SCHOOL OF
ECONOMICS AND
MANAGEMENT

Faculty of Business and Administration

BUSN09 - Degree Project

Master of Science Program in International Strategic Management

Spring 2023

Public Participation in Sustainable Urban Development Strategies - A Tool for Improving Strategy Making or a Symbolic Means of Establishing Legitimacy?

A Single Case Study of the Sustainable Urban Development Strategy of the City of Saint Petersburg

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Abstract

Title: Public Participation in Sustainable Urban Development Strategies - A Tool for Improving Strategy Making or a Symbolic Means of Establishing Legitimacy? A Single Case Study of the Sustainable Urban Development Strategy of the City of Saint Petersburg

Seminar Date: June 2nd, 2023

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Course: BUSO09 - Degree Project in Strategic Management

Keywords: Community engagement, local authorities, Arnstein's ladder, stakeholders, public participation, sustainable urban strategy

Purpose: This thesis aims to analyse the relationships between key stakeholders in the process of developing and implementing an urban strategy using the example of Sustainable Urban Development Strategy of the City of Saint Petersburg

Theoretical Perspectives: This thesis is based on theories related to involving public participation in the planning and implementation of the city strategy and the options and perspectives of participation strategies for involving stakeholders. The theoretical ladder model of Arnstein is used as a tool to assess the degree of public participation.

Methodology: Qualitative single-case study with an abductive research approach

Contribution: This study contributes to the literature on international strategic management by deepening the understanding of the relationships between key urban development actors in a sustainable urban development strategy. Given the influence of contextual factors, the findings and conclusions can also be useful for application in similar situations in other countries.

Conclusion: The study reveals problems in the form of a lack of a comprehensive strategic approach in the city strategy that includes sustainable development and building social capital. The weak position of the public in negotiations with the authorities leads to a lack of influence on the decisions, implementation and results of the strategy, which affects its outcome. The study highlights the importance of public participation in the planning and implementation of a sustainable urban development strategy and recommends that policy makers and urban decision makers commit to involving different stakeholders in the design of sustainable urban solutions and, through participatory design processes, organise more effective influence on the strategy by local communities to achieve better results.

Acknowledgment

I am very grateful to everyone who has supported me throughout this challenging and beautiful journey. First and foremost my supervisor Pauline Mattsson. Despite the distance and the difficulties that happened to me, she was there for me and believed in me, patiently gave wise advice and showed a genuine interest in the research, encouraging me to continue. I would also like to thank my family for their help and support, my partner Vasiliy, locking up the children and domestic difficulties to give me as much time as possible to devote to research. I am very thankful to my friendly group and teachers for the productive and enjoyable time together, especially Jonas Dittrich, for being there for me this year, sharing ideas, and giving valuable feedback on the research. Special thanks to Ulf Ramberg who, with a personalised approach, sensitively supervised my circumstances and gave me the time and choice to write my thesis in the best possible way. I am also very grateful to my interviewees, for the time they took to be interviewed, for their openness, honesty and courage with which they proactively try to create a city strategy, changing the world around them. Last and very important: I am very happy and grateful to the beautiful, bright, academic Lund University, that is now forever in my heart, for its incredible experience and for making this Master's programme an enriching and unforgettable immersion.

Sincerely, Ekaterina

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Cities have become the primary living space for humans, with more than half of the world's population living in cities since 2007. The World Bank predicts that over 68% of the world's population will live in cities by 2050 (United Nations, 2018a). Urban habitats consume three-quarters of the world's energy and cause three-quarters of global pollution (United Nations, 2018b). According to Rogers, modern "cities have become parasites on the landscape - huge organisms draining the world for their sustenance and energy: relentless consumers, relentless polluters" (Rogers, 1998, p.27). Alongside high energy demand and heavy pollution of the environment, industrialisation and capitalism have stimulated social and economic processes on a global scale that have created inequalities in the distribution of wealth (Ryckbosch, 2015). These inequalities have led to the formation of different urban areas whose inhabitants do not have the same access to resources and services (Lipietz, 1995). These socioeconomic and environmental problems are complex and require diverse and multifaceted solutions to be adequately addressed.

In the context of globalisation and an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world, issues such as sustainable urban development and local governance have taken on new dimensions. Creating sustainable cities is thus becoming an increasingly important issue. To respond to the inevitable negative impacts of climate change, cities must use adaptation methods and strategies to create a sustainably resistant habitat in which future shocks and stresses can be absorbed to maintain essentially the same functions, structures, systems and identities (Chu, Anguelovski & Roberts, 2017). Although a normative framework for sustainable development has been defined and applied at global, national and regional policy levels, concrete steps towards sustainable cities and communities at a local level lag well behind the vision and expectation expressed at international summits such as Rio 1992, Johannesburg 2002 and Copenhagen 2009, etc.

According to Maloutas (2003) sustainability is a context-dependent concept and includes environmental, economic and social aspects balanced with each other. The importance of the social dimension as an integral part of a sustainable urban development strategy has been highlighted in many studies (Ghahramanpouri, Lamit & Sedaghatnia, 2013; Polèse & Stren, 2000; Van Driesche & Lane 2002). Moreover, researchers have noted a correlation between the

emergence of socio-economic problems and the declining importance of social aspects on the part of authorities in urban planning (Fainstein, 2000; Ghahramanpouri, Lamit & Sedaghatnia, 2013; Polèse & Stren, 2000). In that context Van Driesche and Lane (2002) believe that today's leaders are losing credibility and are unable to promote a common good approach. In their view, a new political culture should not be built on top-down decision-making, but on an evolving network of relationships between government and civil society at different levels.

Research repeatedly emphasises that for communities to succeed and create sustainable strategies, 'local citizenship' must be created through policies that reward education and learning, and diverse stakeholders, including different levels of government, commercial and non-profit organisations, planners and public administrators, must be engaged through processes of co-design and co-creation of knowledge (Clarke & Gaile, 1998; Davis & Andrew, 2018; Innes & Booher, 2005; McKenzie, 2004; Polèse & Stren, 2000). Scholars mention different reasons why such participation is considered an important and necessary element of urban policy (Drazkiewicz, Challies & Newig, 2015; Legacy, 2010). In urban development, the process of creating shared space has mostly been determined by inequalities between people in economic, political or cultural dimensions as well as power relations, resulting in inequalities in the distribution of resources and benefits (Massey, 2009). It seems that one effective way to overcome these inequalities may be to involve stakeholders in the planning and implementation of a sustainable development strategy. From the perspective of deliberative democracy theory, the stakeholder process is valuable and useful as it encourages inclusive open interaction and exchange of ideas between stakeholders in the planning process (Legacy, 2010). Participatory approaches are considered promising for improving the efficiency of urban space planning and public land allocation (Faehnle & Tyrväinen, 2013). Empirical examples of participatory planning have repeatedly demonstrated that active participation leads to legitimate and informed decision-making that meets community needs (Drazkiewicz, Challies & Newig, 2015). In the participatory paradigm, public and citizen engagement becomes a core part of local government organisational processes for implementing sustainable urban development strategies (Wong, 2007).

Nevertheless, there is a view that participation exists only to give legitimacy and sell proposals, and that the role of participants tends to be symbolic (London & Cadman, 2009). One recognised, cited and well-known theory that assesses public contributions to decision-making processes, emphasising their symbolic participation in these decisions, is the Arnstein ladder of

citizen participation. This model has eight levels of interaction from manipulation to citizen power, with each rung corresponding to a degree of citizen power in determining the plan and or programme. The higher the position on the ladder, the more influence citizens have in the decision-making process (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein, the author of the 'ladder', believed that participatory processes often become 'empty rituals' and should be judged by the actual influence citizens have on the outcomes of the process.

Thus the different approaches, despite their diversity, on the one hand have in common the need for direct and centralised participation of citizens, NGOs and social movements in policy development and implementation (Beck, 1992), as public participation usually serves explicit governance purposes, on the other hand there are some concerns about the possible symbolism and unreliability of involvement (Arnstein, 1969). Against the background of the complexities described above, given the ambiguity and uncertainty about the benefits of public participation and the role of the public, a number of authors believe that contextual causality between process and outcome is important for participatory planning and needs to be explored (Fors, Molin, Murphy & Konijnendijk van den Bosch, 2015; Innes & Booher, 2014). In contrast to studies addressing the opportunities, risks, arguments for and against public participation, the body of research related to the causal link between the depth and 'genuineness' of participation and the outcome of the resulting strategy contains gaps. In addition, the literature and research rarely address potential governance strategies on the way to becoming a sustainable city. As a consequence of these gaps, sustainable city professionals lack comparative information about effective implementation strategies for different levels of public engagement. There is also a lack of evidence in the literature to understand the challenges faced by different stakeholders in engagement, as well as the criteria needed to assess the potential trade-offs involved in adopting and prioritising different sustainability measures.

Arnstein's Ladder model, which describes gradations of citizen participation, was chosen as a tool to investigate power-public relations. Through the metaphor of the ladder, it is intended to understand what levels, types and forms of participation exist in the relationship between power and society in Saint-Petersburg (hereinafter St.Petersburg), Russia as well as to identify deviations in their relationship and to assess the potential of partnerships viewed in the light of participation. The analysis of decisive contextual factors is valuable in that it includes representatives of various stakeholders, including current city political authorities. This analysis is expected to cover a largely unexplored area of research important for the evolution of the city

towards sustainable development by examining the degree of participation of key stakeholders in strategic urban planning. The results of the study will provide empirical input to the analysis of the transformation of urban strategies towards sustainability.

1.2. Purpose Statement and Research Question

The aim of this thesis is to explore the relationships between key stakeholders in the design and implementation of a sustainable development strategy for the city of St.Petersburg (hereinafter "Strategy 2035") with resident participation. The analysis of these relationships is intended to identify causal links between the quality and genuineness of public participation and the outcomes of the strategy.

A qualitative case study will be conducted to achieve these objectives. Through interviews with various stakeholders of the city, including representatives of the government, it is planned to assess the depth and level of their relations with each other in implementing the strategy, to understand whether the public has the power to make decisions and influence changes in the implementation of "Strategy 2035" directions and whether the desired outcome stated by the authorities in the strategy description corresponds to the reality. The authorities of St.Petersburg state that the implementation of the plans of the "Strategy 2035" includes public participation, moreover, one of the objectives of the strategy is the development of civil society. By investigating how the St.Petersburg authorities address these objectives and how they interact with stakeholders and the public in the implementation of the strategy, it is anticipated that the results of the research will help to understand how the involvement of different stakeholders can be changed and improved to make their participation more authentic and effective. In addition, the findings seem relevant for understanding potential scenarios for improving urban strategies in this context. Based on the above, the following research question is expected to be answered:

What influence and impact does the society of St.Petersburg have on the implementation process and outcome of the sustainable development strategy?

1.3 Contributions of the Thesis

The contribution of this work is valuable to scholars and practitioners alike. The work fills a relevant gap in the literature by deepening the understanding of the relationship between the key urban development actors in a sustainable urban development strategy - the public and the

authorities. Given the influence of contextual factors, the findings and results may also be useful for application in similar situations elsewhere. Due to the relevance of sustainable development as an integral part of urban strategy, the topic studied is relevant to the field of international strategic management.

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six parts. The first section introduces the relevance of the topic and the issue, followed by the purpose and question of the research. The second chapter summarises and analyses the literature related to the research question, and identifies areas in which it will be applied at a later stage of this paper. Thus, this chapter reviews previous studies highlighting the need to include social sustainability in strategic urban development, in this context detailing participatory strategies, including social capital building strategies, their benefits as well as the conditions for their effective use. At the same time, the criticisms and challenges that can be associated with participation are examined. For a more in-depth and localised consideration of participation in strategy implementation, the Arnstein ladder model, its features and limitations are examined. In so doing, the theoretical framework provides the foundation for the empirical analysis. Next, the methodology used in this thesis is justified. In particular, it justifies the research approach, data collection and analysis, and discusses the validity, reliability and ethical aspects of the paper. The fourth chapter presents the empirical results obtained from the data analysis. This is followed by conclusions, which are based on previous empirical findings and positioned in relation to the preceding literature. Chapter six summarises the thesis and discusses limitations and suggestions for future research.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This part focuses on reviewing, discussing, and summarising the existing literature on the research question. A literature review means a search for and synthesis of research on a topic. It integrates information regarding proposed concepts as well as the opinions and conclusions of other commentators into the overall literature review (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), and allows this study to fit into the context of an ongoing literature dialogue, filling gaps and expanding on previous research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), and providing a theoretical framework for arguing the relevance of this thesis. In order to facilitate the search for materials, papers and articles related to the aim of the study, the relevant keywords were first identified: community involvement, local government, Arnstein ladder, stakeholders, citizen, public participation, sustainable urban strategy.

2.1 Inclusion of Participation in the Governance of the Public Entities

Sustainable urban development is a complex task that requires specific approaches, which a huge number of city government departments and public authorities have to deal with (Feiock, Krause & Hawkins, 2017). The importance and potential of municipal governments in implementing urban strategies is highlighted in studies and other important global agendas (Kronsell & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2018; Elelman & Feldman, 2018, World Bank Group, 2014). According to Solesbury (2013), in an administrative system, the role of politics is to control change and give direction or approach to decision makers. According to Feiock, Krause and Hawkins (2017) to overcome urban complexity and shape effective urban strategies and solutions, a legitimate political environment needs to be created that is conducive to sound and effective decision-making. As sustainable development is an emerging area for the local agenda, no universal specific administrative tools and mechanisms have yet been developed that local governments use to evolve and implement sustainable development strategies (Feiock, Krause & Hawkins, 2017). In recent years the shift from government to governance has created new governance spaces (Taylor, 2007). Research notes that public institutions should not only focus on building flexible and adaptive processes to adapt to changing circumstances in anticipation of uncertain future threats in order to realise urban resilience, but also coordinate multiple public institutions and the need to allocate resources for preventive measures (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014; Boin & Lodge, 2016). The challenges faced by municipal governments in institutionalising new 'sustainable' arrangements are the formalised ways of working and the current governance structure. The transition from bureaucratic and short-term political silos to systems that are

flexible, mobile and diverse is a complex issue for government structures (Coaffee, Therrien, Chelleri, Henstra, Aldrich, Mitchell, Tsenkova & Rigaud, 2018). Speaking of governance structure, to trigger sustainable mechanisms in urban strategies and encourage flexible and adaptive processes instead of the usual routine that maintains the status quo, Matyas and Pelling (2015) suggest that public bodies prefer open horizontal governance to closed spaces (Matyas & Pelling, 2015; Pelling & Manuel-Navarrete, 2011; Stark & Taylor, 2014). According to researchers, this would challenge the traditional functioning of public processes and help achieve better results in strategy and policy implementation (Duit, 2016; Stark & Taylor, 2014).

According to Coaffee and Clarke (2015), an important enabler of capacity building and organisational behavioural change in municipal governments to implement holistic approaches to urban sustainability, and to develop a coherent and effective urban sustainability strategy, is to bring more people and organisations from different sectors and structures together in a strategic effort to improve sustainability (Coaffee & Clarke, 2015). Its ultimate goal is to embed a sustainable-based approach in all decision-making processes at the city level. Elelman & Feldman (2018) also consider the only option to address sustainability issues and centralised administrative response by maintaining effective cooperation between local governments and various stakeholders, integrating governance with local knowledge about sustainability issues and involving users in the process. The legitimate recognition of, and need for, advanced citizen engagement practices by local governments to realise sustainable urban development is contained in UN Agenda 21. It emphasises the benefits and necessity of public authorities cooperating with citizens as well as other partners - representatives of NGOs, industry, etc (United Nations, 2013). Under the right conditions, stakeholder participation at local level, with the active support of municipalities and local authorities, is an effective way to implement policies and can help governments to achieve improved sustainable development outcomes (World Bank, 2014). Exploring the importance of cooperation between the municipality and other urban actors and raising the question of the role of the municipality in governance Kronsell and Mukhtar-Landgren (2018) suggest that the traditional top-down approach to governance can be contrasted with a more network-centred definition of governance (Qvist, 2016), in which the municipality is just one of many cooperation partners. The role of 'promoter' for the municipality suggested by the researchers emphasises the opportunities for joint and capacity governance and ambition of the municipality to cooperate. In this case, governance is not formal leadership or power, but rather a partnership on fairly equal terms with all parties involved. The concept of governance is thus more oriented towards a horizontal logic that promotes self-organising

inter-organisational networks and independence from the state (Kronsell & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2018). Although some municipalities have realised the benefits of implementing policies through cooperation and collaboration, there is much doubt that governments actually understand how to manage networks or effectively influence policy outcomes (Milward & Provan, 2000).

