Conflict and Tension in Co-creative Processes

A case study of an urban renewal project in Jungshoved

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how and why conflict and tension can arise in a co-creative process, where a municipality and citizens collaborate in a partnership. The research approach is a single case-study of an urban renewal project in Jungshoved, Vordingborg Municipality, where tension and conflict was present. It is argued that this is a critical case using Bent Flyvbjerg's approach to case-study research. The data used consists of two interviews with a representative from the municipality and three members of the local council of Jungshoved. Using those interviews the experiences of the two parts of the partnership is explored in order to understand the reasons for conflict and how they could have been mitigated. Theory on social sustainability, citizen participation and co-creation is used to form the theoretical framework for the discussion, where the equality of the partnership and the level of influence held by the citizens is assessed. This thesis finds that unclear communication and definition of boundaries for the co-creative aspects of the process has been the central reason for tension and conflict. Furthermore, it points to organizational factors that might limit the municipality's ability to facilitate co-creative processes.

Contents

Problem Area

The idea for this master thesis started with a strong interest in the relationship between citizens and public institutions. For a large part of my time at the university I have been interested in citizen involvement and participation mostly from a perspective of theory of democracy and social sustainability. In these fields, strong ideals of the justice and righteousness of involvement are prevalent and citizen participation is seen as a solution to a wide array of challenges. This thesis marks my transition from student of planning to an actual planner that works in the real world, which is why I want to use the opportunity to research a subject that I know I want to work with after graduating. I therefore found it relevant for me to dive into a concrete case to learn from real experiences of planners collaborating with citizens to strengthen my knowledge of participation from theory with experience from the real world.

On my final bachelor project, I worked with local sense community in an area that experienced dwindling population. This caught my interest of planning outside larger cities. I found the issue of areas struggling with declining population interesting and complex. I struggled with finding a perspective on the discussion of whether the trend of people moving towards the larger cities was a natural development that could not be stopped or if it was caused by years of political reforms leading to public services, business and growth being centered in and around the large cities and whether the right approach was to try and reverse the depopulation in the outer areas or to let it happen. In this context I found the perspective of social sustainability. The need for local communities, quality of life and pride of your local area does not limit itself to large cities with growing population and booming businesses. As shown later, quite a lot of people still live in areas, where others are moving away and research into how quality of life for these people can be strengthened and enhanced is relevant and important. This idea of not necessarily planning for growth, but for sustaining and strengthening qualities that already exists, with whatever available resources seemed intriguing. In this context engagement and the local community is detrimental, which is why this thesis aims for learning from experience about the relationship between municipality and a local community to better understand the potentials and challenges of two very different actors collaborating.

Urbanization

Since the industrialization, urbanization has been a dominant trend as work moved from the countryside towards the larger cities. During the industrialization more and more people started working in urban professions while the employment in agriculture decreased, strengthening the trend of the population moving towards cities. (Den Store Danske, 2016) This means that the share of people living in rural districts has fallen since the early 1900's (fig 1) (Dansk Statistik, 2016).
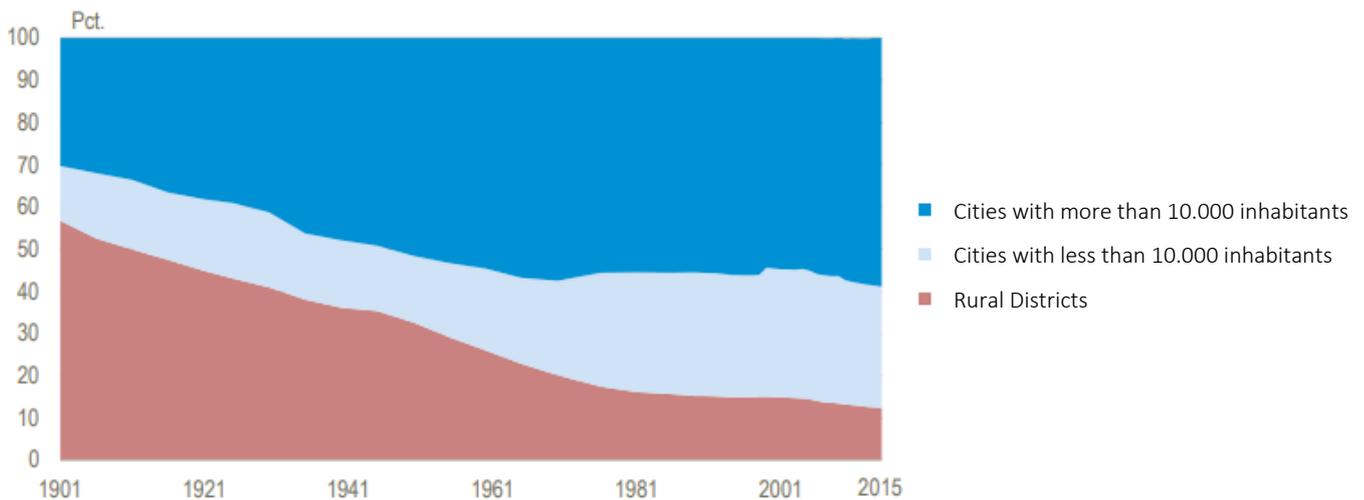
Fig. 1 (Dansk Statistik, 2016)

The consequences of depopulation are most severe in the outer areas, where it leads to empty houses and schools and public services closing or moving away. (Dansk Statistik, 2016)

In 2011 Eurostat did a study on the degree of urbanization of EU-countries. Compared to other EU-countries, the degree of urbanization in Denmark is in the lower half, with 43-45 % living in rural areas compared to the EU-average of 24-33 %. It has to be mentioned that the way of analyzing used by Eurostat, differs from the way used by Dansk Statistik, and the numbers of Fig. 1 can therefore not be compared to the above percentages from Eurostat. (Dansk Statistik, 2016)

Based on this it can be argued that a large amount of the Danish population is living outside of the large cities and are therefore experiencing the consequences of depopulation to various degrees. While the development in Denmark has not been as extreme as other countries, it still exists.

Vordingborg Municipality

The same trend is visible in Vordingborg Municipality. Overall, the municipality expects a population decrease of 2,4% in the period 2020-2032. Since this percentage is equivalent to a reduction of 1.102 citizens over a period of 12 years, a fair amount of uncertainty is off course expected. While 2,4 % can seem like a negligible change, looking at the distribution of age groups paints a slightly different and more challenging picture for the municipality. The age group 0-15 years is expected to decrease by 3,58 %, the age group 16-64 years expects to shrink with 13,18 % and the age group 65-99 years will increase with 20,78 %. This means that the active workforce will decrease while the share of elders will increase, leading to a smaller income through taxes and larger expenses attributed to social services. This is further underlined when looking at the age group above 80 years, which is expected to increase by 80,5 %. (Vordingborg Municipality, 2020)

Large differences can also be seen when looking at the geographical changes in Fig. 2.
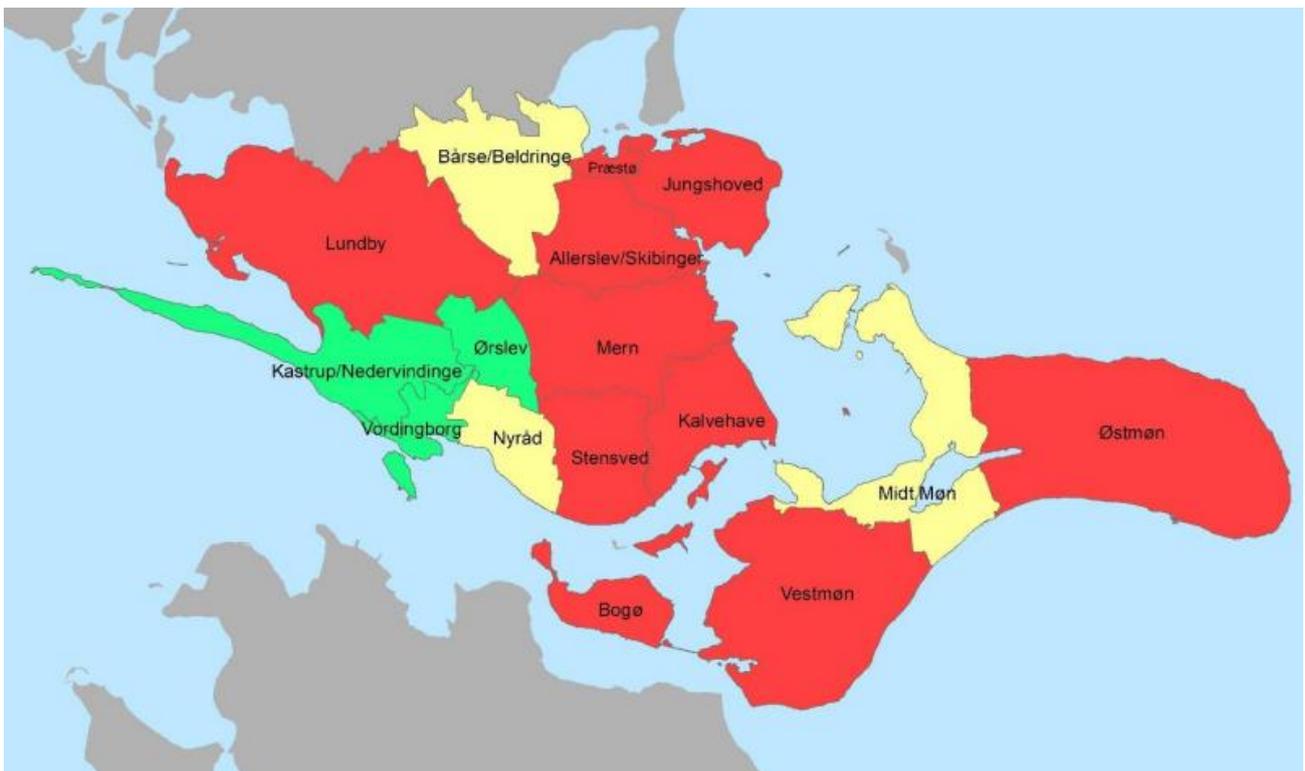
Fig. 2 Vordingborg Municipality (2020)
Green: population growth above 2,5 %
Yellow: no or low population growth below 2,5 %
Red: population decrease above -2,5 %

This map shows how the city of Vordingborg is expected to experience growth in population while the decrease in population is prevalent in other areas of the municipality. The focus of this thesis is Jungshoved, where a decrease of 14,3 % is expected from 2020 to 2033. Jungshoved having a total population of 1.072 means that

-14,3 % accounts for 154 people again underlining the possibility of uncertainties. (Vordingborg Municipality, 2020)

Having now looked at the demographic trends in Vordingborg Municipality a closer look on their approach to citizen participation is relevant. In Vordingborg Municipality the involvement of citizens is formalized in their Local Democracy Model (Nærdemokratimodellen). 14 local councils (Lokalforum) have been established corresponding to different geographical areas of the municipality. This is based on a wish from Vordingborg Municipality to *"create a strong foundation for a common dialogue and a conducive collaboration about the development of the municipality"* (Vordingborg Municipality, nd., s. 3) The members of the local councils are elected by the citizens in their respective local areas, where it is the responsibility of the citizens themselves to organize. The main tasks of the councils are to act as a mediator of dialogue with citizens, local actors and the municipality and to work for the best interest of the local area that they represent. The municipality is obliged to inform the local councils on bigger projects or plans and the local councils can thereby act on behalf of the citizens interest in responding to public hearings. Furthermore, the councils are encouraged by the municipality to produce local development strategies that can give the municipality insights into the wishes and visions of the different local areas and thereby use it as a tool for dialogue between the municipality and its citizens. (Vordingborg Municipality, nd.)

