



The Uppsala tramway project

A balancing act between swift and slow planning

Julia Jakobsson

Degree project/Independent project • 30 credits
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU
Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
Environmental Communication and Management - Master's Programme
Uppsala 2025



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Julia Jakobsson

Supervisor: Daniel Valentini, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Department of Urban and Rural Development

Examiner: Amelia Mutter, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Department of Urban and Rural Development

Credits: 30 credits

Level: Second cycle, A2E

Course title: Master thesis in Environmental science, A2E

Course code: EX0897

Programme/education: Environmental Communication and Management - Master's
Programme

Course coordinating dept: Department of Aquatic Sciences and Assessment

Place of publication: Uppsala

Year of publication: 2025

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Online publication: <https://stud.epsilon.slu.se>

Keywords: urban planning, swift planning, slow planning, citizen dialogue,
participation, Uppsala, Sweden, tramway

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Urban and Rural Development
Division of Environmental Communication

Abstract

Growing cities, increased urbanisation and sustainability challenges cause strain on existing transportation systems, which in turn emphasises the importance of adequate urban planning. Calls for swift and efficient planning to combat sustainability challenges and to adhere to economic and political constraints coexist with calls for incorporating deliberative forms of planning and citizen participation in planning, also referred to as slow planning. In this case study, an ongoing infrastructure project, namely the Uppsala tramway project is explored with the purpose of investigating how planners experience and manage double pressure for swift and slow planning when planning for an infrastructure project. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews were conducted, and a thematic analysis of the interviews was performed. The results show that there is a double pressure for planning swiftly or efficiently, and for planning slowly and involving citizens in planning processes. Furthermore, the results show that political and economic factors are experienced by the interviewees as the main causes for pressure to plan swiftly, and that the balancing act for swift and slow planning largely focuses on enhancing slow planning to become more efficient by improving dialogue designs and by keeping citizens informed before, and throughout a project's duration. To conclude, the balancing act between swift and slow planning is present in the tramway project, and by openly acknowledging and accepting that diverging needs in planning exist, discussion and creative planning that can allow for slow and swift planning to coexist, can emerge.

Keywords: urban planning, swift planning, slow planning, citizen dialogue, participation, Uppsala, Sweden, tramway, democracy, efficiency, pressure

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1. Introduction

The field of urban planning is extensive and centres around the development of land use and how cities are designed and arranged. Beyond spatial planning, urban planning considers sustainability, economic development, public health, and social and political circumstances (Josa & Aguado 2019), which highlights the impact that urban planning has on our day to day lives. Pressing sustainability challenges, climate change and increased urbanisation has led to several challenges when it comes to urban planning. Current demands for increased housing, sustainable infrastructure and green areas contribute to the need for planning processes that are both democratic and efficient, and planning processes that in turn can lead to sustainable urban planning, and improved infrastructure and landscape architecture in cities. Presently, urban planning is at the centre of two contradictory discourses, namely the need for efficiency contra the need for democracy in planning (Falleth & Saglie 2011). This opens the question of whether it is possible to balance these diverging needs in an urban planning context. In this case study, the concepts of swift and slow planning, which are related to the efficiency contra democracy discourse, are explored and applied to an ongoing infrastructure project in Uppsala, Sweden. This study takes inspiration from the research article “Navigating swift and slow planning: planners’ balancing act in the design of participatory processes” by Calderon et al. (2022). The authors (Calderon et al. 2022) describe that there is an existing awareness of the balancing act between swift and slow planning and explain the challenges that this entails for urban planning. Thus, the theoretical framework for this study is based on the swift and slow concepts described in the research article by Calderon et al. (2022). Moreover, swift planning and slow planning is further explored as the concepts are applied to a unique case, specifically the Uppsala tramway project. This study aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice through applying these opposing needs in the planning process to a real-life infrastructure project. This can highlight the need for politicians, planners and other stakeholders to be aware of the dichotomy in future projects and to find strategies to manage the pressure between efficiency and deliberation, which in turn can lead to not only better planning processes but also improved end results.

Furthermore, this study explores the experiences and perspectives of people involved in a planning project and focuses on consultations and citizen dialogues as deliberative processes in planning. Thus, communication plays a central part in this study as public participation is explored and planners' perspectives on how to convey information and engage citizens in participatory processes is studied and compared to perspectives on urgency in urban planning. Environmental communication as a field considers what is expressed, how, and with what consequences with a focus on environmental challenges, as well as engages with how interactions shape and negotiate meaning, values, knowledge and norms (Pezzullo & Cox 2018). In an urban planning context, and in this study, this entails exploring democracy and decision making in planning, perspectives on power and knowledge in planning, and the balancing act of considering and including diverging interests in planning.

2. Aims and research questions

Previous research has largely focused on tensions between deliberative processes in planning and efficiency in planning. This study aims to contribute to previous research by providing a better understanding of existing challenges in urban planning by exploring planners' experiences and perspectives on double pressure for swift and slow planning. By investigating planners' experiences and perspectives, insight can be gained into how planners are affected by double pressure, which in turn can uncover why planning processes proceed in certain directions. Furthermore, the aim of this thesis is to investigate how planners experience and manage double pressure for swift planning and slow planning when planning for an infrastructure project. This thesis will investigate the tramway project in Uppsala.

To achieve this, the following research questions were formulated:

- What characterises double pressure for swift planning and slow planning in a planning project?
- In what ways do planners experience double pressure for swift planning and slow planning when working with a planning project?
- What strategies do planners have to manage double pressure for swift planning and slow planning? And how are the strategies implemented in a planning project?

3. Background

3.1 Swift and slow planning

In the article “Navigating swift and slow planning: planners’ balancing act in the design of participatory processes”, Calderon et al. (2022) use the concept of “swift planning” to describe demands for greater efficiency in planning processes, and “slow planning” to describe demands for more deliberative planning processes. The authors (Calderon et al. 2022) explain that there is a double pressure for swift and slow planning, and that this has become more prominent in Nordic planning research over the last ten years. Urbanisation, climate change and other pressing sustainability challenges along with neoliberal ideas and new public management have given rise to a need for quicker decision making processes (Mäntysalo et al. 2015; Falleth et al. 2010; Falleth & Saglie 2011 see Calderon et al. 2022). However, participation and consequently democratic ideas are not completely compatible with the market driven and technology-based decision making that swift planning processes promote (Grange 2017; Niitamo 2021; Falleth et al. 2010; Falleth & Saglie 2011; Sager 2009 see Calderon et al. 2022). Swift and slow planning are therefore seemingly at odds with each other.

Since the 1980s demands for increased citizen participation in urban planning have been discussed in communicative planning theory (Healey 1992; Forester 1989 see Niitamo 2021). Communicative planning theory focuses on communication in planning and puts emphasis on including different actors in dialogue and deliberation (Forester 1999; Healey 1997; Innes & Booher 2018; Sager 2012 see Westin 2022). Healey (1997 see Mannberg 2006) refers to the “communicative turn” to describe a change in planning ideals toward collaboration and communication between actors with different expertise and diverging interests in a planning context. According to Healey, (1992 see Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones 2002) the communicative turn includes many processes in planning, such as planning being an interactive procedure that encourages participants to find practical solutions themselves rather than simply expressing their wishes, planning that includes diverse stakeholders and inclusive strategic discourses, a focus on arenas of struggle, that is concentrating on identifying, discussing and assessing issues and strategies that create public discussion and conflict, and lastly collaboration between participants and for participants to establish an understanding of, and knowledge of other participants. Communicative planning theory is in turn grounded in communicative rationality. Communicative rationality in a planning context entails that communicative processes and language can bring about rational planning. The emphasis in communicative rationality lies in interactive and social processes with a goal of consensus building discussion (Willson 2001). According to Willson (2001) transportation planning is mainly characterised by instrumental rationality, resulting in that the most important factor when planning for transportation has ordinarily been to choose the most cost-effective processes.

An example of a communicative process that is commonly practised in urban planning is the citizen dialogue (Soneryd & Lindh 2019), also known as “medborgardialog” in Swedish. The citizen dialogue involves striving to engage the public in planning, decision making, discussion and exchange of knowledge and experiences (Calderon et al. 2022). In line with Habermasian ideas of deliberative democracy, the citizen dialogue can be considered a step toward increased democratisation (Soneryd & Lindh 2019). However, participatory processes and thus citizen dialogues are time-consuming processes (Innes 2004; Sager 2009; Baker et al. 2007; Brand & Gaffikin 2007 see Calderon et al. 2022) which entails that the citizen dialogue can be categorised into the concept of slow planning.

Falleth et al. (2010) write about how neoliberal ideas have caused, what they call informal phases in planning practice in a Norwegian context. The informal phase is one where, in an early stage, agreements between municipal planners and private developers are made behind closed doors (Falleth et al. 2010). Neoliberal planning has been criticised for not focusing on democratic aspects of planning, and when excluding the public from the informal phase the public's opportunities to influence the planning process in an early stage decreases (Falleth et al. 2010). Furthermore, the neoliberal planning approach mainly aims to make urban planning and the construction process more effective and can be considered a response to grave criticism of ineffective urban planning (Falleth et al. 2010). In Sweden, neoliberal planning principles are, for example, noticeable when it comes to housing. Housing in Sweden has in recent years been described as being in crisis and has been characterised by housing shortages and an increased population. A survey from 2025 shows that there is a shortage of housing in Sweden's metropolitan areas (Boverket 2025 a). The Swedish housing policy shifted in the 1980s from a state-dominated approach to a neoliberal approach (Baczyk et al. 2023). The shift in housing politics has resulted in Sweden having amongst the most liberal market-controlled housing markets in the western countries of the world (Lind & Lundström 2007 see Hedin et al. 2012). Housing is in turn interconnected with urban planning, and the need for more housing influences city planning in terms of transport networks and land use (Gurran & Bramley 2017). The neoliberal shift in the 1980s is moreover linked to new public management and the reorganisation of governmental structures (Mydske et al. 2007 see Mäntysalo & Saglie 2010). New public management reforms are heavily focused on efficiency and its influence on planning is characterised by market-orientation, competitiveness and decentralisation (Sager 2009). Furthermore, Parker and Dobson (2025) write about the discourse of project speed and delay in urban planning and explain how processes in planning that can be considered to slow down decision making or decrease efficiency are assumed to be direct obstacles toward neoliberal promises of growth.

Furthermore, current sustainability challenges can result in pressure to work faster with planning processes (Calderon et al. 2022). More than half of the world's population live in cities, and urbanisation is continuously increasing (UNDP Sverige 2024). Moreover, climate change may lead to cities being more vulnerable to natural disasters, extreme weather and flooding (Kacyira 2012), and when it comes to planning for transport, growing cities and increasing populations naturally

cause strain on urban transport systems (Goetz 2019). This, in turn, highlights the importance of appropriate urban planning.

