Participation from Theory to Practice: To what extent can Citizens influence the Planning Procedures?

Planning by Dialogue: “The Living Urban Laboratory Karlskrona” (Revedin 2015)

Abstract:

This dissertation examines which democratic perspective is predominant in the Swedish municipal land-use planning focusing on the situation of citizen participation and the actual level of influence the citizen have. The paper not only describes the legislative framework but an interpretation of how collective planning looks like in theory and in practice within Karlskrona Kommun. The aim of this essay is not only to review the formal prerequisites having the law as a departure point but also to identify which are the conditions of participation in practice as the increased collaboration between the policy-developers and the stakeholders has been confirmed by law almost three decades ago.
1. Introduction

The Swedish public administration is known for the decentralized governance of the municipalities. Local self-government has been enshrined in the Swedish Constitution due to its long tradition which started in the mid-1800s. When it comes to planning history and development, the current codes result from different planning paradigm shifts that Sweden has been facing in the past century.

The vision of a so-called ‘strong society’ was enforced by the Social Democratic government during the 1950s and 1970s. This concept was based on some conflicting targets. Namely, it meant boosting the expansion of large municipalities and business concerns at the cost of small sized municipalities respectively enterprises. Despite the fact that the welfare state was completed, a stable economic growth was ensured and a wage policy was established. The welfare system soon became a model in the world (Elmbrant 1993). However, its role in the society was questioned in the 1980s. As a consequence, a series of administrative restructures were implemented. During the 1990s, the Swedish welfare system underwent major improvements imposed by the market: the public sector needed to be rearranged and the power needed to be redistributed to the local governments. This is why nowadays the national government has political control over the urban evolution in order to diminish geographical discrepancy while the local authorities are in charge with social services and infrastructure.

The Swedish political structure is known for the strong political parties which have a key position within the democratic system. In the context of a high political trust, participation, democratic governance and equality are some of the recurring topics in recent discussions in social sciences. All these subjects point to the increasing attention to citizen participation in collective decision-making and to the importance of developing other forms of civic participation than those which are typically found in representative democracy (Premfors & Roth 2004).

The current Planning and Building Act (Plan- och Bygglagen, PBA) resulted after nearly 20 years of investigative work and it is the legal framework which is empowering the citizens to get involved in the early stages of the planning procedures. When it comes to comprehensive planning, however there are some impartial discussions in relation to the design of the built environment. Besides, there are still some obvious restraints regarding the degree of influence the residents can have. For instance, there are no principles of direct democracy when it comes to land-use planning, one can rather talk about some aspects of representative democracy. Furthermore, the law itself is encouraging the municipalities to reduce the involvement rate of the residents in decision-making as there is a simplified planning procedure available which is not requiring civil active engagement. Despite the simplified process, the new provisions of the Planning and Building Act approved in 2015 are decreasing the examination period in order to speed the planning procedures up.

However, there is a paradox in the current Swedish planning development regarding citizen participation in public decision-making in general and urban planning in particular. Urban planning has been based on continuous dialogues and negotiations for more than half a century. However, the civil involvement rate in municipal projects decreased compared to its blossoming period of the 1960s and ’70s. On contrary, an explosion of new citizen movements is becoming more obvious.
2. Aim of Research

2.1 Research Motivation

The paper is aiming to point out which democratic perspective is predominant in the Swedish municipal land-use planning, focusing on the situation of citizen participation and the actual level of influence the citizen have. The essay is not only describing the legislative framework but an interpretation of how collective planning looks like in theory and in practice will be given by addressing the three levels of democracy: liberal, participatory and deliberative. Consequently, the primary research question that arises is to what extent can citizens influence the planning procedures? The influence rate of the public in decision-making will be discussed and analyzed in three case studies in the context of the “Living Urban Laboratory Karlskrona” (Revedin 2015).

Other secondary research questions that arise are: What is the main role the citizens need to fulfill within the preparatory works of participation? Which democratic model do they prefer? Can public participation be seen as a step within the participatory or deliberative democratic model? Or should it be seen as an element in representative democracy whereby decision-makers would listen to the needs of the citizens and on the other hand the transparency of the process would be guaranteed. Further questions are raised about how citizen participation is balanced within the representative system and about its overall efficiency within the planning process. All this questions will be answered by reviewing the existing literature regarding civil participation and by examining some of the previous provisions of the Planning and Building Act.

The aim of this paper is not only to review the formal prerequisites having the law as a departure point but also to identify which are the conditions of participation in practice as the increased collaboration between the policy-developers and the stakeholders has been confirmed by law almost three decades ago.

2.2 Structure of the paper

In background, a short planning history will be reviewed in order to have a clear insight on how participatory planning emerged in Sweden. Within the first section, the three different democratic models will be discussed, namely, liberal, participatory and deliberative, and both their different approaches to collaborative spatial planning, and their level of influence. Secondly, a review of the legal requirements for civil engagement will be presented. While the last section is aiming to present the analytical aspects which will be used within the empirical case studies in order to illustrate how participation looks in theory and practice, namely, to specify whether citizens can influence the decision-making process for real, or not.

3. Background
How did Participatory Planning emerge in Sweden?

Looking back in time, Swedish municipalities had particularly low possibilities to control the urban evolution due to a law that was approved in 1810. In the context of a new constitution, the new legislation made land a "tradable commodity" (Lundström et al. 2013) as no rules for planning and building existed. The urgent need to amend these problems called for a new Building Decree (byggnadsstadgan) in 1874 which was considered to be the initial modern building regulation. Subsequently, the idea of 'planning monopoly' has its roots in The Town Planning Act (stadsplanelagen) of 1907 which had the aim to create legal connections
between the municipalities and landowners. Despite the fact that the idea of municipal planning monopoly (kommunal planmonopolet) was founded, the plans had to be authorized by the King or Government, albeit, the latter had, in fact, no authority over planning. As a consequence, this new concept of monopoly was questioned during the 1930s as the opportunity to authorize national interest plans, against the resolution of the municipality, was created through the Town Planning Act of 1931.

Notable changes in the planning regulations were introduced in the post-war era through the Building Act (byggnadslagen) of 1947. Firstly, in relation to the comprehensive planning, the idea of a master plan (generalplan) and a regional plan (regionalplan) emerged after the vision of the welfare state developed quickly and urban growth to a great extent needed to be steered. Until the 1950s, the professionals were presumed to design blueprint plans of new districts or cities without taking into consideration social aspects or political actions. “Master plans were also deterministic in assuming that large-scale physical changes cause predictable social outcomes” (Khakee 1996). Most of the new planned neighborhoods were build according to this principle by external experts who were not really in touch with the local political and social realities. Secondly, the idea of public participation was introduced for the first time in the Swedish planning laws. Before that, public access to the planning actions was totally limited as most of the crucial municipal agreements were made solely by the public officials and representatives of all interest within the community. Ordinary citizens had very few chances to participate as the power was definitely centralized in Swedish municipalities. Moreover, the so called planning monopoly was given a new interpretation as land-use planning need to be further attested by a governmental agency in charge with Building and Planning (Byggnadsstyrelsen).

The public involvement in decision-making had rather a therapeutic character in its early stages. In other words, many politicians have seen civil participation as an opportunity to restore the formerly high rank of political trust and to give all involved actors a more accurate image of the administration’s policies. The 1950s and 1960s illustrated two decades of rapid change with low social and political conflict. However, the principal social-welfare programs were initiated, the local government was extended and restructured in order to be able to manage the new services. Subsequently, the Swedish society was quickly reorganized in order to make industry more efficient and to assure its financial benefits. The structural changes that took place in industry led to an unpredicted mixed city growth, contrasting the modernist principles that used to have a powerful impact on the Swedish society. Housing shortage was becoming a common phenomenon in many growing urban communities. In order to solve this problem, the central government decided to start implementing in 1965 the “million programme”. As a consequence, a series of sterile suburbs were built in a time span of 10 years in which large scale clearance projects were implemented despite a widespread public opposition. The paradigm change in the architects and planners role triggered during the 1970’s a series of institutional and economical transformations: The state and the local government were rearranged and the number of municipalities were reduced from 2,500 in 1952 to 278. Regarding citizen participation, other measures were adopted in order to increase civil involvement, and economic and social planning was slowly assimilated by
land-use planning. Furthermore, the so called ‘experts’, planners and social engineers, were criticized for being in charge for both the welfare model and the exploitation of several resources including nature and culture (Lundström et al. 2013). It was just a matter of time until the old Swedish planning regulations became obsolete. The so called blueprint planning approach was considered to be a problem in itself. As a result, master plans were replaced by an overall plan (also known as municipal-planning guidelines). In addition to, direct-action demonstrations, such as the Elms Battle, defended by far-reaching mass-media inclusion, succeeded to diminish public confidence in the state structure.