2.2 Inclusion of Participation in Urban Strategies

2.2.1 Social Sustainability as a part of a Sustainable Urban Strategy

Recently, cities have been severely challenged in their ability to respond to contemporary challenges, and new ways of managing policy formulation and development mechanisms have been proposed (Lee, Woods & Kong, 2020). In urban strategic planning, sustainable development has become an important agenda with a particular focus on healthy infrastructure, sustainable communities, green and circular economy, and also with an emphasis on the development of a socially inclusive decision-making process and the governance structures that support this process (Wahlund, 2019). Most studies on sustainable urban strategies combine economic and social aspects together with an agency perspective and the role of stakeholder participation in the design and implementation of a sustainable urban strategy (Bristow & Healy, 2018; Masik, Sagan & Scott, 2018; Dempsey, Bramley, Power & Brown, 2011; Maloutas, 2003). At the same time, a number of studies note that most sustainable urban planning policies do not pay sufficient attention to the social input in implementing strategies and overlook the complexities and challenges of the contemporary urban environment from a social perspective (Trivellato, 2017; Jonas and While, 2007). It is argued that this approach is often neglected (Trivellato, 2017), and when discussing the concept of sustainability and its strategic development, the environment or ecology is implied more, making the social dimension less prominent (Jonas & While, 2007). Nevertheless, other studies highlight the importance of the social dimension as an integral part of a sustainable urban development strategy (Ghahramanpouri, Lamit & Sedaghatnia, 2013; Polèse & Stren, 2000; Van Driesche & Lane 2002).

According to Basiago (1998) urban sustainability and the policies to support it are inseparable from the social principles of the future, equity, citizen participation and involvement in various urban projects and the local land management process. The concept of social sustainability implies a strategy, with the development of which civil society, social inclusion and quality of

life are improved (Davidson, 2010). Also Polèse and Stren (2000) point out that for successful urban governance, its policies should take into account social sustainability, support development aimed at building civil society, and address different objectives aimed at solving urban problems through an effective and equitable local governance structure. Kamariah and Dolbani (2006) write about the need to include in urban strategies collective action as elements of democratic communities and social sustainability and they identify three main groups who are the main actors in successful policy and decision making cooperation: government and authorities, those who have a special interest in public projects (private sector, business) and the community (activists, NGOs). A model of social sustainability integrated into a strategy should encompass the attributes of a "future" that includes improving equity and accountability in local government (McKenzie, 2004).

Thus, to improve global governance and planning, various studies, linking social sustainability with the concept of multi-stakeholder engagement, repeatedly recommend its inclusion in urban strategies to co-create and develop a better city for its residents (Pahl-Wostl, 2009; Trivellato, 2017). For such a strategy to be meaningful as a social and political practice, it must be formulated holistically enough to address the needs of the entire spectrum of urban stakeholders (Legacy, 2010). The studies mentioned above consider it important for an effective sustainable development strategy to identify the real needs of citizens in order to realise more appropriate interventions and solutions. Thus, the public can contribute to decisions in the form of opinions or judgements on which urban policies can subsequently be shaped (Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

2.2.2 Social Capital as a Tool to Address Collective Action in the City

The outcome of a strategy, whether a city or an international community, depends to a large extent on how community or city members deal with the collective action problem (Ostrom, 2000). The collective action problem deals with the clash of alternative courses of action between individual and group interests, it is complex to solve and involves moving from selfish incentives that provide short-term individual benefits to achieving a mutually beneficial plan for all participants (Ostrom & Ahn, 2009). An important new dimension in community and urban development, adopted by many researchers to help overcome the collective action problem, is the strategy of building social capital (Ostrom, 2000; Rydin & Pennington, 2000). It has been seen by researchers as one of the successful mechanisms for maintaining long-term community participation and engagement and includes more managed participation, which differs from the well-known strategy of increasing participation and is a more effective policy implementation

option (Ostrom, 1996; Rydin & Pennington, 2000). Ostrom and Ahn (2009) view social capital as a property of people's relationships that enables them to solve successful problems of collective action. Through institutionalising participation and building trust between actors, social capital building strategies help authorities to address societal tensions over the long term and create more effective governance (Rydin & Pennington, 2000).

Social capital can take many different forms and manifestations, it can be outdated and modern, it can be strengthened, destroyed, weakened or transformed (Wong, 2007). Ostrom and Ahn (2009) emphasise that through the right choice of institutions and incentives, the right forms of social capital necessary for effective policies are created (Ostrom & Ahn, 2009). Also, when analysing the political and economic performance of different cities and communities, the forms of civic engagement, the networks formed between communities, the existence of formal and informal institutions, and the norms of trust and reciprocity must also be taken into account. The concept of social capital building takes these factors seriously as causes of the nature of collective social outcomes and accumulates knowledge to develop networks, constructing a causal link between these factors and the outcome of adopted strategies and policies (Ostrom, 2000). An important advantage of social capital building strategies, researchers see that self-managed systems in urban spaces and communities which result from a strategy of building social capital are more promising, efficient, and stable, due to the creation of forms of social capital such as trust and networks between actors, and the rules and norms that have been negotiated by the system as a result of this participation (Ostrom & Ahn, 2009). These forms of social capital refer to the resources created as a result of the interactions in society (Wong, 2007).

Brown and Ashman (1996) analysing at 13 development projects and participation in these projects revealed a correlation between the presence of social capital and the successful outcome of the project. Analysing the development strategies of two Italian regions, Putnam (1993) found that the higher the degree of 'civic engagement', the more successful and effective the policy works. One of the most important reasons for this success Putnam (1993) cites developed networks between stakeholders. Wong (2007) also identifies the support for social cooperation in the implementation of successful policies through dense social networks and notes the need to include this issue in country and regional community development strategies. Developing and building social capital by working to strengthen and densify networks and their involvement helps governments to pursue effective strategies. However, there is concern that many communities lack such networks altogether (Wong, 2007). In another study, Ostrom and Ahn

(2009) note the rules of participation and cooperation that emerge from incentives. Incentives in turn are provided by institutions that call for the coordination of personal and collective interests and change their structure accordingly. Understanding how incentives work is necessary for a successful strategy of building social capital (Ostrom & Ahn, 2009).

In contrast, studies have noted that formal institutions and norms do not help to solve, and sometimes aggravate, the problem of collective action (Ostrom & Ahn, 2009; Taylor, 2007). Under authoritarian regimes, the regime's ability to stimulate such action is essential to the success of self-governance and the formation of social capital. A democratic atmosphere and organised power structure can be said to be valuable social capital for society and effective policy (Ostrom & Ahn, 2009), and informal institutions in mediating forms of interaction lose importance in cases of strong government control and authority (Wong, 2007).

Thus, a number of studies suggest that the challenges of implementing effective urban strategies can be met by institutionalising participation, building social capital and achieving a policy of contractual engagement and authority building (Ostrom & Ahn, 2009; Putnam, 1993; Wong, 2007). The current mismatch between institutional design and what actually happens, according to Ostrom, is in the way social capital is handled, the forms it takes, how it is allocated, how incentives are structured, and inadequate understanding of the role of agency in the processes (Ostrom & Ahn, 2009).

2.3 Overview of the Implications of Participation with regard to Urban Strategies

This subsection reviews previous study on the conditions for effective participation and the benefits and challenges of including participation in urban strategies. The review concludes with a schematically framework of conclusions regarding inclusion based on the previous literature.

2.3.1 Benefits of Participation in a Sustainable Urban Strategy

Calls for broad public participation and its inclusion in the city's strategy are seen as the result of policies that aim to create a local citizenship that includes the public, different levels of government, commercial and non-profit organisations, planners and public administrators (Clarke & Gaile, 1998; Davis & Andrew, 2018; Innes & Booher, 2005; McKenzie, 2004; Polèse & Stren, 2000). Public participation is a relocation of power that allows citizens, excluded from

political and economic processes for the moment, to be consciously included in these processes the future in order to share the benefits of a prosperous society (Arnstein, 1969). According to Innes and Booher (2005) effective participatory methods are self-organising, focused on anticipating and identifying future actions, seeking agreement and organising shared knowledge and heuristics for joint action.

Conducting an institutional analysis of public choice and public participation from the perspective of the collective action problem Rydin and Pennington (2000) consider participatory strategies as an important tool for overcoming fundamental non-cooperative behaviour problems to build effective and competent urban policies. The researchers emphasise the roots of participatory planning activities in the incentive structures faced by potential participants and, in particular, the strategies that can be adopted to encourage greater public participation. Two different principles are thus considered to explain participation, one based on a common right to participation to approximate a model of values and preferences for policy options that aims to develop a shared vision of what can be achieved. Associated with this concept is most of the existing research on participation, as well as the process of "deliberative democracy", which is undertaking various new participatory methods to expand the role of public participation (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). Another approach to participation looks at the quality of policy implementation and the role of participation in it, answering the questions of how well policies achieve their goals, by what means and in what ways, and what effects they have. Viewing policy formation and policy implementation as 2 parts of a single process, "it is insufficient to limit the discussion of public participation to the reflection of societal values in policy statements; its role in putting these statements into practice also needs to be addressed" (Rydin & Pennington, 2000, p.155). Researchers thus highlight the differences between the usual expansion of public participation described in the current planning literature and the social capital building strategies mentioned above (Rydin & Pennington, 2000).

Fors et al. (2015) note that there are differences in the concepts of public participation and public involvement. Public involvement implies the inclusion of the public in decision-making, with no influence or responsibility for the outcome (World Bank, 1994), while public participation implies that participation should be included in the decision-making process, have the power to influence outcomes (Arnstein, 1969) and therefore be responsible for decisions (Fors et al. 2015). The use of participation and involvement as synonyms emphasises that participation has different degrees and ranges with different impacts on the process and outcome of participation (World

Bank, 1994). Fors et al. (2015) emphasise that both public involvement and participation in the public policy process are important factors in the implementation of policies that meet people's needs and expectations.

Participatory planning has been empirically proven to help make legitimate and informed decisions at the city level that respond to community needs (Drazkiewicz, Challies & Newig, 2015). For example, half a century ago, Paul Davidoff (1965) who takes a pluralistic approach to urban planning, argued for the important role of planners and qualified professionals to represent the interests of poor and rightless groups in the city, like a lawyer representing a client. Davidoff (1965) argued that the participation of different political, social and economic interests contributed to better public policy choices in urban planning. He also saw the need to empower the rightless through the interaction of competing planning advocates.

In conception of the communicative approach to planning, Lane (2005) notes that no planning is possible without stakeholder participation. He highlights the special role of intersubjective communication and public participation and specifically emphasises that in addition to consultation and persuasion, participation should include forms such as negotiation, bargaining and debate (Lane, 2005).

Rydin & Pennington (2000) believe that the ongoing participation of different public representatives throughout the political process helps to coordinate responsive and calm policies. This is also because participation helps to defuse tensions during the political process. Involving different stakeholders and levelling out differences has been shown to help test the legitimacy and fairness of the process and it is believed that involving stakeholders early in the process prevents possible controversy (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). Innes and Booher, 2005 also emphasise that genuine dialogue, networks and institutional capacity, which are the main ingredients of participation, help make difficult decisions, deal with difficult situations and organise a favourable climate for future action.

One important argument for including diverse stakeholders in a participatory strategy is that a wide range of stakeholders have diverse and useful local knowledge, narratives and systems thinking that are as important as technical data (Bai, Zhu, Wang & Ren, 2017), which has great benefits for sustainable urban governance processes and increases the likelihood that different policies will fit the local context, it can also improve the quality of decisions (Fischer, 1993;

Legacy, 2010). Rydin & Pennington (2000) believe that public participation, whatever methods of involvement are used (consultations, surveys) provides useful information for the policy process, based on local knowledge and preferences. This information is "key resources of knowledge" that improves planning and development, prevents negative bias and disagreement and is essential to achieving policy goals and preventing fatal mistakes (Rydin & Pennington, 2000, p.155). In thinking about sustainability, Elelman and Feldman (2018) note the importance of an active role for local stakeholders in knowledge production for the transition to a sustainable society. Combining different forms and modes of knowledge production helps to achieve coherence even when information is scarce (Elelman & Feldman, 2018). These claims are supported by Foley and Martin (2000), who find that strong communities, through their close familiarity with the context in which problems arise, build local knowledge that is valuable to the government and offer better, locally relevant solutions, while building a broad sense of ownership (Foley & Martin, 2000). It is important for all city-level decisions to be relevant to the local context, involving participants in the decision-making process and using their local knowledge and public preferences, enhances the quality of these decisions (Legacy, 2010). Based on the value of local knowledge for policy action and the planning process, Legacy, 2010 argues that the public has a legitimate place in the planning process. According to the researcher different stakeholders have different perspectives on important social, environmental and economic aspects of the city, inclusiveness makes urban planning more complex and integrated, knowledge is tacit, and public participation creates a "alive experience" of the individual. Legacy (2010) notes an important nuance that with various participatory approaches, in addition to authorities having better policies and responding to the growing call for participatory disclosure of dominant decision-making processes, there is also learning and awareness among stakeholders themselves.

As participants are motivated by perceptions of the physical outcomes of their efforts, research on community participation aspirations suggests a link between the process of participation and outcomes in terms of member retention. (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). In addition, physical outcomes of participation, reflecting user preferences, improve user satisfaction and create a stronger sense of belonging and greater motivation to implement decisions (Fors et al. 2015; Wong, 2007).

2.3.2 Conditions for Effective Participation

The failure to identify the conditions for successful public participation and the failure to recognise incentives for non-cooperative behaviour is a consequence of neglecting some key ideas derived from institutional public choice theory and related work on rational choice of social capital, which can lead to policy failure (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). Researchers are still divided on how effective participation should be realised (Fors et al. 2015). While traditional approaches have relied on a narrow range of stakeholders, recent research argues that sustainable urban strategies should involve the full range of professional and community groups at all stages of the planning process, from the identification and formulation of strategies and plans, to their detailed design and implementation (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). This approach should be provided at different spatial scales, from locally coordinated systems to centralised organisations and sub-national communities (Coaffee, 2013).

In their analysis of public choice theory, Rydin and Pennington (2000) identify a number of conditions for successful public participation that influence the prospects and reach of participation, these include knowledge about the issue and process of participation, the costs and benefits of participation and non-participation, the expected distribution of costs and benefits associated with the policy outcome, and expectations about how participation will affect the policy outcome. By understanding how these mechanisms work, it is possible to improve the effectiveness of participation and with it the decisions that are made and the policies that are implemented. Participation can be stimulated by obtaining private selective incentives for those who cooperate. The promotion of cooperation and motivation to participate can arise from an individual's orientation towards the environment. The existence of various social ties and the existence and desire to maintain ongoing good social ties with neighbours stimulates a higher degree of participation (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). Also Rydin and Pennington (2000) note that being in a small group provides an opportunity to monitor behaviour and take action on those who are uncooperative. Reducing free riding is also possible through strict jurisdictional restrictions extending to areas in which participation would be legitimate and offering fairer solutions for parts of the situation, with the aim of increasing incentives to overcome the collective action problem and develop bonds of trust and reputation. Researchers also raise the issue of the need to include a prior learning and training as a core part of the participation process, the subsequent complexities being related to who makes the decision, what is primary and secondary, and what training is needed for each case. Having awareness and knowledge of

stakeholders on a particular issue prepares the community to address the city's problems through participation (Rydin & Pennington, 2000).