3.2 Consultation and citizen dialogue

In Sweden, consultation or “samråd” in Swedish, is a legislated process that aims to collect opinions, information and wishes about a plan in order to consider these early on in the detailed planning process. The consultation is part of the Planning and Building Act or “Plan- och bygglagen” in Swedish (Boverket 2023 a). The municipality should always consult the County Administrative Board, the Swedish mapping cadastral and land registration authority, and other municipalities concerned. Other actors concerned, such as residents and organisations in the area must only be given opportunity for consultation (Boverket 2023 a). During the consultation, the municipality should be able to disclose the plan proposal, the reasons for the plan proposal, relevant planning documents and with what procedure the municipality intends to process the proposal (Boverket 2023 a). Information that the municipality needs to disclose should be available on the municipality’s website during the consultation period (Boverket 2023 a). Apart from who should participate, there are no requirements for how exactly a consultation should be performed (Boverket 2023 a). Consultations can be done by standard procedure or by extended procedure (Boverket 2023 a). Extended procedure is applied when standard procedure cannot be used. Reasons for employing extended procedure can be that the plan proposal is not compatible with the comprehensive development plan, that the proposal entails a significant impact on the environment, or that the proposal is of considerable interest to the public (Boverket 2023 b). When employing extended procedure, opinions collected from consultations should be disclosed in a consultation report, that is “samrådsredogörelse” in Swedish. The municipality replies to, and comments on the collected opinions in the consultation report. A consultation report does not have to be done when employing standard procedure (Boverket 2023 c).

Unlike the consultation, the citizen dialogue is not legislated. The citizen dialogue is an optional process that is supposed to be performed before a detailed plan proposal is made and before the municipality has had the chance to make considerable decisions (Boverket 2025 b). The purpose of the citizen dialogue is to collect opinions, knowledge and experiences from citizens early in order to improve the basis for decision making (Boverket 2025 b). According to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner 2019), the citizen dialogue implies dialogues that are conducted on issues that are influenceable, and where decision makers can be influenced, as well as where the results from the dialogue will be utilised.

Hellquist and Westin (2019) write about three different ideals for how citizen dialogues can manage conflicts. The ideals that the authors describe are the consensus ideal, the agonistic ideal and the mobilising ideal. In line with the consensus ideal, citizen dialogues should strive to create consensus which in turn will dissolve conflicts, this ideal is based on communicative planning theory and ideas of deliberative democracy. Communicative planning theory has in turn had

an influence on Swedish planning practice which is observable when considering the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions own work with citizen dialogues (Hellquist and Westin 2019). Moving on, the agonistic ideal focuses on providing arenas for conflict where reaching consensus is not the goal and where conflict is considered inevitable, this ideal is based on agonistic planning theory and post-structuralist democracy theory. The consensus ideal has received criticism such as that aiming to reach consensus will result in failure to represent different perspectives and for ignoring power relations (Mouffe 2000; Mouffe 2005 see Hellquist & Westin 2019). In contrast to the consensus ideal the agonistic ideal welcomes cordial conflict and encourages negotiation between viewpoints rather than striving for consensus. Finally, the mobilising ideal suggests that citizen dialogues should handle conflicts by levelling power relations and allowing for weaker or marginalised groups in society to strengthen their position (Hellquist & Westin 2019). While the citizen dialogue strives to engage citizens in participation, conflicts within dialogues can be managed in different ways and Hellquist and Westin (2019) suggest that municipalities should disclose what type of ideal or ideals a dialogue aims for.

Consultations and citizen dialogues are ascribed many advantages and purposes. For example, according to 5 c. 12 § in the Planning and Building act (SFS 2010:900), consultations are described as intended to help produce better grounds for decision making and allow for insight and influence, and as mentioned above, the purpose of the citizen dialogue is described as collecting opinions, knowledge and experiences from citizens to improve the basis for decision making (Boverket 2025 b). Furthermore, the citizen dialogue is described as a method for citizens to contribute to the representative democracy system and to create democratic legitimacy as well as to build trust. The citizen dialogue is furthermore described as an approach to minimise the risk of conflicts and violence (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner 2025). Thus, consultations and citizen dialogues are ascribed important roles beyond improving grounds for decision making.

3.3 The case: Uppsala tramway

In this thesis, the Uppsala tramway project will be studied. The Uppsala tramway project is an infrastructure project that aims to build a tramway across central and southern Uppsala.

3.3.1 History

In the year 2010 in Uppsala, investigations into different alternatives for sustainable public transportation were carried out and the idea of building a tramway in Uppsala was formed (Uppsala kommun 2024 a). In Uppsala municipality's comprehensive development plan from 2010, it is stated that preparations should be made to be able to build a tramway or, as an alternative, to build for personal rapid transit in the future (Uppsala kommun 2010). In 2016, a new comprehensive development plan was established (Uppsala kommun 2024 a). In the plan it is expressed that in the year 2050, Uppsala will be built around nodes, and the city, urban areas and the countryside will all be connected via trails for fast and effective public transportation (Uppsala kommun 2016). Furthermore, in 2016, Uppsala region and

Uppsala municipality commissioned an investigation on what types of vehicles Uppsala municipality should invest in for public transportation (Uppsala kommun 2024 a). The purpose of the investigation was to serve as a basis for deciding what public transportation system to implement in Uppsala (WSP 2016). In the investigation, two alternatives are discussed, namely a tramway and bus rapid transit (WSP 2016). In 2017, a contract called Fyrspårsavtalet was signed by the Swedish state, Uppsala region and Uppsala municipality (Uppsala kommun 2024 a). The contract includes developing Uppsala's railway, planning for exploitation of land for housing construction and preparing for a high-capacity public transportation system (Uppsala kommun 2017). In 2018, an agreement was approved by Uppsala municipality and Uppsala region on how to divide responsibilities such as organisation, time plan and financing (Uppsala kommun 2024 a). A design programme for the tramway was developed in 2019, and in 2020 dialogues and investigations about different alternatives for public transportation were performed (Uppsala kommun 2024 a). There were two occasions where the public got to chat online with representatives who performed the investigation that was done in 2016 on what types of vehicles Uppsala municipality should invest in for public transportation. During 2021 the first consultations about the detailed development plan for a high-capacity public transportation system were held digitally. In the same year, the Uppsala municipal council decided on building the tramway (Uppsala kommun 2024 a). In the year 2022, Uppsala municipality and Uppsala region were granted financing by the state via an agreement called a city environment agreement (Uppsala kommun 2024 g). A city environment agreement is a regulation intended to support municipalities and regions with sustainable infrastructure and transportation efforts that promote biking, public transport and sustainable freight transport, with the purpose of promoting sustainable urban environments. Municipalities and regions can apply for a city environment agreement via the Swedish Transport Administration and can in that way receive financial support (Trafikverket 2025). In 2023 and 2024 consultations were held and the different plans were examined (Uppsala kommun 2024 a). The building process officially started in 2024 with a symbolic groundbreaking ceremony, and the tramway project is planned to be completed in 2029 (Uppsala kommun 2025 a). Figure 1 shows a timeline of the tramway project.

According to Uppsala municipality (2024 b), Uppsala is a region that is growing, and the population is increasing, which means that a high-capacity mode of public transport, such as a tramway, is needed. Uppsala municipality (2024 b) also mentions that it is a reliable mode of transportation that will not get stuck in traffic, and that a tramway will contribute to a greener environment since a tramway can be built on top of green areas. Furthermore, Uppsala municipality (2024 b) argues that a tramway will connect the city and provide better accessibility for people to, for example, reach their workplace or their school. The tramway project is furthermore described as an investment for the future (Uppsala kommun 2025 b).

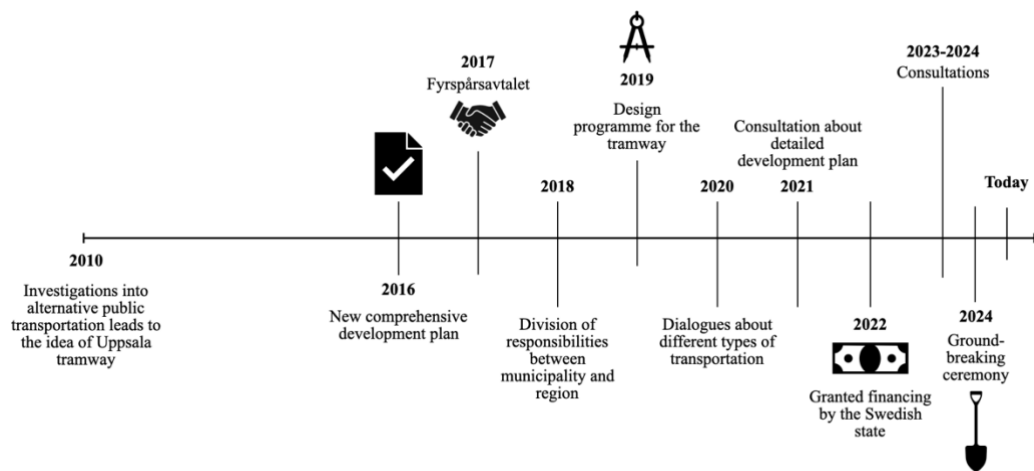


Figure 1. Timeline of the Uppsala tramway project

3.3.2 Consultation and citizen dialogue in Uppsala

Uppsala municipality has a document with guidelines for dialogue with those who live and work in Uppsala municipality. The guideline is intended to help the municipality's work with dialogues (Uppsala kommun 2024 c). The guideline covers dialogues that are open to the public, as well as dialogues that are aimed at certain target groups (Uppsala kommun 2024 c). In the guideline, dialogues that are decided by politics where participants can be given influence in the questions that are being discussed, are referred to as citizen dialogues. It is stated that dialogues should always be considered at the start of a project that directly affects the people who live or work in Uppsala municipality. The main principles that are introduced in the guideline are that the dialogue should have a clear purpose, and it should be clear to the participants what level of influence they will have, and that everyone should have equal opportunity to participate in dialogues. It is also stated that participants should be informed of the results of the dialogue and how the results will be used going forward.

In the guideline it is stated that Uppsala municipality should apply the ladder of participation (see Figure 2) as support when working with dialogues (Uppsala kommun 2024 c). The ladder of participation is based on Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, which was created after criticism emerged during the 1960s of American urban planning practices. The criticism was aimed at consultations that promised more influence than what was actually given to participants. The ladder of citizen participation was made to categorise different types of participation and to clarify what level of participation different dialogue processes and participation processes provide (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner 2023).

