

The role of trust in shaping urban planning in local communities: The case of Hammarkullen, Sweden

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Abstract. Urban planning is increasingly focusing on the social aspect of sustainability. The 2014 report Differences in Living Conditions and Health in Gothenburg shows important and increasing inequalities between different parts of the city, a development seen in cities across the world. The city of Gothenburg has set as its goal the decrease in inequalities by joining forces with civil society, the private sector, academia and people living in the city. Participation and inclusion become important tools in city planning processes for the authorities to understand local conditions, particularly to understand the living conditions of people in socio-economically marginalised areas, whose voices are rarely listened to, and to enable their active participation in shaping outcomes. In this article, we explore the role of trust in improving urban planning, and in shaping possibilities for participation that is positively experienced, in the sense that it increases people's sense of control over their neighbourhoods. Based on empirical work in Hammarkullen, a socio-economically marginalised area in Gothenburg, the article shows how specific local configurations of trust have an impact on local development plans. It further shows how participatory practices coarticulate with the local social situation to shape outcomes in a certain way. Grounded in the empirical study, the paper argues for the importance of understanding the local conditions of trust and how they interact with planning processes in shaping outcomes and future possibilities of cooperation. Further, the paper argues for the need to take the local conditions of trust into account early in the planning phase.

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1. Introduction

As in other major cities, inequalities in living conditions and health between districts in Gothenburg, Sweden's second city, are important and increasing (Göteborgs Stad, 2017). As a basis for policies to overcome inequalities, Gothenburg will regularly publish data on inequalities in living conditions and health in the city. These entrenched inequalities are a result of social norms and politics, as well as practices that over a long period of time have created an unjust division of power and resources in the urban space (CSDH, 2008:10). In Gothenburg, these resources are unevenly distributed between districts and subdistricts, a fact that is most clearly reflected in a nine-year difference in life expectancy between the richest and the poorest districts, but also in different rates of participation in elections and in the percentage of the population who experience social isolation and lack of trust in others. Sustainable urban planning has, as a consequence of the growing awareness of the disrupting effects of inequality (Wilkinson, Pickett, 2009), increasingly come to involve social equity and social cohesion as a complement to environmental protection and economic development.

Various efforts have been made in Gothenburg to strengthen the redistributive urban development policies through knowledge production, cooperation, citizen participation and systematisation of local social experiences in planning processes (Tahvilzadeh, 2015a: 24). In 2016, the city council made the resolution that "Gothenburg shall be an equal city" a budget goal, which was repeated

in the 2017 budget, and the programme for *Equal Gothenburg* constitutes the framework for focusing on social sustainability in urban planning. One of the four target areas of the programme is to create conditions for participation, influence and trust (Göteborgs Stad, 2017: 16). Participation, inclusion and trust are considered determinants of health in their own right, but they are also emphasised because of their importance for better redistributive policies. The purpose of participation is threefold: to increase democratic decision-making, to improve knowledge of local conditions and hence to better adapt interventions, and to increase local ownership and people's control over their lives.

Planning in general and planning for sustainable development have been criticised both for the application of top-down instrumental rationalities based on the perspectives and interests of planners and for a weak adjustment to local conditions and needs. Participation has been a response to several facets of critique, related to the rights-based agenda, increasingly pluralistic societies, and the rise of control and auditing in public management (Swain, Tait, 2007). However, it has been established that trust is a determinant of the effectiveness of participatory planning processes (Senecah, 2004:20). Trust is crucial to achieve cooperation between local authorities and populations, as it constitutes a way to deal with uncertainty and risk (Axelrod, 1984; Tomkins, 2001; Volery, Mansik, 1998). It makes participation and cooperation possible, as it allows people to express their interests and needs and to invest in joint planning processes. Trust is here defined as "the willingness to be vulnerable based on posi-

tive expectations of the intentions and actions of the other” (Rousseau et al., 1998).

The participation and inclusion of groups who feel and have reason to feel distrust in authorities and administrations as a result of segregation and inequality are not necessarily easily achieved. Distrust often leads people to choose not to participate in the shared concerns of the community, such as democratic elections or other fora for influence. Distrust decreases the legitimacy of public institutions, and people can also choose to turn against them (Uslaner, 2002). Of importance for people’s willingness to participate in the shared concerns of the community is a positive expectation that their perspectives, interests, and needs will be taken into consideration. There is a need for trust in public institutions and services.

The literature on trust in public institutions tends to distinguish between one actor who is supposed to trust (trustor), and another actor who is supposed to be trusted (trustee). In general, the population is supposed to trust the institution, and trust (in institutions as well as social trust generally) is achieved when the institution proves trustworthy (Charron, Rothstein, 2014; Hardin, 2006). Hence, the problem to be solved is considered to be the trustworthiness of public institutions, which is achieved through rule of law, equivalence in service provision, and fair and proper treatment (Rothstein, 2013). In the case of participative planning, however, trustworthiness also requires a preparedness to change based on the perspective provided by the participating citizen, in order for participative planning to be perceived as meaningful. Planning agencies cannot act based on what they perceive to be in the best interest of the population but must allow the population to define their interests themselves. The agencies must also be prepared to let the population shape planning in order to open a possibility for change. This means that planning agencies must show trust in the population by showing willingness to be vulnerable. If public services and public servants distrust the population, individuals or groups, they may choose to limit the involvement and influence of the population in different forms of decision-making, such as participative processes (Yang, 2005, 2006).

