcation between informal and formal mechanisms can be somewhat ambivalent, citizen groups have powerful tools to *politicize* their opposition to proposals or their conflicting visions of how their city should be ordered. As noted above, local democratically elected representatives cannot remain unresponsive to issues that are successfully politicized, as they often owe their seats to such movements, and it is in the interests of even those who were elected for other reasons to remain receptive to public opinion. Indeed, these elected representatives can sometimes prove to be a powerful obstacle to the imposition of neoliberal agendas and the ability of growth coalitions to influence land use outcomes in their favour (Ormerod & MacLeod, 2019). The politicization of an issue can be achieved by organizing public protests – which often gain more attention, if not support, by being invasive and conflictual – or by setting up community-organized events that shadow the formal participatory process expected from the city government and create deliberative spaces on citizens' own terms (Legacy, 2017). By framing the alternatives in a decision-making process as binary: as a dichotomy of yes or no, opposition to a proposal can foreclose the potential to negotiate the nuances of a project and bring it to a standstill (Metzger, Soneryd, & Tamm Hallström, 2017). Another key strategy of political action is to engage with the media; through medialization, RAGs can establish a discursive counter-hegemony by setting agendas, creating political pressure and scandalizing the city's post-political attempts to garner support through participation (Kühn, 2021; McAuliffe & Rogers, 2018).

Due to their diversity, it is also important to analyse not only the strategies taken by RAGs and other antagonistic actors to challenge the hegemonic order of the city, but also the degree of their antagonism and how their activities fit into the process of consensus-building. *Rigid antagonism* is a position most incompatible with consensus-building efforts; often exemplified by local NIMBY groups, tied to a single issue, usually based on “resistance to most, if not all,

of the proposed urban development for their areas” (McAuliffe & Rogers, 2018, p. 224). Rigidly antagonistic groups often deny the plurality of interests and views to a given situation and push forward their position in a manner which is non-negotiable, as it is based on moral values and is often expressed through zero-sum game antagonistic rhetoric, where battles against urban development are either won or lost. However, this mentality excludes them from a position of power within the *politics* (in Mouffean terms) of urban development (McAuliffe & Rogers, 2018).

Rigidly antagonistic groups can often become more *agonistic* over time, especially if they have been successful in their previous attempts to stop development and are seen as *a force to be reckoned with*, having shown that the *noise* they make is capable of effecting change. By opposing formal politics *strategically*, RAGs and urban alliances can maintain their antagonistic edge and rhetoric, while building productive relationships with public officials, planners, politicians, and journalists. (McAuliffe & Rogers, 2018) By recognizing the plurality of interests present in land use decisions, strategically antagonistic groups can gain a position of moderate power within the politics: because they are often organized, viewed as influential, and maintain a certain level of erudition, strategically antagonistic actors can often be invited as partners into the internal discussions on the governmental level; into the pre-meetings aimed at building strategic alliances as local or metropolitan-level stakeholders. Due to their experience and high level of understanding of the politics of urban development, strategically antagonistic groups can be able to maintain a modal continuum, consciously shifting between more rigidly antagonistic positions and more agonistic positions depending on what they deem most strategic in following a certain goal. In this hybrid regime of being at once partners, while organizing opposition to urban development, strategically antagonistic groups pose as a strong contender of planning institutions and a problem for their consensus-building approach (McAuliffe & Rogers, 2018). Although the fact that a post-political state of affairs can meet such worthy conflictual opponents, from a more Rancierian viewpoint, this Mouffean state of strategic antagonism/agonism is still very problematic, as shares a crucial flaw of the Habermasian collaborative-deliberative approach: that the political subject is pre-defined and must be viewed as such in order to take a seat at the negotiation table (Van Wymeersch, Oosterlynck, & Vanoutrive, 2019). This is where the concept of *soft* antagonism comes in – a position which the collaborative-deliberative model is best designed to deal with and which it also most effectively limits. It is the position of those – individuals, but also rigidly or strategically antagonistic groups – that engage with the provided formal and informal

engagement processes in order to effect change, only to come to the frustrating realization that not only will these efforts usually be ineffective, but that the crucial matters have already been decided upon.

II. Empirical section

5. Aim of inquiry

In addition to providing a theoretical outline of the argumentation of post-political critique, the aim of this thesis is to investigate whether this theoretical framework can be applied to the situation of urban planning in Prague. More specifically, the empirical section will examine the relationship between, on the one hand, the domain of *politics* or the *police*, which carries out the planning process and tries to do so mostly on the basis of the local planning techne, within the rules defined by law, and in this process seeks to reach a compromise between the existing planning ethos, the political will at various levels of public administration, while gaining the consent of key stakeholders, local actors and the general public; and, on the other hand, the domain of the *political*, which attempts to criticize and problematize the dominant hegemony of the police order, usually by antagonistic means, with varying degrees of intensity.

5.1 Context of urban planning in Prague

The key urban planning institutions in Prague are the Department of Land Use (Odbor územního rozvoje) of City Hall of Prague (Magistrát hlavního města Prahy – MHMP) and the Prague Institute of Planning and Development (IPR). IPR is controlled by the City Council and is assigned with the preparation and completion of key planning documents. The scope of IPR's work includes strategic planning (the Strategic Plan), city-wide land use planning (the Prague Metropolitan Plan - MPP), designing public space, planning of infrastructure, collecting geographical data, communicating with the public about planning and engaging the public in formal and informal participation mechanisms (IPR Prague, nd). The empirical section is a case study of the intense period around the process of *Public Consultation* (veřejné projednání) of the updated version of the Prague Metropolitan Plan (MPP), a proposal of a new city-wide land use plan, assigned by the City Assembly (the 'assigner' - zadavatel) to be prepared and completed by IPR (the 'processor' – zpracovatel). The Public Consultation can be described as a formal mechanism of participation and is mandated by law. It followed a period of IPR and the Department of Land Use implementing comments and objections submitted in the previous round of *Joint Meeting* (společné jednání) by state ministries, other departments of the MHMP, Municipal District governments (Městské části – MČ) and the public, which – unlike the previous institutions – could only submit comments, which are less legally binding than

