

Private sector involvement in urban adaptation planning.

Exploring the role of property developers

sofie.storbjork@liu.se



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Spatial planning a key arena for climate adaptation!

- "Climate change requires us to reorient our spatial planning to pay more explicit and systematic attention to future possible pathways" (Wilson and Piper, 2010:13)
- "Spatial planning has the potential to serve as a switchboard for the interlinking of mitigation, adaptation and sustainable development objectives at the local level" (Biesbroek et al., 2009)



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Spatial planning a key arena for climate adaptation?

- Spatial planning is expected to manage, merge and balance the consequences of climate change with other societal priorities. i.e. integrative potential.

BUT

- Is spatial planning able to achieve a strategic reorientation in shaping the future?



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Climate Change Policy Integration in Local Policy and Planning (CLIPP)

Difficulties of integrating climate adaptation in planning practice:

- Intra-sectoral fragmentation: strategic comprehensive plans vs. detailed planning.
- Case-by-case planning: priorities, negotiations and conflicts of interest in practical decision-making.
- Political continuity vs. shifting majorities, combining engagement and directional leadership/mobilization
- Involving property developers are critical for mobilization and implementation!



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Why focusing on the role of private actors in managing climate change?

- The engagement and coordinated responses of both public and private actors are needed
- Involving private actors holds "an untapped potential for innovation" with respect of managing climate change
- Private actors can – as potential agents of change – solve problems, fill capacity gaps and stimulate new responses
- Research needs: the position, role and engagement of private actors in managing climate change
- Research needs: the institutional arrangements that can facilitate improved public-private collaboration



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Interviews with property developers in urban planning practice 2014-2015

Interviewee	Type of property developer	Since	Market	Company Motto
KBAB	Municipal housing company	1942	Local Market	A home for you
HSB	Private housing cooperative	1923	National-Local Market	Where opportunities live
Riksbyggen	Private housing cooperative	1940	National-Local Market	Room for the whole life
PEAB	Construction and civil engineering company	1959	International-Local Market	The Nordic Community Builder
SKANSKA	Construction and civil engineering company	1897	International-Local Market	Find your new home
Kärnhem	Project development company	2003	A selection of middle sized municipalities	Creating spaces for life
Prepart	Project development company	2010	Local Market	Development. Cooperation. Trust



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An innovative policy agenda on paper

- Property developers taking an active role in driving development and pursuing innovation:
 - ”We create ideas, take initiative and are forward-looking. We are resource efficient and our climate-smart solutions are cutting edge”
- Ideas are realized:
 - ”The pace of innovation for climate-smart building is high /and/ cannot be a luxury only for expensive residential areas”
- Climate change is profitable, increasing corporate competitiveness and facilitating sustainable living



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Lack of innovative ambitions in Karlstad

- Unwillingness to take the lead:
 - ”We cannot be at the forefront, changing society”
- Experimentation is risky. ”Going third” instead of being primary mover.
- No need to push the limits:
 - ” We need an area with a green profile but we don’t need that type of extreme profiling here”
- Place-dependency:
 - ”It is natural to be experimental in the larger cities. We don’t have the same price levels here. We must make ends meet financially.”



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Colliding public, private and third-party demands

- "Without public demands, nothing will happen" but at the same time "the current demands are unreasonable".
- Two opposing views. Property developers either complying:
 - "With tougher demands we have to adjust. We cannot issue ultimatums or play municipalities off against each other. Then we won't get any land the next time"
- OR negotiating demands to pursue less ambitious measures:
 - "It is an act of balancing goals. The municipality have their demands and we ours. If their demands don't match the economy, projects won't come about"
- Public demands are a poor match with consumer preferences.



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Finding new forms of collaborative public-private interplay?

- Advantage of anchorage/dialogue and efficiency in terms of knowledge/exchange and learning.
- Agreeing on principles, not on concrete measures. Consensus of realizing green ambitions vs. "good enough" compromise.
- Focusing on the district (not specific building-lots) improved visioning but fostered vagueness and made concretion difficult.
- Tricky and time-consuming process. A lot of opinions creates frustration and lack of engagement.
- Property developer pre-meetings limits open dialogue. Actors fall back to old roles ("no, no, no"/deleting items, us vs. them)
- Property developers act as competitors monitoring interests.



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The time for change is when?

- In 2012 the planners said:
 - ”It is an act of balance between putting tough demands on property developers and having development come about. The words of property developers weigh heavily particularly during recession when too little is being built”
- In 2015 the planners say:
 - ”There are explicit demands today of speeding up property development. A quick process is required – building a lot at low cost – while at the same time fulfilling climate ambitions. It is difficult when the pressure is on”



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To conclude...

- There is a vast differences when comparing written policies with interview discussions when it comes to taking on a new and innovative role.
- Place-dependency: innovative property development cannot be undertaken equally across the country. Not here?
- Timing is of the essence but when is the time to change? Not now?
- The importance of improving the public-private interplay but also the difficulty in finding a constructive interaction.



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