In this article, we explore the role of trust in a high-profile case of sustainable urban planning in

Hammarkullen, a socio-economically marginalised area in a peri-urban district of Gothenburg, Sweden. In early 2016, the chief executives of four municipal administrations and companies—the city district office, the local municipal housing company, the park and nature management office (hereinafter: PoN), and GöteborgsLokaler—decided to cooperate to lower the thresholds between themselves in order to better address the needs of Hammarkullen. The initiative was picked up by a city-wide initiative, *Equal Gothenburg*, and by one of its focus areas (1), *to create sustainable and equal human habitats*, as a pilot case to explore the effects when the whole city joins forces to strengthen a part of a city district. The purpose of the initiative was to show results, increase the pace of positive development, strengthen trust in the ‘city’ among inhabitants and stakeholders and develop a new way of working, with increased cooperation within the municipality and more citizen participation. The study looks at how planning processes and participatory practices interact with local conditions of trust, shaping outcomes and future possibilities of cooperation, and how this needs to be taken into account early in the planning phase.

In the following section, we will present the context of Hammarkullen and introduce the initiative, before laying out the theoretical framework and methodology of the study and thereafter presenting our results.

2. Hammarkullen and the role of participation in Gothenburg city planning

In order to understand the basis for the local narrative of distrust presented in the next section we need to present the context of Hammarkullen. Hammarkullen is an area in the city district of Angered, in north-eastern Gothenburg, Sweden, with 8,146 inhabitants (2014) (2). The area was built between 1968 and 1970 and has come to represent the epitome of the large-scale planning ideal of the era. Although Hammarkullen and Angered were a result of avant-garde planning at the time, critique was expressed already at its inception, against the large-scale housing, the long distances from the city centre and the deficient public services. The lo-

cal environment was considered the result of economic and technical concerns rather than human conditions, and the social administration in the city warned against segregation and the creation of slums as a result of category housing (The City of Gothenburg's Social Service department, official statement 10/1-1969, Reg.no/100, in Zintchenko, 1993: 39). A total of 80% of the apartments are rental and the rest are small houses (SCB and Göteborgs Stad, 2016). The area is organised with eight-story buildings in the middle and lower houses at the edges. No traffic passes through the area but is directed outwards and around the area. This organisation creates little opportunity for meetings between socio-economic groups of the population, particularly since the central square lost its function as a meeting place when many public services, including a supermarket, closed down. The composition of the population has changed over time, as different groups of migrants have moved in and others have moved out after having established themselves in the new country; 58.1% of the population are born outside of Sweden, compared to 25.2% in Gothenburg overall (SCB and Göteborgs Stad, 2016). The average income has decreased continuously compared to the average income in Gothenburg in general.

The socio-economic situation in Hammarkullen is difficult even compared to other areas in the Angered city district. Unemployment rates are high, as is the level of economic support. Only 68.1% of the children who attend schools in the area leave elementary school with formal eligibility for high school. The city district is also classified by the Police as a *particularly vulnerable area* (3) in the sense that it is characterised by parallel structures of authority and that public authorities do not have full control of the area (Khorramshahi, Hellberg, 2017). In contrast, Hammarkullen has a long history of social mobilisation and community work, including cultural activities. Civil society organisations, political parties and local administration workers have often rallied to protect services threatened by shut-down.

Ever since it was built, Hammarkullen has been subject to initiatives and projects aimed at reinventing the area. The most visible initiative during the last decade has been the establishment in 2010, by the University of Gothenburg and Chalmers

University of Technology, of a Department for Urban Studies. Only five years later, that is in 2015, the universities decided to withdraw their support and the centre closed. However, the departments of architecture and social work still hold courses in Hammarkullen, with a focus on community work and dialogue. An EU-funded project, Utveckling Nordost (Development North-East), has contributed to local initiatives and cooperation between local actors in increasing opportunities for education and employment.

In 2015, the chief executives of the city district office in Angered, the local housing company, the Park and Nature Management Office (PoN), and GöteborgsLokaler initiated talks to improve cooperation in order to strengthen Hammarkullen, and in February 2016 they signed a declaration of intent to join forces. As mentioned before, the purpose was to show results, speed up the pace of a positive development, increase trust in 'the city' among inhabitants and stakeholders and develop a new way of working that includes cooperation between administrations and citizen participation. Soon, the initiative became a pilot case for *Equal Gothenburg*, focus area 4, with the target of creating sustainable and equal human habitats. The process owner of focus area 4 is the central city planning authority.

Several of the activities that were included in the initiative were already in the pipeline, such as the renovation of the indoor swimming pool, the library and citizen office. The city district office, in partnership with a civil society organisation, opened a centre for unaccompanied young refugees. They further started a supervised playground together with the PoN that also renovated the playground in the park. The local housing company, GöteborgsLokaler, and the PoN would all rehabilitate parts of their grounds. Together the four actors were going to open a dialogue office and a community house as well as a mini recycling centre. Finally, the municipal housing company was planning renovations of old properties and the construction of new houses in the centre near the local square, which would require a new local plan to be prepared by the central city planning authority.

All activities were going to be planned with the participation of the inhabitants in Hammarkullen. When it comes to new housing, the central city planning office sets up the local plan as well as

gives the building permit. Citizen participation in the establishment of the local plan is regulated in the Planning and Building Act (PBL, 2010: chapter 5, §11) in the form of a consultation after a draft plan has been finalised. The plan should be exhibited and people and actors who are affected by the plan have the right to give their views and, finally, have the right of appeal.

