

For many are called, but few are chosen

- Citizen Participation in Lund Municipality

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Abstract

On all levels of government, politicians try to find solutions to our environmental problems. Municipalities in countries create action plans according to the Agenda 21, approved in 1992. This agenda encouraged the involvement of citizens from below and many took that to their hearts. Lund municipality in Sweden is one of them.

The theory used in this thesis is deliberative democracy. It is applied through studying citizen participation in the policy process leading up to the municipality's latest environmental document, LundaEko. Through in-depth interviews I could draw the conclusion that citizen participation was not a big part of the process. The participation did not meet the conditions for a fully deliberative process. It consequently did not influence the decisions in a significant manner. The municipality pursued legitimacy in the process, but whether they gained it is not entirely studied. The efficiency was influenced by disagreements among the politicians rather than by the participation of citizens. To conclude, we need further discussions about the relevance of citizen participation, according to deliberative democracy, in today's democratic society.

Key words: policy process, deliberative democracy, citizen participation, environment, local government

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1 Introduction

“Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt¹

The environment has been a hotly contested topic over the last couple of decades, especially since the start of the new millennium. We constantly hear news about natural disasters and climate change affecting millions of people. Not only poor countries are hit. Big cities like New York have recently learnt in a devastating way what nature can do. Because these changes and events are regarded as being manmade, it is up to us to deal with the complex problems that are the result of our actions. Politicians and delegates from different nations gather in big climate change conferences to discuss this urging issue. The latest meeting of this kind was held in Doha, Qatar (UNFCCC 2012). However, on both the international and local level, politicians and officials struggle to deal with environmental challenges.

At the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 Agenda 21 was approved by over 170 nations. It was one of the first plans of its kind for implementing sustainable development. Its main focus was not ecological; many of the chapters drew attention to the political, economic and social features of sustainable development (Carter 2009:209). Agenda 21 focused not only on the international and national level, but also on the local level, because, this is the level closest to the people. Thus, Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 focuses on the local government’s role in implementing sustainable development. Among the countries that have embraced the agenda and made action plans is Sweden, which is considered to be a role model, especially at the municipal level (Carter 2009:311).

Lund is one of those municipalities in Sweden. It has a well-developed action plan, and the city has many ecological as well as fair-trade labelled products in local stores. That is one of the ways the municipality makes it easier for the inhabitants to act sustainable. When you have a good income, it becomes easier to buy environmentally friendly products, and there is little doubt that many residents of Lund municipality have a high income. If we add to this the environmental consciousness in the community, the prospects look good. But, is it really that easy to give a helping hand to the environment?

¹ <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/f/franklind139327.html>. Viewed 4 January 2013.

Politicians, which the inhabitants have voted on to rule in their place, govern the municipality. They are representatives of the public. They are thought to be the voice of the citizens in political matters. However, do they always decide, as the citizens want them to? Does the public have the ability and possibility to participate and decide in municipal matters? And what does such participation lead to? The puzzle here is whether the decisions made regarding the environment in the municipality are based solely on the views of the public, or if other interests are influencing too.

1.1 Purpose and Research Question

My ambition is to do a case study of how the public has been involved in a process regarding environmental decisions in Lund municipality. I will thus look at how the public becomes engaged in local politics and how that is manifested in this particular case.

In 2006 the municipality adopted the environmental document *LundaEko* (Lunds kommun 2006), based on Agenda 21, outlining goals and strategies for implementation. My purpose is to study how this policy process developed and which parties were involved, especially with relation to the public. To make my research more concrete, and considering the time limit, I have chosen to use environmental groups and organisations as representatives of the public. My research question reads:

How have environmental organisations participated in the policy process preceding LundaEko and what did this participation lead to?

To answer my question I will conduct in-depth interviews with politicians, officials and members of environmental organisations. Hopefully these narratives can broaden my understanding of the process and shed light on this case.

1.2 Limitations

I have chosen to focus on a local level of research. This choice has enabled me to do interviews in my own municipality. Hopefully I will be able to contextualise my study in the context of a broader research field.

For my thesis I could have chosen many theories, but I chose to only have one: deliberative democracy. My focus will be on the participation part in the process and the subsequent outcomes and understanding of those. Besides this theory I will also apply ideas about influence and capacities in terms of how the environmental organisations can influence their participation.

I could have looked more at the policy process itself, as well as at all its different steps, but I consider studying citizen participation to be more interesting. It has been studied by others, but less so than policy process.

1.3 Theory

Many scholars have studied and written about my chosen theory, deliberative democracy (e.g. Dryzek 2000, Rosenberg 2007, Ulbig 2008). The theory states that citizens in a democratic society have the right to participate in politics: to deliberate. This participation is anticipated to lead to better decisions (Irvin and Stansbury 2004:56).

I will use deliberative democracy as a theory by studying the occurrence of citizen participation in local governments. For example Michels and de Graaf (2010) studied two Dutch municipalities to shed light on this phenomenon. Hence, my research concerning the municipality of Lund is not entirely new, but it will hopefully contribute to an already existing field. I will study citizen participation in the context of effectiveness versus legitimacy in the policy process.

To broaden the theory I will also apply some ideas about influence and capacities as a way of affecting the participation and the outcomes of that (Ulbig 2008, Baumann et al. 2001).

