

CASE STUDY

THE COMPLEX OF PROBLEMS OF COASTAL PROTECTION ON ORNÖ

LOCATION:

Island of Ornö, Stockholm archipelago, Sweden

TOPIC:

Governance, Stakeholder and public participation

TIME PERIOD RUNNING:

2004

KEYWORDS:

Decision-making process, Environmental Management, Legislation, Municipal institutions, Shoreline management

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FOREWORD

The background of this case study is the research project “Society, resource management and ecology in the Baltic coastal areas”, which was initiated at Södertörns högskola in 2001. The project aims to compare different administrative regimes at a local level in Sweden, the Baltic States as well as in Poland. A comprehensive perspective in the project is the hypothesis that a globalised market economy creates investment pressure on the different coastal related natural resources. The development into a more flexible capital strongly connected to technological development directs questions towards the political processes and the administrative systems that are applied at different places. A constantly recurring argument in the debate on the effectiveness of environmental politics and its democratic character, is that the local, directly affected parties are the most suitable to shape the decisions in these questions. However, an obvious problem in the discussion is an undeveloped theoretical discussion around the decentralised decision-making, together with a too often particular analysis of environmental decisions and politics at a local level. In our point of view, it is necessary to combine more holistic analyses with more specific, where factors related to general societal changes are put in relation to the mechanisms of local decision-making.

In this case study, the coastal protection of the island of Ornö, within the municipality of Haninge in the southern parts of the archipelago of Stockholm, is reflected upon. The coastal protection in Sweden is not unique for Swedish legislation, even though it has had more far-reaching protective ambitions than in many other countries. This legislation has since the introduction in the 1950’s been a political controversy, and during the past years, more municipalities have tried to modify the coastal protection. Therefore, this is an interesting comparative object within an international perspective. The intention of this case study is to act as a pilot for more comprehensive comparative studies of coastal protection in the countries that are included in the above mentioned research project.

The case study is in Swedish only, with a short conclusion in English.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, one can say that the empirical review of this case study shows that the development of coastal protection on Ornö can be regarded as a logical chain from early framework legislation, through a decentralisation of the implementation of the common environmental politics and control, to concrete results in individual environmental matters. The flexibility that originally was built into the framework legislation in the area of environmental protection gave scope for individual interpretations, which eventually led to an increased local power on the environmental area. The tendency of decentralisation has since then been emphasized through the elaborated comprehensive plans, which underlie the decisions in individual cases, and where both individual and municipal interests are balanced with environmental aspects.

In general, one can say that the trend of decentralisation has been successful at a local level. This has led to a change in the opinion of how coastal protection is valued and its custom. Previously, coastal protection was regarded as worth maintaining, and any restrictions could only be carried out if highly specific prerequisites existed. On the other hand, today there are far-reaching possibilities of comparing the value of coastal protection against other interests. Therefore, we believe that coastal protection in Sweden no longer holds the same supreme status as before, which is reflected in that the argumentation around it has been displaced from focusing on issues of justice to concentrating on municipal matters. Nevertheless, it is important to point out the fact that coastal protection under no circumstances is put out of order; there is just a slight tendency of undermining it.