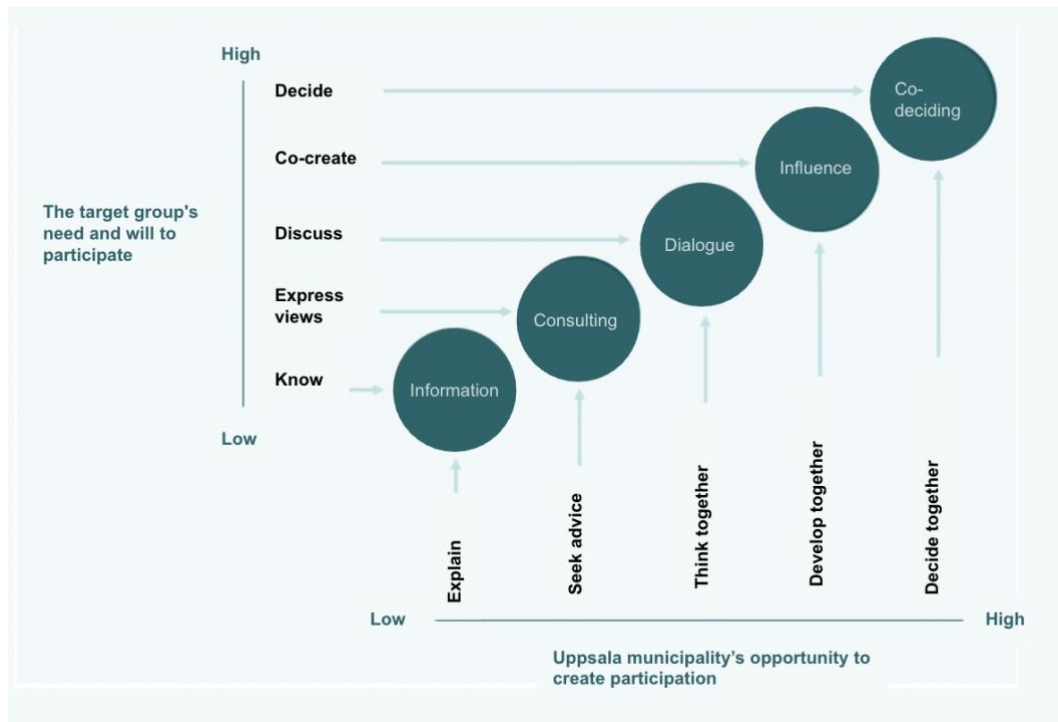


Figure 2. Uppsala municipality's ladder of participation (Translated from Uppsala kommun 2024 c)

Uppsala municipality's ladder of participation considers the municipality's opportunity to create participation and citizens' need, as well as will to participate. The different points of intersection, that is information, consulting, dialogue, influence and co-deciding, entail different levels of influence and participation. It is stated in the guideline that the different levels are suitable for different situations and that they therefore are equally important. It is also stated that, when possible, Uppsala municipality should strive to meet the citizens at their preferred level of influence and participation (Uppsala kommun 2024 c).

3.3.3 Findings of swift and slow in the tramway project

Swift and slow planning can be identified in the communication about the tramway project when considering the purpose of the tramway project, the information that the municipality publishes about the project, and the criticism that the project receives.

On Uppsala municipality's website there is a section about the tramway project, where information and plans about the project can be found (Uppsala kommun 2025 b). Throughout the website there is information that can be connected to both swift and slow planning. There is for example information about consultations and dialogues in the tramway project. In a section about the history of the project there is an emphasis on consultations and what sort of dialogues that have been held (Uppsala kommun 2024 a). When reading about the different sections of the tramway track, it is explained how the planning process proceeds, and it is possible to find and read the consultation reports (Uppsala kommun u.å. a; Uppsala kommun

u.å. b; Uppsala kommun u.å. c). Here, Uppsala municipality describes a consultation as when organisations, authorities, property owners and those who live close to the plan area get to take part in the plan proposal. However, Uppsala municipality also mentions that everyone can participate in this dialogue and that the consultation is also called a citizen dialogue (Uppsala kommun u.å. a; Uppsala kommun u.å. b; Uppsala kommun u.å. c). Another example, where dialogues are mentioned, is regarding the art that will surround the tramway. Art is an important part of the tramway project, and it is stated that resident dialogues will be performed regarding art along the tramway (Uppsala kommun 2024 d). In Uppsala municipality's art programme, it is stated that dialogues should be performed and that the dialogues are always advisory (Uppsala kommun 2024 e). Uppsala municipality also commissioned a children's consequence analysis to get children's perspective on the tramway and to consider what is best for children in line with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, which became Swedish law in 2020 (Koehler & Malm 2020).

On the website there is information about why a tramway is being built and here there is an emphasis on that Uppsala is a growing city that needs a sustainable and efficient way of transport (Uppsala kommun 2024 b). The Uppsala tramway project has received criticism for different reasons. One reason being that the project has started being built even though not all of the detailed development plans have been approved yet. The chair of the municipal executive committee in Uppsala replies to the criticism that it is necessary in a big project to start the building process and that it in this case is necessary in order to keep to the time plan, which has to be followed to get funding for the tramway from the state (P4 Uppland 2024). Time plans about different parts of the project are occurring throughout the website. For example, there is a time plan for the art programme mentioned earlier, as well as for when and where underground cables will be moved, and where and when excavation will begin. There is also a section on the website that is called time plan. In this section there is a short description of the work that will be done in the next few years and when it will be done (Uppsala kommun 2024 f). Furthermore, in the comprehensive development plan there is an emphasis on Uppsala being a city with an increasing population and that therefore the building process needs to be quick (Uppsala kommun 2016). The prioritised issues described in the comprehensive development plan are more housing, more opportunities for businesses that will create new jobs, Fyrspårsavtalet, that is the agreement to develop Uppsala's railway and to prepare for a high-capacity public transportation system, as well as sustainable transport, and lastly, taking care of the nature in Uppsala. In line with ideas relating to swift planning, the Uppsala tramway project is focused on increased capacity amidst urbanisation, economic growth and productivity, (Uppsala kommun 2022) and increasing land and property value which in turn can create new opportunities for businesses (Uppsala kommun 2024 h).

4. Methods

For this study, semi-structured interviews were performed. The semi-structured interview is a form of qualitative interview method that is designed to enable the interview to proceed in different directions depending on the interviewee's interests and viewpoints (Bryman 2018). For the interviews, an interview guide was formulated (see Appendix). The interview guide was divided into four different parts including background information, time aspects in the project, definitions, and consultations and citizen dialogues. Background information entails what the interviewees work with and what their roles are in the tramway project. Time aspects relate to the interviewees' experiences of time pressure in the project, as well as their views on balancing demands for swift and slow planning. The next part is definitions, which is included to see if the interviewees own definitions of consultations and citizen dialogues differ in any way, and to be able to interpret the interviewees answers accurately. The last part is consultations and citizen dialogues, which is included to get an overall picture of how consultations and citizen dialogues have proceeded in the project, as well as get the interviewees views on consultations and citizen dialogues. Three interviews were conducted, and they were held digitally via video call. A small sample was chosen as participants were limited to people involved in the ongoing tramway project and because of the scope of the master thesis, as well as because of the nature of thorough qualitative analysis, allowing for a more in-depth analysis of each interviewee's experiences and perceptions. The interviewees work with different parts of the tramway project. Interviewee 1 is a politician who is closely involved in the project, interviewee 2 is a project manager, and interviewee 3 is a project developer and consultant at Uppsala municipality. Before analysing the interviews, the interviews were transcribed. The interviews were furthermore conducted in Swedish and all of the quotes in the results chapter have been translated from Swedish to English.

4.1 Analysis

For the analysis, a thematic analysis approach was chosen. Robson and McCartan (2016) write about analysing qualitative data and about thematic analysis as a method for analysis. The authors (Robson & McCartan 2016) write about phases of thematic coding analysis. The phases include familiarising yourself with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, constructing thematic networks, and integration and interpretation. Following these steps, the interviews were analysed. The analysis was done inductively, meaning that the themes and codes were identified when engaging with the data, rather than performed deductively, where the researcher searches for predetermined themes and codes. The interviews were first read through twice to become familiar with the data. The next step was to generate initial codes. Generating initial codes was done by assigning relevant segments, sentences or words in the transcribed interviews codes. Furthermore, these codes were assigned colours to easily discern which codes were more prevalent in the interviews. The codes were then sorted and categorised into themes (see Figure 3). Moreover, the identified themes were analysed and compared to detect if the themes could be connected in any way and if they could be sorted into

thematic networks with main themes and sub-themes. Finally, the data and the themes were explored, analysed and interpreted to see if any conclusions could be reached and to make sense of, and understand the results.

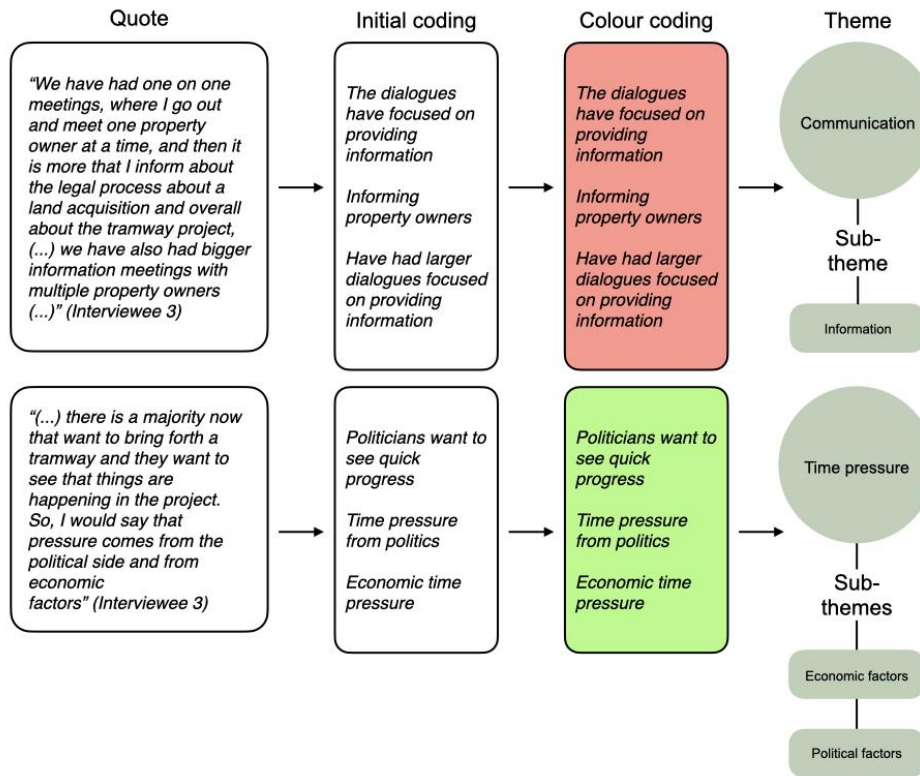


Figure 3. Example of the coding process

4.2 Research ethics

When conducting research that involves people it is important to consider ethics. Ethical considerations include that participants' privacy, safety and rights are considered in the research project (Robson & McCartan 2016). For this interview study, the participants were sent consent forms with information about the case study, information about what data is being collected, and contact information if they had any questions. The participants were asked to confirm if they wanted to participate in the study and they also had the right to withdraw from the study at any moment. Furthermore, recordings from the interviews were stored locally on my laptop to ensure that only I could access the interviews, and the transcriptions were performed manually. Additionally, after the thesis is completed, all collected data will be deleted. Moreover, the participants are anonymised to ensure their privacy. However, the interviewees' occupations are disclosed in the thesis to be transparent about what roles the interviewees have in the Uppsala tramway project, which is relevant in order to understand their views and experiences of swift and slow planning in the tramway project.

5. Results

In this chapter the identified themes and sub-themes will be described and analysed in relation to the case study. The identified themes were communication, balance, time perspectives, time pressure, democracy, limitations, progress and knowledge. Furthermore, misunderstanding, information, continuous dialogue, criticism, economic factors, political factors, power, dialogue design, expertise and local knowledge were identified as sub-themes (see Figure 4).

