



National Urban Park

A Model for a Sustainable City or a Legislative Cage for Development

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Abstract

This paper addresses the concept of the national urban park (NUP) (*kansallinen kaupunkipuisto*) as a planning tool for rapidly growing cities. The focus is on the establishment process of a NUP in Tampere and Helsinki, where it has generated strong views both in favour and against. The study reveals these conflicting arguments and examines the related objectives, values and stakeholders. The empirical basis of the study is a qualitative content analysis on the NUP planning and decision-making documents.

The paper demonstrates that the NUP can be seen either as a model for sustainable urban planning or as a legislative cage for development. On the one hand the NUP is regarded as restricting development, emphasizing static preservation, bringing no real added value, transferring municipal decision-making to the Ministry and engaging primarily environmental and heritage stakeholders. On the other hand, it is considered to be a long-term tool of urban planning, safeguarding values, contributing to tourism and engaging a broad range of actors. The research shows that the NUP process reveals the current tensions between continuity and change, and nature and city, in rapidly growing cities. The paper also emphasizes the importance of understanding the divergent views of different actors in the search for a shared vision of the future of the city.

Keywords: national urban park, urban planning, conflict, Tampere, Helsinki.

Introduction

Between continuity and change, amid nature and city

The balance between continuity and change, nature and city, are the cornerstones of sustainable urban planning. However, urban densification and aspirations for infill development are reshaping this balance and setting new criteria for sustainability. Even if green areas and historical environments are regarded as valuable, they are simultaneously being contested in urban densification (Uggla 2014; Tunström 2007; Lyytimäki et al. 2008). This is related to the conflicts between growth and protection and to the discursive struggle over the direction of urban development. Nature and city, like preservation and growth, are often seen as opposites. This prevailing dichotomy fundamentally affects urban planning and impedes the integration of green areas and historic environments in the development of cities (Erixon et al. 2013; Corner 2006; Frey 2000; Lundgren Alm 2001; Tjallingii 2005). This confrontation is also evident in the protection mechanisms of natural and historical environments,

which have been largely based on segregating an area from its environment and protecting it against change (Erixon et al. 2013; Janssen et al. 2014).

In recent decades, there have been attempts to resolve the uncompromising confrontation between city and nature, continuity and change. In 1992, the World Heritage Convention recognized the interactions between nature and culture and introduced the first international legal instrument to protect cultural landscapes (Chief 2006, 335). Furthermore, Asikainen and Jokinen (2009) have challenged traditional nature conservation and highlighted the possibilities for a new type of nature and urban green to be created in cities. The protection of the built environment is also in a state of transition, with traditional conservation moving towards change management and future-oriented strategies (Janssen et al. 2014, 11).

On the one hand, the NUP is regarded as restricting development, emphasizing static preservation, bringing no real added value and transferring municipal decision-making to the Ministry.

Another good example of this new way of thinking is the concept of a national urban park (NUP), which was included in the Finnish Land Use and Building Act in 2000. According to the Act, a national urban park (NUP) may be established to protect significant cultural or natural landscapes and their historical, scenic and recreational values in urban contexts. The model for the national urban park was adopted from the Swedish National City Park in Stockholm, established by law in 1995. So far, ten NUPs have been established in Finland since 2000. In addition, several cities are aiming at NUPs, including Tampere and Helsinki, and it is these processes that are the topic of this paper. Despite the number of NUPs and the 20-year-long experience of the concept, there is only limited research on how the concept functions in practice and what kinds of negotiation are embedded in the establishment process. The paper arose out of a desire to open up the discussion and the discursive struggles that emerge during the process of establishing NUPs.

Research Design

This paper sheds light on the NUP process by analysing the planning of NUPs in Tampere and Helsinki during 2013-2017. The two cities are currently considering establishing a NUP: Tampere began the process in 2013 and Helsinki in 2017. In both cities, the process has generated strong views both in favour of the NUP and against it. The views are connected to three key questions: 1) what kind of story of the city do we want to pass on to the following generations, 2) who is allowed to participate in the storytelling and 3) is the NUP a purposeful tool for safeguarding the story? The aim of the study is to explore the conflicting arguments about the NUP and examine what lines of argument are used in the process. Additionally, the objectives, values and stakeholders related to these arguments are studied.