objections. By publishing the updated version, the Department of Land Use (the ‘acquirer’ – pořizovatel) in control of the process, started the legally mandated month-long period of Public Consultation, allowing any citizen to submit comments and any landowner to submit objections when concerning their land. In an effort to make this process more accessible, the Department of Land Use prolonged the period of public consultation by one month. A wide range of informal mechanisms of participation were also employed by IPR in order to make the updated proposal of the MPP more accessible to the public. An exhibition explaining its core principles and implications for the future of the city was set up in the city’s Centre for Architecture and Metropolitan Planning (CAMP), while employees of IPR, the Department of Land Use and CAMP were present to provide information and assist citizens with the submission of formal comments or objections. A mobile container was also set up to explain the MPP in various districts, to bring the proposal closer to citizens’ place of residence. A series of five public discussions was held in CAMP, where the city’s executives and planners presented the principles of the MPP to the public, followed by a panel debate which included representatives from organizations (NGOs) opposing the plan. One of the most prominent opposition voices was the NGO Arnika, an ecological activist group, which receives funding from the EU, various ministries and even from the City of Prague (Arnika, n.d.). The NGO employed various antagonistic tactics in attempt to highlight the shortcomings of the MPP, even suggesting that the MPP should be completely redesigned (Arnika, 2023).

6. Research questions and hypotheses

In the empirical section, my goal is to demonstrate that the conversation regarding the post-political critique in theoretical planning literature is applicable to the context of Prague and can be useful for analysing the relationship between planning institutions and antagonistic actors. I would like to address four research questions. In line with the assumptions described above, these questions will relate to IPR as Prague’s primary urban planning institution IPR and the NGO Arnika as the most prominent antagonistic or conflictual actor in the urban planning process. With regard to IPR, my goal is to determine whether its participatory mechanisms, mostly practiced and overseen by the Office of Participation (IPR-KPar), correspond to the collaborative-deliberative model of planning described in the theoretical section. The first research question (**RQ1**) is: *do the practices of IPR’s participatory planning process correspond to the 1) philosophy and 2) practices of the collaborative-deliberative model as defined in chapter 1. of this thesis?* This research question is further elaborated into **RQ1.1**: *do the*

officially declared practices and methods of IPR's participatory process exhibit elements which are highlighted by the post-political critique as problematic? With regard to Arnika, one goal is to identify the antagonistic strategies employed by the NGO to challenge the hegemonic practices of Prague's planning institutions (IPR and MHMP). **RQ2** addresses this particular aspect: *what forms of antagonism and what antagonistic practices does the NGO Arnika exhibit in attempt to uphold use values and challenge hegemonic practices in Prague?* **RQ3** follows this into the realm of the post-political: *Does the NGO Arnika accuse IPR or the City Hall of post-political practices, growth machine tendencies or neoliberalizing tendencies? If so, on what grounds are these accusations made?* The following hypotheses are derived from these research questions: **H1**: IPR applies the collaborative-deliberative model in its participatory planning process. **H2**: The officially declared practices and methods of IPR's participatory planning process exhibit the following goals, which are highlighted by the post-political critique as problematic: A) participation helps legitimize planning decisions; B) participation can speed up the planning process, or make the decision process more efficient; C) participation can be used to manage, pre-empt and prevent conflict; D) participation can assist the growth or neoliberalizing agenda of the city; and E) the role of the planning system as a *techne* is to define the parameters of any participation process and determine which actors are invited to participate. **H3**: The NGO Arnika acts as a strategically antagonistic actor in the planning process, which can be seen from the wide variety and intensity of their antagonistic actions. **H4**: The NGO Arnika accuses IPR and/or MHMP of A) post-political practices, B) practices displaying neoliberalizing tendencies, C) allying with the growth coalition by upholding exchange values over use values or enabling value-free development.

The aim of this thesis is not to prove that Prague's planning system is post-political, or that specifically IPR or the Prague City Council is a post-political actor, but rather to demonstrate the possible discrepancy between the proclaimed practices of Prague's planning institutions and the criticism of their actual implementation (or lack of it) by the NGO Arnika. Furthermore, the aim is to demonstrate that Arnika employees strategically antagonistic tactics in effort to challenge activities of planning institutions involving land use and that the post-political critique is mirrored in its criticism of Prague's planning institutions.

7. Methodology

For the purposes of this thesis, **RQ1** and **RQ1.1** are analysed and **H1** and **H2** verified through the qualitative document analysis of materials provided on the IPR website regarding participation practices, specifically the Participation Manual of IPR (Institut plánování a rozvoje Praha [IPR Praha], 2016) and educatory materials on the design ("Design participativních procesů", n.d.), facilitation ("Facilitace", n.d.) and methods ("Participativní metody", n.d.) of participatory planning and the mapping of stakeholders in a given area ("Mapování stakeholderů", n.d.). Regarding **RQ1**, the traits of the collaborative-deliberative model are operationalized as A) emphasis on the value of engaging the public in the planning process through informal participation mechanisms; B) emphasis on deliberation and consensus-building as key methods of public engagement. With regard to **RQ1.1**, the elements highlighted by the post-political critique as problematic, which are to be identified by the qualitative document analysis, are operationalized according to **H2**: A) implicit or explicit indications of participation helping legitimize planning decisions and interventions; B) implicit or explicit indications of participation being effective at speeding process of urban planning; C) implicit or explicit indications of participation being used to manage, pre-empt and prevent conflict; D) implicit or explicit indications of participation being used in accord with a growth or neoliberalizing agenda of the city; or E) implicit or explicit indications of the role of planning as a *techne* pre-defining the parameters of the participation process.

