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Digital tools in public participation

**A master thesis
by Andreas Sveen**

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Figure 1: Front page.

Acknowledgements

This master thesis marks the end of a five-year integrated master study in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Stavanger. It has been an eventful period of my life where I have grown a lot as a person.

The idea behind writing this thesis was that I wanted to spend my last semester as a student exploring a theme of which I knew very little. Public participation is a fundamental part of planning and gaining more knowledge about it therefore seemed important. Digitalization and digital tools have always been an interest of mine, and it was therefore natural for the thesis to be angled that way.

First, I want to thank my supervisor from UiS, Ana Llopis Alvarez, for being a steady source of motivation and encouragement throughout the semester, as well as providing excellent advice on all areas of the thesis. Furthermore, I want to thank my external supervisor from Multiconsult, Espen Eek, for good discussions, advice, and providing me with contacts that were vital for the interviews. I also want to thank Svein Andersland from Multiconsult for giving me a presentation about Participatory GIS and other digital tools, as well as providing information about the case studies. My appreciation also goes out to the informants that participated in the interviews, your time and insight has been very valuable to this thesis.

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Abstract

Public participation is an activity that is conducted regularly in every planning process in Norway, as demanded by the planning and building act. Even though it is conducted in every planning process, there are cases in the media regularly where the public feel like their opinions have not been heard by the planning authorities.

This thesis aims to explore how digital tools can improve public participation, with a focus on solving some of the main challenges it faces today. Subsequent questions were made to provide a foundation from which the research question could be answered from. The sub-questions were answered by creating a theoretical background, as well as conducting two case studies and four semi-structured interviews. The case studies were centred around two planning processes in Rogaland County, and the interviews were conducted with informants that have experience with public participation. The findings from these three chapters resulted in the thesis concluding that there are in total five areas where digital tools can improve public participation.

Sammendrag

Offentlig medvirkning er en aktivitet som blir gjennomført regelmessig i hver eneste planprosess i Norge, noe som er et krav i plan- og bygningsloven. Selv om det blir gjennomført i hver eneste planprosess, er det fremdeles regelmessige saker i media hvor offentligheten føler at stemmene deres ikke har blitt hørt av planleggerne.

Denne oppgaven vil utforske hvordan digitale verktøy kan forbedre offentlig medvirkning, med et fokus på å løse noen av de sentrale utfordringene med det i dag. Underspørsmål ble laget for å lage et grunnlag som forskningsspørsmålet kunne bli besvart fra. Underspørsmålene ble besvart ved å lage en teoretisk bakgrunn, i tillegg til å gjennomføre to case-studier og fire semi-strukturerte intervjuer. Case-studiene tok utgangspunkt i to planleggingsprosesser i Rogaland fylke, og intervjuene ble gjennomført med informanter som har erfaring med offentlig medvirkning. Funnene fra de tre kapitlene resulterte i at oppgaven konkluderer med at det er fem områder hvor digitale verktøy kan forbedre offentlig medvirkning.

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Introduction

This chapter introduces the relevance of the thesis as well as its research question, the scope of the research and the hypothesis as to why the research question is formulated the way it is.

1.1 The relevance and scope of the thesis

Public participation is a fundamental part of the planning process. It secures democracy in planning decisions and is a requirement in all planning processes according to the Planning and building act (Ministry of the Environment, 2008). Although it has been mandatory to do public participation for some time now, it is regularly criticised for a lack of real follow-through. Debates are currently ongoing in architectural and planning communities on whether public participation is worth the cost and effort it requires, as it appears to provide little added value back to the planners and designers. Decisions appear to have been made before the participants can even voice their concerns, and the result can therefore seem anything but democratic (Aitken, 2014). This is in direct contrast to what the planning and building act intends, but it does not mean that it is breaking any laws. There are enough sections and specifications around what the minimum demands are, but nothing when it comes to the results one should be able to achieve with it.

There are enough examples of citizens making their voices heard through either newspapers or social media, as a way of showing their disagreement. In some cases, there have been groups on social media that have reached over a hundred members, meaning that something isn't right. There are few signs of the failure of public participation that are more visible than public outrage on a large scale over multiple platforms. However, this is not a new phenomenon, which begs the question as to why this is still an issue.

Another issue that has not received the same amount of press and attention is the problem of representation. In public participation, there are usually a few groups in a community that are more represented than others (Michels & De Graaf, 2010). This poses a significant problem, as the result could be that underrepresented groups are not heard. In turn, this could lead to a participation process that only facilitates the need of a few groups, rather than the entire community.

The issues mentioned with public participation today combined with how society has been digitalized can make one wonder why there are not more digital methods for participation being used. One could argue that there is a clear advantage to having measures on the same platforms that the participants are on. Are there additional methods, and how can they improve public participation?

Public participation is a theme that spans many different categories. It is therefore important to restrict the scope of the thesis to reach an acceptable depth of research. The scope of the research in this thesis is therefore limited to public participation in planning projects and processes. Other participation processes or activities not related to planning will not be considered in this thesis.

The economic aspect of public participation has not been included in this thesis. Participation processes do require time and resources, but as these factors have not been made available in either the theoretical background or the case studies, it would have been difficult to analyse.

1.2 Hypothesis

This hypothesis is made based on literature discussing that there is a proven advantage to adopting digital tools in the participation process. Particularly the literature from (Kahila-Tani et al., 2019) has been used where over 200 different cases were critically analysed to find the pros and cons of using web-based GIS for public participation. The research question mentioned in the next chapter is based on this hypothesis.

The report states that there are evenly distributed pros and cons related to web-based GIS use in public participation. The cons are a variation of more ethical issues to specific technical and economic shortcomings. As the use of digital tools in public participation is initiated from the planning authority side, the use of them easily leads to a continuation of top-down participation (Kahila-Tani et al., 2019). Top-down participation is a term for when the main activity of development is initiated by the government or planning authority. The participants can easily become passive in this form of participation, as the planning authority controls the entire process (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009). Other issues are a lack of economic resources and technical challenges. Digital tools alone will rarely be sufficient on their own, as face-to-face discussions are important especially when it comes to strategic questions. Challenges related to data handling and its interpretation of it could also lead to biased results if handled poorly. Lastly, an overreliance on digital tools could further the digital divide that some may be experiencing (Kahila-Tani et al., 2019). Digital divide is described as a gap between those who do, and those who do not have access to new forms of information technology (van Dijk, 2006). This could for example be people who lack the knowledge and equipment to participate using digital tools.

There are several pros as well. GIS-based participation is easy to implement for both planners and residents, as well as other actors. It is useable in various phases of the process and collects data from different geographic scales systematically. The data collected here can again be used by various sectors. The data shows that a relatively high number of participants can be reached with reasonable effort, as well as attracting new resident groups that might not have participated solely in physical meetings. The individual opinions are highlighted in the responses, instead of becoming a part of the view of the group. This can in turn reveal the conflicting viewpoints of the participants. The data produced is generally of high quality with localized information related to planning situations. Place-based data can be integrated into existing systems. It also allows for knowledge from participants to be more equally recognized with other more formal data sets. In general, the results are easier to process and analyse, ensuring answers to different topics relevant to the planning process (Kahila-Tani et al., 2019).

With downsides such as digital divide, top-down participation and possible misuse of data, digital tools alone are not sufficient when it comes to solving the challenges related to public participation. There are however some important positives to remember, with individuality and different opinions being more present. Using digital tools as a supplement to the regular process could therefore be a sound strategy. Combining both a potential increase in the number of participants and the quality of answers and data. With the physical meetings still present, digital divide won't be that much of a problem, as those who lack the knowledge or equipment to participate digitally can do so physically. Therefore, it is possible that digital tools as a supplement to more conventional methods can improve the public participation process.

1.3 Research question and sub-questions

As stated in the previous chapter, there are some challenges regarding public participation in planning. The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to research on public participation, by exploring what these challenges are and how they can be solved. There appears to be an untapped potential regarding the use of digital tools in participation processes. That is why the research question aims to answer how these challenges can be overcome by using digital tools. The purpose of looking at digital tools is to explore the potential and consequences behind a more unconventional strategy when it comes to public participation. The research question is therefore:

How can new digital tools improve public participation in planning?

To help answer the main research question, sub-questions have been made with the purpose of creating a background from which the research question can be answered. As the research question is broad, the sub-questions will consist of themes that have been identified as important in answering the main question. The sub-questions are:

Q1: What are the main challenges with public participation?

Q2: How can digital tools benefit under-represented groups in public participation?

Q3: What kind of digital tools can be used?

Q4: How could an improvement be measured?

02

Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology of the thesis. The methods used for obtaining data and information will be presented, as well as the reasoning for choosing them. Mainly qualitative methods have been used to answer the research question and the sub-questions.

2.1 Research design

The thesis is divided into seven different chapters. The previous and current chapters aim to explain the relevance, objective, and methodology of the thesis. The theoretical background aims to uncover themes that are important to answer the research question. The case analysis chapter shows how different methods were used in two different participation processes, and the results and reactions they achieved. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted to obtain more qualitative answers from people that have worked with public participation before. A conclusion is then made based on the findings from the previous chapter, where the research and sub-questions are answered. Lastly, a discussion chapter is added after the conclusion, to comment on the answers in the conclusion, the methodology of the thesis, the weaknesses of the thesis and reflections regarding further studies on the subject. How the different methods will be used to answer the sub-questions is shown in Table 1.

For chapters 3 to 5, the methods are mainly qualitative, with the literature review, case analysis and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research is, as per Harboe & Eriksen (2008), defined by not immediately producing quantitative data such as numbers. Qualitative methods were chosen due to the complexity of the research questions, where hard data can be difficult to obtain.

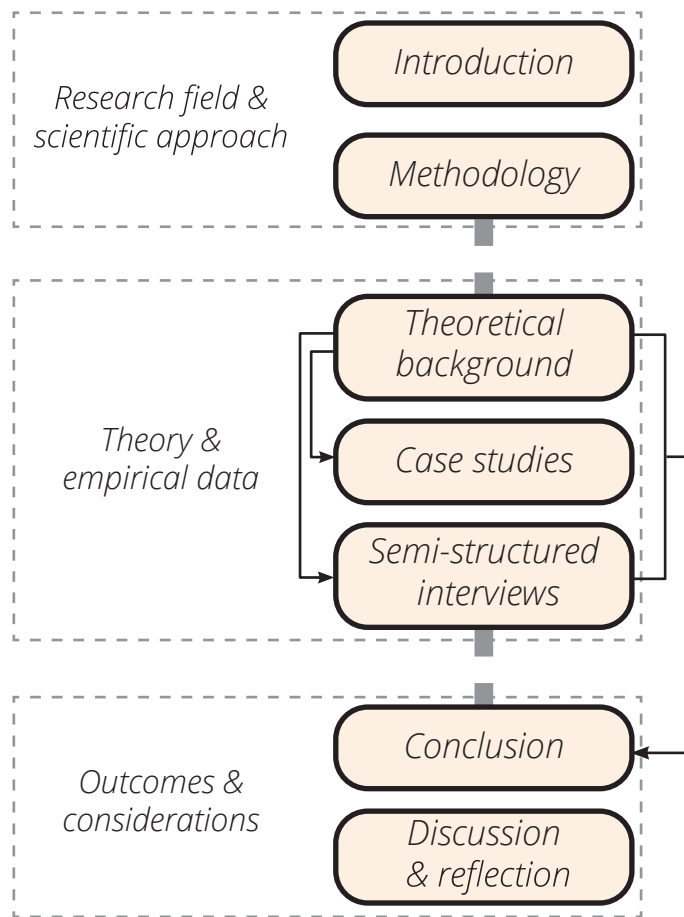


Figure 2: Research design.

2.2 Theoretical background

The sub-questions spawned partly from the themes that came up whilst reviewing the literature. A mixture of different theories and articles were then used to build a theoretical background from which the questions could be answered. The literature reviewed was mainly found through Oria, Google Scholar, and in the bibliography of articles.

The theoretical background starts with an introduction to the general theme of participation. It then delves deeper into what the planning and building act specifically says about public participation. A guide on public participation made by the Norwegian government is then analysed to get a picture of the key points and methods deemed most important by the Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization. Themes such as “under-represented groups” and “digital tools” are then researched to find a correlation between an increased use of digital tools and a wider spectrum of participants. Lastly, there will be a summary of the key findings from the theoretical background.

2.3 Case study

A case study can be defined as “An intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment.” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) (p.301). The case analysis method was chosen to observe how the participation methods found in the literature review worked in a more practical setting. Two projects were chosen for analysis, Paradis and Vindafjord municipality. The Paradis case was chosen due to it developing from a privately initiated development project to a large political issue during the county and municipal elections of 2019. It then forced the municipality to create an area plan for Paradis, in many ways putting an end to the private proposal that made it a political issue (NORCE, 2021). This case can therefore be looked at in two parts, before and after the municipality stepped in. The Vindafjord case was chosen due to it containing a variety of methods that are not commonly used elsewhere in Norway. Information and data from this case have partly been supplied by Multiconsult Norge AS.

The different projects chosen for analysis were picked out to get a variety of size and the participation methods that were used. The analysis goes through the process as described by the municipalities on their respective web pages. Any additional data that was found from the processes were also analysed, such as reports from external actors. To get a better sense of how the different measures were received by the public, news articles and social media posts have also been looked at. These will not give a clear picture of how the public feels about the projects, but the number of articles and posts, and the opinions voiced in them could indicate if the participation process has been inclusive or not.

2.4 Semi-structured interviews

Clifford et al. (2016) define semi-structured interviews as a “verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions. Although the interviewer prepares a list of predetermined questions, semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering the participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important.” (p.143).

To get a better insight into the work behind public participation, the interviews were carried out with people who have, in one way or another, been active in arranging or participating in participation processes. Some questions were adapted during the interview if the answers led to different topics. In total there were 4 informants. The informants were chosen based on their profession. The purpose of this was to get an evenly distributed set of opinions from people working in different sectors.

There was a total of 18 questions that were made beforehand. These were split into six different categories, which were: personal information, participation, the planning and building act, digital tools, underrepresented groups and lastly a summary of them all to round it off. The interviews lasted between 30 to 60 minutes depending on how long the answers from the informants were. Most of the interviews were conducted digitally through Microsoft Teams, but some were conducted physically as well.

2.4.1 Handling of personal data

To ensure that the privacy and data of the participants were handled with care, steps were taken to ensure that everything was done in accordance with the demands of the NSD. An agreement regarding the privacy of the informants was signed before conducting the interviews. The data has been handled accordingly to the guidelines in that agreement, where all the unused data and information have been deleted after the delivery of this thesis. All participants were allowed to change or remove their answers from the interviews before the thesis was submitted.

	<i>Theoretical Background</i>	<i>Case studies</i>	<i>Semi-structured Interviews</i>
Q1: <i>What are the main challenges with public participation?</i>	✓		✓
Q2: <i>How can digital tools benefit under-represented groups in public participation?</i>	✓		✓
Q3: <i>What kind of digital tools can be used?</i>	✓	✓	✓
Q4: <i>How could an improvement be measured?</i>		✓	✓

Table 1: Connection between methods and sub-questions.

OS

Theoretical Background

This chapter reviews relevant literature to uncover themes and concepts that are important for answering the research question. Specifically, themes within public participation, the planning and building act, underrepresented groups and digital tools.

3.1 The ladder of participation

The different levels of citizen participation were introduced in Arnstein's ladder. The ladder describes eight different levels of citizen participation. In the lowest levels, the citizens have almost no power at all, whereas in the top layer they almost have full control over the project. Arnstein (2019) argues that citizen participation without redistribution of power is nothing more than an empty ritual where the powerholders can claim that all sides were involved, despite only a few of them benefiting from it. This ultimately ends up being a frustrating process for the powerless and could potentially build up mistrust towards the local politician.

The first two levels are referred to as non-participation. These are used as a substitute for actual participation, where the powerholders aim to convince or "cure" the participants. Levels 3 to 5 are

described as degrees of tokenism. In these levels, the citizens can hear and be heard, but the real problem is their lack of power. Due to this, there is no follow-through on the suggestions from the public, and therefore no assurance of a change in the status quo. Lastly, there are degrees of citizen power. Partnership enables citizens to have negotiations and trade-offs with the powerholders, whereas in delegated power and citizen control citizens obtain majority votes or complete managerial control (Arnstein, 2019). The danger of not going beyond the requirements of the law when it comes to participation is that it could become tokenism. The PBA only demands that certain information is given out and that those affected can voice their opinion to those in charge. At no point does it mention that the concerns of the public must be addressed and considered. Therefore, there is no real follow-through or guarantee that the public can be a part of the decision process.

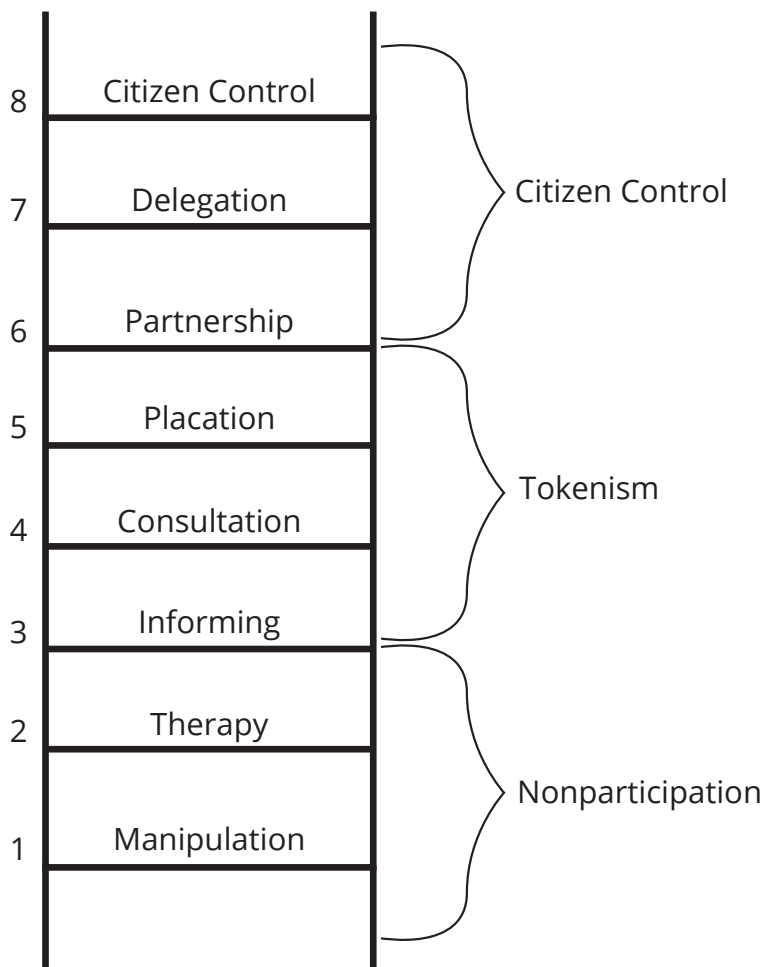


Figure 3: The ladder of participation.

3.2 Participation according to the PBA

Section 5-1 of the Planning and Building Act states that "Anyone who presents a planning proposal shall facilitate public participation. The municipality shall make sure that this requirement is met in planning processes carried out by other public bodies or private bodies." (Ministry of the Environment, 2008). This effectively means that any planning activity in Norway is bound by law to have some degree of public participation. It states furthermore that "The municipality has a special responsibility for ensuring the active participation of groups who require special facilitation, including children and youth. Groups and interests who are not capable of participating directly shall be ensured good opportunities of participating in another way." (Ministry of the Environment, 2008).

"The Planning and Building Act understands public participation as an individual's or a group's right to take part in and influence public assessment and decision-making processes."

(Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014) (p.8).

Onwards in chapter five, section 5-2 deals with the demands regarding public scrutiny. Any planning proposal must be sent out to any party, all from public bodies to private organizations and institutions, that are affected by the proposal for comment within a stipulated time limit. The proposal must also be made easily available to the public so that anyone can familiarise themselves with it. Electronic representation and dialogue is specifically mentioned, where section 5-2 states "Steps shall be taken to facilitate electronic presentation and dialogue at all stages of the planning process." (Ministry of the Environment, 2008). Section 5-2 ends with a referral to the specific types of plans for more details that may vary from plan to plan. Sections 5-3 to 5-7 deal with what rights the governing bodies have to make objections to plan proposals and the process regarding this (Ministry of the Environment, 2008).

3.3 Guidelines for public participation from the Norwegian government

There is no official rulebook for how public participation must be carried out, other than the fact that it must be done according to the Norwegian Planning and Building Act (PBA). Still, the government has provided some guidelines that are recommended to follow. The guide aims to present principles and case studies to show the role of participation in the planning process. In the guide, four factors are mentioned to confirm the importance of public participation in the planning process (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

1. **Quality information as a basis for plans and decisions.** Local knowledge can be a useful supplement to the assessments made by experts. Gathering information from the local community on what they need or want could help in creating an overall picture of the development needs and opportunities. This along with the practical experience, understanding of the history of the area and community engagement could prove to be important assets in the planning process (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).
2. **Diversity in the community.** Communities are made up of people of different ages, races and beliefs. It is therefore important to engage all parts of it so that new development fits in with everyone. Educating the community about participation is important so that more people feel like they can be heard instead of dismissing the idea right away (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014)
3. **Local ownership and identity.** Trying to solve community problems without having a dialogue with the community is being recognized as a bad strategy. The benefits of having an open dialogue with the local community have proven to be many. Not only does it give better insight into the daily issues they have, but also increases the chance of acceptance of the new development. Planning processes where the community feels like it has not been heard usually face quite hard criticism. By having a dialogue with the community early on and continuing to have a transparent process, it could potentially free up time and recourses later on (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).
4. **Mutual learning and democracy development.** By bringing in representatives of the community, the different groups within get the chance to learn more about each other. This can result in new terms and ideas being developed for the plan. In addition, it promotes an open and vibrant local community (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

Looking at the four factors showcasing the importance of participation, it is possible to formulate a plan that ensures that these factors are in place. The guide proceeds to advise on how a well-facilitated participation process can be identified. In total there are nine pieces of advice in the guide, which are:

1. **Cooperate with internal, affected departments.** Both the municipality and the county have roles to play in the planning process, and therefore it is important to have inter-disciplinary discussions particularly when it comes to interconnected topics. Ensuring this and ownership internally will be supportive for the planning authority.
2. **Ensure participation by the politicians throughout the process.** To ensure broad ownership, it is important that politicians and decision-makers are involved in the entirety of the process. The public also tends to get more involved when the politicians are present.
3. **Ensure that all parties concerned are represented from the start.** This point is specifically referred to in the PBA section 5-1 and includes groups such as different age groups, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities. The more complex a project is, the more important it is to have a participation strategy that identifies target groups, affected groups and stakeholders.
4. **Commence with the public perspective and ensure active facilitation measures as required.** Public participation should be a key prerequisite to obtaining a comprehensive evidence base for decision-making. Having these processes regularly in a community can build up both the democratic intelligence and the ability to participate.
5. **Provide a clear framework to secure a meaningful process.** The framework can be understood as to how participants can influence the process at any given time, and in what areas they can do it.
6. **Ensure a good start – commence involvement activities as early as possible.** The earlier the ideas of the community are presented, the bigger the potential for meaningful impact becomes. Getting the right target groups involved early is therefore very important.
7. **Allow for flexibility in the application of the methods so adjustments are possible.** The same methods might not work as well in one project as it might have in others. Different methods should therefore be used depending on what type of plan is being made, what phase the plan is in, and the affected groups and stakeholders.
8. **Allow for creativity and opportunities during the process.** After setting the frameworks, for example reducing greenhouse gas emissions, it can have great effects if one chooses to promote creativity and innovation in the participation process. This can lead to a more engaged and cooperative population.
9. **Inputs and results from all parties involved should be made public.** The planning process must be documented and presented electronically while it is taking place, cf. PBA section 5-2. Showing the participating groups how their inputs affected the result can be a good way to build knowledge about participation in the community.

(Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014)

3.4 Commonly used methods in public participation

There are different methods currently being used depending on the purpose of the interaction. The simplest one is making information available. Then there is collecting information, dialogue, cooperation and councils. Within these four categories, there are several methods that are recommended to use. Some methods can be used in several categories, so therefore some will overlap (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

3.4.1 Making information available

It is important throughout the process to give unbiased, timely and targeted information to those possibly affected by the process and those interested in participating. Particularly in the start, it is important to get the public involved so that the participation process can start as early as possible (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

General announcement

The planning authority is obliged to announce the start of the planning process. They are also obliged to give information about the opportunities for participation in the different phases, when the public scrutiny will take place and when the plan will be adopted. There are also demands for this information to be announced in at least one newspaper read locally, and on the internet electronically. This method is always being used as it is specifically demanded in the PBA. An important factor here is to make the announcement easy to understand for the public, using direct language (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

Regional planning forum

A regional planning forum is a place where the regional and municipal planning authorities can meet to clarify issues regarding projects. This could be to clarify planning information and create progress within the county and is

particularly important in large and complex projects. Other stakeholders that could be affected will also participate in this forum from time to time (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

3.4.2 Collecting information

Building up a good pool of knowledge is important for any process. Collecting information from governmental and private sources can become a useful supplement to expert knowledge that can also serve the public interest. Below are two methods suitable for collecting such information (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a method that can be used when there is a need to obtain general and representative data on the opinions of the inhabitants. It can be distributed to the homes of those living in the impact area or selected target groups. A questionnaire can either be structured or semi-structured. If a large enough and representative group answers the questionnaire, it can give valuable information on the opinions and experiences of that group. It is important to have competence in statistical analysis when going through the answers to avoid misinterpreting the data (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

Validity test in the landscape analysis

The population's perception of the landscape can differ from the evaluations made by a person with a technical background. This has a lot to do with the connection the inhabitants of an area develop to the landscape. A validity test could help adjust the landscape analysis made by consultants/ the municipality so that it fits better with the local population's perception, and can in turn lead to a better definition of the character of the place (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

3.4.3 Dialogue

In the planning process, dialogue is an important tool when it comes to communication between the affected parties and the decision-makers. It can be particularly effective in the early stages of the process when the objectives and principles are being defined. It can also be useful in the phases leading up to the decisions (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014). There are several ways of achieving a dialogue, where some are mentioned below.

Digital planning tool – With the opportunity for an integrated social media solution

Information regarding the planning process must be presented digitally according to the PBA section 5-2. Digital planning tools are a step further that can give both the planner and the participants an overview of input, topics, analyses and plan-relevant information. Tools such as web-based GIS have a great potential for opening up planning processes. There are already projects that have tried this method where the public gets access to the plan digitally and can get more information about certain parts of the plan. Using digital tools can make the sorting and analysis of the input from larger selections of participants easier. This does however require expertise and software investments, and using only digital tools as a way of participation could lead to some feeling excluded (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

Outreach

Digital tools may not always reach certain groups. In those cases, it could be effective to go for a more personal and direct approach as a way of establishing contact and dialogue. This involves being present where people are. This way dialogue, clarification and input can be facilitated easily (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

3.4.4 Cooperation and councils

In this context, cooperation comprises a more interactive form of participation between planning authorities and private parties. It also implies a more binding partnership with the actual planning process. Using this method one can achieve a better dialogue with the population, where the benefits are exchanging of knowledge and values and mutual learning. Cooperation is usually linked to larger planning and development projects, where representative groups of the population participate to process viewpoints and controversies (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

Cooperation group

As mentioned above, cooperation groups are smaller groups that represent all the stakeholders in larger planning and development projects. The groups meet up at several stages of the planning process to discuss varying questions of importance to the planning. This can be everything from the objectives of the planning to assessments of the consequences. The actual structure of the group work may vary as different methods suit different groups and projects. Cooperation groups are a useful tool when many parties are involved, as they can create a better basis from which decisions can be made (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

Negotiation

In this form of cooperation, all parties need to be actively engaged in the issues during discussions. This method can be used when there is a need to clarify each of the parties' positions regarding different topics and find solutions that all parties can accept. In these situations, it is important that all parties meet as equals, avoiding cases where one party steamrolls the other. A good starting point for the mediator in these negotiations is to meet with all parties separately beforehand so that they can get a better understanding of everybody's position before the process starts (Norwegian ministry of local government and modernization, 2014).

3.5 The effectiveness of public participation

Public participation is recognized by most as an important part of the planning process. The people's voice is however often marginalized in favour of the developers. This is not for lack of enthusiasm amongst the population. The right to participate is well anchored in the PBA but is sometimes seen as a more irritating part of a project rather than the great source of local knowledge that it truly is (Hanssen, 2013). The PBA does state that the most important part people can play in participation is through indirect participation. Indirect participation in this case is choosing the politicians that decide what to do with the different projects (Aarsæther, 2012).

The most common projects where the public is actively participating is when municipal or larger zoning plans are to be made, as these set the foundation for what private actors can do when it comes to smaller, more detailed plans. The themes that are focused on in these larger plans are however often seen as abstract to the people, making it difficult to get them engaged in the process. It is usually done by gathering a crowd to a large meeting, where people would have to voice their opinion in front of a large crowd. This is for most people an uncomfortable situation, leading to some not sharing their opinion in fear of it being ridiculed. When the themes brought up seem vague to most, it does not make it easier for them to participate (Hanssen, 2013). Another aspect of public participation that is rarely spoken of is the cost of such a process. If a municipality were to host a public participation meeting with stakeholders and others affected by the proposal, it would be a costly affair not only to host the meeting but also to go through the input afterwards. It is especially costly if the input the municipality receives is not useful (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

There are however also examples of when public participation goes well and adds quality to the project. Municipalities that start with the mindset of public participation being a useful process tend to deliver better results than the municipalities that treat it like a chore. This is partly because they put more effort into getting a more differentiated selection of participation methods. A wider selection of methods tends to reach a wider audience of possible participants. Some of the methods are specifically directed at certain groups, to ensure that those who would otherwise be silent are heard (Hanssen, 2013).

Planning in general can get people engaged in public participation, especially if it is physical planning close to where they live. The knowledge the public possess is quite important for the planners and therefore for the process. Even though the people are engaged in the projects, it is still up to the municipalities to facilitate well enough for their participation. There are enough cases to prove that public participation is useful when the municipalities make a suitable effort (Hanssen, 2013).

3.6 Participation for underrepresented groups

According to Michels & De Graaf (2010), inclusion for all the groups in a community is usually one of the bigger problems faced in public participation. Reaching out to a broad enough set of participants is difficult, as some of them can be difficult to reach for one reason or another. There is usually one group that tends to be dominating in participation processes, which is highly educated men over 50 (Michels & De Graaf, 2010). This is illustrated by a case in Eindhoven where 72% of all participants were male and 71% had completed university or some other type of higher education. Another case was analysed in Groningen, which showed similar statistics. The methods used in these cases were announcements in newspapers, public meetings and workshops (Michels & De Graaf, 2010). This means that people that are below 50, people who do not have higher education, and women can be seen as underrepresented groups. There are usually no statistics on the ethnicity or religious beliefs of participants, but as the dominating group is very specific, it is reasonable to assume that people from minorities are underrepresented groups as well.

One specific group being dominant is however not always the case. During the pandemic, there was a development project of Torskeholmen in Grimstad municipality. Torskeholmen is thought to be important to all the inhabitants of Grimstad, as it is located in the city centre. Due to its status, the participation process was prioritized by the municipality. To reach everyone possibly affected, the planners were allowed to use the municipality's messaging service. As a result, over 16 000 people received information about the plan and an invitation to participate in a digital survey. Almost 3500 people responded, with a broad set of participants when it came to both age and gender. Most notably were the percentage of women participating (48%), and the amount of younger people participating. There was however a visible decline in the number of elderly participants, and especially those over 65 years old were underrepresented. This is quite unusual when it comes to participation processes (Grimstad kommune, 2020). The numbers are illustrated in Figure 4 and Table 2.

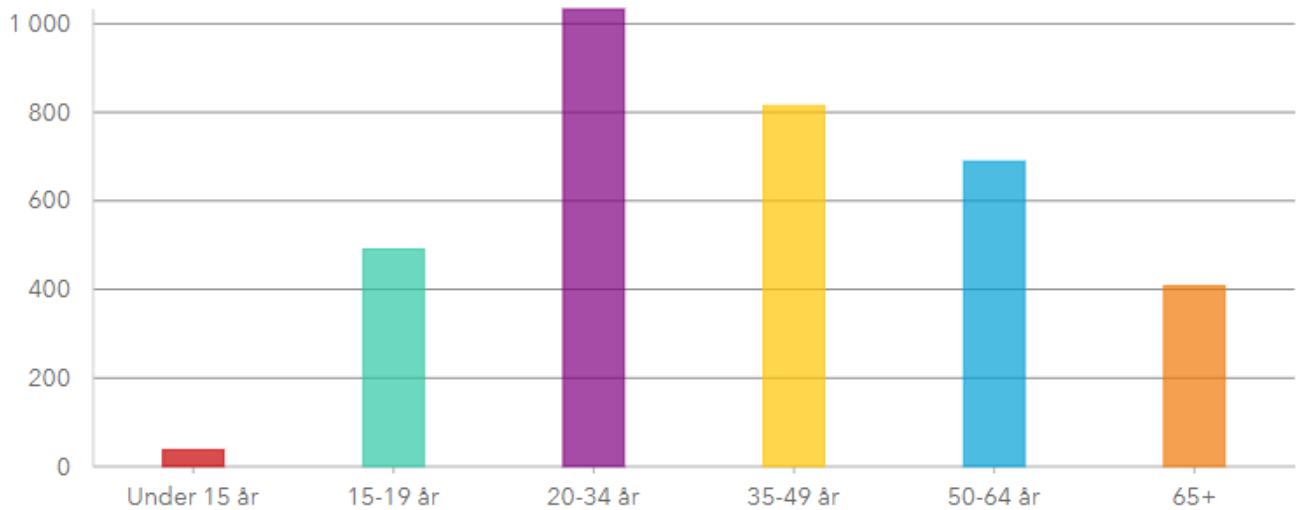


Figure 4: Age-distribution of participants in Grimstad.

Age group	Percentage of the population	Percentage of participants
15-19	8 %	14 %
20-34	25 %	30 %
35-49	24 %	23 %
50-65	22 %	20 %
65+	20 %	12 %

Table 2: Percentage of participants from different ages.

Similar results were found in a participation process in Poznan, Poland, where two traditional face-to-face meetings were held as well as an online questionnaire and an online debate. The number of participants and their age, gender and level of education was noted and compared. The results showed that the online ppGIS questionnaire achieved the highest number of participants, the lowest percentage of higher education, the second-highest percentage of women and the second-lowest average age as shown in Table 3 (Jankowski et al., 2016). The questionnaire also reached a wider audience geographically, including more people than just the neighbours, as seen in Figure 5. The results here do provide an argument for a combination of online methods as well as face-to-face methods but showed no difference in the social-educational status of the participants. Reaching underrepresented groups may therefore require sampling methods directed specifically at them in both an online and an offline setting (Jankowski et al., 2016).

In a participation process, the opinion of those directly affected usually comes to light as people tend to advocate their preferences in planning outcomes in areas close to them. In the case of “the silent majority” or “the general public” however, this is not always the case. As seen in the paragraphs above, there are ways of reaching people of different ages and genders. There is however little information about the social values and interests of those participating. Is there a broad enough range of these factors represented by the participants to reflect the entire community? Online surveys and other digital tools may reach a broader audience than offline methods do, but it does not guarantee more diversity in participants (Brown, 2012).

Participation method		No. of participants	Mean age of participants	Percent women	Percent with higher education
Public meetings	1st meeting	32	45.4	37.5	90.6
	2nd meeting	23	42.5	47.8	76.2
Geo-questionnaire		1087	35,8	47.7	74.5
Geo-discussion		128	35,3	46.9	79.5

Table 3: Comparison of traditional with online participation mode.

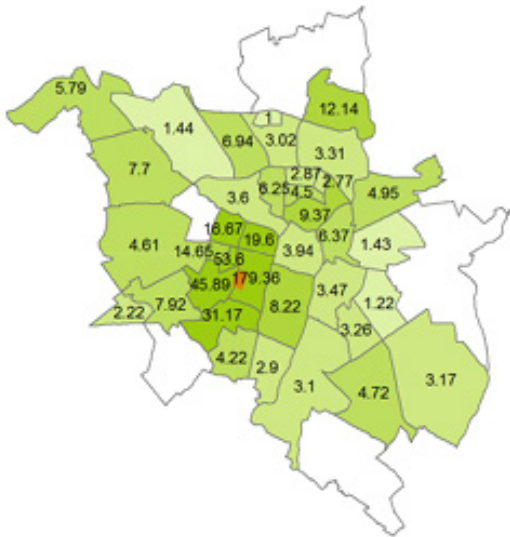
First meeting



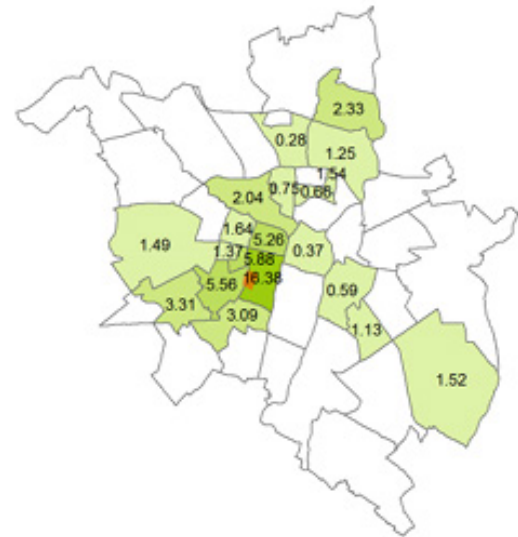
Second meeting



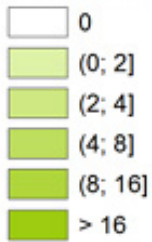
Geo-questionnaire



Geo-discussion



Participants per 10,000 neighborhood residents



0 5 10 km

Plan boundary

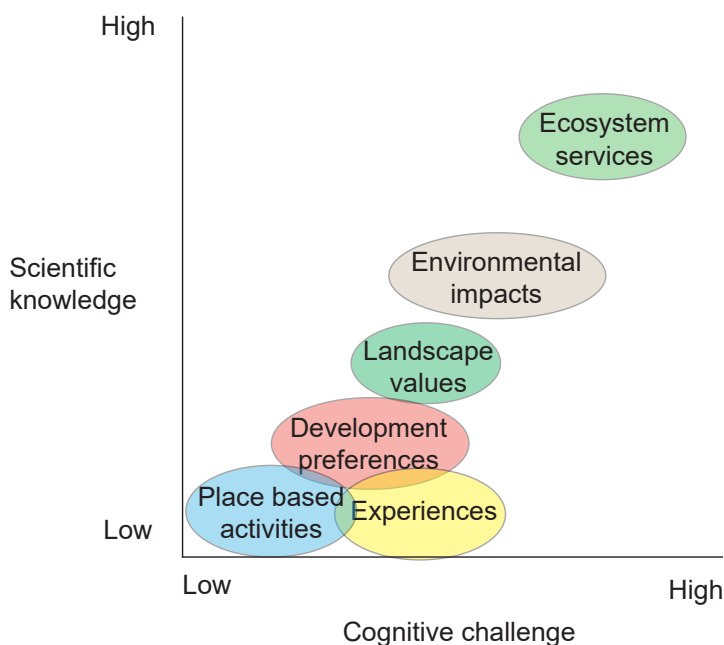
Figure 5: Comparison of traditional with online participation mode.

3.7 Digital tools in public participation

Modern methods for public participation have been developing steadily since the 1990s when public participation geographic information systems (PPGIS) were starting to be used. PPGIS tools are becoming more and more regular in participation processes across the world, with their development linked heavily to the more holistic approach to public participation (Haklay et al., 2018). PPGIS are preferred by planners as the data they receive is easy to use and interpret, but it is not always preferred by the participants themselves. Digital tools for public participation must walk a fine line between accessibility on the platforms that the participants are already on and fitting with decision-making mechanisms (Wilson et al., 2019). The digitalisation of public participation is necessary to cope with how society has changed, with Scott et al. (2016) writing that “public engagement needs to be reimagined to respond to the expectations and demands of an evolving digital culture.” (p.48).

3.7.1 PPGIS

Public participation geographical systems and participatory geographical information systems are being used more frequently, particularly in larger cities in Finland. This is partly due to the perceived usability of PPGIS. In these cases, the program used was Maptionnaire. The program was chosen as it has an easily usable interface in addition to it being able to create online surveys. Questions can then be linked to geographical locations on a map, where participants may choose options, write or draw an answer to these questions (Kahila-Tani et al., 2019). Another similar program is called “inhabitant dialogue”. This program allows participants to draw lines or polygons in a 2D map of the area and link it to a purpose, for example dwellings or industry. In addition, the participants can write a comment along with the suggestion to explain their thinking. All suggestions posted are available for viewing by everyone using the program (Vindafjord kommune, 2022).



As Figure 6 shows, some activities using ppGIS require more knowledge and cognitive abilities than others. For example, it is easier for the participants to answer questions regarding place-based activities rather than ecosystem services. It is important to evaluate how difficult the challenge may be for the participants, as the response rates or level of participation in PPGIS can be influenced by the perceived level of expertise required (Brown, 2012).

Figure 6: The difficulty of different tasks using PPGIS.

3.7.2 Story maps

This tool can be used to present plans and information in a more interactive and interesting way for the readers. Story maps can start with a short introduction about the project before showing maps and illustrations about the area and providing information and links to where they can participate. This potentially makes it easier to understand what measures are being proposed and how they will affect their surroundings by creating a narrative using maps (Esri, n.d.).

As per Scott et al. (2016), map-based storytelling provides new opportunities to engage stakeholders. The combination of map-based data with multimedia content makes Storymap a tool that can deliver geospatial information in an interactive and user-friendly way. With an easy-to-use tool like Storymap, dynamic digital engagement can be easily incorporated into traditional planning processes. Scott et al. (2016) further writes that "GIS Story Maps can be effectively used to empower and engage stakeholders in planning sustainable land use and transportation systems." (p.2).

3.7.3 Apps

Digital applications have become a huge part of everyday life, with many using different apps for either social media, music, or functions. Apps are therefore familiar to most people, with many being able to use them well. The main output organizers can get from using participatory apps is empirical data, with statistics on how the participants answered certain questions (Ertiö, 2015).

Baker et al. (2007) writes that reducing the barriers to participation is an important step toward gathering the opinions of those that do not currently participate in planning processes. Using a format that many people are familiar with could therefore be a way of reducing these barriers. As per Wilson et al. (2019) though, there is a danger of apps oversimplifying the responses people can give, leading to them just being used for reporting issues rather than coming up with suggestions and information. If they are not oversimplified, however, they can be used for quick interactions that lower the barriers to participation.

3.7.4 Social media

Social media platforms are a big part of how people communicate today. Being on these platforms to inform its users about the plans being made and the ongoing processes is therefore important, as the larger part of participants will likely be on them. By using the full functionality of social media, planning agencies can prevent citizens from creating groups to destabilize planning processes (Williamson & Ruming, 2020). Being active on these platforms can be a good investment for the future as well, due to the number of followers the organizers can gather over a longer period of activity. That means that when the next plan is being made and a new participation process is about to start, there will already be a crowd of people from the start who knows how it works (Anik et al., 2020).

As per Anik et al. (2020), using social media in a participation process can particularly favour the youth. They also state that people preferred to interact with posts that featured illustrations or visuals, instead of just text. This potentially makes social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram suitable for spreading information and creating groups where a casual dialogue between the planning authorities and the public.

3.8 Summary of theory

Public participation is in most cases seen as a chore, instead of a useful tool and an important democratic process. In a survey conducted by the government of Norway, the results were that only 5% of the 100 projects had done more than what was required when it came to public participation.

The planning and building act clearly states that public participation is something that every project must go through. The law intends to secure a democratic process where the participants can voice their opinions and suggestions, and that these are considered by the planners.

Underrepresented groups are difficult to involve in traditional participation processes. Some of these groups may require different methods to participate, such as younger people and those with different social or educational status. Digital tools can play a part in doing so, with different tools suitable for different types of participation.

04

Case Studies

This chapter will analyse how two different planning processes approached participation, what methods they used, and what results they achieved. The aim of this chapter is to find a correlation between the methods used and the results achieved.

The intention of choosing the two cases was to get a difference in both size and media coverage. The two cases are the area plan for Paradis in Stavanger, and the municipal plan for Vindafjord municipality. Paradis is a small area compared to Vindafjord, but it is an important development project in Stavanger that has become the subject of political discussion. The municipal plan of Vindafjord was chosen due to it being on a far larger scale than Paradis, as well as using a host of untraditional participation methods. The analysis will have a greater emphasis on the Paradis case.

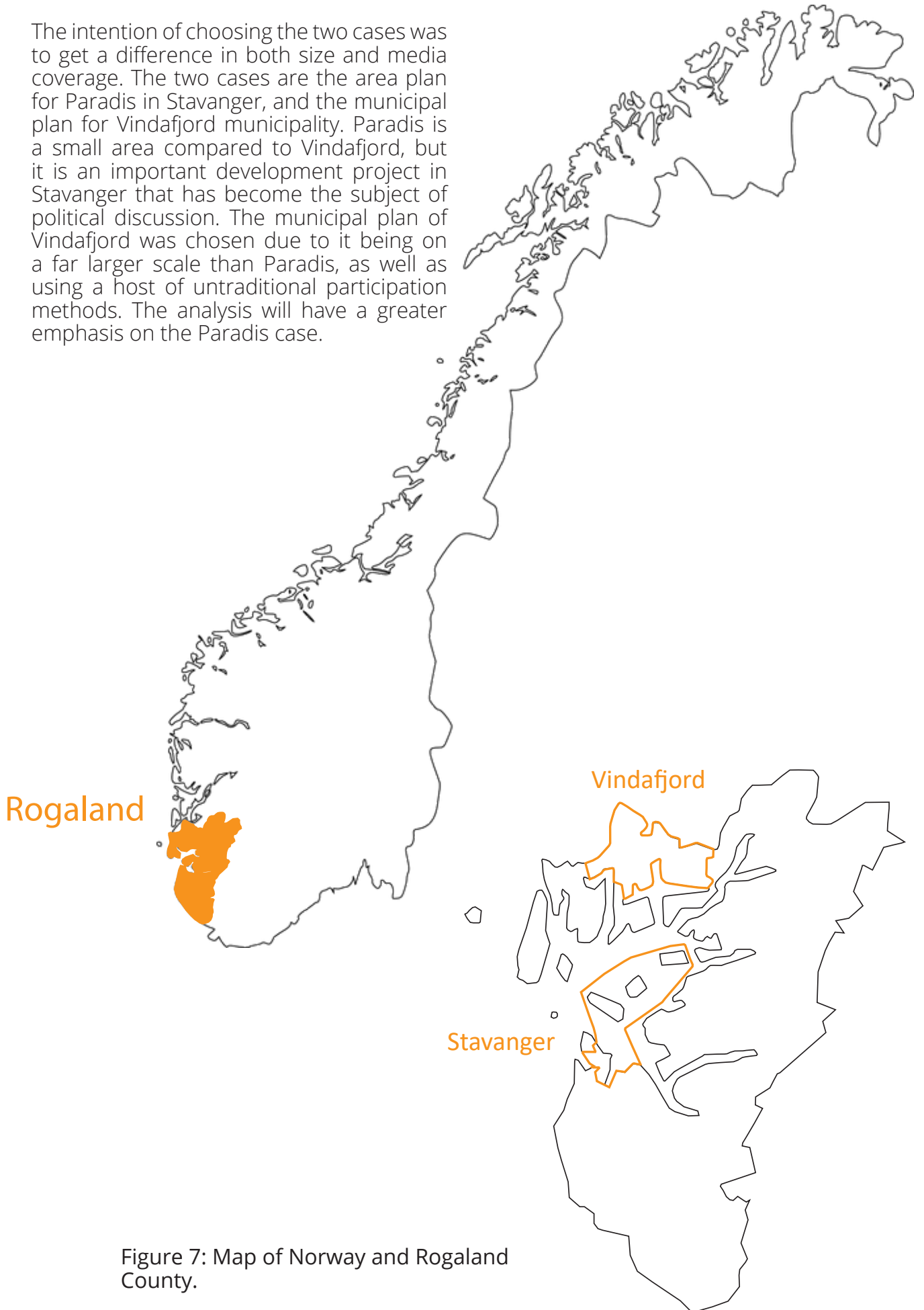


Figure 7: Map of Norway and Rogaland County.

4.1 Paradis, Stavanger

4.1.1 Background

The area in question is located close to the city centre, between the two districts of Våland and Storhaug. Perhaps the more “famous” project of the two analyzed in this thesis, Paradis has been the subject of mass discussion across social media and amongst the politicians of Stavanger. Its positioning and size have made it interesting for several developers that want to build in the area (NORCE, 2021).