Serious concerns have been raised during the 1980s regarding the central government’s power over the urban growth. Municipalities have argued against the imposed building standards and statutory regulations regarding social services. These actions towards stronger local freedom have taken place in moment when the municipal planning monopoly was challenged in relation to the national physical planning (Khakee 1996). Under those circumstances, the urgent need for a new planning legislation was fixed by introducing in 1987 the Planning and Building Act, PBA, which requires municipalities to develop mandatory structure plans. Moreover, urban planning is given a new meaning as local and national issues of public concern had to be rather based on dialogue and negotiation between the politicians, planners and all stakeholders.

4. Literature review

4.1 Citizen participation according to democratic models

The discussion of how a democratic society should look like has a long history. Democracy theorists such as Lundquist (2001) or Held (1996) have chosen to classify the democratic models in three different divisions: liberal (also known as representative), participatory and deliberative democracy. The latter concept will be investigated separately as it is considered to be the key element of democracy. The first intention of this chapter is to examine the relation between the three listed models and public participation in decision-making. Despite the fact that participation is mandatory according to the PBA, the ability citizens have to participate to consultative planning efforts might be influenced by both their own perception of power and some other factors which will be later analyzed. Lundquist (2001) proposed four process values that political institutions should be build upon in order to support democratic decision-making, namely, openness, consideration, reciprocity and responsibility. The purpose is to illustrate which value is characteristic for each model and to highlight any problematic aspects that could be identified. However, all of the three models are based on some common civil liberties that will ensure the main conditions for a democratic society.

4.1.1 The Liberal Democracy

There are different versions of liberal democratic models. However, the main focus point will be on the elite democratic model and the pluralistic one. The foregoing was chosen because it is supposed to be the purest derivative and the latter could be considered the most relevant concept in relation to the analysis. The liberal democracy models have a common starting point. Namely, the rights of the individual which are enshrined in law are protected. The model is based on a clear distinction between the private and the political sphere. To counteract the risk of power concentration
several measures need to be taken: the power has to be separated between various state institutions, minorities should also have a word to say and the media has to be free. One view regarding the pure elite democratic model expressed by Schumpeter (1994) is that citizens are limited to choose their representatives and direct citizen participation in the political process is not desired.

The pluralistic model on the other hand emerged in the 1950s and ‘60s in the US and it was an attempt to describe the political reality. The important difference within this model is the fact that power is not concentrated among the decision-makers. On contrary, it is scattered among various interest groups that can influence the policy-development. According to Dahl (1982), pluralists believe that the interest groups fulfill a democratic role by representing the citizens and by countering the political power. However, the pluralist intention of participation is ambiguous as citizens need to organize themselves into civic groups that should function as a liaison between the community and the professionals. In this case the negotiations that take place between the two sides are the key in the planning process. One of the series problems with this model is the fact that the power itself is not distributed in an even way in the society. Namely, all the social classes which are part of a community should be represented even if certain groups might not have been involved in planning-related movements before. In this case the planner’s role is to think how to reach out and to stimulate the previously excluded groups to get involved in decision-making.

As it has been noted, the main value identified by Lundquist (2001) is in this case the responsibility. In order to yield the expected outcomes, a clear division of the responsibilities of the professionals, politicians and the various interest groups needs to be done. Needless to say, the politicians are actually the ones who will make the final decisions within the planning procedures. Political decisions may be proceeded by discussions but unlike the other two democratic models, debates are not seen as the means to reach consensus. In this case civil involvement is welcomed as long as it does intend to obstruct political verdicts.

4.1.2 Participatory Democracy

A fundamental starting point for democracy is the notion that citizen participation in decision-making is beneficial since it is developing democratic qualities in people such as mutual respect, tolerance, solidarity and a sense of shared responsibility for creating the good society. It turns against the idea that only elites are capable of democratic participation, on contrary there are strong believes that every citizen has this ability. Lundquist (2001) argues that representative democracy is indispensable especially in relation to national policies and decisions with a more general influence. In this case public participation can take place in two different forms. Firstly, citizens can be directly involved in the decision-making process through referendums or by meeting each other face to face in an assembly. Secondly, they can be indirectly engaged by being represented by a civic organization.

Both types of participation illustrate a fundamental dilemma, namely, participation must prove a real influence in order to stimulate the residents to participate. This dilemma is quite obvious but no clear answer is given. It is considered that public participation should be increased and a number of measures are taken. However, in this case it is not enough to have the same formal right to participate because inequalities exists. For instance, disparities exist in relation to the education level, social
status, income etc. and all this factors could, to some extent, influence the engagement rate of the residents.

Under this circumstances, all four process values identified by Lundquist (2001) are equally important. Heinelt & Haus (2005) draw attention to the importance of the political legitimacy. As suggested by them, openness and transparency are equally important when citizens need to understand the decisions which are made by the politicians in order to consider them reliable (ibid.). All citizens have a common responsibility when it comes to a political democracy. Civil servants should assume their role as mediators because one of the main goals of participation is gather as many residents as possible in order to collect their opinion.

4.1.3 Deliberative Democracy

During the past decade, deliberative democracy theory emerged and was discussed extensively. These theories often have much in common with the participatory model, as they argue for an active citizen participation while promoting that all citizens or groups need to have equal opportunities to participate in the planning process.

The deliberative democratic approach is based on Habermas’ (1996) theories of “communicative action” and the ideal call situation and it proposes that civil engagement should be “fair” by being depicted by various stakeholders with identical power. In other words, it means that joint decisions are made through a deliberative process whereby the best arguments prevail. On contrary, a majority would be voting and negotiation based on power relations. The reason why it is crucial to get involved is that all attendants must reach a consensus. This last model has also been criticized as it is not always possible to achieve a general agreement. Therefore, every single participant needs to see first of all past his own narrow interest and should begin to reflect on what is best for the whole common benefit. On the other hand, Bohman (1996) holds the view that to some extent the involved citizens might accept a decision as the decision-making process is going fair, even if they would not normally agree to it. For this reason, the vote of the majority is decisive within the policy-development process.

The deliberative theorists agree on the main point that everyone affected by a planning proposal should have the opportunity to express his or her opinion in equal terms. For instance, Young (2000) states that deliberative democracy could rather take place in small communities where all concerned individuals have the chance to meet face to face. The model proposed by Young (2000) is slightly similar to Habermas’s, namely, the civil society plays a crucial role in achieving the ideal of a deliberative democracy. According to this perspective, all sectors of the society should have the opportunity to communicate with the authorities.

Concluding, it is difficult to identify a set of values within this model taking in consideration the internal differences discussed above. To a large extend they could coincide to the representative model. The question of responsibility becomes somewhat complicated when one assumes that civil society can influence the political decision-makers primarily through informal channels. The deliberative model distinguishes the strong emphasis on reciprocity in democratic discussions. In order to make deliberation possible, it is necessary that all parties listen to the arguments of the other sides during the discussions and one of the involved sides is willing to change its own
position after that if the assertion is more persuasive.

4.2 Citizen Participation within the current PBA

The current Planning and Building Act, PBA, was introduced in 1987 after nearly two decades of investigative work and it was aiming to solve conflicts regarding land-use through democratic means. It emerged with a democratic elite character that previously described the planning process and later it embraced a rather participatory sense. The PBA has a central role in planning as it regulates the municipal decision-making. The so called ‘planning monopoly’ the Swedish municipalities have, means not only that the municipalities are empowered to make their own decisions regarding the planning of buildings, land- and water-use. This also implies that private investors are depending on the local authority’s approval to start planning development strategies. It is important to mention that citizen participation is requested also by the Road and Railway Acts (väglagen, järnvägslagen) and by the Environmental Code (miljöbalken) when it comes to the environmental impact assessments. According to PBA (2006), it is the municipality’s main responsibility to publish the plans and the individuals, assumed to be directly affected by the project, have to be consulted in the early phases of the project. Despite the fact that public consultations need to be undertaken, the legal codes are uncertain about the way the community dialogues should take place. For nearly three decades the main aim of the policy-developers was to increase the local democracy by strengthening the citizen participation.