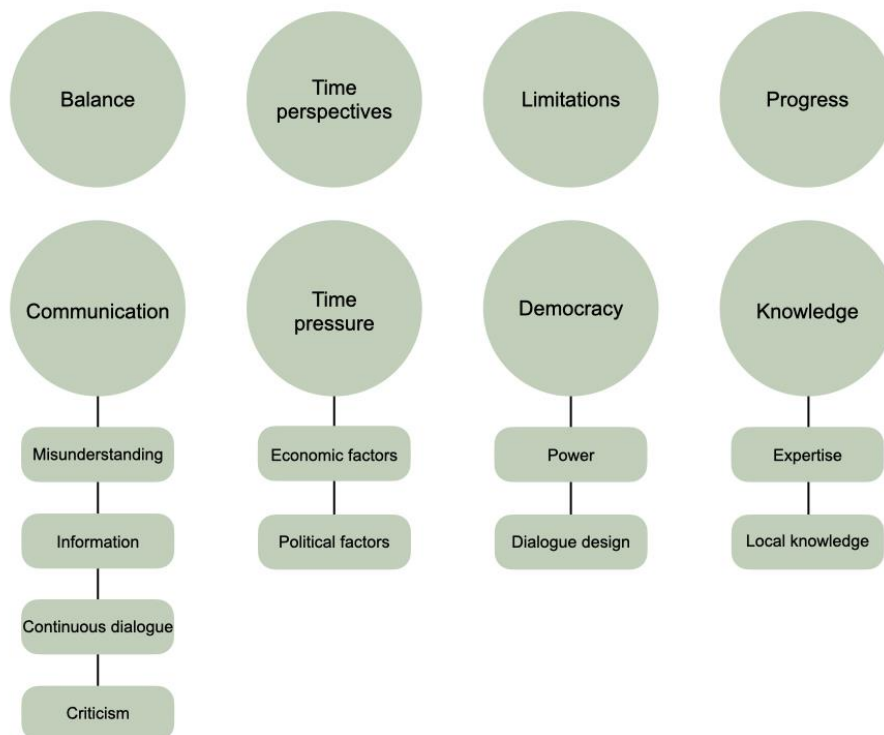


Figure 4. Thematic network of identified themes and sub-themes

5.1 Communication

Aspects of communication were brought up during the interviews and communication was identified as one of the main themes. The themes, misunderstanding, information, continuous dialogue and criticism were identified as sub-themes of communication. The theme communication and the associated sub-themes mainly refer to communication with citizens, and how to inform citizens about the tramway project.

During the interviews, questions about consultations and citizen dialogues were asked. Some comments that surfaced were regarding the misunderstandings that would occur about consultations and dialogues. Mainly, that it is common that the public do not always understand the level of influence that they have. Interviewee

1 explained that when people get invited to consultation meetings, they are often under the impression that they will get to vote on the issue at hand.

“It is not a referendum every time, we have a representative democracy to handle these questions. The consultation processes are not a “yes” or a “no” to something, they are viewpoints to be able to do adjustments, and better adaptations to the local environment. It is not yes or no, but if you go to a consultation meeting, you often go with the belief that if we are enough people that raise our hands and say no, then it will also be a no.” (Interviewee 1)

This quote shows that interviewee 1 has recognised the population of Uppsala's interest in being involved in the tramway project, however, there seems to be a disconnect between the attendees' ideas of what a consultation is and the planners' ideas of how a consultation should proceed. According to Uppsala municipality's ladder of participation (see Figure 2) a high will and need to participate should lead to opportunities for a target group to be part of the decision making process (Uppsala kommun 2024 c). In this case the high will to participate did not lead to co-deciding. Interviewee 1 also suggests that the democratic part of the process already has been concluded while referencing representative democracy, while the people who attend consultations expect participation and therefore a continuation of the democratic process. This indicates a gap in communication, where the attendees and planners have different expectations on what consultations should look like and lead to. This, in turn highlights how slow planning is not prioritised although calls from citizens for slow planning are apparent. Furthermore, interviewee 2 explained that it is very important to, during a consultation meeting, explain what the consultation will result in to avoid confusion.

“(…) it is very important that we are clear about what we can and cannot do after these viewpoints have been presented, so that we register all received viewpoints and that we establish something called a consultation report where we disclose all the received viewpoints and then we answer how we consider the received viewpoints and why.” (Interviewee 2)

This quote illustrates not only the need for clear communication when it comes to consultations but also the need for the municipality to communicate how viewpoints have been considered in the tramway project. This implies that there have been steps taken to consider opinions and viewpoints that have been raised during consultations. There is also an emphasis on communication to avoid confusion in order to facilitate progress in the project. Another thing that was mentioned during the interviews was the importance of information and how to convey information to citizens. When discussing citizen dialogues, the interviewees identified information as one of the main purposes of citizen dialogues.

“(…) most of the people in Uppsala now know that there will actually be a tramway and that was a part of the reason that we wanted a citizen dialogue from the start, because we wanted to draw attention to what is going on in Uppsala (…)” (Interviewee 2)

According to Boverket (2025 b) citizen dialogues are conducted to collect experiences, opinions and knowledge from citizens before a detailed plan proposal is made so that this knowledge can be taken into account before considerable decisions are made. Interviewee 2 states that one of the reasons that the municipality conducted citizen dialogues about the tramway project was to draw attention to the project. This implies that the citizen dialogues have not met the description of what

a citizen dialogue is, instead the citizen dialogues have acted as a way for the municipality to inform citizens about the project. This furthermore indicates that different views of what can be considered a citizen dialogue, exist. Furthermore, when asked about citizen dialogues, the interviewees would for instance refer to the information meetings that had been held or that will be held. When asked about which citizen dialogues interviewee 3 had attended, they answered that they had been part of several information meetings.

“We have had one on one meetings, where I go out and meet one property owner at a time, and then it is more that I inform about the legal process about a land acquisition and overall, about the tramway project, (...) we have also had bigger information meetings with multiple property owners (...)” (Interviewee 3)

This quote also emphasises that the focus of the citizen dialogues has been on providing citizens with information instead of having a dialogue with them which would include receiving information from citizens and taking this into consideration in the project. To collect information and knowledge from the property owners as well as taking this information into consideration would likely be more time consuming than to simply inform the property owners. Overall, information is perceived by the interviewees as something that is important and valuable for citizens, and interviewee 3 also stated that information can help a project move forward.

“(...) it is better with too much information than too little, (...) whatever you can share, I think you should try to share early, I think that everybody appreciates getting information about what is happening in their immediate surroundings. I think that it facilitates the project's progress, and that it can go faster the more you involve, or maybe not involve, but inform citizens at least.” (Interviewee 3)

Interviewee 3 draws a connection between progress in the project and providing information to the public early in a project. Interviewee 3 suggests that sharing information with citizens early on can be positive for a project and help it move along faster. This indicates that there is a focus on making the project more efficient or swift. Moving on to the next sub-theme, continuous dialogues was brought up as significant. Interviewee 1 talked about how a dialogue can proceed throughout the entirety of a project.

“(...) you can have a dialogue much earlier, you can have it during, as a complement to the consultation process, and you can have it after, and during the execution, and I think, and I strive for that we should, in early phases, develop how the consultations proceed, and we should have dialogues during the execution as well.” (Interviewee 1)

This indicates that planners have a will to involve citizens throughout the whole planning process and to do more than the legally required consultations. Furthermore, this quote also suggests that a dialogue can happen at any time during a project. This broadens the meaning of the citizen dialogue which strives to involve citizens early in a project before considerable decisions have been made, to also include contact with citizens during the entirety of a project. Interviewee 3 commented that more dialogues could have been done and that dialogues could have been introduced earlier in the project.

“(...) we should have had more dialogues I believe, earlier, perhaps during the project with how to get information out to everybody.” (Interviewee 3)

Here, interviewee 3 suggests that the purpose of having more dialogues would be to be able to inform citizens, stressing the importance of continuous contact with the public but not acknowledging the public's want and need for more participation. Continuing, the next sub-theme is criticism. This was categorised as a sub-theme of communication because the criticism that the interviewees brought up was mostly related to consultations, dialogues and the difficulties that come with spreading information. Interviewee 1 talked about the difficulty of informing citizens about a project that has been ongoing for a long time.

“You do not know about the early dialogues, you were not there, and you can still be extremely upset about why we have not had early dialogues. So, that is a huge pedagogical challenge there.” (Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 1 stresses how the project has received criticism and caused upset amongst citizens, and attributes this to citizens' lack of knowledge about the early dialogues. Furthermore, interviewee 1 states that there is a pedagogical challenge in informing citizens about what is going on with the project and what has already been done in the project. Interviewee 1 connects criticism of the project to insufficient information efforts, again highlighting how information can help a project proceed.

Overall, communication, both internal within an administration and external to the public is considered a key factor in a functioning project. A project should not be a surprise to the citizens in an area and everyone should have the right to know what is going on in their immediate surroundings. To avoid misunderstandings regarding the outcomes of consultations and dialogues, it is important to clearly explain the purpose of the consultation or dialogue beforehand. Citizen dialogues are mainly considered a tool for informing citizens and in this project the citizen dialogues have for the most part consisted of information meetings, indicating a focus on efficient planning, while the interviewees also acknowledge that citizens want to be more involved in decision making. Furthermore, working with information should be done proactively, and information and dialogues should be continuous over the entirety of a project. Information could have come out sooner in the tramway project and coming out with information early can lead to a more efficient project.

5.2 Time perspectives

The next theme is time perspectives. This theme considers perception of time, meaning that you might have a different time perspective and perception of the length of a project and certain processes within a project depending on who you are and what you do. Interviewee 1 explained that the project both receives criticism for proceeding too slow as well as for proceeding too fast.

“(...) there are two perspectives here, and there are two truths. You can think that 2029 is really soon and you can also say that 2029 is really far away and that it is proceeding very slow (...)” (Interviewee 1)

Here, interviewee 1 explains that there are opposing perceptions of the speed of the project. On the one hand there is a pressure for planners to plan faster and more efficiently, and on the other hand there is a will from citizens to slow down the planning process in order to be included and voice their opinions. This is in turn reflected in how interviewee 1 perceives that people are speaking about the project as proceeding either too fast or too slow. Interviewee 1 states that the project has taken an extremely long time and that people that are against the project will always think that the project is proceeding too fast. Interviewee 1 also talked about how consultations and dialogues inevitably take time, and how the time aspect is the only downside of citizen dialogues.

“The only drawback is that it obviously takes longer time than it would otherwise. It goes a lot faster in China, you do not care what people say, and you make a decision, and you execute it.” (Interviewee 1)

This highlights that there is a perceived problem with including slow, deliberative processes in planning because of the perceived time delay it would entail, and because of the importance of planning efficiently. However, interviewee 2 did not describe the consultations and dialogues as time consuming. Instead, interviewee 2 suggested that it is the development of various background material and assessments that are needed in order to execute consultation meetings that take the most time.

“The consultations processes are not particularly slow if you ask me (...) it is the development of all the background material before the consultation meetings that take time, but to actually meet the public and talk to them is not what takes the most time from us.” (Interviewee 2)

Interviewee 2 makes a distinction between the actual consultation and the preparations for a consultation. This implies that consultations and dialogues do not have to be time consuming if improved ways to plan for, and work with preparations for dialogues are developed. Interviewee 3 described the planning process as a relatively fast handled process in contrast to the amount of time that the project has been ongoing.