The research is based on the NUP debate, including the planning and decision-making documents. A considerable amount of material has accrued in Tampere, whereas it is more limited in Helsinki because the study focuses on the launch of the process. Nevertheless, both cases gave similar results. The paper demonstrates that the NUP can be seen either as a model for sustainable urban planning or as a legislative cage for urban development in big cities. These viewpoints are more closely explored and their lines of argument and backgrounds are examined. The research shows that the NUP process reveals the current debate concerning continuity and change, nature and city, in rapidly growing cities. It also contributes to a deeper understanding of this negotiation and the search for more sustainable urban planning strategies.

The paper consists of four sections, starting with this introduction. The second part addresses the concept of the NUP, with a literature review and the theoretical framework of the study, followed by information about the methods and materials used in the research. The third part presents the NUP processes of Tampere and Helsinki, clarifying first the background and then describing the conflicting views and the related objectives, values and stakeholders. Finally, the fourth section offers conclusions concerning these negotiations. The NUP is

described as an arena of conflicts but also of aspirations towards the shared vision of a sustainable city.

National urban park process as a research object

The NUP in the Legislation

The national urban park was defined in the Finnish Land Use and Building Act (§ 68–71) of 2000 and it consists of significant cultural and natural landscapes in the city. The Ministry of the Environment ratifies the decision on the establishment of a park on the basis of a city's application. The city itself compiles a management and land use plan for the controlled development of the area. So far, ten national urban parks have been established in Finland: in Hämeenlinna, Heinola, Pori, Hanko, Porvoo, Turku, Kotka, Forssa Kuopio and Kokkola. Each NUP must meet four criteria regarding 1) significant content, 2) sufficient extent and interconnectedness, 3) ecology and continuity and 4) a central urban location. According to these criteria, a national urban park must include significant natural areas in terms of the diversity of urban nature, important built cultural environments and green areas remarkable for their landscape architecture or aesthetics. The urban park must be extensive enough as well as being sufficiently connected in its green and blue structures. Furthermore, the national urban park must be part of the urban structure, beginning in the core of the city and reaching to the natural areas and countryside outside the city. In addition to these criteria, the values of the NUP must be safeguarded by urban planning, for example through master plans or local detailed plans (City of Tampere 2017, 5-6).

Research on National Urban Parks

There has been very little research on national urban parks. Several feasibility studies and management and land use plans have been carried out in Finland, but there is scarcely any actual research or systematic monitoring of the functioning of the concept. There are some exceptions, including Mika Raunio's (1999) Master's thesis that examined the NUP in Hämeenlinna as an experiential environment and a resource for urban development. In addition, Laura Leppänen (2006), in her Master's thesis, focused on the project for a national urban park in Varkaus from the perspective of urban development and community planning. Both these theses find that the NUP contributes to the image of the city, which benefits urban development. However, systematic follow-up research on the impact of NUPs is lacking. The NUP experiences of various cities were surveyed in conjunction with Tampere's own needs assessment, which included an extensive questionnaire to the network of NUP cities (Tajakka 2014). In addition to the lack of monitoring, there is also very limited research on the NUP process itself. In Tampere University, Laura Eloranta's (2017) Master's thesis presents an analysis of the Tampere NUP, but otherwise the process perspective has hardly been opened up.

An interesting parallel to the Finnish concept is the Swedish national city park in Stockholm. In 1995, the Swedish Parliament decided to establish an area of 27 sq. km. to protect cultural and natural values in the districts of Ulriksdal-Haga-Brunnsviken-Djurgården. The park is unique, as it is the only national city park in Sweden. It also differs from the Finnish concept in that the park involves three municipalities and is governed by the County Administrative Board (Schantz 2002, 251). However, even though the Swedish concept has several differences from the Finnish NUP, the research on the national city park in Stockholm has a lot to offer for the Finnish cases. Lennart Holm and Peter Schantz (2002) have examined how the concept has been applied after its establishment. They detected several problems concerning the administration of the park and the efficiency of the law in protecting the area from exploitation and fragmentation (Schantz 2002, 250, 260). Despite these deficiencies, the national city park is regarded as a model for sustainable development where the limits between the activities of man and the environment have been recognized – and also constantly challenged. The Swedish case also offers perspectives for studying the establishment processes. In Stockholm, an active

social movement played a crucial political role. Ernstson (2007) and Uggla (2014) have demonstrated how the activists have provided narratives that were able to legitimize the need for protection. By effective story-telling the activists have managed to link the different parts of the park and construct a coherent unity. The story-telling not only combined different areas but also natural and cultural discourses and divergent values. Thus, the narratives of cultural heritage and conservation biology were used to construct the protective story of the area (Ernstson 2007; Uggla 2014).