4.2.1 The Preparatory Works

The fact that resident collaboration was enshrined in the law was a primary response to the civil protests that took place against various projects. Top down planning approaches were slowly replaced by bottom-up planning practices: extensive and broad dialogues with the citizens in the early phases of the planning process started to become the key to a prosperous urban development. Accordingly, by 1976 roughly 80 design proposals elaborated together with the citizens were underway in 60 Swedish cities (Miller 1988). Conversely, some public officials were considering that citizen cooperation could undermine representative democracy, while others were questioning the trustworthiness of these actions and deemed them as manipulatory tricks. Preparatory works highlight the fact that consultative planning efforts were crucial in order to ensure the legitimacy of a design proposal. In it’s early stages, after the municipal monopoly was granted, citizen participation was seen as a replacement tool for the former state control of local development plans. The purpose of the consultations was initially seen as an “exchange of information and views” (Miller 1988). The revision of the PBA in 1996 extended the civil role by providing them the opportunity to influence a design proposal.

In the early 1990s, in order to strengthen the idea of collaborative planning, residents were given the chance to submit comments in several stages of the process (firstly in the program phase and secondly in the planning step), as well as the chance to turn down a project. There has been long debates regarding the involvement of residents in the early phases of the planning agenda. Most of the planners were arguing that this might not really yield the expected results in practice
and that the plans would only be delayed by the consultative actions. Furthermore, the scope of the of those who would get involved was questioned. Namely, it was expected that only people and NGOs having a special interest in the plan would be willing to participate and that they would not be ready to take a more holistic approach regarding the plan.

Nevertheless, further revisions to the legislation were added, namely, the consultation circle was expanded from the property owners to all concerned neighbors and interest groups within the planning area. Consultations could have different purposes depending on whether they involve a comprehensive or a detail development plan. However, at first consultative planning efforts were concentrating on detail planning. The foregoing process has a deliberative character as appropriate land development and land-use need to be negotiated. On the other hand, in case of the detail plan, the consultation has a pluralistic character. According to the pluralistic model, citizens need to get over their personal interest and have a broader dialogue about the common interest of the community. The revisions of the legislation widened the consulting opportunities to the comprehensive plans, too.

There are different planning procedures that can be adopted by the municipality when it comes to the preparation of the detailed development plan. Namely, there is a standard (fig.1) and an extended procedure (utökat förfarande) (fig.2) available. The standard procedure (standardförfarande) can be followed only when the proposed area is in accordance with the comprehensive plan and the County Administrative Board, there is no significant public interest, or in case the plan has no significant environmental impact. It is important to point out that the PBA is also allowing a simplified consultation procedure.

This can be applied if the municipality believes that the plan proposal had a limited impact for the community. The shorter version was initiated in order to speed up the process, since some of the steps can be skipped (fig.3). However, the opportunity to simplify the whole procedure has been adopted to a larger extent.

According to a survey conducted on 100 Swedish municipalities, on average 30-40 percent of the detail development plans are based on a simplified consultation process (Kommitté-direktiv 2002). In contrast to the former law, the new one requires at least two dialogues with the citizens within the standard procedure. In case the proposed development plan is not in conformity with the comprehensive plan, then a preliminary
consultation is additionally requested during the program phase.

Furthermore, an interview with the city planner of Karlskrona Kommun, Ola Swärdh, confirms that lawmakers and planners have two different visions about the notion of planning. According to the city planner, “every practitioner would say: put your efforts in the dialogue, the rest of the ‘journey’ will be easier and the community will be less disappointed” (open citation) while the main intention of the legislators is to “speed up the process by cutting the dialogue” (Ibid.). As Jacobs (1961) states, “Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when they are created by everybody”. This aspect becomes more obvious as the new provisions of the PBA approved in 2015 are cutting the examination phase (granskning) from three weeks to a new shorter amount of time of two weeks. The examination period has an important role in the planning process because both stakeholders and others who may be affected by the plan are invited to submit their comments in written format regarding the second exhibited planning proposal. It is important to state that those who do not send their observations in a written format during this period or earlier have no right to appeal the plan later.

In summary, in this section different key amendments of the PBA were described out in order to point out that communicative planning is to one extent restricted. The citizens role in the whole planning process should be proactive as their aim is to express and defend the community’s interests regarding a new design proposal. It is clear that the current legislation does not handle certain questions that according to the participatory and deliberative democracy models are essential for civil engagement. These questions are about political inequalities and the exclusion mechanisms. In the following section these aspects are going to be further analyzed.

### 4.3 Communicative planning from theory to practice

The discussion on participatory planning can be continued in terms of citizen involvement types. In the first place, individual participation means that several citizens get implicated in a community dialogue on their own. This is a quantitative issue because the more get engaged, better outcomes could be generated. On the other hand, collective participation is seen as a rather qualitative phenomenon as NGOs and community associations are invited to join the dialogues. At the same, the greater expertise organizations have in relation to a discussed topic, the greater is their chance to influence the decision. Nowadays in Sweden the implication of individual citizens is decreasing as they are leaning back and trusting the associations which are supposed to represent them. The idea to involve NGOs in decision-making has a long tradition in Sweden, consequently, it is clear that the trust rate is high and this is why the personal interest in participation is diminishing. Regarded from the point of view of the municipality, it is easier to communicate with the organizations because they are supposed to represent the whole community’s needs and desires while single dwellers often express their own personal interest.

#### 4.3.1 Methods and Tools

These existing literature is mentioning a large number of different forms and methods of institutionalized citizen participation. This mechanisms will be discussed in the context of representative democracy, in which participation acts as in input to the political decision-making process. As stated by Rowe...
citizen involvement can take various shapes for which diverse mechanisms may be compulsory to enable public participation. However, community-based cooperation takes place in a number of distinct ways and at a number of levels and it has lately become a crucial prerequisite in any urban project.

The first category of community engagement is represented by the public information. In order to achieve the goals, it’s recommended to maximize the information exchange between the interdisciplinary team of planners and the neighborhood members attending the sessions. This can happen in many ways: Firstly, the category defined by so-called “passive processes” (Glass 1979) are based on a one-way information flow, which means that there is no direct contact between the citizen and the interdisciplinary team of professionals. The know-how exchange is centered on question-and-answer sessions and the tools used are similar to questionnaires or interviews (Rowe & Frewer 2005). Both instruments yield information that can be generalized and used as a base for the future planning process. This type of participation is designed to give officials and politicians a better basis for decisions. Additionally, there are more binding forms of civic participation, based on a two-way communication flow, in form of working - and reference groups. Various traditional methods have often been combined in order to increase citizens’ interest. For instance, workshops, local information offices or field offices are further examples. This methods are also known as “active process techniques” (Glass 1979) and they are defined as ‘active’ because residents are directly implicated in a set of established activities. Although traditional tools have often been judged as being inefficient, they still continue to be the base of contemporary communicative planning (Baker et al. 2007).

Despite the traditional methods, new ones were investigated in order to support the collaboration between the citizens and the team of professionals. Within this context, electronic technology is seeking to cover the limitation of conventional tools within the field of participation. Electronic participation is illustrated as “the use of mobile devices to broaden the involvement of citizens and other stakeholders by enabling them to connect with each other, generate and share information, comment and vote” (Höffken & Stretch 2013, pp. 206). Nowadays, citizens are enthusiastic to get involved in collaborative planning processes through social media as they would not be required to have direct contact within the whole operation. According to the existing research, the so-called e-participation would improve: the relation between residents and the lawmakers with regard to quality (Ertiö 2015), the contact to materials about the proposal and transparency (Bekkers & Homburg 2007), expand civil engagement by including various disfavored individuals, building up expectations. Taking all this aspects into consideration, one can affirm that e-participation tools could yield better outcomes in the context of the shorter period of time the new amendment of the PBA is allocating for communication.