RQ2 and **RQ3**, along with **H3** and **H4**, are analysed and verified, respectively, via qualitative media content analysis using the Anopress media monitoring service. As the heightened activities of Arnika during the public consultation of the Metropolitan Plan of Prague (MPP) positioned this NGO as by far the most prominent metropolitan-wide watchdog of the city's planning and land use activities, media articles from the 7 month period (from **1 January 2022 to 31 July 2022** comprising the three months leading up to the public consultation, two months during which the public consultation was carried out and one month following the public consultation) surrounding the public consultation of the MPP (from 27 April to 30 June 2022). Articles relevant to the media analysis were obtained by searching (**anna vinklárková OR arnika**) AND (**metropolitní plán OR ipr**) within the given period. Out of the 50 articles, 14 were eliminated from the analysis, due to lack of relevance (the absence of a critical stance taken by Arnika toward planning practices or articles unrelated to land use) or duplicator articles published on different media outlets, leaving 36 to be analysed. The articles were numbered according to their date of publishing and analysed within two categories, corresponding to **RQ2**

and **RQ3**: forms of antagonism on the one hand, and criticism or the pointing out of practices which are post-political, cater to neoliberalizing tendencies or benefit the growth coalition – as defined by **H4** – on the other hand. After a brief evaluation of the content of the media articles, distinct categories corresponding to the form of antagonism applied, the nature of the actions carried out, and the nature of accusations of post-political practices, could be identified and further operationalized based on the theoretical concepts defined in the theoretical section and a categorization of the phenomena identified in the media analysis.¹

¹ In this sense, the categorization/operationalization itself, being in part a result of the phenomena identified in the media content analysis, is presented as a key result of the empirical section of this thesis.

7.1 Operationalization of RQ2 – antagonistic practices

Within the category analysing forms of antagonism, corresponding to **RQ2**, four main forms of antagonism were identified and operationalized (see Table 1):

Table 1: summary of forms of antagonism, antagonistic actions, formal mechanisms and shadow mechanisms

Antagonism		
form of antagonism	M	Media
	F	Formal mechanisms
	I	Informal mechanisms
	S	Shadow mechanisms
actions	<i>A</i>	Alarm public
	<i>E</i>	Encouragement - encourage public
	<i>K</i>	Critique - criticize
	<i>X</i>	Misleading - mislead public
	<i>XX</i>	Misinformation - misinform public
	<i>Sugg</i>	Suggest improvements
	<i>Supp</i>	Support
	<i>Ass</i>	Assist public
	<i>Pr</i>	Praise
formal mech.	FC	submit Comment/objection
	FP	Petition
	Finfo	Attain/gain Information
	FV	Verify
shadow mech.	SD	Debate
	SO	submit formal Objection
	SExp	shadow Expert group
	SPro	Protest
	SPol	Politicize/attention from politicians

- ❖ **M – Media**; engaging with the media as a form of political action (McAuliffe & Rogers, 2018).²

² It is important to note that since the methodology is based on qualitative media content analysis, this form of antagonism is greatly overrepresented in the results – due to the nature of the information source, engaging with the media as a form of political action was present in the vast majority of media articles.

- ❖ **F – Formal methods of participation;** usually mandated or enabled by the law (Özdemir & Tasan-Kok, 2019) and used by antagonistic actors as a tool to influence land-use outcomes or even to mobilize local residents or the general public. These include:
 - **FC** – submitting formal *comments* or *objections* to the planning documentation.
 - **FP** – launching *petitions*.
 - **Info** – demanding *information* to be provided by the city government according to legislation or informing oneself via the information planning institutions are mandated to disclose or publish. This is most often in reference to actors (Municipal District governments, NGOs, or individuals) informing themselves on how new editions of land use plans or zoning studies affect their areas.
 - **FV – verification** whether comments/objections submitted in prior rounds of formal submission process were resolved satisfactorily.
- ❖ **I – Informal participation mechanisms;** usually not required by law but provided or implemented at the initiative of planning institutions (Özdemir & Tasan-Kok, 2019) and used as a tool.
- ❖ **S – Shadow mechanisms;** usually provided or organized by conflictual actors to shadow mechanisms of participation (whether formal or informal) provided and prescribed by planning institutions (Legacy, 2017). These include:
 - **SD** – organization of *debates*.
 - **SO** – signing events aimed at collecting signatures for launching a petition or gaining the mandate for submitting a formal *objection* to planning documentation.
 - **SExp** – setting up shadow *expert groups* in order to provide an independent or competing expert opinion.
 - **SPro** – organizing *protests*.
 - **SPol** – appealing to elected representatives (*politicians*) on the level of the Prague City Council, Prague City Assembly, or equivalent bodies on the level of Municipal District governments.

In addition, several *actions* (*E, Assist, Pr, Supp, Sugg*) carried out by Arnika, and their *intents/impacts* (*K, A, X, XX*) were identified and operationalized as follows (see Table 1). Especially the operationalization of the *intents/impacts* is based on subjective interpretation:

- ❖ *K* – intention of providing the public with a well-founded **critique** of the foundations, principles, and impacts of planning documentation.
- ❖ *A* – bringing specific shortcomings or impacts of planning documentation into context with the intent of **alarming** the public about the potential risks of its implementation.
- ❖ *X* – providing the public with information, critique, or context, which is (intentionally or unintentionally) **misleading** or not well-founded relative to the actual state of affairs or the actual regulations proposed by planning documentation.
- ❖ *XX* – providing the public with information, critique, or context, which is (intentionally or unintentionally) misinformation or unfounded relative to the actual state of affairs or the actual regulations proposed by planning documentation.
- ❖ *E* – **encouraging** the public to engage in the formal, informal, or shadow mechanisms of participation.
- ❖ *Assist* – **assisting** the public with engaging in the formal, informal, or shadow mechanisms of participation.
- ❖ *Pr* – **praising** the planning institutions or planning documentation.
- ❖ *Supp* – **supporting** the actions of government (on various levels), planning institutions, or planning documentation.
- ❖ *Sugg* – **suggesting** improvements to the participatory process or planning documentation.