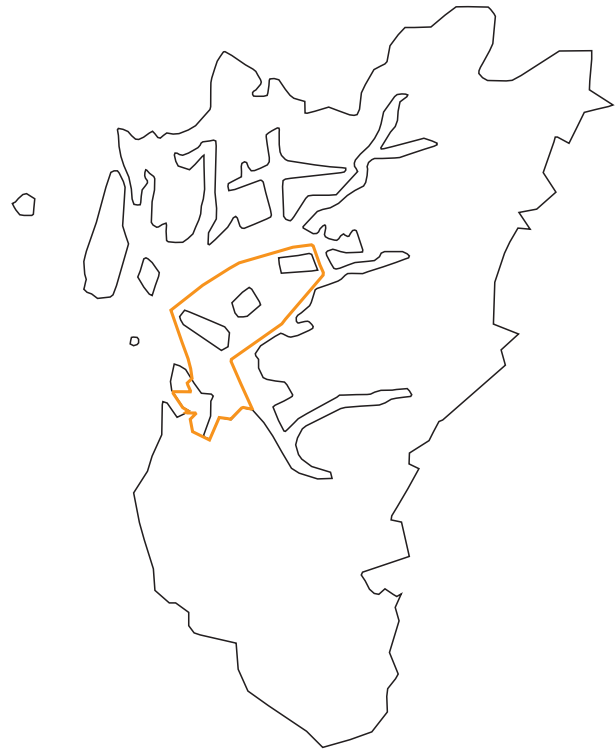


Figure 8: Map of Stavanger municipality.

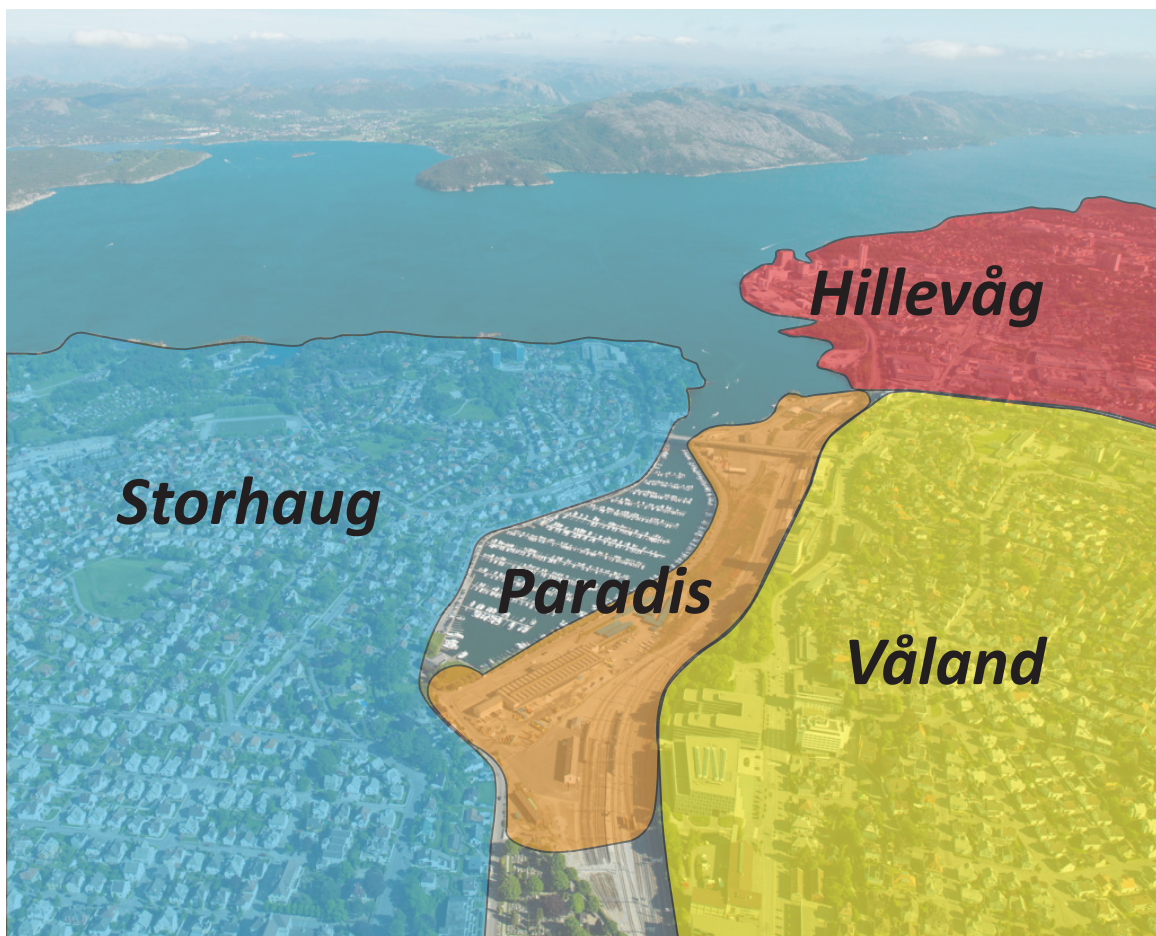


Figure 9: Paradis and its neighbouring districts.

4.1.2 Timeline of the process

Paradis has been a hot topic in Stavanger, particularly since 2014. The catalyst behind the attention and discussion was the development plans from landowners Bane NOR and the plans for new offices for Aker BP in a new and densely built district. The plans created outrage amongst some living in neighbouring areas, as well as others that were passionate about urban planning in Stavanger. After around 200 articles in newspapers and pressure on social media, the development of Paradis was put on the political agenda during the municipal election in 2019 (NORCE, 2021). After a new municipal council was chosen, the work on an area plan for Paradis was set in motion (Stavanger kommune, 2020).

The current process for a plan for a larger part of Paradis was initiated in the autumn of 2020. The first draft of the planning program with extended participation was presented in March 2021. By the autumn of 2021, the program was approved and shared with the public (Stavanger kommune, 2020).

At the moment of writing the municipality of Stavanger has just released the reports from the three different groups that partook in the parallel assignment. Each group was given a unique theme to focus on when it came to the development of Paradis. The reports were posted on the project's website, with a link to a questionnaire. The questionnaire contains questions about the different parts of the suggestions from the three groups (Sætrevik, 2022).

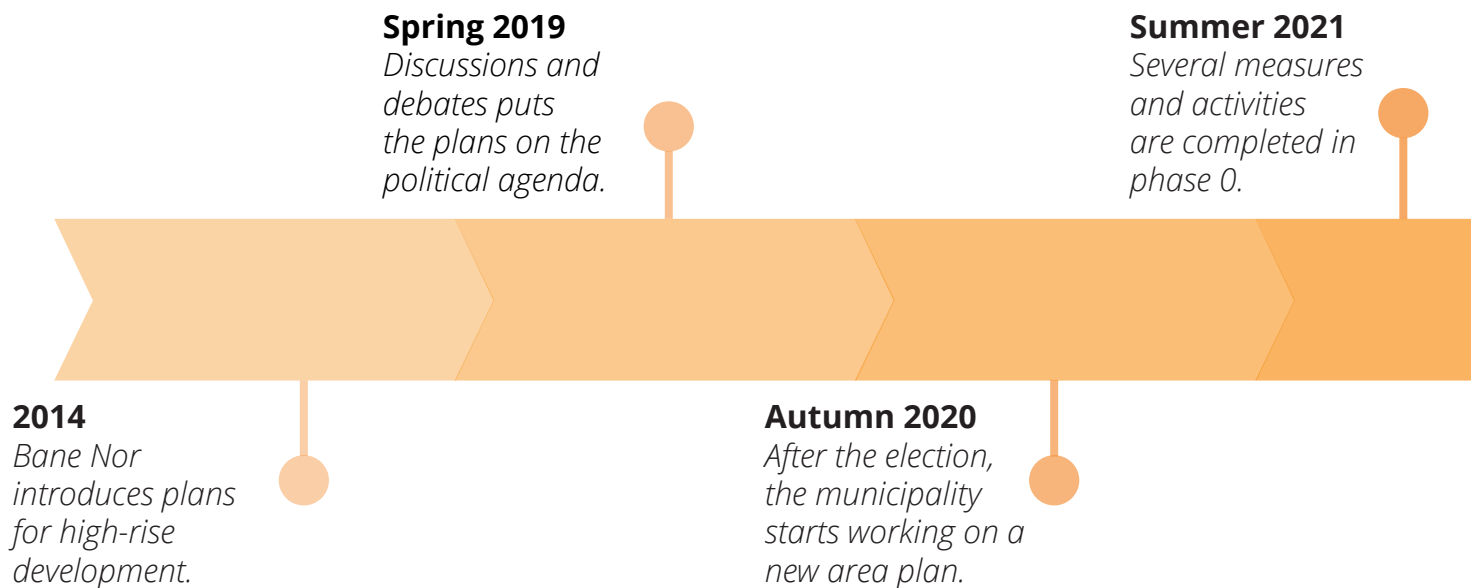


Figure 10: Timeline of the Paradis project 1.

In the fall of 2022, the first version of the area plan for Paradis will be presented to the municipal council. It will then be made available for comments from the public. After that phase is over, the comments will be assessed, and improvements will be made to the plans. Finally, towards the end of 2023, the plans will be approved (Utvalg for by- og samfunnsplanlegging Stavanger, 2021).

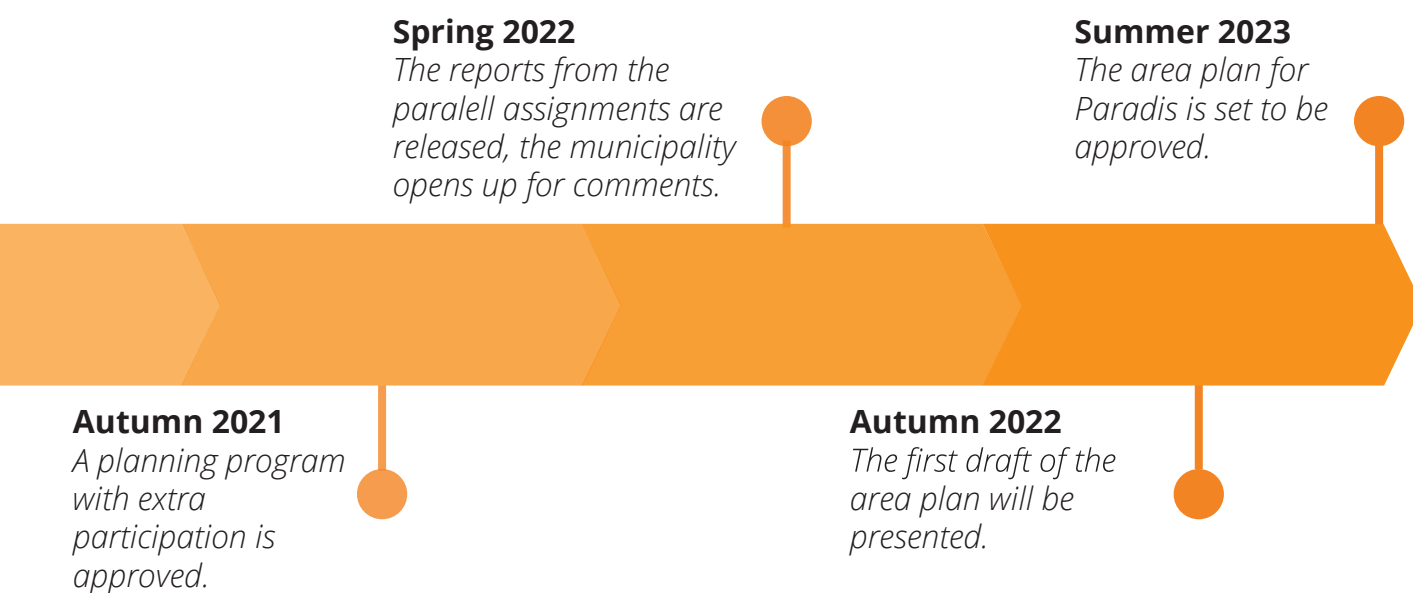


Figure 11: Timeline of the Paradis project 2.

4.1.3 The methods used

4.1.3.1 First proposal by the developers

Initially, in the project launched by Bane NOR, there were some methods used that went beyond the demands of the planning and building act. Bane NOR made the point that it is always their intention to invite the public to participate as early as possible. It was announced both in the local newspaper and on the municipality's website that the work on a plan for Paradis as per the planning and building act paragraph 12. When it was decided that an impact assessment was needed, there was another announcement in the same channels. Meetings were also held with neighbours and municipal agencies, in addition to workshops being held (Ghilardi + Hellsten Arkitekter, 2019). Meetings and workshops are not mandatory as per the PBA (Ministry of the Environment, 2008). It can therefore be seen as going beyond what is strictly demanded. There was still a sizable amount of negative backlash aimed at Bane NOR for the way they conducted the participation process. This indicates that even though they did more than what was necessary and had good intentions from the start, it still was not enough to end up with a process that was perceived by the public as good.

4.1.3.2 Area plan by the municipality

After the first process led by developers caused reactions, the municipality of Stavanger made a planning program of their own when it was announced that they were to make an area plan for Paradis. The planning program has an extra focus on participation, most likely to avoid the same types of reactions as the previous proposal faced. Stavanger municipality has divided the participation process into different phases, depending on how far the work with the area plan has come. Phase 0 started before the planning program had been approved to involve the public as early as possible. Phase 1 then followed when the announcement that the work on the Paradis plan had started came (Stavanger kommune, 2020). Initially, a total of seven different methods were used in phase 0, where four of them were digital ones. The methods are quite different from one another, where some are tried and tested, and others are more experimental in a bid to reach a wider audience (Utvalg for by- og samfunnsplanlegging Stavanger, 2021).

Organizer	Official announcement	Meetings with stakeholders	Workshops	Social media	Digital survey	Web-page	Other communicative methods
<i>The municipality of Stavanger</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Developers</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	X	X	X	X

Table 4: Comparison of the methods used in Paradis.

The most common method that has been used here is a dialogue with stakeholders and those potentially affected by the proposal. The municipality has also reached out to those who have expressed an interest in the development of Paradis for informal talks early on. In addition to this, the municipality wrote messages on the ground in areas that were 10-15 minutes of walking distance away from the project area. The messages were highlighting the short amount of time it takes to get from Paradis to the city centre and other popular destinations. Another uncommon method that was used was a paper fortune teller, a popular children's game in Norway, as a conversation starter amongst the people that travelled in the project area (Utvalg for by- og samfunnsplanlegging Stavanger, 2021).

There was a range of digital tools that were used as well. A designated project page on the municipality's webpage to give information about everything concerning the project and an email address specifically for suggestions regarding Paradis are two of the methods that have been used so far. Social media has been actively used as well to promote all the methods mentioned above and to get the public engaged in the process. Lastly, a digital survey was carried out with defined questions regarding the quality of Paradis, what the area should be in the future and if there are any wishes for temporary activities while it is developed. This survey had a total of 48 participants for phase 0 (Utvalg for by- og samfunnsplanlegging Stavanger, 2021).

For phase 1, the municipality continued with some methods used in phase 0 in addition to introducing new ones. The methods they continued with were the website, the messages on the street and posts on social media. New methods such as a more open dialogue meeting, presentations targeted towards certain groups or stakeholders, workshops and seminars centred around specific themes and lastly, an art project designed to give new perspectives. A social-cultural analysis was also conducted to get a better picture of how different stakeholders perceive the different qualities and negative aspects of Paradis (Stavanger kommune, 2021a).

The continuation of the website is due to its purpose of being a source of information throughout the project's duration. Social media and graffiti were also used again in this phase, but to an increased extent as the work on the plan had officially begun. Of the new methods, the dialogue meeting was probably the new method that was the most similar to the previously used ones. The difference between them is that the meeting in phase 1 was the informative meeting that is demanded by the PBA (Stavanger kommune, 2021a).

Most of the meetings and workshops had to be held digitally due to the ongoing pandemic, which allowed for an app called "Mentimeter" to be used during a presentation for the trade association of Stavanger. This presentation was one of the targeted presentations and workshops and was held over Microsoft Teams. The app was used to engage the crowd, as large gatherings over Microsoft Teams can yield little to no interaction. The participants were asked four questions during the presentation, and the results from those using the app can be seen in Figure 13 (Stavanger kommune, 2021a). The total number of participants and respondents from the presentation is unknown.

There were also targeted presentations and workshops with municipal committees and councils. The councils and committees that were targeted were made up of the elderly, the youth, students, immigrants, disabled people, and the nearby city districts. In addition, there were two workshops where the participants were either politicians, developers, landowners, or professionals in urban planning. The workshops were based around one theme each, which was the circular economy and Paradis in the future (Stavanger kommune, 2021a). These workshops were held physically, so there were no digital tools used here.

The municipality of Stavanger has tried to restore the faith of the public in the Paradis project, with a wide range of different methods being used in the participation process. When it comes to the digital methods, they appear to be used mainly for informative purposes. The exception is the use of the app Mentimeter, so that the participants of a presentation could answer questions that were asked during an online meeting.

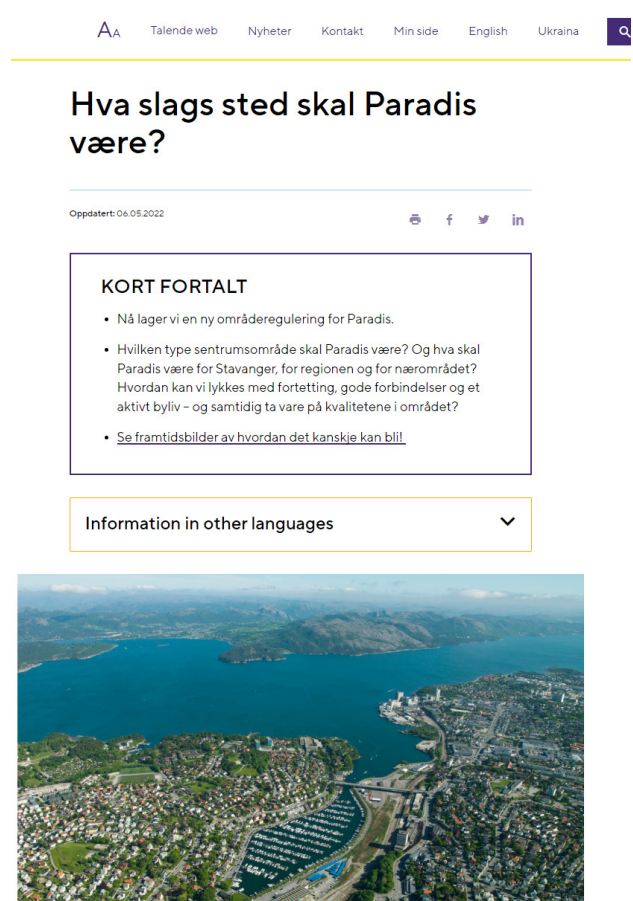


Figure 12: Screenshot of the Paradis webpage.



Figure 13: Screenshot of the results from the Mentimeter app.

4.1.4 Public perception of the process so far

The process has been under scrutiny in social media and debates, both politically and in newspapers. This has largely been because of the plans of buildings over 7 stories in what is described by inhabitants as an important valley. If tall story buildings were to be constructed here, then it would disturb the sightlines from Våland to Storhaug according to several official complaints (Stavanger kommune, 2021b). A proposal from the landowners Bane NOR that suggested precisely such tall buildings was made very unpopular. This in turn led a group of concerned citizens to start a group on Facebook called “Byutvikling Stavanger” or “Urban development Stavanger” with the intention to put such matters up for debate. The enthusiasm from those who joined the group had results, as the proposal from the developers was put on hold by the municipality. They chose to make an area plan for Paradis instead, this time with an extended participation process (Frafjord, 2019).

It is important to note that this group does not necessarily represent the opinion of everyone affected by these proposals. There could potentially be a large group supporting high-rise development in the Paradis area that have not voiced their opinion. Development in populated areas does tend to encounter the “Not in my backyard” phenomenon (Dear, 1992), which could be the case here as well. Due to the number of people opposing this suggestion, where a large part does not even live close to the area, it is however likely that there is more to it than just the “Not in my backyard” phenomenon.

There seems to be a decrease in articles, posts, and debates about the Paradis development as of late. This could largely be due to there not being a specific proposal out yet. It is easier for people to react to something illustrated in 3D so that they can fully understand how the development will affect their surroundings. At the time of writing the municipality of Stavanger has published the results from the parallel assignments conducted by consultants and architectural companies. The three reports that were produced all had their own themes that they were working on, meaning that none of the designs that were published can be seen as a genuine proposal (Sætrevik, 2022). A common trait amongst the proposals is that the building heights seem lower than that of the original proposal from the developers. Had the designs from the parallel assignments been similar to the original proposal, then there might have been more reactions at this stage.

Overall, it appears that the participation measures from the municipality have been well received, at least by those who previously shouted the loudest. This could however only be temporary, as the core of the debate with high-rise development is still planned for the area. It is also important to highlight that just because one group has become less negative to the process, does not mean that the community is pleased or feels like they have been heard. It is difficult to tell how the public feels about the project until a proposal has been presented by the municipality but judging by the reactions to the process so far compared to that of the developers, the public seems to be pleased.

4.1.5 Summary of the Paradis case study

The Paradis project has been a long process with many twists and turns along the way. By the time the municipality presents their proposal for the area plan, the debates will have been ongoing for a decade. It is worth noting that as the initiative for creating the area plan for Paradis came from the public, it can be seen as one of the few bottom-up planning projects in recent times (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009). It is not solely managed by the community but was initiated, and is regularly checked up on, by the community.

A wide range of methods has been used in the participation process, the results of which are difficult to interpret. An interesting choice by the municipality of Stavanger was to make the social-demographic analysis, where the possible users and how they perceive Paradis were mapped. This is potentially a good way to locate underrepresented groups and start the dialogue with them early (Müller-Eie et al., 2021). The methods that are possibly the easiest to judge the results of are those used for information and interaction. The informative measures used can be compared to the methods the developers used at the start when announcing the plans. Stavanger municipality was far more active on social media platforms as well as having their own dedicated webpage for the project, which is regularly updated. This is in contrast to what was done initially with it being posted in the local newspaper in addition to the municipality's website. The area plan process does benefit from the project already being a high-profile political case, but it has nonetheless seemed to calm down the negative views that parts of the public had on it.

The digital tools used in this case are mainly informative, with social media the method most frequently used. A case can be made for digital tools improving the informative side of the participation process, at least when compared to the initial approach from the developers. Communication is an important part of the process as it tells the participants when they can participate, and what they can give their input on. The continued use of social media platforms to update those interested in the process is a clear improvement from using offline methods to communicate with the public (Fredericks & Foth, 2013).

Another example of an improvement digital tools made was when the Mentimeter app was used during an online presentation. The same presentation was held before for a different crowd, but at that time the municipality opted to use the chat function on Microsoft Teams as the main source of interaction (Stavanger kommune, 2021a). The results were very different, as the use of Mentimeter apparently made it more engaging to answer the questions, at least when judging by the results.

There is a big difference between the approach the municipality has taken compared to that of the developers initially, but the intentions behind them are similar. Both stated that they wanted stakeholders to be integrated into the process as soon as possible but ended up with two different reactions from the public. This highlights the difficulty associated with public participation in planning. Even if the intention is there from the beginning, experience shows that a successful result requires careful planning and selection of tools and methods to interact with stakeholders.

4.2 Vindafjord municipality

4.2.1 Background

The municipality of Vindafjord is located in the western part of Norway, in the county of Rogaland. It borders the county of Vestland in the north and is at the intersection of three major regions of Haugaland, Ryfylke and Sunnhordland (Thorsnæs & Lauritzen, 2022). The population number in the municipality is just below 8800 people (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022).