City planning should, according to the Social Services Act, also take into consideration the social experiences of the social welfare board (Socialtjänstlagen, 2001: chapter 3), which is the city district board in the case of Gothenburg. In 2011, Gothenburg merged 21 city districts into 10 due to lack of equivalence between districts as well as lack of efficiency. Another motive was to increase the capacity of the districts to take an active role in city planning and to develop democracy work (Tahvilzadeh 2015a). It was stated that the increasing distance between inhabitants and politics and administration required increasing participation by the inhabitants and dialogue was emphasised as an important instrument to solve social and ethnic segregation (Göteborgs Stad, 2012). The new city districts appointed administrators with responsibility for city planning and citizen dialogue. The city district office should in particular influence the shaping of new and older housing areas. Their systematisation of social experiences should support structural changes in city planning and neighbourhood work. The new emphasis on participatory governance in Gothenburg policy indicated a major change in official policy, although dialogue had been practised since the 1970s (Tahvilzadeh, 2015b: 242).

3. Inequality, urban planning and trust

In Sweden in general, and Gothenburg in particular, urban segregation has been cemented as a result of urban planning since the 1970s and the large-scale modernising projects. While Sweden traditionally has small differences in income in a global comparison, it has had one of the highest increases in inequality of disposable income compared to other OECD countries since 2000 (Göteborgs Stad, 2017:81). In Gothenburg this is reflected in a difference in disposable income between SEK 141,909/

year in Eastern Bergsjön and SEK 412,256/year in Långedrag. These inequalities are also reflected in a difference in life expectancy of 9.1 years between the poorest and the richest area. While the differences in living conditions and health have been well known for a long time, they were clearly laid out in the report *Differences in Living Conditions and Health in Gothenburg* (2014) that resulted in the programme *Equal Gothenburg* (Göteborgs Stad, 2014). The report was inspired by the global report *Closing the Gap in a Generation* (CSDH, 2008). The *Closing the Gap* report established that the most important determinants of health are access to housing, work and education, as well as a sense of belonging and control over one's living situation, the so-called 'causes of the causes' of health. These factors cover two aspects of social sustainability that are often distinguished (Dempsey et al., 2011), i.e. social equity and social cohesion/sustainability of community.

Constituting a core element of social sustainability, social equity concerns "distributive justice, 'fair apportionment of resources', and equality of condition" (Burton, 2000:170). The purpose of continuous reforms in Gothenburg (S2020, SIA, city district reform) has been to strengthen redistributive urban development policies through knowledge, collaboration, citizen participation and systematisation of local social experiences in planning processes (Tahvilzadeh, 2015a: 24). While participation does not directly address social equity in terms of access to, for example, housing, work and education, it is emphasised as crucial for urban planning for two reasons: it better addresses local needs, as well as creates a sense of inclusion and social cohesion (Dempsey et al., 2011: 295). A sense of inclusion is in itself considered a determinant of health, and social cohesion is theoretically assumed to contribute to strong, fair and just societies (Lister, 2000). Hence, participation is considered crucial for achieving both social cohesion and social equity. The focus on collaboration, citizen participation, and systematisation of local social experiences acknowledges the importance of local knowledge and experiences in planning processes, as well as the need for local ownership, in order to achieve sustainable change, particularly in a context of cemented structures of social exclusion and inequity manifested in the urban space.

Where citizen participation in organised activities and democratic processes is weak, it is considered particularly important for public institutions to actively encourage and enable participation. In policies and programmes, participation has therefore become prioritised particularly in certain ‘deprived’ areas, both to deal with current low levels of social inclusion, trust and sense of control over one’s living conditions, and to address the administration’s lack of access to local social experiences. However, participatory governance has been criticised for failing to acknowledge how relations of power shape inclusion, and for assuming an uncomplicated desire among the population that can be communicated as demands to their rulers (Booth, Cammack, 2015). Arnstein (1969) showed how participation often takes the form of tokenism or non-participation, which functions mainly as therapy and dissemination of information. In a similar way, participation has been analysed as politics of activation directed at marginalised populations, and as such as a form of liberal rule, i.e. as a more efficient way of governing the population that produces specific forms of legitimate agency and action, while at the same time unloading responsibility for societal problems onto self-reliant communities and selves (Cruikshank, 1993; Raco, 2012; Blakely, 2010; Taylor, 2007). Tahvilzadeh (2015b) emphasises the need to investigate the specific policy content, polit-

ical roots and political motives of policy-makers in their embrace of participatory governance, in order to understand their local configuration and potential effects (p. 241).

Despite the extensive critical discussion of the politics of participation, in policies and programmes, participation and inclusion are often presented as neutral tools. Arnstein’s ladder of participation (1969) is used as a frame of reference for discussions about participation in Gothenburg, as well as more generally in Sweden through the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) (Fig 1). However, as others have noted (Castell, 2013; Tahvilzadeh, 2015b), in the SALAR version the first two steps of the ladder, i.e. manipulation and therapy (non-participation, according to Arnstein), have been omitted from the model. Further, the ladder is often presented by SALAR as if the first two steps, information and consultation, were equally valid forms of participation as the top three steps: dialogue, influence and co-decision, depending on the situation, and Arnstein’s classification of them as tokenism is omitted (SKL, 2013). An alternative model in the form of a clock has been suggested, in order to explicitly avoid the perception of a hierarchy of participation.