Conflict Approach in the Process

This paper focuses on the process that makes visible the meanings, aims and values that often remain unrecorded in the final results of the decision-making process. The significance of the process is also highlighted by Patsy Healey, who states that the process should not merely be understood as a means to a substantive end but also as a valuable outcome in itself (Healey 2003, 111). The theoretical approaches to decision-making are in general divided into rational-normative and empirical-descriptive perspectives. The rational and normative approach focuses on how the decision-making *should* happen whereas the empirical and descriptive perspective describes how the decision-making *actually* happens. These approaches are different because actual decision-making behaviour often deviates substantially from the rational ideal. The formation of intent stage, which precedes the decision-making, is rarely straightforward, instead it involves groping around in a network of various forces, interests and valuations (Stingl & Gerald 2017, 121; Möttönen 1997, 172).

Planning processes typically include conflicts, opposite interests and continuous disagreements. Conflict can be generally defined as a struggle between the discordant and incompatible objectives of the parties involved (eg. Coser 1956; Schelling 1960; Deutsch 1973). In conflict research the causes of conflicts are usually categorized into divergent interests, differing information and different values (Sairinen 1994, 25-28; Dietz et al. 1989). The NUP offers an interesting research object as the cross-administrative steering and planning groups had divergent interests and values per se. They represent, as Forester (1999, 187) describes, "rival disciplines competing to frame problems with their own languages, with respect to their own measures and values". For example, land policy, urban development, environmental protection and cultural heritage authorities had very divergent views on the project and its impacts. Therefore, the NUP has served as an arena for a discursive struggle, in which the various parties have defended their positions and striven to convince the others of the superiority of their viewpoint.

Conflicts in urban planning typically concern the oppositions of construction and protection. The underlying assumption is often the idea of a zero-sum game, in which everybody can't win (Sairinen 1994, 27-28). Conflicts often involve interest disputes and value conflicts, which means that the arguments easily become matters of principle (Peltonen et al. 2006, 26). According to an enquiry in 2003 by the Ministry of Environment a characteristic feature of conflicts is the division into two coalitions: the builders and the protectors (Peltonen et al. 2006, 17-18). The former coalition typically includes the municipality, land owners and companies, whereas the latter consists of environmental and cultural heritage authorities and associations. The builder coalition is seen to reflect what is known as the growth machine thesis. Conversely, those who react critically towards growth and actors who oppose environmental change form a counterforce to the growth coalition.

Attfield and Dell (1996, 3-26) have analysed the recurring arguments in the conflicts between development and protection and categorized them into economic, social, psychological, political, ecological and aesthetic. *Economic arguments* on the one hand have to do with the benefits of construction, for example, prosperity, jobs and progress. On the other hand they point out the drawbacks of construction, such as the overuse of natural and other resources

and the profit-seeking of the major landowners. *Social arguments* are linked with the production of reasonably priced housing, a decrease in travel times and the empowering of community spirit. The counter-arguments to construction for their part relate to the negative effects on the quality of the environment and thus to wellbeing, preserving as unbuilt those areas important to the residents, and the safeguarding of community spirit. *Psychological arguments* are connected to values and the positive or negative images of the development. *Political arguments* concern objective setting, the planning process or decision-making. One side appeals to the promotion of the public good, as well as to the end results of the planning process, or the majority decisions. The counter arguments claim that the project is against the interests of the public good, against public opinion or based on an inadequate process. As *ecological arguments*, some defend densification and see development as promoting sustainability, while the opposition regards construction as a threat to biological species and their habitats. *Aesthetic arguments* involve on the one hand the views that construction will bring about new aesthetic values and the promotion of creativity, while on the other hand, the reverse views defend existing aesthetic and cultural values.

Materials and Methods

The research is based on the NUP debate and includes the planning, policy and decision-making documents. In Tampere, these documents include five steering group and thirteen planning group meetings, which together describe in detail the discussion, the statements of cross-administrative actors and the process of the NUP in 2013–2017 (the steering group meetings are referred as SG and the planning group meetings as PG in the text). Together with the needs assessment of the NUP, published in 2017, these documents draw a clear picture of the NUP process in Tampere. Furthermore, as former project manager, the author has been able to follow the process closely from 2013–2017. In Helsinki, the study focuses on the starting point of the NUP process in 2017. Therefore, the data is more concise and consists of the decision-making documents, including the statements of six municipal boards. Despite the compact data, the starting point of the NUP process is revealing and captures the multidimensional and conflicting nature of the process. The author also participated in the first public hearing meeting, "start-off of the national urban park in Helsinki", on 12.6.2017.

