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CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE RAILWAY PLANNING PROCESS

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SWEDISH TRANSPORT
ADMINISTRATION'S PRACTICES

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Abstract

Introduced as a right by the United Nations in The Convention of the Rights of the Child, the child participation is still, after three decades, an increasingly popular topic. As the Convention will be adopted as a Swedish law by 2020, several organizations and governmental agencies are committed to different participation strategies for children. However, the participation process is not always as effective as expected and it is usually affected by various factors such as the nature of the project or the scale. With intensive impact, large scale projects are developing more frequently than ever all around the country, affecting the environment for an indeterminate period of time. Children are one of the most sensitive groups to these kinds of developments and therefore the objectives of this thesis are to investigate and assess the extent of children's participation in regional planning. The evaluation is made on three railway projects, coordinated by the Swedish Transport Administration and it is based on the data provided by them. The participation process is first studied through the existing models of children's participation and an evaluation tool is developed. According to the findings, the participation process has several flaws which need to be improved. The results show which are the weakness and the strengths of the current participation process and some improvements are suggested as outcomes of this research.



Preface

This thesis is made as a completion of the master education in Landscape Architecture. The intense desire to know more about the topic that is addressed through this thesis, developed during the courses that I took over these past two years. In the course 'People and Environment' I learned about the needs that different categories of people have, regarding the outdoor planning and design, with children being considered as one of the most vulnerable categories. I believe that my interest on children's participation in the planning process increased during the course 'Landscape Theory in Architectural and Planning Practice' when I had the opportunity to find more about the children's preferences and capabilities to plan their own space. I set the boundaries for my research after taking the course 'Planning Project — Large Scale Structures, Analysis and EIA'. During this course I learned more about regional planning, especially railway planning and about the extent of the impact that these large scale projects have both on the society and on the environment. Driven by concern about the extent of children's participation in regional planning, I started my research by looking into three railway projects that are coordinated by the Swedish Transport Administration.

Several persons have contributed to this master thesis. I would therefore, like to thank my supervisor **Maria Kylin** for her valuable input and support during the entire master period. I would also like to thank **Carolina Lundberg** for providing me with all the information and the contact that I needed within the Swedish Transport Administration. Furthermore, I would like to thank to the projects' representatives, **Torbjörn Sundgren, Marie Minör, Emelie Kroon, Elin Bylund** and **Mia Becker**, for accepting the interviews and for their honest responses. I would also like to thank **Stina Bodelius** for contributing with the experienced opinion of a landscape architect and **Sara Seppänen** for advices and for proofreading the paper.

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1. Introduction

The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) formulated by the United Nations in 1989 is seen as an international starting point for the movement concerning children's participation in the planning process (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Thirty years later, child participation has become increasingly common and popular. Following the UN Convention and other international strategies, several agencies put into practice the right of children and young people to express their opinions in matters that affect them (Freeman & Aitken-Rose, 2005). Both at a national and regional level, the governmental agencies are committed to different participation strategies for children (Regeringskansliet, 2014). Depending on the context, the participation can take many forms and it can vary a lot. There are different levels of participation which depends on the children's age and culture. If the process of participation is qualitative and there is a true collaboration between adults and children, the power is balanced and both, adults and children are on the same level (Save the Children, 2014).

But is the children's participation meaningful enough as it is pretended? Or are the participation models nowadays characterized by the first three levels of non-participation described by Hart in 1992, in its Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992)?

This thesis is looking into the extent of children's participation in three railway projects, in the southern part of Sweden. The idea of this thesis was presented through an email to the Swedish Transport Administration, and they were interested to be part of the research. The projects were chosen by the Swedish Transport Administration, and they are in different stages of development and on different scales. This chapter is an overview of the most important strategical drivers for children and young people's involvement in the planning process, providing a background for the following chapters. The international situation is firstly addressed and then the Swedish development is shortly described.

In the international arena, several significant changes had happened over the past 30 to 40 years, concerning the children and young people's participation in planning. The most important 'movements' that can be identified within the research literature are addressed here.

1.1. Children's participation – International perspectives

"As adults, we think of kids as "future citizens." Their ideas and opinions will matter someday, but not today -- there must be a reason the voting age is 18, right? But kids make up 25% of the population -shouldn't we include them in some important conversations?" (Mara Mintzer, 2018).

Children's Fundamental Rights

The 'children's fundamental rights' movement has been the main force behind children and young people's civic participation. As early as the 1920s, the League of Nations adopted the children's rights declarations that were proposed by the International Save the Children Alliance in the Geneva Declaration (Humanium, 2019). In 1948, the children's rights were reinforced by Article 25 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which specified that children were "entitled to special care and assistance" (UN General Assembly, 1948). The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) introduced the right for children to express and present their opinions in matters that affect them, as international law and it is supervised by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). In article 12 there is a clear description of children and young people's rights and how their opinion should be heard and respected, and therefore it is usually used as a base for the participation movement. Children's participation is also addressed within Article 2 (non-discrimination), Article 3 (best interests), Article 6 (maximum development), Article 17 (right of assembly), and Article 31 (right to play), (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), in the children's participation rights were also included the decisions affecting their living environments. At the same time, Local Agenda 21 was introduced as an instrument for realizing the terms of the Articles, (Day, Sutton & Jenkins, 2011).

In 1996, the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Cities Summit), brought up the first recognition of children and young people as an important participant group for sustainable urban development by including this within the programme guidance (United Nations, 1996). Children learn about their responsibilities and capabilities as citizens if they are involved in the planning process when it comes to land use decisions. However, their input is not always viewed as a necessary element because of the historical image of the child or because of specific laws that regulate the use of urban space by children (Simpson, 1997). According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 12, children can express their views 'in all matters affecting' them (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). However, if we are to analyze literally the words in the article, it will become clear that all the aspects of decision making, from a familial level to an international level can have direct or indirect impacts on children. Therefore, all the matters can be defined as important matters of concern, for example, education, transport, urban planning, poverty reduction or social protection (Lansdown, 2009). There are four levels of involvement that are identified in the decision-making process: to be informed; to express an informed view; to have that view considered; and to be involved as a decision maker (Alderson & Montgomery, 1996). Article 12 suggests that children have the right to the first three levels of involvement. However, the rights do not extend to the fourth level. That means that the adults are, after all, the ones taking the actual decision, although they have been informed and influenced by the children's view and opinions (Lansdown, 2009).

To really understand the concept of participation as a human right, it is also necessary to look at other articles in the Convention. In article 5 it is stated that all the guidance provided by parents or other custodians should be 'in accordance with the child's evolving capacities' and encourage 'exercise by the child of his or her rights' (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). These rights, as well as the right to information, represent the base for the right to participate. Therefore, the participation right is a fundamental right by itself. Considering the rights specified in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, two subgroups have been established within

the rights-based approach. The first category is about approaches that investigate the existing information on child development and at the same time they gather recommendations for a child-friendly planning policy. The second category is about approaches that involve children and their evaluation of the surrounding places. These approaches try to improve the urban environment by using participatory programmes, where through dialogue, children and adults come together (Chawla & Heft, 2002). However, child participation usually depends on the goodwill of the child's legal guardians or of the other adults involved in the child's life.

Overall about the international Perspectives

International engagement demonstrates that there are clear principles for ensuring that children and young people are involved in the planning process. These principles include the children's participation as a right, the integration of the children's participation in all the projects that affect them and the implementation of the participation process in the initial stages of the projects. That ensures that the planning and the design are more appropriate to the needs and the rights of the children (Lansdown, 2009).

Participation in the planning process has several positive effects on children. The fact that they are involved contributes to their personal development and provides them with the opportunity to contribute to positive changes in the communities. Other benefits include increased empowerment and motivation and a greater awareness of their rights. (O'Kane, 2013).

1.2. Children's participation – Swedish perspectives

"The only way to obtain a child's perspective is to ask a child. Otherwise, a child's perspective is an adult's conception of the child's perspective, wishes and circumstances – which of course is not enough," (Heidi Pintamo-Kenttälä, 2010, p.38).

Sweden ratified the Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1990, and in 1993 a governmental agency was founded with the purpose of representing children regarding their rights and interests based on the UN Convention. The agency is called 'the child ombudsman' and it is tasked to monitor how the Convention is implemented at a municipal, regional and national level. Child Ombudsman provides

information and builds opinions on issues relevant to children's rights and interests (Barnombudsmannen, 2019).

In Sweden, children's participation was discussed to a certain degree during the 20th century. However, children were considered part of the family sphere and their perspectives were transmitted through their parents. At the beginning of the 21st century, children's participation became more important and therefore in 2010, the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs published a comprehensive report, on young people and participation, called "Fokus 10" (Bredow, 2015). The international initiative, Child-Friendly Cities (CFCI) has been adopted in 5 municipalities in Sweden starting with 2017 and the purpose was to integrate the children's rights in the different levels of municipal work (Child-Friendly Cities Initiative, 2019).

"Strategy to Strengthen the Rights of the Child in Sweden" (Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige) is one of the most important documents regarding children's rights in Sweden (besides the UNCRC as an international ratified convention), (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2010). The strategy was approved by the Swedish Parliament on 1 December 2010 and it is a framework for the accomplishment of the rights of the child. Article 12 of the UNCRC is one of the nine principles presented in the Strategy. In 2020, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN-CRC) will be integrated into the Swedish law. Therefore, the municipalities will need to implement the Convention and to place the children at the center of all the decision-making processes that affect them (Bredow, 2015).

1.3. Children's participation in the Swedish Transport Administration's practices

The Swedish Transport Administration is responsible for the planning, building, operation and maintenance of the state roads and railways (Trafikverket, 2019). In this task, the Swedish Transport Administration cooperates with county administrative boards, municipalities, interest groups, landowners and the public. Children are considered as a sensitive group and therefore, the Swedish Transport Administration has some well-defined goals for their welfare and quality of life. These include good accessibility and their freedom of movement in the outdoor environment. The transport policy for sustainable

development has the children's needs as a starting point in the decision regarding the transport system. In their report about children participation, the Swedish Transport Administration stated that by having a child perspective in decision making means accepting different decision options from the children's point of view and analyzing what consequences a decision can have for a child or for children as a group. It also means that the adult sees the child as an expert when it comes to the child's own situation. However, the adult is the one taking the final decisions and the responsibility (Gummesson, 2005).

The schools are the Swedish Transport Administration's most important partners for involving children into the road and railway planning (Gummesson & Larsson, 2006). The consultation takes place during school hours and the parents are also involved through their children. In many schools, the students and the teachers have various activities that are meant to teach children more about their local communities. These activities include specialized methods for children, such as modeling, digital and interactive maps. The schools usually collaborate with the municipality's planning department. Within the Child Impact Assessment, children are asked to describe their experiences in the outdoor environment, (Larsson, 2004). They usually know more about their close surroundings and they can express their problems when it comes to traveling to and from school. If children are outdoor, cycling, socializing and playing, they tend to observe and register the changes in their environment, easier. When a new project is developing in these types of sensitive areas, the school's task is to help children to see possible disconnections into their normal itineraries and to get an overview on how the traffic system works. The school staff should guide children to discover and understand problems and conflicts in the traffic environment and the Swedish Transport Administration's planners should provide the information on how the planning develops (Gummesson & Larsson, 2006). Through this, opportunities are created for the teachers to use a real work plan in their teaching, and for the planners to know the children's and young people's experiences and knowledge. The children's experiences, perceptions, and views can constitute a valuable basis in the feasibility studies and in the Child Impact Assessment (Gummesson & Larsson, 2006).

