



Making Sense of Competing Expectations – Paradoxes in Strategic Spatial Planning

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Abstract

Purpose

The presence of multiple and diverse stakeholders is a common feature of public sector governance. This study focused on the process of stakeholder participation, aiming to define stakeholders' expectations of a regional spatial plan and then uncover paradoxes in these expectations. Sensemaking and sensegiving were used as a theoretical lens to explore reasons for the paradoxical expectations.

Design/methodology/approach

A Swedish case was used to qualitatively explore the initial stage of a stakeholder participation process regarding strategic spatial planning. The main empirical material comprised observations and interviews.

Findings

Diverse stakeholders' expectations were captured through the identification of four paradoxes, relating to the level of guidance, prioritization of stakeholders, ambition, and time horizon. With sensemaking theory as a theoretical lens, the paradoxes could be understood through mental models, emotions, narratives, and social factors. The findings show the importance of creating a shared understanding among stakeholders, with sensegiving standing out as especially important.

Originality

The idea of stakeholder participation and consensus building is a debated topic. The current study contributes to this field by focusing on the process and on stakeholders' diverse expectations, using paradox theory to identify and define expectations and sensemaking theory to explore why these paradoxes exist.

Keywords:

stakeholder participation; strategic spatial planning; participatory planning; sensemaking; sensegiving; paradoxes

Practical Relevance

- The study identifies diverse stakeholders' expectations regarding a strategic spatial plan and captures these in four paradoxes. The management of larger collaborative projects as well as participant of such projects, benefits from acknowledging the diversity in stakeholders' expectations to facilitate fruitful processes.
- It is important for project management teams in larger collaborative projects to be aware of the significance of sensemaking, including how, when and why it occurs, and of the possibility to actively engage in sensegiving.
- The study offers examples of how to engage in sensegiving, stressing the need to be strategic not only about the stories told and narratives activated, but also about how opportunities for dialogue are structured and which emotions are displayed.
- The study particular sheds light on situations of fragmented sensemaking, i.e. on cases where stakeholder sensegiving is high, but leader sensegiving is low.

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Introduction

The days are long gone when the public sector was seen as the major actor that alone could carry the responsibility for societal and economic development (e.g. Bovaird & Löffler, 2009; Klijn, 2012; Peters & Pierre, 1998). Instead, we have a scenario where collective problems require collaboration with other players such as citizens, businesses, and the voluntary sector (Löffler, 2009) and where the presence of multiple and diverse stakeholders is recognized as a common feature for public sector governance in general (Klijn, 2012) and for strategic planning in particular (Bryson & George, 2020; Hendrick, 2003; Lee et al., 2018; Raynor et al., 2017). Much work has been devoted to making planning practice more inclusive and representative, resulting in a large literature on participatory planning (Higdem & Hanssen, 2014; Thorpe, 2017) and communicative planning theory (Forester, 1985; Innes, 1995; Westin, 2021). In this literature, planners ideally aim to create innovative, stakeholder-based, and consensus-building processes where the interests of different stakeholders are supposed to evolve and converge towards shared interpretations of the context of planning to create a joint vision (Innes, 1995).

The idea of consensus building is debated, however, partly because it tends to result in lowest common denominator decisions where conflicts are avoided rather than acknowledged and confronted (Innes & Booher, 2015). It is therefore suggested that research which to a large extent has focused on finding positive strategic planning outcome effects (George et al., 2019; Půček & Špaček, 2014) ought to be complemented by process studies (Higdem & Hanssen, 2014) with a particular focus on stakeholder participation (Bryson & George, 2020; George et al., 2019). This is particularly relevant in a strategic spatial planning context, where the process is described as especially complex (Granqvist et al., 2021). One aspect of this complexity is the large number of stakeholders (Domingo & Beunen, 2013), where contradictory views on strategic issues are the normality (Mäntysalo et al., 2015).

Sweden currently offers an interesting and complex case, as a change in the Planning and Building Act (Plan- och bygglag [2010:900], chapter 7, section 1) has introduced a new planning governance level for the county of Skåne (Lexén, 2021). The case is especially interesting in the Scandinavian context, as further counties in Sweden are expected to receive the same commission. A major challenge in this planning is the large number of stakeholders involved; primarily the county's municipalities with their politicians and public officials, but also national authorities, different industry organizations, and the general public. Our Swedish case makes it possible to explore the initial stage of a stakeholder participation process regarding strategic spatial planning. The initial stage is especially relevant as goals are being set and the process formed. Here the study focuses on the expectations formed by the stakeholders during the first year of the process, as these expectations represent the starting point and the diverse interests of the stakeholders that ought to be turned into shared interpretations and meanings during the planning process (Innes, 1995). Furthermore, expectations are also relevant to study as they are well-known to shape perceptions, which for example is illustrated in the acknowledged work by Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman (1993).

Considering the large number of stakeholders, the presence of diverse expectations is natural (Domingo & Beunen, 2013; Granqvist et al., 2021). In the present article we intend to illuminate and define these expectations. We use paradox theory, which includes diverse and ambiguous yet interrelated demands or expectations (Farjoun, 2010), to systematize the stakeholders' expectations. However, it is not enough to acknowledge diverse stakeholders' expectations; rather, to create and maintain a beneficial stakeholder participation approach, the diverging stakeholder expectations must be understood in order to be handled. One way of understanding expectations, or understanding how societal planning emerges through communicative processes in a larger context (Granqvist et al., 2021; Healey, 1992), is to approach it from a sensemaking and sensegiving perspective. Sensemaking typically occurs when people are confronted with issues that are characterized by ambiguity (Helvert-Beugels, 2018; Maitlis, 2005), a definition which is applicable to the current case and to strategic planning processes in general. Thus, the aim of the study was to define paradoxes in stakeholders' expectations on a regional spatial plan, and to use sensemaking and sensegiving as a theoretical lens for exploring why these paradoxical expectations exist. We set out to answer: What are the stakeholders' expectations on a regional spatial plan, and why can we identify paradoxes in their expectations?

Through sensemaking theory, we can understand how stakeholders use different cues to create order and make sense of what is happening (Maitlis, 2005; Weick et al., 2005), and how leaders and other stakeholders influence others' sensemaking processes through sensegiving (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Few studies have comprehensively explored stakeholders' expectations regarding strategic spatial planning. Through this approach, we align with the call by Bryson et al. (2018) for research on social mechanisms and their possible influence on strategic planning processes. The study contributes to the field of public sector strategic planning with a participatory stakeholder approach in terms of both identifying and defining stakeholder expectations on a regional plan and uncovering how sensemaking contributes to stakeholders' perceptions, where sensegiving appears as an important aspect of consensus building.