7.2 Operationalization of RQ3 – accusations of post-political practices

Within the category analysing accusations of post-political practices, corresponding to **RQ3**, two main and three secondary planning institutions or planning documentations subjected to critique from Arnika were identified (see Table 2):

Table 2: the operationalization of accusations of post-political practices

Post-politics		
planning system	MPP	Metropolitan plan
	MHMP	City government
	IPR	IPR Prague
	PLNN	Planning system
	P-X	Municipal district government
post	M	Misleading/alibistic

D	Deregulation
Neo	Neoliberal practices
Ex	Exchange > use values
L	Loss of public control
J	Legality
Nd	Non-disclosure
GC	Growth coalition
NEPar	Not enough participation
Nopar	No participation
T	Techne - governmentality
NT	Non-transparency
PreMeet	Pre-meeting

- ❖ **MPP** – the **Metropolitan Plan of Prague** – the new land use plan of Prague, developed by IPR.
- ❖ **MHMP** – the **Prague City Council**, more specifically, the Department of Land Use.
- ❖ **IPR** – the Prague Institute of Planning and Development
- ❖ **PLNN** – the Czech planning system in general
- ❖ **P-X** – the Municipal District (MČ) government of one of Prague’s 53 Municipal Districts; X refers to the number of the MČ.

The practices, actions, or phenomena which align with the post-political critique, which are defined in **RQ3** and **H4**, and which Arnika accuses the planning institutions or planning documentation of perpetuating or embodying, were identified, and operationalized as follows (see Table 2):

- ❖ M – a ***misleading*** statement or promotional phrase used to conceal or defend a substantial inadequacy of the planning institution/government or planning documentation.
- ❖ NT – a display of ***non-transparent*** conduct by the planning institution/government.
- ❖ Par – a display of the ***participatory process*** being ***deficient*** (NEPar) or ***non-existent*** (NoPar)
- ❖ Nd – an instance when the planning institution/government fails or refuses to ***disclose*** information (***non-disclosure***).

- ❖ PreMeet – an instance when agreements were reached or contracts negotiated behind closed doors, without public involvement.
- ❖ GC – planning practices or principles aligning with the interests of *growth coalition*.
- ❖ Neo – planning practices or principles aligning with or displaying *neoliberalizing* tendencies.
- ❖ Ex – practices or planning principles enabling the upholding of *exchange values* over *use values*.
- ❖ D – planning practices or principles which in their effect *deregulate* land use.
- ❖ L – planning practices or principles which lead to the *loss of public control* over land use.
- ❖ J – planning practices or principles which are *unlawful* or in conflict with current legislation.
- ❖ T – planning practices or principles derived from current *technique* which are problematic.

8. Results

8.1 IPR participatory process – RQ1

The research question which could be resolved in the most straightforward manner was **RQ1**. IPR's *Manual of Participation* (IPR Praha, 2016) declares public participation to be “one of the basic prerequisites of democratic self-government”, having “a direct impact on the quality of life” (IPR Praha, 2016, p. 7). The document clearly promotes informal (or according to the manual, a “wider range of participatory methods...[then formal methods, specifically public meetings]” (p. 9)) mechanisms of participation to be a crucial aspect of most planning decisions: “public engagement has undeniable benefits” (p. 7); and advocates for participation to be implemented in a wide variety of planning practices. In line with its purpose, the manual provides 1) a methodology for determining the extent to which public participation can be useful in different planning situations and which actors should be involved in the process; 2) a detailed description of 22 different public participation methods and the planning situations in which they are appropriate to be used; 3) an overview of eight case scenarios – ranging from the preparation of Prague's Strategic Plan (the city's development program) to the process of redesigning the public space in Prague's peripheral residential districts – outlining which forms of participation should be used at which stages of the various planning processes. Emphasis on the value of utilizing participation for *facilitating dialogue* between citizens, experts and politicians (IPR Praha, 2016, p. 21), *achieving compromise* or mutual understanding between contradictory positions (p. 21), and *utilizing local knowledge* in urban design (p. 20), is present throughout the manual. The document also differentiates the *mechanistic* approach to public participation, which conceptualizes the “the nature of participation purely in the opportunity for the public to contribute its views, for example, to the process of the creation of a territorial development plan and thus strengthen the public's own sense of entitlement to the outcome” (p. 15) from the *humanist* approach, which sees “the essence of the process of public engagement in raising awareness and strengthening the self-confidence of the participants in the process and in the creation of new social bonds” (p. 15). Other documents echo this, emphasizing that “with a high level of engagement, participants feel a real part of the process and can have a greater role in it” (“Participativní metody”, n.d.).

The participation methods described in the document correspond to the categorization of planners' roles (Özdemir & Tasan-Kok, 2019) within the collaborative-deliberative model described in the theoretical section: *brainstormers*: round table – C7 (p. 88), forum on the future

– C3 (p. 80); *professional companions*: mediation – C8 (p. 90), community planning office – C4 (p. 82); and *co-creators*: building of models – C17 (p. 108), community user groups – C18 (p. 110); just to name a few – the categorization of practices is in fact much more diverse and rich than described in the theoretical section. A page on IPR's website is also dedicated specifically to the facilitation of *deliberation*, emphasizing non-partiality, a safe environment for different opinions and ideas to be expressed and for conflicts to be tackled head on to mitigate escalation ("Facilitace", n.d.). The documents available on the IPR website show that IPR not only regularly applies the collaborative-deliberative model at various instances of the planning process, but also actively promotes these methods to other levels of city government (MČ and MHMP).

8.2 Post-political aspects of IPR participatory practices – RQ1.1

The materials provided on the IPR website show to exhibit elements which are problematic from the standpoint of the post-political critique. Corresponding to **RQ1.1** and **H2**, explicit evidence could be identified of participation promoted as a means to help A) legitimize planning decisions; B) expedite, boost the effectiveness or mitigate the risk of failure of planning decisions; C) prevent or manage conflict within the planning process; and E) pre-define the parameters of the planning process and the actors engaged in it. Explicit evidence for D) participation being used in accord with a growth or neoliberalizing agenda of the city was not found in the materials.

A) Legitimacy: The IPR *Manual of Participation* mentions “greater legitimacy and acceptance of the outcomes of planning processes” (IPR Praha, 2016, p. 20) explicitly as one of the primary ‘opportunities’ that participation brings, as it “enables the public to understand the reasons for certain decisions, which may not be self-evident, thus giving them greater legitimacy” (p. 20). Similar statements about the benefits of participation in legitimizing decisions, plans or policies can be found throughout the document (pp. 22, 39, 47, 60). In addition, the manual stresses that participation can help the public to gain a *feeling of ownership* over the participation process (pp. 15,55); with some of the possible needs of the planning process – “contributing to a sense of ownership of the revitalization of public space; a sense that ‘their’ environment will be changed with ‘their’ participation” (p. 55); and “for key actors to feel they are sufficiently involved in the process and gained a sense of ownership over it” (“Participativní metody”, n.d.) – being effectively fulfilled by participation. However, other documents warn that participation which is “poorly executed” can lead to a “loss of public trust in an institution” (“Design participativních procesů”, n.d.) and when its main goals – collecting data and the active engagement of the public – are neglected, it can be viewed only as a PR stunt (“Participativní metody”, n.d.).