To put it briefly, the effectiveness of participatory actions will depend on the chosen tools and the manner in which they are put in practice whereby the legitimacy plays a crucial role as it is seen as a “catalyst which stimulates the civil involvement” (Katan & Shiffman 2014). The forms in which participation occurs could be characterized with the following steps: dissemination of information - information gathering - consultation - joint development of knowledge and mutual understanding. All of these steps are crucial for more extended interaction in accordance with what participatory
democracy was described in a previous section a natural effect of civic participation. The effort and the effectiveness of involving dwellers in the public administration has been questioned in the past five decades. Both citizens, planners and politicians are concerned with developing this concept. Since every procedure has its own advantages and limitations, each action needs to be adapted in order to match all expectations. However, civic engagement requires more than merely seeking the right techniques to increase participation. Accurate public cooperation needs to stimulate the interest for all involved parties and it might call for reconsidering the roles and relations between community members and the interdisciplinary team. This is why Sandercock (1998) gives an illustration of the evolution of “the planner’s role from ‘the knower’ to an autonomous and self-determining actor whose goal is the empowerment of communities”.

4.3.2 Actual Participation

By now it is possible to draw conclusions on the extend to which citizens take opportunities to participate in planning. The existing literature since 1970s until today has been indicating that not only economic and social factors can affect the engagement rate but also different aspects of political inequality. According to the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (i.e. Boverket), women do not participate in the planning process to the same amount as men. At the same time it is men who also dominate positions among planning professionals, municipal planning employees and political decision-makers (Boverket 2000). Further differences between opportunities for civil involvement can be noted at local level. According to Boverket (2000), there is a certain tradition for communicative planning in the towns were different associations have a strong influence. The organizations can be regarded as binding elements between the community and the civil servants as they use to facilitate the mobilization of the neighborhood.

As described in earlier sections, deliberative democracy theorists point out that discussions can be designed in a way to exclude certain groups. Studies of citizen participation are showing that the interdisciplinary team of professionals often use jargon during the consultations which makes the content of the ideas difficult to understand (Khakee & Monno 2011). For this reason, planners need to establish a common language and to present the ideas, graphically or textually, in a way that can be easily understood by the whole public. In advocacy planning it is fundamental to understand that no actor or group is more powerful than another. Sometimes, communities are trapped by their own limited set of experiences (Roger & Katan 2015) whereby the professionals’ main role is to distill the accumulated knowledge from the residents (Revedin 2014).

4.3.3 Community engagement: an examination of power

Khakee (1999) stresses that citizens have a reduced chance to get involved for real in the consultative processes as there might be other possible targets behind actions which advocate for participation in decision-making. This goals can be distributed into four sections:

- knowledge transfer between the two sides which can include also beliefs, intentions, prospects and ambitions;
- maintaining and strengthening of existing relations or creating new networking opportunities;
- “promotion of mobilization capacity in order to act and organize actions” (Khakee & Monno 2011);
- social renewal with respect to attitude, life quality and relations;

On the other hand, studies indicate that there are many different factors that limit the ability of the citizens to exercise influence over the plans. Decisions space is usually limited, especially in the detailed planning work, because of external demands and decrees, agreements, financial and resources. Political decisions are also subjected to pressure from a variety of stakeholders (e.g. government agencies, companies, associations, other local authorities and the media) which would allow only weak forms of influence.

Conceptually, participatory actions have no always empowerment as and endpoint. It is up to how much political control is exercised in fact over the citizens. This can be easily illustrated through the ladder metaphor which was developed in the late 1960s by Arnstein (1969). Furthermore, she holds the view that if dwellers are given more authority, the quality and quantity of choices will raise. The ladder she is proposing is drawing attention to the fact that the purpose of civil involvement was based on the principle of “redistribution of power” as a mean to achieve “control” (Arnstein 1969). To put it briefly, the theory is centered around eight gradual rungs of stakeholder engagement (fig. 6), from passive distribution of information, namely, “manipulation” to active involvement (Ibid.). At the base of the ladder there are various forms of “non-participation” described. In other words, the citizen power to influence a decision-making process is limited, namely, citizens are invited to join the discussions for the benefit of appearance. The formal aim of these working groups may be to ‘instruct’ residents and to obtain more legitimacy. Another type of limited participation can be described through study circle whereby the main goal is to adjust citizens’ desires without giving them the chance to be critical at all. The middle grade of civil engagement can occur through symbolic consultations. In this case planners schedule meetings in order to inform the community rather than to collect their needs or desires. Moreover, at the same rank there are diverse forms of conciliation whereby people with no real power are requested to get involved. On contrarily, the top of the ladder is characteristic for various forms of real empowerment.

Fig. 6: Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation

Diverse theoreticians have remodeled Arnstein’s ladder which has been for over four decades a guide for both policy-developers and various activists. However, it is important to keep in mind that applying her ideal, some alternatives for citizen engagement may be closed off. The approach she is developing based on the potential transfer of power estimates that the power itself has a joint base for residents and authorities. Specifically, Wilcox (1994) is proposing a ladder with only five steps (fig. 7) which is describing diverse aspects of user involvement: “information, consultation, deciding together, acting together, supported independence”. The most important phases are described by the latter three concepts as “substantial participation”. For instance
“deciding together” is illustrated as an encouragement to contribute with diverse suggestions and options in order to decide the optimal method forward while “acting together” is seen as a cooperation, in terms of partnership, between all the involved sides to carry a decision out (Ibid.). On this account, one can say that issues of control exist in most of the normalizing efforts in participation. To what extent practitioners and policy-developers are prepared to allocate to the dwellers implies ethical attention as participation is a democratic privilege.

Planning practice needs to engage with the reality of diversity in today's society. This means being aware of different cultures and ensuring that issues of diversity are addressed throughout the planning process. Traditional public participation has often failed to do this. Participatory planning is built around diversity, conflicting interests and the need to listen to the voices of marginalized groups.

5. Methodology

As previously seen in the theoretical review citizen participation is to one extent limited. However, this is a wide and abstract topic and further investigations will be fulfilled through empirical observations. The communicative process will be analyzed in three different development plans in the context of the naval city of Karlskrona, Sweden. What needs to be underlined from the beginning on is the fact that Karlskrona as a military base was closed for non-swedes until almost two decades ago. This makes the case study more challenging in relation to the examination of community movements and their implication in municipal planning. It is so because the community members need to have nowadays a more holistic vision when it comes to the development of the city which has not been open to strangers for almost three centuries.

Another interesting aspect that popped up during the research is the explosion of new citizen movements created “for the people, by the people” (Friedman 2011) which started to blossom about five years ago. This actions
will be further discussed in the section called “The Community is reacting” as all of them were born out of a common vision, namely, to consolidate the existing spirit of community and to transform the naval city Karlskrona into a more welcoming place for everybody. Furthermore, in favor of creating a better insight of how much the community spirit has changed lately, an interview has been conducted with Henrik Wachtmeister who is the descendant of one of the oldest families settled in Karlskrona.

Regarding the answer to the research question, namely, whether citizens have a real word to say or not within the planning procedures, it would have been necessary to take part of all the dialogue form that took place, rather than passively analyzing the concluding statements which were published by the municipality after the consultation and examination phases. Through direct involvement in a case study, the conducted research could illustrate more accurate interpretations. For this reason, findings from a single case study of community collaboration might not have been a valid input. To create a broader view of public participation three detail development plans were investigated. Despite the fact that the findings will picture the community engagement, they are context specific. They can not be generalized and taken as the absolute truth, as it would have been possible with other quantitative methods.

However, to counterbalance the risk of subjectivity Hakim (1997) recommends triangulation. In other words, despite of the analysis of the published consultation reports, the inquiry was completed with semi-structured interviews conducted not only with the city planner, Ola Swärdh, and the city architect, Sandra Högberg, but also with representative figures of the community who were involved in the planning procedures.