Through this move, the question of power is obscured in discussions about participation in municipal planning processes, as if participation did not

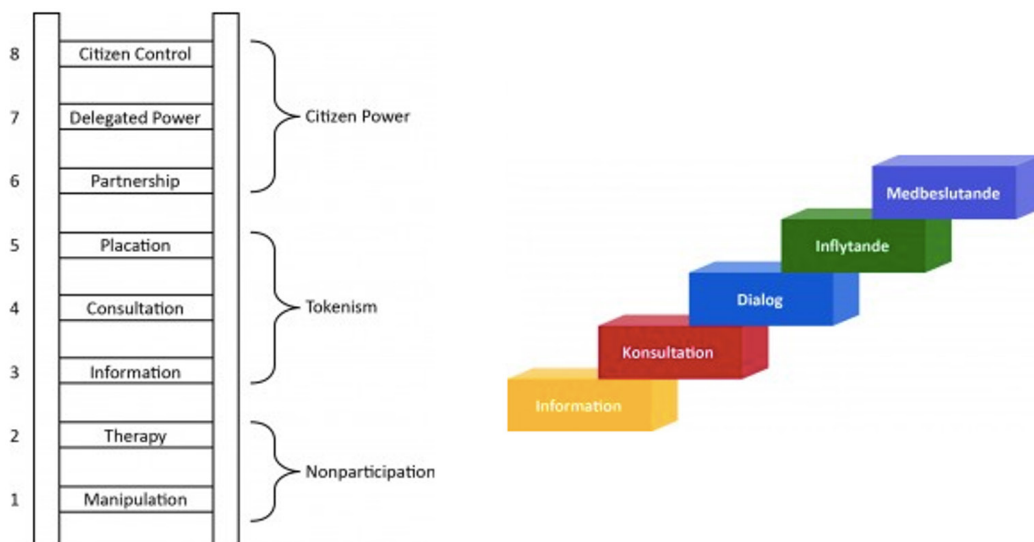


Fig. 1. Arnstein’s ladder of participation and SALAR’s. The boxes in the SALAR ladder read as follow (left to right): information, consultation, dialogue, influence, co-decision. Source: Castell (2013: 37).

involve the redistribution of power and resources, which is the very reason it is promoted as a tool to advance equality in the first place. Participation and inclusion are thus presented as neutral tools, while their possibility to effect equality depends on the openness in decision-making to a change of social norms, politics and practice based on the perspectives presented by marginalised groups. Trust is of importance for people to engage in participatory activities in the first place (4), but even more importantly trust is what enables the necessary openness that will make participation successful.

Trust is here defined as “the willingness to be vulnerable based on positive expectations of the intentions and actions of the other” (Rousseau et al., 1998), adding that positive expectations also require the ability to take the other’s perspective into account, i.e. the cognitive activity of role-play (Mead, 1934). This definition involves a relationship of dependency and uncertainty (Fredriksen, 2014). It is relevant in the case of participative planning, since residents in a local community are dependent on the planning process and the involved public actors for the development of their neighbourhood. As Giddens has argued (1990), citizens have insufficient knowledge of expert systems to base their decision to trust on, hence the uncertainty. The lack of knowledge of the system makes face-to-face relations between professionals embedded in those systems and citizens crucial. Planners are therefore in a position to build public trust in planning processes. By participating in planning, the residents take a risk (Tilly, 2005:12) that the planning agencies will fail to meet their positive expectations by not taking the perspective of the residents into account and adapting planning to their needs and interests. Their participation thereby relies on their positive expectations of the intentions and actions of the planners over time. Moreover, the planner must enter the participative process open to the possibility of being influenced by the participating residents, i.e. the planner must be willing to be vulnerable based on positive expectations of the intents and actions of the participating resident. The risk they face is that residents are unwilling to participate, that participation disrupts planning, and that the residents are uncomprehending of the limitations and regulations of planning, i.e. that participation “results in aggressive and distrustful tension, worsening rela-

tions”. These are fears expressed by city officials in an inquiry initiated by the city executive board in 2011 (Lydén, 2013, in: Tahvilzadeh, 2015b: 243).

As mentioned, trust is not just important for the decision to participate, but also for making participatory activities a tool for equality, as the social norms, politics and practices that have produced inequality are opened up for change. To achieve that, planners must be willing to be vulnerable in the sense that they take people’s perspectives seriously and let them affect planning. If we relate this understanding of trust to Arnstein’s ladder of participation, we see that the first three steps, manipulation, therapy and information, involve no vulnerability, i.e. openness to the perspective of the other, nor do steps four and five, consultation and dialogue, unless the processes are allowed to influence planning, i.e. step six and upwards. Laurian (2009) presents a number of paradoxes of trust and, based on Warren (1999) and Stein and Harper (2003), discusses the distinction between participatory and deliberative planning. In addition to the benefits of participation as a lubricant for cooperation, deliberative processes “emphasize ongoing communication, mutual learning and understanding of issues” (Laurian, 2009: 382), i.e. they improve the ability of planners to understand residents’ perspectives, and they improve the ability of residents to understand the structures within which their influence is possible. Deliberative planning thereby provides additional tools for strengthening the possibility of trust over time.