In order to assess the range of institutional capacities and the potential for stakeholder engagement, and with it to improve the effectiveness of engagement, Fung (2006) proposes a concept that assesses the pattern of any participation through three main parameters: who participates, how participants communicate with each other and make decisions, how discussions relate to policy, strategy or public action. The researcher believes that understanding the varieties of participation and knowing how to work with them is essential to the conduct of effective governance. Through the institutional design of participation, Archon Fung (2006) suggests that issues of democratic governance, such as legitimacy and fairness, should be addressed.

Innes and Booher (2005) offer their concept of effective participation. According to the researchers it should be multi-stakeholder and broad-based, in which participants are not limited to formal communication but also interact informally (Innes & Booher, 2005). In order to ensure this format of participation, a systemic perspective is needed that takes into account the connection between all the diverse stakeholders from both the public and the public sector, reflecting the multilayered and diverse contemporary realities. This model suggests that genuine dialogue improves trust, develops social capital and promotes authentic learning, so that information is understood and accepted in a unified context and shared decisions and goals are formed for the benefit of both parties (Innes & Booher, 1999). Researchers also point out that in today's world, hierarchical power is no longer as effective as it once was, giving way to a globalised, networked society (Castells, 1996).

As the great diversity of voices and opinions creates difficulties for the participatory process, Ostrom (2000) sees the solution in an institutional approach based on consensus building, a shared understanding of the process, and a two-way dialogue to build trust between the participants and harmonise the whole palette of interests between them. In the case of shared resource management in the context of institutional cooperation Ostrom (2000) writes about the importance of balancing control by authorities and freedom to engage and foster civic participation. The researcher sees ideal governance in a balance of control that is organised through access to necessary knowledge, consequently reducing the cost of control and generating an environment for more effective participation (Ostrom, 2000).

One important element of participation is the availability of information; it makes sense to understand where it comes from, whether it can be trusted and who controls it (Hanna, 2000). Also in the context of Burke, Mulvey, Schubert & Garbin (2014), who suggest focusing on intended processes instead of outcomes and evaluating participation according to how it shapes the overall process, it is recommended to pay attention to information and how it will be collected, used and acted upon.

Figure 1: An overview of the implications of participation in the literature (developed by author)

According to Rydin and Pennington (2000), the participatory strategy adopted by the government plays a central role in the chosen development direction, determining the scope and nature of the participatory activities that will result. A distinction is made between different types of government support and policies when engaging in a participatory process. Working in a facilitator mode for administrations provides sufficient local autonomy for individuals and the institutional arrangements they have created to manage participation, while supporting conflict resolution, compliance with institutional rules and providing correct information to elected officials (Ostrom, 1996). Conversely, in the controller mode, the authorities take over almost all governance tasks, which prevents communities from developing their own planning institutions. In a scenario in which the authorities are the controller, participation will be of low quality, as

actors without well-established planning institutions will find it difficult to overcome the temptation of free choice in establishing their own planning framework, and will wait for the government to solve problems for them without creating conditions for effective cooperation (Ostrom, 1996). The state in a controller mode suppresses social capital and creates strategies that are ineffective and do not complement participation. In such cases, participants may not believe that they are infusing solutions, but participate out of a sense of civic duty (Fung, 2006). Also some researchers believe that residents prefer passive forms of consultation, such as mail surveys, to more interactive ones, such as public meetings and juries (Foley & Martin, 2000).

2.3.3 Criticisms and Challenges of the Inclusion Participation in Urban Strategies

Although participation is often seen as an absolute good, opening up planning processes to democratic control and improving policy implementation, in practice things can be very different. Stressing the ambivalence of the role of participation in public management, researchers have described the concept of stakeholder involvement as fundamentally controversial (Day, 1997). Participation is often dysfunctional in the modern bureaucratic state (Innes & Booher, 2005) and exists largely to give legitimacy and sell proposals (London & Cadman, 2009). Researchers see unresolved disagreements between the concept of reasoning and justification for participatory processes and their application in practice (Davis & Andrew, 2018). The symbolism of public participation and the fact that it is often an empty ritual that has no impact on policy planning and implementation processes is noted in many studies (Arnstein, 1969; Lane, 2005; Legacy, 2010; London & Cadman, 2009). The reasons why this occurs vary in the literature. Various studies highlight the high likelihood of a disconnect between planners with an understanding of strategy and the political and economic context and the public with local knowledge, and the difficulty of bridging this gap through participation (Fors et al. 2015; Innes & Booher, 2005. Thus, these claims call into question the whole benefit of participation, because if citizens are listened to during participation, but the process is broken or knowledge and understanding is insufficient, the process may result in the resulting decisions being wrong (Innes & Booher, 2005).

In their study Rydin and Pennington (2000) mention a number of obstacles that influence the worsening gap between planners and the public and consequently the quality of participation and represent the reality of participation in practice, among them the problem of distorted

information, the phenomenon of rational ignorance, the capture of special interests and bureaucratisation.

Another barrier to participation is the seemingly intractable conflict between individual and collective interests, based on the problem of collective action and thus a conflict between a desired democracy and an actual reality in which many voices are difficult to accept and hear (Innes & Booher, 2005). One early and important observation about public participation relates to the claim that the 'broad but superficial' interests of the public will always trump the narrow and deep interests of organised groups (Olson, 1989). This criticism of participation capture by a narrow group with special interests at odds with those of the wider community is also one of the problems of collective action and has been noted, including in more recent studies (Olson, 1989; Tullock, 1993). The implication here is that special interests promote the interests and personal gains of a limited portion of the participants, while imposing small individual costs on the wider community, participation becomes selective, in the hands of active and well-organised interest groups, and "the costs of policy failure spread across non-mobilised sections of the community" (Rydin & Pennington, 2000, p.156). These problems lead to difficulties in achieving effective engagement of all sectors of the public and large numbers of participants, to passive public behaviour, which lies in the fact that the public usually believes that government is not responding to their concerns or, more importantly, is responding to special interests that are funding increasingly expensive campaigns. Formal, legally binding methods of participation only make things worse (Innes & Booher, 2005). Davidoff (1965) sees other reasons for the difficulty of citizen engagement, which is linked to the fact that citizens are more likely to react to what authorities are doing than to offer their own conception of appropriate goals and future actions. Similar comments are made by Rydin and Pennington (2000) who note that in a certain policy scenario, when control and management is concentrated in the hands of the authorities, participation will be passive and the public will wait for their problems to be solved at the expense of the authorities (Rydin & Pennington, 2000).

Fors et al. (2015) note that achieving the Aarhus Convention's goal of bringing citizens closer to the places and services they use and adding them to government, planning and design processes in addition to expert opinions makes participation very difficult. The generally accepted emphasis on the inherent feasibility of multi stakeholder participation is criticised at the expense of the widely differing perspectives of different actors and as a result of the inefficiency of such participation (Fors et al. 2015). But even when large numbers of people participate in some kind

of collective action, the propensity to make certain choices is likely to be very unstable, and active participation in the political process is likely to be episodic (Rydin & Pennington, 2000)

The phenomenon of rational ignorance may be another problem for effective participation (Tullock, 1993). This phenomenon is the effect that the cost of collecting and processing information by the actors involved, and the effort and resources required to do so, may be unnecessarily higher than the benefits of participation. Thus, often with the immaterial and unspecific impact of individual participation in the process, the motivation to obtain information about process issues decreases and with it the quality of participation, while at the same time the tendency to incorporate special interests increases (Rydin & Pennington, 2000).

According to Innes and Booher (2005) public participation methods from the state have long been discredited, but nevertheless continue to be widely used. As a rule, public participation programmes lack credibility with stakeholders and therefore do not ensure genuine participation and do not reach a wide and diverse range of stakeholders. Decisions made through such participation are more often than not of low quality. In addition to the above, these methods of public participation oppose participants against each other, as they need to take opposing positions to defend their concerns. This antagonism greatly complicates the decision-making process, choices made on the basis of participation and public opinion, and discourages those who could actually be useful to the process from participating in such a ritual. Moreover, it exacerbates ambivalence on the part of authorities that the public give benefit to participation at all (Innes & Booher, 2005)

2.3.4 The Model of Arnstein Ladder

Existing theories suggest that there are different levels of public participation. The most common starting point and concept illustrating the influence of the public on decision-making, to which many authors refer, is the basic typology proposed by Arnstein (1969). This tool was Arnstein's means of articulating the social hierarchy and the different ways in which citizens and public institutions interact. This model helps to understand whether citizen participation is genuine, honest and effective. It describes gradations of participatory politics and urban programs that affect the lives of citizens and society (Arnstein, 1969). According to Arnstein (1969), civic participation refers to the distribution of power that allows 'poor' citizens, currently excluded from political and economic processes, to be consciously included in the future in order to share

the benefits of a wealthy society. That is, poor citizens are empowered to participate in determining how information is shared, goals are set, policies are implemented, programmes are run, tax resources are allocated, etc. In other words, this is when citizens can instigate significant social reforms that allow them to share the benefits of a wealthy society (Arnstein, 1969). Participation without redistribution of power is equivalent to going through an empty ritual and process. The ladder is divided into 3 degrees and consists of 8 rungs. The bottom rungs "manipulation" and "therapy" represent degree of non-participation. The next three steps up, showing the degree of tokenism, are called 'informing', 'counselling' and 'placing'. The top three rungs of the ladder - 'partnership', 'delegated authority' and, at the very top, 'civil control' - represent degrees of power of citizens (see Figure 2).

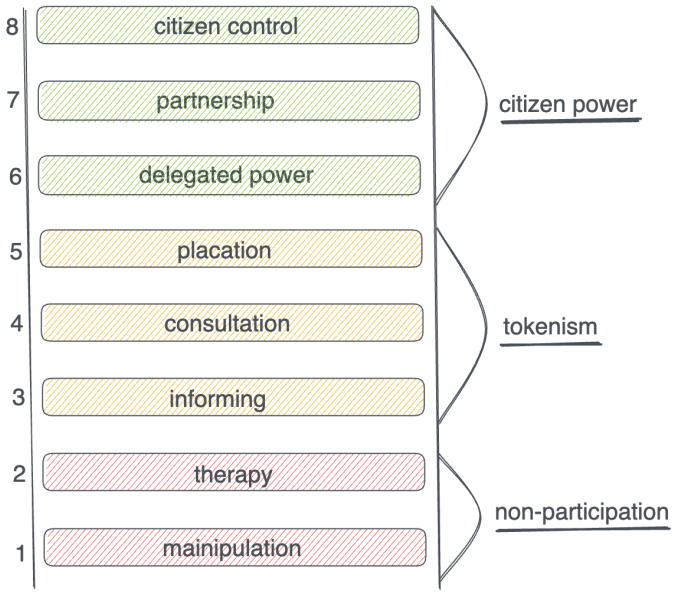

Figure 2. Degrees and rungs of Arnstein ladder

The higher the position of the public on the ladder, the more influence or power citizens have in decision-making. Only by climbing the ladder can citizens claim effective power. The ladder helps to appreciate the complex social interactions between stakeholders and power in the processes of using and transforming the territory. Undoubtedly, this analogy is a simplification, but knowledge of these levels allows us to understand the demands for participation on the part of the poor, as well as the variation of scenarios and issues on the part of those in power. In Arnstein's view, in order for the public to participate they need to be able to make decisions and influence change, the process of making these decisions needs to be transparent.

Since its introduction, Arnstein's ladder has been repeatedly criticised by various researchers. This is primarily due to the fact that participation is more complex than the simplistic and linear

concept of Arnstein suggests. In addition, the ladder simplifies power imbalances, does not reflect the richness of current approaches to participation, and fails to appreciate the complexity of real participation cases (Ross, Buchy & Proctor, 2002; Tritter & McCallum, 2006). Arnstein pays insufficient attention to the process, to making sense of participation on a conceptual and practical level, and to the existence of feedback loops (Tritter & McCallum, 2006). Throughout the journey from manipulation to civic control it is assumed that the policy problem is uniform and does not change, but in real practice all problems are unique and different problems require different levels and types of participation depending on the nature and scope of the problem (Bishop & Davies, 2002) . Furthermore, the problem and policy issue can be shaped during participation, and only afterwards is the nature of participation shaped, and roles and responsibilities allocated to those involved (Collins and Ison, 2006). Thus, according to the researchers, "a linear, hierarchical model of involvement - Arnstein's ladder - fails to capture the dynamic and evolutionary nature of user involvement. Nor does it recognise the agency of users who may seek different methods of involvement in relation to different issues and at different times" (Tritter and McCallum, 2006, p.165). So Tritter and McCallum (2006) eventually abandon the ladder metaphor in favour of a mosaic metaphor, using different colours and shapes, reflecting what they see as a full palette of involvement. Fung (2006) recognises the importance of Arnstein's participation dimension, but believes that more civic control is not always better. According to Guijt and Shah (1998) it makes sense to ask and observe exactly how stakeholders are involved, what forms of participation are used, rather than simply assessing which rung of the ladder is reached, i.e. the researchers believe that the model underestimates the participation process. A criticism of Treseder (1997), who was an opponent of the hierarchical approach, was that the path to participation cannot be linearly sequential, genuine participation occurs through negotiation rather than through the imposition of a participation structure.

Despite criticism of the model, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) based on the Arnstein ladder, has defined five levels of consultation (inform, advise, involve, collaborate, empower) (Davis & Andrew, 2018). This spectrum is currently the main way of describing the degree of citizen participation (or non-participation) in decision-making processes. The difference in these 2 models is that IAP2 is primarily concerned with planning and defining future strategies for stakeholder involvement in decision making processes, whereas Arnstein's ladder participation analysis is concerned with reflecting on the evaluation of results already achieved (Davis & Andrew, 2018). Taking into account the limitations of Arnstein's concept, the ladder model is used in this thesis as an analytical method to assess stakeholder participation in

the existing urban development strategy. Defining the level, type, and form of engagement for this case is seen as important in order to first identify the degree of dialogue between government and citizens and understand how multi-stakeholder engagement can be changed and improved in order to make their participation more genuine and effective. Secondly, using this model, it will be possible to identify the most common biases and prejudice in participation. The findings can then be taken into account in strategy implementation and used to adjust existing policies.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research approach and design chosen to answer the research question and fulfil the purpose of the study and the reasons for choosing the case study. The method used to write this paper was narrative. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) the topic is the central idea for the research. The theme of this study is citizen participation in the planning and implementation of a sustainable development strategy for the city of St.Petersburg. The topic of the study as well as the intended research design justify the choice of a qualitative research approach. In addition, the data collection process is discussed, with emphasis on explaining the sample of respondents and describing the interview process. This is followed by a description of the data analysis process, coding methods and analysis approaches, with a detailed description of the steps taken to transform the data collected into conclusions that answer the RQs above. This is necessary to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. This chapter highlights key limitations and biases, as well as considerations of research quality and ethical considerations as an important part of the research process.

3.1 Research Approach and Design

A research design includes a description of how data collection will occur and the relationship between the original research question and the data to be collected or gathered; in other words, it is a plan that defines the process between the research question, data collection, and data analysis (Saunders, Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2011; Yin, 2008). Thus, the research method can be considered a strategy that determines how the research question will be addressed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Saunders et al. (2011) to create an appropriate and relevant research plan, one must first decide on the problem and the research question of this work.

The aim of this thesis is to explore the relationships between key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of a sustainable development strategy for the city of St.Petersburg ("Strategy 2035") with resident participation. In this regard, the following research question was formulated in the introduction:

What influence and impact does the society of St.Petersburg have on the implementation process and outcome of the sustainable development strategy?