The three detail development plans which are going to be used as case studies are treating different planning situations in order to cover a wider range of community engagement at various planning scales. All three are based on distinct consultation forms and methods as the legislative framework is allowing every municipality to decide upon the tools that will be used within the community dialogues. As Karlskrona Kommun’s main aim is to attract more residents to the discussions varied methods were used within the consultation phases of the detail plans.

**Case Study Context:**
“The Living Urban Laboratory Karlskrona” (Revedin 2015)

Karlskrona is a naval city situated in Blekinge county, in the southern part of Sweden. The city was founded in 1680 when the King Karl XI decided to relocate the Royal Swedish Navy from Stockholm to a more strategic position with shorter sailing distances to the German and Baltic provinces. Karlskrona is spread over thirty islands and the aim is to raise its actual population from 62,800 to 70,000 by 2030.

When it comes to the development of the main island of Karlskrona, Trossö, the detail development strategy for 2030 is assessing three main areas for the future evolution of the city, namely, Pottholmen, Skeppsbrokajen and Hattholmen. The first mentioned area will be the subject of the first case study, while the latter one is going to be the main area for the design proposal. I had the chance to get personally involved in two official stakeholder meetings organized by BTH in collaboration with Karlskrona Kommun for the course “Sustainable Urban Form” during the fall 2014. The information gathered within those meetings regarding the possible future development of the former oil harbor, also known as the area of Hattholmen, together
with interviews conducted by the students, will be the basis for the planning proposal in the last section of the thesis work.

5.1.1 Case Study 1: The Detail Plan for Pottholmen

According to the Översiktsplan 2030, Pottholmen is aiming to become a new attractive neighborhood as it is located between the main island and the outer part of the city. The new district should contain mixed uses of housing (ca. 500 apartments) along with offices and shops.

The proposal itself is the result of 15 year long debates and negotiations between the planners and politicians. This is why it is difficult to figure out to what extent the citizens influenced the structure of the plans, explains the city planner, Ola Swärdh, because there were a lot of technical limitations imposed by the site which were taken into consideration. Certain is the fact that the municipality was open to hear how the future dwellers would use the proposed green spaces (fig. 8). The user is seen as the “central figure” (Friedman 2011) even if “he [the user] is different from who he was yesterday, or will be tomorrow” (Ibid.).

For this reason different methods were experimented by the municipality despite the online feedback which everybody was free to submit. Further a special website was created and updated with information regarding the evolution of the proposal. During May and June 2014 the city planning office installed a pavilion, built out of an old ship container (fig. 9), in the core of the city, namely, in Höglandspark. Twice a week, Tuesdays and Saturdays, the so-called “kub” (i.e. cube) was opened and everybody was welcome to express his opinion regarding the use of the green spaces. This measures are trying to respect to a large extent what Gehl (2010) states, namely, “cities and buildings are inviting people to come and stay, the human scale and the culture of the community must be always taken into account. It is a difficult aspect to work with the scale but if the scale is neglected, the city life will suffer for ever. Also, in order to hand over high quality public domains, it is not only very important to understand the culture of the people through collaboration with the community.”

Furthermore, another important aspect was raised together within this topic: how would the children and youngsters use the public spaces? In order to have a clear answer to this question several workshops were organized with potential users, namely, kids and teenagers from three schools situated nearby the site: Rosenfeldtsskolan, Wämöskolan and Af. Chapman Gymnasiet. Pupils were given the opportunity to draw how they would imagine themselves using the common spaces. This action can be seen as a clear attempt to include other user categories to the problem-solving process.

Further, on the 10th of June 2014 Karlskrona Kommun organized a so-called samrådsmöte (i.e. consultation meeting) where citizens were welcome to have open discussions with
both the planners and the politicians. Politicians often played an important mediation role, particularly when disputes arose in public meetings. The politicians went directly to talk to interest groups or to evening meetings about the latest version of the plan. According to the consultation report, 24 residents and representatives of 48 associations, NGOs, political parties and different state authorities took part to the meeting. The consultation report contains several observations from the residents, among others the most important is regarding urban farming. “We must begin to think differently, I think! Why not to create more green areas which we could plant collectively and take care of together” affirms one of the Karlskroniter. Urban gardening could be a binding activity that could strengthen the spirit of community. Consequently, the strong common vision of the residents succeed to improve the initial building proposal by adding rooftop gardens which the future dwellers will be able to use as further common spaces.

5.1.2 Analysis: Influence level
As previously discussed in the theoretical part, design proposals are generally to some extent limited. It is also Pottholmen’s case regarding the built structure. Although, after investigating the methods and tools that were used by the municipality in order to consult the Karlskroniter regarding the design of the common spaces, it is clear that the officials put effort into the dialogues as all the tools are based on a two-way communication flow which according to the existing literature is seen as an active technique which is supposed to yield satisfaction for both sides. If one would analyze the consultative efforts according to the ladder proposed by Arnstein (1969) or for instance Wilcox (1994) at a first sight it would look like “consultation” which according to both authors is considered to be a low grade of citizen empowerment. Addressing citizens’ opinion, could be considered a legitimate measure towards their overall participation. In this case, the consultations were combined with other modes of collaboration which lead to the conclusion that the assumption needs to be further examined. After having a closer look on both official documents issued after the consultation period, one can assign this communicative actions to the so-called “delegated power” rung (Arnstein 1969) as the citizens are seen as the “central figures” (Friedman 2011). Further, this case could be attributed to the “acting together” step proposed by Wilcox (1994). Both, would however correspond to a high level of citizen empowerment.

5.1.3 Case Study 2: The Detail Plan for the Archipelago

The Archipelago (i.e. Skärgården) is a large scale detail plan aiming to develop collectively most of the 30 islands of Karlskrona. The main objective is to create attractive residential areas by constructing about 700-1000 new homes and to improve the potential for business and to expand the existing traffic infrastructure. Moreover, the goal is to create a sustainable living environment by preserving the untouched nature and the cultural identity of the Archipelago. The new houses are supposed to be concentrated around the existing ports in order to have better access to public transport. The eastern part of the Archipelago
is going to be exploited to a limited extent as the main aim is to protect the actual wildlife.

The archipelago communities are strong united ones. In order to integrate about 1000 new families, the consultations with the residents were crucial. The communicative process is an extended one and it lasted about two years as a program needed to be formulated. The collaborative actions started in May 2012 with the program proposal, continued with public hearings regarding the program, and two further meetings during the consultation and examination phase.

As it is a large scale development area (fig. 10), the municipality put a lot of effort in the public hearings. As stated by Ola Swärdh, the city planning office has tried to avoid organizing an official, typical municipal, meeting with the residents. On contrary, the interdisciplinary team of professionals tried to reach the people out in the archipelago and have open discussions with them. Despite the fact that the municipality had already some thoughts and plans regarding the development, during the program phase no plans were revealed. The intention was to gather first hand information by watching through the community’s eyes the development of the unique Archipelago. As Alexander *et al.* (1977) describes, “Only the people can guide the process. They know most about their own needs and they know most about how well or badly spaces work.”

The consultative actions were sheltered in a tent which has been moved from island to island within three months. About 40 meetings took place with both residents and different representative associations and NGOs. Besides that, various workshops were organized whereby residents were invited to point out their vision by drawing different activities and services they would consider necessary on printed maps (fig. 11). As Alexander (1977) states “*drawings help people to work out intricate relationships between parts*”. Further, all suggestions were collected and distilled by the planners and a plan proposal was elaborated.

![fig. 10: Karlskrona’s Archipelago](image)

**5.1.4 Analysis: Influence level**

As this is an ample development plan, it was easier to get in tough with persons who attended the meetings. After discussing with them about the meetings, the residents seem to be very content about the way the consultations were carried out. Many community representatives which were interviewed stated that the opportunity to have some involvement in the formation of a strategic plan has increased their association’s legitimacy. “I was very surprised to recognize some of our own suggestions during the second consultation!”, explained one of the residents of Aspö island. "The city
planning office did indeed take into account our community’s observations”, stated another local representative of Hasslö island.