Finally, planning tends to involve a number of stakeholders who come to the table not only with uneven powers and resources (Laurian, 2009: 374), but with different missions to accomplish. The goal of social equity and cohesion is jointly formulated in central municipal administrations; however, municipal actors interpret those values differently based on their specific mission. The study of the Hammarkullen initiative shows that the way the trust relationship plays out between residents and administrations in planning processes is shaped by the trust relationship within (different administrative levels) and between municipal actors. Existing relations of trust between stakeholders, between institutions as well as on an interpersonal level, shape the possibility of cooperation (Laurian, 2009:376). Hence, there is a need to open up public institutions

in order to look at how trust is built between civil servants at different levels of the administration, as well as how different departments and agencies relate to each other and the population.

4. Method

This study is part of a larger research project that looks at possibilities and obstacles for building trust between the population and the local administration in Angered. The project is a Flexit project, funded by the tercentenary fund, which means that the project is conducted in cooperation with the Angered city district office, but independently funded. Between September 2016 and September 2017, the start-up phase of the initiative in Hammarkullen, the project has followed the process at close range. The study is based on observations of the main part of the meetings where the initiative has been developed, as well as of the main part of the meetings between residents and the administrations, and of the dialogue workshops held by external consultants and meetings organised by local groups. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 20 public servants who work or have worked in Hammarkullen, and with 35 inhabitants, where a breadth of perspectives has been secured. The questions focused on Hammarkullen and its development, the relationship between inhabitants and the administration, as well as the ongoing initiative. The questions have been fairly open so as to leave space for the respondents to define issues and reflect freely. Conversations have been continuously held with involved public servants. In January, parts of the results were presented to the steering group, and the reflections from that occasion are included in the study. After September 2017 the research project has observed the initiative from a distance.

The material has been analysed in terms of how the respondents in the interviews represent themselves and the other as well as in terms of their expectations of the intentions and actions of the other, and their willingness to be vulnerable based on those expectations. The latter involves being open to the perspective of the other. The interviews are thus treated as instances where the respondents ex-

press how they perceive the possibility of trust. Furthermore, the observations of how the relationship is practised in meetings and participative activities have been analysed in terms of how actors try to control processes and how they are practising the willingness to be vulnerable by exposing themselves to the risk of participation through openness—openness with regard to including the perspective of the other as well as expressing their own needs and interests. In so doing, it is possible to get a better understanding of the conditions of possibility for performing trust in specific ways, with effects on planning processes in practice.

5. Local conditions of trust and participation in city planning—the case of Hammarkullen

5.1. Narratives of distrust

In their interviews, the Hammarkullen residents express a rather unified account of how trust is created in the relationship between residents and the administration. They all, irrespective of background, emphasise the need to meet and to be listened to. This is particularly the case since civil servants in Hammarkullen and Angered rarely live there themselves, and are regarded as representatives of the majority population of ethnic Swedes and therefore considered to know little of the local living conditions. “They have to place themselves in our shoes,” one woman says. Sometimes the difference between civil servants and residents is related to ethnicity in the interviews, but more often it is related to socio-economic marginalisation. When residents do meet civil servants in connection with efforts to come to terms with local problems, they find that civil servants hide behind laws, rules and resources, which prevents local problem-solving. Some residents give accounts of how the inability to listen, on both parts, creates a distrustful relationship. However, residents tend to make a distinction between front-line civil servants, whom they generally trust as “they know Hammarkullen”, and central-level administrators and politicians.

The civil servants present two different perspectives on trust. A few of them say that trust is created when you inform of your plans and then deliver. The civil servants who express this view are mainly responsible for delivering on certain goals urgently. The others give the same account of trust as the residents. However, front-line civil servants emphasise that there is potential for trust locally, but that obstacles are created by initiatives taken by the central administration, initiatives which either prevent front-line civil servants from building relations, or create local solidarity between them and the residents in opposition to the central administration.

A narrative of distrust emerged among the residents based on the feeling of being abandoned, on the social distance between Hammarkullen residents and the authorities, on dialogues and promises that are not heeded or fulfilled, as well as the experience of never being asked about their interests and needs. The feeling of being abandoned by the central city is based on a decline in services, lack of activities, deteriorating maintenance of outdoor areas, and the lacking quality of schools and safety for children. Residents say it creates a sense of hopelessness and blunting. The distance between residents and authorities has been mentioned above and it creates a sense of solidarity between front-line civil servants and residents in opposition to decision makers, or prevents front-line civil servants from building relations. Hammarkullen has been the object of a long line of dialogues conducted as part of external projects, as well as by the locally placed students from the departments of social work and architecture, dialogues that have often been perceived as promises that never materialise. At the same time, there is a perception that things happen very fast, and that the residents are never consulted. The new supervised playground is one example. While it is an appreciated addition to the park, it is questioned based on the lack of anchoring of the plan in advance as it falls into a perceived pattern of top-down planning.

Several civil servants express reluctance to engage in dialogue initiatives in Hammarkullen. Some refer to strong local organisations supported by a number of external actors, such as representatives of university departments, constituting local networks of trust (Häkli, Minca, 2009), as an obstacle to dialogue since their presence prevents access to oth-

er voices in the neighbourhood. They also express a fear of causing disappointment when participative processes are perceived as promises that cannot be fulfilled, and feel uncertain about what methods to use in order to better control dialogue processes.