The empirical basis of the study is a qualitative content analysis, of which the aim is to search for meanings in the texts and organize the data in a compact and clear manner. The work on the data-based content analysis is guided by the research questions, the answers being sought for in the empirical data (eg. Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002). The study applies narrative analysis that primarily focuses on what is said about the NUP. According to Uggla (2014, 364), the narrative includes framing, which is largely about salience, that is, the information that is emphasized. The narrative analysis looks for central themes and main points, the repetition of information, distinctions and contrasts. These analytical tools are used to categorize the empirical material and identify the frame-shaping elements of the NUP discussion. The paper has a special interest in conflicting views on the NUP. According to the conflict approach, disputes include three standpoints: 1) the actors in the conflicts, 2) interaction between these actors, and 3) the specific context of the conflict (Peltonen & Villanen 2004, 14-15). Thus, the paper concentrates on the actors and their objectives and the main lines of argument in the NUP process. It also examines the interaction of the actors and the coalition building in the steering and planning groups and in the decision-making process.

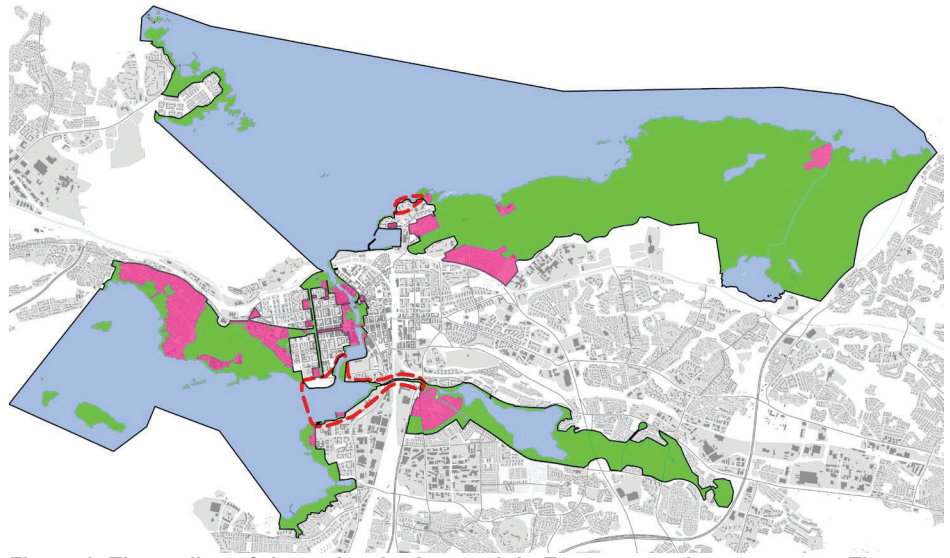


Figure 1. The outline of the national urban park in Tampere needs assessment. The green refers to green areas, the red to built areas and the blue to lakes, included in the NUP.

National urban park processes in Tampere and Helsinki

Tampere NUP process in 2013–2017

The needs assessment for Tampere NUP got going in the autumn of 2012 on the initiative of the city council. In spring 2013, the council decided to prepare a more extensive and profound survey on the establishment of a NUP as part of the ongoing preparation of strategic master plan for the centre. Nevertheless, it was also stated that the city at this point was not going to start a process aiming at the establishment of the NUP because it would limit the development projects in the potential park area and its immediate vicinity (Tampere City Council 15.4.2013). The decision refers to an earlier survey of 2011 when the result had been that the city would not enter an application for the park status. There have been several initiatives on NUPs over the years, such as in 2001, 2005, 2007 and 2011, but they have not led to any measures being taken. However, in 2013, it was decided after all to examine the starting points once more.

The needs assessment of the national urban park in Tampere was carried out from 2013–2017. A cross-administrative steering group for the project was designated by the city mayor, with the deputy mayor as chairman. The members of the steering group represented different administrations: master and local detailed planning, city centre development, land policy, environmental protection, landscape planning, sports, sustainable community, business, real estate services, and outside the city organization, the Provincial Museum of Pirkanmaa, the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (Pirkanmaan ELY-keskus), and the Regional Council (Pirkanmaan liitto).