Theoretical Framework

Participation and stakeholder involvement in strategic planning

Due to the changing role of government in modern society, public governance has been given increased attention in the past 20 years (Bovaird, 2005; Bovaird & Löffler, 2003; Edelenbos et al., 2010; Klijn, 2012; Peters & Pierre, 1998), bringing a strong emphasis on public participation and stakeholder involvement (Klijn, 2012). From a government point of view, there are several reasons for encouraging stakeholder participation: it strengthens democracy (Pestoff, 2009), it enhances legitimacy, accountability, and public confidence in the work of government (Klijn, 2012; Martin, 2009), it improves the outcome and the quality of policy (Bryson, 2004; Edelenbos et al., 2010; Klijn, 2012; Martin, 2009), it increases the chances that services meet users' needs (Martin, 2009), and it generates a sense of shared ownership, which in turn may facilitate efficient implementation (Vigar, 2006).

Many disciplines and sectors have embraced participatory or networked responses to decision making and problem solving (Raynor et al., 2017). In the field of planning, participatory planning theory and practice began to develop in the mid-1960s (Fenster & Misgav, 2014; Thorpe, 2017). It has been claimed that strategic planning can only be effective if it satisfies the needs of multiple groups (Gomes et al., 2010), and George et al. (2019) argue that participation in itself does not necessarily increase performance; rather, it is important *how* the participation is organized and *who* gets to participate. This can also be understood in the light of communicative planning theory, which since its development in the 1980s and 1990s has contributed to an analytical focus on communication in the micro practices of planning with an emphasis on inclusive dialogues (Forester, 1985; Innes, 1995; Westin, 2021).

Forester (1989) made an early identification of information as a source of power in the planning process, where planners can use information in different ways to form the participation, including the trust and expectations of the stakeholders. Mattila (2020) summarizes the core idea of communicative planning theory as making planning more democratic, more legitimate, and more responsive to people's needs, with improved quality and quantity of communication between stakeholders. Taking communicative planning as a starting point, planning can be seen as both a strategic game where participants pursue their own interests and a process of searching for consensus and "making sense" together through communication (Mattila, 2020). Communicative planning theory argues that planning takes place not only in formal government, but also through interaction among players where listening and dialogue are central and where communication becomes a form of acting on others (Innes & Booher, 2015).

The process of involving stakeholders should be characterized by mutual learning about problems and issues. Although communicative planning theorists generally argue that participants can rethink their interests and values in the course of dialogue (Innes & Booher, 2015), it is stressed by others that the process does not necessarily have to lead to consensus but rather to respect for different views and a greater understanding of why a particular policy choice is made (Vigar, 2006). Critiques of the approach include that power dynamics are hidden by neutralizing them within the process of communication, and that there is too much focus on procedural considerations at the expense of more normative goals (Raynor et al., 2017). Bryson et al. (2018) stress the *process* of strategic planning, noting that social mechanisms influence the success of strategic planning processes. Goal achievement is an important part of strategic planning, but it is also about creating a constructive process and culture.

Sensemaking and sensegiving

Sensemaking is a critical organizational activity which involves efforts to create order and make sense of what is occurring (Helvert-Beugels, 2018; Maitlis, 2005). Sensemaking has been extensively investigated in a variety of research fields, and is an enormously influential perspective in organization studies (Brown et al., 2015). In 1991, Gioia & Chittipeddi introduced sensegiving as a complementary concept which reflects the process of attempting to influence others' sensemaking processes (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007). Within planning, Forester's (1985) work on how the design process can be thought of as stakeholders making sense together is seen as groundbreaking. The sensemaking metaphor opened up a new way to approach the planning process, where relations of power and authority play a crucial role in determining what is feasible, desirable, and imaginable.

Sensemaking is most often thought of as a retrospective process, though it has both retrospective and prospective dimensions (Will & Pies, 2018). Weick et al. (2005) first linked sensemaking to organizations, describing it as a process that is ongoing, subtle, swift, and easily taken for granted, and arguing that in its most simplified form, sensemaking is about searching for answers to the question: "What's the story here?" Sensemaking starts with chaos and develops into noticing, bracketing, and labelling. It must be remembered that sensemaking is not about truth and "getting it right", but rather about searching for meaning and plausibility and retrospectively making sense of constructed "realities". Sensemaking happens at different social levels, including communities, organizations, small groups, and individuals (Maitlis, 2005; Weick et al., 2005).

Sensemaking is guided by our mental models acquired during previous work, training, and life experience, as we use our existing knowledge to make sense of new events. As sensemaking is considered a social activity, it is also influenced by a variety of social factors, such as discussions, interactions, and remarks from others. Language, talk, and communication are seen as important tools, as "situations, organizations, and environments are talked into existence" (Weick et al., 2005:409), and narratives are believed to be critical to sensemaking in organizations (Boje, 1991; Fenton & Langley, 2011). Research also highlights the importance of emotions and the critical role they may play in whether an individual engages in sensemaking at all. Emotions can energize (Öhman et al., 2001), shape, and conclude the sensemaking process (Gioia & Mehra, 1996; Maitlis et al., 2013).

It has been suggested that since sensemaking processes can result in unproductive situations, they need to be managed carefully. Sensegiving is an important source for stakeholders' sensemaking that enables shared interpretations (Will & Pies, 2018; Kraft et al., 2015). The stream of research addressing the social processes of organizational sensemaking highlights how certain groups influence others' understanding of issues by shaping the sensemaking processes, for example with the help of narratives and stories of progress or success. These groups include both organizational leaders and other stakeholders such as middle managers and other employees (Maitlis, 2005). However, research has shown that neither leaders nor stakeholders always engage in sensegiving, even around issues that matter to them and where it might benefit them or their organizations.

According to Maitlis & Lawrence (2007), leaders' sensegiving is triggered by a perception of an issue as being uncertain and associated with complex stakeholder interests, while stakeholders' sensegiving is triggered by the issue being deemed important to themselves, to stakeholder groups, or to their organization in general, and also by perceptions of a lack of leader competence such as poor organizational decision processes, poor outcomes of leader decision making, or lack of leader expertise. There are also determining conditions that enable sensegiving. For stakeholders, these comprise possession of relevant expertise, legitimacy, and the opportunity to engage in such behaviour; for example, in regular meetings, ad hoc meetings, or ad hoc retreats. For leaders, their issue-related expertise is crucial, as is the performance of the organization in the issue domain (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007).

The sensemaking process varies depending on how leaders and other stakeholders engage in sensegiving. Maitlis (2005) focused on the roles of organizational leaders and other stakeholders, and identified four different forms of organizational sensemaking depending on the levels of leader sensegiving and stakeholder sensegiving: guided organizational

sensemaking, restricted organizational sensemaking, fragmented organizational sensemaking, and minimal organization sensemaking. As an example, in the case of fragmented organizational sensemaking the leader sensegiving is low and the stakeholder sensegiving is high, which means that the process is characterized by high animation but low control. This results in multiple distinctive and rather narrow accounts that in turn tend to generate a series of inconsistent and contradictory actions. In this case, individuals go their own way, damaging the collective sensemaking processes and action.