In this context of distrust, the Hammarkullen initiative was to be implemented with the participation of the population. Both residents and local civil servants perceived the initiative as top-down. Representatives from the local tenant association said: "It was strange because they said they were starting this major dialogue with possibilities for tenants to have an influence, but they already had very concrete plans for what was to be done." Although people who distrust the system would be less inclined to engage in participatory planning processes, distrust may also constitute a motive to be vigilant (Laurian, 2004). Still, for both residents who were active in the local community and those who were less active expressed hope, although hesitantly, that change would be possible. In the following, we will look at what happened in two of the main activities of the Hammarkullen initiative, namely, the development of the local centre and the restoration of an outdoor space.

5.2. Development of the local centre

Several individual activities were planned in relation to the local centre, in particular by GöteborgsLokaler, the municipal company managing local squares and premises for business, but all four actors had ideas about the development of Hammarkullen Centrum. GöteborgsLokaler were to renovate the library and citizen office, and the vegetable shop. Thereafter, the outdoor premises were to be renovated. Negotiations were underway to attract a superstore. The municipal housing company was planning new constructions next to the local square, the building committee had approved new housing and the city planning authority was working on the local plan. There was some disagreement between the city district office and the housing company regarding the need for a new preschool in the area and for floor space in the new buildings to be allocated to commercial use or other local activities. The preschool and floor space allocation for alternative uses was part of the mission the build-

ing committee gave to the city planning authority. The point of departure for the municipal housing company was to quickly build cheap housing using prefabricated buildings, in order to meet the goal of dealing with the housing crisis in the city, which leaves little room for other uses of floor space. As we will see in the following, trust played out in different ways in relation to time and communication and the performance of dialogue activities.

Municipal planning processes are slow and the effect of time on trust has proved important. In Sweden, citizen participation in local planning is regulated by the Planning and Building Act and is normally organised late in the process, after a complete plan has been presented, in the form of a consultation. Normally, no dialogue is held earlier in the planning process. Citizens who are affected by the plan are also guaranteed the right of appeal. The possibility of engaging in the process has been questioned, particularly in areas with low levels of participation and language barriers, and a more proactive dialogue between residents, politicians and planners has been recommended (SOU, 1996: 162; Berntsson, 1996; SOU, 2005: 77). The process is unknown to most residents in the study and the long period up to the consultation is perceived as a lack of communication and transparency. The time for the consultation was postponed several times and no new date has been set at the time of writing this article. Hammarkullen residents who are aware of the process express distrust that the consultation will allow for real influence and consider the plans that are being exhibited difficult to change at such a late stage.

In the communication vacuum of the planning process, the municipal housing company engaged a consultancy firm to arrange a dialogue workshop around their renovations and the development of the area. The consultant emphasised that the tempo had to be high since they wanted the information to feed into the local plan. Representatives from the city planning authority were invited and the result was presented to the authority in a special meeting, which was a deviation from the normal procedure. A conflict between the local housing company, the city planning authority and the city district office regarding the pace of the process, became apparent. While the local housing company wanted to speed up the process, the city planning authority stuck to its slow processes, and the city district office also

required a slower process due to its responsibility to guarantee citizen participation and to systematise local social experiences in the planning process. The need for each authority to control their own mission and process prevented them from opening up and communicating their different perspectives, and how their respective public missions could contribute to a shared goal, and thereby prevented them from fully engaging in participatory activities.

While the dialogue workshop held by the consultancy firm sparked interest in the planning process, after the report by the consultant was presented (with very limited participation by residents), there was hardly any information provided to the population for several months. The participation they were promised at the outset of the initiative (5) was delayed and residents experienced a lack of communication and transparency. Front-line civil servants had no information they could communicate to the residents, which they felt created a new distance between them and the residents. In this vacuum, residents started to act and demand that their voices be heard. In the absence of positive expectations of the intentions and actions of the administrations and companies, that was due to their lack of openness, the result was local mobilisation in order for the administrations not to be able to avoid hearing the interests expressed by the residents. The distrust that emerged, or was reinforced, made them take up what Laurian calls 'watchdog roles' (2009: 382). A local resident presented his own plans at local meetings, sent it to civil servants and posted it at the tram station. Thereafter a local network of residents, 'Vårt Hammarkullen' ('Our Hammarkullen'), arranged their own dialogue workshop, and invited civil servants to listen only.

5.3. Dialogue

The two dialogue workshops that were held, one by a consultancy firm and the other by a local network of residents, represent very different articulations of trust, and contribute in very different ways to the sustainability of local planning.

Based on the awareness of existing dialogue fatigue and complaints about promises not fulfilled, the city district director did not want to arrange major dialogue events on the broader development

of Hammarkullen. Instead, the director wanted specific dialogues related to deliverables. As a result, the municipal housing company decided to hold their own dialogue with its tenants related to its own activities. However, it did include the broader topic of the development of the local centre and new housing in the dialogue. It engaged a private consultancy firm to hold the dialogue event and participated mainly as an observer, hence missing an opportunity to build relations with the residents through personal meetings. While the city district office and certain other departments in the city have in-house competence in holding dialogues, municipal companies rarely do and therefore tend to rely on private consultancy firms (6). In the workshop, participants filled out individual forms and the results were statistically summed up in a report. The workshop thereby did not constitute a dialogue in the sense of deliberation, but rather involved the collection of information on resident opinions. The form of an individual survey controlled what information could be collected and was designed based on the information the municipal housing company desired. The turnout—88 residents participated (there was an underrepresentation of participants of non-European background)—was considered satisfactory and the arrangement was appreciated by the participants. However, several participants expressed their scepticism that the workshop would result in actual change, thereby safeguarding against future disappointments with regard to the results of the workshop not being considered. The dialogue was arranged together with the local tenant association, to benefit from the trust the residents have in its representatives, but also because they have the local knowledge necessary to interpret the results.