The research question arises from the aforementioned gap in the literature regarding the study of the causal relationship between the participatory process with various stakeholders in the development of urban strategies and the outcome of the strategy in the context of the development of St.Petersburg. The lack of previous research leads to the need to address this gap, which should be reflected in the research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To answer this question, a qualitative study was conducted on a single case. By obtaining a variety of information from the interview process about the topic under study from representatives of different categories of stakeholders, such as NGOs, activists, government officials, an understanding of specific issues and situations was gained, which helped to assess their experiences of interacting with each other. This allows further to evaluate the complex social relations that develop between stakeholders and administrative bodies in the processes of use and transformation of the territory through the implementation of the urban sustainable strategy, as well as the situation on the Arnstein ladder.

The qualitative approach chosen for this study is supposed to help us understand the underlying aspects of the phenomena (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This method was chosen because the nature of the phenomenon in this case study is not suitable for quantitative measurements (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In our case, the situation is conditioned by the specific cultural and historical context in which the interviewees are located. Because this context influences their attitude to the situation and understanding of events and phenomena, the result obtained cannot be evaluated with quantitative data and statistics of the quantitative method (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2018). Also, according to Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019), quantitative as opposed to qualitative measurements assume a static approach and view of reality. In a qualitative method, it is critical to assess the context in which social behaviour unfolds in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of group members' actions. Furthermore, in this context, it is useful to not only look at the surface of people's actions and behaviours, as is the case with a quantitative approach (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019).

For this thesis, the abductive approach was chosen, which combines deductive and inductive logic. In this research it was not clear which theory to test in the case of the deductive approach, in turn there was not enough empirical data and observations for the inductive approach. The abductive approach chosen allowed a shift from building a theoretical framework to analysing empirical material through an iterative process (Dubois & Gadde, 2002), creating new and changing existing theory by collecting additional data (Saunders et al. 2009). This provided

flexibility to the research process and allowed the research question to be explored using a variety of sources (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019).

Since this thesis deals with one phenomenon, namely the relationship between key stakeholders in the sustainable urban strategy, a single case study has been applied as a method, it is assumed that this is the best choice in this case (Yin, 2003). The advantages of a single case study is that it creates a complementary and better theory than, for example, a multi-case study and helps the researcher to understand the subject more deeply (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). Also, Yin (2003) recommends taking context into account. An important point is to describe the context and research findings in a specific way for the reader in a way that the reader can understand and apply them to their own situation (Stake, 1995). As our situation is unique in terms of context, it is important to consider that the research findings will only be appropriate for similar cases to the given context. Nevertheless, as the study concerns a single phenomenon, a single case study seems useful for an in-depth, comprehensive and rich study of the relationship between authorities and the public in the implementation of an urban strategy (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991).

3.2 Collection of Data

3.2.1 Primary Data Collection

A qualitative case study was conducted to explore the relationships between key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of a sustainable development strategy for the city of St.Petersburg with resident participation. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews. An important aspect of interview planning was striking a balance between including a variety of useful respondents - urban key stakeholders - and an adequate number of them for the interview. According to a number of studies, individuals, groups or organisations, including local authorities, various city services, citizens, public administrations, businesses, urban movements and activists can be considered as stakeholders in the city (Jabareen, 2013; Johnson & Blackburn, 2014). Thus urban stakeholders include almost everyone who is directly or indirectly related to the city. However, including representatives from different categories of stakeholders in the study, and not prioritising their views can lead to a conflict between the diversity of the same views and their importance. On the one hand, residents and urban movements are the real stewards of the city (Harvey, 2008). On the other hand, local authorities play a decisive and central role in the governance of the city. The initiative to act and propose forms of governance

belongs to them (Abbot, 1995). The study therefore decided to focus on interviewing three main categories of urban stakeholders - namely members of the city administration, members of non-profit organisations and urban community activists. All of these categories are representatives of a participating public, interacting with each other and fulfilling meaningful social roles for urban development. These categories are chosen because it is expected that due to their experience and immersion in urban development projects, the interviewees will have an established position on certain issues, a viewpoint based on their personal experience of participation in some specific cases, and a diverse view of urban development processes and attitudes towards them. Therefore, thanks to the interviews with these respondents, it is planned to assess the nature of interaction and dialogue of the public with the authorities, as well as to characterise the degree of public influence on the results of the "Strategy 2035" implementation.

Thus, the interviewees for this thesis are:

- Urban civic activists - representatives of citizens' groups as individual actors;
- Non-profit organisations involved in the improvement of the city - urban movements, organisations and associations as collective actors;
- City authorities - deputies representing the central districts in relation to the direct implementation of the city improvement within the "Strategy 2035" as representatives of a more general point of view

The list of interviewees was compiled according to their affiliation to one of the three stakeholder categories, taking into account their diverse backgrounds. All interviewees had been involved at least several times in city programmes and landscaping projects, either organised by activists or by the authorities. This ensured that the respondents had the necessary experience and vision required for the study. In addition, the sample included respondents of different age groups and different genders. Nevertheless, all of these people, including deputies, were representatives of parties and organisations opposed to the current government. In this study, presumably for political reasons, representatives of the incumbent party declined to participate in the interviews. This may have affected their opinions and influenced their attitudes and statements on some issues. The list of respondents consists of 9 people, which is in the upper range of what Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommend for a qualitative research approach. To ensure a holistic picture of the study, the categories and their respondent representatives were chosen purposely, personally by the author based on recommendations from acquaintances, activists, NGOs, and media publications (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To reduce selection bias, respondents were

self-selected by the author using more than one source of information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The role and attitudes of the respondents towards the sustainable urban development strategy by organising various projects aimed at improving the sustainability and comfort of the living environment at their local level are described in Table 1. The sample consists of 5 women and 4 men between the ages of 29 to 50 years, with 2 to 17 years of experience in urban programmes and projects. Before conducting the main part of the interview, 2 pilot interviews were conducted with respondents from different stakeholder categories in order to finalise the questions for the groups and to modify the questionnaire if necessary. As Bryman (2012) advises, a pilot interview is useful to go through all the questions and see how things go so that the interviewer can prepare for any unforeseen circumstances. Below are all the interviewed stakeholders, their categories, and the names of the sustainable urban development related projects that they are the creators or initiators of. A set of interview questions can be seen in Appendix I and II.

Category of stakeholder	**Name of the organisation and role**	**Name**	**Co-founder or organiser of participation projects**	**Interview length, min**
Representative of municipal authorities	Head of the Municipal Formation of St.Petersburg	Paul	Life of one field, Sofiyskaya 20/3, School garden project	51
Representative of municipal authorities	Deputy of the municipal formation "Kolomna" of the city of St.Petersburg	Elias	Colomna Neighbourhood, Pryazhka river neighbourhood	53
Representative of municipal authorities	Deputy of the municipal formation "Vladimirsky District" of the city of St.Petersburg	Vitalis	Co-design in the Vladimirsky District - Marata, 50	48
Representative of NGO	Founder NGO Trees of Saint-Petersburg, Social activist	Marie	Trees of St.Petersburg, winner of Tvoy Budget, Map of city trees 'Urbantrees'	51
Representative of NGO	CEO of NGO Green Saint-Petersburg	Miriam	Aalto Garden, "In the parking lot park", Landscaping of the square at 25 Marata Street, Sadovaya 54, Annenkirche, Viktor Tsoi Square. Guerrilla drop-offs in yards, streets, and sidewalks	57
Representative of NGO	Chairman of the board of the 'Let's Go' Association	Erik	Guerrilla drop-offs in yards, streets, and sidewalks. Author of the projects "bench with features," "in the parking lot	61

			park," participant in the park project "Overgrow"	
Activist	Curator of various social projects that support the initiatives of citizens	Vera	House of Project (Initiator), Seeds for communities, Pollinating for communities (Initiator), Participatory budgeting project "Tvoy Budget" (coordinator), "Citizens assembly", School of Urban Greening (Co-author), peacemaking Practices Project (coordinator)	55
Activist	City-influencer, founder of NGO Green Saint-Petersburg,	Barbara	Green St.Petersburg	59
Activist	Curator of various social projects that support the initiatives of citizens	Alice	Friends of the Karpovka River, Cycling St.Petersburg, the Living Streets festival, the Right to Water educational project.	73
Total		9		

Table 1. List of stakeholders-respondents

The interviews were complicated by the fact that due to the Ukrainian crisis, many participants and the author left Russia and the interviews took place online. For this research, it was important that respondents were able to speak freely and openly about the topic of the study. Semi-structured interviews, according to Bryman (2012), are a type of interview in which the interviewer asks the same pre-prepared set of open-ended questions to the respective sample group. This collection of material is important as it gives interviewees the freedom to formulate answers, allowing new ideas to emerge during the interview (Bryman, 2012), and creates a flexible structure to the conversation and variability in subsequent conclusions (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019). However, because the questions were open-ended, each interview was unpredictable and developed in different directions and scenarios, resulting in some inconsistencies and heterogeneity in the data collected. These problems could have been solved with more structured interviews and closed-ended questions (Collis & Hussey, 2013), however, they are less suitable for this study and interviews.

3.2.2 Secondary Data Collection

In addition to primary data, this thesis also uses secondary data (Table 2). These included official sources of information formed and published by the city authorities, such as Act on St.Petersburg

Social and Economic Development Strategy for the period until 2035, Action plan for the implementation for the strategy, government reports, proposals and concepts, press releases of greening events, as well as socio-cultural research. In addition, information collected in the thematic media, groups in social networks, and online articles were used. The criteria for selecting documents were based on their relevance to the case study. To increase the reliability of these sources, only reputable websites and social networking groups were considered.

Document name	Description	Pages
Act of St.Petersburg N 771-164 "On the Strategy of Social and Economic Development of St.Petersburg until 2035" (2018)	A description of general provisions, objectives, timeframe, milestones, indicators of achievement, implementation targets of "Strategy 2035"	119
Resolution N 740 on the approval of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for socio-economic development of St.Petersburg for the period up to 2035. (2019). (2019)	Information on the aims, objectives, timeframe, problems and proposed solutions of the programme for the Central District of St.Petersburg, Admiralty district	67
The federal programme "Shaping a Comfortable Urban Environment". Passport of priority project (2019).	Main provisions, plans and information on the implementation of the project, a description of the role and options for involving residents in the creating urban environment	55
Report on the implementation in 2019 of the Action plan for the implementation of the St.Petersburg Development Strategy for the period until 2035 (2020)	Information on the progress of "Strategy 2035" plan implementation for 2019	371
Report on the implementation in 2020 of the Action plan for the implementation of the St.Petersburg Development Strategy for the period until 2035 (2021)	Information on the progress of "Strategy 2035" plan implementation for 2020	357
Report on the implementation in 2021 of the Action plan for the implementation of the St.Petersburg Development Strategy for the period until 2035 (2022)	Information on the progress of "Strategy 2035" plan implementation for 2021	363
Act of St.Petersburg No. 396-75 "On Strategic Planning in St.Petersburg" (2015)	The procedure for strategic planning in St.Petersburg, the list of strategic planning documents and the powers of the public authorities in the field of strategic planning.	119

Table 2: Government Documents (secondary data sources) used in the research

3.2.3 Interview Transcription

The interviews, conducted online with Zoom, were in Russian and were recorded. The language was native to both the author and the respondents, which helped to create a relaxed atmosphere. The respondents gave their consent to the recording of the interview and subsequent transcription. The transcription was carried out by the author of the thesis independently and verbatim. In order to improve the quality of the transcription, a careful analysis and comparison of the audio recording and the text was carried out. The risks of recording interviews are that respondents may try to answer better and formulate their thoughts in advance, which can ultimately affect the quality of the answer. An attempt was made to mitigate this problem. First, respondents were informed that the interviews would be anonymous and warned of the purpose of the recording, namely that it would only be used as a tool to help the researcher improve the analysis process, better interpret the answers to the questions and assist in the transcription process. The recording not only allowed the flow of the conversation to be recreated, but also allowed the focus to be on the questions and the respondent, and when re-listened to, to draw attention to details that were not as prominent during the interview itself (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Respondents were not constrained by the time limit for responses, yet almost all interviews lasted no longer than 60 min, this allowed for the necessary depth of information and at the same time no interruptions.

3.3. Data Analysis

Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that the purpose of research analysis is to segment and parse the data collected to make sense of it. According to Miles (1979), collecting and analysing qualitative data is an "attractive nuisance". Generally, collection is often straightforward, but the difficulty lies in the lack of a clear and universally accepted set for qualitative analysis that is observed when dealing with quantitative data. Data analysis should be conducted in a structured, methodical, and sequential manner (Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2018). Eisenhardt (1989) highlights the difficulty of analysis, at the same time he argues that it is the most important part for case studies. The challenge is to create a clear, consistent and structured analysis of the data in order to draw the right findings and answer the thesis research question correctly. Through experience of this thesis it was noted that this process begins even before the direct collection of data, namely when the direction of the study is determined, the sample of interviewees is planned, the questions, etc (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

When analysing qualitative data, the method recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018) was employed. The method involves organising sequential steps from the specific to the general. As a result, during the first two steps, there was basic organisation, preparation of the data for analysis, further review, and examination of the data. The process began with the transcription of the data collected during the zoom interviews. The transcription was necessary in order to get an overview of the data collected and to have reliable data in text format. The transcription proved to be a time consuming task which took longer than the data collection process. Nevertheless, it was a great way to start getting to know the data. Experience has shown that it is important for researchers to transcribe interviews themselves, as intonation, pauses, and other nonverbal features can clarify how a particular statement should be coded (Robson & McCartan, 2016). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) data transcription appears to be a more general method of organising and understanding data, through it the author formed a deep understanding before categorising and arguing in more detail (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

The next step was data coding. Coding is the organisation of data by highlighting parts of the material with different markers, writing a word in the margins that denotes a certain code or category (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). In data analysis, coding was done manually, google-drive was used as supporting tools: tables, documents, storage folders, and the thematic approach was chosen as the coding method (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This approach provided an overview of the themes and phenomena most relevant to answering the research question. The data of interest from observations, interviews, document and object analysis were first coded and then the codes with the same labels were combined into common themes. The original records were always at hand, allowing for timely verification of the coding. The coding and development of the thematic structure is central to the analysis of qualitative data (Coffey, Beverley, & Atkinson, 1996), so despite a number of difficulties, it was conducted in a neat, careful and scrupulous manner. The difficulty of working with a large amount of qualitative data is that it is impossible to reduce the task to a certain formula, and the data obtained must be interpreted competently (Robson & McCartan, 2016). During and after data collection for this study, data condensation was used to help reduce the amount of data through summaries and annotations, note writing, etc (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

According to Creswell, 2018 creating descriptions and themes is the next (fourth) step in a sequential approach. By systematically working through the entire dataset and material, paying

great attention to each data element, interesting aspects were identified that became the basis for themes in the dataset.

The coding used the principle of sifting the data, which is to focus on some data and ignore others (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). This 'sifting' initially resulted in many themes and categories. In order not to exceed the scope of the thesis by missing its purpose by having too many categories and themes, the themes were reduced according to the criterion of relevance to the research question. The findings provided the basis for further analysis and interpretation of the data. Themes are often used as key findings in qualitative research and can also serve as headings in sections of the research findings, this technique was used in the naming of some headings in the study (Creswell, 2018).

In the context of this thesis, the data analysis began in parallel to the interview process, during which, notes were already being taken and links to previous interviews were established through analogies and codes. Some of the observation data was eventually included in the final report in the form of a narrative. However, it should be noted that due to the fact that only one person conducted the analysis, there is a strong possibility that the data may have been interpreted with some bias, in terms of what is considered interesting, relevant and surprising (Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2018). Data analysis and processing (decoding, coding, etc.) was conducted in Russian, as this was the main language of the respondents and most of the accompanying documents, and then the data was translated into English.