Overall, then, several factors seem to be important for sensemaking. Mental models acquired during previous experience (e.g. Weick et al., 2005) are complemented by other cues that facilitate interpretation, where leaders and other stakeholders can engage in sensegiving (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Kraft et al., 2015; Will & Pies, 2018). Important cues are social factors such as discussion and interactions with others (e.g. Helvert-Beugels, 2018; Weick et al., 2005), narratives including language and communication (Fenton & Langley, 2011; Weick et al., 2005), and emotions (Maitlis et al., 2013; Will & Pies, 2018). Communicative planning theory especially highlights that planning takes place in the interaction among stakeholders, meaning that sensemaking cues and sensegiving are particularly relevant in this area.

The Case: A New Level of Strategic Spatial Planning in a Swedish County

A regional level of governance concerning spatial planning is a relatively new phenomenon in Sweden. A change in 2019 in the Swedish Planning and Building Act (Plan- och bygglag [2010:900], chapter 7, section 1) resulted in that Region Skåne, as the second county in Sweden, was commissioned to establish a regional plan. Since then, Halland county has received the same commission and more counties are expected to follow. Region Skåne was selected as one of the first counties for this new governance because its administration has been working voluntarily with strategic planning since 2005 and is positive towards regional spatial planning. According to the Planning and Building Act, a regional plan should specify the basic features for the use of land and water and offer guidelines for the location of buildings and structures that are significant for the county. The plan should provide guidance for decisions on general plans, detailed plans, and area regulations. Furthermore, the plan must be coordinated with the regional development strategy, the county plan for transport infrastructure, the traffic supply program, municipal guidelines for housing provision, and other such plans. The formality process follows the same procedural rules as for the municipal comprehensive planning. The regional plan is not legally binding, however it offers guidance for planning. It can for example be used by the County Administrative Board in their dialogue with the municipalities and facilitate early inclusion of the regional perspective in the municipal comprehensive planning. It is the regional council that decides on matters of adoption, relevance assessment, and amendment of the regional plan.

Today, around 1.4 million people live in the 33 municipalities that make up Skåne. The county contains both large cities and countryside, and there is a great variety between different areas; for example, between the west side of Skåne, which is positioned near Denmark and Copenhagen, and the east side of Skåne, where there are fewer resources and lower population growth and educational level. By tradition, collaborations between municipalities are strong in Skåne, and the county has been geographically divided into corners that are encouraged to collaborate on strategic issues.

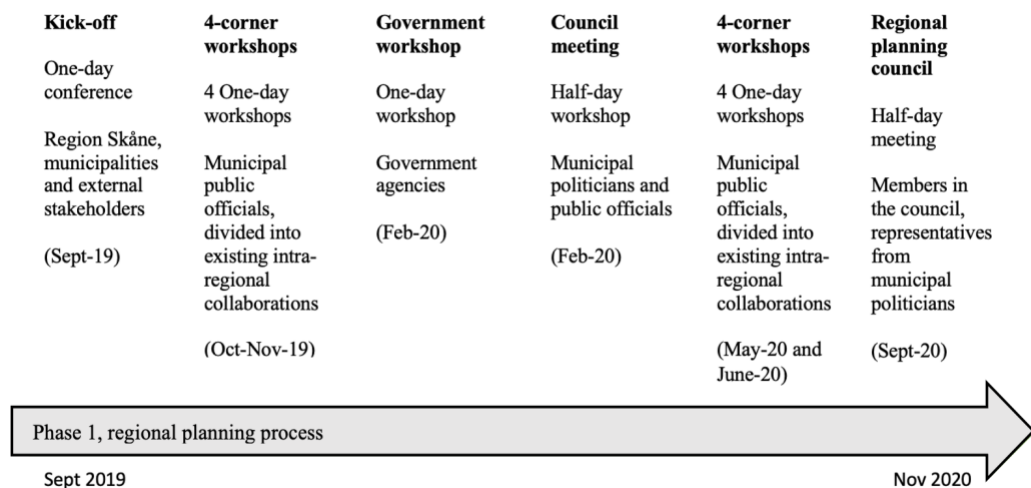
The regional plan is described on Region Skåne's website as a strategic plan, where the county and the municipalities should jointly coordinate spatial planning with the aim of creating good future living environments for everyone in Skåne. It is also described as being able to bridge the gap between regional development and comprehensive planning, to make it possible to see Skåne's regional challenges and opportunities, and to provide a forum where coordination and collaboration in Skåne are strengthened and joint actions are facilitated. The process of developing a regional plan officially started in September 2019, and involved several steps including a consultation period of five months and an audit period of three months before the

plan was decided in June 2022. The plan is indicative rather than legally binding, and will be reviewed once every term of office.

The municipalities in Region Skåne will continue to be responsible for the comprehensive planning, while Region Skåne will be responsible for the regional plan, and so dialogue between the municipalities and Region Skåne is crucial in enabling the regional plan to actually contribute to development. There are several internal stakeholders at Region Skåne, including regional politicians, the director of development, the project team for the commission, and engaged public officials. The municipalities, both local politicians and public officials, are naturally seen as primary stakeholders of the regional plan, but there are also other secondary stakeholders such as the County Administrative Boards, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth and interest groups. Ultimately, the citizens of Skåne can also be viewed as stakeholders.

The first phase of the process to develop a regional plan for Skåne began in September 2019 and ended in November 2020 when the regional development committee decided on an initial version of the plan and sent it out for consultation. This period was characterized by intense internal work at Region Skåne, with around 40 public officials engaged in the work through different thematic working groups. Although there were no formal requirements for dialogue with stakeholders outside the regional government before the consultation period, the county's ambition from the start was to prioritize interaction and collaboration. Hence, the first phase was characterized by several initiatives for dialogue between the county, the municipalities, and other stakeholders. Figure 1 illustrates the key stakeholder activities during this period.

Figure 1. Key stakeholder activities



Research Approach and Method

This article presents findings from the first phase (September 2019–November 2020) of a longitudinal research project in which two researchers are following a 4-year-long process of developing a strategic spatial plan for one of the 21 counties of Sweden. The research is of a qualitative nature and includes inductive as well as deductive approaches.

Data-gathering

Our main empirical material consisted of observations and interviews, along with different types of written material. The observations served the purpose of continuously updating us about the project, but also gave us valuable insights regarding interaction among stakeholders in this large project; for example which issues were or were not brought up for discussion, the atmosphere during meetings, the type of discussions, and so on. A summary of the observations is given in Table 1. Extensive fieldnotes were taken during all observations, augmented with the researchers' own reflections. For some observations both researchers were present, enabling good critical reflection (Silverman, 2015).