The concepts that I intend to define theoretically and empirically are: *citizen participation*, *legitimacy*, *effectiveness* and *influence*. In defining my concepts I aim to reach a high validity in my research. Regarding reliability, I can hope for a relatively high precision in studying the concept citizen participation as well as the other ones.

1.4 Method and Material

My aim is to do a qualitative research study using in-depth interviews (Bryman 2008:196) to gain a better understanding of the policy process in the municipality of Lund. This means that my research is non-experimental and intense with one case (Teorell and Svensson 2007:74). I will interview those who were involved in this process, both officials and politicians within the municipality and members of environmental organisations. By doing this I hope to gain first-hand knowledge about citizen participation in the municipality.

I will conduct my analysis in two stages. The first will focus on how the environmental organisations participate in the policy process. The second stage will study what outcomes this participation leads to in the process with regard to legitimacy and effectiveness.

I intend to record the interviews to enable a fruitful use of the interviews in the analysis. The questions asked during the interviews often need to be thought

through beforehand, so as to know what to focus on and when to interrupt when irrelevant information is presented. Thus I have made three different question sheets for officials, politicians and environmentalists. When the questions are prepared in advance, they hopefully also lead to more reliable and extensive answers (Teorell and Svensson 2007:90). I am aware of how the questions are posed during the interview, as well as the changing settings, can result in different answers. These kinds of doubts are helpful during the analysis when assessing and determining the validity and reliability of the interviews (Kvale 2009:123-125, 239).

The rest of my material consists of books (e.g. Lukes 2005, Rosenberg 2007), articles (e.g. Ulbig 2008, Mckenna 2011) and public documents such as the studied policy document LundaEko (Lunds kommun 2006). It has been complicated to find old protocols from public meetings and such, and thus do the public documents mainly consist of papers found in the archives, on the official webpage for Lund municipality and documents given to me by the interviewed officials.

2 Theory and Concepts

In this thesis I will, as already mentioned, use the theory deliberative democracy to explain and understand the issue of citizen participation on a local political level. The theory is one that looks at citizen participation as part of our democratic idea. Relevant concepts will also be discussed in this chapter.

2.1 Deliberative Democracy

Citizen participation is said by some to lead to more effective and democratic governance. It means that it can lead to a more efficient policy process, but also be costly, both in time and money (Irvin and Stansbury 2004:55-58). As people in a democratic society, not only do we have the right to vote, but we also have the right to participate in political decisions. We can become politicians or state officials, or we can get involved at the local level, which is the case I will be focusing on. Deliberation is another word for this kind of engagement (Rosenberg 2007:2)

When discussing deliberative democracy we must also look at the benefits and costs. Scholars like Dryzek (2000) and Elster (1998) have written books about deliberative democracy and have, thus, also put forward both sides. According to the Anglo-American view on deliberative democracy we have personal rights. They are individual autonomy and social equality (Rosenberg 2007:4). Deliberative democracy differs from other democracy theories. It defines the citizen as having cognitive capacities and moral potential. Individuals thus have the ability to judge according to a sense of justice as fairness. But too truly understand the beliefs and values of others, participation in deliberation is needed to make individuals reflect and interact more logically. Through deliberating with other individuals, the citizens come to develop an understanding of the common good and can reorganize their interests and create new ones (Rosenberg 2004:5-7).

The social equality has thus been broadened too. It does now also mean equal opportunity to participate in an active way when discussing public policy issues. Equality and autonomy go hand in hand, because equality is a necessity for autonomy and vice versa. They must, in this understanding, be realised through participation in governance. Thus institutions need a design that enables this equal and full participation. This can be done through citizen deliberation (Rosenberg 2004:7-9). In my case it is labelled as citizen participation.

There exists five conditions that need to be fulfilled for an interaction to be considered deliberative democratic in its full meaning. The first condition is a

political space for deliberation to take place, and no decisions or actions can be taken before the deliberation has ended. The second condition states that the political space must be inclusive. The third requirement is that the deliberation must be public to the extent that those affected but not involved also can respond to the outcome of the deliberation. The fourth condition says that the results of the deliberation must be binding. The last condition states that the deliberation must have some relation to the creation of public policies. This may be expressed as having the role of a consultative comparative to officials or administrators. A more direct involvement in the formulation of policies is also an option (Rosenberg 2004:9).

Besides these conditions, the deliberation itself also has requirements. It must be conducted with a concern for autonomy and equality. The results of the deliberation must be in harmony with the related values of justice as fairness, and democracy guided by the common good (Rosenberg 2004:9-10).

The scholars, Baber and Bartlett (2005), have also added an environmental perspective. They argue that deliberative democracy is relevant for environmental politics and has the potential for creating more environmentally based policies. Their statement is that we need new models of deliberative environmentalism to make environmental protection a cultural norm instead of merely a reality of government (MIT Press 2013). This is an interesting twist to the theory expressed in this thesis.

Mckenna (2011), another scholar, presents four different conjectures as explanations for the relationship between local governments and citizen participation. The four conjectures are named Transitional, Incompatibility, Instrumental and Resistivity. Below you find a table describing them in terms of five propositions. The propositions tell what circumstances and requirements that define the different conjectures. The five propositions are: analysis of local government, view of the public, characterization of participatory initiatives, explanation of why outcome failure happens and prospects for achieving outcomes. On the basis of this scheme I will try to sort out which conjecture that most adequately explains the policy process studied here. I will also use the five conditions for deliberative democracy mentioned above.