3.4. Validity and Reliability

Because qualitative research uses a lens based not on assessments, instruments, or research designs, but on the views of the people who conduct, participate in, or read and review the research, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that their research is credible (Creswell & Miller, 2000). An important indicator of qualitative research is the presence of validity and reliability in the study (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Qualitative validity is a strength of qualitative research and relates to the accuracy of conclusions when certain procedures are applied, qualitative reliability refers to the consistency of the research process for different researchers and different designs and the repeatability of operations and conclusions performed (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Gibbs, 2007). The purpose of this subchapter is to describe the steps

which have been taken in the context of this thesis to assure other researchers, respondents, or readers of the report of the accuracy and reliability of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To reduce the risk in interpretation bias and improve validity and reliability, a validity strategy was developed, thereby ensuring the measurement of accurate variables (Saunders et al. 2009). According to Creswell, to improve the researcher's ability to assess the accuracy of findings and convince readers of that accuracy, several approaches can be employed. In the context of this thesis, this recommendation was implemented by focusing on concepts that focus on case study research (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019). Throughout the study, attention was paid to validity and reliability, including through a coherent structured transparent in-depth description of each stage of the research process as well as the research findings. Particular attention was paid to the outcomes of the research decision-making process and the logic behind the findings. This is expected to enable readers to better understand the research process, the context of the findings, and to evaluate the research findings individually (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The process of detailed documentation also increases internal reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2015). To better understand the phenomenon under study and enhance the credibility of the narrative, in addition to collecting primary and secondary data, the author attended a number of online events and roundtables with key stakeholders to discuss and decide on the interaction between authorities and residents when implementing green city policies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Triangulation of data was decided upon as one strategy to improve validity. Triangulation is a process of data validation in which, through the processing of multiple sources of information, coincidences are identified that help in the formation of subsequent themes and categories for the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) triangulation provides external validity by using evidence from different sources to support the same fact or conclusion (Rowley, 2002; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study used a variety of data sources to add validity to our findings. For example, codes and categories in the results were determined based on the overlapping responses of several respondents, and the choice of themes was also determined based on the overlap of several data sources and perspectives of different participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Also, empirical data with secondary sources were cross-checked to increase the accuracy of the conclusions (Deacon et al. 1998). Through the use of interview notes it has been possible to overcome first impression biases and to assess and describe the surroundings, intonation, this helps to introduce the reader to the setting and to give the discussion an element of shared experience. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). After transcribing the

interviews, some prepared conclusions, descriptions and selected themes were sent to the participants to check the accuracy of these conclusions and to comment on them. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) this method increases the validity and accuracy of findings in qualitative research.

As the study, and consequently the coding and transcription, were carried out by a single researcher, a research supervisor was involved in the audit. She provided evaluation and feedback of all parts of the study and conclusions to the author throughout the research process, thus reducing bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also, the accuracy of transcription, the relationship between research questions and data, the level of data analysis from raw data to interpretation, etc. were checked with the help of a supervisor. In addition, to further enhance the credibility of the report, a debriefing was organised with an external reviewer, a former fellow graduate of Lund University's International Strategic Management Programme, who scrutinised the paper, asked questions, commented and provided valuable feedback (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The external reviewer cross-checked the codes for so-called intercoder agreement (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). At the same time, it is worth noting that as the supervisor and external reviewer did not have access to the whole dataset, this is a possible risk that could have affected validity. Nevertheless, the effect of implicit bias and the possibility of information cascading was reduced. To increase reliability, processes such as: selecting participants for interviews, conducting interviews, transcribing, coding and topic allocation were documented in detail (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982) and can be found in section 3.3, "Data analysis".

Credibility reflects the overall objectivity of the researcher (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2018). Although the author has tried to remain open to different perspectives, provide transparency, and minimise bias, according to Bell, Bryman & Harley (2018) complete objectivity in qualitative research is impossible to achieve, and exact replication of qualitative research is very unlikely. The reasons may be primarily due to the fact that respondents' meanings represent only one possible reality, the research relies on the subjective perceptions of the interviewees, with the personalities and implicit knowledge of the researcher, subjective conclusions and interpretations (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019; Easterby-Smith, Jaspersen, Thorpe, & Valizade, 2021). Thus, the author, as described above, tried to ensure as much transparency as possible throughout the study by detailing the methodological process.

Transferability or generalizability in qualitative research is often criticised (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019). Because case study research is an explanation of a scenario in a particular context, the findings can be difficult to apply or compare in another, generalised context Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019). This limitation may affect this thesis because the study depends on the views of a limited number of interviewees. In addition, the Russian background of the author and respondents, all of whom were residents of St.Petersburg and were in the same socio-economic, cultural, and historical context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) may have affected the transferability and interpretation of the findings. In addition, as mentioned in the chapter 3.3 data analysis all interviewees were representatives of the opposition to the current government party, this could definitely lead to bias in answering the questions, as well as a certain bias in the results and conclusions obtained. Factors that influence in this case are errors and biases among participants and observers respectively (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019). Nevertheless, the author attempted in various ways, applying a variety of methods described above, to ensure that personal views and expectations would have minimal impact on interpretations, and instead provide as detailed and specific a picture of the situation as possible. With these measures in mind, in addition to providing a detailed transparent research design, the author is confident that the findings as well as the results have a sufficient level of confirmability (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019).

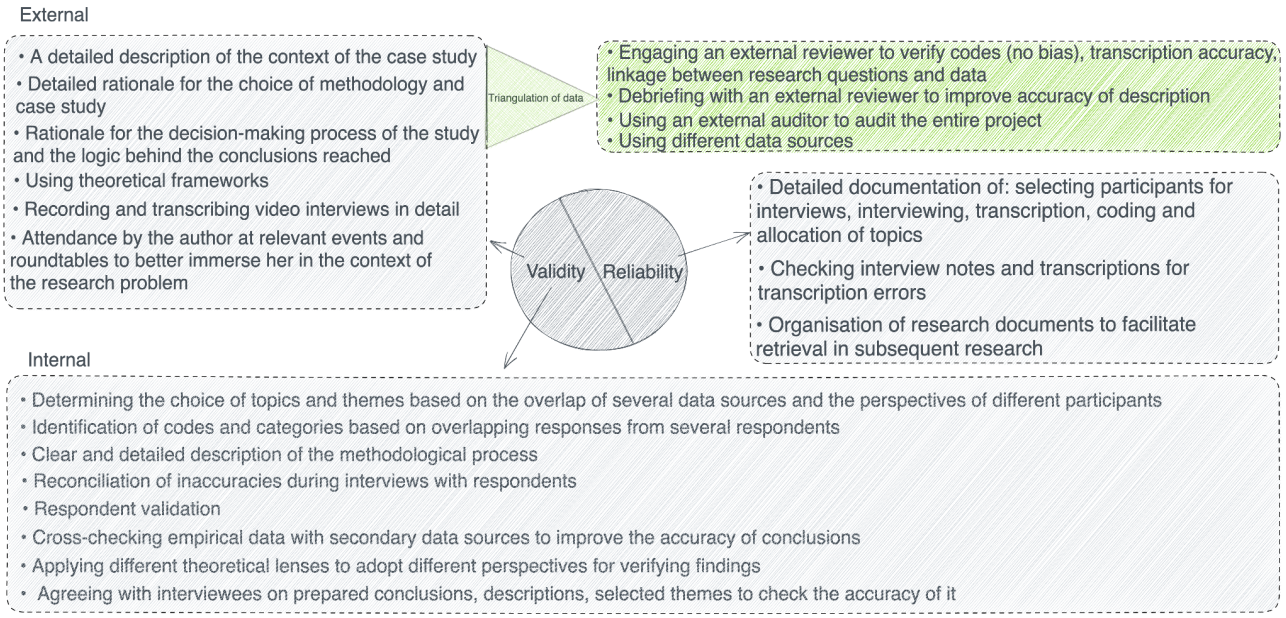

Figure 3. Implemented approaches to increase the validity and reliability of the study

3.5. Ethical Considerations

In qualitative research, ethical issues are important and should be properly addressed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is important that the research is conducted ethically and that the

participants in the study are protected. Before the interview, the author warned each participant about anonymity in the study. This also allowed the respondents to be less stressed and more open during the interview. After the interviews were transcribed, some of the conclusions and direct quotes of the description were sent to the participants to verify the accuracy of these conclusions and to make sure they represent the content and information provided by the respondent accurately. Participants were informed, both in writing and verbally before the interview about the purpose of the thesis, about their expected contribution, that participation is voluntary and at any time participants could refuse to participate or refuse to answer some questions. Because the interview was recorded, the author has separately focused on the fact that the information will be used solely for scientific purposes of this study (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Due to the actions taken, it can be concluded that this study was conducted according to basic ethical principles such as avoiding harm, informed consent, and confidentiality (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019).

4.0 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This chapter will present the case study, an overview and the results of the empirical data from the nine semi-structured interviews conducted. Primary data will be supported by an analysis of secondary data collected from public documents on the websites of the St.Petersburg government and local administrations, regional reports and media publications. St.Petersburg stakeholders relevant for participation in the city's sustainable development strategy "Strategy 2035" were selected as interviewees.

This chapter focuses on the empirical data collected and is crucial for answering the RQ. The theoretical framework discussed in chapter two has influenced the structure of this chapter, which is roughly divided into three parts. First there is an overview of the sustainable "Strategy 2035" and how the city authorities are improving sustainable development through the strategy. Then it describes how participation is reflected in the "Strategy 2035", how it is documented in the strategy documents, which laws regulate it and which areas are responsible for its development. The third part presents an analysis of the relationship between the authorities and the public, using the Arnstein ladder and based on the urban projects realised within the "Strategy 2035" and the current interactions between the authorities and the inhabitants.

4.1 General Development Plan

St.Petersburg is the fourth largest city in Europe and the second largest industrial centre in Russia (Wikipedia, 2023). Given the high population density, concentration of industrial facilities and unfavourable climatic conditions in the city, it is in high interest of St.Petersburg to create a comfortable, sustainable and environmentally friendly urban living habitat. This is expected to be achieved through a sustainable urban strategy, which includes the creation of safe public spaces and the green fund in the city with the participation of various stakeholders.

The main perspectives, directions and concepts of strategic development of the city are consolidated in the "Strategy for Sustainable Economic and Social Development of St.Petersburg until 2035" ("Strategy 2035") and are defined and described in the Act of St.Petersburg N 771-164 "On the Strategy of Social and Economic Development of St.Petersburg until 2035". This act was developed in 2018, and the strategy started to be implemented in 2019, but in 2020, after criticism from the public (interview with Vitalis, 12 July 2022), points were added to the

plan concerning sustainable development and the involvement of stakeholders in the development of the city and thereafter the strategy was called sustainable (Act, 2018). The system of goals for socio-economic development of St.Petersburg presented in "Strategy 2035" is structured into four levels: the general goal defines 3 strategic priorities, within which 4 strategic directions are formed, from which 17 strategic goals and programme objectives are derived. In total, "Strategy 2035" sets out 114 objectives at various levels, each of which, apart from the general objective, has targets characterising the level of its achievement. The general objective of the "Strategy 2035" is to ensure a steady improvement in the quality of life of citizens on the basis of sustainable development and economic growth using the results of innovative and technological activities and increasing the global competitiveness of St.Petersburg. To achieve the general objective, the following strategic directions have been identified: ensuring sustainable economic growth, improving the quality of the urban environment, developing human capital, ensuring effective governance, and developing civil society. In the area of improving the quality of the urban environment, the main strategic document is the The federal programme "Shaping a Comfortable Urban Environment" (2019). This programme was developed in 2021 and it is currently the main document responsible for the sustainable development of the city its landscaping and greening, and defining the future of St.Petersburg's sustainable development for the coming years.

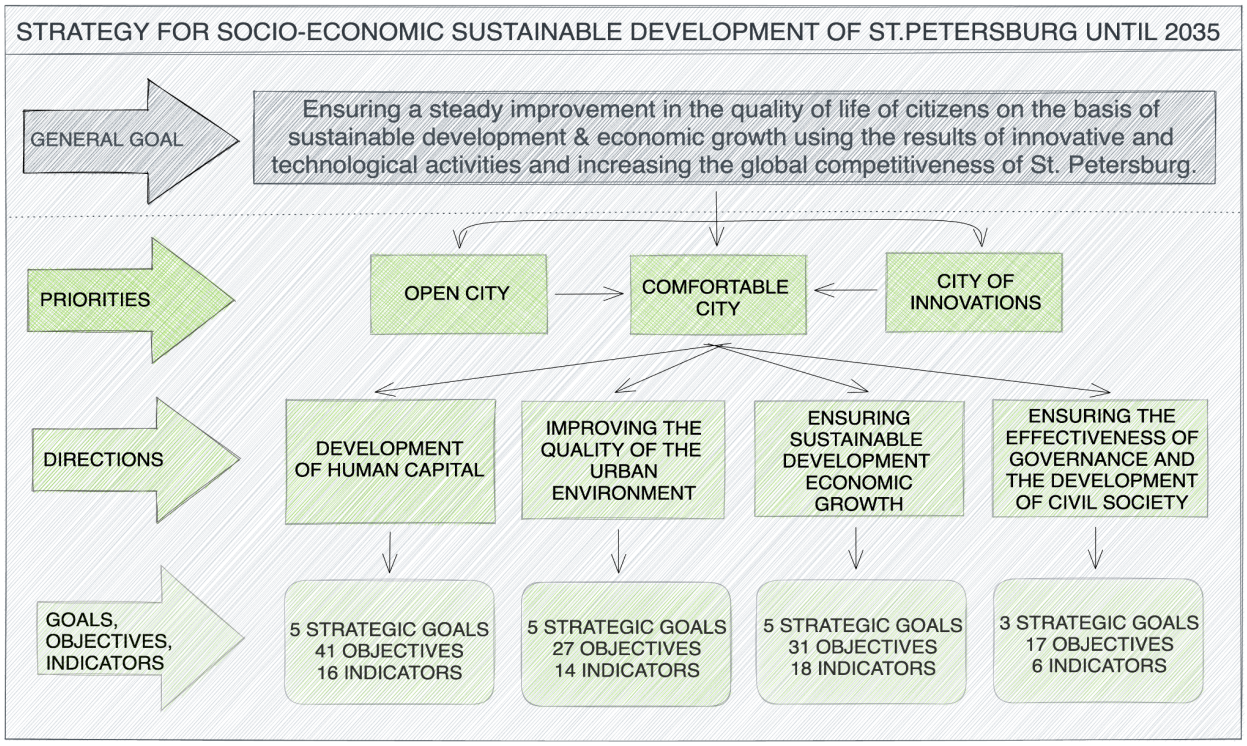

Figure 4: A system of definition of objectives of the "Strategy 2035"

At this moment not enough time has passed to judge the success of the "Strategy 2035" and to evaluate the results, as they are not yet fully evident. Nevertheless, an intermediate evaluation can be made based on the achievements that can be assessed so far. Although the annual regular Reports (2019, 2020, 2021) published by the government show that the strategy is successful and that most of the targets have been exceeded, a detailed examination of "Strategy 2035" reveals some inconsistencies and shortcomings. According to the "Strategy 2035" documentation, the approach to achieve sustainable development has three main components: economic, environmental and social development. However, the list of "socio-economic development goals" listed under "spatial planning goals" does not include environmental and sustainable goals. Most of the listed objectives are related to the development of specific economic sectors such as industry, trade, science, commercial and business facilities (Act, 2018). The focus of the sustainable development strategy documents is on the economic aspects of sustainability. The non-financial components of quality of life, environmental safety, preservation of green areas and plantations, mitigation of environmental impacts, and participatory and democratic participation in decision-making are generally present in the strategy description, but do not appear as key objectives. The documentation lacks a definition of what the authorities consider sustainable development to be and what a sustainable strategy should include. When analysing the "Strategy 2035" documentation and the government website it was found that there is no position of the person responsible for sustainable development issues. Due to the lack of an integrated approach to sustainability planning in St.Petersburg, local municipalities do not have a specific body responsible for the sustainable development strategy. Instead, they assign responsibility to economic departments, thereby taking environmental and social aspects out of context Administration of St.Petersburg, 2022). Thus, the "Strategy 2035" is under the economic department.