Village renewal in Jungshoved

In November of 2018 Vordingborg Municipality and the local council of Jungshoved (Jungshoved Lokalforum) applied for funding from the Traffic, Building and Housing Board, which at the time provided funding for pilot projects with the theme, nature and landscape values in urban renewal. In this application six main goals were formulated:

1) Beautification of central, dilapidated urban spaces in Jungshoved city

2) Visibility of site-specific natural, cultural and landscape values in Jungshoved

3) Increased quality of life and pride, to create an identity about Jungshoved as the municipality's flourishing peninsula

4) Strengthen networks between local initiatives and resources

5) Include experiences from the projects Biosphere Møn and Dark Sky

6) The project will be the good example of sustainable co-creation in urban renewal

(Vordingborg Municipality, 2018)

As formulated in goal 6 and in the section about the plan for local anchoring an important tool in the process is co-creation, where an equal partnership between the municipality and Jungshoved Lokalforum is formed. (Vordingborg Municipality, 2018) Later the same month the project was granted 2 mio. DKK, started in the beginning of 2019 and as finished in 2020. (Vordingborg Municipality, n. d.)

Problem statement

In a preliminary conversation with Rosa Philippine Schollain employed in Vordingborg Municipality the project of urban renewal in Jungshoved was described to me as a project where the finished product was widely agreed to be good, but the process of co-creation had been difficult, leading to tension and conflicts between the municipality and the active group of citizens. For this thesis the problem statement therefore is as follows:

> Using theory on social sustainability, citizens participation and co-creation, how can tension and conflict between a municipality and citizens be mitigated in a co-creative urban renewal process in a village with negative growth?

And the following research questions:

- Using literature, what reasons are there for co-creation and what challenges does it entail?

- Both from the perspective of the municipal planners and citizens involved in the process, why did tensions and conflicts arise in the process?

Methodology

This thesis is a single-case study using semi structured interviews as the data collection method. This chapter will present the methodology and argue for the validity of the chosen methods. Bent Flyvbjerg's arguments for using case-studies will be presented while describing how that affects this thesis and the use of semi-structured interviews will be described.

Case-study

This study is designed as a case-study of an urban renewal project in Jungshoved, Vordingborg Municipality. For arguing for the validity of using a case study and ensuring the right approach to this, Bent Flyvbjerg's (2006) article "Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research" is used.

Flyvbjerg argues that the study of cases is detrimental to human learning, since *"true human experts"* or *"virtuosos"* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, s. 222) act upon and base their expertise on detailed knowledge about countless concrete cases. This mental library of concrete and context-specific knowledge is what creates expertise. Case-study research in that regard enables us to learn from other people's experiences. The approach of case-study research thereby enables this thesis to gather context-specific knowledge about planning practice and real-life experience in relation to co-creation. It is thereby the aim of this thesis to contribute to a more nuanced perspective on the practice of involvement. Because these depends so much on the people involved in a participation process, both public officials, planners, and citizens, it can be argued that case-study research, with its focus on context-specific knowledge, is well suited for studying the subject of citizen involvement, participation and co-creation.

Flyvbjerg (2006) lists five misunderstandings of case-study research that stems from conventional wisdom about this research approach, pointing out how case-studies does not produce valid knowledge and therefore is without scientific value. While arguing against these, Flyvbjerg (2006) simultaneously explains how to conduct case-study research in a way that produces valid and valuable information that can be used on a broader scale than just the case that is being researched.

Flyvbjerg lists the following five misunderstandings about case-study research and argues why they are misunderstandings:

1: General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge. (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 221)

Flyvbjergs (2006) argument against this statement is, that human learning to a high degree is based on context-dependent knowledge. Furthermore, he states that social science is not a field of research that produces context-independent and predictive theories. Instead it produces concrete and context-dependent knowledge of which case-study research is a good contributor, with a focus on learning instead of proving: *"Proof is hard to come by in social science because of the abscence of "hard" theory, whereas learning is certainly possible"* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p 224) In that regard the goal of this thesis is not to provide a general theory or to prove an existing one, but rather to learn from concrete experience from practice by producing context-depending knowledge about the case in Jungshoved.

2: One cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development. (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 221)

One understanding of the idea of generalizing from case-study research is that generalization can only be done on the basis of numerous case-studies and not on a single case. To counter this argument, Flyvbjerg (2006) uses the example of dropping a feather and a piece of lead in a vacuum to disprove Aristotle's theory that heavier objects fall quicker than light objects. In this example, a single experiment, or a single case, was enough to disprove the theory, since two objects, so different in weight, would fall at the same rate. Then the same could be expected for objects more similar in weight. This underlines how the selection of the case is important in relation to its generalizability. Choosing extreme situations, or a *critical case* as the basis for a case-study will be valuable in this regard. (Flyvbjerg, 2006)

It can be argued that the case of Jungshoved is critical, since the process has been heavily impacted by conflict and tension, even though the planners went into the process with a strong ambition to engage citizens in a co-creative process.

Furthermore, Flyvbjerg (2006) states that generalized theory is not the only form of scientific progress, *"[...] whereas "the force of the example" is underestimated."* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 228) The selection of the critical case of Jungshoved aims to provide knowledge that can be used in other, but similar contexts, by learning from the example, while acknowledging the value of context-depending knowledge.

3: The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses; that is, in the first stage of a total research process, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building. (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 221)

This misunderstanding can be seen as a continuation of the previous misunderstanding about findings from case studies not being generalizable. Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that critical cases often contain more information than a representative or "normal" case. This is caused by the critical case's tendency to include a wider array of actors and more complex dynamics. This means that the strategic choice of a critical case, while not being useful for describing symptoms of a problem or the rate of occurrence, is well suited for understanding the deeper causes of problems, which is often more relevant. (Flyvbjerg, 2006) This perspective of understanding is relevant to this thesis, where the goal is to learn from experience, how and why tensions and conflict can arise, even in a project with a strong attention to facilitating a constructive partnership between municipality and citizens. In that sense the aim is not to build theory, but to gain a deeper understanding of dynamics that can be present in a co-creative process.

4: The case study contains a bias toward verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions. (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 221)

The human issue of seeking verification is of a general nature, and the idea of case studies being more prone to this tendency implies that case study researchers does not follow strict guidelines like in other scientific disciplines. Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that experience shows that case-studies often leads to falsification and revision of the hypothesis. (Flyvbjerg, 2006). This thesis is, as stated before, concerned with understanding the phenomenon, rather than testing a hypothesis or verifying my own preconceived notions. In that regard effort has been made, to let the case unfold itself by letting the narration be loyal to the individual experiences held by the interviewees.

5: It is often difficult to summarize and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies. (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 221)

Flyvbjerg (2006) agrees with the critique that case studies are difficult to summarize. However, this is not seen as being an inherent problem to the research method, but rather a consequence of reality being complex and messy and thereby difficult if not impossible to summarize. Reduction in some form is a necessary mechanism, when conducting research. (Flyvbjerg, 2006) The aim of this thesis is not to find one single explanation to the problem at hand, but rather to present the complexity and opposing perspectives that will be present in a situation, where more than one social actor is participating. The goal is therefore to present the narrative of

the case in a way, where opposing viewpoints are not excluding each other, but instead kept in and seen as a strength in order to underline the complexity of the real world.

To sum up the choice of conducting a case study, the aim is not to formulate general theory or to prove an existing one, but to produce context-specific knowledge in order to learn from experience. The choice of the critical case of Jungshoved aims to enable the context-dependent knowledge to be used in other but similar contexts. For fulfilling this purpose, the aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of a co-creative process. In order to gain this understanding instead of confirming preconceived notions, the objective is to unfold the narrative, while being loyal to the individual experiences of the involved actors. The difficulty of summarizing the case is not seen as a weakness, since the goal is not to find one single explanation. Instead, the aim is to present the case in its complexity, where opposing viewpoints are not seen as excluding each other.

Semi-structured interviews

The method for data collection in this thesis is two semi-structured interviews. The interviews were recorded with permission from the participants and later transcribed. One with the planning director of Vordingborg Municipality, Anja Valhøj and one with Jørgen Svendsen, Lise Jacobsen and Henning Nissen, who are all three part of the local council of Jungshoved.

Valhøj was the chairman of the steering group in the Jungshoved Project. Apart from her, two planners from the municipality worked on the project. They were unable to participate in an interview for this thesis.

Svendsen and Nissen was part of the steering group in the Jungshoved project, representing the local council. Svendsen acted as the primary contact between citizens and municipality. Nissen was part of the working group Vejflora (road flora). Jacobsen is the foreman of the local community house Egnshuset and was part of the working group concerned with recreational routes.

The choice of semi structured interviews was found useful to welcome reflections, in order to gain knowledge and understanding of the informants' personal experience of the tensions and conflicts that arose in the process. (Galletta, 2013) In that context it was important for me to understand the case and the reasons for frustration for both parties. I wanted to leave room for the participants to tell me about, what they found important, according to their lived reality and experience. This was done with a wish of understanding how different experiences and perhaps conflicting realities could be at play in the same process. Furthermore, I wanted to encourage the participants to reflect critically on their own role in the process, as to not only reflect on what the other party could or should have done differently.

The themes I wanted to investigate in the interviews where:

- The intention and expectations to the process of both citizens and municipality
- The view of both the municipality and citizens on why and how conflicts and tensions arose
- Understanding how similar tensions and conflicts can be avoided or mitigated in future projects

After the interviews were transcribed, they were color coded to enable analysis by creating an overview of themes that were described in the interviews. This is presented in Appendix A and B. Text that is quoted has been marked with bold letters in the transcription and has been translated to English.

Theory

This chapter will present theory from literature on social sustainability, citizens participation and co-creation in order to understand both potentials and challenges in relation to participation and co-creation. This will work as the theoretical framework for the discussion, where findings and experiences described in the interviews will be compared with theory on the subjects.

Social Sustainability

The following section will present the difficulty of defining social sustainability in practice and how the term is being used in this report. For understanding sustainability, the Brundtland report defines sustainable development as follows:

> *"Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, s. 16)*

This statement can be described as intergenerational justice, since today's actions towards meeting our needs should not disable future generations to do the same. Furthermore, it is stated that:

> *"[…] sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to fulfill their aspirations for a better life." (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, s. 16)*

This underlines the importance of not only worrying about future generations but ensuring quality of life for all. In that way it incapsulates both economic, environmental and social aspects, that all are codependent and necessary to facilitate sustainable development. (Dupret & Langergaard, 2020)

The social aspect of sustainability is the least studied and historically an aspect that receives less attention in plans and policies. (Boström, 2012) According to Boström (2012) this can be explained by the nature of the term itself, that is more abstract and difficult to use in practice than the two other pillars, environmental and economic sustainability. Social sustainability can be argued to be a dynamic concept, since the idea of social justice changes as the society develops. Boström (2012) sees this as both a weakness and a strength. A weakness, because when used it must always describe how it is defined, and a strength, since it encourages communication between actors working together with social sustainability. (Boström, 2012)

Using substantial reference to literature on the subject of social sustainability, Boström (2012) further underlines three main problems relating to the framing of social sustainability in practice. The first being the extremely high expectations for what a social sustainable world looks like. Countless complex problems must be solved, making social sustainability look like a utopia, that by definition is unobtainable. However visionary and utopian thought can be productive, when used as a mirror to reflect on the status quo, in order to work towards better alternatives. On the other hand, having utopian ambitions might lead to disappointment and a feeling of failure, since the ideals are close to impossible to obtain. (Boström, 2012) The next problem with social sustainability is the lack of a concrete unit of measurement, such as monetary units for economic sustainability, and levels of pollution or measurements for biodiversity when it comes to environmental sustainability. Though some aspects of social sustainability can be measured such as access to meet basic needs, employment, income equality, etc., many others are more vague and subjective, when aspects like quality of life and social justice is brought up. This underlines the problem of trying to measure social sustainability with the same methods as when measuring environmental and economic sustainability. Seen in this context social sustainability seems to be more subjective and ideological, hence rendering it more difficult to incorporate in practice and legitimize, when concrete measurements are difficult to make. Boström's (2012) last framing issue relates to how the historical understanding of sustainability is better suited for the environment rather than the social sphere. When discussing environmental sustainability, it can be argued that the goal is preservationist in nature. The same cannot be said for the social issues. Boström (2012) quotes Marcuse (1998): *"No one who is interested in justice wants to sustain things as they are now."* (Marcuse, 1998, p. 105) This ontological difference creates potential conflict between the means and goals of achieving both environmental and social sustainability. (Boström, 2012)