The Swedish Transport Administration has two central perspectives in the work with children. One of them is the 'child's perspective' which means that children can make their own contribution. The second one is 'a child-centered perspective'. Here, children are not directly involved, but their living conditions and their best interests are very important for the adults (Björklid & Gummesson, 2013).

As Sweden has ratified to the Child Convention, Child Impact Analyses should be carried out for all decisions affecting children. Their influence and participation in planning should be encouraged and certain measures are already implemented. The Swedish Transport Administration performs child-impact analyses as part of their planning process. According to their policy, children and young people should be involved and informed and their views should be considered before the decisions are reached. The child impact assessments should be carried just in relevant situations and they should be included in the final reports. If the children's mobility and safety are disturbed by the planned railway or road, then there is a need for a child impact assessment (Trafikverket, 2014).

In the report 'Children's Independent Mobility in Sweden' the participation is described as including two dimensions, one informal and one formal (Björklid & Gummesson, 2013). Children' freedom of movement and their possibility to explore and observe public places is part of the informal participation. It is important that children are informed and experienced regarding the participation process, and the first step for this is to help them know and understand their local environment. Children discover their surroundings through play, so they need to have a safe environment. The informal participation helps children to understand more about their local environment and it is preparing them for the formal participation in the planning process. Problems such as the traffic network and the urban development are becoming familiar to children and therefore they are more prepared for the formal processes of decision-making (Heft & Chawla, 2006). However, for children, both these dimensions are interdependent.

Within the Swedish Transport Administration, the Child Convention places children on a central perspective (Björklid & Gummesson, 2013).

Along with this perspective, children receive the same freedom of expression as adults and they are considered experts in their own situation. Even if children's level of expertise is acknowledged, the adults are the ones responsible for the decision making. Children should enjoy their childhood, therefore they need to have safe environments for play and exploration. These places should be planned not only by the town planners alone, but with the help of the environmental and developmental psychologists. The children's views are, however extremely important for a child-friendly design. Through interdisciplinary collaboration, the children's interests are better recognized and put in practice. Their interest in the environment is based on their physical experience and their sensory impressions start in their first years of life. As children grow, this physical experience shifts to a more emotional connection which also influences their responsibility for the environment. The environmental engagement develops supported by the parents and by the teachers who are also the communication bridge between children and the planners or the municipalities (Björklid & Gummesson, 2013).

The main thoughts that can be concluded from the Swedish Transport Administration's reports are that children's safety is the main concern in the road and railway planning. The outdoor space should be secure for children because the free use of the environment is very important for their development. When their outdoor environment is changed, both children and parents can comply with the new situation and accept the fact that their surroundings have suffered negative changes. This can lead to a negative adaptation of their daily activities such as walking or cycling to other ways of transportation and it can affect the children's spontaneity and freedom of movement. As a result, they will be deprived of the possibility to develop their informal learning, outdoor play, and physical activity. Moreover, the Swedish Transport Administration stresses out the children's right to citizen participation and the fact that they should be gradually taught about their important role in society. Their participation should be based on their voluntarily will and they should be well informed and experienced in the participation process (Björklid & Gummesson, 2013).

1.4. Objectives and research questions

The main objective of this thesis is to study and evaluate the extent of children's participation in the planning process at a regional level. To successfully evaluate the participation, the three components that form the participation process will be assessed and the results will be then compared with the existing models of participation.

Therefore, the second objective is to test and develop an assessment tool for evaluating the scope, the quality and the outcomes of children's participation. The participation process will be evaluated for three railway projects, located in Southern Sweden, projects that were selected to emphasize the regional aspect of the children's participation.

This thesis is guided by the following research questions:

1. How is the Swedish Transport Administration working with the children's participation?
2. How can the extent of children's participation in regional planning be evaluated?
3. Are the existing models of participation corresponding to the Swedish Transport Administration's participation strategies?

2. Method

The research for the thesis is structured in four main parts, a literature review of the most important models of children's participation and of the existing assessment methods, presented in chapter 3; the development of an assessment tool, based on the existing methods, presented in chapter 4; an investigation of children's participation in three different railway projects, presented in chapter 5; and the results of the evaluation of their involvement in these projects, presented in chapter 6. The participation process is investigated through the existing reports and through direct interviews with the Swedish Transport Administration representatives. An assessment tool is developed and the children's participation for each project is assessed and reviewed.

In the discussions, the results of the evaluation are addressed, and the applicability of the assessment methods, in regional planning, is discussed. The focus is then on how the evaluation findings correspond to the existing models of children's participation.

The first research question is answered through the evaluation of the extent of children's participation in the three projects administrated by the Swedish Transport Administration. The other two questions are also addressed in the chapter 'Discussion and Conclusions' and they are answered through an analysis of the evaluation's findings and of the studied literature.

2.1. Literature review

In the literature review, the existing models and the assessment tools for the extent of children's participation are addressed. Three models are chosen for this study and they have been selected because they are recurrent in almost all the existing literature about children's participation in the planning process. These are Hart's Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992), the Seven Realms of children's participation (Francis & Lorenzo, 2002) and Chawla's forms of participation (Chawla, 2001). The main literature considered for the evaluation of children's participation is provided in six booklets about the children's involvement in the planning process (Lansdown & O'Kane, 2014).

In these booklets, the authors describe the extent of children's participation as being formed by three dimensions, which are the scope, the quality, and the outcomes. Each dimension is addressed and the criteria for evaluation are shortly described. This part of the literature research represents the base for the development of the assessment tool.

2.2. The development of the assessment tool

The extent of children's participation is evaluated in this thesis with the help of an assessment tool. This is developed based on the existing assessment tools for children's participation. Therefore, the children's participation is evaluated on three levels. First, the scope of the participation is evaluated. This is assessed through the children's level of involvement and the time when they have been involved in the project. Then, the quality of children's participation is assessed with the help of the nine requirements for effective and ethical participation, which were developed by Gerison Lansdown in 2011 (Lansdown, 2011). Finally, the outcomes or the impact of children's participation are evaluated according to the criteria described in the existing tools. The outcomes can be evaluated for children and parents, or for those organizing the participation process. Considering the fact that no children or parents have been interviewed in this research, the outcomes are evaluated on those coordinating the participation process, the Swedish Transport Administration. The impact is assessed based on the interviews and on the studied reports.

2.3. Cases

Three different railway projects are evaluated for this thesis, from a children's participation perspective. The projects were suggested by the Swedish Transport Administration and the situation is analyzed through existing reports and interviews. The selected projects are Flackarp-Arlöv, Simrishamnsbanan, and Hässleholm-Lund. These projects are in different stages of development which allows an examination of the standard assessment methods for children's participation and their applicability. The railway projects are chosen because they are an appropriate form of regional planning and they are considered to be a more sustainable transportation alternative.

Moreover, the railway development is increasing at a fast rate in the south part of Sweden because people need to commute more, especially between large cities.

As mentioned above, the cases are investigated based on the Swedish Transport Administration's reports and through the interviews with the representatives of each studied project.

2.3.1. Swedish Transport Administration Reports

The Swedish Transport Administration has a multitude of reports that document their activity and all the public reports can be found on their website. For this thesis, the studied reports are both from their website or directly from the Transport Administration's representatives. Most of the reports are in Swedish, so they have been translated online and the translations' accuracy was verified by me afterward. My level of Swedish is basic, but with the help of the internet, I successfully took the information that is relevant for my research. The most important facts were double-checked with the Swedish Transport Administration representatives during the interviews. The study of the reports was led by the thesis's first research question and therefore the focus was mostly on children related issues. In cases where the information about children's participation was not available, the general participation process was studied. Therefore, in the thesis, each project is shortly addressed according to the findings from the reports, but the attention is on children's participation process.

2.3.2. Interviews

There have been four unstructured interviews, three with the Swedish Transport Administration's representatives and one with a representative from a consulting firm, working with railway projects. The selection process for the interviewed people was made based on their involvement in the studied railway projects and they were recommended by my contact person from the Swedish Transport Administration. The representatives were contacted prior to the interviews, via e-mail. They received a description of the project and they were invited to be part of the research through their feedback. See Appendix A for the interview invitation. The interviews were face-to-face or through Skype and semi-structured, with no precise

restrictions or list of options, but with a small number of decided questions, around 8-10 for each project (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). In the invitation were specified a few broad questions that were meant to familiarize the respondents with the topic of the interview. The interviews developed as open, informal discussions with spontaneous remarks and ideas.

The questions and the discussion were kept as specific as possible for each project, sometimes with examples from other similar projects. The unstructured interviews were particularly valuable because the representatives were free to express their opinions and experiences when working with railway projects and children.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. Models of children's participation

The existing literature offers several models of children and young people's participation. However, the ones that are used in this thesis were frequent in most of the studies that I read. Two of them are general models for children's participation in the planning process, while the 'Seven realms of children's participation' focus mostly on their participation in city planning and design. I chose to investigate some of the existing models because they have been widely researched and therefore they are considered to be valid from multiple points of view. They are used as standards, therefore the evaluation findings will be related to the three models described below.

3.1.1. Ladder of children's participation

In 1992, Roger A. Hart was one of the first to problematize the issue of children's participation. He brought forward on how important it is that all young people, children, and teenagers have the chance to learn to participate in programmes that affect their lives. According to Hart, children need to be engaged in collaborative activities with adults, to be able to learn about their responsibilities as citizens (Hart, 1992). He is the one that designed the "Ladder of Participation", a diagram that serves as an initial classification of children's participation in projects. The model is still considered to be very influential within the field and it is separating possible types of adult-child collaboration. The Ladder Model was inspired by Arnstein's work (1969) and includes eight rungs. Starting from the bottom, the first three are 'manipulation', 'decoration' and 'tokenism', and they represent forms of non-participation. The following five represent varying degrees of participation and these are 'assigned but informed', 'consulted and informed', 'adult initiated shared decisions with youth', 'youth initiated and directed' and 'youth initiated shared decisions with adults'. Each level will be shortly addressed below.

The '**Manipulation**' level develops when children and young people are controlled and directed into their actions without understanding the purpose of their activities. Usually, children are requested

to express their desires and views, but they never get to participate in the analysis process. Their ideas are taken into consideration by the adults, but children do not get any feedback. This is considered a form of manipulation.

The second level, the '**Decoration**', describes cases where children and young people participate in adult-led activities, that they maybe understand, but they are not involved in how the activities are planned. At this level, children are used to promote activities and projects without having the chance to be a part of them.