“(...) this project has had a quite quickly handled planning process even if it has taken time, it has been a lot of years, and the plans are so big (...)” (Interviewee 3)

Interviewee 3 perceives the planning process as fast and mentions that the time plans have felt rushed, while also suggesting that the overall process has taken time. Thus, while interviewee 3 states that the time plans have felt rushed there is still a perception of the project as proceeding slowly. This is attributed to the size of the project and to pressure for swift planning.

In conclusion, there are different ways to look at the time aspects of the project. On the one hand, the project has been discussed and considered for many years, causing pressure to speed up the planning process and in turn, the project may therefore be perceived as proceeding slowly. On the other hand, the pace of the project can be perceived as too fast when regarding factors such as the size of the project or the preparatory work and consultations needed before starting the visible building process, as well as the pressure from citizens for slow, deliberative planning.

5.3 Time pressure

Continuing, the next theme is time pressure, including if there is a perceived time pressure, how it is experienced and where it comes from. The identified sub-themes of time pressure are economic factors and political factors. All interviewees concluded that there is time pressure in the tramway project, however time pressure was described as normal and necessary. Interviewee 1 stated that all projects need a time plan.

“It would be weird if there was not a time pressure, all projects need a time plan and a budget to abide by.” (Interviewee 1)

This quote highlights how time pressure is considered normal in a project, and it is explained that there must be a degree of time pressure to successfully execute a project. This quote by itself does not explain where the time pressure stems from, however time pressure and pressure to plan swiftly is apparent. Interviewee 2 referred to the size of the project and the amount of people that are affected by the project as a motivation to stick to the time plan.

“It is Uppsala’s biggest infrastructure project ever, so it is very cool, so of course there is a pressure to deliver, we want good results, and we want to stick to our times so that it does not get too messy for the citizens of Uppsala” (Interviewee 2)

Here, there is mention of pressure and sticking to the time plan for citizens convenience. This could be to avoid conflict as less complaints can be considered to entail a faster planning process (Mäntysalo et al. 2011). All interviewees mentioned economic factors as a cause for time pressure. This was mentioned because the tramway is partially financed by the state and to receive financing the project needs to be completed in 2029. Interviewee 1 stated that they have an extra clear time plan because of this.

“(…) in this case we have an extra clear time plan because of the state’s co-financing via a city environment agreement that amounts to 2,3 billion Swedish crowns, it has a deadline. (...) we should deliver a practical usefulness in order to get the money paid out in 2029 and if we cannot do that like it is written then the money will expire. So that is a clear deadline.” (Interviewee 1)

Here it is stated how the deadline is directly linked to the tramway project’s budget. Thus, economic factors play a part in causing time pressure in the tramway project, and highlights that there is a pressure for swift planning to meet the deadline. Both interviewee 2 and interviewee 3 also mentioned the requirements for financing.

“This project is based on an agreement between the municipality, the region and the state, which means that a lot of our financing for the tramway relies on that we stick to this time plan (...)” (Interviewee 2)

“(…) since this project is connected to financing requirements, the time plan is important to the project as a whole, and that trickles down to all parts of the project.” (Interviewee 3)

Again, time pressure is explained to stem from economic factors as the deadline is directly linked to the financing for the project. Furthermore, politics was mentioned when discussing time pressure. Interviewee 3 stated that politics and economy were the main factors when it comes to causes for time pressure.

“(…) there is a political majority now that want to bring forth a tramway and they want to see that things are happening in the project. So, I would say that pressure comes from the political side and from economic factors” (Interviewee 3)

Interviewee 3 states how time pressure and calls for swift planning stems from economic and political factors. This is furthermore in line with transportation planning that favours cost-effective processes (Willson 2001). Interviewee 1 also brought up how, regardless of the budget or urgency of a project, deadlines are still important within a municipality.

“Even if we did not have this deadline, we from the political side would have had to make a time plan, you cannot work with a project indefinitely. There are other things that have to be done in a municipality, so no matter who makes the decision it would be irresponsible to not have a time plan and a budget to adhere to.” (Interviewee 1)

Here, it is again emphasised how time pressure is normal and important in a project. Interviewee 1 states that time pressure is important even if there is not a strict deadline in order to help a project move along, suggesting that time or time pressure can be a valuable tool in a project, since it can help a project proceed.

Time pressure is in general seen as something that keeps the project on track and that is normal and standard in a project. There is time pressure in the project, but it is not something that is experienced negatively by the interviewees. Since the tramway project is initiated from a political decision, pressure is experienced from the political side, and since the municipality has a financial agreement with the state, the project's time plan is directly linked to the project's budget, which in turn also causes time pressure and pressure for swift and efficient planning.

5.4 Democracy

The next theme is democracy, and the sub-themes of democracy are power and dialogue design. When discussing consultations and dialogues with the interviewees, democracy was mentioned as one of the benefits of dialogues. Furthermore, the Planning and Building Act would come up when discussing consultations. The Planning and Building Act which includes requirements for consultations, is described by interviewee 1 as an important part of the democratic process and as a very democratic law.

“The Planning and Building Act is an extremely democratic law. There is no other legislation that demands consultations in the same way as The Planning and Building Act.” (Interviewee 1)

This quote highlights the importance interviewee 1 attributes consultations for the sake of democracy. This emphasises consultations value beyond decision making. Furthermore, interviewee 1 stated that the Planning and Building Act is something to be proud of.

“I think that the Planning and Building Act is serving as an exemplary model because there are clear requirements and structures for how the democratic process should proceed and that is relatively unique, there are not many other legislations that have that. So, we should be pretty proud that we have the Planning and Building Act.” (Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 1 states that the Swedish Planning and Building Act where consultations are a legislated requirement is an extremely democratic law to be proud of, demonstrating the importance of slow and democratic planning processes. Interviewee 1 also mentions that there are clear requirements and structures for the democratic process, however the legislated consultations do not have precise requirements apart from who the participants should be, and that the plan proposal as well as reasons for the plan proposal and relevant planning documents should be disclosed (Boverket 2023 a). There is little acknowledgement that there might be a need for participatory planning processes that extend beyond the legislated requirements and beyond citizen dialogues that mainly serve as information meetings to meet the public's need for participation in a bigger project like the Uppsala tramway project. Interviewee 2 also expressed how consultations are an important part of the democratic process.

“(...) consultations, they are a super important part for us, a super important part of the democratic process, primarily because we want the citizens of Uppsala to have the opportunity to express their views during the consultation (...)” (Interviewee 2)

Here there is a clear awareness of the importance of including the public and letting them express their opinions. It is furthermore acknowledged that consultations are an important part of the democratic process. Interviewee 1 also brought up the idea of consensus-based democracy in Sweden.

“(...) we have an electoral democracy to make decisions, and we think differently, that is why we have different parties, and that is of course good, and we like consensus in Sweden, and we like agreeing but we are not always in agreement. And democracy is intended to handle differences, and we can think differently from each other.” (Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 1 mentions consensus while suggesting that consensus is not always possible when making decisions. This can be said for consultations and dialogues where consensus can be hard to reach and disclosing what ideal to strive for in a dialogue can be helpful to avoid or manage conflicts (Hellquist & Westin 2019). Conflict management is in turn part of dialogues as the citizen dialogue is also described as a method to minimise the risk of conflicts (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner 2025). When asked about the advantages of citizen dialogues, interviewee 1 explained that citizens' trust in democracy is strengthened by citizen dialogues.

“The advantage is that it, well it strengthens the citizens' trust in democracy. It increases understanding for how decision making works (...)” (Interviewee 1)

Again, it is explained here how citizen dialogues are considered valuable beyond improving decision making processes. Citizen dialogues are also an approach to strengthen citizens' trust in democracy, which in turn can help a project proceed (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner 2025). Continuing with the sub-theme power, aspects of power such as representation and power relations were mentioned when discussing consultations and citizen dialogues. Interviewee 1 talked about consultations and how the attendees at consultation meetings do not have to represent a majority.

“(…) there is no guarantee that the people who go to a consultation meeting represent a majority or represent a selection of the people that live in an area. A consultation meeting is about having input in the process, and you need a lot of people's input for it to be democratic” (Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 1 highlights that there are difficulties in arranging consultation meetings that are democratic and explains that for a consultation to be democratic there must be people at the meeting that represent a selection of the people that live in an area, and that there is a struggle to get people that represent the population to attend consultation meetings. Furthermore, the people who attend a consultation meeting have the opportunity to get their opinions heard, however it can be harder for some attendees to get their voices heard at a meeting, thus creating a power imbalance. This indicates that the consultation meetings are not ideal when it comes to collecting information and opinions, as everybody does not have the same chance of being heard. Interviewee 1 continued by mentioning some downsides with physical consultation meetings.

“I think digital meetings were much better and I think it is a bit of a shame that we are now going back to physical meetings to a greater extent because I think that it shuts people out. I think that it shuts out families with children, I think that it shuts out a lot of groups that do not have the courage to go out or raise their voice at a physical meeting. At these physical meetings, it is mainly middle-aged men that take all the time (…) this means that there are three older men that steal everybody else's time, and we do not get other target groups' viewpoints.” (Interviewee 1)

Like Mouffe (2005; Mouffe 2005 see Hellquist & Westin 2019) and Hellquist and Westin (2019) interviewee 1 raises the topic of power dynamics and offering a space for different people to contribute with different perspectives. Interviewee 1 discusses their positive experience with digital consultation meetings, suggesting that this platform for consultations can include people that usually do not show up, or dare to speak at traditional consultation meetings. This reasoning shows an interest in expanding the democratic arena that consultation meetings offer and a will to work with power dynamics that arise during consultation meetings to be able to include more people in planning and to gain more perspectives and knowledge. This also touches on the topic of dialogue design and how putting time and effort on the design of consultation meetings might contribute to more democratic processes that involve different groups of the public. Interviewee 2 explained that citizens can get very upset during consultations and that it is important for them to get to express their opinions.

“(…) you can get very upset as a citizen in Uppsala because you want to be heard, you want the project to listen” (Interviewee 2)

This quote demonstrates citizens' want and need to participate. Meeting the public's need for participation would likely make citizens feel more in power, limiting their feelings of frustration. The next sub-theme of democracy is dialogue design. Dialogue design was categorised as a sub-theme of democracy because the design of a dialogue invites different types of people to the table, and the design of a dialogue can be more or less adequate depending on what you want to get out of a dialogue. Interviewee 1 stated that you can adapt the dialogue depending on whose perspective you want to know about. Interviewee 1 also mentioned that they, in the tramway project, have tried different types of dialogue.

“(...) you might have to go to a school and talk to children if you want to know the children's perspective, you have to work with multiple different dialogue tools and there is great potential for development and doing more, but the tramway project has been a project where we have wanted to try new methods, where we have tried, and where we have learnt a lot.” (Interviewee 1)

Trying new types of dialogues and acknowledging that there is a need to reach out in different ways to get input from different groups within the population indicates that there is a want to meet the public and to facilitate a more democratic process. Furthermore, interviewee 1 suggests that they can do more to develop dialogue designs and that this is something that they are working on. Interviewee 2 talked about a consultation that they had organised that had been successful.