B) Effectivity, speed, and mitigation of risk of failure: Participation as “a means of preparing and implementing projects has shown to be effective” (IPR Praha, 2016, p. 15). This is mentioned explicitly throughout the IPR *Manual of Participation*: “Participation can speed up processes if a compromise can be negotiated instead of a protest or even a court challenge” (p. 22). In the case study of utilizing participation as an important tool in urban renewal, it is mentioned that participation can

“contribute to the sustainability of the project – brownfield redevelopments that have not sufficiently involved local communities carry a much higher risk of failure”, while stressing the need for the “early detection of potential points of contention or interest groups that could block the implementation of the project in the future” (IPR Praha, p. 59). Similarly, participation should be used in planning public infrastructure to “reduce possible delays associated with local resistance or dissatisfaction of the public with a final proposal that does not respect their needs” (p. 67). Elsewhere, it is also stressed that participation should not be an end in itself, but rather “serves as a tool to help get to [one’s] project goals faster and more efficiently” (“Design participativních procesů”, n.d.).

C) Prevention and mitigation of conflict: The *Manual of Participation* mentions the “early detection of potential conflicts” as one of the primary ‘opportunities’ participation can bring, as “objections can be taken into account before they give rise to conflict” (IPR Praha, 2016, p. 20); by identifying potential conflicting demands in advance, it is possible to “prepare a consensual proposal in advance or provide sufficient reasoning as to why some demands could not be met” (p. 55). Participation used to reduce the risk of a project being ‘blocked’ is also mentioned in several places (IPR Praha, 2016, p. 59; “Facilitace”, n.d.). Before the participation process is undertaken, the potential of a given idea or proposal to generate controversy is to be assessed (p. 26), and participation can be used to mediate conflict in situations when conflict has broken out before or during a planning process (p. 25). The practice of *mediation* is implemented in these situations – its goal is to “initiate dialogue between the groups in questions, in order to find a common path toward a solution which is satisfactory for both sides” (p. 90). However, it is recognized that this method requires that “actors on both sides share a common goal of resolving the conflict and are willing to invest energy in building consensus” (p. 90).

D) Growth or neoliberalizing agenda: There was very little explicit evidence to suggest that participation is used as a tool to promote economic growth or to cover up neoliberalizing tendencies, as set out in the theoretical section. Mostly, there was evidence to the contrary – an acknowledgement that participation runs the risk of being “misused by well-organized interest groups, seeking to push through their particularistic interests” (IPR Praha, 2016, p. 22). However, the case study on urban regeneration unproblematically exposes the growth-machine mentality that drives

it: “European capitals are using these projects to increase their competitiveness capabilities in the global competition between cities for new talent, investment and visitors and to promote the city's ability to adapt to global developments despite structural changes in the economy” (p. 59). In combination with the statements that follow (some of which have already been quoted above in section B), e.g.: “the local government should positively motivate private investors to involve citizens on the basis of Czech and foreign examples of good practice, where participation has contributed to the success and continuity of the revitalization project” (p. 59), this can be interpreted as an implicit indication of how participation can be used in accordance with a growth or neoliberalizing agenda of the city. It is important to note that the manual also emphasizes the role of participation in “strengthening the position of disadvantaged communities living near the brownfield site and contributing to solving their problems” (p. 59).

E) Predefining the parameters of participation: The importance of defining the parameters of any participatory process in advance is emphasized throughout the documents analysed, often for good reason - to make the process fair, effective in achieving changes to the plan, and to ensure that the means are appropriate to the ends. It is shown that the goals of participation form a continuum – from merely informing the public about a project, to the project being driven by citizens (IPR Praha, 2016, p. 16). It is necessary to “define the scope, i.e., to determine ‘what is up for grabs’. Exactly what the public should comment on, what can change at this point and what is unchangeable” (p. 24). While this is undeniably a sign of transparency, it is a direct display of the planning *techne* pre-defining any participation process, without providing the public with legitimate means to challenge the premises of the planning process – a practice of *policing*.

8.3 Antagonistic tactics exhibited by NGO Arnika – RQ2

From the 36 articles analysed, 35 displayed an explicit form of antagonism from the part of the NGO Arnika. Since the articles analysed spanned the period of 7 months, several themes distinct from the dominant topic, the Metropolitan Plan (MPP) emerged (see Table 3). Three topics other than MPP are of city-wide significance: the urban renewal of the Nákladové nádraží Žižkov brownfield (NNŽ), the urban renewal of the Holešovice-Bubny-Zátory brownfield (Bubny) and the *Methodology for investor contribution to the territory* (Kontribuce) – at the time a newly proposed and approved document serving as a partially-binding metric of

developer contributions to the public purse in exchange for a change in zoning regulations, allowing the land to be developed. The updating of the Spatial development principles (ZÚR) is also of city-wide importance, but not particularly significant for the purposes of this analysis. The newly proposed Building Act (Stav. Zák) is of state-wide importance, but also insignificant, as this thesis focuses mainly on the activities of Arnika within the territory of Prague. The remaining instance; a territorial dispute in the peripheral Řeporyje district, was of local significance.