Furthermore, the city planner draw attention to the fact that now after the communicative actions are over and the plan has been approved, the planning office is receiving questions from community representatives of various island about the progress of the plans as they are eager to see their islands developing. Taking this confessions into consideration together with an objective analysis of the consultation statements one could frame this collaborative action according to the ladder suggested by Arnstein (1969) as “partnership”. In other words, partnership is described as redistribution of power between the citizens and the power holders whereby there is a clear agreement about the plan between both sides. Analyzed from Wilcox’s (1994) stances of participation, the Archipelago detail plan corresponds to the “deciding together” step. Like in the latter case, both rungs coincide with a high civil involvement grade in decision-making.

5.1.5 Case Study 3: The Detail Plan for Saltö

The vision for Karlskrona 2030 included a further development of Saltö island, namely, the southern area into a mixed used neighborhood with ca. 400 new apartments (fig. 12). The first discussions regarding the further expansion emerged in 2006 after Findus, a food processing company which had the headquarters in Saltö, had been shut down. The master plan proposed that the fishing area should primarily coexist with the proposed settlements and after the plan would be fully implemented, the emblematic fish market, restaurant and boat parking area would need to be displaced. Two possible alternatives for the relocation of the port activities were sought, namely, Sandhamn and Ekenabben which should provide the same services and facilities as the port of Saltö. The fish market of Saltö has a long tradition of almost a century and at the same time, the old building was the first covered marketplace in Sweden. Moreover, the Karlskroniter consider the two adjacent islands Saltö and Dragsö as the closest “recreational areas of the city” and they would like to keep them this way.

fig. 12: proposed development for southern Saltö

The published consultation documents after the first exhibition of the detail plan, revealed that there were also some voices raised against the proposal. For instance, Foodia Fisk AB, a fish processing company, which has been operating in that area since 1957 would not picture the relocation of the company because Saltö is a key location for the fishing industry. At the same time, the County Administration Board considered that the master plan was lacking in consideration of national interest in the cultural environment and the world heritage protected naval city of Karlskrona. Several residents who took part to the meeting were stating that the proposal is rather profit oriented and that the scale and general image of the city were neglected. They explained that a small scale intervention would have fitted better within the existing built environment even if they would not agree to the relocation of the fish market.

There is another major aspect that has not been discussed during the consultation
meeting but it has been mentioned in the interviews conducted by students of the master class “Sustainable Urbanism” lead by Jana Revedin in 2013 at BTH. Most of the interviewed residents confirmed that they would have a boat which is lined up in the boat parking of Saltö. Boats are very important for Karlskroniter. That is the reason why they expressed a total opposition against the development plan, as they can not see their boats positioned elsewhere. One of the main reason why people move from other larger cities to Karlskrona is the fact that they can own a boat here, despite enjoying the peaceful environment of the naval city. Furthermore, the interviews handled by the interdisciplinary team of students tell that the island of Saltö plays a very important role for the fishermen community and a further development is out of question for them. For instance, this harbor has the right depth for their boats and there is no other deeper port nearby. Moreover, Håkan Malmberg, the owner of the well known fish market and restaurant (fig. 13) states in a conversation with the students that he can not picture his business anywhere else (“definitely not, no way”) as this location is invaluable for the fishermen community.

fig. 13: Saltö fish market and restaurant

5.1.6 Analysis: Influence level
Needless to say, the 2013 generation of students of the master class “Sustainable Urbanism” together with the didactic board of the Swedish School of Planning, BTH, had a key role within the interruption of the development plan. Furthermore, the vehement opposition of the Karlskroniter combined with the emergence of the economical crisis were other two crucial factors that worked hand in hand and succeeded to stop the evolution of the southern part of Saltö. In conclusion, one can frame this successful denouement on the highest step of citizen participation proposed by Arnstein (1969), namely, “citizen control”. At the same time, analyzed from Wilcox’s (1994) ladder, this community achievement could be assigned to the “acting together” rung which implies yet again a substantial degree of civil involvement in decision-making.

5.2 The Community is reacting

Overall in Sweden the citizen’s interest in relation to municipal planning proposals is decreasing in comparison to the blossoming period of the 1960s and 1970s (Khakee & Monno 2011). However, a paradox has been noted, in other words, locals are nowadays actively engaging in actions undertaken by community movements which are shaped by them. An explanation of this phenomenon is illustrated by Hall (2002), namely, “if values are created together, they belong to the whole community”

5.2.1 Klaura, the pop-up market

The first example of community initiative is the young entrepreneurs incubator also known as Klaura which was founded in 2013. The NGO was raised in order to support young persons who start a business on their own. It was crucial to develop such an incubator in Blekinge county because this region was hardest hit by the financial crisis and it is dealing with the highest youth unemployment rate in the country. Karlskrona as a campus-based city was the proper
location to develop the non profit organization “by the people, for the people, with the people” (Friedman 2011).

The association is aiming to mediate the relation between the young entrepreneurs and potential customers as a newly started business can be difficult to self-establish, meet clients, and find partners. To do so, there are regular networking meetings and workshops organized where members can participate, share experiences and collectively develop each other’s business ideas. Furthermore, all this activities are sheltered in a common office space, in a hall in Campus Gräsvik where youngsters are offered also a place to start growing their business without needing to rent a space elsewhere. Besides that, young business-persons also receive advice regarding administrative aspects and all the support that is needed. The key concept of this associations are the pop-up markets which are organized several times a year in order to facilitate the contact between young entrepreneurs and potential customers. The founder of this NGO, Ms. Ursula Hass, the former rector of BTH, states that the idea emerged out of a common vision of the three board members because before five or six years ago there were no activities like this that would support young graduates to build their own business in Karlskona. Because of the economical context, most of the alumni decide to leave the city after completing their studies. In summary, Klaura is still a concept under development but it can be seen a step-by-step participatory work as it was conceived by the community for its young generation of entrepreneurs.

5.2.2 Conventus - Ideas for a greener and more open Karlskrona

The idea started get shaped in 2012 within the project named ‘Conventus’ which is a program created entirely by the community. Its main goal is to set up urban gardens and natural meeting places in Karlskrona. In order to make their wish come true, since 2012 the initiators had many meetings with people, the municipality and different organizations. After years of discussion the effort was materialized in February 2015 within a workshop organized together with an international school, Hyper Island, with the premises on Stumholmen. About 100 persons among others representatives from the municipality, BTH, various organizations and companies attended and contributed with own ideas and visions to the urban gardening concept. Looking at the large number of participants Lina Liedholm, the initiator of the green movement affirms that there “is a big interest in Karlskrona to be more sustainable…But as always the problem is money!”. However, the money impediment was solved to a small extent after Lina after , together with an young architect who is sharing the same ideals, won a start-up competition. Together they started developing a mobile application called ‘Get Grow Go’, which is aiming to introduce the idea of urban gardening step by step and to make the concept understandable for every smartphone user. Even if the development of the project will be assisted by BBI (i.e. Blekinge Business Incubator) for two years from now, the plan is to launch this application in December 2015.

Furthermore, the same team is also working with the project for Urban gardens in the previous discussed area of Pottholmen. After the plans of the buildings have been adapted according to the desires of the community, the team is now making sure that the ideas will be also implemented. Therefore, they had several discussions with Anders Jaryd, who is the responsible in charge with the roof
gardens of Pottholmen. Regarding this area, there are further discussions about an Eco Café. However, this idea will be addressed in the next following two years when the built structure will be ready.

In addition to, this initiatives will be supported by students of BTH coming from two different faculties with sustainable visions, namely, the young spatial planners from ‘Fysisk plantering’ and the students from Master’s in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability (MSLS). All of them share a common vision about a greener Karlskrona and are willing to united their forces and human resources in order to make this thoughts come true. Moreover, another initiative raised is in relation to the polluted soil of the former oil harbor of Hattholmen. The team is aiming to develop a project based on biological cleaning of the soil. As the cleaning will have to start soon, the idea will be discussed with the municipality this coming months.

As it has been noted there is a strong connection between the municipality of Karlskrona and the community initiatives. However, there is a common vision about a more sustainable Karlskrona. This is why it is very important to have a united community which is ready to fight and find solutions in order to make their vision come true. This turns to Katan & Shiffman (2014) who draw attention to the fact that “Once you have gained the confidence of the community, the people of the community not only provide your inspiration but also become your powerful ally in the inevitable battles to come against entrenched bureaucracies and the attitude of business as usual”.