My assumption is that legitimacy is a positive outcome while the effectiveness of the process is negatively influenced by citizen participation. Better decisions as a consequence of citizen participation can, however, lead to advantages in efficiency (Irvin and Stansbury 2004:56). In other words, effectiveness, as well as legitimacy, are complex concepts. Thus is the causal connection between citizen participation and these two consequences not always clear-cut.

I will not go any further into the concept of democracy; it is a too wide and complex concept to handle in a bachelor thesis, when the focal point is on the case itself and not the theory.

TABLE 1 *The relationship between local government and public participation: four conjectures*

Conjecture	Analysis of local government	View of the public	Characterization of participatory initiatives	Explanation of why outcome failure happens	Prospects for achieving outcomes
Transitional	An important democratic institution that is necessarily representative and participatory	An active citizenry with political rights and complex needs	A genuine and necessary attempt to engage with citizens	Mechanisms linking initiatives to decision making are not yet in place	Good – through learning and innovation by local government
Incompatibility	A necessarily elite institution in complex modern society that must be representative but not participative	Unable to contribute meaningfully to policy and decision making	Often genuine attempts to engage with citizens that have mainly symbolic value for local political elites	Initiatives have limited democratic value within a representative structure – unwanted outcomes are rejected	Extremely limited – without structural change intermediate bodies many have to be used or expectations lowered
Instrumental	An institution that administers economic and social policies on behalf of the central state	Collective consumers of local services who need to be 'managed'	Pro-active management tools used to gather information and to deal with protest	Corporate elites have no desire for initiatives to influence policy	Nonexistent – outcomes cannot be achieved in future – however initiatives can be used to challenge the state
Resistivity	Only one node within a complex network of local governance	Constructed by public officials in many different ways	The embodiment of new participatory discourses that are vulnerable to existing institutional frameworks	Entrenched institutional frameworks operate to resist the outcomes from initiatives	Mixed – existing frameworks may be challenged, however directing participation through external bodies may be more effective

2.2 Influence

Baumann et al. (2001) consider influence to be one of two ways to do power politics. The other is called autonomy, which means to reinforce one's position. To be able to influence or seek autonomy, you need capacities. They can be economic, political, technical, institutional etc. When you have a capability, you can use it to gain influence or autonomy in a specific setting.

I will study influence in this process in terms of how the environmental organisations manage to affect their surroundings through influence. I choose to not study autonomy, because it does not seem to be suitable for this case. Baumann et al. (2001) mainly study these developments on an international level, but I think influence can be applied on a local level too.

The environmental organisations represent the public in this case and are therefore the voice of the citizens. They are the ones trying to influence the local politics. Influence can be reached through two different ways for environmental organisations. The two aspects can be looked upon as capacities. The first is called *resource mobilisation*. It essentially means how you gather the resources needed for collective action. The resources can be financial, members and symbols. You can either have a professional or a participatory organisation. The second aspect is called *political efficacy*. This refers to chosen strategies. You can choose to either follow the political rules or to play against them. These conflicting choices lead to four different types of organisation: the public interest lobby, the participatory protest organisation, and the professional protest organisation and last the participatory pressure organisation (Carter 2007:147). These capacities can thus be used to influence a situation in desired ways.

They can lead to participation and influence, but might also make the other influencer, the municipality, act differently. The officials can decide to not invite certain organisations because they might be seen as having too extreme opinions. This kind of exclusion in politics is known as the two-dimensional power where one actor is prevented from bringing up subjects because a more powerful actor decides, as argued by Bachrach and Baratz (Lukes 2005:20).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

I have four concepts to define and study scientifically: citizen participation, legitimacy, effectiveness and influence. I will not measure my concepts in the quantitative way of statistics, but I will somewhat try to determine my concepts by looking at different indicators.

I theoretically define citizen participation as part of deliberative democracy. As mentioned, there are other ways for people to influence politics in a state than by voting on their favourite politician. The politicians represent the people, but the

people can choose to engage in politics themselves. This kind of deliberative democracy, in comparison to the more known electoral and representative democracy, has been in practice for a while (Rosenberg 2007:2-3). It is called participatory democracy (Cook et al. 2007:27).

Citizen participation as a concept might in the essential sense mean everyone, i.e. all citizens. But in reality, the practice of citizen participation might only mean the few interested citizens who take time to engage. In my case, the citizens consist only of environmental organisations. The citizens are thus not represented as individuals, but rather like organisational bodies. This kind of representation can raise questions of legitimacy. Is it legitimate to assume that the environmental organisations de facto represent the views of the citizens? Can they represent all citizens?

Legitimacy is defined as having support from the public. Locke, among others, expressed ideas about legitimacy. He argued that political power lies in the hands of the people and not with a leader. To gain legitimacy you must have consent from the people (Mingst and Arreguín-Toft 2011:24). It can thus be understood as the higher the legitimacy, the greater is the approval from the people.