The third level of non-participation is '**Tokenism**'. At this level, children are apparently given a voice, but with minimal opportunities for feedback. According to Hart, there are more examples of tokenism than cases of genuine forms of children's participation in projects.

The following five levels are degrees of participation. The first of these levels is '**Assigned, but informed**', and at this level, children understand the intentions of the project, they know why they have been involved and by whom, they have a meaningful role and they voluntarily choose to participate after being clearly informed.

The next level of participation is '**Consulted and informed**'. Here children and young people are consulted in adult-led activities, and they are also informed about how their contribution will be used in the adult's decisions.

Following, is the level '**Adult initiated shared decisions with children**'. This level is considered as true participation because the decision making is shared with the young people, even if the projects are initiated by the adults.

At the next level, '**Child-initiated and directed**', children and young people lead activities with just little contribution from the adults.

The final level is '**Child initiated shared decisions with adults.**' Here the activities are led by children and young people and they can choose to have adults involved as equal partners (Hart, 1992).

Even if the Ladder is very used in several studies, the model is frequently criticized by fellow experts in the field. Hart himself had some critique for the model, such as cultural bias and the fact that is misused and outdated (Hart 2008).

3.1.2. Seven realms of participation

In 2002, Francis and Lorenzo came up with an alternative to the 'Ladder of participation' which they named 'the seven realms of children's participation' (Francis & Lorenzo, 2002). These realms describe the former participatory efforts with children and young people, and they have suggestive names such as 'romantic', 'advocacy', 'needs', 'learning', 'rights', 'institutionalization' and 'proactive'. Their article from 2002 is a critical and historical review of the children's participation in city planning and design.

In the '**romantic**' realm, children are the active designers and planners, putting in practice their own ideas, without adult involvement.

The '**advocacy**' realm is based on the idea 'planners for children'. Children are predominantly planned for, with their apparent needs advocated through adults, but they are not directly involved in the design process.

In the '**needs**' realm, the focus is on the research about children's needs. The objectives are to define the spatial needs of children and incorporate them into the design. However, children are not directly involved in the design process because it is assumed that social science alone can identify the children's needs.

The '**learning**' realm is defined by 'Children as Learners' and participation is through environmental education and learning.

The '**rights**' realm or the 'children as citizens', demand children's involvement in the planning and decision-making process. However, there can be a too intense attention on children's rights and less on their actual needs.

In the '**institutional**' realm, children are equal to adults and are expected to participate in the planning process but within institutional boundaries. The result is less spontaneous and limited.

The last realm, '**proactive**', recognise children's involvement as a communicative and educational activity. Within this realm, the research, the participation and the action are combined, and the purpose is to engage children and adults in both planning and design (Francis & Lorenzo, 2002).

The proactive realm describes the modern practices of participation as informative and ambitious processes that shift from the classic forms of participation to a new form in which children are directly empowered and perceived as important factors in the planning process as well as in the decision making.

3.1.3. Chawla's forms of participation

Another important model of children's participation was described by Chawla in 2001. In his article 'Evaluating children's participation: seeking areas of consensus', he defined seven forms of participation depending on how children are involved, and on which is their level of initiative (Chawla, 2001).

The first form is the '**Prescribed participation**'. Here the participation opportunity is perceived as a moral and a cultural obligation, therefore as a privilege. The children have a low possibility of choice.

In the second form, '**Assigned participation**', the adults provide opportunities for participation training. Children's involvement is directed by adults, but their experiences should be meaningful.

The '**Invited participation**' is initiated and controlled by the adults, but children can choose to participate or not.

In the next form of participation, '**Negotiated participation**' the child receives a participatory role with the opportunity to negotiate his level of involvement.

The '**Self-initiated negotiated participation**' provides for the child the chance to initiate and control the type and the level of involvement.

'**Graduated participation**' is the form where children can practice different types of participation gradually as they achieve the necessary competences.

The last form of participation is the '**Collaborative participation**', which is initiated and supported by a group of children and adults that decide together the level and the form of involvement.

These different forms of participation can be integrated together in the participation process. As the children's competences increase, they may move from one form to another. However, children of the same age might practice different forms of participation depending on their level of interest and available opportunities (Chawla, 2001).

Table 1: An overview on the models of children's participation
Source: the author; based on the studied literature

Hart's Ladder of Participation	The seven realms of children's participation	Chawla's forms of participation
Manipulation	Romantic	Prescribed participation
Decoration	Advocacy	Invited participation
Tokenism	Needs	Assigned participation
Assigned but informed	Learning	Negotiated participation
Consulted and informed	Rights	Self-initiated negotiated participation
Adult initiated shared decisions with youth	Institutionalisation	Graduated participation
Youth initiated and directed	Proactive	Collaborative participation
Youth initiated shared decisions with adults		

3.2. Assessment tools for children's participation

By evaluating the extent of children's participation, it is made clear what it should be changed or improved in the participation process. One of the most well-known researchers in the field of children's participation is Gerison Lansdown. In 2009, she suggested three dimensions that should be discussed regarding how the extent of children's participation is assessed and evaluated. These are the scope, the quality, and the outcomes (Lansdown, 2009). Her work continued with a series of booklets "A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation", written in collaboration with Claire O'Kane in 2014, for the 'Save the Children' Organisation (Lansdown & O'Kane, 2014). Therefore, the literature research on the assessment tools for children's participation is based on her work.

3.2.1. The scope of children's participation

The scope of the participation can be evaluated by considering the point when children were involved in the planning process, their level of engagement and the rate of inclusivity. These can be evaluated with the help of Lansdown's levels of participation. She classified the children's participation based on different levels of power that the child possesses within the participation process (Lansdown & O'Kane, 2014). The participation was classified into three different types where the power defines the variation from a lower to a higher level of participation. The levels are 'Consultative participation', 'Collaborative participation' and 'Child-led participation'.

In the first level, '**consultative participation**', the consultation is described as an appropriate way of allowing children to express their opinions. At this level, the children's expertise and perspectives are recognized, and the adults use them in decision making.

The second one is '**collaborative participation**'. At this level, the cooperation between adults and children is higher, with children having the opportunity to engage actively in the decision-making process. They can be involved through their participation in several boards or committees and their influence is both in the planning and in the outcomes of the process.

The third level is '**child-led participation**'. At this level, children are offered the opportunity to determine what are their concerns and to initiate actions as individuals or as a group. The adults are facilitating children to continue with their own objectives, by offering them information, advice, and support (Lansdown & O'Kane, 2014).

When it comes to public participation, these three levels of children's engagement are partly used in different stages of the decision-making process. If children are actively involved in all the parts of the planning process, they will be able to exert a higher level of influence.

3.2.2. The quality of children's participation

The second dimension that needs to be evaluated is the quality of children's participation, and this is evaluated with the help of specific standards that are suitable when working with children. In 2005, the 'International Save the Children Alliance' presented a list of seven practice standards in child participation. According to the seven standards, a qualitative participation is characterized by transparency and honesty. Children's engagement is voluntary, but relevant, and the environment, as well as the staff, is suitable and protective with children. There is equality in opportunity and an ensured follow-up and evaluation (Save the Children, 2005). In 2011, the seven standards were transformed into another assessment tool named 'The 9 Basic Requirements for Effective and Ethical Children's Participation'. This assessment tool made for children's participation provides precise and measurable indicators for the quality of the

participatory process (Lansdown, 2011). In the assessment tool are described nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation.

The first one is transparent and informative participation. In practice, it means that children's participation has a clear purpose, they understand the impact that they can make, as well as their roles and responsibilities. Children should also agree with the possible outcomes of their participation.

The second requirement is voluntary participation. Children should have enough time to decide if they want to participate and they can leave the process any time they wish.

The third requirement is respectful participation. Children should be treated with respect and they should be able to express their views freely. For an effective process, children should be allowed to share ideas and to collaborate with the staff.

The fourth requirement states that participation should be based on children's own knowledge. Within the participatory process, the focus should be on issues that are relevant to children and the local context.

The fifth requirement specifies that the participation approaches need to be child-friendly, therefore designed according to children's age and abilities. These approaches should ensure that children are prepared for the participation process.

An inclusive participatory process is the sixth requirement. That means that children are not being discriminated against, because of their status. The possibility of being involved cannot depend on their background and it should recognize the needs and the expectations of the different groups of children. However, their age, gender, and abilities need to be considered.

The seventh requirement states that effective participation can occur if the staff working with children have the knowledge and the ability to support their participation. To obtain that, the staff must be trained and prepared to involve children in activities and to assist them along the participation process.

The eighth requirement is about the children's safety and describes various safety procedures that need to be considered when it comes to children's participation. For example, one security issue

is that children cannot be photographed or recorded without their explicit consent for a specific use of the obtained material.

The ninth requirement states that children must receive feedback and follow up, regarding how their opinions have been interpreted and used. They should be informed on how they have influenced the process and if possible, they should be involved further on, in the process (Lansdown and O’Kane, 2014).

3.2.3. The outcomes of children’s participation

The last important dimension when it comes to children’s participation is ‘the outcomes’ that this has afterward. The indicators of effectiveness can be determined by the involved children and adults. There are two types of impact, directly on children and on the project’s outcomes. The impact on children should be positive, for example, skills building, self-esteem or confidence (Lansdown, 2009).

When measuring the outcomes of the participation process, some important issues must be considered. Firstly, the objectives of the evaluation must be clear and precise. In this thesis the main objective is to evaluate the children’s participation in the planning process for three railway projects, so the evaluation will be made against the data about these projects. Secondly, the possibility of negative outcomes must also be taken into consideration. The time-frame is also important to consider because the studied projects develop during long periods of time and therefore children might have to wait a long time to see how their opinions and suggestions were translated in the design process (Lansdown and O’Kane, 2014).

Children’s participation occurs both in informal and formal settings. As presented before in the chapter “Children’s participation in the Swedish Transport Administration’s practices” these two different dimensions of participation are used by the Swedish Transport Administration in the consultation process. According to Chawla, (2001) the adults need to understand these dimensions to be able to help children in the participation process.

4. Developing an assessment tool

The tool developed for this thesis is based on the literature described in chapter 3. However, the main source for this tool is “Booklet 3 - How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children’s participation” from the series “A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children’s Participation” (Lansdown and O’Kane, 2014).

4.1. Evaluating the scope

The scope can be evaluated through the children’s level of involvement and through the time when the children are involved. The periods of time are divided according to the general stages of the planning process.

Table 2: Evaluating the scope of children’s participation

Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O’Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.14);

	No information available	No children involved	Consultative involvement	Collaborative involvement	Child-led involvement
Investigation stage					
Planning stage					
Design stage					
Construction stage					
Monitoring and evaluation					

4.2. Evaluating the quality

The quality of the children’s participation is evaluated with the help of the nine requirements for effective and ethical participation. For each requirement, there are specific questions that ensure a more objective assessment. These questions are answered based on the existing information from the reports and on the feedback received during the interviews. The nine requirements are considered to be the goal for every project that affects children through its development. Therefore, each requirement was assessed by the author based on the found information, and the level of consideration that each requirement received during the participation process, was decided after an objective analysis.