“We chose to organise it as an open house (...) so that you had the opportunity to visit different stations about different issues, so that you could ask questions to the people with the proper competencies (...) otherwise it is pretty traditional that you meet in a room and that a few people stand before everybody that visit the dialogue and speak about the project and we made the judgement that there are some risks with that (...) we thought that the open house was a very good arrangement, that we could have some different stations and then we could have more personal conversations with those who wanted to bring up their viewpoints. So that was very cool and now the administration will work a bit more with open houses (...)” (Interviewee 2)

Interviewee 2 mentions how the design of a dialogue can contribute to inclusion of people that might not have had the opportunity to be heard in the standard setting for a consultation. This quote indicates a desire for more democratic processes and suggests that the design of a dialogue can facilitate participation and inclusion. Interviewee 2 also talked about the ladder of participation (see Figure 2) that they use for support within the municipality.

“(...) there is a ladder of participation that the urban planning administration works with (...) and on the ladder of participation we can see that there are different levels of citizen dialogues, and I think the lowest levels are that we should give out information, and that is where we are at.” (Interviewee 2)

Here, interviewee 2 discusses the ladder of participation that Uppsala municipality uses and explains that they have mostly worked on the lowest step on the ladder, which is information. This is contradictory as the interviewees acknowledge the benefits of citizen participation and express desire to work more with dialogues.

In conclusion, the Planning and Building Act includes consultations, and these consultations are not just a tool to ensure the quality of a project, they are also a part of the democratic process in a project. Power imbalances exist within consultations and dialogues, which is one reason for testing out different types of dialogues and different dialogue designs. The municipality works with a ladder of participation as support for conducting dialogues, and there are different levels of participation on the ladder that entail different levels of influence for citizens (see Figure 2). In the tramway project they have worked on the lowest level on the ladder, which is information, which in turn is contradictory as the interviewees acknowledge the importance of including citizens and see a need to expand their work with dialogues and thus the democratic process. This indicates that there is a desire to work with slow planning, especially regarding how to level power imbalances to make sure everyone is heard.

5.5 Knowledge

Another theme that was identified was knowledge. Expertise and local knowledge were identified as sub-themes of knowledge. When asked about dialogues and consultations an aspect that was brought up as important was the knowledge that can be discovered and received through dialogues. The sub-theme expertise refers to the importance of expert knowledge. Interviewee 2 stated, when asked if it would have been helpful to be higher up on the ladder of participation, that it would not have been necessary because you need to have certain competencies to comment on certain aspects of the project.

“In this case I do not think that it would have led to improvements and that is because the tramway goes where it goes, you cannot twist and turn it that much, because there are fixed preconditions that we must stick to, so we have investigated this very carefully and in relation to very specific competencies as well. And you need to know the facts to be able to give reasonable judgements” (Interviewee 2)

Interviewee 2 has previously recognised how important it is to include citizens in dialogue and let citizens express their views during consultations. However, interviewee 2 explains that being higher on the ladder of participation would not have been necessary in this project because of the expert knowledge needed to give appropriate judgements. This might be because expert knowledge is connected to more direct advancements in the project and that it therefore contributes to a swifter planning process. Interviewee 2 also talked about the difference between a consultation and a citizen dialogue when it comes to what they wanted out of the two different dialogues.

“(…) during the consultations I have felt we have gotten more concrete information related to what we actually work with that has been super positive for us, because then we have been able to complete the detailed development plans, so the consultations have been connected to clear deliveries within the project to enable that we actually get to build a tramway. And the citizen dialogues have more been about attracting attention” (Interviewee 2)

Interviewee 2 states that the consultations have resulted in concrete information that has helped the project move forward, whereas the citizen dialogues have been about attracting attention to the project. This entails that the citizen dialogue is being used for gaining attention and spreading information rather than for including citizens in participation and decision making. This in turn reveals that there are different definitions of what a citizen dialogue is. Furthermore, there seems to have been a higher degree of participation in consultations where people with certain expertise have been included. The other sub-theme is local knowledge. Interviewee 1 brought up local knowledge as one of the benefits of citizen dialogues.

“(…) it is a fantastic way to get a hold of knowledge, you cannot hire a consultant that can give you local knowledge, only the people that live in an area know what trees that are appreciated, where you go out and tan when the first sun comes out in the spring, where the kids walk to school. There is a lot of local knowledge that you can only receive if you actually ask the people that live in a certain geographical area and that makes for a better detailed development plan, a better project.” (Interviewee 1)

This quote highlights how local knowledge is considered important and interviewee 1 states that local knowledge is valuable to ensure a better planning process and better results.

To conclude, knowledge is needed in a project and knowledge comes in different forms. There is a perceived difference between expert knowledge and local knowledge, where expert knowledge is considered more favourable for moving the project along and providing technical information. At the same time, local knowledge is considered valuable because of the unique knowledge it provides, for ensuring quality in a project and for contributing to democratic legitimacy in a project. The preference for expert knowledge indicates a focus on swift planning as it is stated that expert knowledge is connected to clear deliveries in the project. However, there is again a clear acknowledgement of the important role citizens have in ensuring quality in planning, meaning that there is an awareness of the benefits of including citizens in planning.

5.6 Limitations

The next theme is limitations. Limitations refers to restrictions and difficulties regarding consultations and dialogues in a project. Interviewee 3 mentioned how you cannot solve everyone's questions.

“(…) it is difficult in a municipality, it is always the public against the private that steers a bit, so you cannot always solve everybody's questions, you often look to your own interests. (Interviewee 3)

Interviewee 3 acknowledges that it is not possible to accommodate everybody's opinions, while also addressing how private interests and public interests are set against each other making it difficult to prioritise. Similarly, interviewee 2 also mentioned how it is not possible to accommodate for everyone's opinions.

“(…) we have not had the opportunity to accommodate for everyone's viewpoints that have come in (…) and there are lots of things that you have to account for such as cultural heritage, the natural environment, where buildings are located in the urban environment and so on, so when we have citizen dialogues in the tramway project it is a fact that we have a lot of information but we cannot accommodate for everyone's viewpoints” (Interviewee 2)

This highlights how planners feel limited when considering viewpoints, partly because of the many different opinions and interests to consider as well as because of the fixed preconditions. Another thing that was mentioned was how a disadvantage and a limitation with citizen dialogues is that the people that listen and talk to citizens are not the ones who can make decisions in the project.

“Disadvantages might be that you are not always the one that can answer all of the questions, you are not the one with mandate to decide certain things, rather it is politics that often decide around the viewpoints that come in, so often it is just that we listen to viewpoints, but we cannot take a stand on them ourselves.” (Interviewee 2)

This suggests that there are limitations to dialogues when qualified people are excluded from answering the public's questions since they are not the ones who make the official decisions and therefore are not the ones who have the answers.

Ultimately, there are limitations to dialogues, and the municipality has to prioritise when considering different opinions, and public and private interests. Furthermore, dialogues are not always designed in a way so that the people that receive citizens' opinions and questions have the authority to answer or take a stance themselves. These limitations highlight difficulties that arise when conducting dialogues and how attempts at trying to engage with citizens affect planners who feel as though they do not have much say when partaking in dialogues with citizens. This does not motivate planners to work with slow planning.

5.7 Progress

The theme progress refers to the thoughts and ideas on improvement and development when it comes to dialogues that were mentioned in the interviews. Interviewee 2 for example, talked about the open houses that they had arranged and that this is something that they want to continue doing to improve future dialogues. Similarly, interviewee 1 also mentioned that there is great potential to develop dialogues and that they have tried new things in this project.

“(…) this should be seen as a very positive example on how you can work with dialogues and trying new things. (…) So, I think we will learn from how we have worked with dialogues and developed the consultations during this project.” (Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 1 considers the tramway project a positive example of a project where they have worked with dialogues, emphasising that they have tried new, creative methods for conducting dialogues, and sees progress in the municipality's work with the democratic process. Interviewee 1 also stated that there are few projects that have gotten as much time as the tramway project.

“There are actually few projects that have gotten to take so much time, that have been debated so much, (…) and that has been a theme for so many dialogues” (Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 1 states that the project has been discussed for a long time and has gotten to take up a lot of time in debates and dialogues and interviewee 1 suggests that this shows progress in the municipalities work with dialogues. However, the level of influence citizens have had is not mentioned here, rather the time spent on dialogues is emphasised. Interviewee 1 continued to explain that performing the dialogues by the book has been the secret to a successful project.

“The requirement has been that we cannot take shortcuts, we need to have a lot of dialogues, there have been demands from us in politics and from citizens on that we must, we cannot skip things during the formal consultation processes, and we have to carry out other types of dialogues, and we actually need more of that type of dialogue, so that is the secret.” (Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 1 expresses that they have been successful in conducting consultations and that they have made progress with working with citizen dialogues, however interviewee 1 states that there still needs to be more dialogues. This entails that interviewee 1 believes more dialogues would be beneficial for the project, interviewee 1 does not specify what type of dialogues and what level of influence

citizens would have had if more dialogues were conducted. Interviewee 3 focused on the benefits of earlier dialogues.

“I think that it can facilitate, you need to have consultations, but I think that it is good to have a dialogue earlier than that” (Interviewee 3)

Interviewee 3 states that early dialogues that are held before the consultations can help a project proceed, and states that earlier dialogues should be considered in big planning projects to improve the planning process.

The areas of improvement in the project connect with communication and dialogue efforts. Earlier dialogues and different types of dialogues were mentioned as factors that could be improved. However, they were also mentioned as factors that have been considered and have been successful in the project. There is also an emphasis on creativity and trying new things as a means for improving dialogue processes. This indicates that there is a will to work with dialogues and it is also acknowledged that earlier dialogues where citizens can be given more influence would be positive, suggesting that there is a will to include slow planning in planning processes.

5.8 Balance

The final theme is balance. Balance refers to demands for different, sometimes contradictory, needs in a project, and how to balance these needs. Interviewee 2 stated that prioritising is important when considering different interests.

“It is a trade-off that we have to do always when it comes to different viewpoints and sometimes there are different interests that are put against each other and then we have to prioritise between them.” (Interviewee 2)

Here, interviewee 2 states that it is a fact that interests are put against each other in the project and that it is difficult to prioritise, and balance demands. When discussing time pressure, interviewee 1 explained that there is a good balance between quality and efficiency.

“(…) there needs to be a certain degree of pressure otherwise it is not a deadline. However, a time plan must be realistic, and you should have quality in work assignments, and there my assessment is that we have a pretty good balance.” (Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 1 acknowledges that there has to be a balance between quality and efficiency and mentions quality in relation to permit processes and consultation processes which can be time-consuming processes. This touches on the balancing act of swift and slow as efficiency and consultations are put against each other. Interviewee 1 also brought up how it can be problematic when a project is moving too slow and that, because of the need for consultations and dialogues, it is important to find a balance.

“(…) and you can also say that 2029 is really far away and that it is proceeding very slow and there you have to find the balance, because if it does proceed very slow, then it takes a lot of resources and it costs money and we do not get use until 2029, it is needed today already. But you should have

a lot of dialogues and consultations, and reinforcement also takes time, there you have to find the balance” (Interviewee 1)

This highlights that pressure between swift and slow planning is experienced in the tramway project as there is a pressure to plan swiftly for economic reasons, while at the same time there is a pressure to include more dialogue processes in planning, and interviewee 1 puts an emphasis on that balancing the two is essential.