Legitimacy can also be divided into input and output legitimacy. Input legitimacy refers to the participatory quality of the decision-making process, while output legitimacy concerns the perceived efficiency of the decided policies (Lindgren and Persson 2010:451). This division raises the question whether the relationship between these two is one of synergy or trade-off? If synergy, an increase in input legitimacy will also increase the output legitimacy. If it is trade-off, an increase in input will consequently lead to a decrease in output (Lindgren and Persson 2010:450).

I believe that we need legitimacy on all levels of politics. Legitimacy is, however, very difficult to study. The concept is estimated subjectively and may lead to different opinions on the same process. Under these circumstances I will pursue objective accounts as much as possible, knowing that most statements are always coloured in one way or another.

Effectiveness can be studied as how efficient a process is in two terms. A process can be seen as effective if it manages to achieve and implement approved policies. A process can also be more or less time consuming. If a process is time consuming, it is also ineffective. Effectiveness in citizen participation can thus be looked upon both positively and negatively. Citizen participation can give more efficiency benefits to the public through better decisions. But it can also lead to a costly process in both time and money (Irvin and Stansbury 2004:56, 58). The perception of effectiveness is relative, which makes it a difficult concept to study. In this case, I will use the statements from the interviewees with the same viewpoint as for legitimacy. I am aware that relying on the interviewees to estimate the efficiency can lead to invalid results. But in addition to this I will also study the follow-up document (Lunds kommun 2011), evaluating the goals set in LundaEko, to estimate the efficiency.

Michels and de Graaf (2010) use aspects like legitimacy, inclusion and civic skills as aspects of citizen participation. There is, thus, undeniably an overlap in

the understanding and conceptualisation of citizen participation. I will try to keep legitimacy and effectiveness apart from citizen participation in the sense of seeing theme as consequences and not aspects of citizen participation.

Influence is another complex concept to define. In this thesis, I define influence as having the capacity to affect the circumstances in a situation. A capacity is thus a tool used to gain influence (Baumann et al. 2001). In this case I will mainly look at political and organisational capacities. The influence of the environmental organisations can be studied by looking at connections to the municipality, i.e. networking, personnel and organisational skills. The other party in the process, the municipality, also has the ability to influence. The municipality has capacities such as personnel, i.e. officials and politicians, economic capacities, i.e. budget, as well as political structure, i.e. the division of political parties.

2.3.1 Operational Indicators

Invitation to meetings, attendance at meetings and received referrals will be used to study citizen participation. Legitimacy is complicated to estimate. Looking at the openness of the process, i.e. the information given to the public and possibility for the public to engage, can hopefully assess it. Effectiveness will be determined through the statements of the interviewees and an official document evaluating the implementation of the goals (Lunds kommun 2011). To study influence I will use the following indicators: networking, personnel, organisational skills, budget and political structure.

3 Method

Through interviewing relevant people I aim to find empirical evidence confirming that the theory, deliberative democracy, can explain the development and happenings in this policy process.

I will, as mentioned, analyse this case in two stages. Firstly, I will study which key players were involved in LundaEko and how they were involved. Here, I will focus on the environmental organisations and their participation in the process. Secondly, I will look at what this citizen participation led to in the policy process. The consequences that I will focus on are legitimacy and effectiveness. In the first stage, citizen participation will be the dependent variable, while in the second stage it will be the independent variable. I will thus look at causal connections to better understand this level of policy process.

3.1 Interviews

I have been using the snowball method to collect relevant people to interview. It has been quite sufficient. My interviewees ended up being mostly officials and politicians. The total amount of people interviewed is 8. Except for two, all interviews were conducted in person. The two exceptions were conducted through phone calls. Two of the interviewees were interviewed twice because I found their knowledge and experience on the topic to be of high value. They have consequently gotten more interview time, which might give their statements an advantage when I do the analysis of this case.

Three politicians were interviewed; all of them sat in the municipal executive committee at the time of the process. Two of them came from the political majority at that time while one came from the opposition. Four officials were interviewed: all of them worked at the unit for environmental strategy during the process. One of the officials also belonged to an environmental organisation at the time, but balanced this by being involved in different issues depending on her role. Besides the official, one member of an environmental organisation was interviewed.

The collection of data was complicated due to the time span of almost ten years between the events studied, and when the interviews were conducted. Another difficulty was getting hold of people. Politicians, officials and members of environmental organisations had moved on in different ways. Some are not involved in politics or environmental organisations anymore, and some have moved to other parts of Sweden. Furthermore, some people I asked did not want to be interviewed. Members of environmental organisations were the most

difficult to get hold of. As many as thirty groups were invited, but barely a third of them actually participated in any manner. When searching for them, I found that many of the involved environmental organisations had ceased to exist. As a result of this decline, I only managed to interview one former member. This low number creates reliability problems for my study. But I intend, in spite of that, to extract as much as possible from this interview.

The interviews lasted between fifteen minutes, and 1 hour and fifteen minutes. They were all conducted during three weeks in December 2012. I did modify my interview questions after the first interview, based on wanting to gain a better understanding of the events and which people had been involved. The three groups had their own collection of questions. This created a natural difference between the interviews, which can have created different answers. People might understand questions in their own way and this consequently leads to various answers. My way of asking and following-up can also have affected the answers given.