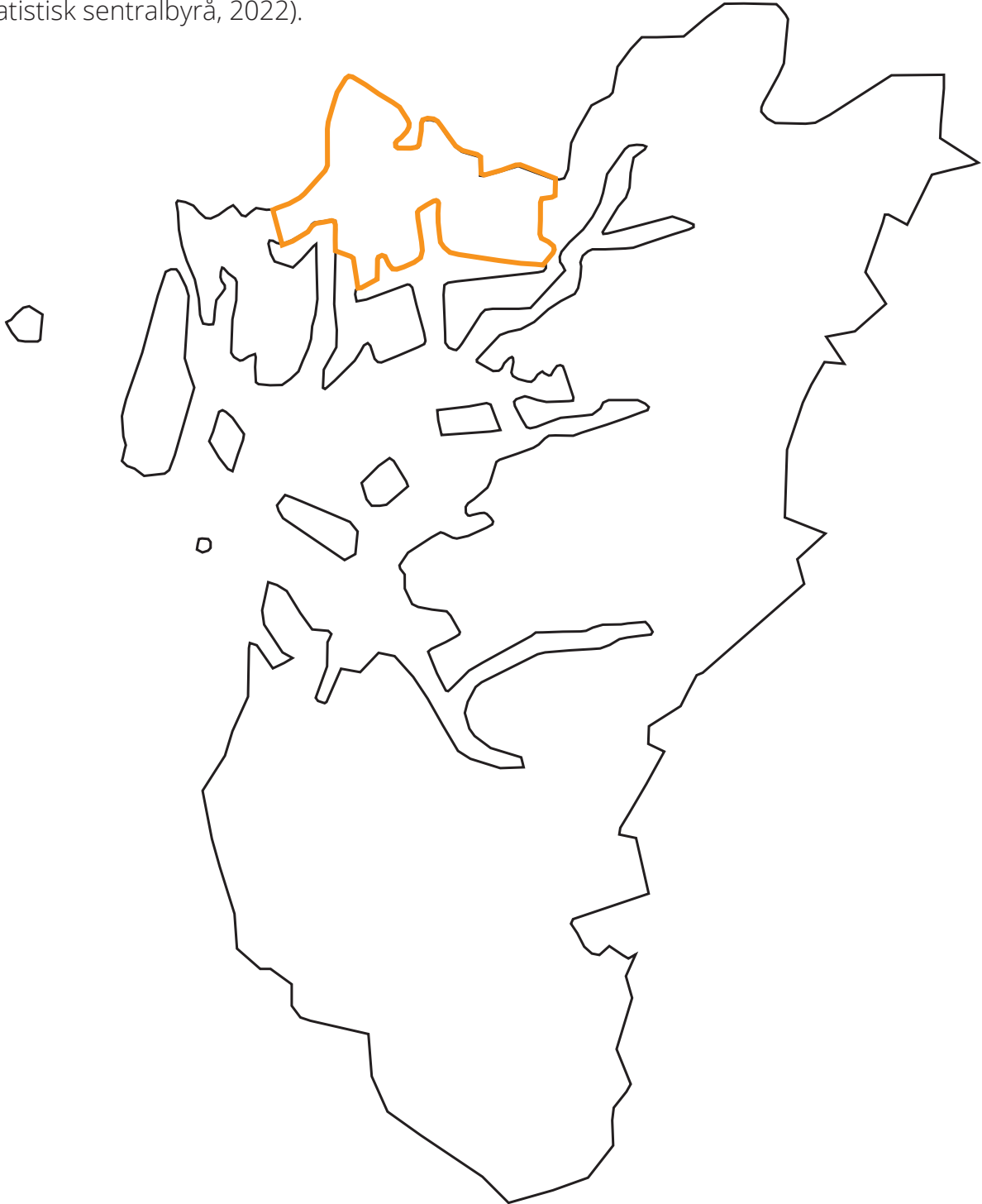


Figure 14: Map of Vindafjord municipality.

4.2.2 The timeline of the process

The work on the planning program was started towards the end of 2020 and finally approved in the summer of 2021 after a hearing process. The participatory measures decided in the planning program were then put into action, as work on the community and area part of the plan was initiated (Vindafjord kommune, 2021a).

At the time of writing the municipality is, according to their plan, preparing to publish the proposal for the community and area parts of the municipal plan for public feedback. The input received from the different participation methods have been published and reviewed, and in the autumn of 2022, the plan is due to be approved by the municipal council (Vindafjord kommune, 2021a).

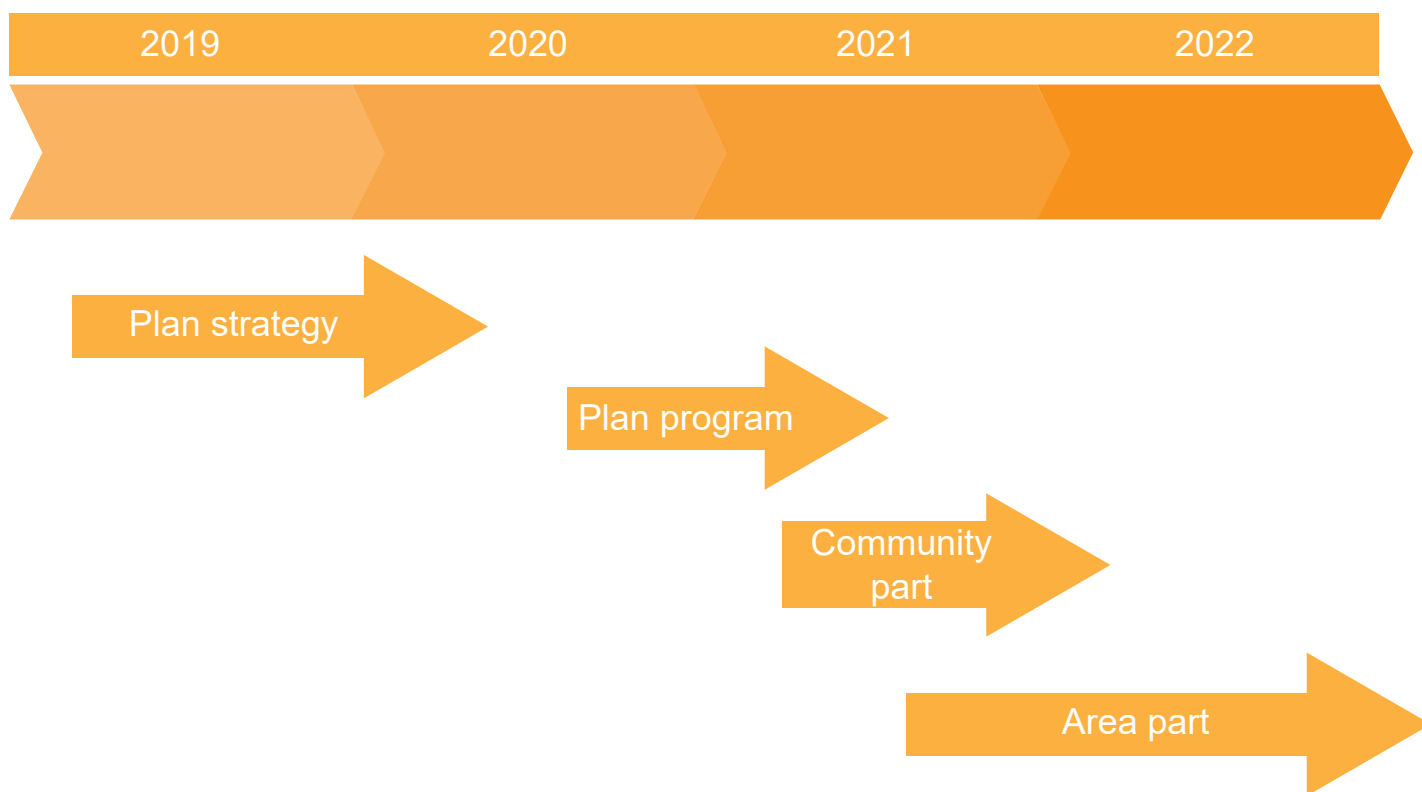


Figure 16: Timeline of the Vindafjord project.

4.2.3 The methods used

Given that the planning process is for a municipal plan and not for a smaller area plan, the methods used need to be adapted to fit in with the desired outcome. The municipality of Vindafjord therefore made a plan for how the participation process would unfold, with a variety of different methods used. The mandatory measures, announcements and public meetings, were completed according to the law. In addition to this, a website was set up specifically for the project. The planning program is on display there with updates about the process being published regularly (Vindafjord kommune, 2021c).

Vindafjord municipality is characterized by polycentric development, with there being multiple settlements instead of a large municipal centre (Vindafjord kommune, n.d.-a). The municipality therefore decided to reach out to each one of these smaller settlements rather than gathering them all in one place. Each one of these settlements has a small council that the municipality regularly communicates with. These councils have been included in the process, and have also been given the power to help the municipality when it comes to prioritizing the input they receive (Hagevik, 2022).

Another method that the municipality used is "Gjestebodsmodellen", which encourages people to gather friends and family to discuss the plan. They are given a guide on how they can affect the plan, and possible themes to discuss. The conclusions they make are written down and sent to the municipality. The municipality also got into contact with groups they describe as having special needs (Vindafjord kommune, n.d.-b). Due to it being a municipal plan, the regional planning forum is also engaged in the process (Vindafjord kommune, n.d.-c).

A series of digital measures have also been used, with a digital survey and a PPGIS-program at the forefront. The digital survey was aimed more toward the community part of the plan, while the PPGIS-program was created for input towards the area part. In the survey there was a total of 1929 respondents (Vindafjord kommune, 2021b), meaning that in a municipality of 8758 inhabitants where 7738 of them are over 9 years old (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022), the percentage of inhabitants of age that responded was 24,9 %. The PPGIS-program received around 100 responses (Vindafjord kommune, 2022).

The survey asked about the age and living situation of the participants, as well as how they felt about living in the municipality. Digital surveys can sometimes receive mainly negative answers, as those who have something to complain about will be eager to respond. In this survey, however, around 78 % stated that they were happy or very happy about living in Vindafjord (Vindafjord kommune, 2021b). These are impressive numbers, but it could also mean that the municipality has failed in reaching groups who are less happy about living in Vindafjord. A response rate of around 25 % is relatively normal though, but more variety in the happiness of the respondents could lead to better answers (Saleh & Bista, 2017). Given that 78 % are happy with living in the municipality, it is likely that a large percentage of the answers will be similar to each other.

The PPGIS-program that was used is called “Innbyggerdialog”. The purpose of using this program was to receive specific input on how members of the public and the business sector wanted the area plan to look. Participants were able to draw in an interactive map where they wanted to have different functions, either dwellings, industry or others in the municipality. They were also able to see what other participants had suggested. The suggestions are marked in the map of Figure 16, and the suggestions can be seen when clicking on these markers, as shown in Figure 17 (Vindafjord kommune, 2022).

It is difficult to tell how the input from both the digital survey and the PPGIS-program has affected the plan, as no proposal for the plan has been published yet. It will be particularly interesting to see how the suggestions from the PPGIS-program have affected the area part of the plan, as one can see if the areas marked with different functions are the same as the ones from the suggestions.

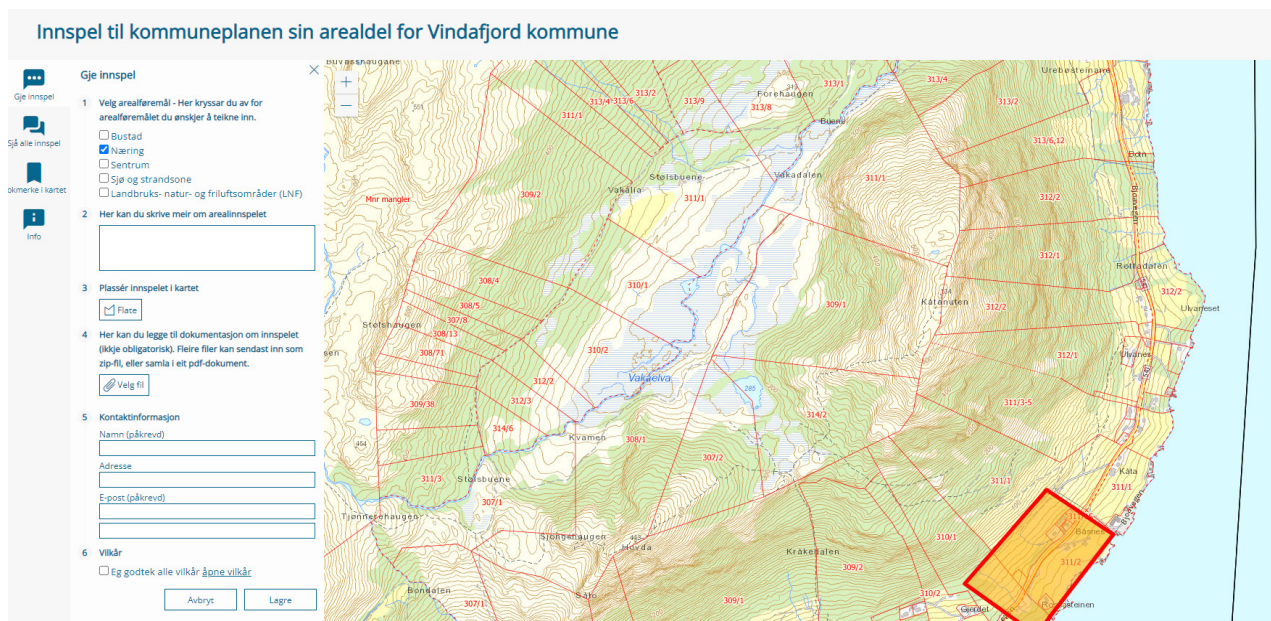


Figure 16: Screenshot of the “Innbyggerdialog” program.

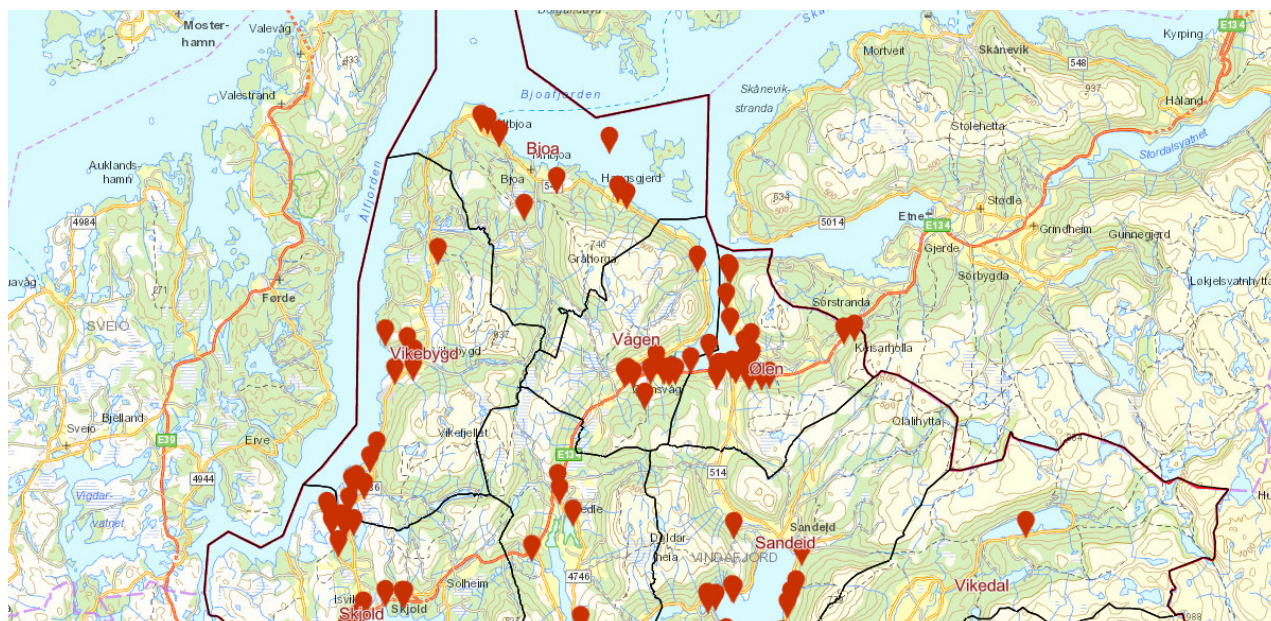


Figure 17: Screenshot of the inputs received through “Innbyggerdialog”.

4.2.4 Public perception of the process

The Vindafjord process has not created many reactions when it comes to social media and in the newspaper, which could be either good or bad. It can be good as it means that the public feels like they have been heard, but it could also suggest that the participatory methods have failed in engaging them.

The municipality has posted articles in newspapers on numerous occasions throughout the process, as well as advising the settlement councils to be active on their social media (Aakra, 2019). Given that there is no specific proposal that has been published, some may find it difficult to get involved. It is easier to see how a more detailed zoning plan will affect the area versus that of a municipal plan.

4.2.5 Summary of the Vindafjord case study

The process surrounding the Vindafjord municipal plan has seemingly gone well when it comes to the low amount of backlash, or criticism, that the municipality has faced. There was an intention from the start to involve participants early and receive input from several different methods, both digital and physical.

It is uncertain how much the different methods have impacted the result as no proposal or plan has been published. The digital survey that was conducted is probably the best marker for how many people the municipality was able to reach. The response rate of 25 % is within the area that is expected for a digital survey. Response rates could possibly be higher if the survey was shorter, but it would not make a considerable difference (Saleh & Bista, 2017). The PPGIS-program was an interesting addition that yielded specific suggestions from the public and business sector, saving the municipality from having to go through these suggestions on paper. Another interesting method used was the "Gjestebodmodellen", but the municipality later stated that they were a bit disappointed with the response it received (Wangensteen, 2022).

There have been little to no reactions towards the planning process from the public on social media and in the newspapers. This could be due to the lack of a specific proposal from the municipality. The closest indicator could be the digital survey, as the public generally is pleased with how things are going (Vindafjord kommune, 2021b). There is still the question of whether the low level of reactions is due to the municipality not providing good enough information, but with the measures they have used this seems unlikely.

The process appears to have been going smoothly, with decent response rates on the methods used and minimal criticism from the public so far. Due to the inhabitants living scattered all over the municipality, it has been important to direct measures toward the smaller communities. Digital tools have been important here, by letting the municipality easily receive input and communicate with participants from all over the municipality.

4.3 Comparison of the case studies

The case studies of Paradis and Vindafjord are two very different cases when it comes to the results they want to achieve, how the process unfolded as well as how it was received by the public. Both are ongoing as well, meaning that the outcomes of them are still unclear. The effect of the methods that have been used and how the public has responded to them is however clear at this stage.

Many of the same methods were used in both cases. Both naturally did what they were lawfully bound to do, but also sought after specific groups when it came to informative meetings and dialogue. A characteristic of them both is that they targeted groups that were already established on either social media or other places, instead of inviting participants into new groups. Social media presence and a designated webpage were also methods used in both cases.

Another method used in both cases was the digital survey. The survey Vindafjord posted received a lot more responses, but this could be because it concerns everyone that lives in Vindafjord municipality. For the survey that was used in the Paradis case, it is difficult to tell whether the number of responses they received are good or not, as no one is living in that area yet. It is therefore also difficult to calculate a response rate for the survey as everyone in Stavanger could participate, but it might only be relevant for the closest neighbours.

Other digital tools were also used in the two cases, but due to the size of the areas that they were planning for and the nature of the plans themselves, two different methods were used. Vindafjord used the PPGIS program "Innbyggerdialog" to receive input on the area part of the municipal plan, whereas Paradis used the app "Mentimeter" to engage the audience in an online presentation. The app could probably have been used by Vindafjord during one of their presentations, but it would not be ideal to use the PPGIS program "Innbyggerdialog" in the Paradis case. That is because the Paradis plan is more detailed and sending in drawn proposals in such plans is of little to no use.

Organizer	Official announcement	Meetings with stakeholders	Workshops	Social media	Digital survey	Web-page	PPGIS	Apps
<i>The municipality of Stavanger</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	X	Yes
<i>The municipality of Vindafjord</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	X

Table 5: Comparison of the methods used in the case studies.

The response from the public regarding the two projects has been night and day. The Paradis case initially caused outrage amongst some groups in Stavanger, leading to debates in social media, newspapers, and finally between the politicians of the city as well. After the municipality took over the process, there has been a decrease in comments. There are however many that follow the process closely. One could argue that the Paradis case has benefitted from the initial outrage, as the project has now almost become famous. This is nearly in complete contrast to the Vindafjord case, where there has been little to no public criticism regarding the plan. The response rates on the survey and PPGIS program indicate that there is an interest in the project, meaning that the argument of the municipality not reaching enough people seems less likely. One explanation is that municipal plans can be harder to understand than a zoning plan where illustrations are made to give a better view of how the result will look.

All in all, both cases are good examples of how to conduct a participation process at different levels. Both Stavanger and Vindafjord municipality have gone in with a clear intention and plan, as well as being aware of the results they want to achieve through the participation process. Physical and digital measures have been used informatively, to establish dialogue and mutual trust, and to receive input on specific themes and areas of the plans. Underrepresented groups have also been accounted for, and measures have been directed towards them. To what extent these measures have worked is still unclear due to the plans not being published, but the overall effort and plan that the municipalities have had for the participation has been thorough and well-executed.

4.4 Summary of the case analysis chapter

The Paradis case became a political issue after a group of neighbours and urban planning enthusiasts protested the plans for high-rise offices from a group of real-estate developers. The municipality of Stavanger then decided to make an area plan for Paradis, with an extra emphasis on participation. Digital tools such as social media and apps played a big part in the participation process, particularly in informing and encouraging the public to participate.

Vindafjord municipality's planning process got off to a better start than that of the Paradis case, with no initial controversy or public demonstrations. Vindafjord's inhabitants are sparsely populated, which meant that the municipality had to use methods that focused on the smaller communities around the area rather than gathering everyone in one place. Digital tools were helpful there as physical meetings weren't possible due to the pandemic. A digital survey to receive input on the community part of the plan, while a PPGIS-program was used to receive input on the area part.

The comparison of the case studies showed that both municipalities went into the process with similar intentions and plans. Many of the same methods were used, as well as some that were unique to them both. It also highlighted that not all tools and methods work well for all plans and that the methods and tools used needs to be chosen carefully both with respect to stakeholders and the uniqueness of the municipality in question.

05

Semi-structured Interviews

This chapter presents the findings from the semi-structured interviews. It goes through the themes discussed in the order they were asked and summarizes the answers towards the end.

4 informants participated in the interviews. They were chosen based mainly on their profession, but it was also a goal to have an even spread of age. The informants all had different backgrounds. This was desirable as it allowed for different perspectives on the questions. There was a total of 18 questions that the informants had to answer, as can be seen in the appendix.

The interviews were centred around 5 different themes, as seen in Table 6. After collecting the personal information, the informants were questioned about their thoughts on participation in planning. Moving on, the informants talked about the planning and building act, and how it either secures or prohibits “real participation”. Digital tools and underrepresented groups were then discussed before a summary of all the themes. Lastly, the informants were asked the research question of the thesis.

	Age	Profession
<i>Informant 1</i>	55	Real estate developer
<i>Informant 2</i>	45	Project manager and local politician
<i>Informant 3</i>	24	Planning consultant at a municipality
<i>Informant 4</i>	44	Project manager at a municipality

Table 6: Age and profession of the informants.

Personal information

Age and occupation of the informants.

Participation in general

Defining participation, and discussing the most important aspects, best methods and biggest challenges.

The planning and building act

Debating whether or not the act does enough to secure a good participation process.

Digital tools

Talking about the informants's experience with digital tools in participation, and what kind of tools they used.

Underrepresented groups

Discussing who could gain the most of an increased use of digital tools, and how to include more people from underrepresented groups.

Measuring improvement

Talking about the ladder of participation and how participation in Norway lies on that scale, as well as how to measure if a process has been good or not.

Research question

How can digital tools improve public participation?

Figure 18: How the set of questions was built up.

5.1 Participation in general

The informants were asked to define what participation is. This was done in the hopes of revealing how they look at this part of the planning process. The informants responded quite similar to each other, where informant 1 phrased it well:

“Participation in planning processes is a bit of a systematic approach to establishing groups and challenging groups who may have a close interest or an interest in general in an area of land, to come with their opinions on proposals. Not like a hearing process, but actually participating. You facilitate systematically to make arenas where people can voice their opinion and have workshop activities. Both on an individual and group level, and in larger gatherings to try and extract as much information as possible from which a solid decision-making background can be made.”

– Informant 1

The others responded with similar answers, where they described it as the act of involving and allowing those with an interest to voice their opinion and participate in the process. Moving on from the definition, the next question was about what the most important factors are in a successful participation process. The informants gave some slightly different answers this time, but the core of all the answers was that there needs to be a clear intention behind the process, and a plan for how one can achieve the results they want. Starting early was also something that was mentioned regularly by the informants.

The question about the biggest challenges regarding public participation also gave similar answers among the informants. A recurring theme was the challenge of getting people to participate, particularly the “right” people. There was a general agreement among the informants that it is usually the same people that participate in these processes, and that it is difficult to reach those who could be affected by a plan but do not voice their opinion on them. Informant 2 mentioned this in the previous question as well, saying:

“When the participation process is not made relevant, that is the major pitfall, I think. Especially when you are mapping those who eventually will participate, there is a tendency to get the usual participants and those who shout the loudest. The weakness in it, or the major challenge, is getting a hold of the quiet voices. Those who do not shout loudly, those who do not see that they have an interest when they might actually have it.”

– Informant 2

The last question of this theme was about the best method they have used or participated in during a participation process. This question gave some different answers from the informants, as some had some good examples that they remembered right away, while some struggled to find a good example. Informants 1 and 3 struggled to find good examples, but informant 2 had participated in a workshop focusing on the future. The setting was that one would imagine waking up in future Paradis and trying to think about what everyday life would, or should, look like.