5.2.3 Skärva gården

Skärva is a farm nearby Karlskrona where people learn from each other how to handle plants. They learn about long time forgotten skills which are practically the key for a sustainable development. The owner of the farm, Henrik Wachtmeister, states that harvesting is a constant learning process. Skärva is a gathering point where locals sharing a common interest in a healthier lifestyle get together and follow what is right for them at the moment depending to what extent they want to get involved in the gardening activities. The farm is just the framework which offers them the opportunity to rebuild a whole community spirit. For 20 years, Henrik has been trying to attract people to the farm and it is only been a few years since locals are coming more often to the filed. There is no exact explanation, their presence might be somehow connected to the recently opened ecological shop and cafeteria as both might work as a catalyst. Henrik remembers laughing that his first initiative to bring residents of Karlskrona to the farmed failed, namely, he printed some posters which were inviting everybody to participate and despite this open call a single person showed up. Now, after nearly 20 years, things have totally changed. Skärva not only has become a coveted place-to-be, but also it is the place where the community is gathering and sharing its vision about the development of Karlskrona within different more or less organized and official meetings.

Once the whole valley was a garden so a possible extension of the existing 8 patches is just a matter of time. “There are 8 patches now and every patch it’s a story in a way”, affirms the owner. Somehow after working on a certain patch, one can say that they would add a little bit to the story and then while sitting together they can discuss and tell each
other their own story. Furthermore, the shop is another way to get people together and also to earn a little bit of money. They do not go out and advertise, it’s an information that is spreading from mouth to mouth brings people together. Henrik while sometime selling in the shop is spontaneous asking his customers if they would be interested to help in the garden.

Skärva is also the place where long time unemployed people have the change to sense how it is to work again by offering them the chance to choose their own schedule. Moreover, Arbetsförmedlingen (i.e. the Employment Office) is offering a subvention so that some of the unemployed young people get the change to receive a wage in exchange for the help in the garden or help with organizing different cultural events. (fig. 14). As it is a intercultural place, people not only gather to discuss about their visions, they also get together to play music from their own countries. This is how young talents get discovered within different small scale events arranged at the farm, where everybody is welcome to come.

![fig. 14: locals helping in the garden](image)

Now, after almost two decades there is a vision about the expansion of the farm by develop small scale compact and sustainable houses which locals interested to spend more time at the farm could use. With small steps this once a dream has developed together with the community in a totally new prosperous space which works as a gathering, education and integration place.

### 7. Conclusions

Summarizing the theoretical part, the current PBA expresses clear participatory ambitions as it provides citizens with opportunities for early and continuous participation in the planning process. There are even some deliberative ambitions in that comprehensive planning opens up for a more open discussion about the design of the physical environment. However, it remains clear limits on citizen influence. First, there has never been talked about introducing any direct democratic elements in the planning, but it is clear that decision-making remains within the framework of representative democracy. Second, the legislation allow municipalities to use a simplified plan-process that significantly reduces citizen participation. However, as Katan & Shiffman (2014) suggest “democracy is dependent on the empowerment and participation of the people directly and indirectly impacted”.

While the legislation has a participatory character so there is practically obvious deficiencies when citizen participation is unevenly distributed and the possibilities to influence through the formal consultation process is limited. Planning needs to be about integration not about limitation - integration between public and private investment in an area, between different scales of government and between different agencies. Thus there is a need to rethink the traditional approach to consultation with stakeholders and other public agencies. A paradigm change in the culture of planning means changing from 'public participation' (led by the planning authority and built around the assumption that their plan already
represents a basis for consensus) to ‘participatory planning’ (in which diverse groups, community members and agencies come together to exchange information, explore common ground and negotiate in an attempt to achieve consensus).

However, the actual planning process is more similar to the elite democratic and pluralist democracy models because the formal process is often subordinated to the informal negotiations between the municipality and various private developers. The pluralistic element also involves detailed planning process reduces the role of citizens to simply assert their own interests. The municipality is then meant to serve as a neutral judge who makes the trade-offs between individual and public interests, but the dependence on private investment will allow the municipality neutrality can sometimes be questioned.

Although, in practice, the situation is different displayed. After analyzing the proposed case studies, one can see a clear answer to the research question, namely, to what extent can citizens influence the planning procedures? Within the local context of the “Living Urban Laboratory Karlskrona” (Revedin 2014) as the investigation illustrates, citizens seem to have a real word to say within the communicative actions organized by both the municipality or even by the community itself. This findings may, however, be only a local context situation. As previously stated, it is not suitable to assign the verdict to other Swedish municipalities. However, even if the research question has reached its goal, there are certain limitations which hindered a broader result. In other words, the fact that I could not be involved as an observant in the dialogues arranged by the municipality in time regarding the three detail development plans was an impediment. For this reason the research has to be completed with interviews and analysis of the published documents in order to have an objective overview of the happenings. Through direct engagement in a case study, the handled research could have illustrated more exact judgement. Second difficulty that has been encountered was given by the language barrier, namely, most of the literature regarding participatory planning and the official documents where entirely in Swedish and only short summaries were sometimes available in English.

Compared to other larger cities, Karlskrona has the major advantage to be a small scale city spread over several islands with united communities. Within a little community, people often have the chance to know each other, to meet up and discuss their common interests. This assumption is working hand in hand with Katan & Shifman’s (2014) statement, namely, “once the key assets and issues have been determined, leaders within the community must involve the rest of the community, persuading them to get involved”.

Despite the fact Karlskrona has been a closed city to foreigners, now when the collectively development of the commune is questioned, everybody is welcome to contribute in order to put the basis of a new, ideal and sustainable living environment for all.

As previously seen, initial minor ideas grow together in time being supported by members of the community. A blossoming common idea can only bring satisfaction and encouragement for the community to move on and keep up the good work. As suggested by Revedin (2014) “something which is designed collectively will remain in the memory of the people as a success which they achieved together”. 

23
8. Discussions

Within this research a gap has been identified in the planning legislation in relation to the methods and tools which should be used by the policy developers in order engage citizens in the early stages of the planning process. Swedish regulations offer plenty of information and directions about whom should establish contact with in the whole planning practice. On contrarily, they lack in instructions regarding how the whole procedure should take place. In fact, every public authority in Sweden is free to decide upon the methods that will be used within the communication processes with those who are supposed to be directly affected by a new planning proposal. The identified lacuna could be a subject for further investigations. A possible research question that could be explored could be “which methods and tools could be used by the policy-developers in order to encourage communicative planning?”.

9. Hattholmen - analysis through the “Radicant Method” (Revedin 2014)

The main island Trossö is densely populated and has only a few green common areas the locals could use. Dragsö, Saltö, Stumholmen and Hattholmen together with Bryggareberget are key near-urban areas with high potential for recreation. The översiktsplan 2030 is taking about the priority green structures have in relation to the block-based city center. Hattholmen, the former Oil Harbor, is an artificial link between Trossö and Bryggareberget (fig. 15) which includes the so-called “green belt”. This is why a relation needs to be established in order to create a coherent green structure with public places which could be used by the whole community.

fig. 15: historical overview of Karlskrona (2015 -1850)

The ample mapping of the area has been done by students during four courses using different methods and tools and the conclusions are going to be used as a basis for the design proposal. To successfully design the area of Hattholmen, the students took as a reference the “Radicant Method” of Jana Revedin, our Professor in the Master Programme “Sustainable Urban Planning”. The method is developed into four steps as it follows and the analysis was conducted by the whole Master class:

1. The community presents it’s needs

First of all as we had the opportunity to collaborate with the city planning office, two official stakeholder meetings were organized at Dockan. The approach is exploratory, the focus group qualitative research method was used as the main tool. By conducting focus groups, the researcher can gain information about experiences and thoughts in a selected group (Morgan 1998). Compared with interviews, focus groups can provide more information than is asked for. If respondents talk to each other, they can introduce new relevant topics, jointly developing lines of argumentation and responding to one another’s statements (Fern 2001). Particular statements will be mirrored or opposed by other focus group participants. Each of the focus groups, were divided into four categories: use of space, sports, facilities and
water use. They involved three to five participants who were assisted by students. The participants comprised building industry stakeholders and actors as follows:
- interdisciplinary young planners
- NGO representatives
- municipal employees
- organized users and end-users
- technical consultants
- real estate owners and managers

Besides the official stakeholder meetings, further street interviews were conducted by the students in order to have a broader view about how residents could further use the area of Hattholmen after the soil which is polluted would be cleaned.