Table 1. Observations

Activities	Date	Form
Kick-off, open invitation	September, 2019	All day, physical
Workshop with one of the county's 4-corners, municipal public officials	November, 2019	All day, physical
Workshop, internal for the county's public officials	January, 2020	All day, physical
Workshop, authorities and other secondary stakeholders, also representatives from other counties	February, 2020	All day, physical
Workshop, municipal politicians and municipal public officials from the county's 33 municipalities	February, 2020	All day, physical
Workshop with one of the county's 4-corners, municipal public officials	May, 2020	Online, 2 hours
Regional planning council	September, 2020	Online, 2 hours

In addition to the observations, we conducted 40 interviews with selected stakeholders. These interviews had the overall purpose of capturing the stakeholders' expectations of the regional plan, and were guided by a semi-structured interview guide including three themes. The first theme centred around background information, comprising previous work experience, current position, connection and engagement in this project, and earlier experience from stakeholder participation projects; the second theme centred around expectations of the plan, comprising feeling for the plan, dream/worst scenario, and main benefits; and the final theme centred around general understanding and expectations of stakeholder participation. The interviews took place during January–May 2020, and the selection of interviews was based on the stakeholder groups predefined by the region (see Table 2 for an overview). Each interview lasted approximately 40–60 minutes and was recorded and transcribed.

Table 2. Interviews

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder sub-group	Number of interviews	Type of interview
Internal stakeholders	County politician and chair of the regional development committee	1	Physical
	Manager of regional planning	1	Online
	The project manager	1	Physical
	Project management team	5	Physical & online
	Leaders of the thematic working groups	5	Physical & online
Primary stakeholders	Municipal politicians, also members of the regional planning council	4	Physical & online
	Managers of municipal collaboration in the county's 4-corners	4	Physical & online
	Public officials from large, middle and small municipalities in diverse geographic locations	7	Physical & online
Secondary stakeholders	National authorities	5	Online
	Other secondary stakeholders, e.g. the Swedish construction federation, southern Sweden water supply	6	Physical & online
The citizens of Skåne	Public official responsible for the citizen-perspective	1	Online

During both the interviews and the observations, we acquired various types of written material related to the project. For example, the project manager provided us with internal documents relating to planning and process of the project. In relation to events such as

workshops, we received material including discussion plans, notes taken after the event, and information about the strategic plans or analyses on which the discussions were based. These documents all gave us valuable information about the content and context of the project.

Data analysis

The analysis was a two-step process, and was mainly performed in NVivo. Nevertheless, it was also an ongoing and iterative process involving comparison of field notes, critical and comparative reflections, individual coding, and validation of the analysis between the two researchers, aiming for rigor in the analysis (Charmaz, 2009). The first step focused on capturing stakeholders' expectations regarding the final product of the planning project. In the initial coding process, we created seven codes covering 518 references representing expectations of the regional plan. In the second round we looked further into these codes, keeping an open mind and trying to "create codes that fit the data" (Charmaz, 2009:48). Using a pattern-finding technique based on grounded theory (Charmaz, 2009) revealed 11 different categories regarding expectations of the regional plan.

The next step of further understanding these categories caused some difficulty, and we constantly came back to the issue of diversity in the expectations. A conceivable way forward appeared through the concept of competing demands (March, 1991), specifically that of paradoxes (Gaim et al., 2018). Paradoxes, understood as one type of competing demand (Gaim et al., 2018), include diverse and ambiguous yet interrelated demands or expectations, where opposites and contradictions are at the same time part of a unified whole (Farjoun, 2010; Smith & Lewis, 2011). Hence, we captured the stakeholders' diverse expectations in four empirically grounded paradoxes. The analytical process is depicted in the Appendix along with selected quotations. These paradoxes emerged through the codes from the interview transcripts, but the impressions from the observations were also important, and served to validate the findings from the interview material.

Having captured "the bones of analysis" (Charmaz, 2009:48); that is, the paradoxes of stakeholder expectations, the process continued toward "assembling into a working skeleton" (Charmaz, 2009), or in other words toward a theoretical understanding of the paradoxes. This phase of the analysis had a deductive approach in the sense that it used predefined cues of sensemaking theory. Of particular relevance in this study were sensemaking cues of mental models, narratives, emotions, and social factors. Before using the cues to interpret the paradoxes, we used the empirical material to make a robust cue description. We next collated some example interpretations of how the particularities of the cue along with aspects of sensegiving, or the lack of sensegiving, could be used to understand how and why the paradoxes had emerged. This stage of the analytical process is also depicted in the Appendix.

Findings and Analysis

Expectations captured in paradoxes

The following sections present the four empirically grounded paradoxes of stakeholders' expectations regarding a regional spatial plan (summarized in Figure 2).

Firstly, there was a clear tension concerning the level of guidance; that is, how specific and concrete the regional plan ought to be. On the one hand, it was argued that the regional plan needed to be clear and easy to follow for the municipalities. A public official working at the county described his vision for the regional plan as: "It needs to be made fairly easily accessible and clear and concrete, like easy to follow." Some of the public officials at the municipalities also expressed expectations in line with clear statements and guidelines, for example: "There should not only be a strategy, the strategy should have action plans to make sure that the strategy is implemented." On the other hand, several voices were raised against a too-concrete regional plan, arguing instead for the importance of protecting the municipalities' autonomy and expressing concern that a plan with too-clear guidelines would jeopardize the right to municipal self-governance. One municipal official argued: "If the county enters and controls too much, then I am afraid that the municipalities will obstruct and work against the regional plan." The importance of finding the right level was also stressed: "It is most important that the county can

keep their fingers away from what they have nothing to do with, instead finding the overarching and wide perspectives.”