Huge efforts have been made by the scientific community in order to understand and operationalize social sustainability. (Boström, 2012) In the following I will present the understanding of the subject that is present in this report. Boström (2012) makes a useful distinction between the procedural and substantive dimensions of social sustainability. The substantive dimension relates to what social sustainability goals to achieve, while the procedural dimension focuses on how to achieve social sustainability. (Boström, 2012)

Substantive aspects of social sustainability are related to quality of life of citizens. This can be in form of attractive housing, access to green areas and a sense of identity in relation to the local community. (Boström, 2012) Since the focus of this thesis is the subject of citizen participation, I will mostly focus on the procedural aspects of social sustainability. However, aspects from the substantive dimension are still relevant for the subject of participation in planning for villages, but since they are defined as goals, and this report is more focused on the process of participation the procedural dimension will be the focus for the following. Boström

(2012) describes how the substantive aspects of social sustainability are focused on access to influence on plans and development. This involves both access to information through proactive communication and participation in planning processes and decision making. (Boström, 2012) A key aspect of obtaining social sustainability is thereby to ensure that citizens are involved in formulation of goals and development towards these goals. (Dixon, 2011), (Boström, 2012) In the context of this thesis the aspect of citizens participation is thereby seen as an important mean for social sustainable development.

Citizen Participation

In order to understand and enable a critical analysis and evaluation of citizen participation, The Ladder of Participation formulated by Sherry Arnstein (2019) provides a useful framework. Even though her rationale for participation was mostly focused on empowering minorities without influence, her model for assessing the level of participation is still useful, when evaluating participation from a wider scope. Arnstein constructed a figurative ladder of participation comprised of 8 rungs, each corresponding to a certain level of participation rated from manipulation to citizen power. These eight rungs are categorized into the three levels: non-participation, degrees of tokenism and degrees of citizen power (Arnstein, 2019):
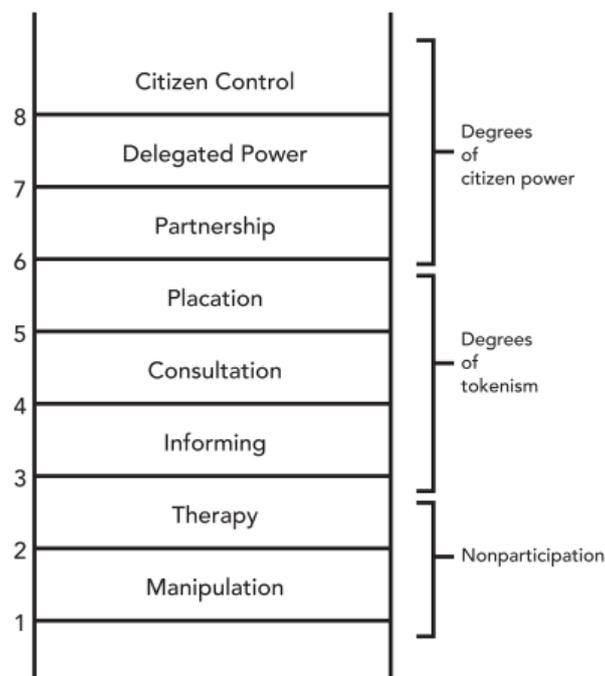

Fig. 3 Ladder of Participation (Arnstein, 2019)

Non-participation: The first rung is *manipulation*, which describes a process, disguised as participation, that seeks to create and manifest public support to policies that the citizens do not have any influence on. The second rung is *Therapy,* which also describes an activity disguised as participation. It involves the

understanding that powerless minorities need to be cured instead of changing the structures that keeps the oppressed. This results in group therapy disguised as participatory activities. (Arnstein, 2019)

Degrees of tokenism: The third rung, *Informing*, is an important tool and legitimate step towards real participation. It involves a one-way flow of information from public officials to citizens. While providing information about a project is important, it does not in itself give citizens the opportunity to provide feedback or have influence on future decisions. The typical means of providing information is through media, posters and pamphlets, but it can also occur on meetings, where two-way communication could appear to happen, but instead the time slot for discussion and questions can be too short or the answers given can be either misleading or to technical for laypeople to understand, effectively resulting in information only going one way. The fourth rung is *Consultation*, where the focus is on two-way communication. Citizens are encouraged to express their opinions and provide feedback, but there is no formal requirement that this information is actually incorporated in the planning process. Methods for this includes public hearings, surveys and meetings. According to Arnstein (2019), facilitating participation on this step, can be used as a way of showing that the requirement for participation has been fulfilled, without actually involving citizens in the process. Furthermore she criticizes the sole use of surveys to consult the citizens, since "*people are […] perceived as statistical abstractions*" (Arnstein, 2019, p. 28)*,* which is why surveys used without other input from citizens, will only be shallow representations of the opinions and needs held by the community. The fifth rung is *Placation,* which is the act of having citizens in committees or boards, thereby placing them closer to the decision-making processes. This step is however still seen as a form of tokenism by Arnstein, since the citizens can easily be outvoted if they do not hold the majority of the seats or outsmarted if they do not get the proper technical and professional guidance. (Arnstein, 2019)

Degrees of citizen power: The sixth rung is *Partnership*, which is the first step, where citizens gain actual influence on the planning process. Here, the power and decision-making are distributed through negotiations and partnerships between public officials and citizen-representatives. According to Arnstein (2019), this works best when there is some degree of organization of citizens that the public official is held responsible by, when the representatives of the citizens can be paid enough to enable them to dive into this time-consuming activity, and when the citizens have resources to pay for or otherwise have access to their own experts and consultants. Partnerships gives the citizens a degree of influence *"[…] as long as both parties find it useful to maintain the partnership."* (Arnstein, 2019, p. 31)*.* Commonly the power is not given to the citizens, but rather taken by them, since powerholders historically are not often willing to give their power away. The seventh rung is *Delegated power*, which is occurring when citizens achieve the authority to make decisions in relation to a specific project or plan. This can happen when the citizens hold the majority of seats on a board or in a

committee. Instead of powerholders responding to pressure from citizens, they need to engage in debate, and negotiations. The eighth and final rung is *citizen control*. Here, citizens are in full control of both policy and managerial aspects of a plan or institution. It should of course be noted here that no one in the real world has absolute power over anything. (Arnstein, 2019)

Co-creation

Co-creation is a relatively new term experiencing a growing amount of attention as a public governance tool. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020) It is the approach used in the project on Jungshoved and a description of the theoretical background, reasons for using it, ideals and challenges is therefore necessary.

A key challenge faced by the public sector is the increasing demand and expectations held by citizens towards the public sector combined with a declining amount of public resources. This challenge has largely been met with savings, increased efficiency and productivity through budget reforms, which has, not surprisingly, meant that the quality of services has suffered. This both leads to a less satisfactory work life for public employees and a decreasing level of trust in the public sector and politicians. A problem that cannot be expected to disappear, since the demand for savings and increased efficiency does not seem to shrink. As logic dictates, it is not possible to cut the hair of a bald man, and the less hairy a municipality gets, a smaller and smaller amount of hair can be expected to be removed. In other words, there must be a limit for the continuous shaving of public budgets, without the quality dropping significantly. Based on this line of reasoning a new approach to public services is needed. Co-creation offers a solution, by searching for resources in new places. This is done by looking outside the public sector and into the private. Instead of the public sector competing on price and quality with the private sector, co-creation encourages collaboration between them. Partnerships in co-creitive processes can include local companies, citizens and communities in an attempt to activate and engage resources outside the public budgets. This is a counter-reaction against the traditional notion that the public sector alone is responsible for providing services and solving problems for the public, where new solutions should be found in collaboration and partnerships with both public and private actors. This should enable a higher quality of services and solutions without costing more. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020)

Like Arnstein's (2019) ladder of participation, a ladder of co-creation can also be formulated. The first step according to Torfing, Sørensen and Røiseland (2020) is when the public sector supports citizens to manage their own life, by having different professionals working together with the citizen to define their problem, to ensure that the citizen is getting the right help offered. Furthermore, the citizen is encouraged by the professional to contribute to the solution. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020)

On the second step the public sector and volunteers co-produce already existing public services. On this step the public and the volunteer sector should not be seen as separate or competing, but instead as close partners. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020)

Actual co-creation is the third step. Here, the citizens are included in discussions and debate about existing problems, defining new problems and developing new solutions. This differs from the second step since citizens are involved in defining problems and solutions, instead of just working to meet an existing demand for service. A key feature of this step is that the citizens or other private actors are part of an equal partnership with one or more public institutions. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020)

A similar classification with three types of co-creation is made by Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2014) based on a systematic literature review including 122 studies. The first type they identify is co-implementation, where citizens are only included in the implementation task. An example of this can be when citizens are obligated to sort their waste, since the citizens thereby play an active role in the garbage disposal service being offered, but only by being involved in the implementation of the service. The second type is where the citizens are being activated as co-designers. Here the public institution is behind the initiative, but the citizens are invited to contribute to the design of the service. The third type is where the citizens are the initiator and the public sector then follows the initiative of the citizens. (Voorberg, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2014)

While being similar in its classification these to perspectives on levels of co-creation differs in their focus. It could be argued that the perspective of Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2014) is more focused on the role of the citizen in a given process and how they contribute. The second rung of Torfing, Sørensen and Røiseland's (2020) ladder of co-creation is co-production. This is similar to what what Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2014) describes as a co-implementer, which is their first type, so a difference is present here. In the same sense the third rung in Torfing, Sørensen and Røiseland's (2020) ladder of co-creation can include both the second and third type in Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers' (2014) study, where the citizens are either co-designers or initiators. This perspective, on who the initiator is, is not present in the ladder of co-creation (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020). When citizens has the role of initiator, it can be assumed that they play are larger role in the definition and formulation of the problem, than when the public institution is initiating. Based on this argument it can be said that the classification from Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2014) is more detailed in its description of what Torfinger, Sørensen and Røiseland (2020) calls actual co-creation.

Interests of different actors in co-creation

A switch from traditional governance or planning towards using co-creation as a tool is not simple. It requires politicians and public professionals to give away power and to work in ways different than they are used to. In

the article by Torfinger, Sørensen and Røiseland (2020) assumptions about the different interests held by the different actors, are used to argue for how and why co-creation can be a valid tool to fulfill those interests. Politicians wants to legitimize their political leadership. The legitimacy can be strengthened by being in close dialogue with both their administration and citizens, associations and volunteers. While strengthening legitimacy, the quality of political solutions can also be affected positively by ensuring that new political initiatives are developed in close dialogue with the affected actors. This means that they are more likely to be tailored precisely to the need of the local community. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020)

For the administrative level, the motivation for implementing co-creation can be the need to work with private actors to find solutions to problems with a high level of complexity, that the public sector alone cannot solve, because they do not have sufficient resources or they lack the ability to solve them *"alone over the desktop in the city hall"* (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020, p. 34). For the professionals working in a municipality, the interest in co-creation can be found in their already existing need to include and activate citizens and recipients of their services, both to make sure that the right service is being offered, and to save time, by having the recipients contribute as well. For citizens as well, a change in their everyday life and relationship with the public sector will occur as co-creation is implemented. A more active role as a citizen will be demanded, but the motivation for this can be found in the human search for community and purpose. A form of governance centered around co-creation will enable citizens to be more active and directly involved in matters that affects their own life and future of the local community, that they are part of. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020)

An important point of this line of arguments is that all mentioned actors can have an interest in co-creation, but that their reasons for this interest might be different. This is important to remember when working with co-creation, so that it does not only fulfill the benefits of one actor. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020)

Having now gone through the positive aspects of co-creation a more critical look at its challenges and limitations is relevant. General challenges from literature will be presented, enabling a better understanding of the challenges planners and citizens faced in the project at Jungshoved.