In conclusion, there needs to be a balance between quality of work and efficiency. In the tramway project, the interviewees think that the balance has been good. However, efficiency, quality of work and the necessity of dialogues are still described as being in an active balancing act and you always have to prioritise between interests.

6. Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to investigate what characterises double pressure for swift planning and slow planning in a planning project, in what ways planners experience double pressure for swift planning and slow planning when working with a planning project, and if there are any strategies that planners have to manage double pressure for swift planning and slow planning. In this chapter, the results will be interpreted and discussed further, considering each theme and sub-theme, and the above-mentioned research questions. The chosen methodology and opportunities for further research will also be discussed.

6.1 Discussion of the results

One finding that was discovered from the interviews was that there are a lot of misunderstandings about consultation meetings and citizen dialogues. For example, it was stated that citizens do not know the level of influence that they have in certain questions and what the purposes of certain dialogues are. When the interviewees were asked to define consultation and citizen dialogue, all interviewees associated the consultation with the Planning and Building Act and referred to the legal requirement to conduct consultations. Citizen dialogues were described more broadly as, for example, dialogues that can be complementary to the consultation, that can be held at any phase in a project, that can attract attention to a project, that serves as a way to inform citizens, and that can be initiated when needed. Consequently, the citizen dialogue becomes an umbrella term for any type of communication with citizens. For example, the interviewees considered information meetings a form of citizen dialogue, and Uppsala municipality's own ladder of participation that they use as support for conducting dialogues (Uppsala kommun 2024 c) has information as the lowest step on the ladder (see Figure 2). However, Uppsala municipality's ladder of participation is based on Arnstein's ladder of participation where information is described as too often being a channel for one-way communication from officials to citizens, and only a step toward legitimate citizen participation (Arnstein 2007). According to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the citizen dialogue is only a citizen dialogue if the issue at hand can be influenced by discussion and negotiation (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner 2019). This is directly contradictory to the interviewees' definitions of what a citizen dialogue is, and an example of this is how they include one-way communication in the form of information meetings as a form of citizen dialogue. Another example is how citizen dialogues were explained as dialogues that can be held at any phase in the project, which also goes against the definition of the citizen dialogue as a dialogue that is supposed to be performed before a detailed plan proposal is made and before the municipality has had the chance to make considerable decisions (Boverket 2025 b). Thus, the interviewees' understanding of the citizen dialogue, as well as participation and therefore slow planning differs from the definitions in literature. Nevertheless, planners still experience a pressure to include more dialogues earlier in the planning process and to improve dialogues which in turn creates a double pressure between swift and slow planning, as there is a constant awareness of the fact that the municipality

needs to work with and improve dialogues while also experiencing political and economic pressure to speed up planning. Furthermore, since diverging ideas of what a citizen dialogue is, exist, there are also different expectations on what a citizen dialogue can lead to which might be cause for confusion and misunderstanding. The term citizen dialogue can easily be misused because of this, and one example of this is on Uppsala municipality's website, where it is stated that the consultation is also called a citizen dialogue (Uppsala kommun u.å. a; Uppsala kommun u.å. b; Uppsala kommun u.å. c), yet the consultation and the citizen dialogue is, as established, not the same thing.

Circling back to the ladder of participation, the interviewees said that they had mostly worked on the lowest step of the ladder, namely information. Uppsala municipality's ladder of participation is created as a graph where the x-axis shows Uppsala municipality's opportunity to create participation, and the y-axis shows the target group's need and will to participate (see Figure 2). Since the tramway project is described by the interviewees as a controversial project and a project where there has been a great interest from citizens to take part in consultation meetings, and furthermore a project that will change the city landscape at large, the target group's need and will to participate should be considered quite high. However, since Uppsala municipality has worked with the lowest step on the ladder, that indicates that Uppsala municipality's opportunity to create participation in this case must be low. The Uppsala tramway project is politically initiated and the deadline for the project is directly linked to the funding of the project. This causes time pressure to be experienced politically and economically, with the deadline in 2029 being central to achieving funding for the project and politicians therefore wishing to see quick progress in the project. This demand for efficiency might hinder the opportunity to create participation. Niitamo (2021) writes that citizens' participation in large-scale urban planning projects often aims to inform citizens, rather than encourage participation in the planning process, and that demands for swift construction processes threaten deliberation and discussion. This is contributed to the influence of economic and political interests (Niitamo 2021). Thus, while citizen participation is described as important by the interviewees, in practice, informing citizens takes precedence and there seems to be a gap between beliefs of best practice and actual practice. Furthermore, when asked if it would be beneficial to work higher up on the ladder of participation, interviewee 2 stated that it would probably not have been necessary because of the specific knowledge and competencies needed in the tramway project. Planners often recognise expert knowledge and local knowledge as different with an emphasis on expert knowledge being of higher value in a project (Puustinen 2006; Staffans 2004 see Niitamo 2021). This does not encourage citizen participation. However, all interviewees were positive toward citizen dialogues and saw a need to incorporate dialogues early in the planning process. Yet, while there is an interest in involving citizens in planning, in reality it manifests as providing citizens with information, rather than including them in participation. Possibly, because of political and economic constraints, and pressure for swift planning.

The dialogues in the tramway project are described as extensive and the tramway project is described as a good example of a project where they have improved

dialogue and information efforts. Interviewee 1 stated that no other project has been up for this much discussion and that the tramway project has been a project where they have tried new and creative methods regarding dialogues. Dialogue design was described as important for different reasons such as, for example, making sure the dialogue design is suited to the objectives of the dialogue, as well as creating dialogues that consider power imbalances between citizens or target groups. The open house and digital meetings were specifically mentioned in the interviews as examples of successful dialogues. The consultation that was designed as an open house was described as a good arrangement because of the different stations with experts that could answer questions and respond to viewpoints, as well as because of the personal conversations that the open house allowed for. When choosing this form of design for the consultation it was also acknowledged that there were risks to having a more traditional consultation where it is common for officials to talk from a stage while citizens sit in an audience. The digital meetings were described as more open than physical meetings, allowing for more people to be able to join dialogue meetings. At physical meetings, there were descriptions of power imbalances between attendees relating to taking up time and space at meetings. There are advantages and disadvantages to digital meetings and digital participation. On one hand digital meetings offer accessibility for those who cannot make it to a physical meeting as well as being time efficient, on the other hand existing digital divides can make it difficult for people, who for different reasons cannot access technology, to participate (Rydh 2014). The description of physical meetings as meetings where power imbalances emerged is interesting because there were no descriptions of power imbalances between citizens when discussing the open house approach which is also a form of physical meeting. This entails that the design of the dialogue is relevant when considering power relations in dialogues, and that the platform used for dialogue is not what makes for a good or a bad dialogue. Big meetings where one person talks, and the others listen are not ideal if the purpose is to engage people in dialogue. All participants rarely get the chance to voice their opinions and there are often a few people that dominate the conversation (de Laval 2002). This was described by interviewee 1 when referring to physical meetings, however physical meetings can be designed in many different ways and overall, the interviewees seemed positive toward new methods for dialogue and developing dialogue and consultation processes. This entails an openness to consider creative methods for slow planning.

All interviewees expressed that there was a degree of time pressure in the project. Time pressure was described as necessary, normal and standard in any project. Parker and Dobson (2025) describe the discourse of project speed and delay in a planning context and explain how processes in planning that are considered to decrease efficiency or slow down decision making are deemed as direct obstacles toward neoliberal promises of growth. This discourse puts participatory processes and deliberation in planning at risk of being excluded or minimised in planning (Parker & Dobson 2025). This does not mean that time pressure or planning efficiently is bad, especially in the light of sustainability challenges that require quick decision making, and because of the interviewees views of time pressure as important for a project to proceed, rather it suggests that there is, as established, a common belief that swift planning and slow planning directly contradict each other

as this discourse deems any process that can slow down the planning process as a hindrance. Additionally, it is acknowledged that there is a perceived and existing balancing act between quality of work and efficiency, effectively deeming the two incompatible or at least in need of active balancing. However, speeding up the planning process does not guarantee greater efficiency, and to slow down planning does not guarantee higher quality of work in planning. This is explained by the interviewees as they emphasise that efficiency is connected to slow processes since conducting citizen dialogues and engaging with citizens early is described as something that can lead to a more efficient project with less delays. This is in turn connected to building trust, strengthening democracy and avoiding conflicts as this can help a project proceed without objections. On the other hand, to simply slow down a planning process does not guarantee that participation and deliberative planning processes will be prioritised. Time can be described as a tool that can be utilised to influence democratic processes depending on how time is distributed in a project (Dobson & Parker 2024). For example, the time a consultation is given can control the outcome of the consultation.

Overall, double pressure for swift and slow planning in the Uppsala tramway project is characterised by the urgency for sustainable transport amidst urbanisation, economic and political pressure to complete the project, the need to improve information efforts toward citizens, the desire to strengthen citizen's trust in democracy and an awareness of the municipality's need to work more with dialogues and participation in planning. This can be seen as interviewees express how the project is needed today already, and they explicitly express that there is economic and political pressure to speed up planning. The pressure for slow planning is seen as the interviewees experience a constant pressure to engage with citizens more than they are doing at the moment, and to involve citizens earlier in the planning process and they also express the benefits of doing so. However, in line with the municipality's and the interviewees' own ideas of what can be considered a dialogue, there is a large focus on improving information efforts and strengthening citizens' trust as a motivator for conducting dialogues. Planners experience the double pressure as a balancing act between interests where political and economic factors are the main drivers for efficiency and citizen participation is described as important for better decision making and democratic legitimacy, but also as something that ultimately takes time and can slow down the planning process. Thus, the double pressure between swift and slow planning is, in line with current discourse regarding efficiency and democracy (Falleth & Saglie 2011; Calderon et al. 2022), experienced as two opposing needs that are important to balance. How planners manage or intend to manage double pressure for swift and slow planning is by, first of all, not cutting corners and conducting dialogues demanded by politicians and citizens, developing and improving dialogue designs, and implementing dialogues or informing citizens as early as possible in the planning process. To improve dialogues while still sticking to a time plan is described by the interviewees as important for maintaining a good balance between efficiency and quality. Essentially, the balancing act between swift and slow seems to focus on making dialogues more efficient to fit in with calls for urgent and swift planning. This is done by conducting citizen dialogues that can help the project proceed faster, such as focusing on information meetings, increasing citizens' trust

in democracy, increasing citizens' understanding of how decision making works, and thus avoiding conflicts. Furthermore, slow planning in the tramway project is in a way characterised by conflict avoidance. The idea is that more information earlier on will lead to a more efficient planning process by avoiding misunderstandings that can lead to conflict, and that escalating conflicts can be avoided by developing dialogue designs, which in turn will also lead to a more efficient project. This might be the case, however, it should be acknowledged that by designing dialogues in certain ways that benefit planners and make dialogues easier to manage for planners, power imbalances can arise between planners and citizens (Calderon et al. 2022). Hellquist and Westin (2019) write about conflict avoidance in the sense that conflict avoidant tendencies can be explained by a fear of citizens' trust decreasing when conflicts are highlighted, as well as a conflict avoidant culture. Mäntysalo et al. (2011) also bring up that there can be a fear of revealing diverging interests as it is assumed that it would lead to conflict. Furthermore, the interviewees mentioned creating trust as an important part of citizen dialogues and an important aspect of the Uppsala tramway projects' communication is about informing and educating citizens, as well as keeping citizens calm in the midst of change. Mäntysalo et al. (2011) explain that different interests in urban planning projects are not inherently antagonistic, rather multiple different stakeholders have the opportunity to create new solutions in the case that there is transparency about conflicts and interests. The authors (Mäntysalo et al. 2011) suggest that acknowledging and accepting tensions in planning allows for healthy political debate and that creative planning can allow for different interests to exist together. Furthermore, Hellquist and Westin (2019) suggest that municipalities should be explicit in what the goal of a dialogue is in terms of following the consensus ideal, the agonistic ideal or the mobilising ideal. It is understood from the interviews and Uppsala municipality's guideline for dialogue with those who live and work in Uppsala municipality, that dialogues should have a clear purpose, and that it should be clear what level of influence participants have in a dialogue, and to consider what ideal or ideals to strive for in a dialogue could be an additional step to improve dialogues.