4.2 Participation in "Strategy 2035"

There is no specific direction in the strategic documents outlining a potential involvement of citizens in the process of planning and implementation of the "Strategy 2035", but there is a strategic direction called "Ensuring good governance and development of civil society". Within this pillar, the objectives are related to ensuring quality social services and life safety. However, there are no goals and indicators aimed at improvement of the participation and participation, involvement of citizens in decision-making. The main tool the authorities intend to use to engage the public, and which is part of "Strategy 2035", is the aforementioned The federal programme

"Shaping a Comfortable Urban Environment" (2019). Under this programme, in addition to the tasks associated with organising a comfortable city for its residents and increasing the index of the quality of the urban environment, there is an important task - to involve citizens in the process of improving the city so that "the share of the active population should be at least 30%" (Programme, 2019). That is, the project looks at improving the quality of the urban environment by creating modern public areas (parks, squares, boulevards, embankments, etc.) with mandatory citizen participation (Programme, 2019).

Additional local emphasis is placed on the need to change the relationship between society and government as part of the ‘Comfortable City’ priority, which is one of the key components of "Strategy 2035" (see Figure 4). Although one of the objectives of this priority is formulated as "Strengthening the role of public debate", neither the Act nor the Plan for the implementation of the "Strategy 2035" contains a programme and a plan for implementing projects with public participation and how citizens should be involved in realising this objective (Act, 2018; Resolution, 2019). In the annual Reports (2019, 2020, 2021) on results of "Strategy 2035", the Government lists projects and activities related to the achievement of the objective of public participation, but does not provide information on how this process ultimately affects the overall result of the objective. Also, the Reports (2019, 2020, 2021) do not reflect the current status of implementation of this objective, and existing problems and difficulties. Overall, there is no specific and organised system, strategy or model for the concept of 'involving the people of the city' visible among the "Strategy 2035" documents.

This lack of transparency on the part of the executive branch towards taking action to improve the quality of cooperation between the city administration and key stakeholders was also noticed during the interviews and was evident in the different views on how this process is taking place and should take place according to the respondents. All activists and two NGO representatives could not name a single example of successful implementation of any public urban project involving city residents and other stakeholders initiated by the government under "Strategy 2035", except for the "Tvoy Budget" project described below. All interviewed respondents noted the importance of including participatory and stakeholder participation in the planning and implementation of a sustainable city strategy. Also all the respondents except one deputy believe that without participation the strategy will not be sustainable. Representatives of authorities Vitalis and Paul comment that it is important to actively involve stakeholders through co-design and co-creation processes in order to successfully implement the strategy. Nevertheless, most of

the public respondents indicated that they do not trust the authorities' genuine wish to include stakeholder involvement in the "Strategy 2035" and do not believe that they will be heard and can influence the outcome and decisions of the government. At the same time, all respondent deputies noted the difficulty in involving residents in improvement projects and in finding proactive participants with many of their own ideas, solutions and concepts.

In general, the analysis of the "Strategy 2035" revealed the authorities' willingness to stick to the current legislative requirements for sustainable development and participation, but this willingness has not been supported by practical concrete programmes and changes at the legislative level. While there is a participation target and local inclusion of participation at the level of some priorities and programmes, there is no articulated, coherent vision for "Strategy 2035". The Strategy does not prescribe exactly how participation and public involvement should be organised and there is no description of the intended criteria for successful and poor outcome.

4.3 Analysis of the relationship between the key stakeholders in St.Petersburg

As part of the overview of the findings this subchapter is organised according to the concept of the Arnstein ladder. The activities, actions of the authorities and the public and the relationships between them are analysed in terms of the presence of citizens on the different rungs of the ladder. The analysis of each rung of the ladder helps to identify the degrees, types and forms of participation present in the relationship between power and society in St.Petersburg, identifying the deviations in their relationship and assessing the potential for partnerships or power of the citizens seen in the light of participation. This provides a comprehensive understanding of the role of citizen participation and determines the extent to which participation influences the process and outcome of the strategy.

4.3.1 Manipulation and Therapy

From these two rungs, citizens of St.Petersburg begin their journey up the ladder. During the interviews and the analysis of documents from the government website, various tools of "Strategy 2035" were found which were used by the authorities to find out public opinion as well as attempts to enable public participation. Many of them - surveys, public hearings, approval procedures could be regarded as dishonest, some of the actions and events that St.Petersburg

authorities organised could be described as symbolic and 'for the record'. The tools used by the city to engage the public are described below.

Public Voting via Gosuslugi

To meet the goal of "at least 30% of the population being active", the government has organised a system of online public voting (Programme, 2019). This feedback is received from citizens through the federal portal of public services of the Russian Federation ‘Gosuslugi". In order to vote, a resident must be registered on the "Gosuslugi" portal, have Russian citizenship and a tax identification number, and confirm their identity in person at one of the official document centres. All projects, services or discussions to be voted on are uploaded to the portal. Those wishing to vote must go to the website, find the project page and express their opinion there. The questionnaire consists of questions and suggested answers, some of which you can write your opinion and thoughts in a blank field. The results are presented in an impersonal statistical format and are only available for registered users of the public services portal "Gosuslugi". Responses and comments from blank fields are not published (Gosuslugi, 2022). Four out of nine respondents do not have access to the portal at the moment for various reasons. All respondents acknowledged the complexity of interacting with the system, and that it takes a long time to try to find the project of interest and vote. Most of the respondents (7 out of 9) said that the currently organised polling system is not transparent, does not achieve its goals and is meaningless in its current form.

Deputy Elias commented that the authorities decided in favour of polls as it is a simple and obvious way to get closer to the stated goal of citizen involvement in the Federal Programme. The authorities do not deal with comments and responses in a blank field and analyse the data received only quantitatively, i.e., they can only indicate the number of people who voted for a particular category or issue. As there is no qualitative analysis of the survey data and the quality of engagement, there are no metrics either to qualitatively assess participation, hence only the achievement of the above-mentioned goal that at least 30% of the population should be active can be assessed (Programme, 2019). Thus, it is impossible to get an idea of the extent to which these surveys actually improve public involvement, whether this engagement is healthy and whether the result of the surveys is adequate. The respondent from NPO Marie had experience of engaging with city authorities to create an alternative participatory device among stakeholders and authorities, but as a result a system of public surveys was adopted. Marie commented:

"... together with the authorities, but unfortunately unsuccessfully, we tried to develop a manifesto involving different stakeholders in the city strategy, both in planning and decision-making issues and in the evaluation of implemented projects. First and foremost, we are talking about involving residents, businesses, media, academia, and the executive and legislative authorities. We believe that this is important, as they are all users of the city in one way or another, and it is important to find points of intersection and then move forward, rather than in a circle or backwards. But the authorities have opted for a simpler and in their view more effective way of interaction - public surveys of the population through the state portal Gosuslugi".

Activist Alice believes that due to the lack of transparency, these polls are more likely to be fake, as the way the budgets for projects are allocated does not reflect the outcome of this vote in any way. In her opinion, these polls are more of a profanation and manipulation of public opinion than a genuine attempt to involve the citizens in the decision-making process. None of the respondents remembered a successful project organised by connecting stakeholders through Gosuslugi. Most of the respondents noted that the best projects in their opinion started with the initiative of the residents. For example, Vera shared:

"All meaningful projects in our city, as experience has shown, are those in which the citizens themselves achieve some results. From their inception, questionnaires have not helped to drive urban change. Advocating and lobbying for specific initiatives around which the city community is built with a voice and a choice - that's what participation should look like. Polls are a strange and ineffective tool for working with citizens, especially when it is the only way to get involved, when there is nothing else around it - public talks, public discussion".

Public Discussions

In addition to official surveys through "Gosuslugi", there are also discussion meetings and open days in all executive authorities and local governments, as well as interaction with subscribers on social media. Most stakeholders recognised that meetings with the authorities and public hearings are held regularly, but rather bureaucratic, the procedure for large public improvement projects suggests that residents should choose from already designed projects. Deputy Vitalis confirms that public hearings are organised at the moment, when residents can no longer change anything in principle, but only choose from the proposed ones. For this reason, they often look more like a dispute between the authorities and citizens, which creates many points of tension. Thus, the study confirms Arnstein's words, that through these actions, "fictitious" events replace genuine citizen participation, and the authorities in power - the Landscaping Committee and the City

Administration do not give a real opportunity to participate in the planning or implementation of any landscaping programmes, instead being mostly engaged in "treatment" and "education". As we see in the case study and in the Arntein concept, this policy assumes a passive audience, one could say it creates one (Arnstein, 1969). Those surveyed comply with the requirements to participate, but have little interest in participating and do not believe in changing things, in fact they are simply used by decision makers to get the necessary numbers to meet the targets. Judging by the results, there is no sincere desire on the part of the "haves" to share power with the "have-nots". Public hearings are organised by the decision makers, but under the guise of citizen participation, citizens are subjected to group therapy, this is evident in votes and hearings for projects already designed and validated. This form of interaction is unfair, no matter how much citizens may be involved in the process.

4.3.2 Informing

According to Arnstein (1969), this step is at a higher level than non-participation and is an example of tokenism, since here the public is still outside the decision-making process. This step is an important intermediate step towards fair and meaningful citizen participation, and it involves the authorities informing the public about citizens' rights and opportunities as well as the various activities and programmes planned.

In order to strengthen the role of public discussion and public informing, communities in social networks (VKontakte, Instagram (before the closure of the social network in RF), Telegram, WhatsApp) and discussion sub-groups within each of them have been created on the part of the government. The information published mainly concerns the activities of the executive bodies of St.Petersburg state authorities and is released unilaterally from top to bottom. Monitoring of appeals, comments and wishes is inactive. One can find out about round tables, planned meetings held, dedicated to the implementation of improvements from "Strategy 2035" plans and other events by subscribing to these groups, news publishers, mailing lists, different channels from the committee for improvement, and by contacting the local authorities themselves. There is no centralised notification and invitation to citizens to participate, which makes participation much more difficult. It is also possible to obtain information or approvals from the executive authorities through other formal means of communication - official letters and appeals. All respondents named different sources of receiving news about planned improvements and projects. Newsletters from the committee and news on their social networks such as group

St.Petersburg Center of Competence for FCGS issues in Vkontakte (2023) talk more about the ongoing process and reports, but there are no practical examples of interaction with residents, how exactly residents can interact, what their rights are to transform the area. The problem in the case study is that the information that these authorities broadcast tends to be partial or constructed - the meetings were organised after the tendering procedure was published and the assumptions of the proposed project formulated, and the focus is on one-way communication. As head of the municipality Paul comments:

"What it usually looks like is that residents are informed about the improvements that have already been approved. They have to choose from a list of options of what will be done in a certain area: a cycle path, a square or a playground. But what if the residents want a dog walking area? In the end only what is proposed is discussed. Then after receiving the results, the authorities attach them to the documentation and to the report, apparently just to tick off the box, but it doesn't work".

Also, it cannot be said that there is a system of regular meetings to which the residents are invited to make any decisions, with the exception of district level meetings organised by the municipality. Thus, residents do not have a regular two-way channel of communication with the City-administration and the Committee. When residents do not meet with the Committee and the City-administration to engage in dialogue, communication between residents and authorities is usually limited to providing basic information from the top down (Arnstein, 1969). Thus, citizens' informing is present, but at this level, citizens don't have enough power to ensure that their opinions are considered by decision makers and have little possibility to influence. There is also a lack of any feedback from the authorities to the public.

4.3.3 Consultation

According to interviews, both at the city level, the methods used for consultation are opinion polls through municipalities, neighbourhood meetings within the district and public hearings at the municipality level. Arnstein believes that at this stage citizens can be heard.

Head of the municipality Paul shared that residents are invited to participate in roundtables about the city's strategy but in this process, only prepared participants or those who have proven themselves in some kind of joint activities are involved, so the circle of stakeholders involved is greatly reduced. The analysis confirms Arnstein's words that in such initiatives

activities are carried out to collect the opinions, ideas, problems and priorities of residents, but this does not oblige the authorities to take them into account for decision making and inclusion in the development strategy (Arnstein, 1969). Consultation without further, action-oriented changes in line with what residents have said is not enough for full participation and engagement. Thus, what Arnstein calls the misuse of consultation can occur, as residents are consulted, but it may not actually affect the outcome.

When authorities limit the consideration of citizens' ideas to this level, "people are primarily perceived as statistical abstractions" (Arnstein, 1969 p.219). This is the case in some ways in St.Petersburg, since even consultations with residents take place mainly through participation, organised through formal questionnaires. The quality of consultation and participation is measured by how many people participate in the survey, come to the meetings, and the goal of participation itself is determined by a quantitative proportion. In some of these consultations (for example, on social media) people are given a voice, but there is no way to ensure that their views are listened to, often when responding residents do not understand what they can actually influence. In this context, the authorities go through the necessary procedures to engage the public to see that they participate (Arnstein, 1969). The residents responding to surveys, questions or completing sentences may not even be aware of their options. The residents may not be aware of the best options available to them. Thus the opportunity to leave feedback or a suggestion is not a reliable indicator of community opinion if one does not know what can really be changed in a neighbourhood or a city (Arnstein, 1969). On this basis, we can see that in most cases, residents are not really involved in the development of the proposal and are not present at the consultation stage. It can be said that when the authorities send a free question about what they want and the residents at best write their opinion without having a clear understanding of the possibilities for change, participation remains only a ritual.

Nevertheless, the presence of the public at the Consultation stage can still be noted through the successful and popular "Tvoy Budget" project, as well as a number of programmes in local municipalities. The essence of "Tvoy budget" is the implementation of urban projects based on the initiatives of the inhabitants of the district. An important advantage of the project, according to the respondents, is its interactive component: drawing lots, lectures, communication between people, choice within the group, which stimulates sincere participation and involvement. The project gives St.Petersburg residents an opportunity to allocate part of the budget funds in their area to those objects that they consider a priority and thus participate in the distribution of the

budget funds. "Tvoy budget" is a kind of variation of the competition among residents. Although the website of the city government contains data about the competition, this project is not mentioned in the "Strategy 2035" documents. All interviewed activists and NGO representatives considered "Tvoy budget" as the only example of successful participatory participation of St.Petersburg. Government respondents noted the high level of interest from residents and the subsequent ownership of projects already implemented by residents. Respondent from NPO Marie participated in this competition and won it in 2019. She commented:

"In my opinion, this is the best city initiative. No regalia will help you when a lot is decided by chance. Apart from that, it's a great educational system - I learned a lot about power structure and decision-making. And most importantly, I learned that the money in the city is our money. Not the developers' or investors' money, but citizens' taxes. And, of course, it's just a great opportunity to get to know all the active neighbours in the area".

According to documents on the government website in some areas of the city, the "Tvoy budget" project has undergone changes in 2020, with much of the interactive part of the activities removed: public discussions, draws, and face-to-face interaction within the group. As deputy Vitalis suggested, the project changed after budgetary organisations and proposals from them were allowed in. The project's website justifies this by measures against the spread of Covid19.

The analysis confirms Arnstein's words that authorities are not ready to share power and implement plans according to the wishes of society. Thus, on this rung, there is just "window-dressing participation" remaining, and the current results of citizen surveys are not reliable indicators of community opinion (Arnstein, 1969 p.220).

4.3.4 Placation

At this stage, citizens and people's voices begin to have influence, although the symbolic approach still remains. Arnstein (1969) believes that appointing "a few hand-picked 'worthy' poor on the boards" of directors of public action agencies or to government bodies may be a good example of a Placation stage, where society give advice and government yields to some demands from citizens (Arnstein, 1969, p.220).