Organizational factors

One challenging factor for a municipality in using co-creation is the role of leadership. Since co-creation often will involve actors and employees with different professional backgrounds, sitting in different departments, it demands a more flexible approach to boundaries between different municipal departments. This can put pressure on the leader's formal authority, since the scope of a co-creative project might include employees that the leader does not have authority over. In this context the role of the leader might be more about facilitation of networks and partnerships, where the power and thereby responsibility is shared by multiple

actors. The act of giving orders might no longer be valuable or even possible, since the different actors will protest, if they do not see a purpose with participating in the given partnership. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020)

As mentioned earlier, a transition to co-creation also involves giving away power. This challenges the traditional organizational structure of a municipality and unpredictability becomes a larger factor in planning processes. The process of both problem definition and solving is opened up to incorporate views and understanding from non-public actors, making it harder to predict both process and product of a project. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020) This is supported by Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2014) describing how the degree of risk aversion of the administrative culture is an influential factor in 14 % of the studies concerned with organizational factors included in their literature review. (Voorberg, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2014) This can result in a clash with the traditional way of governing, where budgets play a large role in both planning of future projects and evaluation of past, and some degree of knowing what you are paying for is therefore important. This can also be in conflict with the role of a municipality in a New Public Management perspective, where the public sector is seen as merely a service provider and the citizens as customers. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020)

In this way of thinking, the public sector's role is to provide the best possible service to the lowest possible price. The political level are then the strategic leaders, that provide the wide framework and direction and the administrative level is where the strategy is turned into reality. This limits the communication between the two levels to be restricted to formal documents. With co-creation a more dialogue-based form of communication is needed, since problem definition and development of solutions can come from different levels. In this way co-creation challenges the traditional roles of different levels in the public sector demanding dialogue between the levels for a more collaborative approach to problem solving. (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020) The role of communication also plays a role in the possibility of collaboration between citizens and the public institution. The degree of the public organization's compatibility with citizen participation is characterized as an influential factor of 46 % of the studies reviewed by Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2014). This describes the ability of the organizational structure to include citizens and whether there are functional means of communication between institution and citizens. In line with this, the attitude towards citizens as a valuable partner held by both politicians, administrators and professionals is an influential factor in 22 % of the studies reviewed by Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2014). If citizens are considered unreliable, a higher risk of giving away control is perceived, and the extent of co-creation might be negatively affected. The last factor identified in the literature review in 14 % of the studies is the knowledge about incentives to include citizens. This can be seen in connection with the previous factors, and it describes how a

lack of clear incentives perceived by the different levels of the public sector can limit the use of co-creation as a tool (Voorberg, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2014)

Citizen factors

While Torfinger, Sørensen and Røiseland (2020) places their focus on institutional challenges, Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2014) adds the citizen aspect of co-creation. They identified four influential factors on the citizen side. The first one being concerned with how the characteristics of the citizens influences their willingness to participate. This can be personal values like a sense of civic duty, and a wish to improve their surroundings positively. Furthermore, a higher educational background shows to influence both the willingness to participate positively, by increasing the awareness of community needs, and their ability to participate, by giving citizens a higher level of administrative skills necessary to navigate in the process. The second factor being the citizens sense of ownership and their own perceived ability to contribute. A larger sense of ownership results in a larger sense of responsibility, as does a higher belief in one's own ability to influence decisions and services. The third factor is social capital, which is necessary to activate to ensure commitment from the relevant local community. Lastly, the citizens trust in the co-creative process is important. To ensure engagement a level of trust in the ability of the co-creative process to enable the citizens to gain influence is important. (Voorberg, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2014)

Analysis

In the following section the findings from the interviews will be presented. The interviews have been coded, using these themes:

- Intentions and expectations
- Understanding of co-creation
- Local area and citizen group
- Tension and conflict
- Description of the process - neutral and positive
- Proposals and reflections on solutions
- General barriers

The results from both interviews will be presented following the order of above themes. Under each theme, the municipal perspective will be presented followed by the perspective of the citizens.

After the presentation differences and similarities will be studied. This will describe what they agree and disagree on, but also how their perspectives and understanding of the process may be opposing each other.

This analysis will be the basis for a discussion, where findings from the interviews is assessed in relation to the presented theory on social sustainability, citizen participation and co-creation.

Intentions and expectations

This section is about how the two actors entered the process on Jungshoved. A distinction between the intentions of the municipality and the expectations of the citizens has been made. The differentiation has been made since the municipality is both the authority and the facilitator of the process.

<u>Intentions of the municipality</u>

The municipality went into the project in Jungshoved with knowledge about the local community and the active members of the local council. The local council had previously contacted the municipality to inform them of their wishes and plans for their local area. This meant that the planners knew that the local council was active and that there was a serious interest in starting a process that could improve the physical conditions of the area: *"[…] our thought was that we knew that we had a local council that was very active and had ambitions and wanted to do something. They had contacted us, so we knew that they wanted to do something, and we knew with our perspective and knowledge about the Jungshoved-area, that there were some potentials*

there […]" (Appendix A, p. 57). The knowledge about an active local council and the professional knowledge about Jungshoved was thereby the starting point for the municipality to start a process. (Appendix A)

To enable the process, the project would have to be granted the national funding for urban renewal pilot projects, managed by the previously called Traffic, Building and Housing Board: *"[…] so we stepped into it with an idea of what we thought was important, but off course also with an idea about what we think it takes to be selected as a pilot project […]"* (Appendix A, p. 57). This underlines that the municipality started with an idea based on their professional knowledge about urban renewal, but also with professional knowledge and experience about what elements a project needs to include to be approved for funding. This meant that for the project to be approved certain elements were necessary for the application. The application to some degree also set a frame for the project to work within. The draft for the application was sent to the local council for comments and approvement, so some minor adjustments were made to ensure common ground in relation to the application. (Appendix A)

In relation to the intended extend of co-creation, Valhøj states: *"[…] what we want to co-create about, and there we really had the approach, that if it is a tree that you want, then that is what you will get, […] but this is the available resources. Whether you want to spend them over here or over here, that is completely up to you."* (Appendix A, p. 58) This shows the intention of the planners to let the selection of physical improvements be completely decided by the citizens as well as how to prioritize the resources. However, she further states that: *"[…] cool, then this is the project we are making, then we will collect offers and write the contract."* (Appendix A. p. 58) This shows how the co-creation was limited to the design of the physical elements of the urban renewal and therefore did not include the administrative tasks, such as invitation to tender and the writing of contracts with the chosen suppliers. (Appendix A)

Expectations of the citizens

The main goal of the project in Jungshoved was to improve the physical condition of the village. This is reflected in the citizens expectations to the project. As Jacobsen states: *"Jungshoved By had become a town, where the development was going in a negative direction. The school, Brugsen, the baker, the Mill and the sport club and more had closed. You wanted the city to be improved to become a place where you were proud of living"* (Appendix B, p. 73) This shows the hope and expectation of the urban renewal project to enhance the town, since the development and maintenance has been neglected for quite some time. At the same time this comment also hints to a focus beyond the physical condition. It is also about strengthening the local identity connected to the place. (Appendix B)

In line with this, an expectation of ownership is also presented: "*It was very important to me, that the people living here in Jungshoved By achieved ownership of the new things that would happen here.*" (Appendix B, p. 73) This underlines how the expectation is not only related to the product, but also how the process is facilitated.

It shows the importance of the citizens having a sense of ownership of the project, that must come by them being active in both the brainstorming of ideas and decision making. This is also underlined when Svendsen describes his expectation that the project should not be "*[…] an authority thing being placed here […]*" (Appendix B, p. 72)

This leads to the expectations about the process and how the partnership between planners and citizens should work. Svendsen states: "*[…]such a project would never have been accepted here on Jungshoved, if it was not grounded in local activity and therefore we actually got it formulated and written into the application, that it was going to be an equal partnership between the local council and the municipality, and that, to me, is actually the very basic expectation to the project, it was that it should be an equal partnership and that has also been approved by the municipality.*" (Appendix B. p. 72) This shows how important the expectation of an equal partnership throughout the whole process was for the local council, when entering the process of urban renewal in Jungshoved. The equal partnership in this context is understood as "*[…] openness in the project, […] a form of transparency, where you can see what is going on, what activities are taking place, what are the budgets and what are the money being used for and what is the time being used for.*" (Appendix B, p. 72)

Understanding of co-creation

This section will describe how both the municipality and the citizens understand the term "co-creation". This is closely connected to the section above about intentions and expectations, but will look more closely at how the term is being understood. It is relevant to study how the same concept can be understood in different ways.

<u>Municipality's understanding of co-creation</u>

The primary aspect of the understanding of co-creation presented by Valhøj is when public and private actors cooperate: "*[…] it is about creating something new that involves both the public and the private, and where the boundaries are not defined in advance.*" (Appendix A. p. 57) The strength of public-private partnerships is, according to Valhøj, that it enables development of solutions that could not have been formed by just one of the parts alone: "*For me it is only co-creation, if we have external partners, but it is also only co-creation if we are partners, because it is that complexity that you can get solved if you have different perspectives and*

knowledge about it." (Appendix A, p. 57) This statement underlines the understanding of co-creation held by Valhøj, that partnerships between public and private partners enable new solutions to problems that are too complex for either public or private actors alone. The key in this understanding is how the different types of actors can contribute with different perspectives of the same issue. (Appendix A)

Even though the importance of not having boundaries defined in advance by the public actor, is expressed by Valhøj, there is a "but" in the municipal understanding of co-creation. When asked about the equality of the public-private partnership in a co-creative process, Valhøj answers: *"[…] we, as a municipality, will always have some boundaries in relation to the project having to end at some point and we have allocated a certain amount of resources, and that it does not evolve into becoming twice as expensive or twice as resource demanding etc., so in that way there is not complete equality in relation to us being completely open to "oh! We are going in that direction?" and "will it be this extensive?""* (Appendix A, p. 58) In that regard it is thereby important to note that equality of the partnership cannot be limitless. For the municipality, the idea of co-creation was limited to what physical improvements that should be implemented in Jungshoved By. It should not include an equal partnership and decision-making competence in the sense of how many times a draft for a contract for instance should be rewritten, and how many times a plan should be discussed. (Appendix A)

Citizens' understanding of co-creation

For the local council the most important aspect of co-creation in this project was the equal partnership. As stated in the section about the expectations of the citizens above, an essential part of this project succeeding was that it was rooted in local activity, that the residents would feel ownership and in that context that the partnership was equal. The citizens' view on the term co-creation is thereby equivalent to an equal partnership. (Appendix B)

Local area and citizen group

This section will provide a description of the local area and the community of residents involved in the process.