Table 3: Evaluating the quality of children's participation

Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O'Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.21);

Requirements	Questions to use as prompts when using this table	No consideration for the requirement or no information about it	Requirement is considered but not used in practice	Requirement is implemented to a certain degree	Requirement is fully implemented and monitored
Participation is transparent and informative	Can children take informed decision about their participation?				
	Is information shared with children in formats that they can understand?				
	Is the participation voluntary?				
Participation is voluntary	Can children take informed decision about their participation?				
	Can children leave the participation process any time they want?				
	The participation process does not interfere with children's normal activities?				
Participation is respectful	Are the local values and cultural practices considered in the participation process?				
	Are the parents supporting the children's participation?				
	Are the addressed issues relevant to children?				
Participation is relevant	Is the participatory process appropriate to the children's abilities and interests?				
	Are the approaches and the methods used suitable for children?				
Participation is child-friendly	Is the participation process held in child-friendly places?				
	Is the process inclusive and non-discriminatory for children from different backgrounds and conditions?				
Participation is supported by training for adults	Are the adults trained to work with children?				
	Can they effectively support children's participation in the planning process?				
Participation is safe and sensitive to risk	Is the participation held in a safe environment?				
	Can the staff make children feel safe during the participation process?				
Participation is accountable	Are the adults providing follow up for the children?				
	Are the children's views implemented in the planning process?				

4.3. Evaluating the outcomes

The outcomes of children’s participation can be evaluated through an analysis of the project’s initial objectives. If the process has clear objectives, it is easier to measure how the planning process has progressed in various stages, including the participation stage.

In this project, the outcomes will be measured just for the institution involved, the Swedish Transport Administration. The outcomes on children or on their parents couldn’t be measured because, for this project, no children or parents have been interviewed.

Table 4: Evaluating the outcomes of children’s participation

Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O’Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.31);

Outcomes	Criteria	Negative change	No change	Immediate change	Significant and sustained change
On institutions	Increased respect for children’s rights within the institution				
	Balance of power between staff and children				
	Children’s participation as part of all the planning processes				
	Changes in the planning process based on the children’s needs and priorities				

5. Cases

The main objective of this thesis is to evaluate the extent of children's participation in regional planning, more specifically in railway planning. The projects that are evaluated for this thesis are all located in Skåne and they are coordinated by the Swedish Transport Administration. They are in different stages of development and on different scales. Each project will be shortly addressed concerning its location, stage of development, purpose and existing documentation. All the facts about the projects are acquired from the Swedish Transport Administration's reports and they have been verified during the interviews.

5.1. Background and purpose

5.1.1. Simrishamnsbanan

The first railway project that has been studied for the thesis is Simrishamnsbanan. The construction of the railway started in 1882 and different sections of the railway were built in different periods of time. (Simrishamnsbanan på senare år, 1982). Nowadays, "Simrishamnsbanan" is not entirely used. Between Simrishamn and Tomelilla the trains continue on the original course, while further to Malmö, the trains go via Ystad. In November 2011, an agreement was signed between the involved municipalities, Region Skåne, and the Swedish Transport Administration. The purpose was to carry out a railway investigation, on a possible route for "Simrishamnsbanan". In 2012 the railway investigation began, and it was completed at the beginning of 2015. The result of the railway plan was the selection of a route for the Simrishamnsbanan, with the value of national interest for future railway development (Översiktsplan för Tomelilla kommun, 2017).

The objectives for the track construction were, among others, to facilitate the potential development throughout the Öresund region and to broaden the labor market by enabling daily commuting options between the urban areas. However, today, the railway that previously has been up for discussion is not included in the national plan for transport systems for 2014-2025 (Trafikverket, 2018). Still, in Skånetrafiken's Traffic

Strategy 2037 there are plans to rebuild the railway, in 2020 to Dalby and in 2030 further on to Tomelilla. According to Vectura Consulting AB, (2010), the project focused on how to acknowledge the different identities in each individual municipality and how these complement each other.

This project is on a regional scale, but it has been interrupted in the investigation phase.



Figure 1: Investigated corridor for Simrishamnsbanan project; map developed based on the existing maps from the reports.

5.1.2. Flackarp-Arlöv

The southern mainline or “Södra stambanan”, is an important part of the Swedish railway system. Here, the railway is essential both for national and regional passenger traffic and for the international freight traffic. (Tyréns AB, 2014). The line between Malmö and Lund was inaugurated in 1856 and today is one of Sweden's busiest route. Around 460 trains run every day between Malmö and Lund and about 80 of them are freight trains. It is estimated, that by 2030, the traffic on the route will increase to a total of 645 trains, with approximately 100 trains just for freight. Because of the intense railway traffic between Malmö and Lund, the current railway's capacity is exceeded (Trafikverket, 2019). Therefore, the need for improvement is crucial. Considering the above, the Swedish Transport Administration proposed an extension of the tracks between Lund and Arlöv, with the purpose of transforming the existing railway into a four-track railway (Tyréns AB, 2014). The expansion takes place in two parts, with the eight kilometers stretch between Flackarp and Arlöv, and the three kilometers stretch from Flackarp to Lund. The construction of the tracks between Lund and Arlöv started in autumn 2017 and the four-track railway is expected to be in full operation by 2024 (Trafikverket, 2019). The railway expansion project started after many years of investigations and discussions. Between 1999 to 2002, consultations were conducted on a feasibility study and between 2004-2005, the investigations led to the first decision of expansion. In 2008 and 2009 some of the affected municipalities agreed with the expansion project and in the following years, more consultations were carried out. In March 2014 the Ministry of the Environment consented on the expansion of the tracks. The initial proposal was for the railway to be expanded at a ground level, but for better noise mitigation, the solution was to lower the tracks and to even build a tunnel. The tunnel is 400 m long and it is built in Åkarp (Trafikverket, 2019).

This project is the smallest one compared with the other two, but it is also the only one that is already in the construction phase. Moreover, in this case, the railway already exists in the landscape, so the impact might not be as extreme as for a new railway project.

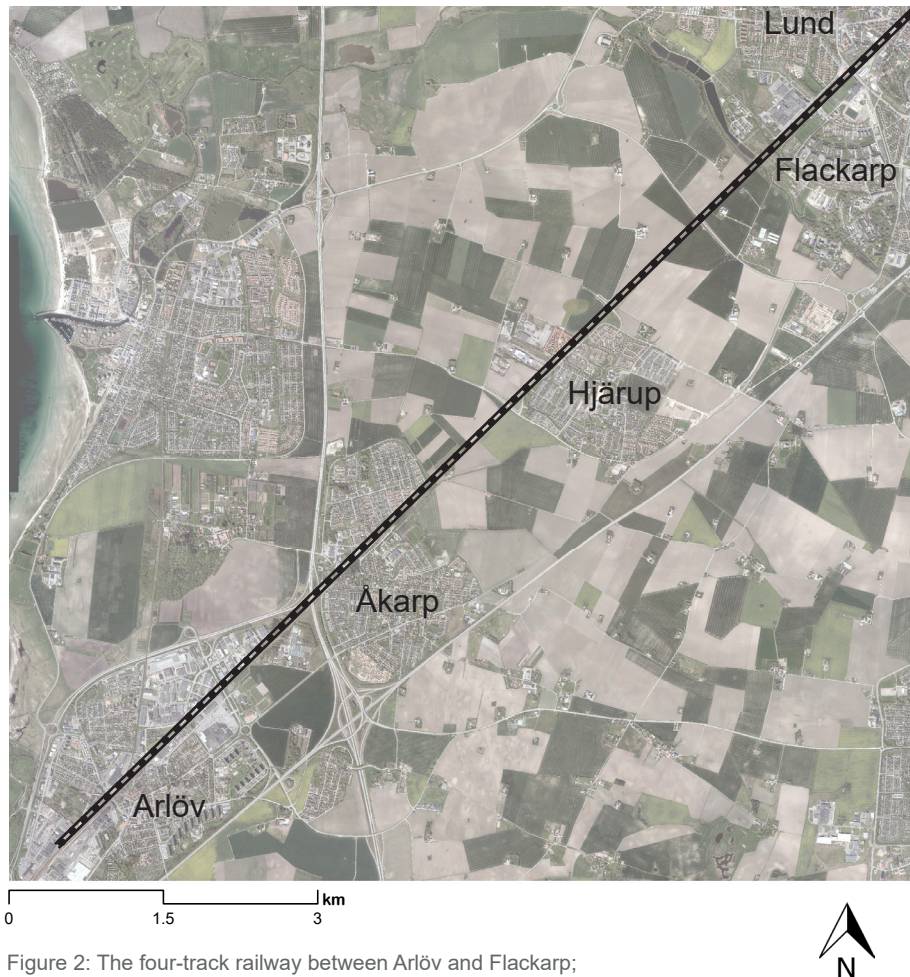


Figure 2: The four-track railway between Arlöv and Flackarp; map developed based on the existing maps from the reports.

5.1.3. Hässleholm-Lund

The Hässleholm-Lund railway project is planned by the Swedish Transport Administration as a double-track railway for high-speed trains and fast regional trains between Hässleholm and Lund (Trafikverket, 2019). The main goal is to have faster journeys between metropolitan regions, better opportunities for work commuting, to reduce the pressure on the existing tracks and to strengthen the international networks. As part of the Swedish Transport Administration program “New generation railway” (Ny generation järnväg -NGJ), the route was previously a segment of the Jönköping-Malmö project (Trafikverket, 2019). In this stage, the investigation area is approximately 70 km long and 30 km wide between Hässleholm and Lund. In the Government’s decision on the National Plan for the Transport System 2018-2029, the project Hässleholm-Lund is a named object with the construction start within the planning period. The planning process for this project is regulated by the Rail Construction Act. Firstly, the Swedish Transport Administration has produced a consultation document

containing the description of the project and what will be the environmental impact in the area between Hässleholm and Lund (Trafikverket, 2019). At the end of 2018, a consultation was conducted and the received comments have been compiled in a consultation report, together with the feedback from the Swedish Transport Administration. All the documents are available on the project's website. The consultation report was the support for the County Administrative Board's decision concerning the significant environmental impact that the project will have. Therefore, an environmental impact assessment should be produced, and the consultation should be extended to relevant municipalities, other government agencies and the public (Trafikverket, 2019). This project is also on a regional scale and now it is in the investigation stage, therefore different alternative corridors are identified and compared to find the most suitable one where the railway could be built.



Figure 3: Possible corridors for the high-speed railway between Hässleholm and Lund; map developed based on the maps received during the course 'Planning Project - Large Scale Structures, Analysis, and EIA'.