One hundred resident turned up at the second dialogue workshop, arranged by the local network of residents, 'Vårt Hammarkullen', with a broader representation of people with different ethnic backgrounds. In contrast to the workshop arranged by the municipal housing company, this workshop provided an opportunity to exchange perspectives, primarily between residents, with civil servants as listeners. The workshop was set up as group discussions around certain broad topics, and the results of the discussions were presented to the entire group at the end of the workshop. This arrangement provided a possibility for the invited civil servants to

get a broader and richer idea of how the residents reflect on their needs. There was hope that the civil servants would be affected by the personal contact and by listening to the residents. The willingness to participate as listeners can be seen as a choice to trust the population, as it would become difficult to deny what they had heard during the workshop. The invitation can be seen as a demand that civil servants show such trust, since declining the invitation would have had very negative effects on the relationship. Some of the participating civil servants also expressed discomfort at participating.

A particularly interesting aspect is the individual character of the first workshop and the collective character of the second. In the first case, information is provided on individual preferences translated into statistics. In this form, the "listeners" (the municipal housing company) minimised their vulnerability, since this type of information can easily be discarded based on representativity. In the second case, that is the workshop that was of a more collective character, where smaller groups through deliberation presented a shared view, it becomes difficult for the listener to deny the voice of the residents, despite the fact that the participants represent a small percentage of the total population.

The deliberation that characterised the dialogue workshop arranged by 'Vårt Hammarkullen' improved the possibility both that the result of the development of the local centre would respond to the needs of the residents, and that trust would be strengthened in the relationship between the administration and residents. It is important, however, to note that the initiative by 'Vårt Hammarkullen' was made possible by a strong civil society network with the ability to mobilise participation as a result of local trust, which is not necessarily present in other similar, marginalised urban areas.

5.4. The renovation of an outdoor space

The outdoor environments are central in the Hammarkullen initiative, both with regard to the target of *Equal Gothenburg*, that is, to create sustainable and equal human habitats, and with regard to the purpose to lower the barriers between the administrations and companies. Several areas, owned by different municipal actors, were to be renovated as

part of the initiative. Among them was a space outside a block of flats where the ground floor was to be developed into a community house, a mini recycling centre, and a dialogue space. The municipal housing company owns the building and outdoor space, while the city district office rents most of the ground floor for its activities, including an open preschool and an activity centre for young newly arrived refugees. The community house and the dialogue space were set up in cooperation between the two actors.

The outdoor space in front of the block of flats was considered unsafe and was not used by residents. The first floor was covered by a black tin roof to protect passers-by from garbage being thrown out of windows. Protected by high bushes and with insufficient lighting, the space was used by drug dealers, what added to the passersby feeling of insecurity. The municipal housing company applied for and received funding for the renovation of the outdoor space and presented a very short time frame for implementation in local media—a time frame that was considered unrealistic by several other actors, particularly since the plans were to build on participative processes with residents. The municipal housing company managed to negotiate the time frame and invited the staff of the operations on the ground floor, as well as other local actors, including one (1) resident who was active in an association in the adjacent building, to a dialogue meeting.

At the meeting it was made apparent that the representatives of the municipal housing company had made incorrect assumptions about the activities on the ground floor, including their needs and regulations, upon which they had made their plans. Throughout, the Hammarkullen initiative exposes a lack of communication between the various actors that are present in the area, which results in incorrect assumptions and rumours. This problem also characterises the relationship between different departments within the city district office, which fail to communicate, and thereby create stress among staff, which is communicated to the population as the failure of higher-level administrators to understand the local context. The meeting held by the municipal housing company represents a positive example of how unnecessary and costly complications can be avoided through a transparent and participative process among the involved official actors.

It further filled the function of building trust that contributed positively to the implementation of the plans.

However, to some extent the meeting represented a conventional approach to planning. A consultant who had been assigned to design the outdoor space presented the plans. The main plan was to construct concrete benches and the residents would be invited to choose colours and paint the benches. This mode of working was strongly objected to by the one (1) resident present at the meeting. The objection led to a discussion about the actual proposal as well as about how the residents should be involved in the process. During this discussion, several interesting points were raised and productively managed as a result of the open and flexible approach applied by the representatives of the municipal housing company.

Discussions about the proposal concerned the design of benches and lighting, and the possible removal of the black tin roof. The dividing line in all three cases was between a focus on security on the one hand, and a focus on comfort on the other. Should benches be designed to be comfortable, and thereby possibly encourage people to dwell in the spot and disturb residents in the building, or should they be uncomfortable in order to encourage people to sit only for a short while? Should lighting be designed to create a comfortable place to stay or to prevent criminal activity? And, finally, would it be possible to take away the tin roof without running the risk of people dwelling in the space being hit by garbage thrown from the windows?

In the absence of residents' voices, participants interpreted the needs and interests of the residents with regard to the development of the outdoor space. Rather than solving the issue at the meeting, it was agreed that involving the residents would both provide access to their views and create a sense of ownership and responsibility for the space and hence decrease the risk involved in removing the tin roof. As a result, the municipal housing company invited the residents to lunch in the outdoor space to discuss the development of the place. Compared to other meetings with a less successful outcome, what stands out in this case is the flexible approach taken by the representatives of the municipal housing company that made it possible to openly respond to the critique presented and change the mode of

operation. The fact that the representatives of the housing company as well as from the other organisations had both established relations with residents and a mandate to make decisions made local problem-solving possible.