Table 3: main article topics and their frequency

Topic	Frequency
MPP	20
Řeporyje	2
NNŽ	7
Bubny	2
Stav. Zák	2
Kontribuce	2
ZÚR	1

A total of 97 moments of antagonistic action were identified from the 35 articles that included antagonistic action by the NGO Arnika (see Table 4). These moments were codified according to the methodology described in the previous section. Analysing the frequencies of forms of antagonism statistically would be in large part misleading, as many of the articles reported on the same events or even included duplicator quotes of representatives of Arnika (predominantly by Ing. Arch. Vinklárková). However, Table 4 provides a solid basis for qualitative Media Content Analysis. Out of the total 97 moments, 25 distinct media contents depicting forms of antagonistic action could be identified. The frequency of antagonistic actions does not necessarily correspond to their real significance – for example, 7 articles featured Arnika criticizing the failure of the MPP to adequately protect the city’s green spaces, while only 2 mentioned a real event featuring a more significant antagonistic action: the shadow event organized by Arnika to assist the public in submitting formal comments or objections to zoning regulations proposed by the MPP that go against their interests (whether that be maintaining local use values or defending their right to develop their own property). However, the analysis provides solid ground for the NGO Arnika to be considered an actor of *strategic antagonism*.

An overview of the most significant antagonistic actions (**MK**; **MA**; **FP**; **MX**; **FC**, **MEFC**, **MSAssistFC**, **MSEFC**; **MEV**,) will be provided.

Table 4: antagonistic actions conducted by Arnika; their frequencies; and an explanation of their meaning

Antagonistic action	Frequency	Meaning
MK	28	Critique through media
MA	23	Alarming public through media
FP	5	Formal mechanism - petition
MX	4	Misleading public through media
FC	4	Formal mechanism - submitting comments
MEV	4	through media: Encouraging public to verify how comments submitted in previous rounds of formal particip. were resolved
MSugg	5	Suggesting improvements through media
MEFC	2	through media: Encouraging public to submit formal comments
MSExp	2	Shadow mechanism: experts - informing through media
FPK	2	Critique through formal mechanism - petition
MSAssistFC	2	Shadow mechanism: assisting public with submission of formal comments
SPro	2	Shadow mechanism: organizing a protest
MEInfo	2	through media: encouraging public to inform themselves with information available
MPr: MPP	2	through media: praising MPP
MSupp_I	2	through media: supporting informal mechanisms of participation to be set up by IPR
FPA	1	Formal mechanism: launching petition to alarm public
MXX	1	through media: misinforming public
MSuppFO	1	through media: supporting formal objections submitted by MČ or State Ministries
MFC	1	(through media): formal mechanism: submitting comments
FPSugg	1	Formal mechanism: launching petition to suggest changes
MSD	1	(through media): shadow mechanism: suggesting changes
MSEFC	1	(through media): shadow mechanism: encouraging public to submit formal comments
Spol	1	shadow mechanism: appealing to politicians
Total	97	

Considering criticism through media (**MK**), Arnika poised itself as one of the main watchdogs of the process of approving the Prague Metropolitan Plan during the period of its public consultation, as indicated by most media outlets including their critique to include opposing views in their articles, often referring to Arnika as “the main” or “fiercest critics of the MPP”(3,27), or as “activists who have long been involved in land development issues”(26). The NGO displayed a strong tendency to criticize the Metropolitan Plan and its regulations, specifically the loss of urban green space as a result of the widespread designation of numerous *transformation zones*, intended for development; the lack of sufficient space for public amenities and the insufficient enforceability of its designation (schools and healthcare facilities); the enabling of *value-free development* through lack of regulation of transformation zones through regulation plans (regulační plán); and the threat of developers being able to circumvent proposed regulations due to their legal ambiguity, based on the designation of green space and public amenities in transformation zones being enforced through quotas, rather than having designated spaces within them and localities being regulated in part by their *intended character* – a unique description of every locality, seen by Arnika as too ambiguous. The NGO argued that this proposal of a new land use plan would lead to an effective deregulation of land use in the city and a loss of the public sector’s ability to uphold use values in the face of value-free development.

Table 5: elements of antagonism and their frequencies

Antagonism			Frequency
form of antagonism	M	Media	68
	F	Formal mechanisms	0
	I	Informal mechanisms	2
	S	Shadow mechanisms	4
actions	<i>A</i>	Alarm public	24
	<i>E</i>	Encouragement - encourage public	10
	<i>K</i>	Critique - criticize	30
	<i>X</i>	Misleading - mislead public	4
	<i>XX</i>	Misinformation - misinform public	1
	<i>Sugg</i>	Suggest improvements	6
	<i>Supp</i>	Support	3
	<i>Assist</i>	Assist public	2

	<i>Pr</i>	Praise	2	
formal mech.	FC	submit Comment/objection	10	
	FP	Petition	7	23
	Finfo	Attain/gain Information	2	
	FV	Verify	4	
shadow mech.	SD	Debate	1	
	SO	submit formal Objection	0	
	SExp	shadow Expert group	2	10
	SPro	Protest	2	
	SPol	Politicize/attention from politicians	1	

As one of the few actors with the capacity (resources and expertise) to assess the citywide implications of approving the MPP (Municipal District governments were also very critical of the proposal, but their criticism was usually limited to their respective jurisdictions), a key antagonistic tactic employed by Arnika was to *alarm (MA)* the public about the potential implications of approving the MPP. Through its own press conferences, media articles and informal participation mechanisms, including four public debates on the MPP set up by IPR, Arnika frequently focused on worst-case scenarios, often extrapolating site-specific flaws in the proposed plan to the city as a whole in order to sound the alarm. Examples of this included situations where a minor reduction in park space was put into contrast with planners' proclamations of the wider benefits of approving the MPP:

“Problems are often hidden in subtle detail. For example, one of the residents of Prague 2 called Arnika to tell us that according to the Metropolitan Plan, it is possible to build up a part of the Perucká hillside below Gröbovka. It could be said that these are just two plots of land, but it is already an irreversible reduction of the park. The municipality claims to have strengthened the protection of parks and amenities. The intention in Perucká hillside certainly does not correspond to this claim” (Ing. Arch. Vinklárková in: Mračno, 2022b).