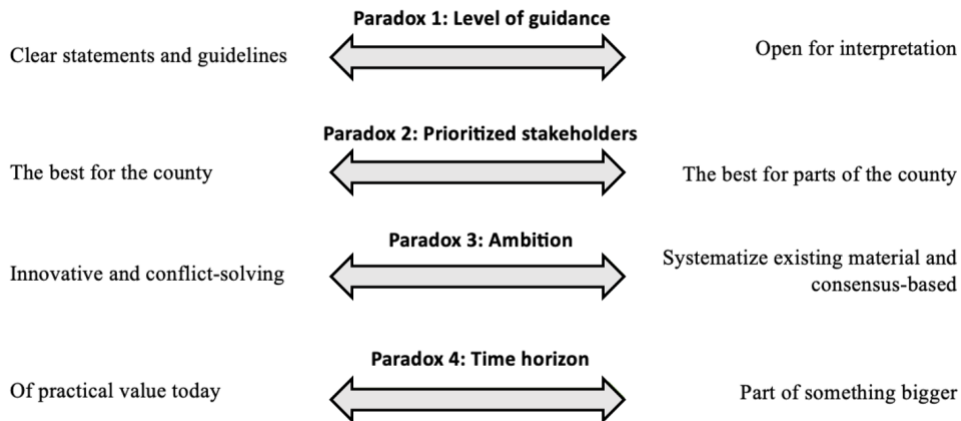
Secondly, there was a tension concerning the regional plan’s prioritization of stakeholders, as what was best for the county sometimes stood in contrast to what might be best for parts of the county, such as an individual municipality. One such example was the issue of agricultural land. The county wanted to protect valuable fertile land, which inhibited the development of new housing in specific municipalities. A representative of a national authority explained it openly: “We need clear regional positions that may be negative for some, but will be best for the county... Everyone can’t get everything, in other words, not everything is best to have everywhere.” However, these priorities created tensions. A representative from an inter-regional cooperation expressed a concern that their part of Skåne would suffer from this kind of prioritization:

Our sub-region consists mostly of farmland and agriculture, so we are concerned that we will be placed in a box, “No, we want to preserve you because you have agricultural land, and you are not allowed to develop.” We also want to be a part of the development and get the same, no not the same conditions because that is impossible, but the right conditions to be able to develop.

There was also a concern that the different parts of Skåne would not be given the same focus and priority. Several politicians and public officials aired this concern, expressing worry that there would be an imbalance and that more focus would be given to the west part of Skåne while other parts would be forgotten.

Thirdly, there was tension regarding the ambition of the regional plan. On one hand, it was argued that the regional plan should be innovative and that it would open up the possibility of adding new perspectives. This opinion was expressed by a regional politician: “We also want to create this value-adding thing, where more social dimensions can be seen, e.g. where in the county are you the happiest?” and by a municipal official: “I think it should be a new structural plan.” Along with these ambitions followed an interest in daring to tackle sensitive areas, where conflicts were known but not yet solved, as expressed by a public official at the regional level: “One must have the ambition of doing as much as possible, not simply lie down and say that these are difficult questions and let’s work with consensus tasks only.” These ambitions created tensions, as other stakeholders emphasized that the regional plan was about systematizing already-existing material. A municipal politician expressed this as: “My view is that it centres around co-ordinating what has already been done,” and a county public official described the process as “where we make zip-files of all existing material.” Using existing material implied that there was no need to tackle sensitive areas; a view that was also expressed among the stakeholders, for example a municipal official: “Keep it rather simple and begin with those things we have already agreed upon.”

The fourth and final paradox centred around tensions regarding how stakeholders related to the regional plan in terms of its time horizon. On the one hand, stakeholders emphasized the need for practical municipal value even in the very first version of the regional plan to be decided in 2022, as exemplified by a county public official: “It needs to be concrete and practical,” and “One can really make something that brings value to the municipalities.” The practical orientation was also expressed in a short but clear description by a municipal official: “Yes, we are to make a map of land and water utility.” On the other hand, there were stakeholders who considered this regional plan as the first of many more to come. These stakeholders emphasized a long-term orientation where small steps could be taken now, but since from a longer time perspective there would be more plans in the future, the practical value of today’s plan would be limited. This was expressed by a county public official: “There is a need to make the plan rather small and neat, firmly established, that everyone feels comfortable with and that can be improved and further developed in the next election round.” A municipal official expressed a similar opinion: “It will, kind of, take many regional plans before we can understand its results and what it can be used for.”

Figure 2. Paradoxes of stakeholders' expectations regarding a regional spatial plan

Paradoxes understood by sensemaking theory

The next part of the analysis of how and why we saw these paradoxes was focused on four central cues for sensemaking and how leaders and other stakeholders influenced other people's understanding by engaging (or *not* engaging) in sensegiving to shape the sensemaking processes. In trying to make sense of the regional plan, the stakeholders used all these cues at the same time; however, for analytical purposes and clarity they are presented separately.

Mental models

Mental models represent small-scale models of how the world works (Craik, 1943). Each individual's mental models are constructed, carried in mind, and developed on the basis of their personal and professional frames of reference, including their unique life experiences, and are used to help them to understand, explain, and predict their situation (Brock et al., 2008; Jones et al., 2011).

The stakeholders participating in this project entered the stage with a magnitude of unique life experiences which guided both their understanding of "a regional plan" and how they expressed their expectations of such a plan. We identified three main aspects of life experiences constituting valuable frames of reference: general working life experiences, current work tasks/position, and previous experience of work similar to this regional plan. Taken together, our impression was that the stakeholders comprised an impressive spectrum of life experiences which gave them a wide variety of references to guide their understandings of what a regional plan was; it was therefore not surprising to see varying expectations of the regional plan. Several of the stakeholders had extensive experiences and expertise within spatial planning. In contrast, the project management team were relatively young, with limited work experience; moreover, as the development of a regional plan was a new task for the region, the organization's issue-related expertise was limited.

We now give some examples of how mental models can help us understand the paradoxes. The paradox "level of guidance" refers to a tension between clear statements versus those which are open to interpretation. Stakeholders with life experiences such as strategic planning in an inter-municipal collaboration understood the plan as an opportunity for them to get clear guidance, for example by pinpointing directions of value for their own strategic work. At the same time, stakeholders with a local municipal frame of reference, such as municipal officials working with planning, might understand the plan as something that could threaten their own municipality's right to make its own decisions, and hence expressed the expectation that a regional plan should be open to interpretation.

The paradox "prioritization of stakeholders" refers to a tension between what was best for the county and what was best for parts of the county. Stakeholders with a regional frame of reference, such as a county public official or a county authority with county experience, had a county-focused perspective when they created their mental models of what the regional plan was about, and hence emphasized expectations of value for the county. Conversely, municipal

officials, municipal politicians, or a company with a more local frame of reference had a perspective focused on the local area instead of the county when interpreting the regional plan, and talked for example about threats of unbalanced resource allocation.

These examples are of simple character, almost implying the possibility of seeing a pattern between stakeholders' experiences/work tasks and the paradox. However, we must remember that the magnitude of life experiences makes the frame of reference very wide, and that depending on what was being discussed and the level of detail, the stakeholders appeared to express different and even paradoxical expectations, framed by their different experiences. The wide frame of reference moreover signals a need for sensegiving to align the diverse stakeholders and their ambiguous expectations of the regional plan.