The time difference between the interviews was due to the fact that the interviewees had different amounts of knowledge regarding the process. The two officials that I interviewed twice had been involved in this process and the one prior to this as well. It made them valuable to interview, because they knew more than the politicians, who had first gotten involved in 2002. Also, being that the officials still worked within the unit for environmental strategy, they had a more fresh memory of the events than the politicians who had moved on.

In the analysis, the interviewees will remain anonymous. This is done to show respect and understanding of their position. I can hand out the recordings of the interviews, as well as the interview questions, on request.

4 Description of LundaEko

The municipality of Lund began its environmental work before the start of the new millennium. A quick historical background will be provided before moving on to a description of the case of citizen participation in the policy process preceding LundaEko.

4.1 Historical Background

It all started in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 at the Earth Summit when Agenda 21 (henceforth known as A21) was agreed upon. Countries around the world began to make efforts to implement A21. In 1996, Lund municipality began its work on the local A21. This led to the first official A21 document consisting of environmental goals in 1997 (Lunds kommun 2013). The process leading up to this document had involved the public, nongovernmental organisations and other concerned actors.

After a few years, a revision of the document was needed, and in 2001 the process for creating a new document began. The new document was based on the fifteen national environmental goals previously set by the state (Prop. 2000/01:130). The goals were broken down to sixty smaller goals to suit the local level. The environmental state of Lund was then put together in thirteen reports, which became the basis for the further development of goals and strategies. In 2002, five theme groups were created with representatives from environmental organizations, officials from the municipality, experts and other relevant people. The groups met four times and were given the thirteen reports as a starting point. These groups gave ideas and suggestions for goals and strategies.

When the whole document was sent out on referral during Fall 2002 and Spring 2003 some of the administrations within the municipality did not accept the document and these disagreements made it difficult to finalize the document. It led to a prolonging of the process lasting three years before the municipal council finally voted it through in 2006 (Lunds Kommun 2012a). LundaEko was implemented and evaluated in 2012 when the timeframe expired. A revised version is currently in process.

4.1.1 The First Agenda 21 Document

The officials I interviewed had good insight in this process. Two of them have worked in the municipality since 1996, when the first A21 document was

established. As a consequence, they have knowledge about both processes, and the differences between them.

The point of looking at the first A21 process is to see the pronounced change of strategy in engaging the public, thus also the level of citizen participation. 1996, when the first process began, was only four years after the Earth Summit in Rio 1992. The feeling and encouragement on a global level to engage people from below still hung in the air. This was also the case among the politicians in Lund municipality. The politicians and the officials worked in many ways to involve the public. These ambitions were made possible by a big financial support to environmental matters. There were public meetings, different theme groups with mixed actors, a magazine sent out to all households in the municipality and an environmental book for the municipality. The theme groups consisted of people from the municipality and of external actors such as experts, scientists, local companies and the public. The public meetings were announced in the newspaper to enlighten people about their chance to have a say, and many did show up. But the follow up at the group meetings was not always high.

The problem with engaging the public is that they do it on a volunteer basis, which creates a difficult situation. When no one is obligated to come to every meeting, the turn up can vary a lot from week to week, which makes continuity in the discussions tricky. This was also the case here, as well as being time consuming for the officials working with the meetings.

Another issue, that actually quickened the first process, was the politicians wish to have a swift process. The first A21 document went up in the municipal council in 1997. This document only consisted of goals and nothing about how to achieve them. Consequently, the politicians knew that a new document had to be created soon after.

4.2 LundaEko

LundaEko is consequently the revised version of the first A21 document. It consists of three sections: goals, strategy and measures, and last responsibility. The goal part is made up of sixty goals divided into thirteen larger goals concerning fresh air, poison free environment, living forests and limited climate effect among others.

The second part consists of 124 measures to reach the goals. Because the document focuses on the ecological aspect of sustainable development, the measures do not lead to much involvement of the ordinary citizen in the implementation. Many of the strategies were to be implemented within the realms of the municipal organisation. Nevertheless, it is interesting to study the participation of citizens, because the policy affects everyone in the municipality.

The last section states how the responsibilities for the strategies and measures were to be divided between the different municipal administrations and organisations.

4.2.1 The Process

The political division in charge of the creation of the new A21 document, LundaEko, was the environment and health committee, working directly under the municipal executive committee. However, the unit for environmental strategy did the actual work. This unit was the working place for four of the interviewees, also known as the officials.

The process resulting in LundaEko was planned to finish within two years from the start in 2001. The prolonging of the process was partly due to political differences between two municipal administrations and the unit creating the document. Especially the technical management was against the development of the document. Many of the measures on the table would give more responsibilities to that particular department, and the board opposed to that. Not only municipal departments had reservations against the document. The political opposition made their reservations heard both in the executive committee and in the municipal council during the final stages (Lunds kommun 2012a).

Another issue that heated the discussions was whether Lund's environmental document should incorporate all aspects, including the social and economic. If so, the document had to be redone essentially to include these aspects. Some of the administrations wanted such a document, but it would have required more time to create. Eventually the parties agreed to only focus on the environmental aspects, and thus the document got the name LundaEko, referring to the ecological features.

5 Analysis of the Process

The analysis consists of different sections, depicting the results of studying citizen participation, legitimacy, effectiveness and influence. A theoretical analysis ends the chapter.