Furthermore, during a lecture the city planner Ola Swärdh described the thoughts the municipality came up with, namely, to apply for the national sports week also known as “SM-veckan”. In order to do so several requirements need to be fulfilled among others a 50m long swimming pool, a multifunctional indoor sports arena, sailing areas etc. The challenge raised to the students was to think how this facilities could be replaced or reused them for everyday life after the competition.

Moreover, another team (Iris Elbelt, Ali Ibrahim, Max Brandl, Alexander Kadur) created an e-mail account and a Facebook page where citizens could have submitted their opinions regarding future sustainable development of the area. A list of potential stakeholders focusing on associations, related businesses and people that might represent a group of potential users. Consequently, around 50 potential stakeholders were contacted and the students asked them to have a short conversation about Hattholmen.

2. Interdisciplinary Urban Mapping

The cross-disciplinary team of students filtered all the information gather from both the consultative meeting and the street interviews and the online participative actions. (fig. 16). By reviewing the collected information the most urgent needs of the community were traced and the first proposal had to be presented during the third step of the “Radicant Method” namely, the second stakeholder meeting for feedback.

![fig. 16: outcomes divided in 3 sections: waterfront use, green structure, outdoor activities](image)

Some of the main quotes extracted from the Karlskroniter are:

“I do not care about the area.”
“It is not important. It is off from the city.”
“I never thought about the area.”
“The ground is polluted. I never go there.”
“There is no life.”

3. Participatory design laboratory

Most of the opinions received after at the first concept was presented revolved around the idea of developing a recreational purpose for the area with boat places, a green park and sports facilities, but also to design the area so it would be suitable for urban farming. Also, some of the opinions had a strong emphasize on the need of housing, especially student
housing, this being an area in a short distance to BTH's campus. The new input gathered during this session has formed the basis for the individual project: “Hattholmen, from Oil Harbor to Start-up City”

4. Catalytic chain-reaction of policies

The most important role planners have within a participatory process is to distill and translate the vague ideas citizens have intro something more concrete by offering them the frame to react. Once the community is taking over, they will model the space according to their own needs and visions. This phenomenon is illustrated by Alexander (1977), namely, “only the people can guide the process. They know most about their own needs and they know most about how well or badly spaces work”.

10. Design proposal:

“Hattholmen, from Oil Harbor to Start-up City”

The first phase is going to take place before the cleaning of the old harbor area will take place since the soil is most probably polluted. Therefore, the main target is to make the forgotten area of Hattholmen be part of the mental image of the city of Karlskrona. As one of the participants from the stakeholder meetings stated “Maybe people just need to get used to the area again”. For now, the inhabitants consider this, practically very central situated region, as totally uninteresting and despite its very beautiful and unique viewpoints. “I do not care about the area”, says another citizen.

In other words, a floating bridge could be implemented to shorter the distance from the city center to the old harbor. Creating this possible connection, more inhabitants could start to be interested of the area. In addition to, already existing elements, such as an old shipwreck, could be used in order to attract the first people in the area. The ship could be turned in a small waterpark which could be a new attraction point for families with school children since there is no other similar park in the region nearby. Moreover, a football field could be designed for different responsive football players. Besides the football field other sport fields could be added to promote other sports such as volleyball, tennis, handball, basketball etc. The costs for this fields are nearly zero but they could work as a catalyst for the whole area. For the same reason, on the eastern part of the area, next to the old brewery, some small office buildings could be added in order to attract other people to the site.

Besides the already mentioned leisure facilities, some floating saunas could be also implemented as well as an open air cinema/theater which could be used during the summertime. The last element brought to Hattholmen could be the idea of urban gardening. Even if the ground is polluted, urban gardening could still take place because the plants could grow in special flowerpots so that the plants would not get in touch with the poisoned soil. If the urban gardening would be a success, small kiosks could be added in order to create a small temporary market where the inhabitants could buy ecological, self grown, fruits and vegetables.

All this possible measures could renew the image of the city of Karlskrona. According to Jan Gehl (2010) people need to feel save in a certain area in order to dare to experience it. Once the area would start to be populated during daytime, other curious dwellers would dare to stroll around the area.

The second possible implementation phase is equally important and it could take
place around 2020. The main aim would be to bring a real, small scale city life in the area of Hattholmen by adding a first row of apartment buildings. This new constructions could be mixed use. In other words, the ground floor which is orientated to the sea, could take advantage of the beautiful cityscape and host different cafes, shops, etc. On the other hand since the city has been lacking of student housing lately, some of the new apartments could be designed in a very flexible way so that they could be rented out as students flats during the two semesters and converted into a youth hostel during summertime when Karlskrona is crowded with tourists. The new area could be also supplied with a parking house which could cover the necessary parking places which would be required for the new residential area.

The idea of bringing sport activities could develop meanwhile and a real multifunctional sports arena could be build. Even though there is at the moment another handball arena close to Trösso, that one could be relocated in time in the new growing area since it would be more attractive for investitures to build residential units in the current site area. The shape of the brand new sports hall would be inspired both by the valleys and ramps of the Yokohama International Port Terminal and the Oslo Opera House. That is why the arena could be designed with a green roof which could be in fact an extension of the common space that could exist on the ground. The rooftop park could offer a unique experience to the broad public coming to the sport events held within the hall. The new sports ring could hide a parking house which could assure a part of the needed parking places during the games. New temporary busses could assure also the accessibility during important competitions. By its position, the arena could present the cityscape from another, yet unreachable, point of view. “The favorite views were usually the distant panoramas with the sense of water and space” (Lynch 1960). Since the city would already start to develop in the field of sport activities, the Municipality could also try to apply to host a typical Swedish sports event called SM-veckan. Due to the advantage of being surrounded by the sea, during such an event a lot of water sport competitions could take place. Therefore, a 50 m long floating swimming pool could be the next element that could be added to the area. Since it would be a floating pool, it could be in fact relocated anytime along the seashore of Karlskrona. During this phase, a new office building together with a parking house could be added in the eastern part of the site.

The third phase is marked by the moment the proposal could reach its maturity. This step could take place around 2025 and the most important element that could be introduced here is the junction together with a new boulevard which could be placed between the second, now already developed, row of blocks and the arena. The new introduced boulevard could on the one hand improve the accessibility both to the arena and the new residential units but on the other hand it could offer the public a new promenade path with could have as an end perspective a fountain in the sea. The fountain could be a landmark that according to Kevin Lynch would contribute to the importance of the new created edge. The change of the pavement which would take place due to the fact that the boulevard turns right would also contribute to the perception of the cityscape from the new ob- serving point available nearby the fountain. Furthermore, the eastern area dedicated to the office would continue to expand. That is why the existing parking house could be enlarged.

The southern part could also evolve. In other words, a new landfill area in the core of the sea could be proposed. This would also offer
a brand new living experience within the city of Karlskrona. Different type of housing units could be build there in order to diversify the housing options. The new landfill area could also be connected with the peak of the peninsula by another floating bridge.

**The fourth phase** could take place around 2030 since the detail development plan is also available until that period and the concept has almost reached its maturity in the present development stage. Having a gas station in the core of the already established concept is not viable anymore. That is why 2030 is the moment the gas station could be relocated since nowadays hybrid and electrical cars might be part of a future lifestyle. For this reason the whole eastern side of the former oil harbor could turn into a research park which would be part of the blossoming city of Karlskrona.

In conclusion, the four proposed evolution stages are trying to reintegrate the already forgotten area of Hattholmen and to create a strategic link to its environmentally image so that it could start to create pleasant mental pictures for the individuals.
10. References:


Friedman, Y. (2011), Arquitectura con la gente, por la gente, para la gente = architecture with the people, by the people, for the people, Actar, Barcelona.


Revedin, J. (2014), The Living Urban Laboratory Karlskrona: In Search for Planning with and by the People, [Lecture to FM2583, Karlskrona], 10 November.