Similarly, three of the articles quoted Ms. Vinklárková criticizing the designation of roadside greenery as a public park, accusing the planners of overemphasizing the area of green space designated in the MPP:

“Isolation greenery protects populated areas from strong sources of pollution and noise. It cannot be designated as a park to be used for people's relaxation, but also as a refuge for small animals living in cities. Declaring the isolation green space along the D1 motorway, for

example, to be a park, just to make the Metropolitan Plan look more palatable on paper than it is, seems to serve as an alibi for its enforcement.” (Ing. Arch. Vinklárková in: *Praha jedním z nejzelenějších evropských měst nejspíš už dlouho nezůstane*, 2022)

Media outlets also quoted Ms. Vinklárková appealing to people’s lived experiences and tying them to the shortcomings of the MPP during one of the informal discussions orchestrated by IPR:

“Parents, for example, know all too well how difficult it is nowadays to get a child into secondary school or even kindergarten. Many of them are forced to keep their nearly four-year-old child at home for another year. In line with European trends, there should be places available for some children from the age of two. The Metropolitan Plan will not only fail to resolve any of this but will even exacerbate the existing problems. The necessary capacities are grossly underestimated, the Institute of Planning and Development is ignoring the needs of the people of Prague, as well as its own strategic and analytical documents,” (Ing. Arch. Vinklárková in: Afri, 2022b)

While these statements are not explicitly misleading, they are clearly intended to portray a stark discrepancy between the planners’ proclamations promoting the plan and specific instances where these proclamations do not stand up to reality. However, the examples presented are extremely selective and cannot be taken as a substantive critique by an expert. Their alarmist narrative is clearly intended to encourage the public to investigate whether the MPP goes against their local interests and use values.

Raising the alarm was often combined with encouraging citizens to take action, either by submitting formal comments or objections (**MEFC**) (in cases where the submissions are made by the landowners of the affected parcel); by verifying (**V**) whether the comments they submitted in the previous round of formal participation (*společné jednání*) held in 2018 have been satisfactorily resolved in the new proposal; or by informing (**Info**) themselves about the regulations proposed by the MPP in their vicinity. Arnika itself also provided the means for this, organising shadow events (**S**), including two critical discussions in the municipal library, attended by expert opponents of the MPP, where guidance was given (**SAssistFC**) on how to submit formal comments or objections, and setting up a temporary information point in the square opposite the library to provide guidance and answer questions from the media (*Kritici se ožívají proti Metropolitnímu plánu. Podle nich je v něm málo zeleně*, 2022; *Metropolitní plán vstupuje po deseti letech příprav do veřejného projednání*, 2022). Arnika also brought together a shadow expert group (**SExp**) to provide a deep assessment of the risks presented by

the MPP (Janiš, 2022c) During the City Assembly vote on the land use plan for the Nákladové nádraží Žižkov brownfield site, Arnika rallied local citizens' groups and launched a petition (FP) against its approval, as well as organising a protest (SPro) in front of the City Hall (ČTK, 2022; Vávra, 2022).

Within the articles, there is evidence of Arnika acting not only as an actor of *rigid* antagonism, but also employing *strategically* antagonistic tactics. Its continual monitoring of land use planning in the city has earned it the position of a force to be reckoned with and sometimes being offered a seat at the table. Representatives associated with Arnika were given a platform in two of the five panel discussions on the MPP orchestrated by IPR (I). One article reporting on NNŽ (Hesová, 2022) referenced multiple official meetings taking place between Arnika – the initiators of the petition against the proposed NNŽ land use plan – and representatives of the City Hall and the Prague 3 Municipal District.

8.4 Accusations of post-political practices – RQ3

27 of the analysed articles contained implicit or explicit echoes of post-political critique, a total of 59 implicit or explicit accusations on the part of Arnika against the Prague City Council, IPR, the Prague Urban Plan, or a municipal district that exhibited post-political elements or behaviour, were coded on the basis of the methodology outlined in the previous section (see Table 6). As in the case of the previous section analysing RQ2, the frequencies of the accusations of post-political elements or behaviour have little explanatory value. However, corresponding to **H4**, it is evident that that Arnika accuses IPR and the City Council of A) post-political practices, B) practices displaying neoliberalizing tendencies, C) allying with the growth coalition by upholding exchange values over use values or enabling value-free development. An overview of these three parts of the **H4** will be provided.

Table 6: Accusations of post-political conduct; their frequencies; and an explanation of their meaning

Post-political conduct	Frequency	Meaning
MPPL	7	MPP leading to loss of public control over land use
MPPM	5	MPP being promoted in a misleading manner
MPPD	5	MPP proposing an effective deregulation of current land use regulations
MHMPNeo	5	Prague City Hall displaying neoliberalizing tendencies
MPPNeo	5	MPP displaying neoliberalizing tendencies
MHMPNd	4	Prague City Hall refusing to disclose information or inhibiting access to it
IPREx	4	IPR upholding exchange values over use values
IPRNeo	4	IPR displaying neoliberalizing tendencies
MHMPEx	3	Prague City Hall upholding exchange values over use values
IPRNoPar	3	IPR not engaging public in planning process
MHMPGC	2	Prague City Hall catering to the interests of the growth coalition
MHMPNT	2	Prague City Hall acting in a non-transparent fashion
MHMPL	2	Activities of Prague City Hall leading to a loss of public control over land use
MHMPNEPar	1	Prague City Hall providing insufficient means for participation

PLNNT	1	Deficiencies of the Czech planning system
MHMPJ	1	Prague City Hall acting in a legally problematic fashion
IPRNT	1	IPR acting in a non-transparent fashion
P3GC	1	Prague 3 catering to the growth coalition
MPPEx	1	MPP upholding exchange values over use values
MPPJ	1	MPP being in conflict with the law
P3Ex	1	Prague 3 upholding exchange values over use values
Total	59	