Emotions

Maitlis et al. (2013) claim that although emotions are a somewhat underexamined facet of sensemaking (see also Gioia & Mehra 1996), they are an important element in sensemaking processes, as they can explain whether and how stakeholders engage in sensemaking in the first place. At least for some of the stakeholders, the regional plan seems to have evoked emotions right from the start, as several strong emotions could already be observed at the launch of the regional plan in September 2019. Even in the introduction speech, a regional politician recognized and reinforced the idea that the regional plan was associated with a sense of concern in the municipalities. The politician emphasized the uniqueness of the project, and followed this by an inspirational speech which illustrated the work ahead using the metaphor of Jon Snow's task to join the seven kingdoms in the television series *Game of Thrones*. At another workshop, mainly comprised of politicians, many strong emotions could be heard during presentations and different discussions. Here, a regional politician took a moderating role to bring about positive and calming emotions. Conveying one's own feelings to others can be seen as a sensegiving mechanism, where the metaphor in the example evokes strong emotions and accentuates the importance of the regional plan and the task at hand. Some of the questions from the audience also reflected underlying emotions, such as whether the regional plan should be viewed as an expansion or restriction plan, and how goal conflicts and inter-municipal competition could be dealt with. Asking critical questions and displaying emotions openly is a way for stakeholders to engage in sensegiving to shape other people's sensemaking processes.

Although emotions and sensemaking are often described as intimately and intricately connected, Maitlis et al. (2013) argue that the emotions of sensemakers can also be viewed as something that shapes their sensemaking processes, and that different emotions will have very different impacts on these processes. Positive emotions are likely to lead to more generative sensemaking; that is, processes that involve maintaining flexibility and integrating new cues in a flexible and creative manner. Conversely, negative emotions are more likely to lead to more integrative sensemaking; that is, more critical and more extensive analyses of new information. In our interviews, where the interviewees spoke about their emotions in connection to the regional plan, we captured both very positive emotions (e.g. excitement, joy, interest, hope, pride, inspiration, creativity) and more negative emotions (e.g. frustration, doubt, indifference, anxiety, passiveness, fear).

Previous research on the role of emotions in sensemaking (e.g. Maitlis et al., 2013) suggests that the very different emotions that were captured among the stakeholders will have influenced the sensemaking process differently, and can therefore also help us to understand the paradoxes identified in the stakeholders' expectations. For example, the paradox "ambition", which refers to a tension in how stakeholders envisioned the outcome of the project, can be related to emotions. People with mostly positive emotions and who saw the regional plan as something exciting also tended to expect an innovative and conflict-solving regional plan. Conversely, people with more negative emotions, such as a fear of conflict, tended to be more critical and to make more extensive analyses of any new information; they therefore imagined that the regional plan would mostly be a systematization of existing material and that it was necessary to focus on areas where consensus could be achieved. Thus, emotions appeared to be an influential sensemaking cue; however, as the emotions were diverse, strongly declared, and came from

different stakeholders in different contexts, they added more to an ambiguous than to a unitary sensemaking process.

Narratives

Another important cue for sensemaking is narratives or “stories”. These are argued to be able to contribute to collective sensemaking, since they contribute to constructing the world that they simultaneously describe (Boje, 1991; Fenton & Langley, 2011; Weick et al., 2005). As Maitlis (2005) notes, they are also important in sensegiving. Stories help us to make sense of what is going on, and storytelling tends therefore to be more common in turbulent settings, as it is a way to make sense of and manage current ambiguities.

In this case, different and sometimes conflicting narratives were often used, but we only found limited situations where leaders deliberately used narratives for sensegiving. We can illustrate the use of conflicting narratives with two examples from the observational data. Firstly, the audience at the launch in September 2019 were treated to many inspiring stories concerning the potential of the regional plan. The project was described as “an honour project” with great potential to lead to important improvements for the county, and it was stressed that Skåne was one of the first counties in Sweden commissioned to establish a regional plan, which could lead to national recognition and the chance to show other counties how this could be done. However, other stories were also told at the launch, and were later identified as important recurrent narratives. For example, the project was also described as a requirement and a necessity. It was made clear that the regional plan would be developed and decided, whether the participants wanted it or not. The second example of conflicting narratives centred around whether the regional plan really could be considered as something new. Despite recurring language which emphasized the significance of the project, for example phrases such as “we are breaking new ground” and “we are pioneers”, narratives with a totally different meaning were also frequently used. Stories that downplayed the role of the regional plan typically focused on the idea that strategic planning was nothing new for the county, and that the county had been given the commission in the first place because of its extensive experience of working with strategic plans on a county level.

The recurring use of conflicting narratives by leaders and the consequent lack of sensegiving offered by these narratives can help us to explain the paradoxes identified in stakeholders’ expectations. The paradox “ambition” refers to a tension within how stakeholders envisioned the outcome of the project. Some expected an innovative and conflict-solving regional plan, while others saw it simply as a systematization of existing material in which the outcome would be directed by where consensus could be reached. This paradox can be understood in the light of the narratives introduced above. Stories about the great potential of the regional plan and the pioneering nature of the work led some to the conclusion and expectation that the outcome ought to be something unique and innovative, while others let their sensemaking be guided by stories about this being “nothing new” and the idea that it was just a task that needed to be done. The latter group thus ended up with lower expectations of the outcome, and the view that existing material would simply be systematized and that the plan would not solve any existing conflicts.

The paradox “time horizon” refers to a tension between the expectation that the regional plan would have a direct practical value in itself and the expectation that it should be seen as something bigger, part of a process which started long before the regional plan and that would continue to develop as the regional plan developed. Given that there were recurring stories about how the regional plan was nothing new and could be regarded as a task among many others, it is not surprising that some stakeholders made sense of the task as being a part of something bigger. At the same time, the stories told about how Skåne was setting an example and acting as a pioneer contributed to other interpretations and high expectations that the regional plan would bring change and have a practical value today. As we all tell stories (Boje, 1991), the narratives were reinforced as stakeholders passed on selected stories in interactions with others and thus engaged in sensegiving and influencing each other’s sensemaking processes. An important aspect of storytelling as a tool for sensemaking is that we, as listeners, are co-producers of meaning as we fill in the blanks between the lines based on our mental models (Boje, 1991). Even if different tools for sensemaking helped the stakeholders make sense of the

situation, the role of the stories told and the narratives used appear to have played a rather central role in the current case, and they were often retold to us in interviews.

Social factors

Sensemaking is not something that can be packaged and passed on to a recipient, but rather a social activity to be engaged in (Weick et al., 2005). Sensemaking takes place through “the actual, implied or imagined presence of others” (Patriotta & Spedale, 2009:1229), and includes activities of diverse type and character such as communication, discussion, negotiation, and interaction, which can be written or spoken, formal or informal, and verbal or nonverbal (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991).