5.1 Citizen Participation in the Process

During the first A21 document, the public was engaged in many ways. This changed in the second round when creating LundaEko. The funding, that had made possible many of the events in the first process, had been decided to be used elsewhere. Furthermore, the distinguished ideas from Rio 1992 to have a higher involvement of the public had a decreased impact ten years after. The politicians decided that this time the invitations to meetings would go to specific actors only.

It was a matter of inviting the organisations known to the municipality. Of course there is always the possibility of missing a group when sending out invitations, but the more noticeable ones were invited. Bigger organisations like Lundabygdens Naturskyddsförening (LNF) and Fältbiologerna were gathered as well as smaller organisations like Lunds Fot- och Cykelfolk and Rio-gruppen. Both LNF and Fältbiologerna are national organisations with regional and local offices across Sweden. This may result in more organised and better-supported local offices.

Another engaging organisation was Miljöbiblioteket, which was a kind of platform for the public and other organisations to meet and discuss. Having own premises was not a normal asset for an environmental organisation in the municipality of Lund. This library was funded by the municipality, and thus, had some kind of obligation to help the municipality with premises when needed etc. The one member of an environmental organisation that was interviewed was active in Miljöbiblioteket. He said that he had attended dialogue meetings held by the municipality and knew at the time that the library was involved in the process.

One set of groups that were not invited were those holding too extreme opinions on the environment. They were considered not to add anything to the discussion. The aim was to have as broad a collection of opinions as possible, but the extreme groups were not considered as part of that wide range.

The citizens that became involved in the process through participation were perhaps not the ordinary citizens. The members of the organisations did not represent all social groups in the municipality: the old, the young, women, immigrants etc. But the young were given other opportunities. Fältbiologerna also has a younger group and they helped the municipality organise a youth hearing

where young people could speak up about the environmental politics in the municipality.

However, the fact that the environmental organisations cannot completely represent all citizens in the municipality is a critic against this chosen representation. It complicates the generalisation of this case in a bigger context of deliberative democracy.

Theme groups were created where members of environmental organisations, among others, could engage in the creation of LundaEko. The organisations were also invited to different meetings specifically to discuss the environmental goals and measures. One such meeting was held in 2005 where 30 different organisations and associations were invited. One third of them showed up at the meeting and even less answered to the referral that was later sent out that year.

The issue of not responding to invitations and referrals was said to be grounded in for example not having enough engaged members and having too little time. If no response came, the officials skipped those groups for the next send-out. This could create irritated people stating that they had not received the referral, based on misunderstood signals. The fact that their organisation had not given a response the last time, made the officials conclude that they did not want to be involved.

The interviewed officials and politicians have differing views on citizen participation. The four officials interviewed all supported citizen participation in municipal policy processes and decision-making. Three of them strongly stated the importance of involving the public. One official said that it was all a matter of support from the public to gain approval for municipal decisions. Citizen participation takes time, but it is needed for the public to feel involved. Another claimed that if the citizens were not made involved, it could lead to distrust among the public. A third said that citizen participation is important, but it may not engage more than a few people, which questions the representativeness of it.

Most politicians agreed on the importance of citizen participation. However, one politician argued that it was not the municipality's duty to involve the citizens. There already exist civil associations and umbrella organisations that work as the voice of the citizens. This politician was very sceptical to the idea that the municipality should use resources to involve the public. A dialogue with the public sounds good, but it is a waste of time. Another interviewee also held this argument. It was, surprisingly, the only member of an environmental organisation that was interviewed. He had, however, a more multifaceted view on the matter. He said that citizen participation on the municipal level has both positive and negative aspects. One positive aspect is that the citizens are closer to every day life than officials and politicians. They can instantly see if something needs to be fixed somewhere in the municipality and can thus be seen as the eyes and ears of the municipality. What confounded this interviewee was that it is regarded as a must to engage the public. He argues:

“There is something wrong with the democratic system here if you believe that you need a dialogue with the public in a democratically governed organisation.”

A more negative aspect is that the involved citizens can be a small group of people with own agendas and/or too much concern for the welfare of the world. Consequently, they do not care for the local issues of Lund. This rather small number of people is also a very small representation of the public. As a result, it is difficult to infer that the voice of all inhabitants in the community has been heard. The condition of inclusiveness in the process was not fully met. Thus can the process not be considered completely deliberative democratic.

5.1.1 Legitimacy in the Process

Inviting environmental organisations to discuss the strategies for the document can be seen as a way for the municipality to achieve a higher degree of legitimacy in the process; if they did not include the ordinary citizen, they could include engaged environmentalists to be the voice of the public. However, only inviting specific actors means only getting their opinion on the matter. These involved were also the engaged ones: those who are specifically interested in the environment. This can lead to somewhat narrow visions of environmental problems, if these people have particular concerns. The politicians are chosen by the public to rule and decide for them. That fact should give enough legitimacy to the decisions taken. Why should citizens then need to engage in decisions that politicians can take without their participation?

That is a legitimate question. Are the politicians better off without the participation of citizens? If they are, why do we want to have citizen participation? And do the politicians want this kind of legitimacy? The officials argue that we need to have approval for the decisions from the public. The municipality is there for the citizens. If the citizens did not have a say, the municipality would not represent the public. One politician, on the other hand, states that there already exist well-functioning organisations that do the same. Hence, we have split opinions on this matter. Everyone does not see deliberation as a good solution.