5.2. The status of the consultation process

5.2.1. Consultation Process - – Simrishamnsbanan

The following reports have been studied for this project:

-Översiktsplan Tomelilla kommun – Granskningshandling; 2017

-Simrishamnsban – Attitydundersökning; 2013

– Urbania – Pilotprojekt; 2013

– PM Barnkonsekvensanalys; 2013

The preliminary investigation was made in consultation with the affected municipalities, the County Administrative Board in Skåne, Region Skåne, Skånetrafiken and other stakeholders (Simrishamnsbanan.se, 2011). The public was also invited to consultation during public meetings. There were several public meetings, usually one in each municipality. During March 2011, consultations were held in Dalby, Veberöd, Sjöbo, and Tomelilla. The meetings were very well attended with over one hundred people for each occasion. Therefore, a lot of feedback has been collected during the meetings. The meetings were a good occasion for people to learn more about the project. One of the issues that were most discussed was the location of the stations in each community (Simrishamnsbanan.se, 2011).

The consultation process included a new tool for gathering feedback from the public (Freij, 2013). The tool, 'Urbania' was specifically created for the Simrishamnsbanan investigation and it was a digital instrument, in form of a map where the public could add their own views and in the same time to learn more about the project. There were 133 registered users, but just 45 people left their feedback. The users were from several communities along the stretch and 80 % of the respondents were between 30-49 years old. When asked why they chose to use Urbania, some respondents answered that the map was easy to use directly from home and that it should be improved and used further in other projects. Still, some of the respondents considered that it was difficult to understand and orientate on the map. Most of the respondents participated also at the public meetings and therefore they knew about Urbania. However, several users asked for instructions and they suggested improvements for the tool. Overall,

the respondents were willing to submit their feedback through the same tool in future projects, despite the difficulties. Those responsible for the project had a good opinion about the tool. However, their conclusion was that it is a good method to be used in the early stages of the project (Freij, 2013). According to them, the consultation with the public should be made earlier in the process, when the comments and the knowledge about specific areas can be better used by the Swedish Transport Administration. The later stages are more specific and detailed and therefore it can be more difficult to follow the public's requirements. However, the public's interests vary over time, so it might be appropriate to use tools like Urbania in all stages (Freij, 2013). According to the Swedish Transport Administration, the tool was used in the project as a pilot method and it has never been used after that, in any other project (Freij, 2013).

Another consultation method used in this project was the survey method, and the purpose was to find out to what degree are the respondents aware of the project and what is their attitude about it (Trafikverket, 2013). There have been 1400 telephone interviews, around 200 in each affected community, with people between 18 and 75 years old. The survey collection took place in May and June 2013, via telephone. The best informed about the project were the people from Veberöd and Sjöbo with 76% respectively 78% of the people knowing about it. From the total, 85 % of the respondents had a positive attitude about the project and just 4% knew about Urbania. When asked about how did they get information about the project, the most selected way was through media. Still, the respondents said that they would prefer to receive information home, directly from the Swedish Transport Administration. Most of the respondents were over 45 years old, around 55%, while the younger group, between 18-24 was represented just by 11% (Trafikverket, 2013).

The children's safety and needs were one of the main objectives of the investigation and therefore, a Child Impact Analysis has been developed in 2013 (Trafikverket Region Syd, 2013). In this assessment, the places that are frequently visited by children have been mapped. In each affected municipality, the important places for children were analyzed and the focus has been on how the railway development

might affect the children's freedom of movement and their daily activities. There have been held open meetings with children and they have been invited to express their opinions through the digital tool, Urbania. However, after the analysis of the children's feedback, the specialists decided that the responses were influenced by the adults and therefore they were not taken into consideration (Trafikverket Region Syd, 2013).

5.2.2. Consultation Process - Flackarp-Arlöv

The following reports have been studied for this project:

- *Flackarp-Arlöv, fyra spår – Gestaltningsprogram; 2015*
 - *Samrådsredogörelse; 2015*
 - *Miljökonsekvensbeskrivning; 2014.*

According to the existing reports, the consultation was a very important tool for all the stakeholders, during the work on the railway plan. The possible affected property owners, the authorities and the organizations that had any significant interest in the project were invited to consultation in different stages of the planning process (Tyréns AB, 2015). There have been held special meetings with the County Administrative Board and the affected municipalities. The Swedish Transport Administration had individual meetings with the property owners affected by the development of the new tracks (Tyréns AB, 2015). The public meetings were held during the pre-investigation phase, in 1999, but there was no available information about children's participation in the early stages (Tyréns AB, 2004). During the investigation stage and the environmental impact assessment, in 2001, there have been held 26 public meetings in 5 different municipalities. Public consultations were held through group meetings in 2011 and 2012 (Tyréns AB, 2015). In all the affected municipalities, there have been over 600 participants, with a higher attendance in Hjärup and Åkarp. There have been special meetings with parents and teachers in the schools affected by the railway development and the children's needs and safety has been discussed and considered. In 2017, when the construction stage started, the preschool children have been invited to the opening event of the construction stage. In the post about the event, the children's involvement indicates the fact that the children's needs are considered and they are

perceived as future users of the railway (Trafikverket, 2017). According to the Swedish Transport Administration, the feedback resulted during the consultation stage has been incorporated as much as possible into the plan proposal (Tyréns AB, 2015). They have used the received information both in the planning and in the design stages. The most feedback was apparently about the noise pollution and reduction measures, in Hjärup and in Arlöv, while in Åkarp there was the request about mitigating also the noise from E6/E20. Other concerns included the stations' location, the impact on the water features and the possible disturbance while the works were ongoing. A safer design of the station was also required. The project was investigated in different planning stages in accordance with the planning process for roads and railways, a process that is regulated by the Road Act, the law on the construction of railways and the Environmental Code.

The environmental impact assessment has been written as a separate document that was included in the railway investigation after being approved by the County Administrative Board (Tyréns AB, 2014). Following the requirements of the County Administrative Board, the investigation continued with issues concerning child-related problems integration and gender equality. Sensitive places, like stations or intersections with roads, were investigated into more detail, taking into consideration the feedback resulted in the consultation stage.

The public requirements were about the safety of the stations and how they can be changed with the help of a better design (Tyréns AB, 2015). For example, several responses regarding the station in Hjärup were about the importance of achieving a bright and open environment with transparency, instead of dense walls and screens. Another point of view was regarding children's safety, by adding protective barriers on the station edges (Tyréns AB, 2015). The children's needs were considered also at Burlöv station and their freedom of movement was emphasized during the consultation stage (Peetre, 2015). It was pointed out that many children and young people move in the area, especially around the passage under the tracks and therefore it must be rebuilt in a safer way for children. During the planning process, documentation was obtained from different authorities, organizations, and stakeholders. Previous investigations were also considered,

and many more investigations and surveys have been carried out to increase knowledge. The consultation process was meant to add knowledge in the planning work (Tyréns AB, 2015).

5.2.3. Consultation Process - Hässleholm-Lund

The following reports have been studied for this project:

-Projekt Hässleholm – Lund – Planlägningsbeskrivning; 2018

– Planlägningsbeskrivning; 2019

-Höghastighetsjärnväg Hässleholm-Lund -

– Samrådsredogörelse; 2018

– Samrådsunderlag; 2018.

In the planning process, consultation is an important step because it gives people the opportunity to submit their opinions about the process (Bremer & Bylund, 2018). The consultation methods focus on various issues in the different stages of the planning process. For example, the general interests are considered earlier in the process while the individual interests such as the locals and the property owners are considered later. The comments received during the consultation process are reviewed and compiled in a consultation report. For this project, the consultation page was open on the Swedish Transport Administration's website from the third of September until the first of November 2018 (Bremer & Bylund, 2018). The information about the consultation was published in several newspapers while the affected municipalities, Region Skåne, the County Administrative Board, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Armed Forces, the National Heritage Board and the Public Transport Authority received information about the consultation via e-mail or mail. There have been received a total of 16 responses, eight from the municipalities, seven from authorities and organizations, and just one from the public (Bremer & Bylund, 2018).

The only response received from the public was concerning the placement of the new station in Lund. According to the Swedish Transport Administration, the feedback will be included in the location investigation but the design of the railway within the chosen corridor will be determined in the next stage of the planning process after the location's investigation is completed (Trafikverket, 2019).

5.3. The interviews

One of the most common methods of qualitative data collection is the interview. The important thing is that through qualitative research, the personal experience of the interviewed person can be better understood (Price, 2002).

Four interviews have been held during the research stage of this thesis. The interviews were semi-structured, and the answers were noted down by the author, during the interviews. The respondents agreed for the interviews through e-mail and they chose the place and the time that suited them the most. Three interviews were held with the Swedish Transport Administration representatives and one interview with a landscape architect that works with railway planning. The main reason for this was the value of different perspectives in the outcomes, but it was also important for the research, to have feedback from a landscape architect's point of view. All the interviewed persons were asked if they agree to have their name published and the four of them accepted. During the interviews, the respondents were asked between eight to nine main questions. See Appendix B for the questions. The answers developed into discussions with other spontaneous questions that help the author to understand better the situation. In the end, the respondents were asked if they have any other concluding thoughts or expectations from this research. Below, the answers are compiled and the main ideas from each interview, are presented.

5.3.1. Swedish Transport Administration representatives

The representatives were interviewed separately and on different days. The main questions were similar for all the projects but there have been adaptations to the specifics of each project.

For the Simrishamnsbanan project, the interview was held on 19th of February 2019, at the Swedish Transport Administration office in Malmö.

The interviewed person is Torbjörn Sundgren and he was the project manager for Simrishamnsbanan, between 2012 and 2015. Before the interview started, the objectives of this research were clarified, and the respondent shortly described the railway project. This was a good opportunity to verify the information found in the reports.

Because Simrishamnsbanan project is the only one that has a Child Impact Assessment (CIA), there have been some specific questions about it. The CIA was made by a consulting firm and it has been approved by the Swedish Transport Administration (Trafikverket Region Syd, 2013). The outcomes of the CIA were then added to the final report that was sent to the County Administrative Board.

The children's participation in the CIA was then discussed and according to the respondent, the children's direct involvement was low in that phase. The CIA was written by the experts from the consulting firm and the focus was mostly on children's safety and their freedom of movement but from an adult perspective. Open discussions were held with children and they have been informed about the project, but the feedback was not significant. The children were not asked for any special permission, but their attendance was voluntary, and they were free to leave whenever they wanted. According to the respondent, the children haven't been directly invited to public meetings, but the invitations were published in the newspapers. As a result, the children's participation in the public meetings was minimal and the respondent agreed that this happened because of how the meetings were organized.

The next question was related to the digital tool 'Urbania'. The tool was used in the consultation phase, but it has not been properly advertised. According to the respondent, the information about the tool was shared with the public during the open house meetings but not in any other ways. As a result, the tool was not used as much as expected by the public in general. The respondent agreed that digital tools can be more attractive for children and teenagers, but the invitation to participation is the essential step.

When asked what methods should be used in the children's participation, the respondent answered that they should be adapted to children's needs and understanding.

The interview ended with a general conclusion from the respondent, who said that there is a need for improvement in how the children's participation is organised.