6.2 Further research

Based on the findings, further research on urban planning processes and planning projects could focus on dialogue designs and how to account for power imbalances in dialogue settings. This can in turn help municipalities to improve dialogue designs and help municipalities with how to conduct more equitable dialogues, which can improve both future urban planning processes as well as the end results of urban planning projects. Another idea for further research could be to conduct a document analysis of different municipalities guidelines for citizen dialogues and communication with the public and stakeholders regarding urban planning projects. Additionally, a proposal for how Uppsala municipality can improve their guidelines for citizen dialogues based on existing research within the field could be developed. This proposal could also include concrete examples of how advice from the guidelines can be applied in future planning projects. Furthermore, suggestions of how internal guidelines and strategies for urban planning, in regard to swift and slow planning, can look like and how they can be applied, could be developed.

Moreover, the question of how strategies and guidelines, as well as politicians and directors of city planning can support planners in the balancing act between efficient and deliberative urban planning can be investigated. Further research can also be conducted on how other urban planning projects manage the different demands for swift and slow planning. There is also a possibility to produce a larger more comprehensive study of how urban planners in Sweden experience the balancing act between slow and swift planning. It would also be interesting to conduct a similar study to “The Uppsala tramway project: A balancing act between swift and slow” in a few years’ time, to compare the current experiences of swift and slow planning in relation to the tramway project in Uppsala, with experiences after the project has been concluded. How do planners' experiences of swift and slow planning differ when comparing experiences during a project's continuation with experiences after the completion of a project?

6.3 Discussion of methods and reflexivity

The advantages of semi-structured interviews are that they allow for flexibility and the emphasis is put on the interviewee’s experiences and perceptions, rather than on their opinions on specific questions. However, answers from semi-structured interviews are difficult to compare to each other and personal bias from the interviewer may affect interpretation (Bryman 2018). Furthermore, qualitative research that is heavily based on the researcher's interpretations requires reflexivity in research. This entails that the researcher reflects on their personal background, biases and values (Creswell & Creswell 2018). My background is in landscape architecture as I have previously studied landscape architecture, however I have never worked with planning, thus while I may understand aspects of the planning process, I lack experience in the field. Furthermore, from my education, I have certain biases toward how planning processes proceed and how certain values might be prioritised over other values, as well as ideas of existing tensions between planning, construction and green and grey infrastructure. This helped me see the potential in investigating planners’ experiences of tensions in planning. When conducting the interviews, I wanted to keep in mind that the tramway project is a topical point of conversation and that there are many people who have strong opinions on the project, thus striving to create an open interview climate where the interviewees could express their opinions without feeling questioned about the project itself. This was not completely achieved since I did receive some answers that were defending the project. This could be attributed to the interviewees previous experiences with interviews or the media, my style of interviewing, or the fact that the project is unfinished as well as a current subject of criticism, and may have been avoided by explaining the purpose and the aim of the study more clearly before conducting the interviews, and perhaps by explicitly declaring that I am not judging if there should be a tramway in Uppsala or not, rather that my focus is on experiences of tensions between efficiency and deliberation in planning. Furthermore, since the participants were few, it is not accurate to generalise the findings as comprehensive for planners' experiences, which in turn limits this study. Therefore, it would have been interesting to interview more people in the project to get a more extensive and representative result. For the analysis, I opted for a thematic analysis. The thematic analysis is a flexible method for analysing and

finding patterns in qualitative data and is an adaptable method that can be applied to many different disciplines and fields (Robson and McCartan 2016). The analysis was furthermore performed inductively, thus focusing on findings from data and observations rather than from predetermined codes and themes. This form of research relies heavily on the researcher's interpretations. Because of this, it would have been interesting to perform this study with another researcher and compare and discuss interpretations to bring forward a more nuanced result.

7. Conclusions

Urban planning must evolve with society's needs and the need for both swift planning and slow planning is apparent. The balancing act between swift and slow planning is also clear in the tramway project, however the pressure that planners experience seems to predominantly stem from the swift side as political and economic pressure to deliver on time is evident. Nevertheless, there is a clear push for slow planning as citizens exhibit great interest in participation and planners see the importance of including citizens in planning to an extent, and experience a constant, underlying pressure to improve participatory processes in planning. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that there is great potential for improving dialogues, and by defining dialogues and explaining their purpose as well as prioritising dialogue design, dialogue processes are explained to work in favour of both swift and slow planning, as dialogues can help a project proceed according to the interviewees. In a way, slow planning is framed as something that can aid swift planning by facilitating and speeding up progress in a project. This attempt to rationalise slow, deliberative planning by highlighting its importance for efficiency might be a step in a direction where slow planning becomes more significant and desired in projects where efficiency is non-negotiable. Thus, efficiency does not get to exist comfortably without considering democratic legitimacy. However, if slow planning is simply a tool for increasing efficiency and for increasing citizens' trust in democracy, this undermines the intentions of slow planning as a way to truly involve citizens in deliberation and decision making. In relation to this, it is also important to mention the different definitions and understandings of citizen dialogue and slow planning that exist, since what is considered to speed up a project is not necessarily a higher level of influence for citizens, rather increasing contact and communication with citizens. In conclusion, the balancing act and double pressure between swift and slow planning is active and demands for both swift and slow planning are legitimate, and by transparently acknowledging and accepting that diverging needs in planning exist, there is potential for creative planning and debate to emerge that can allow for slow and swift planning to coexist, thus allowing for improved planning processes to materialise. In the end, this could lead to improved outcomes for infrastructure projects and for urban environments overall.

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Popular science summary

There are many challenges in urban planning, among these are how to plan quickly and efficiently to meet economic, political and environmental demands, as well as how to plan with citizens' viewpoints, knowledge and suggestions in mind. Demands for planning efficiently can be referred to as “swift planning” and demands to involve citizens in planning can be referred to as “slow planning”. Swift planning and slow planning are often assumed to be contradictory, which begs the question of whether swift planning and slow planning can exist side by side.

In this thesis, an infrastructure project, specifically the ongoing tramway project in Uppsala, Sweden, is explored in terms of finding out planners' perspectives on experienced pressure for slow planning and for swift planning in a large-scale planning project. For this purpose, interviews with people who work with different parts of the tramway project were conducted.

The findings show that there is a sense of urgency to finish the project, as well as an acknowledged need to improve dialogue processes and information efforts toward citizens about the project and about future projects. Additionally, political and economic factors were described as the main sources of pressure in the tramway project. The results also unveil difficulties that planners face, such as time constraints, how to communicate with citizens to avoid misunderstandings, and how to conduct successful dialogues.

These findings provide insights into how planners experience pressure for swift and slow planning, as well as provide a better understanding of how planners view important demands for both swift and slow planning, and how they in turn manage swift and slow planning in practice. By researching these concepts, better practices for planning may emerge as a deepened understanding of planners' intentions, practices and experiences is gained. In turn, future planning projects may learn from previous mistakes as well as from previous successes, encouraging planning processes to develop and evolve. Finally, the acknowledgment and acceptance of the legitimacy of both swift planning and slow planning is a step in a direction where healthy debates and creative solutions in planning are allowed to blossom.

Appendix

Intervjuguide

Bakgrundsinformation om deltagaren

- Vad jobbar du med?
- Vad är din roll i spårvagnsprojektet?
- Vad innebär det? Vad är dina arbetsuppgifter inom projektet?

Tidsaspekter gällande spårvägsprojektet

- Upplever du att det finns en tidspress för att få färdigt projektet eller att nå vissa delmål?
- Om nej?
- Vad tror du att det beror på?
- Om ja?
- Hur upplever du den tidspressen?
- Hur påverkar tidspressen ditt arbete?
- Vart kommer den pressen ifrån? (från politiken, ekonomin, hållbarhetsutmaningar)
- Hur hanterar du den pressen?
- Upplever du att det finns en press mellan att ta snabba beslut och att ta hänsyn till långsammare samrådsprocesser?
- Om nej?
- Vad tror du att det beror på?
- Om ja?
- På vilka sätt märker du av pressen?
- Hur hanterar du den pressen?
- Finns det strategier eller metoder för att balansera kravet på samrådsprocesser och behovet av effektivitet?
- Om nej?
- Tycker du att det behövs strategier eller metoder för att balansera krav på samrådsprocesser och behovet av effektivitet?
- Har du idéer om hur man skulle kunna balansera kravet på samrådsprocesser och behovet av effektivitet?
- Om ja?
- Vad är det för strategier?
- Hur implementerar du de strategierna i ett planeringsprojekt?
- Tycker du att strategierna fungerar?

- Ser du att det finns en konflikt mellan snabb, effektiv planering och deltagandeprocesser såsom medborgardialoger?
- Tror du att det är möjligt att balansera krav på demokratiska deltagandeprocesser och effektiv planering?

Definitioner och begrepp

- Hur skulle du definiera begreppet samråd?
- Hur skulle du definiera begreppet medborgardialog?

Samrådsprocesser och medborgardialoger

- Hur har samråd i samband med projektet gått till?
 - Vad tycker du att det finns för för- och nackdelar med samråd?
 - Hur ofta leder samråd till att ni gör förändringar i projektet?
 - Finns det avsatt tid för att hantera eventuella förändringar efter samråd?
 - Har det utförts medborgardialoger utöver samråd om spårvägsprojektet?
-
- Om nej?
 - Varför?
 - Vad tycker du att det finns för för- och nackdelar med medborgardialoger?
 - Hur lång tid tar det att planera och utföra medborgardialoger?
-
- Om ja?
 - Hur har de medborgardialoger som utförts gått till?
 - Vad tycker du att det finns för för- och nackdelar med medborgardialoger?
 - Hur lång tid tar det att planera och utföra medborgardialoger?
 - Har du känt att ni har fått ut det ni vill av medborgardialogerna?
 - Hur ofta leder medborgardialoger till att ni gör förändringar i projektet?
 - Finns det avsatt tid för att hantera eventuella förändringar efter medborgardialoger?

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