5.2 The planning and building act

The interviews then went over to talk about the planning and building act. From the theory chapter, a question arose when looking over chapter 5 in PBA. The question was if the planning and building act does enough to secure proper participation. There was a mixed response from the informants, with some being adamant that it does not and some arguing that having more demands could be damaging to smaller planning projects. Informant 2 had a relatively short answer, simply saying “No” when the question was asked. After being asked to deliberate, informant 2 said:

“I don't know the planning and building act by heart and I'm a bit unsure about what it actually says about participation, but I think that the formal hearings are too late in the process, as the process has already gone too far at that point. How about participation where the initiative comes from the inhabitants for example. I think that the planning and building act could have an idea-phase, perhaps a demand for an idea-phase early in the project. When I am reading comments or input from a public hearing, I always feel that the input comes in too late, as the developer has already defined large parts of the plan. This means that the room for maneuvering is probably around 10%. If the input comes in early in the process, then that room could be increased to 50 or 70%. I absolutely believe that there is a potential there.”

- Informant 2

Informant 3 also mentioned not being completely sure about the contents of the chapter regarding participation but stated; “I feel like that is a reflection of the planning and building act. One does not have to do more than the minimum demands.”. Informant 1 made the point that the intention is there but believed that the problem lies in how it is written and presented. While there are several guides and handbooks written by the government on participation, it is still written by bureaucrats, making the content difficult to put into practice. Informant 4 made the point that it is against its purpose to force on the planners one way of doing participation, which stricter demands possibly could lead to. It is in the opinion of informant 4 important to look at what tasks one aims to solve and choose their method accordingly, not to be forced into a general form of participation.

5.3 Digital tools

There was a mixed response from the informants when asked if they had ever participated in, or arranged, a participation process that used digital tools. Informants 2 and 4 had done so before with different types of tools. Informants 1 and 3 had limited experience in this field, as informant 3 had only used it informatively through the municipality's webpage, and informant 1 had no experience of using digital tools in a participation process. None of the informants had used programs that could fall under the category of participatory GIS, but informants 2 and 4 had both used an app called "Menti" or "Mentimeter". In addition to "Mentimeter", informant 2 had also used another app called "Miro".

"I have had a very good experience using Miro, all the tools really. They have different functions, so you have to choose the tool that is most suited to the task. The tools are easy to use and are simple to access. There are no digital obstructions by being difficult to access with passwords and such. All the tools are available on your mobile phone, making it easily accessible, at least for those of us who are up to date on the digital front."

– Informant 2

The informants who had used digital tools were then asked about their experience using these tools. Informant 4 had used Mentimeter in an online presentation for an informational meeting during the pandemic when physical meetings were unable to be held. The app made it possible to activate and engage the crowd with questions that were asked parallel to the presentation. This led to a large percentage of the participants answering the questions. Informant 4 also talked about another online presentation where they did not use Mentimeter or any other app, instead using the chat function on Microsoft Teams as the main way to interact. This was according to Informant 4 "very pacifying". Informant 2 also talked about the Mentimeter app as a useful tool. In addition, the Miro app was also mentioned.

After talking about the different tools the informants had used, they were then all asked who they thought could benefit from the use of digital tools in participation. The answers were relatively divided among the informants, with two claiming it is those organizing the participation that will benefit the most, while the other two claimed it would be certain groups of the public or the public in general. Informant 4 described it like this:

"It makes it easy for us to sort it out afterwards. It is harder when people talk in plenary, then you need a referent who writes it all down. When you do it in a digital way, for example using a questionnaire, you can have more specific themes with your questions. You can in a way get answers to the questions you need answered. That is something I think is very nice. You could also get answers that go in all sorts of directions, but the core of them all will probably give you some answers to the questions you ask nonetheless. Then you have those answers for later as well."

– Informant 4

Informant 2 answered similarly to informant 4, meaning that the two informants that had previous experience with using digital tools, both agree that it is the organizers that will benefit the most. Informants 1 and 3 on the other hand argued that it is those participating that could benefit the most. Informant 1 talked about two groups, where particularly one of them could possibly benefit from more digital measures. The group in question was young people, as informant 1 describes them as “very digital in their way of living their lives”. Informant 3 was initially quite clear on who would benefit the most but seemed to change their opinion upon further thought.

The informants therefore seemed to believe that it is the organizers that will benefit the most from an increased use of digital tools, as the input is easier to sort out and use. This is an interesting opinion as one could expect the answer to be more heavily in favour of those participating, as informant 1 talked about with younger people.

“That has to be the inhabitants. Or maybe it is the municipality actually, because it is always good with some different perspectives. We usually get input on our plans from governmental agencies, and they do not possess the local knowledge that the inhabitants do.”

– Informant 3

5.4 Underrepresented groups

On the theme of underrepresented groups, the informants all had different approaches and suggestions on how these groups could be more included in participation processes. Some of the informants focused more on how these groups could be identified and what variety of participants that are in them. Others focused more on how to reach these groups, and how to properly include them from there. Informant 1 talked about how finding and reaching a representative audience is a big challenge, saying:

“So how do you reach the right selection to get the young people of the city to mean something that is not overly influenced by the opinions of their mothers and fathers? The act of reaching a broad audience among the inhabitants of the city within the demographic groups you want to reach, that is a challenge I would like to see someone solve.”

– Informant 1

Informant 2 talked about the importance of the mapping phase early in the process, to identify the groups that might be important stakeholders. It was also mentioned how it is important to see beyond just the inhabitants of an area. There might be many who pass through the area regularly or spend time for one reason or another. These people might feel ownership to the area as well as those who live there, and it is therefore important to include them.

Informants 3 and 4 talked more about specific methods one could use to reach these groups. According to informant 3, informing the people in these groups about how they can be included and participate is key. Informant 4 had a different point of view, saying that we need to think differently.

“We have to go into the environments that they are in. We must ask them completely different questions. Maybe we shouldn't even ask them questions, maybe they need more practical tasks or to be brought along on a walk through the area where we can talk with them. I can understand why they don't get involved in urban planning when it is so formal. We don't talk to them at all.”

– Informant 4

Even though there were different answers from the informants to this question, the core of them was similar. Having an awareness that these groups exist and making an effort to reach them appears to be an opinion shared by all of the informants. It is however interesting to see informant 4's answer. If the people in these groups are not participating through the methods currently being used, then finding new ways of reaching them does make a lot of sense.

5.5 Measuring improvement

Whether a participation process has been successful or not can be difficult to decide. The informants were therefore asked several questions about how they would decide if a process had been adequate or not, and what factors that help them decide it. Questions were also asked about the ladder of participation theory, and how the informants would rate the participation processes they had been active in on that scale.

	Know it	Heard of	Not Heard of
<i>Informant 1</i>		X	
<i>Informant 2</i>			X
<i>Informant 3</i>		X	
<i>Informant 4</i>	X		

Table 7: The informants' familiarity with "The ladder of participation".

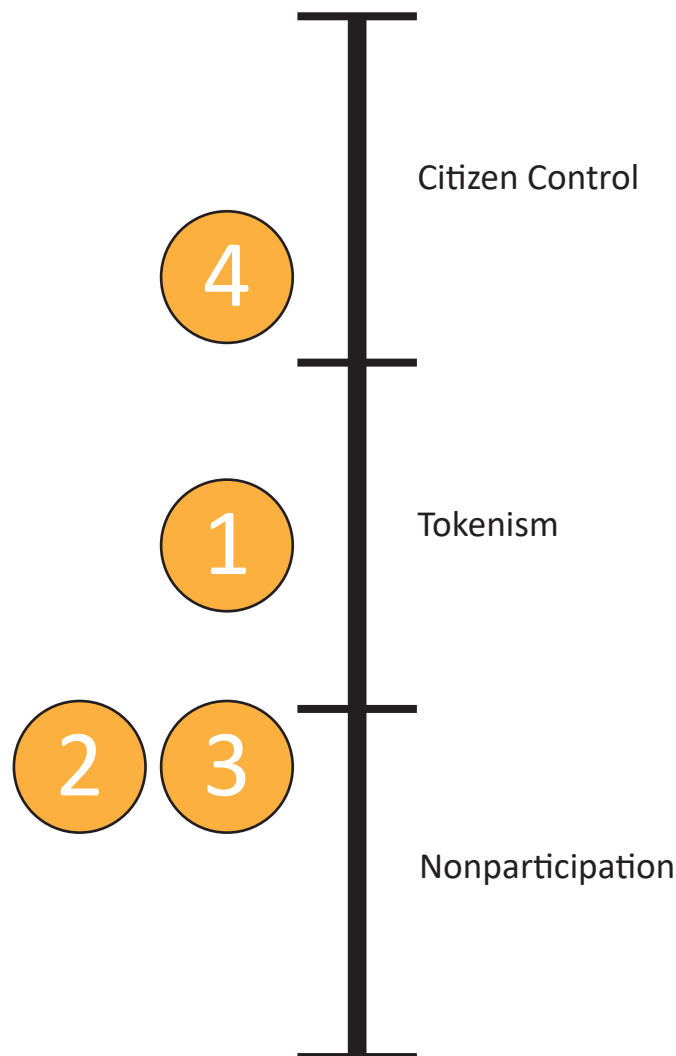


Figure 19: How the informants ranked participation in Norway on the ladder of participation.

When it came to the informants' familiarity with the theory, there was a mixed response. Most of them had heard of it before but weren't sure about the content of it. A brief explanation of the theory was given to informants 1, 2 and 3. Informant 4 was well familiar with the theory beforehand. When it came to rating participation in Norway today, most of the informants placed it in the lower to the middle level of the ladder, as seen in Figure 19. Informant 2 was the only informant who had never heard of the theory before, but explained his reasoning for placing it in the lower part of the ladder:

"It is a bit back to your question about the planning and building act. I do feel like it doesn't facilitate for that much participation. That is why I am placing it in the lower part, but it does clearly depend on co-creation and similar things. We do think completely different today than what we did 30 years ago when it comes to that. I think we are headed for the upper level on that scale maybe, in the long term at least. Some are naturally better than others in this field. Laws, demands and regulations in the planning and building act, that is what creates the foundation for moving up the ladder."

- Informant 2

Informant 1 talked about some of the same themes, with there being a tradition of listening but not using the input, with signs of it becoming better in recent years. Informant 1 did indicate that participation in Norway lies somewhere in the middle of the ladder, instead of the lower part. Informant 3 placed it in the lower level as well, as it appears to be mostly informative. The times there had been a dialogue with the inhabitants, Informant 3 did not feel like it had ever been used later on. Informant 4 rated it more highly than the other participants but did only consider the projects that that department had worked with. When explaining why it was placed in the higher part of the ladder, Informant 4 said:

"We are at least very concerned with it in our department. We are also very concerned with avoiding "participation-washing". We don't have time for it, we would get heavily criticized for it, and we would not get anything out of it either. We want do participation so that it may help us in achieving better results, better plans. So, I think we are good at it, we should be high up on that scale. It gets interesting if you talk to the public though. If we say that we are good at it, and they disagree, then that could be a little "reality check" for us. We are at least very conscious of it. It is challenging given that it is a bit up to each plan now, how much participation that is going to happen. It seems like it depends on how dedicated the project manager or project group is. What good ideas do they have? What previous experiences can they build on? It is too unorganized, it has not been placed in a system, but the intentions are good."

- Informant 4

Looking at Figure 19, the participants disagreed when it came to rating participation as it is today, somewhat due to how they chose to define it themselves. They mention some of the same arguments and thoughts, such as participation in general being better than it used to be and how the mindset has changed. All the informants are also in agreement that there is still room to improve.

Moving on from the ladder of participation, the informants were asked about how they would decide if a participation process had been successful. Informants 1, 2 and 3 spoke of having something to show for the work that has been put into the process, that one is left with proof that the inputs received through the process did impact the result. Informant 1 described it like this:

"I think now that planning processes looks to take as much time as they do and that one is thorough in the introductory phase, you need to have even stops and points of contact between the groups that want to be engaged in the process. That there have been several rounds of hearings where one can actually show that something has been accomplished through the process."

– Informant 1

There was also an agreement among the informants that it is more important to get a few good answers that cover the opinions of several groups, rather than many similar ones from a few groups. Informant 3 was asked if it was more important to get a few suggestions that could be used, or if it was better to have for example 300 answers instead of 50. To this, Informant 3 said:

"I would say that if you could get 50 well represented participants, then that could be more useful than the 300. Among those 300 there would probably be a lot of similar answers as well."

– Informant 3

Informant 4 did not talk about what the organizers are left with, but rather about the reaction of the public towards the project or process. This is a different take than the other informants had, who all talked about how the process has affected the result. Talking about how to decide if a participation process has been successful, informant 4 said:

"You do get quite clear feedback about whether or not the public feels like they are being heard or not. Today they are using Facebook and social media to comment on plans, lack of participation, design proposals and so on. There are of course some who shout louder than others in there, but the fact that somebody is shouting in there and how they word themselves, what discussions that are ongoing, it gives you a clue about whether or not people are satisfied."

– Informant 4

Informant 4 did mention later on that it is good when people get engaged, but that it is also difficult to interpret that engagement as those who shout the loudest could be representing a small group, while the grand majority are generally pleased. The point still stands however that one could get a sense of whether the process has been a good one by looking at the reactions from the public.

5.6 Research question

The last question that the informants were asked, was their opinion on the research question, or theme, of the thesis. Rather than being asked how digital tools can improve public participation, they were asked if they believed it could improve it at all. The answers were all positive towards this question, with some informants more convinced than others.

All the informants agreed that digital tools could improve public participation, but that it needs to be user-friendly and simple. Informant 1 suggested that it would be a good idea to have a finished app or program as a part of a starting pack that the developers could get. Informant 3 made the point of it being easier for both those organising and participating. Informant 4 highlighted that it is good to use these tools but in combination with physical measures. Lastly, informant 2 was convinced digital tools could improve participation, but also talked about the negative aspects of it, and the need to be aware of these problems.

"I think it is obviously possible to reach groups that one would not reach before, so that you can reach out more broadly into society by having some easy and well adapted tools. The threshold to use them by those participating needs to be low, and it needs to be easy and user-friendly, intuitively. If there is something close to a finished app or a different program that the developer receives as a part of a starting package, or at least something you have to use to reach people."

– Informant 1

"Yes, I think so if it is easy. That is the big advantage with all things digital, it does make things very easy for both the participants and the organisers."

– Informant 3

"I am completely convinced that it can, but in a good and a bad way. You have to be aware of the "dark side" of digital tools, you have to be aware of the potential problems. There is no doubt that not everyone is excited by digital tools, they may distance themselves from it and not participate. So it is dangerous to only rely on that, but have a conscious attitude towards it at least. Could digital tools potentially exclude someone from participating for example, that is an evaluation that one needs to do I think."

– Informant 2

"I believe so yes, but in a combination with physical things. One thing I am thinking about is everything regarding communication. It is so big, there needs to be clear limitations. Be clear in what people can participate in. They can't participate in everything. They can't say that there should be a big park here for example, that won't work. You have to tell them that there will be offices, there will be dwellings, it is expected to have a high concentration. We work within those limitations. It is really important that people understand that. Then people can understand that "Ok, the shopping mall that I wanted here, that won't fit in". Clear framework, clear questions."

– Informant 4

5.7 Summary of the interview chapter

The interviews were conducted with 4 informants with different backgrounds and levels of experience. The informants were questioned on different themes linked to public participation in planning. Initially, the informants were asked about how they defined public participation, to which all informants responded similarly. The planning and building act was then discussed, as most of the informants were critical of how it is phrased today. All of them did however agree that it would be difficult to change it, as that could be harmful as well by forcing too many tasks on processes that don't require them.

Digital tools as a subject caused mixed responses amongst the informants, as they all had different levels of experience when it came to using them. Informants 2 and 4 were those who had the most experience. They spoke of how it made processing data and accessibility easier, but that there are some downsides that one must consider. Underrepresented groups were also talked about, with informant 4 stating that one must think differently to properly include them.

An important theme that the informants were asked about was how they would measure success in a participation process. Most of the informants talked about the quality of the data that one is left with when the process is over, not necessarily the number of people that participated. It was also mentioned that one could look at how the public reacts to the process. If there is a lot of negativity, then something has probably gone wrong. Lastly, the informants were asked the research question of the thesis. All informants responded positively to this but added that it must be done correctly, and as a supplement to the physical measures.

06

Conclusion

The conclusion aims to summarize the findings from the thesis. It also aims to answer the research question and the sub-questions formulated in chapter 1.3.

How can new digital tools improve public participation in planning?

That is the research question of the thesis, stated in chapter 1.3. It aims to explore how new digital tools can improve on the problems and challenges associated with public participation in planning. Four additional sub-questions were made to help answer the research question.

The methodology of the thesis contains four parts. The first part explains the research design of the thesis. Parts two, three and four present the theoretical background, case studies and semi-structured interviews were conducted. The ethical considerations made in the thesis were also commented on.

In the theoretical background, themes and concepts considered important to answering the research question were reviewed. Some of the themes were the ladder of participation, the planning and building act, the efficiency of public participation, underrepresented groups, and digital tools. The findings from the theoretical background provided a solid foundation that the case studies and semi-structured interviews could build upon.

The case studies chapter analysed two cases, Paradis in Stavanger and Vindafjord municipality. Both cases were different when it came to whether it was a municipal or private initiative, the type of plan that was being made, the size of the planning area, and the number of participants. The studies looked at how the process unfolded, what methods and tools were used, and the results and reactions they produced. The case studies made it possible to review how the methods found in the theoretical background worked in a practical setting. It highlighted how important it is to engage the public early on, and the effort it takes to achieve good results.

For the semi-structured interviews, four informants participated. The informants all had different backgrounds and levels of experience. This was done intentionally to get different answers and opinions on the questions and themes brought up in the interviews. Some of the answers were expected, such as that the biggest challenge in public participation is to get the public to participate. Some questions however gave unexpected results, such as when the informants believed the planning agencies would benefit the most from using digital tools,

After completing the theoretical background, case studies, and semi-structured interviews, is it possible to answer the sub-questions formulated in the introduction.

Q1: What are the main challenges with public participation?

From the interviews, it became apparent that the informants agreed that the biggest challenge in public participation, is to get the public to participate. Particularly achieving a representative selection of participants is always a challenge. This was highlighted in the theoretical background as well, as Michels & De Graaf (2010) wrote that participants are mainly older, highly educated men. The Vindafjord case showed that the digital survey was well balanced when it came to the ages of the participants, but showed nothing about gender, level of education or ethnicity. Another notable challenge associated with public participation is the attitude of the organizers towards it, with it sometimes being perceived as a chore. A participation process is demanding when it comes to the effort required throughout the process, but particularly at the start. The organizers therefore need to be aware of what they want to achieve with the methods they use.

Q2: How can digital tools benefit underrepresented groups in public participation?

From the Vindafjord case and the example from (Grimstad kommune, 2020), it became apparent that the age of the participants was more balanced when using digital tools for surveys than the standard average age which (Michels & De Graaf, 2010) describes. Looking at the study from (Jankowski et al., 2016), there was a higher percentage of women participating, in addition to the number of participants with higher education being lower. There was still a notably high percentage of participants with higher education, but it showed promising signs. When it comes to groups of different ethnicities, or other factors not mentioned in the thesis, there has been no clear improvement as this is rarely asked about or noted in surveys and meetings. It is therefore difficult to tell how these groups are impacted by an increased use of digital tools. There is however data that points to an arguably more balanced and representative pool of participants when there is an increased use of digital tools.

Q3: What kind of digital tools can be used?

As shown in both chapters 3 and 4, numerous digital tools can be used in a participation process. What tools that can be used will also vary depending on what type of plan that is being made, and the desired results one wants to achieve with them. Social media, apps, Story maps and digital surveys are applicable in any process as they can be adapted easily to the number of people one wants to reach. These can be used for information, dialogue, and cooperation with the public. PPGIS however is realistically only applicable when dealing with larger plans, such as municipal or regional plans. This is due to the level of detailing in smaller plans requiring more skill and knowledge than in larger plans, where participants can suggest where to have different zones rather than buildings and roads.

Q4: How could an improvement be measured in public participation?

There are many parameters one can look at to judge whether an improvement has been made to a participation process. For example, one can look at the number of participants, the quality of the input received, how representative the participants are of the community, and the response from the public in newspapers and social media. This question created mixed answers from the informants in the interview chapter. Most of the informants spoke of the results of the participation process, and what the organizers are left with. What separates the tokenism stage and the citizen control stage is the follow-through of the suggestions from the public (Arnstein, 2019). If the results from the participation process are useable for the planners, then the argument that there has been follow-through on the suggestions could be justified. By ensuring that the input is usable, the organizers get something back for their efforts. Another point that was made in the interviews was that organizers can look to the reaction of the public, as that can give a hint towards what the people think about the process. Smaller groups may make a lot of noise in these forums, making it seem like the whole community is displeased. One should therefore only look at it to get an indication of what the public feels.

From the sub-questions and other findings in the thesis, there are in total 5 different areas where digital tools in collaboration with physical methods can improve public participation in planning. These areas are information, interaction, data processing, quality of responses, and representation. Spreading information on platforms more frequently used by possible participants, such as social media, can lead to an increased awareness of both the plan and participation process. A more interactive participation process with the use of apps and other programs can make the participants feel like they are contributing more to the plan, making them more engaged in the process and obtaining a feeling of ownership to the project. For the planning agencies, using digital surveys, apps or PPGIS will make the data received easier to organize, process and utilize compared to going through letters and transcribing comments made in public meetings. In addition to this, questions and activities can be directed and framed so that the input and responses are better suited to the areas where they can make an impact. When the planning agencies have a presence on social media and share their questionnaires and surveys there, a more balanced and representative pool of participants is likely to occur compared to just using physical meetings.

07

**Discussion
& Reflection**

This final chapter discusses the results and conclusions made in the thesis. It also comments on the limitations and recommended further studies. Lastly, it includes a personal reflection from the author.

7.1 Results and conclusions

When comparing the conclusion of the thesis to the guidelines in chapter 3.3, the first two points from the guidelines are areas that digital tools can improve, with the spread of information and representation of the community. The third and fourth points from the guidelines are also to an extent areas that can be solved, as increased interaction can lead to a sense of ownership and democracy development. With that in mind, digital tools appear to have a great impact on the themes deemed most important by the Norwegian government.

Chapters 3.6 in the theoretical background were also important for the conclusion, as it gave better insight into how digital tools can affect the representation of a community. Both that chapter and the case studies underlined the point of a more balanced group of participants when it comes to age, gender and level of education.

The results from the semi-structured interviews were highly influential on the conclusion, as almost all the questions that the informants were asked yielded interesting responses. There were also some unexpected answers in that chapter, that contributed to the point about data processing being one of the five points in the conclusion.

7.2 Limitations

The thesis has several limitations. In chapter 1.1 it is mentioned that the economical aspect of public participation is not accounted for. A participation process demands a lot of resources, and that can be one of the reasons why so few planning authorities do more than what is demanded of them. As the costs and time spent on the participation methods are not available, it would be difficult to analyse them. The acquisition and training of personell who can use digital tools properly will also demand resources. The handling of statistics surrounding these processes are also important, as it is easy to misinterpret them.

When it comes to the case studies, there is a clear limitation as no final plans have been published in either of the two cases. This makes it difficult to analyse whether there has been any follow-through in the participation process. It would be interesting particularly in the Vindafjord case, as one could compare how the area part of the plan ended up compared to the input received from the PPGIS program. The reaction of the public towards the plans would also be interesting to analyse. Both cases had initially scheduled to release first drafts of the plans while the work on the thesis was ongoing, but this did not materialize. In hindsight, it would be beneficial to analyse cases where the process was over, and the plans had been approved. The reason for choosing ongoing cases was ultimately down to it being easier to analyse the reactions of the public in newspaper articles and social media posts, as well as the possibility that digital tools that have been used in previous projects might already be outdated.

The planning and building act was one of the challenges brought up in the beginning. It became apparent through both the theoretical background and the semi-structured interviews that it was one of the major challenges in public participation. There was however no clear way in which digital tools could solve this specific challenge, and it was therefore not mentioned in the conclusion.

7.3 Further studies

An important point that has been mentioned earlier in the thesis, is how it is difficult to tell whether digital tools can improve representation when it comes to ethnicity. This is normally not noted in questionnaires, surveys or in public meetings, and therefore no comparable data has been found in this thesis. This is an interesting theme that should be researched in further studies regarding digital tools in public participation.

As mentioned in the limitations, the economical aspect of public participation not being present in this thesis is a weakness. If one can get access to the finances of conducting participation processes, and the resources that each method demands, then one could compare that to the results the methods achieve. That could end up with cost-efficiency analysis of different methods in public participation. Comparing the cost-efficiency of the digital tools to the physical methods could give interesting results and is something that should be considered if possible.