From the very beginning of the project, the project management group stressed the importance of developing the regional plan in dialogue and collaboration with stakeholders, especially the municipalities. As such, the project included different type of social activities, such as formal meetings where the county invited stakeholders to be informed about the working process of the regional plan, interactive workshops, and meetings where the municipal politicians could voice their interests or give viewpoints on the written document. More informal interaction took place in the working groups within the county which performed the actual writing of the plan, and stakeholders were able to give direct input to the specific working group or to the project management group. In other words, there were many opportunities for dialogue and for both leaders and other stakeholders to engage in sensegiving and to influence each other’s sensemaking regarding the regional plan. Our observations of the meetings suggested that the county welcomed all kinds of input, and took on a listening role rather than presenting its own standpoints or driving discussions towards a solution. Interaction seemed to be more often between invited stakeholders, for example in terms of pinpointing important aspects, and less between the county and the stakeholders.

Apart from these formal and informal social activities arranged by or in connection to the county, there were other social activities where stakeholders in interaction made sense of the regional plan. This occurred, for example, within the municipality itself and within the inter-municipal collaborations. Our interviews gave us the understanding that, in particular, municipal officials working with planning discussed their expectations, concerns, and possibilities regarding the plan. Other stakeholders dealing with, for example, infrastructure, were also part of continuous activities and interactions relating to the work of the regional plan. Hence, the project included stakeholders who were part of both formal and informal networks within which extensive social interaction took place and where sensegiving between stakeholders was common.

These social activities can guide our understanding of the paradoxes. The paradox “prioritization of stakeholders” emphasizes a tension between what was best for the county versus what was best for parts of the county. The project included stakeholders from different organizations and networks in the county’s 33 municipalities. This implies a large number of constellations or networks, of formal or informal character, where people were able to discuss and develop their understandings and expectations of the regional plan. These discussions took place without the participation of the formal actor responsible for developing the plan (i.e. the county), and hence enabled sub-collective expectations of the plan for that particular constellation of stakeholders which had engaged in mutual sensegiving. These sub-collective understandings did not develop in isolation from each other, yet tended to focus on specific areas or matters instead of taking the entire county into consideration. This is not to be understood as a deliberate strategy by the different constellations, but more the outcome of joint work within a specific network without any actor responsible for guiding and engaging in sensegiving towards the “wholeness”. Scholars have highlighted the importance of social activities for sensemaking (Patriotta & Spedale, 2009), and we conclude that social activities were an important ingredient of the regional plan. Depending on which actor a person interacted with, or which networks and interactions they were part of, different expectations of the regional plan were discussed and created. Hence, sensegiving appeared in different social settings, yet because the arenas tended to include different stakeholders, different understandings of the regional plan were created.

Conclusions

This study of the initial stage of a stakeholder participation process regarding strategic spatial planning has captured diverse stakeholders' expectations through the identification of four paradoxes. The paradoxes define areas where contradictory views existed, and reveal tensions regarding the level of guidance, prioritization of stakeholders, ambition, and time horizon. Thus, the collaborative approach does not seem to have led to a common understanding of the aim of the new strategic plan, at least not in the initial stage of the process. As few studies have explored stakeholders' expectations regarding strategic spatial planning, this perspective contributes to our understanding of social mechanisms in strategic planning processes (Bryson, 2018). Moreover, it aligns with Thorpe's (2017) conclusion that spatial planning processes are continuous processes in need of nourishing and inclusive activities with different types of participants throughout the entire process.

As early as 1985, Forester suggested that the design process can be thought of as stakeholders making sense together. In the current article, we use sensemaking theory (Helvert-Beugels, 2018; Maitlis, 2005; Weick et al., 2005), including sensegiving (e.g. Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007), as a theoretical underpinning to understand why the identified paradoxes emerged. In the search for an understanding of what the regional plan was and ought to be, the stakeholders used different cues from the environment to bracket and label what they saw and experienced.

The analysis of the case highlights individuals' *mental models* and how very different life experiences and backgrounds combined with limited opportunity to create shared mental models resulted in different opinions concerning, for example, the ideal level of guidance and which stakeholders ought to be prioritized in the regional plan. Moreover, the very different *emotions* connected to the regional plan (e.g. excitement compared to frustration) contributed to tensions in expectations, for example in terms of ambition, as did the different and sometimes conflicting *narratives* and stories that circulated. Since sensemaking is fundamentally a social rather than individual process (Weick et al., 2005), *social factors* and the different meetings, workshops, and forums for dialogue also played an important role when people tried to make sense of the regional plan. This is in line with communicative planning theory, which claims that planning takes place not only in formal government but also through interaction among players where listening and dialogue are central (Innes & Booher, 2015). The social arenas and networks and the discussions, negotiations and interactions that occurred seem to have created tensions in expectations regarding, for example, which stakeholders should be prioritized. In this case, overall, the sensemaking processes appear to have resulted in a situation where stakeholders had very different, even paradoxical, expectations of the regional plan.

It has been argued that sensemaking processes can be managed through *sensegiving*, where leaders and other stakeholders influence others' understanding of issues and enable shared interpretations (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Kraft et al., 2015; Will & Pies, 2018). Similarly, information can be seen as a source of power in the planning process, where planners can use information in different ways to create participation (Forester, 1989) and thus also to facilitate sensemaking. Both leader and stakeholder sensegiving triggers were present in the current case; for example, the leaders perceived the issues as uncertain, the issues were associated with complex stakeholder interests, and the stakeholders saw the issues as important (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007).

However, when it came to the leaders, not all of the conditions that enable sensegiving were fulfilled. As noted earlier, the project management team were relatively young and had no previous experience of regional spatial planning. Since the leaders lacked expertise relating to the issue, it was difficult for them to shape other people's interpretations of the task at hand. Although Region Skåne got the project as a consequence of having been voluntarily working with strategic planning since 2005, this does not appear to have been able to compensate for the leaders' lack of expertise. Conversely, all conditions enabling sensegiving among the other stakeholders appear to have been fulfilled: the stakeholders possessed relevant expertise and knowledge about how spatial planning works in municipalities, many of them had numerous years of relevant experience which gave them legitimacy to engage in sensegiving, and there were many opportunities for them to participate in sensegiving in the form of different meetings and encounters. This resulted in a situation where stakeholder sensegiving was high but leader

sensegiving was low, leading to highly animated but uncontrolled processes in a way that Maitlis (2005) refers to as a form of “fragmented sensemaking”. The many fragmented processes seem to have produced multiple ideas and expectations, many of which represented only a single individual or group. The risk of multiple distinct accounts is that everyone goes their own way, generating a series of inconsistent and contradictory actions.

