

Participation and Planning in the Management of Coastal Resource Conflicts: Case Studies in West Swedish Municipalities

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Abstract

There is a growing concern about sustainable management of natural resources in coastal areas, which is expressed in a worldwide debate about integrated coastal management. Physical or territorial planning as a comprehensive approach to territorial management with routine procedures for public participation seems well suited to achieve integration across many administrative sectors, to support local stakeholder participation, and to enhance conflict management in coastal areas.

This thesis analyses municipal physical planning and the participation procedures involved in relation to the management of conflicts about coastal natural resources. The data were collected in the municipalities of Kungälv and Strömstad at the West Coast of Sweden using expert interview and document analysis and were assembled as four case studies. Theories of common pool resource management and the Swedish institutional framework for coastal resource management were used in the analysis.

The analysis of the institutional framework reveals a number of structural constraints to managing and solving coastal resource conflicts through planning and public participation. The case studies provide information about how conflict management based on planning and participation leads to partial solutions of identified problems.

One conclusion drawn from the case studies is that a number of important issues for coastal management and conflict resolution do not receive sufficient attention in the planning and participation processes as these are organised today. Among other aspects, those related to coastal water-related resources, which are crucial for coastal management, are often insufficiently addressed. Slow environmental changes and economic aspects related to local livelihood also tend to be neglected. Last but not least, it is difficult to address conflicts about values, which are of increasing importance in environmental conflicts.

Another conclusion of the case studies is that routine procedures of participation, which are designed for other purposes than resolving coastal resource-conflicts, would need to be developed. Active individuals and networks of local organisations were important to the process of solving the conflictive situations studied. Through participation of local stakeholders better and locally adapted solutions can be achieved which is demonstrated with examples of a local process in the Koster archipelago and intensified local planning in Kungälv. The studies also indicate that competence and skills in managing group processes for conflict solution are important facets of the work of coastal planners.

Keywords

Planning, participation, natural resource management, coastal management, conflict management, Bohuslän, Sweden