The municipality's description of the local area and citizen group

Valhøj describes the active group of citizens as showing huge engagement in the process in Jungshoved. Furthermore, she shows awareness of how the resources of the citizens are also limited like the municipality. The citizen group and the community is described as resourceful and close knit. (Appendix A)

From the interview with the three members of the local council a very strong identity connected with Jungshoved was visible. They describe Jungshoved as being a unique place, where *"[…} it is a long-lasting tradition on Jungshoved, that you work together to solve problems […]"* (Appendix B, p. 74) This is also showing as the local area has seven or eight committees concerned with tourism, settlement, environment, traffic and transportation, trips, nature, the village pond etc. Furthermore, the closed school is being managed by Jacobsen as a community building used for various local activities. All these local initiatives are described by the interviewees to be formed completely from the bottom up based on interests and volunteering. (Appendix B)

Even though Jungshoved is a peninsula, *"Jungshoved is almost an island, we are placed far away, we are the outer most part of the municipality and that means, that if we do not do anything, nothing happens. Just like on an island, you cannot expect others to do anything. That among other things is the driving force"* (Appendix B, p. 87). This further underlines the strength and identity of the local community on Jungshoved and can maybe point to a critical approach to things coming from the municipality and the importance of the locals accept when starting projects. As Nissen states: *"[…] if you have not been here and talked with people about something, then you are not going to get it through, so you simply need it to be grounded with every single houseowner […]"* (Appendix A, p. 87)

Tension and conflict

This section will go into situations and experiences from the process that was contributing to tension and conflict from the two different perspectives.

A key aspect of the tensions, according to Valhøj is the difference in expectations to the process held by the citizens and how the boundaries of co-creation was intended by the municipality. She states: *"[…] I think our project manager on the project promised a little too much in relation to what the co-creation was about. […] the co-creation is about the task, what is it that we want to make, what is it that we are going to produce for them […]"* (Appendix A, p. 57) This led to the citizens having very high expectations for how wide the boundaries of the co-creative part of the process was. They wanted a say in how tenders were formulated, what was written in contracts with external suppliers, what other municipal departments should be involved and almost how the employee's hours were spent. The citizens said that it was their money, so they were responsible for exactly how they were spent. This meant that the time and resources spent on the project got

too high, because the citizens demanded a level of detail and a number of times a draft or contract should be discussed or rewritten, that was too high given the boundaries of the budget. Valhøj states: "*The problem was that using us was free, in their mind.*" (Appendix A, p. 64)

This contributed to the emerging conflict that culminated in relation to the formulation of a contract with an external supplier: *"That was where it culminated. They said that they wanted it sent to them and that we need to hold a meeting about it and we [the citizens] want… we [the citizens] need to approve it, and then we held the meeting and I told them, no, I have not sent it to you, because you are not supposed to be part of this. […] And then I ended up saying, we are ending this meeting now, then I will send it to you afterwards, but we are not having a meeting about it. And then the rest of the communication was only in writing"* (Appendix A, p. 62) Here Valhøj describes how the tensions turned into conflict when the process got to the realization phase, where external suppliers were found. Disagreements emerged about both how the tenders should be formulated, and when a supplier was found, how the contract should be written. (Appendix A)

This was problematic because of the organizational structure in the municipality, because the planning and development phase, where the municipality intended to do co-creation, was managed by the planning department, while the realization phase that included writing tenders and contracts was managed by the financial department: *"[…] we are the planning department and manages these processes, but when we are to have it realized, then it is our neighboring department and then we should not sit and dictate, how they work with it. We just give them the task, you could say, and they [the citizens] wanted to be part of it and we off course would not accept that."* (Appendix A, p. 58) Furthermore Valhøj describes that both neighboring departments and external suppliers were complaining to her, that the group of citizens from Jungshoved were calling them and taking up quite a lot of their time. (Appendix A)

Apart from the issue of the citizens taking time from other departments and external suppliers, the time and resources used in the planning department also got higher than planned. According to Valhøj, this was because the boundaries of co-creation was not described clearly enough: *"how many times can we manage for each subproject, that we need to revisit it and have a new process and so on. There it is probably necessary to formulate some boundaries for the work, because we, in our organization… I mean, I think we used twice as much time on the project, than what we actually had resources for."* (Appendix A, p. 59) This is challenging for both the organization and the individual employees, since there will always be other projects and tasks that they are working on simultaneously. (Appendix A)

Valhøj describes the group of citizens on Jungshoved as strong and resourceful. This is off course a positive characteristic, but at the same time it made it very challenging for the planners to face the group. Valhøj reports that when disagreements were debated until an agreement could be found, the planners often felt

overruled by the citizens and came home extremely tired and emotionally affected. Furthermore, the employees reported that they in multiple occasions were scolded by one of the citizens: *"[…] there is sometimes this perception among some citizens, about those people from the municipality, they can be spoken to in a certain way and that also pushes the equality, when you are working together."* (Appendix A, p. 60) Valhøj states how this way of talking to the employees did not occur when she was present, so it was not until later that she found out. (Appendix A)

The strength of the citizen group was a challenge for the planners. Especially considering their level of experience: *"She who had the task was completely new and had not worked with projects before and so on, so she was completely green, and therefore she had a colleague with her, that was actually just there to help her and support her, who had more experience and who I actually thought had more experience, but in reality, she was also quite new […]* (Appendix A, p. 66) When asked about how this project differed from other co-creative projects, that were more easy-going, Valhøj replies: *"[…] it is a bit blunt to say it like this, but in fact I think it was about that exact citizen group, who is very, very strong and determined combined with the fact that my employees probably were a bit too weak to stand up against that. It was a very strong [group of citizens] […]. And they [the planners] were not strong enough to face that and handle it and I let it be for too long."* (Appendix A, p. 67) In that context the planners did not feel trusted and appreciated by the citizens, but were instead scolded, controlled and told to do better even though they felt like they did all they could for the citizens. (Appendix A)

Another aspect of the tensions during the process was related to how the roles in the partnership was distributed. As mentioned earlier Valhøj was the chairman of the steering group and the municipality was supposed to be the facilitator, but instead a citizen acted as facilitator and Valhøj let it happen until the culmination of the conflict, where she had to draw a line. This unclarity of roles lead to the citizens *"[…] ordering all sorts of things from us […]" (Appendix A, p. 61)*

There was never an evaluation done with both citizens and municipality, even though Valhøj believes that it could have been a smart choice. The choice to not evaluate together is described by Valhøj: *"[…] at that time [after the project ended] my employees were very full of the project, so we simply could not do it […] but there were too many emotions at stake at that time, so we had to do our own learning right now and push it aside for now. And it sounds bad, but it was."* (Appendix A, p. 62)

Citizens' perspective on tension and conflict

According to the local council the missing clarity of the different roles and responsibilities was a key factor in the conflict. This resulted in the chairman of the steering group taking decisions bypassing the rest of the

steering group. This meant that some parts of the budget was allocated without approval from the rest of the steering group. Svendsen states how *"it really damaged my motivation, and I think it did so for many others, that you had this experience of, oops, where did the equal co-creation go?"* (Appendix B, p. 76) An example of this was the cost of preparing the area where Folkeparken was going to be made. The local council believed that it should be the Road and Park Department in the municipality that was responsible for that, but the chairman ruled that it was part of the project budget. The local council states that terms of reference for the authority of the steering group was promised, but never made. Svendsen further states that the problematic issue of this maybe was not the subject of disagreement, but rather the lack of discussion with the rest of the steering group. It is pointed out how it can be difficult for the municipality to be both the authority and the project manager at the same time. (Appendix B)

The work being done by citizens was strictly on a voluntary basis. A lack of understanding from the municipality that volunteers will only be engaged if they are motivated and can see a purpose of their efforts was felt. Some municipal employees were said to understand this, but others did not, and volunteers sometimes got the feeling like they were being employed by the municipal employees. This also resulted in a lack of equality. (Appendix B)

In relation to all of the above and the ability to formulate project plans and foresee future costs, Svendsen states that: *"[…] we appreciate our municipality as authority, but as project manager… it differed a lot what project management competences they had, and I think I can allow myself to say, that the project from the municipal side was understaffed on project management competences."* (Appendix B, p. 78) This lead to both unclarity about how authority and roles were distributed, sometimes lack of motivation and the feeling that the municipality suddenly said, that all the employee's hours had been used, so they did not have time for more meetings. (Appendix B)

For the local council openness and transparency was seen as a fundamental condition for the equal partnership that both parts committed to. According to them, this was missing when the project reached its realization phase. It was also apparent when the citizens were informed that the municipal employees had spent all their hours, which came as a surprise for the citizens. Furthermore, they state that they were told not to worry about the cost of the plans and never saw the finished budget. This damaged both the trust in the municipality and the feeling of an equal partnership. (Appendix B)

Heavy critique of the way the project phases were planned and carried out is also present in the interview. As mentioned earlier the citizens expected the co-creation to be part of the whole process: *"[…] that phase model, where the thought was to first gather all the wishes from the citizens and then we [the municipality] deal with*

the professional treatment. That does not hold up." (Appendix B, p. 79) This approach resulted in the citizens fearing that they would not be able to recognize themselves in the finished product. (Appendix B)

A frustration related to this emerged when other municipal departments were involved in the project. An example of this is the department responsible for formulating the tenders. These tenders were, from the perspective of the citizens overly complicated and bureaucratic: *"it was so academic that the local suppliers could not read it through. They did not dare"* and *"we had suppliers who said, we want to do it… and we are interested in this, but when they saw the tender, they said they did not dare. It is impossible for us to calculate a price on that basis."* (Appendix B, p. 80) The argument here is that because of formalities in the other department, the tenders could only be accepted by bigger suppliers from outside Jungshoved and that the costs would be bigger than necessary. It was frustrating to them that the other department had not been part of the process and therefore neither had heard the arguments or had an understanding of motivating the volunteering citizens. They saw it as an *"example of that everyone in the municipal bureaucracy had not been taken under oath"* (Appendix B, p. 80) on the idea and purpose of this project. (Appendix B)

An issue also connected to the organizational structure of the municipality is the issue of necessary information not being brought in at the right time. An example of this was the information that trees were not allowed to be planted close to the road. This information did not come forth until the working group had spent a lot of time on it. The planners were expected to represent the municipality and it was disappointing that this was not found out earlier. It simply damaged the citizens trust to the planners. (Appendix B)

A similar situation occurred with the working group concerned with biodiversity. Late in the process, experts from the municipality told the group that they chose the wrong plants for supporting biodiversity. In this situation the citizens felt like the experts were talking down to them, and that they wasted a lot of time to work on a plan that turned out to be wrong. (Appendix B)

Other examples of this dynamic are the wall painting and an issue about trimming trees in Folkeparken. The working group concerned with the wall painting spent a year on formulating a proposal consisting of landmarks and characteristics of Jungshoved. It was agreed that the Art Council of the municipality should look into what artist should get the task. They chose one without informing the citizens about the different candidates and the chosen artist never saw the proposal. Instead she got a two hour bike ride with one person from the working group and based the painting on that. (Appendix B)

The other example was that the municipality promised to trim the poplar trees in Folkeparken, but that still has not happened. While expressing an understanding of the necessity for the municipality to save money,

they are disappointed that they have to contact the municipality to get information about such things. (Appendix B)

Description of the process – neutral and positive

This section is dedicated to all statements from the interviews that are concerned with the general process.