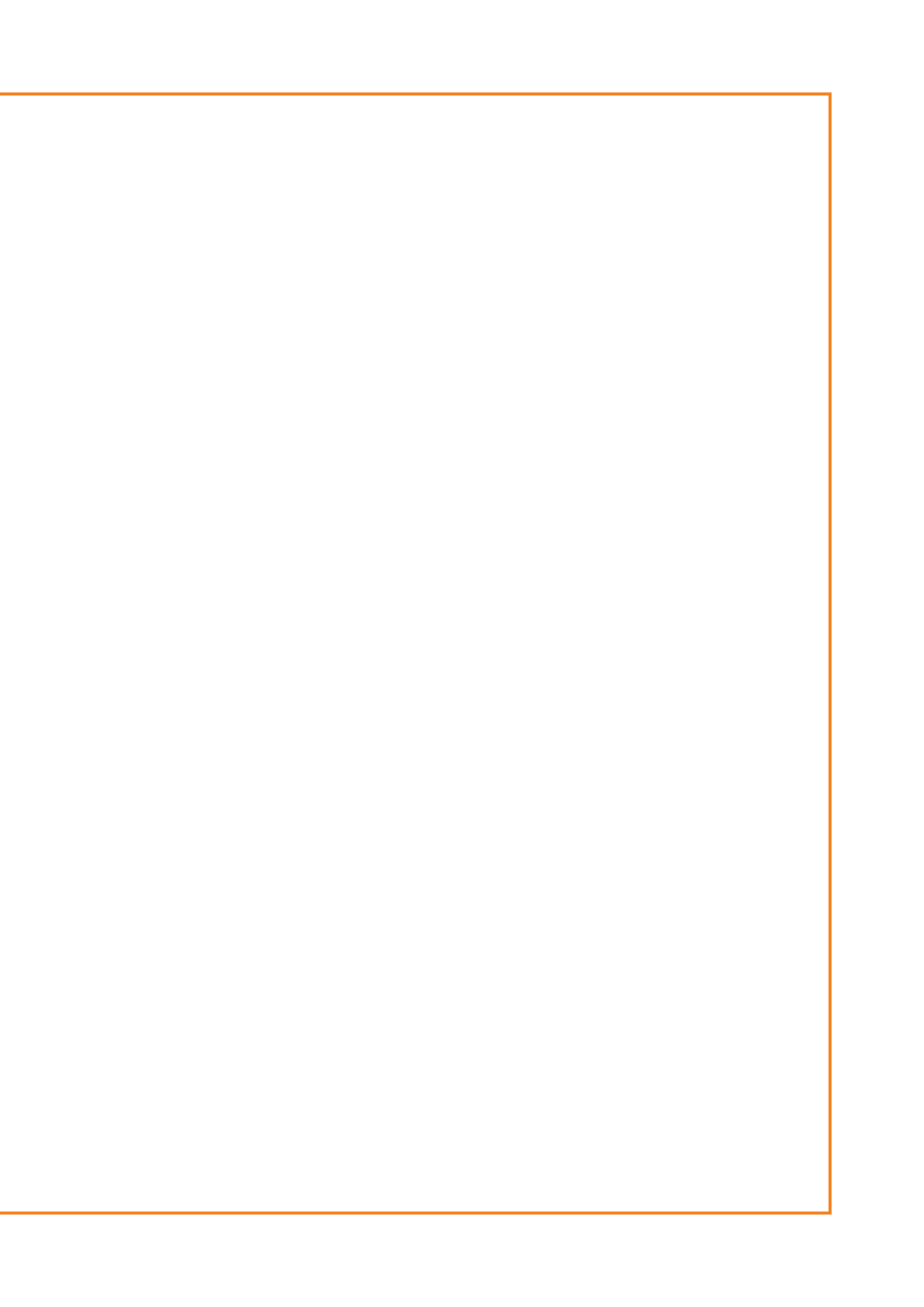
7.4 Personal reflection

Writing this thesis has been an eye-opening experience as my knowledge of the theme beforehand was limited to what is written in the planning and building act, and the reputation that public participation has for being more of a chore than anything else. It has therefore been rewarding to gain knowledge about the importance and complexity of these processes.

The conversations I had with the informants when conducting the interviews revealed challenges that I had never thought of before, particularly how much a successful process demands from the planning agencies. This in addition to learning about all the different digital tools that can be used has been very exciting.

The major challenge of writing this thesis was probably the case studies, as there were limited results to analyse. There is also a big element of interpretation when it comes to the number of people that participated and the responses they gave. This means that there is a great deal of uncertainty there. Nonetheless, when the findings from the case studies were summarised along with the theoretical background and the semi-structured interviews, there appeared to be a correlation between them.

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Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

Hvordan kan nye digitale verktøy forbedre medvirkning i planprosesser?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å innhente meninger og ulike synspunkter om medvirkning i Norge. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet med denne masteroppgaven er å undersøke hvordan digitale verktøy kan forbedre medvirkning i planprosesser i Norge. Dette gjøres ved å gå gjennom teori knyttet til ulike tema innenfor dette, samt analysere medvirkningsprosesser hvor det har blitt og ikke har blitt brukt digitale verktøy.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Institutt for sikkerhet, økonomi og planlegging (ISØP) ved Universitetet i Stavanger er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du har blitt spurt om å få delta da noen med din rolle/yrke kan gi et verdifullt perspektiv på forskningsspørsmålet i oppgaven. Jeg fikk kontaktopplysningene dine fra Espen Eek, som er ekstern veileder på oppgaven. Ca. 10 andre personer fra ulike yrker vil også bli spurt om å delta.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du svarer på spørsmål i et intervju. Det vil ta deg ca. 45 minutter. Intervjuet inneholder spørsmål om medvirkning, digitalisering og de fordeler og ulemper som kan knyttes til det. Dine svar fra intervjuet blir lagret som et lydopptak, før det transkriberes til et word-dokument.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

De som vil ha tilgang til opplysningene vil være meg, Andreas Sveen, som student og veilederen min Ana Llopis Alvarez. Navnet ditt vil jeg erstatte med et nummer som vil bli brukt til å referere til dine svar i oppgaven. Oversikten over navn og nummer vil bli lagret i en annen mappe som ikke er tilknyttet øvrige data.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 15.06.22. Lydopptak vil bli slettet senest ved prosjektslutt. De eneste opplysninger som vil være igjen etter prosjektslutt er de som blir inkludert i oppgaven. Dette er alderen og yrket ditt.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Universitetet i Stavanger har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt på e-mail andrsv2@live.com eller tlf: 93453378

Andre du kan ta kontakt med:

- Ana Llopis Alvarez, veileder, Universitetet i Stavanger: E-mail: ana.l.alvarez@uis.no
- Personvernombudet ved Universitetet i Stavanger: E-mail: personvernombud@uis.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Intervju spørsmål

Dette intervjuet er laget for å få deltageres svar på ulike spørsmål knyttet til masteroppgaven min ved Universitetet i Stavanger. Temaet for oppgaven er medvirkning i planprosesser, og spørsmålene har blitt hentet ut ifra litteratursøk. Du har blitt spurt om å få delta da noen med din rolle/yrke kan gi et verdifullt perspektiv på forskningsspørsmålet i oppgaven. De eneste personlige opplysningene det vil bli spurt om er alder og yrke, da det er slik deltakeren vil bli referert til i oppgaven. Det vil ikke bli spurt om eller referert til hverken navnet eller kjønnet til deltakeren. Opplysningene vil bli lagret i en onedrive-mappe jeg har tilgang til fra min personlige pc, og vil bli slettet fra denne mappen når oppgaven er levert. Det er frivillig å delta.

1. Personlig informasjon

1. Hvor gammel er du?
2. Hva jobber du med?

2. Generelt om medvirkning:

1. Hvordan definerer du medvirkning?
2. Hva mener du er det viktigste å tenke på i medvirkning?
3. Hva mener du er den viktigste/beste metoden å bruke i medvirkning?
4. Hva er den/de største utfordringene i medvirkning i dag?

3. PBL:

1. Synes du at plan- og bygningsloven gjør nok for å sikre reel medvirkning?
2. Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

4. Digitale verktøy:

1. Har du vært del av en prosess der digitale verktøy har blitt brukt?
2. Hvilke verktøy?
3. Hva var din opplevelse med det?

5. Underrepresenterte grupper:

1. Hvem tror du tjener mest på bruk av digitale verktøy?
2. Hva tror du skal til for å inkludere flere fra underrepresenterte grupper?

6. Hvordan vurdere hva som er bra nok: Miks av spørsmål/oppsummering

1. Kjenner du til "The ladder of participation"?
2. Hvordan vurderer du at medvirkning i Norge i dag legger seg på denne skalaen?
3. Hvordan tenker du det er best å vurdere om en medvirkningsprosess har vært god nok?

4. Nå er det bare ett spørsmål igjen, og det er forskningsspørsmålet til oppgaven min. Tror du at digitale verktøy kan forbedre medvirkning i en planprosess?
5. Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke?

Appendix 3: Informant 1

Informant 1

Hvor gammel er du?

Jeg er født i 66, så jeg har levd i 55 år og nærmer meg 56 år.

Hva jobber du med?

Mitt ansvar er eiendomsutvikling i Bane Nor eiendom i regionen sør og vest, og det strekker seg fra Bergen til Arendal i praksis.

Hvordan vil du definere medvirkning?

Medvirkning i planprosesser får vi si er en litt sånn systematisk tilnærming med å etablere grupper og utfordre grupper som kan ha nærstående interesse eller interesser i det hele tatt i et landområde, til å komme med sine synspunkter på forslag. Ikke som en høringsprosess, men altså at man medvirker. Man tilrettelegger systematisk for å lage arenaer der man kan få å ytre seg og ha verkstedsaktivitet, men både på individnivå og på gruppenivå, og i en større forsamling for så prøve å hente ut ekstrakter av den type underlag. Det som er vist seg vanskelig er jo de yngste og kanskje de eldste.

Det neste spørsmålet var hva de største utfordringene er i medvirkning, men da er den grei. Hva mener du er det viktigste å tenke på i medvirkning for at det skal bli en god prosess?

Det er jo ideelt sett at man starter tidlig nok og at man har en flertrinns rakett da, med flere møter i stedet for at du kun har like før det skal til høring når man har jobbet lenge med det. Man må starte tidlig og ha sjekker underveis opp mot de funnene man gjør. Vi har jo ganske god erfaring med å arrangere workshops, men jeg ser jo at vi kanskje har gjort det innimellom for sent i prosessen når det allerede ligger føringer og premisser som nærmest er litt urokkelige. Våre tomter ligger tett opp til jernbane som har et eget regelverk, som fører til tomteutfordringer. Det er aldri helt jomfruelig mark vi jobber med. Det er alltid forhold som gjør at du kanskje ikke får så god prosess som det man ønsker. Som man sier at planprosessen tar 3 år så bør man i løpet av det første året ha en 3-4 aktiviteter knytta opp mot de gruppene som da naturlig kanskje ikke ville meldt seg på som opplagte nabolagsaktører, men at man prøver systematisk å få til noe med disse andre grupperingene. Det er å begynne så tidlig som mulig og å få klemt ut mest mulig saft og kunnskap av de gruppene på et så tidlig tidspunkt som mulig for å se om man kan imøtekomme behovene deres. Særlig for de gruppene som jeg sa i stad som ikke alltid er så organisert og som gjerne ikke kommer til bordet. Det jeg er opptatt av i min alder det er jo spesielt at de unge skal få sagt sitt. Det å bruke skoleverk og undervisningssystemene til å nå den gruppen har vi kanskje ikke helt lykkes med. Det har da blitt litt mer ungdommens bystyre og den type ting. Det kan av og til være litt perifert. Nå svarte jeg kanskje på flere ting på enn en gang, men det er å ha flere og hyppigere aktiviteter i innledende fase.

Du snakker litt om workshops og lignende her, hva vil du si er den beste metoden å bruke, eller den metoden dere har hatt mest suksess med når det kommer til medvirkning?

Jeg må bare starte med å si at vi har ikke vært spesielt god på det. Vi har jo gjort det i flere runder i paradiset, men det er jo gjerne kommet etterpå og etter press for å prøve å reparere skadene. Det er også fordi vi trodde at vi at området egentlig var modnet og besluttet tilrettelagt for den type urban utvikling. Vi var kanskje ikke var forberedt på at ord ikke var så dekket, og det var definitivt ikke kommunen heller som planmyndighet i perioden 2013-2015. Senere så har vi da forsøkt med ulike prosjekter, men vi er liksom kommet så skeivt ut fra hoppkanten at alt er liksom opplevd eller mottatt i hvert fall av mange som «damage control», og ikke som en reell medvirkningsprosess. Medvirkning på detaljplan nivået er jo kanskje ikke så relevant, det burde vært mye mer systematisk medvirkning på et overordnet plan nivå som ved sentrumsplaner og kommunedelplaner. I hvert fall på kommunedelplans nivå burde man ha lagt ned et større støt, der ligger et mye større ansvar på kommunene. Jeg synes jo utbyggere får så mye pes i medvirkningsspørsmål, mens det egentlig er kommunen som er planmyndighet og mye større ansvar burde påhvile planmyndighetene i å få dette til på et tidligere tidspunkt og på et bedre og mer systematisk nivå. Når premissene for høyde, bredder og funksjoner er lagt og tomtene har sine premisser så er det egentlig mer snakk om takvinkler og herlighetsverdier. Det er jo ikke det vanskeligste å diskutere, så jeg tror det er egentlig er det viktigste ankepunktet opp i dette. Kommunene, planmyndighetene, er meg bekjent relativt dårlige på det.

Det er jo et interessant poeng du gjør at det alltid er utbygger som får pes da det som regel er det navnet folk ser, men det er jo ganske bra forankret i plan- og bygningsloven at det er kommunen som har ansvaret for at sånne ting skal gå i orden.

De arrangerer disse åpne møtene da hvor utbygger skal legge fram noen skisser og så danner det igjen basis for høringsinnspill. Det er jo den gamle varianten også har jo man blitt bedt om å gjøre mye mer enn det. Min utfordring er at igjen på detaljplan nivå og så lenge man velger å ligge innenfor de rammene som ligger i de overordna planene gitt at de er så rimelig oppdaterte. Det er ikke alle kommuner som har oppdaterte kommunedelplaner for å si det sånn. De skal i prinsippet rulleres hvert fjerde år, eller i hvert fall burde vært. Det har jo vært planer vi jobbet med i 2014 og 15 hvor vi jobbet med kommunedelplanen fra 2005 som grunnlag, og det er jo åpenbart skjedd ganske mye siden da.

Det var litt generelt om medvirkning. Nå er det litt mer på plan- og bygningsloven, det var vi jo litt inne på tidligere. Syns du at plan- og bygningsloven gjør nok for å sikre reell medvirkning?

Jeg tror intensjonene er gode, men måten det er presentert og skrevet på så er det for meg ikke tydelig nok. Jeg vet det finnes utfyllende dokumentasjon fra regjeringen eller egne håndbøker og hefter som har beskrevet det, men igjen skrevet av byråkrater og veldig lite matnyttig. Igjen og så kan det ikke være for diffust i forhold til hva som er et absolutt krav. Jeg mener at det burde vært en konkret oppskrift som sier at du må gjennomføres sånn, du må sikre at alle grupper er hørt, denne type aktivitet er gjennomført. Ikke sikkert at det skal stå direkte loven, men da må det henvises til en eller annen tydelig mal som sier hva et minimum er og det kan godt være ganske omfangsrikt for min del. Det er selvfølgelig forskjell på om man må regulere en garasje i et nabolag eller fordi man ønsker å bytte vinduer og må gjennom en reguleringsprosess, det hender jo det i sårbare områder. Mens det å tilrettelegg for 90.000 kvadratmeter på en gammel godsterminal det er 2 litt forskjellige ting da, men at det er noen tydelige oppgaver og bokser som skal «tickes» av i forhold til at man har utført og kan si at man har utført et tilfredsstillende medvirkningsløp det mener jeg må være der. Så kan ikke jeg svare på om det skal stå i lovteksten eller om det skal stå i form av kommunale tolkninger og beslutninger rundt dette, men jeg synes det er veldig vagt. Igjen vi regulerer i mange forskjellige

kommuner, og prosessene og kravene til oss oppleves å være utrolig forskjellig. Så åpenbart er lovverket og myndighets beskrivelsene rundt dette ikke klare.

Da er vi litt over halvveis nå. Det neste punktet omhandler den digitale verktøy delen av oppgaven min, så jeg lurer på om du har vært med i en prosess der noen form for digitale verktøy har blitt brukt?

Jeg kan vel ikke sånn direkte svare på at vi har iscenesatt digitale verktøy i de prosessene som jeg har vært med på. Nå er det jo en stund siden jeg var ordentlig i manesjen da, men altså det er sånn 3-4 år siden. Vi hadde litt noen av de planprosessene som vi startet for 5-6 år siden det har vi fått dunket inn ganske nylig, men det er jo da liksom de siste politiske prosessene og avklaring rundt bussveien og andre ting som har hindret det og ikke nødvendigvis medvirkningen. Så nei jeg er ganske tynn på det altså, dette med bruk av kommunikasjon via Facebook og andre ting. Jeg vet ikke om det er der du vil.

Det er litt hvordan du definerer det selv, men digitale verktøy kan være sosiale medier, nettsider, mer avanserte verktøy som kanskje er mer brukt av arealplanleggere eller det kan være en app for eksempel.

Vi har ikke laget det, vi har laget utstillinger og vi har hatt med mulighet for å gi direkte respons med penn og papir i postkasse, og vi har gjort tilsvarende med oppfølging at det har vært en Facebook side hvor de kan også «poste» synspunkter på det de ser i utstillingen enten har vært digital og eller fysisk utstilling. Så det er vel det lengste jeg kjenner til som jeg har vært med på faktisk, men igjen er det vi er litt rustne på det i vår region da vi ikke har hatt noen aktive prosesser som er startet opp siden 2017-2018.

Sånn generelt hvem er det du tror potensielt kan tjene mest på at det blir brukt mer digitale verktøy?

Åpenbart er terskelen for å bruke det lav med tanke på de 2 gruppene som jeg har vært kanskje mest opptatt av. Det som er de som har levd et langt liv i en by og de unge håpefulle, det er jo 2 forskjellige verdener. For ungdommen som er veldig digitale i sin måte å leve livene sine på så er det jo klart at det kan være en god måte å kunne nå dem på. På den andre siden når vi de riktige? Hvordan får vi det utvalget vi ønsker? Det er et eller annet med det der «not in my backyard», det må ikke bare være naboene. Hvordan når jeg ungdom som bor på tasta? Hvordan får jeg de til å mene noe om mitt prosjekt i paradiset? Det kan jo tenke seg at de er egentlig mer en stakeholder, om vi kunne ha nådd ungdommene som skater i den hallen. Nå bruker jeg paradiset som eksempel hele veien da, er det bare om de synes byggene er høye eller for lave eller breie eller stygge eller om de tar sol eller om det er nok kjærlighets verdier, altså da må liksom være med i et båt miljø eller skatemiljøet eller ha kjæreste som bor rett i nærheten. Så hvordan du når det rette utvalget for å få byens unge håpefulle til å mene noe som ikke bare er knyttet til at de er preget av at mor og far eventuelt mister utsikt eller at de forplanter mors og fars holdning til noe. Det å nå bredt i byens befolkning innenfor de demografiske grupper man ønsker å nå, jeg skulle gjerne sett noen løse den oppgaven for å si det sånn. Det blir fort for spesielt interesserte, du ser jo hvem som også er med på disse byutviklings sidene og sånn. Det er jo utbyggere som meg og så er det litt journalister og så er det den gjengen som bestemte seg for å være litt aktive i denne menigheten da. Ser man på kommentarfelt i aviser og sånt så er det liksom 10-12 navn som går igjen som kommenterer absolutt alt. Det er ganske interessant synes jeg. Hvordan får bredest mulig tilfang reell tilbakemelding? Også de som eventuelt har heiarop som sier

«bygg noe! hjelpe meg det eneste vi trenger er mer liv, mer mennesker, mer aktivitet». Jeg vet at de også finnes, noen av dem tar direkte kontakt med meg enten på SMS etter at jeg har skrevet noe eller sagt noe eller i form av e-poster. De kommer jo ikke til uttrykk i medvirkningsprosessene eller i høringene.

Tror at en økt form for individualitet i medvirkning kan hjelpe? At du kanskje spør mer enkeltpersoner, eller tror du kanskje det best å fortsette sånn som nå at man bare med den store offentligheten og i større grad får svar fra grupper?

Det er et godt spørsmål. Nei jeg tror både på kraften i gruppedynamikken selv om du ser jo når du leser høringsinnspill at det er 10 personer som egentlig skriver det samme eller har fått manus da som de sender inn sånn at du får det samme brevet 50 ganger. Som regel så når du ser hvor de bor så har de en eller annen tilknytning til området. For eksempel hvordan når du næringslivet? Hva er det næringslivet i Stavanger ønsker? Aa får du en generell uttalelse fra næringslivet om hva som ville vært bra for paradiset eller bra for Stavanger, men det er ikke en gruppe man så lett når. Det tenker jeg er litt synd. Jeg ser at næringsforeningen og NHO og disse organisasjonene ikke kommer med høringsinnspill. Næringsforeningen kommer gjerne i etterkant og sier at det var synd at det ikke ble som det ble, men de er ikke aktive i medvirkningsprosessen. Svaret på spørsmålet ditt er at jeg vil nå både individene og i alle aldersgrupper og de som bryr seg om byen sin. De som er opptatt av at barnebarna, barna eller ungdommen selv ytrer seg. Jeg er opptatt av nå gruppene som så måtte det være næringspolitiske parti eller om det er arkitektforening eller om det er grupperinger som jobber med vern, altså fortidsminneforeningen eller om det er partipolitiske grupper, ungdomsorganisasjonene, båtforeningen som i dette tilfellet er nærstående eller om det er jernbaneentusiaster eller om det er pendleforeninger. Det er ikke så nøye for meg, det viktigste at vi får et bredest mulig innspills grunnlag til å forsøke å hente ut noen røde tråder ut av det materialet som kommer. Det mener jeg har en opplagt verdi, hvert fall når man jobber med større transformasjonsområde. Det er litt annerledes selvfølgelig om du jobber med et lite bygg klemt innimellom 2 andre liksom. Da blir det selvfølgelig en mer nærstående prosess, men som jeg sa innledningsvis så er jeg jo mer opptatt av kommunedelplanen. Hvis du tar vanlige folk så er jo det veldig komplisert å forstå hierarkiet i planprosessene og hva som styrer hva. Hvis ikke jeg hadde jobbet med dette så hadde ikke jeg skjønnet noe som helst. Så det er jo rett og slett et veldig komplisert system da. Jeg møter også politikere som ikke skjønner det, og de er med å ta beslutninger. De tar beslutninger basert på stygt eller fint, eller fordi de leser den konklusjonen i et dokument. Så er det alltid noen i partigruppene som kan det, så det er jo ikke sånn at vi har et demokratisk problem. Jeg bare sier at det er politikerne som ikke har skjønnet hva sentrumsplanen egentlig innbefatter, hva de tok stilling til etter den prosessen.

Da er vi på siste bolken med spørsmål. Det er en slags miks av spørsmål eller en liten oppsummering. Det kan kanskje være litt komplisert, du snakket litt om den «not in my backyard» teorien, har du hørt om «the ladder of participation»?

Ja, men jeg har ikke kjennskap til det annet enn at jeg har hørt begrepet.

Jeg kan jo forklare det veldig kort. Det er en slags skala som du kan bruke til å vurdere hvor bra medvirkningen har vært i en planprosess. Det nederste nivået er når planmyndigheten kun informerer folk om hva som skal skje uten å gi de muligheten til å komme med innspill. På midten har man «tokenism», som betyr alt folk får gi innspill, men det blir ikke brukt til noe og har heller

ikke gjennomslagskraft. På toppen er det på det mest ekstreme folket som styrer prosessen, og det er generelt mer makt hos folket. Jeg bare lurer på hvordan du tenker at generell medvirkning i Norge i dag legger seg på den skalaen?

Det har skjedd noe de siste årene, man registrerer at det er et tydelig fokus på det. Sterke grupper som involverer seg da, eller hvert fall mer organiserte grupper, men jeg tror tradisjonen har vært der de siste 10-15 årene, at det har vært et poeng i at folk har muligheten til å til å ytre seg. Sånn at det har vært på den delen av skalaen, men du registrerer nå at man må ta det på større grad av alvor og at man må svare konkret. Hvorfor man gjør som man gjør mye tydeligere og mye mer bevisst. Så er det opp til politikerne å ta hensyn til og vekte det som kommer fram. Man kommer fra en tradisjon som snakker om at det er flott at vi har hatt noen møter og har gjort noe greier for at folk skulle kunne ytre seg, men det er et fag vi holder på med og det er det. Vi lar det være med det. Så skjønner jeg at i vårt demokratiske system og med de føringene som ligger ved at vi må stramme dette opp. Som jeg sa innledningsvis skulle vi hatt en mye tydeligere oppskrift på hva som må til og når det må skje i prosessen for at man skal kunne si «check her har vi gjort en ordentlig medvirkningsprosess». I noen tilfeller så tror jeg ikke dette må stå i disse malene at man må dokumentere at man har blitt hørt heller. Det fint hvis man kan, men man får bidra til å si at man har fått belyst det skikkelig da.