For the Flackarp-Arlöv project, the interview was held, at the Swedish Transport Administration office, in Arlöv, on the 26th of March 2019, with two representatives from the Swedish Transport Administration. The respondents are Marie Minör and Emelie Kroon. Marie is working with the project from 2012 and Emelie from 2017. Both the respondents said that they have been involved in consultation meetings but there haven't been any special consultation meetings with children. The area affected by the project was studied, and there have been meetings with the teachers and with the parents in the construction phase of the project. Therefore, the children's needs were mainly expressed through their parents and through their teachers. This project has no Child Impact Assessment, and this decision was taken by the Swedish Transport Administration and by the consulting firm working with the project. However, when the construction phase started, special events have been organized for the public and the children were invited to workshops, presentations and site visits. According to the respondents, the strategy for the consultation process was to reach different groups in the community and to have a good collaboration with the public.

When asked about their opinions concerning the scale and the phase in which children should be involved in the planning process, the respondents agreed that children should be involved in the earlier stages, to be able to influence the development of the project. However, the most common way is to involve children in the construction stage and at a local level.

According to the respondents, the newest tool, that the public can use in this project is the 3D model, available on the Swedish Transport Administration page. With a pair of VR glasses, people can experience the final design of the railway and of the stations. Moreover, the tool is very successful with children, especially teenagers. They can use the model from home or even in the Transport Administration office in Arlöv.

The interview ended up with some final thoughts from the respondents. Overall, they considered that more digital advertisement is needed during the construction phase and the children's views about the accessibility issues should be included in the decision making.

The interview for the project Hässleholm-Lund was held with two representatives from the Swedish Transport Administration, both currently involved in the process. Elin Bylund and Mia Becker agreed on a Skype interview that took place on the 15th of March 2019. Both the respondents started to work with this project in June 2018. According to them, there haven't been any specific meetings with the children.

The information about the project was published online and the public was invited to submit their feedback on the Swedish Transport Administration's web page. The affected stakeholders, such as the municipalities and other agencies have been informed about the project and their opinions were included in the document that was sent to the County Administrative Board. At the time of the interview, the planning process was still on the phase of choosing a corridor. According to the respondents, the public meetings are going to be held before one of the corridors is selected as well as after. Once the corridor is selected, the public will know better to what degree the development of the railway can affect them. The respondents said that probably a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) will be made for the project and therefore, the children's participation will be a part of that. Similar to the previous project, the SIA will be made by a consulting firm, but the participation process will be supervised by the Swedish Transport Administration.

Children's participation was then discussed considering the scale of the project. According to the respondents, children should be involved in the planning process on different scales based on their age and experience. The same principle should be used also when deciding the stage for the children's participation. For younger children, a local scale is more suitable. It is important that they participate in the planning process for the decisions that affect them directly and in the later stages of the process when the design and the construction start. If children have enough understanding and experience, their participation can be more meaningful for the entire project. They can influence the decisions from an early stage and at a regional scale.

The interview ended with a general conclusion from the respondents. They said that the project is still in a very early stage and the information concerning the children's participation is still limited.

5.3.2. Consulting firm's representative

One of the four interviews was with a representative from a consulting firm. Stina Bodelius is a landscape architect working with railway projects. She is now involved in the project Hässeholm-Lund and she was interviewed on the 1st of March 2019.

The interview started with a short description of the project, from her perspective. She was asked about her involvement in the children's participation, as a landscape architect. In her opinion, landscape architects are important in the children's participation, but the complexity of the process requires cooperation between different disciplines. According to the respondent, children should be involved in the planning process based on their age and experience. However, in her perspective, children's participation in the Child Impact Assessment is important. Their opinions can influence the choice of alignment, the location of the passages and the mitigation solutions for the negative effects of the railway.

The interview continued with her opinion about how the children's participation is organized. The need for children's involvement is decided by both the consulting firm and the client, in this case, the Swedish Transport Administration. The methods used in the children's participation need to be adapted for the children's age group. Schools can play the role of intermediate part between planners and children and the participation can be integrated into the school's activities.

The interview ended up with the respondent's opinion about the importance of how the children's views are used and integrated into the planning process. She considered that it is essential to acknowledge the children's opinions as much as possible in the decision-making stage, especially when the decision involves places that children use on an everyday basis.

6. Findings

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented. Each dimension that forms the extent of children’s participation was evaluated for every project with the help of the tools presented in chapter 4. The children’s participation was assessed based on the available reports and on the interviews with the representatives of the projects.

6.1. Simrishamnsbanan

6.1.1. The scope of children’s participation

The Simrishamnsbanan project was paused in the investigation stage. However, children have been involved in the project and their needs were considered in a Child Impact Assessment. This project is the only one of the three analysed, where a Child Impact Assessment has been made. During the investigation stage, children were invited to participate and to express their opinions about the development of the railway project. Their views were important, and they have been used to build knowledge and understanding of how they utilise the outdoor environment and how they can be affected by the project. However, according to the reports, children’s direct feedbacks were not considered in the Child Impact Assessment because the specialists decided that parents had influenced the children’s responses to a very high degree. The Child Impact Assessment was, according to the authors, just the first step in a very long process of children’s involvement. Overall, in this project, children had a consultative involvement in the investigation stage. Because the project has been stopped after this phase, there are no further information about children’s participation.

Table 5: The scope of children’s participation; Simrishamnsbanan

Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O’Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.14);

Level of involvement		No information available	No children involved	Consultative involvement	Collaborative involvement	Child-led involvement
Time of involvement	Investigation stage			X		
	Planning stage	X				
	Design stage	X				
	Construction stage	X				
	Monitoring and evaluation	X				

6.1.2. The quality of children's participation

The results show that the participation was transparent and informative to a certain degree. Children were able to participate to open meetings and then to submit their opinions through a digital tool, 'Urbania'. However, their feedbacks were not valuable enough to be taken into consideration in the assessment.

The participation to the public meetings was voluntary and children chose by themselves to submit their feedbacks through 'Urbania'. I couldn't find specific information about when the public meetings were organised or if they interfered with the children's daily activities. But the parents have been involved in children's participation, as much as they influenced their responses.

The problems addressed in the Child Impact Assessment and at the public meetings were relevant for children and the focus was on their freedom of movement and safety. Other issues addressed, concerned the noise mitigation and the reduction of the barrier effect, problems that are also directly affecting children.

The methods used were appropriate for them to a certain degree because according to the reports, 'Urbania' was considered too difficult to use by some young participants. The participation process was held in familiar places for children because the public meetings took place in each affected community and the digital tool could be used from children's homes. Because the process was inclusive, all children were invited to participate and to express their opinions. There is no specific information about how the staff working with children's participation has been trained but the Child Impact Assessment was done by a consulting firm, therefore specialists have been coordinating the participation process.

Children's views were not implemented in the planning process because the project was paused. However, there are some plans of restarting the project and the Child Impact Assessment can work as a base for the future investigations.

Table 6: The quality of children's participation; Simrishamnsbanan
Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O'Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.21);

Requirements	Questions to use as prompts when using this table	No consideration for the requirement or no information about it	Requirement is considered but not used in practice	Requirement is implemented to a certain degree	Requirement is fully implemented and monitored
Participation is transparent and informative	Can children take informed decision about their participation?			X	
	Is information shared with children in formats that they can understand?			X	
	Is the participation voluntary?				X
Participation is voluntary	Can children take informed decision about their participation?			X	
	Can children leave the participation process any time they want?				X
Participation is respectful	The participation process does not interfere with children's normal activities?	X			
	Are the local values and cultural practices considered in the participation process?	X			
	Are the parents supporting the children's participation?			X	
Participation is relevant	Are the addressed issues relevant to children?				X
	Is the participatory process appropriate to the children's abilities and interests?			X	
Participation is child-friendly	Are the approaches and the methods used suitable for children?			X	
	Is the participation process held in child-friendly places?			X	
Participation is inclusive	Is the process inclusive and non-discriminatory for children from different backgrounds and conditions?				X
Participation is supported by training for adults	Are the adults trained to work with children?			X	
	Can they effectively support children's participation in the planning process?				X
Participation is safe and sensitive to risk	Is the participation held in a safe environment?				X
	Can the staff make children feel safe during the participation process?			X	
Participation is accountable	Are the adults providing follow up for the children?	X			
	Are the children's views implemented in the planning process?	X			

6.1.3. The outcomes of children’s participation

According to the respondent, the children’s participation in the project Simrishamnsbanan increased the awareness and the respect for children’s rights within the Swedish Transport Administration. However, there haven’t been any noticeable changes in the balance of power between planners and children. Children’s participation is part of the planning process for most of the projects developed by the Swedish Transport Administration and their needs are considered and implemented in the planning process. Still, there is a lack of the children’s direct involvement, their opinions and requests being expressed by the adults; parents, teachers and planners.

Table 7: The outcomes of children’s participation; Simrishamnsbanan
Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O’Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.31);

Outcomes	Criteria	Negative change	No change	Immediate change	Significant and sustained change
On institutions	Increased respect for children’s rights within the institution			X	
	Balance of power between staff and children		X		
	Children’s participation as part of all the planning processes			X	
	Changes in the planning process based on the children’s needs and priorities			X	

6.2. Flackarp-Arlöv

6.2.1. The scope of children’s participation

The scope of children’s participation is difficult to evaluate in this project and the lack of clear information about children’s direct involvement is the main reason. There have been several public meetings in the different stages of the project, but there is no available information about children as being involved. The children’s needs are taken into consideration during the planning process according to the reports and the interview, but these needs are mostly expressed by adults, such as parents and teachers. However, these methods are not considered as direct participation methods for children and they

cannot be assessed under any of the three types of involvement. Even if children might have been participating in some meetings, I couldn't find any specific information about their involvement. In the construction stage, however, preschool children from one affected school were invited to participate at the opening event. Their participation was mostly symbolic because they were representing 'the future users' of the railway.

Table 8: The scope of children's participation; Flackarp-Arlöv
Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O'Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.14);

Level of involvement		No information available	No children involved	Consultative involvement	Collaborative involvement	Child-led involvement
		Investigation stage	X			
Planning stage	X					
Design stage	X					
Construction stage				X		
Monitoring and evaluation	X					

6.2.2. The quality of children's participation

The quality of children's participation has been assessed based on the criteria presented in the table below. Overall, the children's participation is transparent and informative to a certain degree because they have been involved mainly just in the construction phase of the planning process. According to the findings from the interview, in the construction phase, children have been informed about the project through presentations and workshops. There have been introduced digital tools, such as a 3D model of the project that children could experience in order to understand better the development. The participation was always voluntary, and children could leave the process whenever they considered. However, because children were involved just in one stage of the process, they could not take completely informed decisions about their participation. I couldn't find any information about how the Swedish Transport Administration took into consideration the daily duties of the children, their cultural practices and values, as well as the parents' acceptance when they organised the consultation meetings. The issues addressed during the meetings were relevant for children, but they were addressed just in the latest stages of the planning process.