The Municipality's description of the process – neutral and positive

A key factor for the initiation of this project was, according to Valhøj, the political view in Vordingborg Municipality on the relationship between municipality and citizens: *"[...] it is also because we generally, also from the political level, have the approach that we need to be really good at considering us as partners together with the citizens and we have to do things together."* (Appendix A, p. 57) This both shows that a political will towards co-creation and a culture in the municipality with the same values is present. (Appendix A)

Before the application was sent, the municipality held a startup meeting with citizens from Jungshoved, where the plan to use co-creation as the main method was presented. This was received very well by the citizens. An organization was quickly established with terms of references and a steering group, where Valhøj was the chairman. The funding for the project was a 2 mio. DKK grant from the national Traffic, Building and Housing Board, which set the boundaries for the budget: *"You receive a grant and then it has to succeed within that"* (Appendix A, p. 59)

Apart from the budgetary boundaries set by the size of the grant, Valhøj, when looking back, notes that a precise description of the roles and the boundaries for the co-creation process was not made in the beginning: *"[...] I think that our project manager on this project probably promised a bit too much in relation to what the co-creation includes [...]".* (Appendix A, p. 57)

Valhøj describes the process as consisting of a lot of constructive collaboration and a great will to put time and effort into producing a really good end-product. This enabled solutions to problems that, Valhøj stated, could not have been solved if the project had just been planned and implemented by the municipality alone. An example of that is a judicial roadblock of the wish to plant trees on the sides next to the road leading through the town: *"[...] it apparently came forth from our road department, that it was not allowed and there were many issues and it was not at all possible and especially not inside the town, so that could not be done [...] and then I actually think it was the citizens' idea that [...] then the citizens are all given a tree, and then they promise to plant it in their front garden, so it was the gardens that had the trees, that were supposed to form the avenue through the town."* (Appendix A, p. 63) Apple trees were then gifted from the local estate and the planting of

trees in people gardens was turned into a local event. For Valhøj this is a clear example of something that would not have been possible if the project was solely managed by the municipality and no partnership was established. Instead the partnership had fostered a common desire and will to have the project succeed, when a judicial detail forced the participants to think alternatively. (Appendix A)

Furthermore Valhøj describes how much effort was put into this project by the citizens: *"They managed all dissemination […] and then they invited residents to citizen meetings or they distributed information to all households, they did both this and that and so on. So, this point about how much further you can reach, because private actors wants something is a very significant part of it […]"* (Appendix A, p. 63) When talking about the end-product, Valhøj only has positive adjectives. (Appendix A)

Citizens' description of the process – neutral and positive

Svendsen describes himself as the initiator of the project since he invited a planner from the municipality to take a look at Jungshoved with the purpose of a potential renewal process. The local council knew about the grant, but their plan was mostly about tearing down rundown houses, so they could not see how that could fit with the criteria for applying, which was nature and landscape values. But it was then *"a creative employee in the municipality, who could see the opportunity, that was present and then asked us, and then we made an application together."* (Appendix B, p. 71)

The startup meeting is described as good, and there is a strong agreement that the first part of the process was exciting: *"[t]he first three quarters of the project, was really, really… only exciting and we were in the idea phase, and we were very enthusiastic […]".* (Appendix B, p. 76) Organizing the participants in working groups based on their individual interests worked well and the terms of reference made it easy for the representatives from the different groups to stay focused on the task. All representatives were also members of the local council. It was estimated that around 50-75 people were participating in different ways. Some with practical tasks, some with ideas and creative inputs. During the interviews Jacobsen described the process by pouring a jar of candies on the table while saying: *"[…] if we now say that this is the whole project, then all this is all the good stuff and everything that went well […]"*, then she pushed one piece of candy aside while adding: *"[…] and then this is the one we are talking about now."* (Appendix B, p. 78) referencing the problematic situations in the process. So overall a reasonable satisfaction of the general project is present. This is, according to Jacobsen, also because the local council is well working and has the support of the local community. (Appendix B)

In the interview it was mentioned in different contexts that they were aware of limitations and boundaries of working with a municipality. One example was in relation to the application, since plans mentioned in that,

had to be carried out. For instance, it was written that they planned to hold a "flower party", which was later forgotten. The planner in charge of writing the evaluation report had to remind them, so the citizens had to incorporate some flowers in an event. This was perceived as overly bureaucratic, but at the same time they showed understanding that procedures like that had to be followed. (Appendix B)

The local council also felt that they were aware of the boundaries of the project and the municipal employees working on it, but that it cannot be expected that all volunteers have that awareness all the time. However, they also stated that this awareness and mutual understanding was hard to maintain at times: *"[t]he difficulty is just when we experience that there is not really openness about it and the necessary knowledge is not brought in in time, as with the example with the road regulations, which definitely was frustrating."* (Appendix B, p. 81) An example of the opposite is also mentioned, where a planner was said to be "[…] *incredibly good at, you could say, navigate also in the municipal system, and who actually was able to, on one hand, be creative and resourceful and personal and so on, and on the other hand, could make sure that she had the administration behind her"*. (Appendix B, p. 81) It was also described how this employee sometimes would imply, that an idea might clash with another department, and that she would fight to get other departments on board. This was said to really create acceptance and understanding from the volunteers. However, it was stated that it seemed like the employees when nearing the end got very stressed out and suddenly the citizens were informed that they did not have more time to spend on the project. (Appendix B)

The effect of Covid-19 was mentioned shortly in the interview. There was a common understanding how the pandemic made it harder to meet in person. Furthermore, it was speculated that Covid-19 could have been the reason for why there was not an evaluation meeting with both municipality and citizens after the project ended. (Appendix B)

When talking about the end-product it was agreed that it was very satisfactory. It was mentioned that less houses than before the renewal are now for sale. While the renewal project was not solely responsible for that it was agreed that it probably played a role in making the area more attractive. (Appendix B)

When asked about the citizens relationship with the municipality after the project it was stated that even though it took a few blows in the process it is still good. Jacobsen has a good dialogue with the municipality in relation to the community house. (Appendix B)

Vordingborg Municipality is also praised for its approach to collaboration and local democracy: *"[…] they really, really prioritized volunteering and democracy and local democracy. I think as an organization, you really want to and you are also depending on it."* (Appendix B, p. 85) Jacobsen further states that there is a need for the organization to develop to better fulfill this goal. (Appendix B)

Proposals and reflections on solutions

This section will describe the reflections the interviewees made about how a similar process could be facilitated in a way where tension and conflict would have been avoided or at least reduced. In both interviews the interviewees have been encouraged to both reflect on their own role and the role of their counterpart.

The municipality's proposals and reflections on solutions

The main point of Valhøj's reflections about how to avoid conflict in similar processes is clear communication and early definition about boundaries for co-creation and limitations of the municipality. (Appendix A)

The miscommunication about authority of the chairman and the steering group should have been clarified from the beginning. In the situation where the conflict culminated, she expected a more dramatic outcome, but instead she perceived the reaction to be a sign of respect, that was not there until she drew a line. Looking back, she would have clarified these roles earlier to avoid the conflict evolving. (Appendix A)

A clearer and more open communication about the time spent by the employees on the project would also have been desirable, in order to strengthen the awareness among the citizens that the employees does not have unlimited time to spent on this project and thereby force the citizens to prioritize more in relation to how much time they want to use and how detail oriented they want to be: *"[…] we always need to consider how much of our time we use, because that is also part of the project budget […] [w]e should have had that talk."* (Appendix A, p. 64-65)

A stronger focus on starting co-creative processes in a way where it does not create unrealistic expectations to the level of co-creation in the process is important. In this project the promise to the citizens about what is being co-created might have been too wide. (Appendix A)

Valhøj also mentions the option of hiring one person for only one project until it ends, but states that it is not how the municipal budgets work. (Appendix A)

In relation to the scolding, mistrust and ongoing tensions felt by the employees, Valhøj points to the importance of being better at continuously managing it, before it gets out of hand or affects the collaboration negatively. (Appendix A)

She also states that her general experience is that collaborative processes most often build trust and mutual understanding between municipality and citizens. (Appendix A)

<u>Citizens' proposals and reflections on solutions</u>

Probably the most important source of conflict in the experience of the citizens is that only the first phase was planned to be co-creative. Instead co-creation and an equal partnership needs to be present in the whole process. (Appendix B)

Apart from that, the importance of more openness and transparency is expressed in different contexts. A better insight into to the workings of the municipality and its administrative processes is desired, since it would encourage a better understanding and acceptance of limitations of the municipality among the citizens. (Appendix B)

A need for involving representatives from other departments is also pointed out. The idea being that it can bring necessary knowledge about road regulations for instance into the process when it is necessary and before it is too late. (Appendix B)

A better sense of how much the budget can carry is desired, to avoid surprises when there is no more time and ensure better project management. Concerning budgets more transparency is also wished for. (Appendix B)

In relation to authority of the steering group and chairman more clarity is pointed out as important. The authority of the steering group was not clear and therefore non-existent in the perspective of the citizens. It was pointed out that the fact that the project management was also the chairman was very problematic. Therefore a clear distinction between the steering group and the project management is paramount. (Appendix B)

In the interview the skills required for a planner in a process like this is described as an ability to navigate in the municipal system and know about potential roadblocks or barriers. This demands a deep knowledge about the municipality as a whole. This is believed to foster a better understanding among citizens about the difficulties of working within a municipal system. At the same time the planner needs to be able to be creative and personal and understand how motivation of volunteers work. (Appendix B)

A more radical proposal was to give the project manager full authority of the budget to bypass the need to get approval from the administration. (Appendix B)

Lastly Jacobsen adds: *"[…] maybe we also have to lower our expectations."* (Appendix B, p. 88)

General barriers

This section will present barriers and challenges related to co-creation and collaboration between public institutions and citizens as perceived from the perspective of the municipality and the citizens of Jungshoved.

<u>The municipality's perspective on organizational challenges</u>

An organizational barrier for equal collaborative relationships is the size and structure of a municipality: *"[…] in reality we have a lot of pillars, that actually legally does not care at all about all the others, because there are so many demands in this pillar, that it needs to fulfill. And then you can do as much collaboration as you want, and we are doing that, but there is also… it is a company that must deliver on so many different fronts, that does not really have anything to do with each other."* (Appendix A, p. 60) This can be seen as a barrier when different departments are working together on a project, but it is also challenging for the individual employee, because they sometimes can be expected to represent the whole municipality, which is not practically possible. (Appendix A)

It is also stated that municipal projects will always contain boundaries in relation to the project having to end within some given timeframe. Strict procedures also have to be followed. This means that a complete openness to the development of a project and thereby also a completely equal partnership is not possible. (Appendix A)

Valhøj have experienced the perception among citizens that participatory processes are just for show. By having exactly these kinds of processes this perception is usually broken down. However, because the municipality is so large, it is rare to have projects with the same citizens more than once. It is also described how otherwise non-related experiences with the municipality can affect the perception in other contexts. (Appendix A)

<u>Citizens' perspective on organizational challenges</u>

In the interview the representatives from the local council acknowledged the difficult role of being a municipal employee: *"[…] it must be really difficult to be a municipal employee, because we expect on one hand that they can sit in a group and be personal, creative and so on, and on the other hand we must accept that what they are saying might not hold up, because maybe when they go back and ask, then they do not get support and that must be a difficult role, right?"* (Appendix B, p. 79-80) This is an acknowledgement that the employee on the floor, does not have decision making competencies, and therefore always have to check with the higher level. (Appendix B)

Another difficulty acknowledged by the group was how an employee is expected to represent the whole municipality, but the reality is that the organization is separated in multiple areas of expertise and the employees are lacking knowledge about the other departments. (Appendix B)

Lastly the challenge of the two to three employees, working on this project, of keeping the overview of ideas coming from 50 to 75 people was mentioned. (Appendix B)

In general the experience was that it became difficult, when other departments with no knowledge about the co-creative process had to be involved. (Appendix B)

Another challenge was found in the dynamic of employees collaborating with volunteers. This created problems with scheduling and a need for paying for overtime. (Appendix B)

The last barrier mentioned by the citizens was the difficulty of an authority to work with projects. Svendsen states: *"[…] it is definitely difficult for a municipality, which is used to act as an authority, where there have to be a strict hierarchical responsibility and then transform to work in projects. I am tempted to quote an old teacher in project management, who said that establishing a project organization in a traditional hierarchical organization, which the municipality is, is equivalent to transplant a kidney in a patient. The patient's brain understands the purpose and accepts it, but the body will no matter what do everything it can to repel the kidney"* (Appendix B, p. 85)

Comparison

Having now presented the content of the interviews, it is time to sum up and compare the different perspectives. The relevant themes will be presented and analyzed in relation to how they agree, disagree or even oppose each other.