The ensuing dialogue lunch with residents was held in the outdoor space and women active in local associations served the lunch, while staff from the housing company engaged in conversations with the residents. Over 40 residents attended the lunch, which was considered a success. Staff with specific language skills was available to overcome the language barrier.

6. Concluding discussion

The objective of this article has been to explore the role of trust in urban planning processes that aim to be participative and build trust in socio-economically marginalised areas. Based on an empirical study of a particular initiative by municipal actors to join forces to develop Hammarkullen, an area of around 8,000 inhabitants in the city district of Angered in Gothenburg, the study has looked at how municipal actors and residents show trust in participatory practices, i.e. how they are willing to be vulnerable based on positive expectations of the intents and actions of others.

The Hammarkullen initiative is implemented in a context characterised by residents' distrust in local authorities as well as by front-line civil servants who build relations with residents, and higher-level administrators who show a lack of trust in the population as they are hesitant to engage in relations with them, both because of uncertainty about who the residents are and about the effects of engaging in dialogue. We have looked closer at two specific processes to better understand what is at play.

The study shows that time and communication shape how participative processes play out and how the residents respond to participative practices. Long and delayed processes require continued communication in order for activities not to be interpreted as promises that are not fulfilled or even as manipulation (Arnstein, 1969). The asymmetrical character of trust means that "it takes more knowl-

edge to trust than to distrust" (Laurian, 2009: 374). In the communication vacuum that emerges, rumours run the risk of disrupting efforts at building relations. In the case of Hammarkullen, where civil society is active, residents will fill the vacuum with their own activities, taking the role as watchdogs (*ibid*). By responding positively and engaging with the initiative of the local network of residents, the municipal actors managed to avoid the negative effects on trust that could have been the result of the communication vacuum. Still, one year after the workshop the city planning authority has not completed a local plan that can be exhibited for consultation with the residents.

The development of the local centre further showed how the lack of trust, and the lack of communication regarding missions and perspectives between the different municipal actors, prevented a timely and productive dialogue with residents. Instead, the lack of communication delayed the process of preparing a joint plan for the development of the local centre with the participation of residents, and prevented the possibility for front-line civil servants to communicate with residents regarding the plans and the process. The inability of the civil servants to communicate with residents is interpreted by residents as a lack of trust on the part of the municipal actors and thereby as a reluctance to engage residents in the planning process.

In contrast, the plan by the municipal housing company to renovate an outdoor space managed to create an opportunity for necessary communication between municipal actors. Thereby they managed to avoid false assumptions about the perspectives and interests of other actors, and the risk of front-line civil servants communicating negative views of other actors in meetings with residents. It should be noted that the renovation of the outdoor space was a minor intervention compared to the development of the local centre. However, it illustrates the importance of the role played by front-line civil servants. Furthermore, the possibility for the front-line civil servants to be flexible and make decisions, without the obligation to anchor their decisions higher up in the organisation, provides an opportunity to engage constructively in dialogue with the residents. In the case of the development of the local centre, decisions have to be made higher up in the organ-

isations, but decision-makers can productively engage front-line civil servants, who already benefit from interpersonal trust in relation to the residents, in order to avoid time and communication problems and hence contribute to creating positive expectations among residents.

Finally, the two different types of dialogue workshops indicate how trust shapes the specific form of participation. A controlled and individualised form of communication, as the one employed by the consultancy firm, shows a lack of trust in the ability of the residents to understand the limitations of urban planning and an unwillingness to open up for processes that may affect the outcome in uncertain ways, and it takes the shape of a consultation, which Arnstein (1969) classifies as a form of tokenism rather than actual participation. Instead, the collective conversation of a workshop led by residents was only made possible through the trust the civil servants showed in the event and the organisers, and the deliberative character (Laurian, 2009) enabled an improved and deepened understanding of the needs and interests of the residents, and hence possibilities to better address local needs throughout the planning process.

In conclusion, we see that the specific configuration of trust between residents in a local neighbourhood and planning agencies shapes how participation is played out, with effects on the possibility of adapting plans to local needs and interests as well as on people's sense of control over their lives and the places they live in (7).

Notes

(1) Equal Gothenburg has four focus areas: 1) to create a good start in life and good conditions for growing up; 2) to create conditions for work; 3) to create sustainable and equal human habitats; 4) to create conditions for participation, influence and trust.

(2) The actual number of people living in Hammarkullen is unknown and difficult to estimate due to an assumed high number of undocumented residents.

(3) An important debate has ensued regarding the effects of classifying and stigmatising communities as particularly vulnerable.

(4) Distrust can also motivate participation as people take the role of a watchdog (Laurian, 2009).

(5) Information letters had been distributed to the population both by the local housing company and the city district office, and the housing company had held meetings with the local tenant association, where the promise of participation was made clear.

(6) It should be noted, however, that the municipal housing companies often have local staff who manage to build positive relations continuously through their work.

(7) This article is part of the 40th issue of *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series* entitled "Sustainability—differently", edited by Mirek Dymitrow and Keith Halfacree (Dymitrow, Halfacree, 2018).

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