Table 9: The quality of children's participation; Flackarp-Arlöv
Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O'Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.21);

Requirements	Questions to use as prompts when using this table	No consideration for the requirement or no information about it	Requirement is considered but not used in practice	Requirement is implemented to a certain degree	Requirement is fully implemented and monitored
Participation is transparent and informative	Can children take informed decision about their participation?			X	
	Is information shared with children in formats that they can understand?			X	
	Is the participation voluntary?				X
Participation is voluntary	Can children take informed decision about their participation?			X	
	Can children leave the participation process any time they want?				X
Participation is respectful	The participation process does not interfere with children's normal activities?	X			
	Are the local values and cultural practices considered in the participation process?	X			
	Are the parents supporting the children's participation?			X	
Participation is relevant	Are the addressed issues relevant to children?				X
	Is the participatory process appropriate to the children's abilities and interests?			X	
Participation is child-friendly	Are the approaches and the methods used suitable for children?			X	
	Is the participation process held in child-friendly places?			X	
Participation is inclusive	Is the process inclusive and non-discriminatory for children from different backgrounds and conditions?				X
Participation is supported by training for adults	Are the adults trained to work with children?	X			
	Can they effectively support children's participation in the planning process?			X	
Participation is safe and sensitive to risk	Is the participation held in a safe environment?				X
	Can the staff make children feel safe during the participation process?			X	
Participation is accountable	Are the adults providing follow up for the children?	X			
	Are the children's views implemented in the planning process?	X			

Therefore, the requirement is implemented just to a certain degree. Children have been informed about the project, but their feedbacks were transmitted through their parents and teachers. According to the reports, the main concerns were about their safety and freedom of movement. However, the goals for the participation process was to be more inclusive and therefore, all the interested parts were welcomed to express their opinions. In the studied reports or during the interview I haven't received any information about the staff working with children. The only information I have is that the Swedish Transport Administration works with consulting firms that usually have specialists for all the different tasks. The feedback concerning children's need was implemented in the construction phase. However, the children's views were not expressed directly but through their parents and their teachers.

6.2.3. The outcomes of children's participation

The outcomes of children's participation are assessed based on the feedback received from the respondents, during the interview. From a theoretical point of view, the children's rights are respected in the planning process and their participation is considered as an important part. However, from a practical point of view, there is space for improvement. Children have actually been involved just in the construction stage, but the respondents agreed that they should be involved from the earlier stages and their direct perspectives should be considered. Overall, the outcomes of children's participation are quite positive. The project manager appeared to have gained a valuable sensitivity to children's rights and needs and a better understanding of their capacities.

Table 10: The outcomes of children's participation; Flackarp-Arlöv
Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O'Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.31);

Outcomes	Criteria	Negative change	No change	Immediate change	Significant and sustained change
On institutions	Increased respect for children's rights within the institution			X	
	Balance of power between staff and children		X		
	Children's participation as part of all the planning processes			X	
	Changes in the planning process based on the children's needs and priorities			X	

6.3. Hässleholm-Lund

6.3.1. The scope of children’s participation

The project Hässleholm-Lund is now in the stage of analysing, investigating and comparing different alternative corridors for where the railway could be built. Up until this stage, the public had the opportunity to express their opinions. The people were invited to submit their thoughts through the Swedish Transport Administration’s web page. However, according to the feedback received during the interview, there have been no special meetings with children. In this project the scope of children’s participation will be assessed based on the information about the future developments of the consultation process.

The plans include a Social Impact Assessment where children will be involved at a consultative level. It is expected that they will participate in different stages of the planning process, once the corridor is chosen.

Table 11: The scope of children’s participation; Hässleholm-Lund
Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O’Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.14);

Level of involvement		No information available	No children involved	Consultative involvement	Collaborative involvement	Child-led involvement
Time of involvement	Investigation stage	X				
	Planning stage			X		
	Design stage			X		
	Construction stage			X		
	Monitoring and evaluation			X		

6.3.2. The quality of children’s participation

The quality of children’s participation is difficult to assess for this project because it is based just on the information about the general consultation process that was held on the Swedish Transport Administration’s web page. The consultation page was open for the public during the investigation and it was advertised through the newspapers. Everybody could submit their opinions about the project, but there weren’t used any specific methods adapted to children’s needs and understandings. Therefore, children couldn’t take informed decisions about their participation.

Table 12: The quality of children's participation; Hässleholm-Lund
 Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O'Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.21);

Requirements	Questions to use as prompts when using this table	No consideration for the requirement or no information about it	Requirement is considered but not used in practice	Requirement is implemented to a certain degree	Requirement is fully implemented and monitored
Participation is transparent and informative	Can children take informed decision about their participation?	X			
	Is information shared with children in formats that they can understand?	X			
	Is the participation voluntary?				X
Participation is voluntary	Can children take informed decision about their participation?	X			
	Can children leave the participation process any time they want?	X			
	The participation process does not interfere with children's normal activities?			X	
Participation is respectful	Are the local values and cultural practices considered in the participation process?	X			
	Are the parents supporting the children's participation?	X			
	Are the addressed issues relevant to children?	X			
Participation is relevant	Is the participatory process appropriate to the children's abilities and interests?	X			
	Are the approaches and the methods used suitable for children?	X			
Participation is child-friendly	Is the participation process held in child-friendly places?				X
	Is the process inclusive and non-discriminatory for children from different backgrounds and conditions?				X
Participation is supported by training for adults	Are the adults trained to work with children?	X			
	Can they effectively support children's participation in the planning process?	X			
Participation is safe and sensitive to risk	Is the participation held in a safe environment?				X
	Can the staff make children feel safe during the participation process?	X			
Participation is accountable	Are the adults providing follow up for the children?	X			
	Are the children's views implemented in the planning process?	X			

The participation was voluntary, and children could submit their opinions from any place they considered suitable for them. Because the consultation page was public and everybody was able to submit their opinions, children from different backgrounds and conditions had the possibility to participate. However, because, the consultation page was not specifically adapted to children and young people, and they haven't been invited to participate, there haven't been any responses or feedback from them.

6.3.3. The outcomes of children's participation

Based on the answers received during the interview, about the plans for the consultation processes, the outcomes of the children's participation were evaluated mainly as positive. The representatives of the project are aware of the children's rights and their needs will be considered during the planning process. According to the respondents, children will participate in the Social Impact Assessment and in other phases of the planning process.

However, there is no reflection on the power balance between children and planners, but their opinions will be implemented in the different stages of the planning process.

Table 13: The outcomes of children's participation; Hässleholm-Lund
Source: the author; based on Lansdown and O'Kane, Booklet 3; (2014; p.31);

Outcomes	Criteria	Negative change	No change	Immediate change	Significant and sustained change
On institutions	Increased respect for children's rights within the institution			X	
	Balance of power between staff and children		X		
	Children's participation as part of all the planning processes			X	
	Changes in the planning process based on the children's needs and priorities			X	

7. Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter are discussed the findings of the study in relation to the theoretical framework. The thesis was guided by three research questions and the main objective was to study and to evaluate the extent of children's participation in the planning process, at a regional level. The second objective was to test and develop an assessment tool for evaluating the scope, the quality and the outcomes of children's participation. In the final part of this chapter, the possible errors resulted from the evaluation are also discussed.

To answer the first research question, the findings of each evaluation are discussed and related to the Swedish Transport Administration's practices for children's participation. The second question is answered through an analysis of the assessment tools and of the possible bias when measuring the extent of children's participation in regional planning. The third question is answered through an interpretation of the results in relation to the existing models for children's participation.

7.1. Children's participation in the Swedish Transport Administration's practices

As described in the beginning of this thesis, the Swedish Transport Administration has two central perspectives in the work with children. These two perspectives are the 'child's perspective' and the 'child-centered perspective'. The first means that children are directly involved in the planning process, by having personal contributions, while in the second one, their interests and needs are considered and fulfilled by adults. However, the Swedish Transport Administration's reports show that the 'child's perspective' is mainly used in small scale projects, more specifically in places where children are directly affected. Children are usually involved through schools and they are invited to describe how they use and move in the outdoor environment. Their feedbacks are then considered in the decision-making stage. The second perspective means that children are observed by the planners and specialists. Their use of the outdoor environment is examined and then, based on the rules and regulations, the best decisions are

taken for children's interests. The general information about children's participation, was found in the reports and it is mainly from road planning. Therefore, in order to have a holistic overview of the children's participation in the Swedish Transport Administration's practices, the findings from the evaluation of the railway projects are added in the discussion. According to the findings, the children's safety is very important in the planning process. Children are considered as a sensitive group that needs special care and therefore a Child Impact Assessment has been developed for one of the projects. Even if just one of the projects has a Child Impact Assessment, in the other two, children's necessities are analysed and considered. However, the perspective that is mostly used in the work with children, for these projects, is the 'child-centred perspective'. In the Simrishamnsbanan project, the Child Impact Assessment is made by the planners, based on their studies about how children are using the outdoor space. With the existing research and by mapping the areas, the planners found out which are the places that are most frequented by children and which are their interest points. In the project Flackarp-Arlöv, children have been considered in the entire planning process. Their use of the outdoor environment was studied, and through their parents and teachers, their needs have been expressed. The main concerns were the children's safety and their freedom of movement. For the project Hässleholm-Lund, children's best interests were considered from the beginning of the planning process. Even if the project is in the early stages of development, a social impact assessment is planned and according to the project representatives, children will be part of the assessment. It is expected that, for this project, 'a child's perspective' will be used, and children will contribute directly through their feedbacks.

Overall, it can be summarised that in two of the three railway projects, there have been used 'child centred perspectives' while in the last project, which is still in early stages, it is planned to be used 'a child perspective'. Therefore, based on the existing reports and on the findings of this thesis, it can be concluded that the Swedish Transport Administration uses preponderantly 'a child centred perspective' in the larger scale projects and 'a child perspective' in local scale projects, where children are directly involved.

However, the aim for the projects that are developing now, is to involve children more and to allow them to directly contribute in the planning process.

7.2. The evaluation of the children's participation in regional planning

For the three studied cases, the extent of children's participation was evaluated with the help of one of the most recommended assessment tools, developed specifically for children. The tool was adapted to the specifics of this study and for each project, the scope, the quality and the outcomes of the children's participation have been assessed.

To measure the scope, the children's participation in each stage of the planning process was studied. The lack of information in various stages, made the evaluation difficult and the results were influenced by this. Therefore, the scope of the children's participation was also evaluated based on the interviews with the representatives of the projects. Some of the gaps have been filled through their feedback, but there was still missing information about specific stages. Because the projects are in different developmental stages and the planning process evolves during a long period of time, the data about some consultation meetings was difficult to find.

The quality of children's participation has been studied with the help of the nine basic requirements for ethical and effective practice. For each requirement, the information provided by the reports and by the representatives during the interviews, has been analysed with the help of several guiding questions. The guiding questions were meant to make the assessment more transparent because, through them, each requirement was analysed from different perspectives. However, for many of the requirements, no information was available in the sources that have been used.