The shape of citizen participation can also affect the legitimacy. When the citizens are involved through giving new input to the process, and not deciding the actual policies, it may create a trade-off between input legitimacy and output legitimacy. A democratic gap due to the fact that the citizens do not have the actual power to decide, other than through voting on their politicians every fourth year. Hence, no full deliberative democracy is achieved.

5.1.2 Effectiveness in the Process

Looking at how the policy process was extended three years, it is a quick assessment to make that the policy process was not very effective. This was not, however, due to the participation of citizens, but rather the internal conflicts. It is thus possible to conclude that citizen participation did not make this process less effective, neither in time nor money. It is a distinct contrast between this process

and the first A21 document, where the procedure of involving the public had to be hastened on demand from the politicians. This time it was the politicians who could not agree. Thus, it was more an internal power conflict that made this process longer than expected.

The efficiency of the process can also be studied through looking at the follow-up of the sixty local goals set in LundaEko (Lunds kommun 2011). In this evaluation, the goals were classified as being reached, not reached, reachable, reachable but delayed, not reachable and unable to follow-up. Fourteen goals had been reached in 2011 and two had been partially achieved. Four had not been accomplished at all, while eight could still be achieved within the time frame ending in 2012. Three goals could be accomplished but were delayed, while four goals could not be followed-up. The significantly largest amount of goals would, according to the follow-up, not be reached at all. That means that 24 goals out of sixty were evaluated as not being achievable within the time limit. It leads to a conclusion stating that the outcomes of the document were not efficient, when 40 per cent of the goals could not be accomplished.

5.2 Influence in the Process

As mentioned above in 4.2.2., the decreased funding and changed idea of engagement from the politicians influenced the participation. The organisations that were invited were the ones that were known to the officials. Being bigger and having more members made some organisations stand out from the crowd. LNF, Fältbiologerna and Miljöbiblioteket all arranged meetings with the municipality and showed greater interest than other organisations in the process.

Despite invitations to meetings and received referrals, some organisations never attended or answered. Not participating at all leads to no possibility to influence, to deliberate. To get involved in the process the organisation had to be invited and included by the municipality. They could influence this decision by being recognised as an environmental organisation and showing interest.

The one exception to the invitations was the exclusion of the environmental groups that were considered too extreme. This choice to not invite them can be seen as two-dimensional power (Lukes 2005:20), where keeping out some organisations eliminate those organisations' chance to tell their opinion. This is not according to the deliberative democratic criteria of inclusion.

One issue where the environmental organisations disagreed with the municipality was the question of where and how to expand the city. Lund municipality has one of the most fertile agricultural lands in Sweden, which makes urban expansion a matter of preserving good land too. The environmental organisations do not like the idea of building on such fruitful soil. The politicians, on the other hand, argue that to inhabit all new citizens new buildings are needed. And the only way to expand is building on this specifically fertile land.

When the interviewees were asked whether the citizen participation in this process led to actual influence over the decisions taken none could answer yes.

Most of them did not know at all, although the officials said the suggestions put forward by the environmental organisations had been taken into account in the making of the document. The politicians could not remember the exact details around these matters and therefore had no concrete answers.

The role of the environmental organisations in this process was mainly as environmentally engaged people. It was a way of gaining more knowledge and getting new suggestions. Their proposals were not meant to be the final words. That power lay with the environment and health committee, the municipal executive committee and the municipal council; all consisting of politicians. The officials had influence in the matter by being the ones who work with and write the actual policy papers. But it all had to be approved by the politicians in the end. They were the deciding actors in this process, not the citizens themselves.

5.3 Theoretical Analysis of the Process

The deliberative democracy theory is very relevant to this case study. Public participation on a local level is indeed a matter of following the democratic values and ideas. The politicians shared, to a certain degree, those ideas with the officials, who were the ones inviting the environmental organisations.

My expectation was to find evidence supporting that citizen participation leads to actual impact on the decisions taken in policy processes, as stated by the fifth condition in 2.1. Although that turned out to not be the reality, I still consider the chosen theory to apply to this case. Without the ideas that citizens need deliberation to feel included and part of the community, the participation might not have taken place. All the officials held citizen participation as an important element of the work. The participation may be agreed by most as being important. Conflicting ideas are rather regarding how that participation should be expressed. The diverging opinions might have influenced the deliberative quality of this process in a negative way leading to less deliberation.

The conjecture that most adequately explains the relationship between the local government and the public participation in this process is the Transitional (Mckenna 2011:1186). All the propositions seem to describe this case. The municipality of Lund seems to be an ideal version of the Transitional conjecture. The prospects for accomplishing outcomes are, as stated in the conjecture, good. But to reach better outcomes in the future requires learning and innovation from the government's part.

My assumption that citizen participation would lead to a higher degree of legitimacy and a lower degree of effectiveness was partially supported. Legitimacy is seen as an important aspect of politics. It is needed to make the political decisions more profound. But the legitimacy of this process was difficult to study. I mainly got answers stating how essential legitimacy is to the political process and the municipal work, but few gave me reason to conclude that the legitimacy of this process was high or low. Although I did receive answers that indicated that legitimacy was pursued.