At the same time, a planning group was appointed to prepare the needs assessment. The task was to produce information relevant to the project decision-making and a potential application. The main goal was to define what kinds of impact the NUP would have on the city of Tampere. The needs assessment survey presented an outline of the NUP by exploring the essential themes and features of the city and forming the story of Tampere. Additionally, borders were examined as well as the criteria for NUP and planning prerequisites for the area. The impact assessment was a central part of the survey. The work included an extensive questionnaire on other cities'

experiences of NUPs. Expert workshops and resident surveys also complemented the process (City of Tampere 2017, 5, 13).

During the NUP process there arose a strong opposition, described in the steering group thus: "It is unlikely that a consensus will be achieved because the NUP can be seen as a protector of the different factions' own territories" (SG 14.1.2015). In the final meeting of the steering group in spring 2016 the different fields presented their own views on proceeding with the project. Eight factions offered their clear support and four expressed doubts (SG 22.3.2016). Representatives of environmental protection, landscape planning, sports, sustainable community, real estate services, the Provincial Museum of Pirkanmaa, the ELY and the Regional Council took a positive stand. Master and local detailed planning, city centre development, land policy and business were critical.

The project proceeded on a majority vote and the report of the needs assessment was handed over to the mayor in spring 2016. The work was taken to the city council in October, but the handling was postponed (Tampere City Board 31.10.2016). In February 2017, the city council approved the assessment and decided that Tampere would move on towards the NUP application stage. According to the decision, the next steps would be the preparation of the necessary extra surveys for the central development areas, and the preparation of a management and land use plan. Contrary to the proposal, the decision also required redefining the borders of the area, which reveals the tensions in the decision process (Tampere City Board 20.2.2017).

Helsinki NUP process in 2017

The NUP process began in Helsinki on the initiative of the city council (25.5.2016), accompanied by the citizen initiative (published 10.9.2015). Unlike the case in Tampere, the social movement, supported by 79 organisations and communities, played a crucial role as the initiator of the process. The movement "National Urban Park to Helsinki!" (Kansallinen kaupunkipuisto Helsinkiin!) was closely connected to the ongoing, strongly objected master plan process. Therefore, the initiative was a clear protest against the plan with high building volumes (<http://kaupunkipuisto.fi/>; <https://www.kuntalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/2057>). The NUP proposal was taken to the city council in November 2016, but the handling was postponed (Helsinki City Council 30.11.2016). The decision of the preparation of the NUP feasibility study was finally taken in February 2017, four months after the approval of the master plan. Therefore, the timing of the NUP was clearly connected to the aftermath of the contentious master plan process. In the opening statement of the final Helsinki City Council meeting, the NUP was supported as a counterweight to the master plan and as a strategy to protect valuable areas from construction (Helsinki City Council 22.2.2017).

As the case in Tampere, the NUP process evoked strong opposition that was obvious from the first statements. The preparation for the city council decision included statements from six different boards, with two negative and four positive standpoints. City planning and public works took a negative standpoint, whereas the city museum, education, environmental protection and sports supported the NUP (Helsinki City Planning Committee 6.9.2016; Helsinki Education Committee 13.9.2016; Helsinki Environmental Committee 20.9.2016; Helsinki Museum Board 27.9.2016; Helsinki Public Works Committee 20.9.2016; Helsinki Sports Committee 6.10.2016). The city council decided that a NUP feasibility study would have to be prepared as a basis for a common viewpoint and support for the decision-making. After this it would be possible to decide whether to establish a NUP or not (Helsinki City Council 22.2.2017). The project was also made into an interactive pilot project in accordance with Helsinki's new participation and interactive model. The council designated a cross-administrative steering group with representatives from the city planning department, the public works department, the environment division, sports, the

city museum and the executive office (The decision of Helsinki Mayor 15.3.2017).

As in Tampere, the establishment of an NUP in Helsinki had been presented many times earlier. Nevertheless, it had not been considered necessary and for this reason no studies had been started. The NUP had been proposed in 2002, in connection with the previous master plan, but instead a so-called Helsinki Park was established, on the basis of some NUP criteria. The Helsinki Park became a substitute for the NUP, and would, according to the city council, fulfil the criteria concerning the values of the natural and built environment and be managed by the city's own means. Therefore, as response to the residents' initiative concerning NUP in 2012, the city council decided not to apply to the Ministry for NUP status because the preservation of its values was seen to be ensured by the Helsinki Park and city planning instruments (Helsinki City Council 25.4.2012).