The boundaries of co-creation

A big difference between the municipality and the citizens was the expectation of how wide the boundaries of co-creation was. From the beginning it seems like the citizens believed that co-creation would be part of the whole process, including the realization phase. This, however turned out not to be the plan of the municipality, which resulted in tension and conflicts starting when tenders and contracts with external suppliers where made. (Appendix B) Valhøj states that a clear alignment of expectations should have been made in the beginning of the process to avoid the high expectations of the involved citizens. (Appendix A) Looking at the interview with the citizens, it is possible that the disappointment could have been avoided if they knew from

the beginning that the realization phase would have been carried out without their involvement. But it is also likely that this premise for the process would not have been accepted. It is stated clearly in the interview that a process where co-creation was only used for gathering ideas from the citizens and the implementation by the municipality alone, was not desirable. In this regard a fear of not being able to see themselves in the end-product was present. (Appendix B)

Other departments / cross sectoral collaboration

The issue of other departments being involved in the project is closely tied to the above, since it also contributed to boundaries for what the co-creative process could affect. (Appendix A) In the interviews with the citizens it is clear that from their perspective it was problematic that other departments, such as the one formulating tenders and contracts, was not part of the process. Instead they followed procedures that the citizens meant limited the opportunity for local suppliers to make an offer. (Appendix B) From the perspective of the municipality the co-creative aspect of the project was limited to the planning department and Valhøj did not want to dictate how another department should do their job. (Appendix A) Clearer communication about what was being co-created in relation to sectoral boundaries could have reduced the negative surprise of the citizens, but again it cannot be guaranteed that it would have been accepted. The involvement of other departments in this example is in relation to the realization phase, and as stated in the interview with the citizens, a realization phase without co-creation was not desirable. On the other hand, it was also mentioned in the interview, how more openness about difficulties and limitations of working with a municipality could increase understanding. (Appendix B) At the end of the day the procedures of writing tenders and contracts are strict and the ability of those procedures to be affected by a co-creative process is very limited without reorganization or changes of practice. (Appendix A) While this argument leans on the difficulty of changing a big institution it does not mean that it should be considered impossible. This challenge will be revisited later when the process is being discussed in relation to theory on co-creation.

Another aspect of involving other departments is in relation to bringing in expertise from other areas at the time when it is needed. The best example for this from the interviews is the issue with trees through the village. The citizens mention this as a big source of frustration, since a lot of time was spent on planning this. It was mentioned how it was expected of a municipal employee to have knowledge about potential roadblocks due to regulation, while acknowledging the difficulty of this, so a need for relevant experts to be brought in at the right time to avoid wasting time and energy is pointed out. (Appendix B)

In the interview with Valhøj the same situation is mentioned, however with a different perspective. It was here used as an example of what a co-creative process could achieve in opposition to a process that was run only by a municipality. (Appendix A)

Equal partnership

In the interview with citizens a lot of emphasis was put on the condition of an equal partnership and how that notion was often challenged in the process. As it was written in the project description in the application to the Traffic, Building and Housing Board it was an important condition for the citizens when entering the collaboration with the municipality. (Appendix B)

From the municipal perspective however, Valhøj states that an equal partnership with citizens, will always come with a "but". In a municipality there will always be limitations in relation to budgets, time, procedures and legality. (Appendix A) As with the above-mentioned issues a clearer description of how the equal partnership should be understood, could be imagined to strengthen understanding of limitations and boundaries of the equality of the partnership.

An interesting question in relation to the partnership is related to the perception of the municipality as one unit. Whether the equal partnership was understood to be with the whole municipality or "just" with the planners from the planning department makes a big difference. If the partnership was clearly formulated to be with the planning department only it could be argued that the equality would not be harmed when other departments with no intention of co-creation was involved in the process.

A different aspect of the equality comes into play when looking at the difference between the municipal actors and the citizens. Since the planners were employees and the citizens were volunteers the conditions for their actions were completely different. This also had an impact on the equality in the relationship. In the interview with the citizens it is mentioned that the volunteers sometimes felt the municipality was acting as their employer. (Appendix B) On the other hand it was mentioned by Valhøj that the citizens sometimes had the perception that the time of the municipal employees was free or already paid for and that the citizens thereby could "order" them to do things. (Appendix A)

Transparency

In both interviews a desire for more transparency and clearer communication was mentioned. (Appendix A), (Appendix B)
This agreement is especially visible in relation to the available time of the municipal employees. The citizens

experienced that the planners suddenly ran out of time and in relation to this express a desire to had been informed about this earlier in the process so their prioritization of their time could have been better. (Appendix B) Valhøj agrees that communication about how much time the employees had left to work on the project should have been more open throughout the process. She also states how the time consumption quickly got higher than it was expected from the beginning. (Appendix A)

The citizens also missed transparency on relation to budgets, tenders and contracts. This should be seen in relation to the disagreement of how much of the process should be managed co-creatively. (Appendix B) This meant that the citizens wanted to be informed on subjects that from the municipality's perspective was not something they should have insights about, because it was not intended that the citizens should have a say in it. (Appendix A) Furthermore, it can be speculated that the extra time the employees had to use, was damaging the transparency, because it was decided that there was not time and resources for it.

Authority of steering group and chairman

Another topic that is touched upon in both interviews is the role and authority of the steering group and the position of chairman. In the interview with Valhøj, she describes how she experienced that her role as chairman was overtaken until the conflict culminated and she used her authority to end a meeting. She felt that it was respected, and that she therefore should have made her role and authority clear earlier in the process. (Appendix A) This situation is experienced very differently by Svendsen, who stated that his motivation took a huge blow when Valhøj did this. What Valhøj experienced as respect and acceptance was actually a loss of motivation on Svendsen's behalf. (Appendix B)

The topic of the distribution of authority in the steering group is also perceived differently by the citizens. While Valhøj states that she would have clarified her authority as chairman earlier (Appendix A), the citizens wanted the steering group to have more authority. They experienced that Valhøj on more than one occasion took decisions that bypassed the approval of the steering group. This problematic issue here is, according to the citizens, that Valhøj possessed both the role of project management and chairman of the steering group. In their opinion the steering group should have been independent of the project management in order to ensure that decisions with the common interest of the project was being made. (Appendix B) This again points to the issue of the realism of establishing a completely equal partnership with a municipality with limited resources and strict procedures and standard practices that have to be followed.

Even though the perspectives of this issue are quite different, an agreement about that the roles of both chairman and steering group should have been more clearly defined from the beginning is present. The disagreement lies in exactly how this should be to ensure a good and fair process. (Appendix A), (Appendix B)

Trust

Valhøj states how the employees often did not feel trusted in their professional ability. (Appendix A) This mistrust is also visible in the interview with the citizens. The source of this mistrust can be found in some of the experiences the citizens had in the process. Again, the example of road regulations is relevant. The citizens expected that the planners knew about relevant regulation, when they approved the idea of planting trees to form an avenue. Unfortunately, the information about regulation inhibiting this plan did not emerge until after many hours had been spent by the citizens. (Appendix B) It is likely that an experience like this can hurt the citizens trust in the planner's professional ability, which leads to the citizens seeing a need for questioning and challenging the planners. The planners also reported how the citizens often had to control and doublecheck if they did their job right, leading to frustration for the planners. (Appendix A) This can be understood in relation to the point of municipal employees representing the whole municipality even though that is not possible in practice.

A speculation can be made, that this dynamic created a negative feedback loop, where mistrust led to more control of the employees, leading to the employees spending more time on communication, resulting in less time available for doing their job to avoid other mistakes in the future process.

Group dynamics

Both interviews point to experiences of the other part communicating disrespectfully. (Appendix A), (Appendix B) For the planners these experiences are most likely related closely to the issue of mistrust described above.

From the citizens perspective a relevant example was the situation where the working group concerned with biodiversity was critiqued for choosing the wrong plants. The frustration of the citizens in this situation was related to the experience of relevant knowledge from other departments being brought in too late. (Appendix B)

General challenges

Both parts acknowledge the challenge of a municipality working with co-creative processes. (Appendix A), (Appendix B) The difference in perspectives in this context might lie in what aspects are possible to change. It might come down to a question of realism versus idealism, where citizens are freer to be idealistic in their approach to how a municipality should work differently, while municipal employees are forced to be more realistic, because they have to follow procedures and respect boundaries between departments and the hierarchical structure of their workplace. Furthermore, the municipality is the sender of the application for funding and thereby responsible for succeeding within the budget. (Appendix A) In support of this line of

reasoning a key difference between citizens and municipal employees in a project like this is also the emotional connection to the subject matter. (Appendix B) For citizens it is the future of their local community, while it, for the employees, after all is only a job.

Discussion

As Flyvbjerg mentions summing up or generalizing a case study is difficult. (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Therefore, the goal is not to come up with a clear answer and determine who was right and who was wrong, but rather to present different experiences and perspectives on the same subject matter, where the truth and validity of the individual experiences and perspectives are acknowledged.

Validity of findings from the case

As argued in the methodology section the case of Jungshoved is seen as critical. It can be described as a case of a co-creative project that tests the ability of the municipality to work co-creatively to its fullest. The actors of the case is a strong group of citizens representing a close knit local community and a municipality with a strong will and vision to collaborate with citizens, represented by planners with good intentions but relatively inexperienced. I am aware that the findings from this case is context specific, but also convinced that a deeper understanding of this case can contribute to reflections that can be valuable in other contexts. As Flyvbjerg (2006) argues, critical cases has value in how they often contain a great level of complexity and how a wide array of issues can be extrapolated.

Social sustainability of the process in Jungshoved

As stated by Boström (2012), social sustainability is notoriously difficult to measure and quantify. However, a discussion about aspects of social sustainability is relevant.

The physical improvements made in the project of Jungshoved can be compared with the substantive aspects of social sustainability presented in the theory section. An agreement that the end result of the process was good is visible in the interviews. (Appendix A), (Appendix B) In relation to social sustainability aspects, the project can be said to have improved the attractiveness of the local area, by renovating buildings, the establishment of Folkeparken and a village garden. As mentioned in the interview with the citizens a sense of pride attributed to living in Jungshoved was also visible as a result of the improvements of the town, strengthening the positive identity connected to living in Jungshoved. (Appendix B)

When looking at the procedural aspects of social sustainability it is clear that access to participation and decision-making was present in the process in Jungshoved. However, emphasis in the definition of social sustainability is put on access to influence on different stages of a process. (Boström, 2012) In Jungshoved the influence of the citizens of was limited to the idea and design phase of the project, while participation in the

realization phase was non-existent. The main concern of the citizens in regard to not being part of the realization was that the way the tenders were formulated deterred local businesses from making an offer. Instead bigger companies from outside of Jungshoved was hired. (Appendix B) This can be seen as an example of a missed opportunity for the project to strengthening the economic sustainability of the local area of Jungshoved. The main reasons presented by the municipality for not involving citizens in this phase, was that procedural and regulatory concerns dictated how the tenders should be formulated. How citizens should gain influence in a phase like this is outside the area of expertise from this thesis, since it would require further research, but the process of Jungshoved points to the relevance of these reflections on how a public institution like a municipality can be better suited to involve citizens in more stages of urban planning projects.

Which level of co-creation is Jungshoved?

