Plant a Seed, Grow a City

AN ANALYSIS OF POWER, DISCOURSE AND KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO URBAN TREES IN REYKJAVÍK

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been a long journey since I first entered university, the University of Iceland in 2001, being young and did certainly not know what to become when I grew up. I have had the chance to develop and take part of life during this past decade or so, by working, getting married, having children and finding my path through diverse studies. And finally I am seeing the light at the end of the tunnel now when I finalize my studies at KTH in spring 2014.

I chose Reykjavík as a location for my study because it was my hometown for many years. I care a lot about the city and wanted to know how the city’s planning structure works with a topic that is also dear to me, trees. The study gave me a chance to look at my city from another angle where I had the role of the researcher instead of the role of a citizen. I got a glimpse of both the inside of the political structure and the relations that create the city at least regarding the topic of this thesis. Furthermore, with my thesis I combine my studies in environmental psychology and urban planning with my interests in sustainable planning for a good, healthy environment that contributes to well-being.

I would like to thank my supervisor Moa Tunström for good comments and guidance along the way. Thanks to my interviewees that participated in my study and contributed with their time and knowledge, without them this study would not have been the same. I am thankful for the support from family and friends, their encouragement sure helped me to carry on. Last but not least, thanks to my husband, Steinar and my children, Júlía and Styrmir for support, patience and endless love. Takk!
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ABSTRACT

Trees in Reykjavík gained an attention in year 2010 when the Mayor brought up the issue in a city council meeting, with the intention to replace cottonwood trees in the city center. A new topic was introduced to the scene which initiated a process within the planning system in Reykjavík. That process is studied in this paper and covers the period from April 2010 to February 2014.

The purpose of this study is to explore the strategic role of urban trees in the city and the changes that have occurred during the process. The analysis is made to find out if, and then how, the status of urban trees has changed during this period of time from two perspectives. The first perspective involves an analysis of the actions, decisions and connections between main actors involved in the process, in relation to power, discourse and knowledge. The second part is an analysis of changes in discourse on urban trees in Reykjavík where the main extensions of the discourse are identified. This is a qualitative study performed first and foremost by interviews with involved actors and a thorough examination of documents and literature.

The main results of the study indicate primarily that the role of urban trees has strengthened extensively during the process. Further, the discourse about urban trees in the city has expanded with new concepts and words, with new and deeper knowledge about already known factors. This new understanding and experience gained are essential when it comes to strategic planning, planting and maintaining. The actors involved in the process utilize their power according to their positions but due to a small and concentrated planning structure in Reykjavík this creates delicate conditions for both the actors and the trees.

Keywords: Urban trees, urban forests, power, discourse, knowledge, Reykjavík
SAMMANFATTNING


Syftet med denna studie är att undersöka stadsträdens strategiska roll och förändringarna som har inträffat för träden under själva processen. Analysen av processen görs utifrån två perspektiv; första delen innebär en analys av de åtgärder, beslut och relationer mellan huvudaktörerna i förhållande till makt, diskurs och kunskap. Den andra delen är en analys av förändringar i diskursen om stadsträd i Reykjavík. Detta är en kvalitativ studie, genomförd med intervjuer samt en undersökning av offentliga dokument och teoretisk litteratur.

Studiens huvudresultat visar först och främst att stadsträdens strategiska roll har blivit starkare under processen. Diskursen om stadsträd har också utökats med nya begrepp och ord, samt med ny och djupare kunskap om befintliga element. Den nya kunskapen och erfarenheten är viktiga faktorer när det gäller strategisk planering, plantering och underhåll av stadsträd. De aktörer som deltar i processen utnyttjar sin makt enligt sina professionella roller men på grund av en koncentrerad planeringsstruktur i Reykjavík skapas känsliga förutsättningar för både aktörerna och själva träden.

Nyckelord: Stadsträd, tätortsnära skog, makt, diskurs, kunskap, Reykjavík
1. INTRODUCTION

We live in a world where the most common societal structure is driven by representative democracy, at least nominally. We chose representatives to act and make decisions, affecting our lives, conditions and well-being. The representatives speak on our behalf during their campaign, prioritizing issues, making promises that the public has to rely on when giving their vote to a worthy candidate. But words are words and when it comes to practice there can be other issues and prioritizations that are put on the agenda, controlled by forces and generated by knowledge that are not obvious for the general public. In other words, opportunities to affect our own lives are limited. That is why we need representatives that deal with their assignments with integrity and with benefits for the citizens.