Hvordan tenker du det er best å vurdere om en medvirkningsprosesser har vært god?

Jeg tror nå som planprosesser ser ut til å ta såpass lang tid da og at man er grundig i det innledende arbeidet, men at man har jevnlig stopp og jevnlig kontaktpunkt mellom de gruppene eller de som naturlig ønsker å aktivisere seg i sånne prosesser. At det har vært flere høringsrunder og sånn at man gjerne kan vise til at man har fått til noe. Vi prøvde å gruppere den tematikken som kommer inn og lage et hjul på det og se hvordan vi møter det gjennom hele prosessen. Vi har gjort noen gode ting som har gjort det sånn lett å styre for å si at OK her har vi hvert fall gjort det og forsøkt det, men hvem som blir mottaker av en sånn type rapport eller ett sånt type dokument, det vet jeg ikke. Vi har jo som sagt sikkert hatt 10 folkemøter om paradiset gjennom de 3-4 planprosesser som har vært. Kanskje har det vært flere. Vi prøvde å starte med å si at selv om ikke vi har jobbet med det samme området så er det kommet inn disse innspillene. Dette jobber vi med dette liksom, det ligger over oss hele veien og det svarer vi jo på det leverer vi på. Vi har forsøkt å holde en liten tråd i temaene som kommer opp. Nå kjører jo kommunen selv den områdeplanen og de har vært flinkere kanskje til å få andre grupper involvert selv det har vært mye sånn byråkratiske miljøer og det har vært litt mer politikere. Hvor det har vært litt sånn verksteder og skrevet om side opp og ned om ting som man ønsker, så kan man jo se hvordan dette blir når man da begynner å putte dette inn i et plankonsept. Med unntak av at vi ikke har sett nesten noen ungdom eller innspill fra ungdom. Kanskje noe via sosiale medier som ikke jeg har greie på, men med de verkstedene har vært veldig preget av godt etablerte folk og fagfolk. Noen spesielt interesserte i byutviklingsspørsmål har nok ikke vært så aktive på disse verkstedene, men de har sine egne arenaer og sine egne innspills metoder så de har ikke vært i hvert fall dominerende på disse workshopene og verkstedene som jeg har deltatt på da. Selv om det har vært mye kunstnerorganisasjoner og folk som er opptatt av mikroklima og opptatt av urban park, altså det grønne da. At hestehoven har liksom en berettiget plass i det videre liksom. Vi har jo liksom ikke en eneste eik vi skal felle, vi har liksom ikke noen sånne gamle bygninger vi må ta vare på, så det ligger jo veldig til rette for å tenke ganske fritt med unntak av er litt sånn skygge og jernbane og båthavn og en del av barrierer.

jeg har et spørsmål igjen og det er forskningsspørsmålet til oppgaven. Tror du at digitale verktøy kan forbedre medvirkning i planprosesser?

Jeg tror åpenbart at det er mulig å nå grupper som man ellers ikke ville nådd som er de nærmest berørte eller opplagte stakeholders sånn at du kan nå bredere ut i et samfunn ved å ha noen enkle og godt tilrettelagde verktøy. Terskelen for å bruke dem for de som skal medvirke må være lav og det må være enkelt og brukervennlig da, intuitivt. Om det finnes nærmeste en sånn ferdig app eller et eller annet verktøy som du som utbygger får som en del av startpakken, eller så er det den du må bruke for å nå folk. At du plikter å dele den eller gjøre sånn og sånn for det er jo liksom en erstatning for den avisannonsen tenker jeg da, og da å koble det med noen mer aktiviteter tenker jeg egentlig vil være en bra ting. Jeg har ikke svaret på hvilke verktøy eller hvordan det skal distribueres, men at det å hente ut de 200 nærmeste adressene og sende postbrev i postkassa det er litt gammelmodig. Åpenbart så må disse prosessene digitaliseres og det tror jeg også det er i noe grad, men jeg skulle gjerne ha nådd en hel by. I Grimstad har du et ganske en het potet da som heter torskeholmen. Der fikk de faktisk i samspill med kommunen lov til på grunn av pandemien å sende ut SMS via meldingssystemet deres. Samtlige beboere i kommunen tror jeg fikk meldingen, og det bor rundt 20.000 mennesker i Grimstad kommune. Jeg tror de fikk over 10.000 respondenter på det, så det er jo helt vill responsrate hvis du liksom når rett inn i appen eller telefonen eller mailen til folk enn om du liksom bare putter den avisannonse. Det er faktisk veldig godt eksempel på hvordan du kan nå mange og på litt sånn intenst vis få opp raten og da får du også fram kanskje de som egentlig ikke har følt seg så berørt, men som da plutselig blir interessert.

Appendix 4: Informant 2

Informant 2

Da er det totalt 6 forskjellige bolker med spørsmål med litt forskjellige tema. Først det er bare litt personlig, så hvor gammel er du og hva du jobber med?

Jeg er 45 og jobber da som prosjektleder på et ganske stort kulturelt byutviklingsprosjekt her i kommunen, men jeg er jo da ansatt av Rogaland teater sånn at jeg skal jo ivareta Rogaland teater sin interesse da i det prosjektet. Det var liksom der det startet, men jeg jeg er utdannet lysdesigner så jeg har jobbet innenfor teater egentlig hele livet. Ja så er de som sagt litt forskjellige hatter på og sånt, men prosjektleder er stillingsbeskrivelsen min da.

Så oppgaven omhandler om hvordan digitale verktøy kan eventuelt forbedre medvirkning i planprosessen, så jeg tenkte vi kunne snakke litt generelt om medvirkning. Hvordan definerer du medvirkning?

Ja, godt spørsmål. Ja altså det er noe sånn med-påvirkning på et eller annet vis. At man liksom med medvirkning kan jo ha veldig forskjellige effekter, men det handler jo litt om og da skal jeg skal ikke snakke fra en medvirker sitt perspektiv eller et prosjekt perspektiv?

Bare det som treffer deg når du hører ordet, hva det innebærer for deg.

For meg så innebærer nok det at man etter beste evne prøver å involvere så mange som overhodet mulig som kan ha interesse i det man ønsker å ha en medvirkning rundt da. Enten om det liksom er et byggeprosjekt eller ja vi kan jo egentlig være alt mulig, men rett og slett at hvis man er en eller annen form for interessent da så kan man får muligheten til å påvirke den prosessen i alle fall og komme med sine meninger som igjen forhåpentligvis vil styrke prosjektet.

Hva mener du er det viktigste tenker på når det kommer til medvirkning eller en medvirkningsprosess?

Noe av det viktigste tenker jeg egentlig er den kartleggingsfasen. At det liksom ikke bare blir en check-box øvelse. At man sier «jojo, men vi har gjort medvirkning» og så har man liksom gjort det og da kan man krysse av det punktet der og så legger man egentlig hele medvirkningsprosessen i skuffen og så gjør man som man egentlig hadde tenkt seg likevel. At medvirkningsprosessen egentlig ikke får stor relevans det er den store faresonen tenker jeg. Så spesielt det når man gjør kartlegging av de som eventuelt skal medvirke så har man jo en tendens til å få de opplagte medvirkerne, og de som roper høyest for å si det sånn. Så svakheten i det eller den store utfordringen er å få tak i de stille stemmene, de som ikke roper høyt, de som ikke nødvendigvis ser at de har en interesse selv om de kanskje egentlig har det.

Det var litt det neste spørsmålet mitt egentlig. Hva du vil vurdere den største utfordringen til å være, men da er det mye det å få de stille stemmene med?

Ja det tenker jeg og få med de som man nødvendigvis ikke tenker på at er viktige bidragsytere, men som plutselig kan vise seg å være kjempevesentlige. Så liksom det å prøve å selv presse seg litt utenfra de der gitte rammene som er veldig opplagt da.

Du har jo vært sikkert vært med på en del medvirkningsprosesser enten på den ene siden eller den andre. Av alle metodene som har blitt brukt der eller virkemidlene, hvilken av de mener du er best og hvorfor? Hvis du har en spesiell du kommer på.

Jeg var i en sånn en medvirkningsprosess med Stavanger kommune i forbindelse med planlegging av Paradis-området på den områdereguleringen som de er i gang med der, og da var det universitetet som kjørte et slikt framtidsscenario. Altså slike øvelser som prøver å pushe deg i en eller annen retning til å tenke litt sånn ut at boksen på ett eller annet vis. Det at man ikke tenker på sine behov nå, men at du tenker 30 år frem i tid eller noe sånn og at man tenker i et større perspektiv. Det var en sånn innledning med at du våkner opp med å være i 2050. Hvordan ser hverdagen din ut der? Så satt vi i grupper på 4 og så starter du på en historie før man bytter ark og fortsetter på den neste historien. Så egentlig er man med og bidrar på 4 forskjellige scenarioer av hvordan en hverdag i Paradis i 2050 så ut da. Det var en litt sånn gøy øvelse som jeg tror fikk de fleste til å reflektere litt forbi vi det alminnelige tankesettet.

Ja bra. Litt videre nå så går vi mer på plan og bygningsloven. Synes du at plan- og bygningsloven gjør nok for å sikre reell medvirkning?

Nei.

Hvorfor ikke?

Nå kjenner ikke jeg plan- og bygningsloven sånn inngående så hva det egentlig står om medvirkning er jeg er litt usikker på, men jeg synes de formelle høringsprosessene i alle fall kommer for seint i prosessen for å si det sånn, da prosessen er kommet altfor langt. Jeg tenker at medvirkning hvor man kan komme med initiativ fra innbyggere for eksempel, hva er liksom våre behov her og nå. Hva er våre behov i fremtiden? Det blir egentlig litt sånn underkommunisert. Så der tenker jeg at plan- og bygningsloven kunne vært tydeligere på å ha en idéfase, gjerne ha krav om en idéfase tidlig i prosjektet da. Nå sitter jeg og leser ukentlige høringsinnspill til planprosesser og du får en fornemmelse av at innspillene kommer litt for seint inn i prosessen da utbyggeren allerede har definert store deler av det, så handlingsrommet ditt er kanskje under 10%. Hadde det da kommet inn i en tidligere prosess så hadde det kanskje vært et handlingsrom som var opp imot 50 eller 70%. Der tror jeg absolutt at vi har et potensiale.

Da tenkte jeg vi kan gå litt videre på det som omhandler digitale verktøy. Har vært del av en medvirkningsprosess der digitale verktøy har blitt brukt?

Ja.

Hvilke verktøy var det?

Sei det i dag brukte jeg Miro, det er et digitalt verktøy som egentlig bare er et digitalt whiteboard hvor du kan legge inn gule lapper. Det er også maler og sånt sånn du kan sette opp grafer og bilder, men det er egentlig et sånn klassisk samskappingsverktøy som du bruker istedenfor en tavle som du

skriver opp lapper på og bruker til brainstorming. Da fungerer det sånn at alle de jobber på det samme tablået og du kan se hva de andre jobber med. Så var jeg med på en medvirkningsprosess her på fredag i forbindelse med det masterstudiet som jeg sa innledningsvis som Uis gjerne vil etablere til neste år, der er jo blant annet Rogaland teater en av samarbeidspartnerne som er med å utvikle det programmet. Der brukte vi et program som heter Menti på tablet, det er et verktøy vi kjente fra tidligere prosesser. Det er vel egentlig kanskje de 3 sånne sentrale digitale verktøy som vi har vært borti.

Hva var din opplevelse med det?

Jeg har veldig gode erfaringer med det første, Miro. For så vidt egentlig i de 2 andre og altså de har jo 3 forskjellige funksjoner så det er jo liksom å velge det verktøyet som støtter den funksjonen det du ville ha ut av det. Alle 3 verktøyene er såpass enkle at det er lett tilgang, det blir ingen digital obstruksjon med at det er vanskelig å komme inn og at en trenger passord. Du kommer inn på alle verktøyene på mobil. Alt er veldig enkelt tilgjengelig i alle fall for oss som er oppegående på den digitale fronten.

Ja greit, da tenkte jeg at vi går litt videre. Hvem tror du tjener mest på bruken av digitale verktøy?

Det er vel de som skal behandle dataene etterpå tror jeg. Jeg tror de får god effekt av det. Ofte så får du kanskje større utbytte av de som er med kanskje, men det er jo enkelt å behandle dataen etterpå og man slipper dobbeltarbeid. Det kan jo være en del sånne uklarheter altså når folk skriver inn i en tablet på et eller annet og det går veldig fort og sånt liksom så kan det jo så kan de jo selvfølgelig misforstås så det er jo noe usikkerhet i kommenteringen. Hva er det egentlig dette betydde? Det er klart, men det kan jo like så godt skje muntlig. Senest i dag har jeg gått gjennom et referat fra styremøte hvor alt skjedde muntlig og så er det en referent som sitter og noterer. Det er ikke alltid det er 100% for å si det sånt da.

Hva tror du skal til for å inkludere flere fra underrepresenterte grupper?

For det først så må vi selvfølgelig ha en bevissthet om at de gruppene finnes. Det er en vanskelig øvelse det der. Rett og slett en god kartlegging er jo liksom det det aller viktigste og kanskje en sånn åpenhet og på prosessen ved å åpne lukkede dører. Sånn at du liksom selv om du kjører en workshop med de interessentene så kan det jo plutselig generere spørsmål om hvem som er brukere av området. At man er åpen og for å åpne og lukke liksom hele den prosessen da sånn at det ikke blir en sånn «ja men nå har vi gjort medvirkning så nå skal vi ikke snakke med flere». Det tror jeg nok er noe av det essensielle, men det det er sykt vanskelig å være inkluderende med alle eller klarer liksom å spotte alle de nødvendige eller interessentene, de stille stemmene. Det er liksom bedre vær åpen for at de finnes, det må liksom være det viktigste.

Ja det er jo vanskelig generelt da å få folk med på medvirkning hvis saken ikke blir veldig stor. Så for folk som normalt ikke deltar heller kan det jo være noe vanskelig.

Så et enkelt og konkret eksempel vi har er en utvikling av dette området her. Det enkelt å si at interessentene våre er publikum, det er beboerne, det er kanskje skolen som ligger ved siden av her. Kanskje de kan bruke noe uteareal eller noe sånt, men hva med de som lufter hunden og bare ser området mens de går forbi? De kan ha en verdi i dette området. Ta med alle de narkomane som sitter

i buskene her og skyter seg i lysken eller noe sånt. Det er jo og en stille stemme for eksempel, de vil aldri involvere seg i en høringsprosess eller noe sånt. Det er kanskje viktig for de å ha en busk å sette skuddene deres liksom. Det er et samfunnsproblem og en utfordring som vi må lytte til på et eller annet vis. Fjerner vi den muligheten der, ja så flytter vi egentlig bare problemet et annet sted.

Da er det egentlig bare et siste tema har igjen. Her er det en 5-6 spørsmål hvor det er litt sånn miks av litt forskjellig tema eller en slags oppsummering da. Kjenner du til en teori setter «The ladder of participation»?

Nei.

Ikke det nei. Det er en ganske gammel teori, men jeg kan forklare det kort. Det går ut på er at du har en skala med 8 punkt, men på en måte 3 hovedbolker da. Det er liksom en skala for å rangere hvor bra en medvirkningsprosesser har vært. Den første delen da er det på en måte egentlig bare informativ at det egentlig bare er en planmyndighet som bare sier til beboerne hva som skal skje. I midtsjiktet er det mer sånn tokenism, det er mer at du har en samtale med dem, men det skjer ingenting med det. I den siste er det sånn at innbyggerne på det mest ekstreme styrer prosessen selv da. Så det er liksom det fra null innvirkning til all innvirkning på en måte. Jeg skjønner at det kan bli litt vanskelig, men hvis du skulle prøvd, hvordan vil du vurdere at medvirkning i Norge legger seg på den skalaen?

Ja fra liksom null involvering egentlig til full? Da er det nok i den nedre delen i alle fall vil jeg påstå. Det er jo det er jo ekstremt viktig når en går i gang med en sånn medvirkningsprosess å forklare hva som er formålet med det, og være veldig ærlig på det da. Jeg opplever jo at det er veldig mange som interessenter som tror at medvirkning betyr medbestemmelse for eksempel. Altså det å være litt tydelig på hvordan prosessen er og fungerer og sånt da. Det er vel litt sånn tilbake til spørsmålet ditt om plan- og bygningsloven. Jeg opplever vel egentlig at den legger opp til lite medvirkning. Det er derfor jeg vil plassere det på nedre del da, men det er jo helt klart at det kommer litt an på samskapning og sånt. Man tenker jo helt annerledes i dag enn man gjorde for 30 år siden i forbindelse med det da. Så vi er på vei mot det øvre sjiktet på den skalaen kanskje, på sikt i alle fall. Så er det noen som selvfølgelig er bedre i klassen enn andre da. Lov, krav og føringer i plan- og bygningsloven der regjeringen sier forskjellig, det er de som danner grunnlaget for at man beveger seg i den retningen.

Du har jo vært med i en del med medvirkningsprosesser. Når du ser tilbake på dem, hvordan tenker du det best å vurdere om en medvirkningsprosess vært god eller dårlig?

Jo i en medvirkningsprosess er det i alle fall viktig at alle parter egentlig føler at de får noe ut av det. Medvirkningsprosesser hvor du i etterkant blir ble fulgt opp og at de innspillene som er blitt gitt har hatt en relevans da. I alle fall påvirker sluttproduktet på en måte. Kanskje og hvis du hvis du blir tatt med i neste fase så kan det jo være noe implementering, altså vi kan gjøre noen prototyper eller noe sånt. Når man er blitt tatt med på hele den reisen og ikke bare blir invitert i en time også «vær så god» liksom, så er det ferdig med det. Da opplever jeg at de prosessene er mer nyttige egentlig for alle parter og for de som setter medvirkningsprosessen i gang som kan ha en nytte av å ha de interessentene med i hele prosessen, at det er en lenger reise da prosjektet utvikler seg samtidig som medvirkningsaktørene utvikler seg da.

Så det ligger litt mer i at du ser på en måte at det å komme med innspill i hvert fall har brukt litt, at det har vært en påvirkning?

Ja at det liksom har en relevans på et eller annet vis da.

Så det det er ikke nødvendigvis hvor mange som har vært med for eksempel? Vil det være en faktor eller er det blir det litt for enkelt si at det for eksempel var 200 stykker som la inn en kommentar og derfor tenker vi at det var kjempebra liksom?

Det tenker jeg ikke er så vesentlig. Det er det litt mer at vi kan se kvaliteten på det enn kvantiteten. At du liksom velger folk som har forskjellig ståsted sånn at du kan få litt forskjellig input istedenfor. Ser man på det masterstudiet som universitet planlegger er altså vi inne for vi representerer en helt annen måte å jobbe på og komme med noen helt andre innspill når det kommer til behovet for framtidens ledere og ledelsesstruktur og sånne ting. Vi har en helt annen vinkel enn Shell eller ungt entreprenørskap. Det er mangfoldet egentlig som jeg tror veldig ofte bør være nøkkelen til suksess. Der er kartleggingen av interessenter er ekstremt viktig.

En annen tema som veldig ofte dukker opp når jeg har gjort en del litteratursøk rundt et tema er jo mye det forholdet imellom individualitet mot en gruppestemme. Har du en mening om det? Synes du det er viktig å ha flere individuelle meninger eller er det viktig å på en måte ha en stemme fra en gruppe eller befolkning, eller er en kombinasjon best?

Det er en kombinasjon altså igjen litt det som går på mangfoldet av innspillene. En god miks av både de individuelle og det større bildet for så å dra ut en retning du liksom kan konkludere med.

Da har jeg bare et spørsmål igjen og det er forskningsspørsmålet på oppgaver. Tror at digitale verktøy kan forbedre medvirkning i planprosesser?

Ja det er jeg helt overbevist om at det kan, men på godt og vondt. Man må være litt obs på «the dark side» av digitale verktøy, man må være problematikken bekjent da. Det er ingen tvil om at ikke alle blir trigget av det mens andre kan ta avstand fra det eller ikke kan ta en del av det. Så det er farlig å bare kun basere seg på det det da, men ha en bevisst holdning til det i alle fall. Kan det være at digitale verktøy utelukker noen til å medvirke for eksempel, det er jo en sånn en vurdering som man må ta tenker jeg.

Det er jo et ganske godt poeng. Uansett når du snakker om digitalisering så er det begrepet «digital divide» til stede. Så du er mer på en kombinasjon da?

Det kommer jo an på hvem man henvender seg til. Hvis du skal lage et ungdomshus hvor det skal være et gamingrom for ungdom, så er jo digitale verktøy definitivt det beste for å si det sånt da. Hvis du skal ha en medvirkningsprosess om hvordan menyene på et eldrehjem skal være, så er det ikke sikkert at det er det rette. Man velger jo sine verktøy etter prosessen og situasjonen da og hvem man liksom skal medvirke med.

Appendix 5: Informant 3

Informant 3

Hvor gammel er du og hva jobber du med?

Jeg er 24 og stillingen min heter planrådgiver.

Hvordan vil du definere medvirkning?

At man får ta med seg alle relevante parter enten det er innbyggere, naboer og kanskje bedrifter i prosessen fra starten. Man gir de flere muligheter til å komme med innspill og kommentarer, og at man tar med seg disse videre i prosessen. At det ikke blir en sånn «den synes det og det» og så går man videre med det man har tenkt. Så du kan se at folk har faktisk medvirket.

Hva mener du er det viktigste å tenke på i medvirkning?

Hva du vil ha ut av det. Den som holder på med planen, hva er det man skal fram til med medvirkningen? Gjør man det bare fordi man må, eller tenker man at man kan få nyttige innspill.

Du har kanskje ikke vært med på så mange medvirkningsprosesser, men er det en spesiell metode eller aktivitet du mener er best å bruke?

Jeg har ikke vært med på så mye nei, ikke sett så mye heller i jobben. Det har vært litt snakk om at man kanskje skulle hatt en åpen kontordag eller folkemøte, men generelt så er det jo dårlig oppmøte på disse. Der har vi i kommunen ikke nødvendigvis anbefalt å gjøre det sånn. Så jeg vil heller tro at det er viktigere å få ut informasjon der som folket er, for eksempel så er lokalavisen viktig for mange. Egentlig burde det ha vært en Facebook-gruppe for dette, det er det sikkert også, men ja at kommunen er med på å gi ut informasjon.

Så hovedsakelig det å få budskapet ut da?

Ja, men det var kanskje hvilken prosess du ønsket?

Nei altså medvirkning det er alt fra hvordan du velger å gi informasjon til for eksempel hva den beste måten å gi innspill på er.

Jeg har ikke så mye erfaring med det så det er jo en ting-

Hva vil du si er den største utfordringen med medvirkning?

Å få folk til å medvirke, hvert fall å få de riktige folkene til å medvirke. Generelt så engasjerer folk seg lite hvis ikke det er naboeiendommen det skal gjøres noe med opplever hvert fall jeg. Eller hvis de har en særlig interesse som kommer i konflikt med det.

Ja det er jo mye der oppgave ligger, litt det med «not in my back yard».

Ja det gjør det, og det skjønner jeg også. Man nødvendigvis ikke tid, men og vet kanskje ikke hvorfor at man skal gjøre det heller. Hvorfor skal jeg bry meg om hva det bygger på andre siden av byen? Det er veldig mange som ikke skjønner hva som egentlig skal gjøres.

Det neste spørsmålet handler om plan- og bygningsloven. Synes du den gjør nok for å sikre reell medvirkning?

Jeg har ikke satt meg veldig godt inn i det, og det føler jeg kanskje reflekterer plan- og bygningsloven litt da. Man trenger ikke gjøre mer enn det minst nødvendige. Man skal varsle de som blir påvirket, så skal du varsle de lokale. Jeg vet ikke om det nødvendigvis hadde hjulpet om kravene var strengere.

Har du vært en del av en medvirkningsprosess der digitale verktøy blitt brukt?

Nei, egentlig ikke. Ikke som jeg har hørt om i det siste i hvert fall.

Det har ikke vært noe informasjon på nettsiden engang?

Ja om det regnes som digitale verktøy så har vi brukt det ja. Det blir alltid lagt ut noe på kommunen sin nettside.