Conflicting Views on the NUP

The NUP processes in Tampere and Helsinki have served as an arena for tensions and negotiations between continuity and change. Concerning the conflicts, we need to return to the key questions about the NUP: 1) what kind of story of the city do we want to pass on to the following generations, 2) who is allowed to participate in the storytelling and 3) is the NUP a purposeful tool to safeguard the story? The documents of the processes in Tampere and Helsinki demonstrate that there is no shared understanding about the story of the city, nor about who can participate in the process, and finally nor about what kind of instruments are the most useful to foster the story of the city.

The analysis of the processes reveals several conflicting views concerning the benefits or disadvantages of the NUP instrument. The most controversial aspects address the negative impacts on urban planning by hampering development and transferring decision-making to the government. Furthermore, there are doubts about whether the status would bring adequate added value to the city (City of Tampere 2017, 11). In the analysis, the conflicting views have been categorized into five main lines of argument, addressing: 1) the restrictions of preservation, 2) the agenda of urban planning, 3) the added value gained, 4) the ownership of decision-making power and finally, 5) the ownership of the process itself. In the following, the objectives, values and actors related to these opposing arguments are examined and elaborated. The arguments make the tensions between growth and preservation profoundly apparent, in addition to the challenging interaction between the various actors.

Restrictions of Preservation

The NUP process reveals a clear opposition of two interests – development and preservation. In the "restriction story" the NUP is regarded as hampering urban development, and as halting change through protective regulations. Many such views emphasized the national urban park as a brake on development or as museumification of the city (City of Tampere 2017, 9-11, 53). The park's precise border and its ratification in the NUP decision were also seen as especially problematic (City of Tampere 2017, 7; PG 3.12.2014; Helsinki City Planning Committee 6.9.2016). In Tampere, these concerns especially addressed important development projects with the unpredictable needs for change, such as Eteläpuisto and Viinikanlahti. It is illustrative that in the initial process meeting in Tampere it was already asked whether an NUP decision could be reversed if an urgent need would arise (SG 6.11.2013).

The points of friction between the NUP and urban development were repeatedly tackled in both the Tampere and Helsinki statements (PG 23.10.2013; PG 13.5.2014; SG 14.1.2015; City of Tampere 2017 17, Helsinki City Planning Committee 6.9.2016). The NUP status appeared as possible grounds for appeal on urban planning decisions. In Helsinki, the urban planning committee referred to the difficulties experienced in Stockholm concerning the restrictions brought about by the NUP (Helsinki City Planning Committee 6.9.2016). In Tampere,

the steering group specifically focused on the complaints about the NUP area in Turku (SG 9.6.2014). Furthermore, the Ministry of the Environment was asked for a separate clarification of the points of friction between land use planning and NUP (PG 13.5.2014). The steering group also required more information on the impacts of NUP on urban planning and development processes, land policy and business (SG 14.1.2015).

In opposition to the arguments emphasizing restriction, an "enabling story" was created. This argument demonstrated that the NUP does not prevent development, but enables change and gives guidelines to urban planning (Helsinki Environmental Committee 20.9.2016; City of Tampere 2017, 9, 56; SG 9.6.2014). This was supported by the results of the enquiry among NUP cities which stated that the NUP had not had a negative impact on urban planning and land policy and it had not brought extra restrictions (City of Tampere 2017, 11; PG 23.10.2013). Furthermore, several cases of the development projects in the NUP areas were mentioned to support the argument (City of Tampere 2017, 18). The enabling story emphasized the guiding of urban development, instead of protecting values from exploitation. Even if the definition of protection was avoided in the discussion, the idea of safeguarding values from negative impacts was clearly present (SG 14.1.2015; City of Tampere 2017, 56; Helsinki Public Meeting 12.6.2017). In both cities, the pressure for infill development had generated strong opposition, and the NUP was considered to be a counterforce to balance the growth (Helsinki City Council 22.2.2017).

Agenda of Urban Planning

The NUP brings forth conflicting views on the agenda of urban planning and its relationship to the NUP. The future-oriented "development story" sees the NUP as emphasizing static preservation and lacking a link to strategic urban planning, for example, the master plan. The NUP is regarded as subordinate to the urban planning agenda, which dictates the storyline of city planning and infill development strategies. Therefore, in Tampere, the NUP was not connected to the master plan even though the master plan process was simultaneously in progress (PG 3.9.2014). In this way, the development story was underlined and the strategic significance of the NUP was underrated. Correspondingly, the areas where the NUP and the local master plan were in contradiction were described as sore points that stressed conflict, rather than an opportunity for improvement (SG 9.6.2014).