To circumvent inconsistency, sensegiving has been stressed as important in terms of providing collective understanding of a phenomenon (Fenton & Langley, 2011), and narratives in particular are argued to be a key cue in this process. Although limited to just one case, this study shows that there are other cues which can be used to give sense. Emotions are one such cue, as conveying one’s own feelings is a way to give sense to the process and the task at hand. Another cue that emerged as having influence on sensegiving was social factors. The organization of meetings and social encounters determined which constellations and which stakeholders sensegiving could take place within and between. For example, leader sensegiving becomes difficult when meetings are held in small groups with limited representation and input from organization leaders and when there are few occasions in which all stakeholders get together. In this case this led to a shared understanding about certain issues in controlled constellations, yet the collective understanding of the task at hand remained absent. Thus, the current study offers additional support for the importance of sensemaking in larger collaborative projects.

In this specific case, the diversity of organizations represented in the process together with the paradoxical expectations that were formed among stakeholders in the first phase of the process set high standards for leader sensegiving in order to form a collective understanding of the work and for a fruitful continuous planning process. It is important for project management teams to be aware of the importance of sensemaking, of how and when it occurs, and of the possibility to actively engage in sensegiving. Furthermore, there is a need to be strategic not only about the stories told and narratives activated, but also about how opportunities for dialogue are structured and which emotions are displayed.

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Appendix – The Analytical Process

Step 1 in the analysis, understanding expectations through the creation of paradoxes		
Phase 1: Sorting of data	Phase 2: Categories regarding expectations	Phase 3: Thematization of the categories into 4 dilemmas with examples of quotes from the stakeholders
Stakeholder expectation on the RP (Regional Plan) - 158 references in NVivo		<p>➤ Level of guidance: Clear statements and guidelines vs. open for interpretation</p> <p><i>“It needs to be made fairly easily accessible and clear and concrete, like easy to follow”</i> (county public official).</p> <p><i>“There should not only be a strategy, the strategy should have action plans to make sure that the strategy is implemented.”</i> (municipal official)</p> <p><i>“If the county will enter and control too much, then I am afraid that the municipalities will obstruct and work against the regional plan”.</i> (municipal official)</p> <p><i>“It is most important that the county can keep their fingers away from what they have nothing to do with, instead finding the overarching and wide perspectives.”</i> (municipal official)</p>
	1. The RP should make clear standpoints	<p>➤ Prioritized stakeholders: The best for the county vs. the best for parts of the county</p> <p><i>“We need clear regional positions that may be negative for some, but will be best for the county... Everyone can’t get everything, in other words, not everything is best to have everywhere.”</i> (representative of a national authority)</p>
	2. The RP threatens the self-governance of the municipalities	<p><i>“Our sub-region consists mostly of farmland and agriculture, so we are concerned that we will be places in a box ‘no, we want preserve you because you have agriculture land, and you are not allowed to develop’. We also want to be a part of the development and get the same, no not the same conditions because that is impossible, but the right conditions to be able to develop.”</i> (representative from an inter-municipal cooperation)</p>
	3. The RP serves the region	
	4. The importance of each municipality	
	5. The RP creates something new	<p>➤ Ambition: Innovative and conflict-solving vs. systematize existing material and consensus-based</p> <p><i>“we also want to create this value-adding-thing, put the social raster on, where more social dimensions can be seen, e.g. where in the county are you the happiest”</i> (regional politician)</p> <p><i>“I think it should be a new structural plan”.</i> (municipal official)</p>
	6. The RP summaries existing material	<p><i>“one must have the ambition of doing as much as possible, not simply lay down and say that this is difficult questions and let’s work with consensus-errands only”.</i> (regional official)</p>
	7. The RP must be usable today	<p><i>“where we make zip-files of all existing material”.</i> (county public official)</p> <p><i>“keep it rather simple and begin with those things we have already agreed upon”.</i> (municipal official)</p>
	8. The RP must be long-term oriented and sustainable	
	9. The RP should be a tool to address inequalities between different areas	<p>➤ Time horizon: Of practical value today vs. part of something bigger</p> <p><i>“it needs to be concrete and practical”, and “one can really make something that brings value to the municipalities”.</i> (county public official)</p> <p><i>“yes, we are to make a map of land- and water utility”.</i> (municipal official)</p> <p><i>“there is a need to make the plan rather small and neat, firmly established, that all feel comfortable with, and which in the next election round, can be improved and further developed”.</i> (county public official)</p> <p><i>“It will, kind of, take many regional plans before one understands its results and for what it can be used”.</i> (municipal official)</p>
	10. The RP should address differences between small and bigger municipalities	
11. The strategic dimension of the RP		

Step 2 in the analysis, understanding the paradoxes through the theoretically derived cues of sensemaking

Cue	Empirical material	Cue description based on:	The cue as a way for understanding the paradoxes	Aspects of sensegiving
Mental models	Mainly based on the interviews with specific questions regarding position, previous experience, but also experiences from the observations showing the diversity of people.	<p>1) general work life experiences e.g. stakeholders with private and/or public sector experience; practical planning experience, political experience at municipal/county level, industry specific experience, work experiences;</p> <p>2) current work tasks/position e.g. municipal officials with practical planning work tasks/strategic planning in municipals of diverse geographic location and resource allocation, regional authorities with overall regional responsibility, municipal/regional politicians, representatives of diverse interests groups</p> <p>3) previous experience of work similar to this regional plan. Some stakeholders have experiences from counties or municipalities outside the county of Skåne.</p>	<p>Cue used to exemplify the paradoxes:</p> <p>Level of guidance</p> <p>Prioritized stakeholders</p>	The cue descriptions regarding wide life experiences serve mainly as signaling a need for sensegiving.
Emotions	Mainly captured in the observations, but also in the interviews when the interviewees feelings towards the project was noticed.	Different emotions, mainly positive and negative emotions	<p>Cue used to exemplify the paradox:</p> <p>Ambition</p>	Stakeholders openly declare own emotions, both positive and negative, during different events creating implying ambiguity in terms of giving sense to the process.
Narratives	Mainly captured in the observations, but also in the interviews when the interviewees discuss and talk about the RP and in different type of written material presenting and informing about the RP.	Different and conflicting narratives, e.g. inspiring stories, the RP as something innovative, described as a requirement, take place regardless stakeholder participation or not, strategic planning is nothing new	<p>Cue used to exemplify the paradoxes:</p> <p>Ambition</p> <p>Time horizon</p>	The empirical data contains many conflicting narratives implying lack of unitary sensegiving
Social factors	Captured in the observations, but also in the interviews when the interviewees discuss and talk about different activities they participate in, network, etc. Also written material in terms of directed invitations, meeting agendas.	Great variety, i.e. a set of formal and informal activities directed to different type of stakeholders, organized by the Region. Often of informative character where the region takes on a listening role, and without consensus solving or decision making. Other type of social arenas exist between the stakeholders but where the Region is not present.	<p>Cue used to exemplify the paradox:</p> <p>Prioritized stakeholders</p>	The project includes a diverse set of social activities gathering different stakeholders which implies diversity regarding sensegiving in these smaller gathering, i.e. a lack of a unitary sensegiving.