The outcomes of children's participation on the Swedish Transport Administration have been evaluated through the responses received during the interviews. Even if none of the analysed projects are yet completed, the impact that the children's involvement had on those that are administrating the projects, was noticeable. The respondents were all aware that the children's participation is still not a fully

developed process and that there is a need for improvement. In this thesis, the outcomes were evaluated just on the Swedish Transport Administration because they were the main resource of data about the projects. However, for a complete evaluation, the outcomes on children themselves and on their parents should also be assessed.

Overall, the assessment tool used for the evaluation can be described as comprehensive and easy to adapt to different projects, but the lack of information from specific stages in the planning process made the evaluation more difficult and the results less reliable. The reasons found for the lack of information, are that the railway projects develop during long periods of time and multiple stakeholders are involved. The raw information, gathered at the public meetings, is usually interpreted and compressed, and then integrated in different reports, making it more difficult to find and use in the evaluation.

7.3. The models of participation and the Transport Administration's practices

Three main models of children's participation have been studied for this thesis because they are used in most of the research literature, and they are considered as standards that can be ascribed. The models are Hart's Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992), the Seven Realms of children's participation (Francis & Lorenzo, 2002) and Chawla's forms of participation (Chawla, 2001).

The findings from the evaluations will be discussed in relation to the models, to emphasize the character of the participation process. Because there hasn't been enough information about the children's participation in every stage of the planning process, the discussion will focus mostly on how children have been involved in the projects.

The Simrishamnsbanan project was paused in the investigation stage but children were involved in the project through a Child Impact Assessment. They were invited to open meetings where the project was presented and then their feedback was requested. Moreover, children had the possibility to express their opinions through a digital tool called 'Urbania'. However, the received feedback was not qualitative enough to be introduced in the Child Impact Assessment and therefore, the children's interests and needs were decided by the adults. Based on the research literature, the children's participation was 'Assigned and

Informed' in the beginning. Still, as the analysis of their feedback was not shared with the children and it was not even made transparent in the reports, the second part of the participation process can be compared with the 'Manipulation' level in the Hart's Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992). The process of participation in the Simrishamnsbanan project corresponds also to the Seven Realms of Children's Participation. The first part of the participation process is characterized by the 'Proactive realm', because the research is combined with the action to engage children in the planning process. However, due to the fact that the Child Impact Assessment was based just on the planner's research and on the existing studies about children's needs, the second part of the participation process is characterized by the 'Needs realm' and by the 'Advocacy realm'. If the findings are compared with Chawla's forms of participation, the children's involvement can be described as both 'assigned' and 'invited'. Children participated in meetings organized by adults, where they have been informed and listened. However, they had the right to withdraw from the meetings or simply not submit their feedbacks through the digital tool.

In the project Flackarp-Arlöv, the information about children's direct involvement in the planning process was available just for the design and the construction stages. There have been multiple public meetings in all the stages, but no specific information about children's participation was found. In the design stage, several meetings were organised with teachers and parents. The children's needs and interests were discussed, and the feedback was implemented in the design stage. The participation is characterized here by the 'Advocacy realm' from the Seven Realms of Children's Participation, because children are not directly involved but their opinions are advocated by their caretakers. In the beginning of the construction phase, the preschool children from one of the affected schools participated at the opening event. The event was attended by important political figures and broadcasted in the local media. The children's participation can be characterized in this case, by the 'Decoration', the second rung on Hart's Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992). Children were not invited to the event to express their feedbacks but to enjoy the activities and to be part of the image of the project.

The last project, Hässleholm-Lund, is still in an early stage. Children had a few possibilities to be involved and one of them was through the consultation webpage that was specifically created for the public. According to the findings, there was no feedback from children submitted through the webpage. However, a Social Impact Assessment will be done for this large project and within this assessment, children will be involved. Based on the feedback received during the interview, children will be directly involved in the planning process and therefore a qualitative participation is expected.

Overall, in the studied projects, children were involved just in specific stages, but each participation process can be characterized by more than one model. The participation processes had both positive and negative aspects, which were visible from how the meetings with children were organized and from how the data collected from children was used in the planning process.

7.4. Conclusions

Through this thesis, the extent of children's participation in the railway planning process has been analysed and assessed. The evaluation was made with the help of an assessment tool, developed for this study. After reviewing the existing literature and the evaluation results, the main conclusions are that the children's participation in the regional planning is flawed and more attention and work need to be put in this aspect of the planning process. One of the main reasons for that is the fact that children's direct participation was almost absent in the researched projects. The participation processes were rarely adapted to the children's needs and therefore the children's engagement was very low. Another reason is the long duration of the projects. For a qualitative participatory process, children needs to be constantly involved in all the stages of the planning process. As these regional projects develop during many years, it is difficult to have the same children participating. The scale of the projects is also affecting the participation process because children are usually involved just in smaller parts of the projects, mainly in the ones that affects them directly.

As described in the Discussions, The Swedish Transport Administration has a 'child centred perspective' when it is working with projects at a regional scale. In the three case studies, children's

best interests are considered but their direct involvement in the planning process is reduced. Moreover, the information about their participation is usually integrated in the overall reports and not specifically addressed. The lack of specific information about the children's participation in the different stages of the planning process affects the accuracy of the assessment's results. However, in one of the cases, the children's needs and interests are articulated through a Child Impact Assessment, but even in the assessment, the adults are the ones deciding which are the sensitive points for the children.

The assessment method that was used for this study is easy to adapt to various projects. However, the results could have been even more clear, if during the interviews, the respondents would have been asked exactly the specific questions that were used when the quality dimension was assessed. The semi-structured interviews were valuable because the respondents had the opportunity to express their own perspectives and experiences, but questions with a selected choice of answers could have brought more accuracy to the results. A less subjective evaluation would have been possible if the representatives of the projects could have assessed the children's participation from their own perspective. Errors resulted from subjectivity reasons could have been avoided by comparing their results with the results obtained by the author. However, the approach was too time-consuming and the time frame for the thesis didn't allow it.

When the analysed participation processes are compared with the existing models of children's participation, the deficiencies and the strengths of each consultation meeting is revealed. The models provide guidance for further improvements and help the planners to evaluate the children's participation. Landscape architects have an important role in regional planning and therefore they need to be involved in the participation process. The models show how the ineffective participation can impact the different stages of the planning process and even the final product. When the landscape architects are part of the planning process, especially in the decision-making stage, they need to be aware of the children's opinions and needs. Therefore, it is important that they are involved in the children's participation process and that they acknowledge which are the children's rights.

Based on this study's investigation and results, there are some general suggestions for those working with children's participation in regional planning. Firstly, for a qualitative participatory process, children need to be specifically addressed. The normal public meetings, that are so popular during the planning process, should be organized and adapted to different age groups. For a qualitative participation, children need to be invited to the consultation meetings through suitable methods. However, to reach out to children in their familiar surroundings is much better than to have the meetings in a totally new environment. Children need to be informed through schools about their right to express opinions and about how important is their participation. In the studied cases, the invitation to the public meetings was general and children on different age groups were not specifically asked to participate. Therefore, their participation was low and the results from the consultations were insignificant. Moreover, the methods used during the consultation with children can be adapted to the children's capabilities. The existing literature, such as the Toolkit written for the 'Save The Children Alliance', offers various approaches that can be used with children on different levels. The younger ones can be engaged through games and activities, organized by the planners and teachers, while teenagers can submit their opinions through digital methods, such as Urbania for Simrishamnsbanan, or the public webpage for Hässleholm-Lund. However, the children need to be old enough to communicate and to be able to understand their role in the planning process. This can bring difficulties in the participation process because according to the Convention, all children regardless of their age, need to be encouraged and provided with opportunities to participate. Therefore, the participation needs to be organized with the help of trained adults and adapted to different age groups.

Moreover, all the information that is presented needs to be understood and accepted by children. A transparent and informative participation is obtained when the consultation methods are specifically adapted to each age group or to the children's background and knowledge. Some participatory tools such as mapping, drawings, focus discussions and child-led tours can balance the power relations among adults and children.

Additionally, one of the most important factor for a successful participation is the children's engagement. They should be engaged in the planning process through appropriate methods and the problems that are discussed during the meetings should be relevant to them. By using appropriate methods which are developed by specialists in child behaviour, children with different characters and personalities can be equally involved in the planning process. The power balance is a sensitive issue and it shows how big is the variation in the level of involvement between adults and children or even between different categories of children. In the studied projects, the power in the planning process was held by the adults and the decisions were made without child direct involvement.

As this thesis's results are based on the data provided by the Swedish Transport Administration, both through their reports and through interviews, I believe that the issue concerning the children's involvement in the planning process needs to be researched also from different perspectives. Due to the fact that the children's participation is specified as a right in the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Convention will be a law in Sweden, by 2020, the participation process should be further evaluated from a child perspective.

8. References

8.1. Literature references

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8.2. Image references

- Fig. 1: *Investigated corridor for Simrishamnsbanan project*; map developed by the author based on the existing maps from the Swedish Transport Administration's reports.
- Fig. 2: *The four-track railway between Arlöv and Flackarp*; map developed by the author based on the existing maps from the Swedish Transport Administration's reports.
- Fig. 3: *Possible corridors for the high-speed railway between Hässleholm and Lund*; map developed by the author based on the maps received during the course 'Planning Project - Large Scale Structures, Analysis, and EIA'.

Appendices

Appendix A - Invitation to the interview

Hello,

My name Anamaria-Madalina Bondre and I'm a master student in Landscape Architecture, at Swedish University of Agricultural Science. I'm writing my master thesis on the behalf of Trafikverket and I would like to invite you to participate to a short interview which will help me in my research.

The focus for this project is to evaluate to what degree are the children involved in the planning processes of Trafikverket. During the interview I would like to get a better understanding on the current methods that are used when it comes to public engagement. My research area includes three railway projects, Flackarp-Arlöv, Hässleholm – Lund and Simrishamnsbanan. Therefore, my most important questions for the moment are:

1. For the specified projects, which are in different stages of construction, are there any specific consultation programs for children?
2. Is Trafikverket directly involved in the consultation stage or are you collaborating with the affected municipalities in the relation with the public?
3. When you are addressing the public for the consultation, do you have specific methods of presenting and asking for opinions?
4. Are these methods specialized for children's needs and understanding?
5. Are there any direct meetings with children in schools or is it usual to get feedback from children and young people?
6. Are there any materials that I could access concerning the children's involvement in the planning process of railways?

The interview will take less than one hour, and we can plan it at your earliest convenience. Thank you so much for your time and I'm looking forward to your reply.

Please feel free to contact me as specified below with any questions.

With gratitude,

Anamaria-Madalina Bondre.

Appendix B - Questionnaire

1. When did you start working with this project?
2. Did you participate in the consultation meetings?
3. Were there any specific meetings with children?
4. Could you describe the methods that are used to inform the public about the meetings?
5. Are these methods specialised for different age groups?
6. Are the parents collaborating with the planners, on their children's behalf?
7. Has this project a Child Impact Analysis?
8. From your perspective, in what stage of the planning process should be children involved?
9. Is the scale of the project affecting the children's involvement?