Regarding accusations of post-political practices (**H4-A**) around the Prague Metropolitan Plan, in the articles analysed, Arnika consistently and strongly criticized IPR for promoting the MPP with misleading statements or promotional phrases used to conceal or defend what Arnika deemed to be substantial inadequacies. The NGO accused IPR's statement about the latest update of the proposed MPP removing 990 hectares of greenspace from the *buildable area* (zastavitelné území) as “manipulative” (44) and intended to mask the fact that a majority of city parks still remain within the buildable area in the updated version of the MPP. Similar accusations were made on the basis of IPR designating roadside greenery as a park (as described above), supposedly to render the plan more palatable. These accusations hold very little ground and can be interpreted as overstatements of the post-political intentions of IPR's design proposal and its promotion of the MPP, intended to alarm the public. Much more salient, however, were the NGO's criticisms of the Prague City Council's (specifically the Department of Land Development) refusal to disclose how comments submitted by the public in the previous round of public participation (společné jednání) were resolved and implemented in the new version. Arnika formally requested (using the Freedom of Information Act – 106) for the resolution of their previously submitted comments to be provided, and when the city government refused to publish the information, even filed for a lawsuit. The documents were provided to Arnika, but the Department of Land Development refused to publish the remainder of resolutions of public comments, unless demanded formally through 106. In the articles analysed, Arnika highlights this as an example of grossly non-transparent governance intended to mask the lack of impact brought by formal participatory mechanisms (Vránková, 2022). With regard to the Bubny brownfield, Arnika criticized the city and the Municipal District government of Prague 7 of pushing through a (partially-binding) land use study in the absence of any public consultation process (Nguyen Thuong Ly, 2022), while accusing IPR of failing to communicate with local residents in the effort to push through a similar study concerning NNŽ (ČTK, 2022).

With regard to accusations of practices displaying neoliberalizing tendencies (**H4-B**) or catering to the interests of the growth coalition by upholding exchange values over use values or enabling value-free development (**H4-C**), in the articles analysed, Arnika frequently sought to expose how new planning documentation was, in effect, a deregulation of current land use regulations and question whether IPR, the city government, or Municipal District governments cater to the needs of developers, rather than their own constituents. The MPP was portrayed by Arnika as being too lax in its regulation of the numerous transformation zones it designated. By ‘unlocking’ these areas for development, while (in theory) allowing urban design to be carried out by developers (**MPPNeo**), Arnika argued that the public would effectively lose (**MPPL**) the guarantee that use values (e.g. the designation of public amenities and green spaces) would be enforced in the given transformation zones, leading to widespread value-free development (**MPPEx**), the cost of which would be borne by the public – both in a literal and figurative sense; public funding would be needed cover the critical infrastructure in loosely regulated transformation zones (schools, waterworks, public transportation etc.), while the lack of use values would also overload surrounding neighbourhoods. This was argued especially in connection with public amenities:

“The authors of the metropolitan plan claim that all amenities can be built anywhere, because the plan proposes mixed-use areas. Just because something can be built doesn't mean it will actually be built [...] In fact, it leaves a free hand to the developers, because they will be able to build what is most advantageous for them, according to the latest market demand. So, the city and its residents will have no guarantees” (Ing. Arch. Vinklárková in: “Metroplán dost nemyslí na potřeby lidí, říká spolek”, 2022)

This logic of argumentation was echoed throughout the analysed media articles and was applied to different contexts of land use – specifically the Bubny and NNŽ brownfields and the proposed developer contributions – and attributed to different actors, depending on which institution was in control of the particular planning process (MHMP or IPR).

Conclusion

In this Bachelor thesis, I verified whether the conceptual framework of the post-political critique of current urban planning practices, described in the theoretical section, can be applied to the case of urban planning in Prague. This was achieved by providing evidence for the four hypotheses defined in the empirical section (**H1-4**). Evidence for the collaborative-deliberative model forming the basis of the participatory methods employed by the Prague Institute of Planning and Development (**H1**) was shown through the analysis of documents published by IPR, specifically the *Manual of Participation*, which exhibited a strong focus on the value participation can bring to the planning process and displayed an emphasis on participation through deliberation. Evidence for the post-political critique being applicable to the planning practices exercised by IPR (**H2**) was shown through an analysis of the same documents, which exhibited signs of using participation to give projects legitimacy (**H2-A**), to expediate the planning process (**H2-B**), and to reduce the risk of conflict from arising (**H2-C**), while exhibiting a strong emphasis on defining the nature, content, and scope of the participation process beforehand (**H2-E**). However, sufficient evidence supporting the hypothesis that the documents would show evidence of participation being used in alliance with the growth coalition or to mask neoliberalizing tendencies (**H2-D**) was not found. Through qualitative content analysis of 36 media articles, based on the operationalization of the conceptual framework of the post-political critique, evidence was also provided of a prominent conflictual actor, the NGO Arnika, exhibiting a wide variety of antagonistic tactics aimed at challenging the dominant hegemony of planning practices employed by Prague's planning institutions, which showed Arnika to be a *strategically antagonistic* conflictual actor (**H3**). Lastly, through the same qualitative content analysis, and corresponding operationalization, evidence of the criticism Arnika displayed toward the practices of Prague's planning institutions mirroring elements of the post-political critique was shown, as Arnika frequently accused the city of catering to the needs of developers, rather than defending the existing use values in a given area of the city (**H4**). By providing this evidence, I have attempted to make the case that the post-political critique is useful for analysing the case of urban planning in Prague (**RQ0**).

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Rychlá novela špatného stavebního zákona ANO+SPD+KSČM+Hospodářské komory z roku 2021 rezignuje na nutnou reformu územního plánování 2022-03-10. (2022). Otevretenoviny.cz. Retrieved May 16, 2023, from <https://otevrenoviny.cz/rychla-novela-spatneho-stavebniho-zakona-anospdkscmhospodarske-komory-z-roku-2021-rezignuje-na-nutnou-reformu-uzemniho-planovani/>

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List of abbreviations

MPP	Metropolitní plán Prahy	Prague Metropolitan Plan
NNŽ	transformační území nákladové nádraží Žižkov	transformation zone of the nákladové nádraží Žižkov brownfield
IPR	Institut plánování a rozvoje hlavního města Prahy	Prague Institute of Planning and Development
MHMP	Magistrát hlavního města Prahy	Prague City Council
MČ	Městská část	Municipal District

List of Appendices:

- ❖ **Appendix 1: Lamken_BP_MediaContentAnalysis.docx:** a document containing sections relating to Arnika and IPR from all media articles analyzed in the empirical section.
- ❖ **Appendix 2: Lamken_BP_ContentAnalysis.xlsx:** a spreadsheet showing which antagonistic action or post-political critique by Arnika was present in the respective articles.