St.Petersburg is characterised by the institution of municipal government, which was created as an administrative unit governed by bodies and people elected from the population, i.e.

representatives from the community are elected to the municipalities (Federal Law, 2023). In this study, a separate category of stakeholder respondents is represented by local government deputies, who are responsible for the interests of the district, their municipal district and its residents. Municipal deputies are significant participants of the participatory movement, they play an important role in the dialogue between the authorities and the residents of the city and work with the initiatives and proposals of the latter. The existence of the institution of municipal government is indicative of the presence of the Placation strategy in the relationship between the authorities and the public in St.Petersburg. The deputies shared that every month there are scheduled dialogue meetings with the residents, in addition to them there is also a free-attendance format. At these meetings, residents can meet municipality officials, business representatives, express their wishes and opinions, both regarding planned transformations of streets, parks or areas, and suggest changes to existing projects. All respondents noted that at the level of municipal authorities, it is much easier to influence some decisions and promote changes in the area. Deputies interact much more willingly than committees and the city administration and consider their main task to help the residents. All deputy-participants of this study make proactive attempts to involve stakeholders in decision making on the district level, they note a great positive effect in the form of overall satisfaction with participation and increased ownership of the project in which they were involved from the meetings-discussions and participation of the residents. As head of municipality Paul observed, the effect the authorities want to achieve is to organise residents' involvement in the development work, followed by a sense of belonging and responsibility for the place. Paul also shares that as head of the municipality, he has built his municipality's development strategy entirely on the principles of engagement with the area's key stakeholders. He describes his reasons for deciding to do so as follows:

"Through the engagement strategy I get unlimited resources in the form of support from my residents. If you do something that is valuable and appealing to the residents, they will always help not only during the construction phase, but also during the operation and maintenance of the area, keeping it intact and taking care of it afterwards.

Elias stresses the value of getting feedback from the public:

"The great wisdom is to get feedback from people and change things accordingly. Then people start to appropriate what you've done, feel it's theirs, come and take care of it."

At the same time, head of municipality Paul noted that in order to involve stakeholders in planning and implementation of projects together with the authorities, consultative and advisory

bodies, including those of sectoral nature, which include representatives of science, business, public organisations, local self-government bodies of intracity municipal entities of St.Petersburg started functioning within the executive bodies of the state authority of St.Petersburg from 2021. Nevertheless, none of the interviewed city residents and NGO representatives commented on these changes. On the contrary, they noted that the participation lacked interactivity and transparency and in the current situation it is impossible to talk about trust in the dialogue. The majority of the public representatives (5 out of 6) do not see the potential for real participation and the actual strength of their voice. At the same time, all deputies noted the difficulty of interacting with residents and businesses, as well as the lack of proactive assistance and the absence of 'adequate' leaders from the public. Through dialogue meetings with residents, the deputies formed a system of relations between the authorities and the public. The bottom-up approach has resulted in the implementation of citizens' initiative ideas within the municipalities and their inclusion in the design. They allow citizens to advise and plan indefinitely, but nevertheless retain the power to judge the legality or appropriateness of the advice. These nuances of combining the use of public advice with the retention of decision-making power at this rung of the ladder are also noted in Arnstein's work.

Nevertheless, these examples are rather exceptions to the rule, on the whole in the case study there is a significant gap between the powerholders and the have-nots. St.Petersburgers have a weak advisory role, while those with ultimate decision-making power remain unchanged. Episodic examples of consultation are limited to the local district level, and then only if the municipality has a policy of participation and includes this priority in its agenda. At the city level, the strategy does not suggest the existence of consultative mechanisms offering interaction between government and the public.

4.3.5 Partnership, Delegated Power and Citizen Control

The responses of respondents and secondary data showed no sign of partnership, in which power is "redistributed through negotiation" and there is an invitation to real, rather than formal, public participation (Arnstein, 1969). Since the Partnership rung is not overcome, the public is also not present at the next Delegated Power and Citizen Control levels. The most important sign that St.Petersburg's stakeholders have not reached this stage of engagement is that the local community does not influence the outcome of any plans initiated by the government.

The programmes and plans discussed above were top-down, fulfilling federal and regional mandates under "Strategy 2035". The study noted the top-down rather than bottom-up nature of policy planning and implementation in St.Petersburg, which reduces the participatory process and the impact of the effort expended. Municipal development programmes seem bureaucratic, as every step and objective of the programme is prescribed. Any actions not prescribed by the programme have to be approved by the city authorities. All the interviewees confirmed the complexity of coordination and subsequent implementation of civic initiatives related to neighbourhood improvement and landscaping. As a rule, even if a citizen has a proposal for an area, it is not yet clear how to effectively bring it to the attention of the authorities. Vitalis says:

"The wishes we receive from residents are often not implemented or are implemented, but slowly due to bureaucracy and a complicated approval system".

The representative of NGO Erik described an experience where, in response to documents sent to the Landscaping Committee for approval of trees in a certain area in the city centre, the Committee refused, but counter-offered to plant trees in another area where the Committee itself was supposed to do it, thereby pursuing the aim of saving the budget at the expense of the public organisation.

Power at this degree is supposed to be redistributed between citizens and authorities through negotiation between them - they are supposed to agree on joint planning and decision-making. The study did not find any bodies, policy councils or planning committees that were willing to enter into negotiations with stakeholders, followed by the possible distribution of power. Nor did it find any mechanisms for resolving deadlocks between stakeholders.

5. DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings of the study and attempts to place them in the context of relevant previous research. The theoretical considerations are meant to help explain the findings. The chapter first considers the influence of contextual factors on the formation of "Strategy 2035" and as a consequence on stakeholder relations. This is followed by an overview of the current strategy for sustainable development in St.Petersburg and the role of participatory development in it. This is followed by the main conclusions about the place of the public in the dialogue with the authorities and the potential for partnership in St.Petersburg and the limitations of the chosen tool of analysis - the Arnstein Ladder.

5.1 The Influence of Contextual Factors

Understanding the contextual factors is important for interpreting the results, as the factors influence the formulation and planning of St.Petersburg's sustainable development strategy, as well as the strategic implementation of decisions that follow. In turn, geopolitical factors also largely determine the development of power-public relations (Tálas, 2018). Primarily a set of political aspects, culture, norms, principles and ideas have a decisive influence on the governance of the city and, consequently, on the work of all public authorities, mechanisms of interaction with them, as well as the very nature of the strategy (Brorström, 2017). Russian mentality and political culture to some extent inhibit the perception of some sustainable development issues by the Russian political elite and society at large, superseded by narratives of improving quality of life and creating an efficient economy. This is generally reflected in the analysis of interviews and documents related to "Strategy 2035". As the study shows, most sustainable development programmes are narrowed down to socio-economic issues and separated from environmental and social sustainability issues. Thus, different departments are dealing with different areas of the strategy - social, environmental and economic. According to Figge, Hahn, Schaltegger & Wagner (2002) this decentralisation blurs the link between social and economic indicators and prevents an integrated strategic approach.

The strongest factor determining the development of the relationship between the government and citizens in St.Petersburg is the monopolisation of power, the concentration of power and decisions. This orientation of politics allows the 'regime' to reward its supporters and punish its opponents (Smyth, 2014), which ultimately has a negative impact on the legitimacy of the decisions made, the freedom of public debate, and the health of civil society. According to the study, existing relationships within government and between government and the public create

certain political barriers to engagement, which Chelleri, Waters, Olazabal and Minucci (2015) argue creates difficulties and is critical to governance and policy making. These barriers include the complicated government process for approving landscaping and planting, reluctance to accept residents' opinions for decision making, fragmented ideas about what constitutes a policy, etc.

5.2 A Sustainable Development Strategy for St.Petersburg

The movements' demands for a "right to the city," raised by various communities, neighbourhood associations, and residents, were both a demand for redistribution of resources and a demand for social and political participation in the governance of St.Petersburg. The recent emergence of independent municipalities, business associations, and NGOs in new projects and foundations, and their involvement in stakeholder dialogue where decisions are made about resource allocation or local development strategy, demonstrates the growing importance of civil society in developing a sustainable city strategy for St.Petersburg. However, it is a difficult task to achieve true participation and equal involvement of stakeholders. "There is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process". (Arnstein, 1969, p.24). The results of participation in "Strategy 2035" are explored in more detail below.

5.2.1 Participation in a Sustainable Urban Development Strategy

According to the study, the basic dimensions of sustainable urban development are not connected and translated into the various strands of "Strategy 2035", and the notion of sustainable development is not defined at the legislative level. While existing stakeholder pressure has influenced the authorities to add a participation objective and conditions to the 2020 Strategy update, at this point the strategy cannot be said to be planned and implemented with genuine urban stakeholder participation. It can be concluded that there is a focus on the economic outlook and neglecting the social contribution to the strategy implementation, as well as a lack of attention to the complexities and problems of the contemporary urban environment from a social perspective, which was also highlighted by Trivellato (2017) and Jonas and While (2007). In their study Coaffee and Clarke (2015) highlight that the exclusion of the sustainability approach from part of the decision-making processes at city level, and the absence of people and organisations from different sectors and silos in strategic efforts and making these decisions, ultimately affects the effectiveness and consistency of the strategy (Coaffee & Clarke, 2015).

The study found that although participation is formally included in policy documents and requirements, in practice there is a low degree of real engagement and participation with a narrow range of stakeholders, and a reluctance on the part of the government to share power. Vale (2014) suggests that such a problem may be due to the fact that the concept of the strategy is not formulated holistically enough. The analysis showed that "Strategy 2035" does lack a clear formulation and plan according to which this participation will be connected, which stakeholders should be included in the process and what outcome is expected, missing important components such as targets, criteria for public participation and involvement, which ultimately affects the quality of its implementation (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). In addition, the focus of "Strategy 2035" is primarily on the residents of the city as members of the public, but overlooks many useful and important stakeholders such as businesses and professional communities (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). In practice, the inclusion of stakeholders in St.Petersburg's sustainable development strategy occurs through the organisation of various formal events with the residents of the city. According to Spaans and Waterhout (2017), this format of engagement improves inclusiveness, promotes the acceptance of different types of knowledge and helps participation become more integrated. At the same time, the study notes a lack of informal methods of participation, as well as a lack of autonomy to manage community participation. Rydin and Pennington (2000) refer to this format as a controller regime and believe that in such a case, the participation and strategies created by the state will be of low quality and will not be able to help solve the problem of collective action (Taylor 2007; Ostrom & Ahn, 2009). Thus, according to the study, the important balance between control by the authorities and the freedom to engage and develop civic participation noted by Ostrom (2000) is lost. Researchers note that in a political scenario where control and governance are concentrated in the hands of the authorities and the hierarchy of power is strict, there is passive participation and expectations of solutions to problems from the authorities (Davidoff, 1965; Innes & Booher, 2005; Rydin & Pennington, 2000). This correlates with research findings indicating low and superficial levels of participation according to the Arnstein model, distrust of the authorities in interviews, and gaps in the "Strategy 2035" strategy documents regarding participation. As Brink and Wamsler (2018) point out, when confidence in the support of the authorities is high, citizens passively wait for top-down decisions.

With the development of such behaviour on the part of the authorities, the correct forms of social capital are suppressed and the above mentioned problems with trust and difficulties with involvement and participation appear as a consequence. The study found no work on the part of

city authorities to develop communities, build networks between them, and build social capital to include more manageable participation. The lack of an overall concept of participation, revealed through interviews and secondary data, and the participation activities carried out by the authorities indicate more of a weak manifestation of an expanding public participation strategy than a move towards the social capital building strategy mentioned by Ostrom (2000). The study also revealed a lack of work with incentives at the time of public involvement. None of the interviewees mentioned this tool as effective for achieving quality participation (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). According to a number of researchers, these findings may mask key participation problems and the resulting ineffective implementation of urban strategies (Ostrom & Ahn, 2009; Putnam, 1993; Wong, 2007).

Another important finding of the analysis is that the work and management structure of governments, including municipalities, the Landscaping Committee and the Gardens and Parks Committee, is quite bureaucratic and formalised, and stakeholders face lengthy and often unsuccessful approval processes for trees and landscaping sites. Researchers refer to the complexities of participation in the modern bureaucratic state, warning of the trap of formalised governmental practices in urban environments (Coaffee et al. 2018; Goldstein et al. 2015; Innes & Booher, 2005;) and emphasise the need to replace closed space with horizontal governance and move towards flexible, mobile and diverse systems to implement a sustainable development strategy (Matyas & Pelling, 2015). To better identify the causes, Coaffee et al. (2018) advise looking at the changing organisational behaviour of municipal governments. According to the interviews, the difficulty in reaching agreement between the public and government is partly due to the fact that public and government understanding, knowledge of the problem and previous experiences are different. Fung (2006) also stresses that it is important to speak the same language in order to understand and solve the problem. Another useful joint finding with the Rydin and Pennington (2000) study is that, according to respondents on the part of the authorities, involving stakeholders early in the process helps to mitigate the participation process, prevent possible disagreements, overcome communication problems, and including more trained participants in the participation process makes participation more effective.

The survey showed that participants do not trust the work of the city administration and have no hope of influencing the policies or actions of the authorities, however, deputies emphasised that projects involving the public are guided by a sense of responsibility for their neighbourhood and a desire to change the city for the better. In the literature, Fung (2006) mentions that participants

do not believe that they can influence the decisions but participate out of a sense of civic duty. There is little evidence that citizen participation in St.Petersburg has actually influenced the decision-making of local authorities. The empirical evidence from the research shows that in most cases the organisation of events by the authorities has been more to inform the public about the planned implementation of already approved and signed projects, and despite comments from the authorities, the strategy does not seek to engage the public at an earlier stage to give them a real opportunity to participate and influence planning. The exceptions are municipal agencies, where the authorities do want to know the opinion and knowledge of the public and involve them in planning. Examples of successful cooperation between stakeholders and authorities include the initiatives implemented in cooperation with municipalities and the "Tvoy Budget" competition. Due to the fact that one of the respondents was a competitor and winner of the competition, the study noted loyalty to the event and satisfaction with the results obtained, this is in line with the idea highlighted by Fors et al. (2015) and Wong (2007) that physical participation results reflecting user preferences increase user satisfaction and create a stronger sense of belonging and greater motivation to implement decisions.

The study confirms the findings of the literature that whatever methods of engagement and participation are used (consultations, surveys), they provide a variety of useful information based on local knowledge and preferences, and this information improves the planning and implementation of plans, increases the likelihood that different policies will be appropriate to local conditions, and prevents negative biases and contributes to sustainable urban governance processes (Bai et al. 2017; Legacy, 2010; Rydin & Pennington, 2000). Government officials confirm that through their close familiarity with the context, stakeholders offer the best, locally relevant solutions, while building a broad sense of ownership (Foley & Martin, 2000). This important contextualised knowledge for the planning process and subsequent implementation of the strategy in the case study manifests itself in the everyday experience of the respondents, the close connection with the physical environment and the resulting knowledge about the characteristics of the environment, and the ongoing communication between each other, resulting in a rich urban community in St.Petersburg. In practice, the application of knowledge is borne out by the success of local initiatives identified in the analysis and implemented with the help of residents. In addition, the analysis on the example of projects organised with the municipality and within the framework of "Tvoy Budget" has shown that residents are more loyal to projects that have been implemented with public participation. This is supported by the literature that residents are both empowered and responsible for the project, i.e. they own the process and are

responsible for it (Brink & Wamsler, 2018), thus reducing control costs and helping cooperation to be more effective (Ostrom, 2000).

According to Foley and Martin (2000) residents prefer passive forms of consultation such as mail surveys to more interactive ones such as public meetings and juries. However, such conclusions were not supported by empirical data. None of the respondents considered postal surveys to be an effective and preferred form of dialogue between the authorities and the public, and the majority of those surveyed favoured incorporating more interactivity into participation. Also, the study did not support the common criticism that multi-stakeholder participation is difficult and inappropriate due to widely differing viewpoints (Fors et al. 2015). On the contrary, those examples of participation from interviews as well as collaborative projects, surveys and municipal assemblies suggested the inclusion of a greater diversity of stakeholders and the study did not find any difficulties with this participation format. Nevertheless, the municipality gives preference to prepared participants in meetings, which significantly reduces the number of it.