Har det blitt gjort noe mer enn bare det? Bli noe for eksempel lagt ut på Facebook, eller er det noen andre plattformer dere bruker? Eller blir det kun lagt ut på nettsiden og hvis folk skal se det må de gå inn på nettsiden deres?

Ja det er kun den siste der vi gjør, det blir kun lagt ut på nettsiden.

Føler du at dere får bra respons på det, eller er det mest i avisoppslagene at folk hører om det?

Jeg tror ikke folk ser ting på nettsiden nei. Hvis de ser det så ser de det som regel i avisen. Der er det en liten annonse som forklarer at vi har lagt ut den og den på høring.

Hvem tror du så tjener mest på bruk av digitale verktøy?

Det må jo bli innbyggerne. Kanskje kommunen faktisk, fordi det er alltid greit med litt forskjellige perspektiver. Vi får som regel innspillene til planene fra de statlige organer, og de har jo ikke den lokalkunnskapen som innbyggerne har.

Når det kommer til underrepresenterte grupper, hva tror du skal til for å inkludere flere av de i medvirkning?

Gi de informasjon om hvordan de kan inkluderes. Få ut at de har rett til å delta og bruke sin egen stemme til å komme med deres egne innspill, det er sikkert mange som ikke vet det.

Da var det en 4-5 spørsmål igjen bare. Da er det først litt teori. Er du kjent med det «the ladder of participation»?

Ja vagt. Jeg husker ikke alle stegene, men jeg vet at på det nederste steget er det minst medvirkning og at det blir bedre oppover stigen med forskjellige grader av medvirkning.

Det er jo i prinsippet det det er ja. Nederst er det kun informativt, hvor de pårørte får informasjon og beskjeder, men ingen reel mulighet til å få si meningen sin. I midten da er det mer at de har en prosess, men det er mer et spill for galleriet. Du får si ting, men det brukes ikke til noe som helst. Så har du på en måte det beste på toppen. Der er det jo på det mest ekstreme innbyggerne som styrer hele greien da, så det går litt fra ingenting til 100%. Med det i bakhodet, hvordan vil du vurdert at medvirkning i Norge legger seg på denne skalaen?

Nederst, i og med at det i stor grad bare er informativt. Kanskje på nippet til den i midten.

Hvorfor tenker du det?

Nei jeg tror i den grad at man har fått en dialog med innbyggerne så tror jeg ikke det brukes videre. jeg tror ikke det er noe som egentlig har noe å si.

Det er det vel kanskje litt mer store saker som får veldig mye oppmerksomhet rundt seg at det faktisk kan brukes videre.

Da har de også gjerne vært å spurt barn hva de vil. De vil jo ofte ha muligheten til å leke. Jeg tror i mange tilfeller at ikke det blir veldig stedsspesifikt, det er det generelle. Det er jo greit å ta det videre og for så vidt.

Hvordan tenker du at det er best å vurdere om en medvirkningsprosess har vært god? Hva er de viktigste tingene å bedømme det etter?

Kanskje den informasjon som er ble gitt, altså hva de fikk til å medvirke til, og hvilken informasjon de fikk tilbake. Hvilke innspill man fikk og hvordan man har tatt disse med seg videre. Hvor har de blitt av i prosessen? Kanskje også litt på mengden av det som ble tatt videre.

Tror du det er viktigere at du får en del innspill som faktisk blir brukt, eller er det viktigere at det for eksempel var 300 stykker som deltok istedenfor 50?

Nå ville jeg sagt at hvis du hadde 50 som var godt representert kan det være like bra som de 300. Det er sikkert mange av de 300 som ville sagt det samme.

Da er det egentlig bare et spørsmål igjen, og det er forskningsspørsmålet på oppgaven min. Tror du at digitale verktøy kan forbedre medvirkning i planprosesser?

Ja, jeg tror det hvis det var enkelt. Det er jo det som er fordelene med det digitale, det gjør ting veldig enkelt både for de som skal gi innspill og de som skal få de.

Appendix 6: Informant 4

Informant 4

Hvor gammel er du og hva jobber du med?

Jeg er snart 44, og jeg jobber med byutvikling i Stavanger kommune. Jeg er prosjektleder for områdereguleringen av Paradis. Jeg har jobbet med byutvikling nå i 12 år både kommunalt og privat.

Hvordan vil du definere medvirkning?

Det er jo litt vrient fordi jeg oppfatter jo at vi har en annen definisjon av det enn folk der ute. Det er ofte litt sånn konfliktfylt, men jeg mener jo at medvirkning er noe med at folkene der hvor vi planlegger kjenner områdene eller problemstillingene ganske godt. Noen bor kanskje i et område hvor de er opptatt av trafiksikkerhet for eksempel. Noen er opptatt av at kommunen ikke løser store samfunnsoppgaver godt nok og så videre. Det er jo veldig nyttige innspill til oss som sitter og driver på med det her. Så vi kan jo denne faglige biten av det, men akkurat detaljene omkring hvordan det er å bo og leve og være i områdene som vi planlegger for, der tenker jeg at vi trenger innsikt og det er medvirkning kjempebra til å gi oss. I tillegg så er det jo en mulighet for oss å prøve noen ideer. Treffer vi riktig? Har vi bommet helt? Hvis det er tilfelle så bør en jo høre på og justere så en får innspill tidlig, sånn som den kjennskapen de har til området i tidlig fase, men og når du kommer så langt ut i planprosessen at det faktisk ligger et forslag, at man da kan gjøre korreksjoner og justeringer på det.

Det neste spørsmålet er hva du tenker er det viktigste å tenke på i en medvirkningsprosess, vil du kanskje at det er det å starte tidlig da?

Ja absolutt. Det er jo mange sånne teorier omkring det, men jeg vet at det å gi informasjon ikke blir regnet som en del av medvirkning, men det mener jeg at det er. Det å informere folk fra tidlig stadium hva det er en holder på med, hvorfor en gjør det, når kan de bidra inn med meninger. Det er jo fastlagt i de dere høringsperiodene i reguleringsplanene, det er utrolig viktig for å de å vite. Hva er løpet? Når skal planen være ferdig? og så videre. Så det mener jeg er kjempeviktig. Informasjon tidlig, å være åpne, spill på lag med dem. Ikke hold hemmeligheter for dem ved til å lukke døren i 2 måneder og så sitter vi og lager en plan. Når den er ferdig, da kan du få lov å se den og så kan du mene det du vil om den, men det er ikke sikkert at vi kommer til å gjøre noen endringer på den. Sånn har det kanskje vært litt før, men det regimet føler jeg absolutt at Stavanger kommune er på vei ut av altså. Nå åpner vi opp veldig tidlig. Vi er på Instagram og er på Facebook, har informasjonsmøter og gir folk god informasjon fra starten av, det tenker vi alle fall omega.

Hva mener du er den beste metoden å bruke i medvirkning?

Akkurat nå så har jeg veldig friskt i pannebarken det vi har gjort her ute med de plansjene. Det med at vi tok sånn whiteboard film på hele og hang ut tusjer, det har fungert utrolig bra. Det der formelle på måten du kan skrive inn innspill via epost, det blir veldig formelt. Det er veldig mange som kvier seg på det og du må på en måte være veldig sånn påpasselig på hvordan ordlyden i setningene du bruker og så videre, men den der uformelle der du kan både skrive bare kommentar eller skrive en pil inn og si at dette fint eller de der flate takene de vil vi ikke ha. Gjør det tilgjengelig for folk. Det synes jeg vi har lykkes veldig bra med. Så er det jo opp til oss å ta bilder av dette her, det forsvinner jo når det

regner eller hvis noen velger at denne kommentar vil de ikke ha stående. Den uformelle biten, det tror jeg er viktig. Byplanlegging er så enormt stort og komplekst. Det er vanskelig for folk å forstå hva som ble gjort hva, hvordan de kan påvirke. Så på en måte det å bryte ned barrierene og det er jo det her med prosjektkontoret, det er jo en måte hvor vi kan komme litt tett på de som vi skal planlegge for. Tanken med dette her er jo at vi kan låne det ut til alle som har lyst til å komme inn her og bruke dette lokalet, slik at det skapes litt sånn aktivitet i området. Når bestillingen av benker og bord kommer og vi får de ut, da kan folk oppholde seg her. Det er også en del av det her med å bevisstgjøre folk av sted. Da kan du henge opp litt informasjon om at det faktisk pågår planarbeid her med en internettside som vi kan gå inn på. Det synes jeg er kjempebra, men det å ufarliggjøre byplanlegging, bruke litt andre ord. Være mer omgjengelige i tekstene du bruker. På de informasjonsmøtene som vi har til enhver plansak, en ting er jo hvis du er i et område hvor det er veldig mye debatt og engasjement så kommer det veldig mye folk på disse møtene. Da er det jo som regel en person fra kommunen som står og forteller om prosjektet og så er det de der som er komfortable med å stille spørsmål i plenum. De stiller spørsmål eller kommer med kritikk, som regel kritikk, men etter de møtene så står vi alltid på gulvet. Da kommer alle de andre som ikke nødvendigvis har lyst til å skrike og de kommer bort til oss og spør spørsmål omkring ting som de er opptatt av. Informasjonsmøter er viktige, men det er like viktig å bli stående igjen for å sikre at de andre som er på det møtet kan komme og stille spørsmål.

Hva vil du si er den største utfordringen med medvirkning i dag? Er det kanskje noe rundt kommunikasjon da?

Ja jeg tror kommunikasjon, det med å snakke et språk som folk forstår. Det med å være tydelig på når de faktisk kan melde inn og hvordan de kan melde inn. Det her med at du tilgjengeliggjør noen plattformer. Det at man ikke nødvendigvis er nødt til å skrive en mail til kommunen, men at det kan være forskjellige plattformer de kan melde inn på. Nå har vi jo med de plansjene og vi har de formskjemaet hvor de kan velge å svare på alle spørsmålene, men de kan og bare velge å svare på noen. De kan også velge bare å skrive i kommentarfeltet helt nederst. Jeg tror den største utfordringen er nemlig dette med tretthet i forhold til medvirkning. At de er med og bidrar, men kan ikke se at de er blitt hørt eller ikke se at det de har skrevet har hatt noen påvirkning på planene. En ting kan være at en ikke har fått kommunisert ut, at den ikke har på en måte referert tilbake til at det var veldig mange i den tidlige fasen som var opptatt av dette, det har vi svart ut på denne måten. Eller at det var veldig mange som er opptatt av akkurat dette her, men det er i konflikt med så mye andre ting at derfor så er ikke det mulig å prioritere, men vi har prøvd å imøtekomme dette på en annen måte via dette som er litt mer sånn indirekte. Det er ikke så lett for folk at de faktisk får gjennomslag. Så er det jo det og, medvirkning er jo ikke likt gjennomslag. Du kan tenke deg at vi sitter og skal ivareta utrolig mange hensyn, det er jo masse interessekonflikter. En er nødt til å på en måte prioritere noen foran noen andre. Jeg håper at via dette paradis-prosjektet at folk allikevel kan føle at de har fått gjennomslag for noe. De som er opptatt av solrike og ta vare på solrike uteplasser, at de føler det er en plass for de da når de kommer ned her. Eller de som er opptatt av å få høy utnyttelse rundt knutepunktet, ja de har kanskje og fått det, men så har de ikke fått at det skal være kontor over hele, men så ble det kanskje halvparten kontor. Det er en veldig vanskelig balansegang. Kommunikasjon ut, hva er forventningene der ute og hva kan de forvente av oss. Også det her med at folk må forstå at medvirkning ikke er gjennomslag 100%.

Synes du at plan- og bygningsloven gjør nok for å sikre reell medvirkning?

Det er mange som bruker det der reel medvirkning, hva mener du med det? hva er reel medvirkning kontra ikke reell medvirkning?

Det er naturligvis veldig vanskelig å definere hva det er, men at det ikke bare blir sånn «check box» aktivitet. At liksom noen tenker at plan- og bygningsloven sier at jeg skal gjøre det og det, så da gjør vi de og de tingene og så kan vi si at vi har gjort det, men ingen av forslagene blir brukt. Mer reel medvirkning er for meg at man tar kontakt med folk tidlig. Du hører på hva de har å si og tar en skikkelig vurdering på det, og om noe av det er bra så prøver man å bruke det videre. Det å prøve å gjøre slik at folk kan kjenne seg igjen i det området der.

Igjen da er vi tilbake til at er det da som kan se at de har fått gjennomslag for noe, er det de da som mener at har blitt gjennomført reell medvirkning? Og de som ikke kjenner igjen de innspillene de kommet med, vil de si at det ikke har vært reel medvirkning?

Det er nok lett å si, du får jo aldri alle fornøyd. Det er nok i hvert fall bedre at noen kan kjenne seg igjen enn ingen tenker jeg.

Det er vanskelig det fordi det er mange som bruker det der med at det ikke har vært gjennomført reell medvirkning og da er jeg veldig nysgjerrig på hva er det egentlig som ligger i dette begrepet. Det har jeg ikke helt funnet ut av da, men jeg føler at det henger sammen med gjennomslag. Men hva var det du spurte om?

Synes du at plan- og bygningsloven gjør nok for å sikre reel medvirkning?

Det er jo noen minimumskrav i plan- og bygningsloven, men det er og veldig vanskelig å skulle instruere folk til å drive en type medvirkning. Du bør se på hvilke typer oppgaver du har. Hva er det en prøver å oppnå gjennom planen hvis det er en plan. Hva er det som er viktige problemstillinger? Hvem er det vi bør få fatt i? Det er å drive sånn generell medvirkning ut til alle, du får god innsikt i hva de som vandrer i området og de som er her har å si, men ofte så er det jo naboer som kanskje ikke har lyst til å ha noe nytt her. Ofte kan det være at du faktisk skal tilrettelegge for noe som løser noen problemer, la oss si det er en idrettshall eller noe. Så kan det godt være at naboen ikke har lyst til å ha den kassen rett ut fra stuevinduet sitt, for det er kanskje det det ender opp i. Derimot er det for idrettslagene og for skolen og for de unge som skal bruke dette her, så er det jo enormt viktig å få det. Derfor så bør en jo på en måte gå ut og intervju dem og. Hva er det som er viktig for dere nå som vi skal oppføre denne her? Hvilke uteområder er det dere ønsker og så videre. Så en bør ta en sånn generelle for å få kartlegging av området, men en bør og se på hva programmering det skal være, hva er det for type et område? Er det noen særlige grupper som vi bør gå ut og kontakte? Det er jo vanskelig på en måte å slå fast, eller på en måte å skrive inn i et sånn lovverk. Men ja det er jo et minimum, altså vi oppfyller minimum ved å ha et informasjonsmøte. Det kan en jo gjøre uten å egentlig drive med medvirkning, egentlig kan du stille deg opp og bare fortelle om planen og så si «hade» og gå liksom. Da gir du informasjon, men det er ikke noe dialog. Jeg oppfatter jo at vi i Stavanger kommune, i hvert fall i byutviklingsavdelingen er veldig opptatt av å gjøre medvirkning også noen hakk mer enn det som ligger i lovkravet, fordi vi er interessert i det og det er jo et enormt ressurskrevende å lage en plan. Hvis du lager en plan og så blir det masse bråk i etterkant, du vil jo helst ha de der interessekonfliktene kartlagt tidlig. De behovene eller kravene folk har på forhånd sånn at du på en måte er i hvert fall klar over dem. Da kan du bearbeide noe av det, så får du en smidigere prosess og så føler folk at de har vært delaktige i prosessen.

Har du deltatt i en prosess der digitale verktøyet ble brukt?

Ja.

Hvilket verktøy var det?

Det var jo i koronaens tid, der var man jo nødt. Da hadde vi jo informasjonsmøte på teams. Der ble det laget et Facebook-arrangement, og så var det da en lenke til det teams-møtet. Det er jo veldig pasifiserende. Da sitter nok mange og sjekker telefonen under møtet istedenfor fordi det er jo ingen som ser deg. Det vi har prøvd å gjøre da er jo å engasjere folk. De kunne skrive i chatten hvis de var interessert i noe. Jeg hadde og et møte for næringsforeningen sine medlemmer, det var også digitalt. Der var det jo et profesjonelt opplegg da med video og redigeringspult. Da gjorde jeg slik at jeg hadde et «mentimeter» som var lagt inn i presentasjonen. Så da fikk de en kode og så var de inne i dette «mentimeteret». Underveis i presentasjonen kunne vi da stille spørsmål som «hva mener du er de beste kvalitetene i Paradis?». Da kunne de svare på det, hvor vi fikk de opp på slutten og kunne gå gjennom dem. Da var de mer med, koblet mer på. Vi spurte de fire spørsmål underveis, og det var faktisk ganske mange som svarte på dem. Det synes jeg fungerte bra. Skal du ha en presentasjon på teams, så bør du aktivere dem gjennom en eller annen form for «mentimeter» eller noe sånt.

Så generelt det å aktivisere publikummet på andre måter enn gjennom chatten på teams?

Ja, også det å gjøre det mer uformelt, at det er litt sånn gøy ting og. Det at man ikke lager en avhandling eller ikke tester noen, men mer sånn «hva synes du om det?». Hva er slogan for Paradis i framtida? Når vi hadde det første informasjonsmøtet på teams, så var det ingen som skrev i chatten eller stilte spørsmål hverken under eller etter presentasjonen. Da ender man opp med å bare snakke i en vegg.

Hvem tror du tjener mest på bruken av digitale verktøy?

Det er jo veldig enkelt for oss å sortere etterpå. Det er vanskeligere når folk sier noe plenum, da må jo vi ha en referent som må skrive. Når du gjør det på digital måte, for eksempel et slags spørreskjema, så kan jo du målrette spørsmålene. Du kan på en måte få de til å svare på det du ønsker å få innspill på. Det synes jeg er veldig greit. Så kan du jo si da at de svarene du får de spriker jo i alle slags retninger allikevel, men kjernen av det er jo allikevel kanskje at de svarer noenlunde på det spørsmålet du har spurt. Da har du jo de til ettertid. Vi har jo valgt å lage rapporter fra hver fase. Vi hadde jo en innledende fase, så har vi en der vi skrev planprogrammet, så nå er det kommet til fasen hvor det faktisk skal lages en plan. Det er jo veldig greit da når det kommer inn digitalt, for da er det veldig enkelt å samle dataen. Det er jo og en fordel, men det blir jo fint lite dialog. De får brølt sitt, så det bør jo være en annen form for oppfølging egentlig, men det krever jo ressurser det og. Det som er litt dritt med den måten det er organisert på, altså får vårt arbeid i den daglige kontordagen så har det ikke kommet veldig mye mer krav om medvirkning. Nå sier ikke jeg et plan- og bygningsloven sine krav, men krav fra folket. Det er få som har satt av tid til det, så vi er nødt til å være veldig nøye og gå målrettet til verks i tillegg til å plukke ut de dataene på en effektiv måte. Derfor kan det være veldig krevende. Altså en ting er på en måte å sette opp spørreskjema, men det å skulle bearbeide de dataene etterpå kan være ganske krevende, men lettere hvis de er digitale enn hvis du hadde åpent hus og det kom masse folk og det slippes til masse spørsmål. Kanskje kombinasjonen hadde vært bra, at folk får muligheten til å skrive inn det føler på fra og så et åpent hus hvor de kan komme og spør. Denne uka er det åpent hus her, da blir det spennende å se hvem som kommer. En ting jeg kom på nå som er bra med å gjøre informasjonsmøtene på teams, er jo at det er enkelt å ta de opp og legge video ut etterpå. Da kan de som ikke hadde tid til å delta fremdeles få med seg presentasjonen.

Hva tror du skal til for å inkludere flere fra underrepresenterte grupper?

Da må vi gå inn i de miljøene de er i. Vi må stille de helt andre spørsmål. Det er ikke sikkert at de skal ha spørsmål engang, kanskje de skal ha mer praktiske oppgaver eller ta de med ut på befaring og snakke med dem. Jeg forstår godt at de ikke involverer seg i byplanlegging når det er så formelt som det er. Vi snakker ikke til dem i det hele tatt. Nå pågår det et prosjekt som heter kunst i byutvikling. Der var det en fotosafari. Da tok de kontakt med en ungdomsskole der oppe og tok den med ned i området her med mobiltelefonene sine og tok bilder. Da fikk vi ganske mange forskjellige motiver. Det var en veldig fin og uformell måte å oppdage var de så på som kvaliteter i området og den synsvinkelen de har gjennom bildene de tok. Det er ikke sikkert at vi hadde fått like bra svar gjennom et spørreskjema. Vi hadde jo og et opplegg for ungdommens kommunestyre. Da hadde vi noen spørsmål som vi hadde sendt ut til de på forhånd og prøvd ikke å avmystifisere spørsmålene. Da var det jo sånn, for eksempel et ord som uterom, jeg bruker jo det hele tiden, og de bare «hæ?». En bør jo altså ideelt sett koble på noen folk som kan medvirking, og særlig da unge som er flinke til det. Noen som har jobbet ut forskjellige metodikker, og jeg tviler på at de baserer seg på spørreskjema for å si det sånn.

Kjenner du til «the ladder of participation»?

Ja.

Hvor vil du rangere medvirking i Norge i dag på den stigen?

Generelt i Norge?

I hvert fall etter din erfaring da, det du har vært med på.

Vi er i hvert fall veldig opptatt av det på vår avdeling. Samtidig så er vi jo opptatt av at en ikke skal gjøre sånn «medvirkningsvasking». Det har vi ikke tid til, og vi blir veldig kritisert for det i etterkant, og vi får jo ikke noe ut av det heller. Vi vil jo gjøre medvirking for at det skal hjelpe oss i å få bedre resultat, bedre planer. Så jeg synes at vi er gode, vi bør ligge høyt oppe på den skalaen der. Når du snakker med folk der ute, det det er jo interessant da. Hvis vi sier at vi er veldig gode på det, og de der ute oppfatter det som at vi ikke er så gode på det så må vi ta en liten sånn «reality check». Vi er i hvert fall veldig bevisste på det. Det er utfordrende at det er litt opp til hver enkel plan nå, hvor mye medvirking som skal skje. Det blir nesten litt sånn «hvor dedikerte er prosjektlederen?» eller de i prosjektgruppa. Hvilke gode ideer har de? Hvilke tidligere erfaringer har de med seg som de kan bygge videre på? Det er for uorganisert, det er ikke satt i system, men det er veldig gode intensjoner.

En ting jeg synes er litt vanskelig er å vite hvordan du skal bedømme om en medvirkningsprosess har vært god nok eller ikke. Hvordan mener du det er best å bedømme om en medvirkningsprosess har vært god?

Du får jo ganske tydelige tilbakemeldinger der ute om folk føler at de blir ivaretatt eller ei. Nå bruker de jo Facebook og sosiale medier til å kommentere på planer, mangel av medvirking eller på løsningsforslagene og så videre. Det er jo selvfølgelig noen som roper høyere enn andre der inne og, men at det blir ropt der inne og hvordan de ordlegger seg, hvilke diskusjoner som foregår der, der får du litt peiling på om folk er fornøyde eller ei. Vi ser jo nå i dette her paradiskprosjektet, så er det jo en

gruppe som heter «nei til høyblokker i paradiset». De har jo begynt å bare dele, altså når vi legger ut på Facebook at nå skal det være informasjonsmøte, så deler de det. Ikke sånn «herregud nå er de i gang igjen» ikke sant. «Nå skal de rasere området», men da har det vært deling og noen tommer opp. Det har ikke vært noen sånne store diskusjoner. Nå er vi jo såpass tidlig og at de har ikke sett noe monsterblokker enda. De har nå nettopp fått sett resultatene fra parallelloppdraget her. Det er jo noe som er noe helt annet enn det som de er blitt introdusert for før. Generelt er det bare bra at folk engasjerer seg, men engasjement kan være vanskelig å tolke da det kan være at de som roper høyest kun representerer en liten gruppe, mens det store flertallet generelt er positive. De som er positive til et forslag kommenterer sjeldent på det, da får man kanskje bare en tommel opp.

Da er det bare det siste spørsmålet igjen, som er forskningsspørsmålet til oppgaven. Tror du at digitale verktøy kan forbedre medvirkning i planprosessen?

Jeg tror at det er godt verktøy, men i en kombinasjon da med fysiske ting. En ting som jeg sitter og tenker på da med kommunikasjon ut og sånn. Det er så stort, de bør ha ganske gode rammer. Være tydelige på hva de kan medvirke på. De kan ikke medvirke på alt. De kan ikke komme å si at det skal være en stor park her, det går ikke. Du må på en måte si at det skal komme kontor, det skal komme boliger, det er forventninger om en høy tetthet. Det er innenfor de rammene vi jobber. Det er kjempeviktig. Da forstår folk at «OK, det kjøpesenteret som jeg har gjerne vil ha her, det går jo ikke det.». Tydelig rammer, tydelige spørsmål.