Contrary to the development story, arguments about safeguarding the identity of the city were produced. The identity was based on the story of the city, a shared vision of its significant features and unique values. In this "identity story", the NUP was regarded as an instrument for fostering the common values of the city. If the city did not apply for the NUP, it would send a signal that these values were not appreciated (SG 30.9.2014). In addition, the role of green areas was emphasized and the NUP was regarded as a tool that would stress their strategic significance as a counterbalance to infill development (City of Tampere 2017, 55). As opposed to the development story, the close link between the NUP and urban planning strategies was highlighted (PG 3.9.2014; SG 9.6.2014; SG 30.9.2014). In the steering group it was stated that the NUP was an integral part of the Tampere master plan process, not a separate decision (SG 9.6.2014). This emphasized the strategic significance of the NUP and considered it equal to other urban planning documents.

Added Value through the NUP

An important aspect in the NUP discussion addressed added value. In Tampere, it was decided from the beginning that both benefits and disadvantages would be assessed in the study (PG 23.10.2013). Therefore, the enquiry focused on the impacts on urban planning, land policy and business (SG 30.9.2014). Regarding added value, the views differed. A recurring argument was that the NUP would bring no real added value in big cities but would mainly benefit smaller towns. For the same reason, Helsinki decided to establish a Helsinki Park in the master plan 2002 as a substitute to the NUP. In bigger cities, urban planning instruments with master and local detailed plans

were regarded as sufficient, no extra tool thus being needed (City of Tampere 2017, 9; Helsinki City planning Committee 6.9.2016). The views were also supported by the survey which showed that the impacts on livelihood and land policy in NUP cities have been neutral or slightly positive. In Tampere, a member of the steering group asked why to introduce this kind of tool if the impacts were neutral. The results of the enquiry were also questioned because there were no exact quantitative surveys about the effects on tourism (SG 22.3.2016). It was also stated that the added value is not self-evident unless the city develops NUP and different administrations become engaged in the project (City of Tampere 2017, 10).

The opposing arguments were also based on the enquiry and pointed out that the NUP would be a desirable status bringing substantial benefits to the NUP cities. According to the survey, the NUP contributes to sustainable urban planning, local pride and tourism (City of Tampere 2017, 9; Helsinki Environmental Committee 20.9.2016). The NUP was considered a long-term tool for urban planning, safeguarding the story of the city and offering a holistic view of the city combining cultural heritage and nature (City of Tampere 2017, 9). The NUP was also considered to promote deepening cross-administrative co-operation between stakeholders. Furthermore, it would affect well-being and local pride and give opportunities to tourism, for example, in urban nature tourism (City of Tampere 2017, 9, 56; SG 14.1.2015).

Ownership of Decision-Making Power

A strong disagreement addressed the decision-making power with the NUP. The view that the NUP would transfer decision-making power to the Ministry was an argument that constantly came up in the discussions both in Tampere and Helsinki (City of Tampere 2017, 9, 10, 53; Helsinki City Planning Committee 6.9.2016). Helsinki stated that "the establishment of a national urban park partly relinquishes the decision-making power over the development of the area and its management from the city to the Ministry of the Environment and also curtails the city council's role as the highest deciding body. There is a risk that the city's decision-making would be delayed and complicated" (Helsinki City Planning Committee 6.9.2016). Tampere reasoned that "it is not necessary for the preservation of parks and other areas to transfer the power of decision to the Ministry of the Environment. The city must have confidence in its own capability to make sensible decisions" (City of Tampere 2017, 10).

As the statements demonstrate, the intervention of the Ministry of the Environment in city planning was considered undesirable and detrimental to urban development. In spite of the fact that the Ministry of the Environment emphasized their consultative role and the responses of other cities did not identify any slippage of decision-making power to the Ministry, the image of interference in the city affairs remained resolute. The probable reason behind this idea lies in the Ministry's earlier role of sanctioning plans, which was seen as weakening the role of the local government. In addition, conflicts of interests between the state and the cities influenced their attitudes (SG 22.3.2016). Another new factor of uncertainty was the administrative reform and the changing position of ELY, the Centre for Economic Development and the Environment, which would also have an impact on the practices of the NUP (SG 22.3.2016).