A relevant topic for discussion is how the process of renewal in Jungshoved By compares with the presented theory on co-creation. According to Torfing, Sørensen and Røiseland (2020) the third step on the ladder of co-creation involves an equal partnership, where citizens and municipality in collaboration defines both problems and solutions. On the second step, the citizens only contribute to the production of existing services. From both interviews it is clear that the citizens had a very active role in both defining the challenges and potentials in Jungshoved By and figuring out solutions for how Jungshoved By should be improved physically. In saying this it is argued that the citizens where more than co-producers in this project and that the process therefore can be defined as being co-creative in the sense described by Torfinger, Sørensen and Røiseland's (2020). Having said this it should however be acknowledged that the question of whether the partnership between municipality and citizens was equal is more complicated to answer clearly. In that regard the act of placing the process of Jungshoved on this ladder is not simple. This question of equality will be left for a little later in this discussion.

Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2014) provides a theoretical perspective on co-creation, where the level of detail in their second and third type is higher. This can be helpful in understanding the process of Jungshoved, since the ladder presented above might be missing a level of detail as well as room for nuance.

Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2014) underlines the distinction of who the initiator of a process is. In the case of Jungshoved it can be argued that the citizens are actually the initiator, since a key step in starting this project seems to be the invitation of the municipality to Jungshoved, where they saw a potential. In reality the question of who initiated the process is probably less simple than that and the most precise way to describe how the project was initiated is more likely to have been in collaboration with municipality and citizens. While the local council might have had plans to improve their local area, it was a planner from the municipality that

saw the possibility of applying for the grant from the Traffic, Building and Housing Board. (Appendix B) This enabled the project to be more extensive and ambitious than what the local council had in mind. The application was formally written by the municipality, but in close dialogue with the local council of Jungshoved, so while the first initiative might have been shown by the citizens the process of initializing the project was done in collaboration. (Appendix A)

In their second type citizens have the role of co-designer. In this type, the public institution is often the initiator, and the citizens are brought in to contribute to the design of the solutions. (Voorberg, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2014) When looking at the process of Jungshoved it may seem fitting to view the citizens as co-designers, since the co-creation was present in the idea-phase where the design is taking place. In this phase a clear intention of the municipality was that the desires of the citizens should be the controlling force of the design of the finished product, without however, to be involved in the realization phase where other municipal departments where involved to write tenders, find suppliers and write contracts. From the perspective of the citizens, however, not being part of the realization phase was seen as a restriction of the citizens influence on the design of the project. They had a fear that when leaving the realization phase to the municipality, they would not be able to recognize themselves and their plans in the finished project. This might be a result of a growing level of mistrust towards the ability of the municipality building up over the course of the project, but nevertheless it is quite clear from the interview with the local council that not being part of the realization phase was a key part missing in the co-creative process. It is clear that different expectations to this question were a determining factor in the conflict between the municipal planners and the citizens of Jungshoved. On one hand it can be argued that standards of practice, procedures and regulations for a municipality makes it unable to be influenced by citizens. On the other hand, it can also be said that a co-creative process should contain an equal partnership throughout the whole process, and that the structure of a municipality is ill-fitting for a true co-creative process. Getting back to the distinctions of types of co-creation made by Voorberg, Bekker and Tummers (2014) the citizens might have been more than just co-designers, while not fully being the sole initiator. Therefore the two models used to describe co-creation (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2020), (Voorberg, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2014), might be lacking in their ability to assess the level of influence the citizens had in the process.

Level of influence

The ladder of participation, formulated by Arnstein (2019), might be able to add to that level of the discussion. It can be argued that the formalized structure for local democracy in Vordingborg Municipality, described in the Problem Area, is what Arnstein (2019) describes as *Placation*, which is the fifth rung of the ladder of

participation. Citizens are organized in different local councils, where influence through dialogue with the municipality is guaranteed, thereby placing them closer to the decision making. Arnstein defines this rung as still being a form of tokenism, since influence is not guaranteed. However, a small aspect of this can be viewed ad being higher on the ladder on the sixth rung, *Partnership,* or even the seventh rung, *Delegated power.* As a part of the local democracy model, a steering group is appointed with four members from the municipal council and five external members, including two appointed by the local councils and three appointed by different volunteer organizations. This means that citizens hold the majority in the steering group, which is how *Delegated power* is described by Arnstein (2019). In this context however, the decision-making authority of the steering group is limited to the treatment of applications for the Volunteer and Local Democracy Fund of 20.000 to 100.000 DKK. The main purpose of the steering group is dialogue between the political level and citizens, recommendations and public hearings. (Vordingborg Municipality, nd.) So while having some decision-making competence it is still quite limited.

In the context of the project at Jungshoved, *Partnership* was written in the application. (Vordingborg Municipality, 2018) This is the sixth rung on Arnstein's (2019) ladder of participation. However, a deeper understanding of the level of influence demands a closer look in the different phases of the project. As visible in the interview, in the idea phase, the level of citizen influence can be argued to be on the seventh rung, *delegated power,* where the citizens where given authority to decide what elements should be part of the renewal of Jungshoved. In the realization phase, the interviews shows that the citizens did not have control. It was even described as a struggle to get information about contracts and budgets in this phase. (Appendix B) From the perspective of the municipality, citizens participation was not meant to be part of this phase in the process (Appendix A), while the citizens expected to be involved in the whole process from start to finish (Appendix B). This decoupling of the citizens corresponds well with Arnstein's (2019) description of a *Partnership*, where the partnership only exists *"[…] as long as both parties find it useful to maintain the partnership"* (Arnstein, 2019, s. 31). In the realization phase there was not participation, and the level of influence is therefore not on the ladder of participation.

As described by Arnstein (2019) partnership work the best when citizens are organized, when citizen leaders are compensated economically and the citizens have financial ressources to hire their own experts. In Vordingborg Municipality, the citizens are organized in the local councils, where the members are given a small amount of money to compensate for their time, but the local councils does not have ressources to hire external experts. (Vordingborg Municipality, nd.) These conditions are described by Arnstein (2019) in order to enable fair negotiation between the partners of the partnership. In regard to the ability to hire external experts, it can be argued that the local democracy model is lacking in its ability to enable fair negotiation

between citizens and municipality, leaving the citizens unable to negotiate as it happened in the realization phase of the Jungshoved process.

Organizational aspects

An organizational characteristic of Vordingborg Municipality that works in favor of co-creation is their local democracy model. An influential factor of well working co-creation is the organizational ability to incorporate citizen participation in their practice. (Voorberg, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2014) In Vordingborg Municipality their model for local democracy ensures a channel for communication and it is a model that both employees and the local councils have years of experience working within. (Vordingborg Municipality, nd.)

In this context the definition and understanding of what an equal partnership, between a public institution and citizens entails, is important. As seen in the interviews the different understandings of this term were a source to tension and conflict. While also being part of the definition of co-creation formulated by Torfinger, Sørensen and Røiseland (2020) a discussion of the equality of a relationship between public and private partners is extremely relevant. In the process the citizens did not have influence on the realization phase, where it can be argued that the partnership lost its equality, when the citizens felt that the municipality took over. In the interview with Valhøj it is also described how her understanding of an equal partnership comes with a "but". A municipality has limitations and boundaries and procedures and regulation have to be followed. (Appendix A) Such limitations are not present in a purely private project and they were perceived by the citizens to be counterproductive and overly bureaucratic and seen as the municipality using its authority to overrule their influence and opinions. Furthermore, a problematic issue in the perspective of the citizens was that other departments were not properly involved in the process. (Appendix B) From the perspective of the municipality the planning department did not wish to interfere with how other departments worked. (Appendix A) This corresponds with the challenge of leadership in co-creative processes described by Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2014). While co-creative processes often overlap sectoral boundaries the structure of a municipality does not reflect that, creating a challenge for leaders, since they do not have authority over employees from other departments. (Voorberg, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2014) A highly complex question in this context is whether such structural conditions for a municipality is disabling true co-creation, and whether reforms and re-structuring is necessary for the municipality to fulfill their intentions of working in equal partnerships with citizens in co-creative processes. The learnings from this thesis unfortunately does not provide enough knowledge to answer that question, but the experiences of both parties can be used to point to organizational challenges of a municipality working within a co-creative framework.

Another approach to the question of equality can be found in how it is defined. This can entail that limitations of the equality in a public-private partnership needs to be stated clearly from the beginning. The "but" that Valhøj describes needs to be expressed openly. The partnership in the process can be equal, but the municipality has procedures and regulation that needs to be followed and can therefore not be influenced by the partnership. In this context a clarification of which phases in the process the equal relationship is existing could have mitigated potential conflict, but whether or not the citizens of Jungshoved would have accepted a project on those terms can only be speculated.

Another limit of equality of a partnership also lies in a clarification of who the partnership is with. It can be imagined that when formulating the partnership as being between citizens and municipalities that the perceived equality is thereby eliminated when another department is involved in the process. This department might have procedures that can be perceived as working against the wish of the citizens. The point here being that defining the municipality as an equal partner of the citizens, might be too unprecise. Instead the partnership could have been defined as being with the planning department of the municipality or the planners who are working on the project.

The challenge of defining the partnership between the municipality and citizens of Jungshoved is how different the expectation of what that entails where for the two parts. This difference in expectations points to the importance of defining such terms for a partnership in the beginning of a process to enable mutual understanding and preventing surprises as the process progresses.

The role of the planner

An aspect, which is influential for the role of the planner, is the difficulty of representing the municipality in the meeting with citizens. As clarified in both interviews a tendency of perceiving a municipality as one unit can be found. But in reality a municipality is a large organization with different departments, procedures and regulations that are all there to manage different purposes. As seen in this case mistrust in the planners' ability was created, when the work of other departments was experienced to work against the interest of the project and the citizens. In this context a challenge for a planner is to have enough insight in the workings of the municipality to mitigate or avoid situations like these.

A clear knowledge about one's professional boundaries and limitations is therefore necessary and clear communication about these in non-municipal collaborations is desired. The importance of being open about your own limitations seems important to avoid misunderstandings and disappointments during a process like this.

At the same time a process like this is shown to be challenging in the current organizational structure of the municipality. While the separation in departments may be logical from a municipal perspective, these separations can seem counter intuitive for citizens when the plan made in collaboration with one department is hindered by another department. This might point to a more holistic approach, since projects like this are cross-sectoral and will involve different professional areas of expertise.

As a result of this the planners project management ability was also tested in this process. This involves their ability to clearly define the structure and framework of the collaboration. The ability to ensure mutual understanding of the role of the different partners is necessary to avoid uncertainty about how the collaboration is actually structured. This skill is necessary in order to hopefully avoid conflicts based in the difference of expectations to how a collaboration is carried out.

Conclusion

This thesis aims to answer the problem statement:

> Using theory on social sustainability, citizens participation and co-creation, how can tension and conflict be-tween a municipality and citizens be mitigated in a co-creative urban renewal process in a village with negative growth?

Using a case-study approach this thesis aims to learn from experiences from a co-creative urban renewal project in Jungshoved, where a partnership between Vordingborg Municipality and the local council of Jungshoved. The findings of this case can be categorized in practical experience from the process that points to how tension and conflicts can arise and how they can be avoided and more general structural challenges that was made visible by the process and the difficulty of a public-private partnership.

Structural challenges of co-creation are found. This study shows that strict procedures and regulations can be perceived as limiting factors of a co-creative process. This was especially visible when municipal departments other than the planning department was involved in the process. In the realization phase of the project the citizens no longer had influence, since procedures and regulations of the department that formulated the tenders had to be followed. If influence from citizens in the realization phase and in relation to other departments are desirable, a closer look into how a more holistic approach can be taken on the organizational structure of a municipality is needed.

The practical experience of the project underlines the importance of clear communication about possibilities and limitations of the collaboration. A high level of mutual understanding is important when a municipality and a group of citizens collaborates in a co-creative process. A clear definition of how an equal partnership is understood and what phases of the project can be influenced by the co-creative partnership is paramount in order to prevent disappointments and disagreements based on the nature of the collaborative process.

It is my hope that this thesis can provide relevant knowledge to both the implicated actors in this case and to planners more widely, who are interested on learning from practical experiences from a co-creative process.

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