5.3 The Arnstein Ladder in St.Petersburg

This subsection presents the findings on the relationship between the public and power in the development strategy of St.Petersburg and the limitations of the tool used - Arnstein's model - in its application for this analysis. Arnstein emphasises the redistribution of power and the creation of an enabling environment for citizens to participate in the political and economic process in a conscientious way (Arnstein, 1969).

The empirical data showed that participation in St.Petersburg is largely symbolic and that power is in the hands of the city leadership, which is not prepared to share it. As a result, St.Petersburg's hierarchical ladder of participation, ending at the Placation rung, does not reach the degree of Citizen Control. Analysis of the interviews and secondary data revealed different forms of manifestation of the first two stages of Non-participation in almost every project of participation and communication between government and the public. The next degree after Non-participation, called Tokenism, according to interviewees, is characterised by the fact that the authorities create the conditions for participation, the public participates, but their opinions are usually not taken into account. St.Petersburg society "participated in participation" and the authorities received evidence that formal procedures for engaging people are fulfilled (Arnstein, 1969, p.219). Through the institution of municipal government, citizens exert some influence, but the decisions

and advice they take have no real power and influence on the authorities, and can be changed or overturned, especially if it is "unfavourable from the perspective of professional planners" (Brooks & Harris, 2008, p.141). The analysis shows that the potential for partnership in St.Petersburg is currently unlikely and, given the contextual factors, difficult to achieve in the long term. This is because, for the most part, all participation and dialogue between society and power is concentrated at the lower rungs of the ladder, and the presence at the upper rungs of Tokenism is rather small and localised.

Certain limitations of the Arnstein ladder were identified during the research. First of all, it oversimplifies the analysis of participation through the model, as the ladder confuses means and ends, as it implies that user empowerment should be the only goal, and that reaching the step of Citizen Control is the highest achievement (Tritter & McCallum, 2006). It is worth noting that the ladder obtained in St.Petersburg confirms Tritter and McCallum's (2006) conclusion that Arnstein's model does not capture the dynamic nature of stakeholder participation and relationships identified in the interviews. The ladder concept, which constrains the location of public movements in one direction, limits the existing horizontal links between them, which in fact permeate the city and urban actors: deputies are representatives of both authorities and the public, since they themselves live in the areas in question, NGO representatives are activists and participate in relevant urban projects, and they also come together in various communities. In other words, the relationship between the stakeholders is essentially a network rather than a ladder, and develops horizontally at each level in addition to the vertical format. It is important to emphasise this horizontal integration as all interviewed stakeholders, being participants in all kinds of projects, are active users of the city and its resources as well as co-producers of the city strategy and its implementation. Using Arnstein's model, it is impossible to assess the extent and nature of the relationship of municipal councillors, NGOs, activists and city residents to each other. In order to assess the diversity of their relationships, the analysis of a single ladder is not enough; it seems to make sense to reflect each category on a separate ladder and establish connections between them. The same limitation of the ladder was found in a study by Tritter and McCallum (2006).

In the current case study there are examples of involvement that resulted in city projects, but the Arnstein model lacks qualitative characteristics to evaluate these projects. Arnstein refers to qualitative involvement, in which the users' opinions are taken into account by the authorities and ultimately influence the formation and implementation of some city projects and the outcome of

the strategy as a whole, but this process does not cover the provision of quality services, which can be affected by implementation (Arnstein, 1969). Another limitation that the study found was the existence in St.Petersburg of activist and resident-initiated projects and the reluctance of activist representatives to participate in government-initiated projects. The model misses the fact that members of the public may independently decide to get involved in various issues and problems according to their interests, and in some cases sabotage participation and do not want to be involved. This limitation underlines the lack of a comprehensive approach to measuring participation, it is also mentioned in Collins and Ison (2006). The results of the ladder model have been assessed in terms of involving the community in developing solutions to the problems already identified, but involving stakeholders in defining and articulating the problems themselves would allow for a more holistic approach to participation. This is due to the fact that the Arnstein model is more outcome oriented, unlike, for example, the IAP2 model used to plan and define future strategies. It can be concluded that the role of society and the opportunities that can potentially be derived from its involvement for the participatory process is underestimated in the Arnstein model. According to Collins and Ison (2006), focusing the model also on process, rather than only on results, would create more potential for building organisational culture between urban stakeholders. Moreover, in her concept Arnstein sees the relationship between the public and the authorities as between two adversaries sharing limited power between themselves. A dichotomy of rivalry between representatives of the administration and stakeholders was observed during the interviews, tensions were felt in the descriptions of joint projects and experiences of cooperation, and respondents' answers took place in the "us (the public) - them (the authorities)" paradigm. This competition, both in the ladder model and in the final analysis, limits the possibility of cooperation and joint decision-making that seems necessary when it comes to participatory development in urban strategy. The last important nuance is the context of the participatory process, not mentioned in the Arnstein ladder and important for a meaningful analysis of participation. Each participation strategy or plan has its own unique characteristics and the specific context in which participation takes place needs to be taken into account, which may be historical or cultural experiences, geopolitical features, political agendas and established legislation that impose certain constraints on participation. Since all of the above facts are not taken into account, the ladder does not use any means to present the context of participation. Ignoring some of the factors to better understand the possibilities for participation in context, makes the analysis less qualitative.

In the context of this study it can be summarised that the use of Arnstein's ladder is suitable for straightforward, high-level analysis and insufficient for deep multilevel analysis from different sides, including at horizontal level, as well as for understanding the nature of interaction between individual stakeholders and their groups and assessing the roles of stakeholders on which successful user involvement depends.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to explore the relationships between the main stakeholders in the process of developing and implementing St.Petersburg's sustainable development strategy, "Strategy 2035". The analysis of these relationships was aimed at finding causal links between the quality and authenticity of public participation and the final outcome of the strategy. In order to achieve this, the following question was posed:

What influence and impact does the society of St.Petersburg have on the implementation process and outcome of the sustainable development strategy?

The answer to this question was obtained through a case study, which included an analysis of the relationship between the authorities and the public regarding the implementation of the strategy of St.Petersburg as well as a direct examination of "Strategy 2035", its sustainability and how the involvement of key stakeholders in the implementation of the strategy affects the decisions made to improve the city and outcome of the"Strategy 2035".

Applying a qualitative research approach using interviews and secondary resources, the study found that the current strategy does not include a separate sustainability focus and priority; most sustainable development programmes are narrowed down to socio-economic issues and separated from environmental and social sustainability issues. There is no integrated strategic approach to sustainable development issues in the "Strategy 2035".

Regarding the inclusion of participation in the strategy in St.Petersburg, the study found a weak position of the public regarding the steps of the Arnstein ladder and revealed a lack of influence of key stakeholders on decisions and implementation of the "Strategy 2035", especially in terms of landscaping. The results show that there are many common difficulties and barriers to achieving a high level of participation in the implementation of the strategy. Formally, participation in the urban agenda is present in the form of goals, objectives and implementation criteria spelled out in the strategy documents, but in fact the public has no influence on decisions concerning the improvement and landscaping of the city. The sustainable urban development strategy is fully formulated by the central administrative authorities and then extended to municipal and local authorities. The involvement of residents in the process is mostly limited to "token" participation and informing about the authorities' plans for the area. Using the Arnstein

ladder it was found that the level of the relationship between the authorities and the residents is mainly concentrated at the degree of Non-participation and Tokenism. The position of citizens reaches the rung of Consultation. Residents are usually consulted in the latter stages of approval of some projects, when it is no longer possible to make meaningful changes, and advice and consultation is limited to a narrow range of options to choose from that make it virtually impossible to excert any influence. Nevertheless, it has been established that the public has some limited influence on the process and outcome of the strategy.

Thus, in this example, the actors on the power side have taken full ownership of the position at the Partnership degree and, judging by the results, are not prepared to share it. This situation can partly be explained by the public policy context and the cultural and historical background in St.Petersburg, and partly by the fact that state actors find it difficult to share power (Arnstein, 1969). Nevertheless, examples of successful projects carried out at the municipal level provide a positive experience of participation between government and the public and provide an impetus for further movement up the ladder. Thus, the results see a causal link between the low level of public position on the Arnstein ladder, low quality participation and poor development of "Strategy 2035". As the study shows, true stakeholder dialogue and public transition to civic governance is difficult to achieve in the short term. Participation is fraught with a lot of communication noise, distrust of each other, conflicts of interest between key urban actors and, most importantly, the lack of an effective urban strategy that includes building social capital. It is worth noting that real participation and fruitful cooperation is only possible in situations where the authorities are open and have a targeted policy to improve the quality of participation and this starts with a strategy.
This study improves knowledge about the nature of participation of key stakeholders in urban strategy, thereby moving cities towards a more sustainable future.

6.1 Theoretical Implications

The main theoretical implications of this study are largely the same as the ones arising from previous studies. First and foremost is that most forms of participation provide useful, local knowledge and preference-based information, which is a key and important component for successful planning, developing and implementing urban strategies. In this respect, the next important implication is that the link between power hierarchy and control by the administration, which was observed during the study, hinders the development of communities and networks and

is destructive to the effectiveness of participation. The study confirms the causal link between a weak public position on the Arnstein ladder and poor strategy performance. At the same time, it is recommended to investigate the causal links between the participatory strategy formation process and the outcome in more depth, as much relatively unexplored research remains in this area. For example, it is interesting to study the impact of the participatory process on the outcome in some specific aspects, in particular the link between the level of stakeholder involvement and the outcome of the strategy in the context of progress in sustainable urban development.

Speaking of strategic urban development, the study found that strategies are strongly influenced by contextual factors, the role of which remains an understudied area. The results also highlighted the importance of theories from other areas of strategic management concerning the incorporation of the participatory approach to the strategy through dissemination of basic principles and priorities in its directions, goals and objectives, using PMS to assess the performance of the participatory approach and adjusting the strategy course depending on its deviation, tracking the relationship between the planning and the strategy outcome.

6.2 Practical Implications

This thesis has contributed to practical implications that can be put into practice by urban actors involved in the planning and implementation of sustainable urban development strategies, representing municipal and central governments, organisations and NGOs, involved in urban project activities for the improvement of the urban environment, interacting in one way or another with the authorities.

The results of this study highlights the importance of participatory dialogue and identify challenges, potentials and invisible points of growth in the relationship between urban stakeholders, to enable them to cooperate more fruitfully in order to implement a more effective sustainable urban strategy. City authorities need to understand the benefits and opportunities that quality and genuine participation brings. It is recommended to integrate strategies to promote genuine participation into policies, with priority given to strategies to build social capital rather than to increase public participation. This means that urban decision makers need to commit to involving different stakeholders in developing sustainable urban solutions and, through processes of co-design and co-creation of knowledge, organise more effective influence on strategy by

local communities to achieve better outcomes. In turn, NGOs, activists, businesses and urban communities should be open to and strongly supportive of collaboration.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

The methodological approach used in this thesis has some limitations, which may affect the understanding and implications of the findings.The small size and not the most diverse coverage of the stakeholder sample does not provide a comprehensive understanding of the level and diversity of the problems present between society and power in and prevents the prediction of city-wide outcomes. This sample provides initial research indications and allows for the formulation of further hypotheses. It is necessary that the sample of future surveys should include ordinary residents of the city and representatives of the authorities on the part of the incumbent central government. In this study the respondents representing the authorities were from different political opposition trends, which may have influenced their attitudes and statements about how the urban improvement system is organised and the strategy organised, due to their certain biases hence the sampling bias is present in the study. It is also worth noting that some interviewees were unable to answer some of the questions because they did not have information about some issues. Secondary data was used to fill in the "gaps" in such cases. The difficulty in capturing a large sample is also due to another limitation, namely that the author conducted the study alone. In addition, the context in which the study was conducted was important, as mentioned above. This limitation affects the results, limits the scope of the study, and raises questions about the relevance of the findings when interpreted in a different context. Due to geopolitical factors, the majority of respondents, particularly NGO representatives and activists, as well as the author, were located in different geographic locations, which may have contributed to the lack of a more holistic perception of the situation and assessment of the participatory process on-site. As this study is qualitative, one limitation is the lack of statistical methods to prove correlations between data, so future research could add quantitative approaches to its analysis for greater confidence in the conclusions. The Arnstein model used in the study has limitations, excluding context and not allowing for a comprehensive and multifaceted assessment of participation, missing the dynamic nature of participation and stakeholder relationships. For future research, it makes sense to turn to context-sensitive models that allow for a more in-depth and comprehensive analysis, taking into account not only the hierarchical approach but also horizontal multilevel structures. And also to do an analysis of participation, based not only on its impact on strategy or policy outcomes, but also analysing the impact of participation on the process.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide: General questions for all interviewees

The following list of themes guided our interviews with room for variation and adaptation depending on the interviewees answers during the interviews

To mention before the interview

- Video will be recorded
- Personal name can be anonymized
- The interview will only be used for the purpose of our thesis

General questions for all interviewees:

1. What attitude and role (in your own words) do you play in developing the city's greening strategy? (citizen, government representative, NGO representative)
2. Do you know who the stakeholders are? Do you think stakeholders can somehow help to plan and implement a sustainable urban strategy?
3. Describe in your own words the role of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the urban strategy?
4. Do you know which forms of citizen engagement proposals to improve the sustainable urban strategy have been initiated by the city authorities? Please tell me about them
5. Which forms of involvement do you find most useful for participation?
6. Do you know of successful or unsuccessful examples where citizen proposals have been accepted and implemented? Please give an example
7. What do you think is a sustainable city? What ingredients must be present in this concept?
8. Can you give an example of a city that you think is sustainable and why?
9. Do you consider St.Petersburg a sustainable city? Please justify your answer
10. What do you consider to be the most successful collaborative project between stakeholders and city authorities in St.Petersburg?
11. How many participation projects (public and authorities) in St.Petersburg do you remember in the last year?

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide: Questions for representatives of institutional authorities, local and national NGOs & green activists

The following list of themes guided our interviews with room for variation and adaptation depending on the interviewees answers during the interviews

To mention before the interview

- Video will be recorded
- Personal name can be anonymized
- The interview will only be used for the purpose of our thesis

Questions for representatives of institutional authorities. All questions from APPENDIX A and additional questions:

1. Can you share the main principles and directions of a sustainable urban strategy?
2. Why did the government decide to implement a sustainable urban strategy?
3. How does the city government take into account the views and wishes of its citizens?
4. What are the current formal formats for engaging stakeholders in the city's development?
5. In what format, at what stage and why do you think it is best to involve stakeholders in a sustainable city strategy?
6. Please tell us about cases where the authorities have delegated some part of the organisation of an urban improvement project to active citizens or NGOs?
7. Please tell us about the procedure for preparing approval documents for residents' self-approval of planting and landscaping in the city centre?
8. How do you get feedback and/or participate in negotiations on city beautification projects, tree planting for city residents/ NGO representatives?

Questions for local and national NGOs & green activists. All questions from APPENDIX A and additional questions:

1. What is your role in the city's development strategy?
2. Please tell us about the strategy of sustainable urban development and the formal role of NGOs and active residents in it?
3. What are the peculiarities of NGO existence in the St.Petersburg space?
4. Please tell us about the procedure of preparing documents from residents/NGOs for self-approval of beautification and planting projects in the city centre?

5. Tell us briefly how the city administration and the beautification committee work in terms of interaction with the public and stakeholders?
6. How do you give feedback and/or participate in negotiations on landscaping and tree planting projects with city stakeholders / representatives of community organisations?
7. Where and how do you get information on new projects and planting, on the city's sustainable development strategy, on any greening actions?
8. What do you consider to be the most successful joint action project between citizens and city authorities in St.Petersburg?
9. How do representatives of the authorities respond to your feedback?
10. How many landscaping or tree planting projects have you been able to coordinate independently / from your organisation?
11. How many projects and urban tree planting have you been involved in in the last year?