In opposition to arguments that emphasized the interventions of the Ministry, a story of the city as the primary actor was brought up. These arguments were based on the enquiry which demonstrated that the role of the Ministry is merely consultative and the city itself decides how to interact with the Ministry. The main task of the Ministry is the preparation and application stages of the NUP. The instrument does not change the role of the ELY in the urban planning process (City of Tampere 2017, 9). The Ministry of the Environment also emphasized that the NUP is primarily an internal development tool of the city, with which to safeguard the city's special values in its urban planning, following jointly-agreed-upon principles (SG 6.11.2013). In this way, the NUP would

actually originate on the basis of the city's own objectives, rather than being led by externally imposed demands.

Ownership of the Process itself

During the NUP process the actors involved were quite clearly divided into two camps with different standpoints and divergent interpretations of the ownership of the process. The critical coalition regarded the NUP primarily as engaging environmental and heritage authorities and citizens. In Helsinki, the citizen movement was a prominent feature which highlighted residents' role in the process. The active role of environmental and heritage authorities also affected the interpretation of the ownership.

While critical members saw the NUP as a matter of only a limited number of actors, the supporting coalition regarded the NUP as engaging and benefiting broadly different authorities and citizens. In Tampere, the ELY criticized the fact that the process had concentrated on the effects on the City but not on the citizens (SG 14.1.2015). The need for participation was generally recognized in the Tampere steering group. Nevertheless, the actual realisation of the participation was very limited and publicity of the project was sparse. On the contrary, participation was emphasized in Helsinki where the NUP was introduced as a pilot project of a new participation model. As background to this, the participation in the recently approved master plan had been strongly criticized and the NUP was an attempt to restore confidence in the decision-making (Helsinki City Council 22.2.2017).

Table 1. The discursive struggle over the NUP.

CRITICAL COALITION & ARGUMENTS	SUPPORTING COALITION & ARGUMENTS
urban planning, city centre development, land policy, public works, business	environmental protection, landscape planning, sports, education, sustainable community, real estate services, museum, Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, Regional Council
Restricting development	A long-term tool of guiding urban development
Emphasizing static preservation, no link to the city strategies	Safeguarding the identity of the city for future citizens, closely linked with city strategies
Bringing no real added value for big cities, present planning instruments are sufficient	Contributing to sustainable urban planning, cross-administrative co-operation, well-being, local pride and tourism
Transferring municipal decision-making to the Ministry	City as the key actor
Engaging primarily environmental and heritage stakeholders and citizens	Engaging and combining broadly different stakeholders

Conclusions

The NUP processes in Tampere and Helsinki have revealed the current debate between continuity and change. They have been a collision point for the opposing interests of the different actors involved in urban planning. During the NUP process the actors were quite clearly divided into two camps with different standpoints. Representatives of environmental protection, landscape planning, sports, real estate services, sustainable community, education, museums, the ELY and the Regional Council took a positive stand. Conversely, land policy, city centre development, urban planning, business and public works were critical.

The NUP processes have been arenas of conflicts and contentious views. The paper demonstrates that the NUP can be seen either as a model for sustainable urban planning or a legislative cage for urban development in big cities. On the one hand, the NUP is regarded as restricting development, emphasizing static preservation, bringing no real added value to big cities, transferring municipal decision-making to the Ministry and engaging primarily environmental and heritage stakeholders. On the other hand, the NUP is considered a long-term

tool of urban planning, safeguarding the identity of the city for future citizens, contributing to sustainable urban planning, tourism and local pride, and engaging broadly different stakeholders.

These constructed narratives formed the discursive struggle over the NUP. The struggle related to the nature of the city's story, who gets to define it, and what kinds of tools can preserve it for future generations. The process of the national urban park can be seen more broadly as a laboratory of urban planning and a board game for participants, in which the different coalitions strive for their goals. The NUP also reveals the tensions between growth and preservation, in addition to the related objectives, values and actors in growing cities. The NUP is like city planning itself, nonlinear, polyphonic and contradictory.

The NUP appears to be an arena of conflicts, but it can also be exploited constructively. Further study is needed to explore its potential. Even if there is no shared understanding about the agenda of urban planning and the benefits of the NUP, the process itself is a useful arena for negotiation and striving for consensus. It is an instrument that can construct a shared vision of the story of the city and its substantial values. The process also adds understanding of the divergent interests and values of different actors. Consequently, the NUP process can be applied as a model for consensus-building. The NUP is also an exercise in urban planning and offers an important link between nature and city, history and present, and preservation and development. Whether or not the final result is a national urban park, the process in itself is valuable and manifests a shared aspiration towards a sustainable city.

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