The policy process was not efficient with regard to reaching all the goals within the time set, and being prolonged three years. But the effectiveness was at least not affected in a significant degree by the participation of environmental organisations.

Both the legitimacy and the efficiency might have been affected by the fact that it was mainly different organisations that participated, not ordinary citizens. This can have affected the legitimacy in a negative way and the efficiency in a positive way. The legitimacy is thus not as high as if all citizens had had the opportunity to participate. The effectiveness was perhaps quickened by the involvement of organisations instead of individuals.

The politicians turned out to be major influencers. They hold the deciding power in the municipality on an every day basis. They need only to listen to what has been the outcome of the discussions with the citizens. The suggestions can certainly be taken into account, but the decision lies not in the hands of the citizens. The third requirement for deliberative democracy may not have been met here, at least not in relation to the deliberation. It was the political game between different parts of the municipal organisation that most directly determined the outcome of the policy process. It makes the actual influence of the citizens in this process quite small. Influence did matter in the policy process, but not in the way that I hoped and anticipated it would.

The environmental organisation did take action to have an impact in the policy process, especially the three mentioned. But the influence was not more profound than the politicians' decision-making power. The politicians consolidated their power by not involving the environmental organisations further than the first stage. Influence may not have been the decisive factor in choosing which organisations to invite and include in the discussions, but it was manifested through the democratic system that has not yet given the public in Lund a more direct form of democracy.

Deliberative democracy can, however, explain the mere fact that the environmental organisations even got the chance to engage in municipal processes. It is rooted in the idea that the public should have the possibility to deliberate in a democracy: to have a voice that leads to influence (Ulbig 2008). If the citizens participate but perceive that they have no influence in the matter, their voice is useless. But there is more to it than that. It is a combination of the two that creates beneficial outcomes. Perceived opportunity to participate and influence is as important as using the possibility (Ulbig 2008:535). And it is the opportunity to participate that is essential to deliberative democracy.

The five conditions for a fully deliberative democratic process were not all met. All the conditions were only met partially, which makes this an incomplete deliberative process. More governmental work is needed to improve the conditions for deliberative democracy.

6 Conclusion

The ambition put forward in this thesis was to study how the public participated in local politics. I have studied citizen participation in Lund municipality regarding the policy process preceding the environmental document LundaEko. It was the second Agenda 21 document created for the municipality since the Earth Summit in 1992.

I studied citizen participation, within deliberative democracy, as a variable affecting the legitimacy and effectiveness in the process. Influential power was also studied to broaden the theoretical framework based on deliberative democratic ideas.

Pragmatic circumstances, possibly influenced by the organisations themselves, such as if the municipality knew about the organisations and whether the organisations themselves answered to the invitation, influenced the shape of citizen participation. This conclusion was supported by the argument of the officials that the municipality existed on behalf of the citizens, not the other way around. The participation of environmental organisations could not, however, be deduced to have influenced the decisions, taken by the politicians, in any significant way. The Transitional conjecture was most similar to the process studied here. This process is an ideal example of the transitional relationship between the government and the participation of the public in all five aspects.

Legitimacy was difficult to study in this case, but actions taken during the first stages of the process showed eagerness to pursue a high level of legitimacy. The other consequence, effectiveness, was not influenced by the participation of citizens. It was rather due to internal conflicts between different parts of the municipal organisation that influenced the efficiency as well as the later follow-up on the achieved goals in the document.

The theory, deliberative democracy, is considered to be an applicable theory to this case study. The case shows different aspects of deliberation that need more discussion. It is particularly relevant to further discuss why deliberation is needed.

To conclude, a preeminent explanation to the development in this policy process is the deliberative democracy theory, with a small implication of influence.

6.1 Discussion

Of course, more interviews with members of environmental organisations would have increased the reliability. It would also have been better to study the process closer in time, because forgetfulness among the interviewees was a problem here.

With more time, I would have interviewed all the relevant politicians and officials and made a more advanced comparison between the two processes. Interestingly enough, during both processes it was a red-green (left) majority in the municipal council (Lunds kommun 2012b). Could this political situation have had any effect on the outcome of the policy process? This circumstance could certainly be studied more in detail.

Further study of the perspective of how deliberative democracy can improve the environmental thinking as stated by Baber and Bartlett had been interesting. In this case, the environmental part was mainly there because of the chosen case. There was no intention from the beginning to make the connection between deliberative democracy and environmental politics.

The few negative statements about citizen participation raise the question whether we need citizen participation or not. If the politicians are good at their job, why should we interfere? Any input can be good and useful, whether it comes from desired direction or not. I think the essential core lies in the Greek definition of democracy; rule by people. If a state is considered a democracy, the people who live there should also govern it. It is here that the opinions diverge. While some think that a representative democracy is enough, others believe that the people should have the right to deliberate too: the deliberative democrats.

In the context of a more globalized world, how much effect has our efforts on this local level made on the international level? Do we in fact decrease the pressure on the environment and help make a more sustainable world? Is it not the big CO₂ emitters that we should put pressure on? Perhaps it is the citizens in those countries who should begin participating? We need to think small and local to reach a global level of deliberation. If we, the citizens of the world, are not prepared to engage and act for this cause, who will?

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