“Reykjavík is a boring city, we are ready to make our contribution to make it enjoyable.”
(Kastljós 2010)

These were the words of the Mayor to be, Jón Gnarr in an interview during his campaign for the Best Party in the city council elections in Reykjavík in May 2010. Gnarr, in a cooperation with a group of his friends, established a populist protest political Party in anticipation of the city council election, a candidacy that was a result of a very specific circumstances in Iceland. The political landscape, both in the city and nationwide, was very unstable at the time following from the economic crisis that the country went through late year 2008. The Best Party brought up a lot of provoking matters in their campaign that really stirred up established structure, leaving the other candidacies annoyed and a bit confused (Halldórsson 2013). The Best Party promised that promises made before the election would be broken once they were elected. Despite the joke-like campaign the candidacy turned out to be a great success as the party won the elections with a great majority of votes, 34,7% of valid votes getting six candidates in the city council of 15 members (Hagstofan 2010).

Although the Best Party was not taken seriously during the campaign it provided a different angle on a number of issues. Urban planning seems to be within Gnarr’s field of interest as he wrote a number of articles on the party’s website about diverse topics that mattered to him, topics like statues in the city, electrical cars, bridges and urban trees (Besti flokkurinn 2010). The main point in the article about urban trees stressed his opinion that cottonwood trees that are commonly used as street trees in Reykjavík, should be cut down and replaced by other kinds, like maple or birch. Gnarr stated that cottonwood trees were not suitable as street trees, with a small crown, grow straight up in the air and have an expansive root system that can wreck pavements, walls and pipes (Gnarr 2010).

The article did not get a lot of attention until it became a topic of action that in fact was put on the political agenda during the autumn in year 2010. The minority of the City Council was
concerned about this attack on cottonwood trees in Reykjavík, addressed several points to underline this concern; it stated that it would be too costly to fulfill such implementation, the topic was too specific to be discussed in the Council, that it lacked some kind of future vision and strategies about urban trees in Reykjavík to name a few. What possible effect would it have on the citizens to cut down tall trees and replace them with another type that would probably not be as big as the cottonwood? (Reykjavík 2011). The minority pointed out some valid points there and further, the Mayor’s actions raised many other questions such as; can the mayor himself decide implementations like these? Who has the power to decide? The need for mutual understanding of the concepts in question was also highlighted when talking about urban trees, street trees, cottonwood and other terms that were used in the debate.

Northern European cities have in general been criticized for their low diversity of street tree species and in Reykjavík, a total of 90% of all street trees are cottonwood (Pauleit et al. 2005). The majority of the trees were planted in the 1990’s when the main shopping street in the center was renewed. These trees are thought of as the first proper street trees in Reykjavík (Harðarson 2012). Since the trees were all planted within a relatively limited timeframe, they are approximately the same age and face the same problems at a certain period of time. The methods used for planting and managing the trees were not aimed at considering the biological needs of the plant. Like the Mayor pointed out in his article about the cottonwood, the root system expands, the branches get bigger and older and can fall off at any time, creating insecure environment, not without mentioning ugly trees (Gnarr 2010).

There is a clear need for understanding of the process that starts when a new topic is introduced to the scene. One of the reasons that this study is performed is that this particular subject has never been researched before, urban trees in the planning system in Reykjavík, although there has been a clear focus on the topic in the public debate for the last few years. The study should give a look behind the scene, from the moment that this action was an idea in an article in year 2010, to this year 2014 when this study is made. The study is important for the multidisciplinary sectors that manage urban trees in their daily practice to understand how the process evolves, what the driving forces are and how they affect practice. By identifying relations, hindrances and interferences, an understanding is gained of the complex processes through the planning system.

1.1 Aim and research questions
This research is performed within the planning scene in Reykjavík with the aim to explore the strategic role of urban trees in the city. This is carried out by an analysis of the process that started in April 2010 when the Mayor’s article about trees was first published until a new comprehensive plan for Reykjavík was accepted in February 2014. A further introduction of the process will be outlined in chapter five.
The analysis is made to find out if, and then how, the status of urban trees has changed during this period of time from two perspectives; the first part is to analyze the actions, decisions and connections between main actors involved in the process in relation to power and knowledge. The first research question is formulated in the following way: 1) *How do different actors utilize their position during the process?* The second part is an analysis of changes in discourse on urban trees in Reykjavík and the second research question is the following: 2) *How has the role of urban trees in Reykjavík changed through the process?* The material gathered in the study will be examined in relation to power, discourse and knowledge, to be able to elaborate on the answers to the research questions above.

### 1.2 Disposition

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter starts with introductory part which puts the topic of the study in a context where the background for the study is outlined with problem formulation, aim and research questions. The second chapter gives guidance through the methodological approaches used in this study, together with a review of the type of material that was gathered during the process. The second chapter ends with listing of delimitations that were faced in the study. The third chapter gives a description of Reykjavík where current planning structure and urban trees are introduced and put it in a historical context. The new comprehensive plan also gets a summary with introduction of the Green city, a part of the comprehensive plan where the matters of urban trees belongs to. Next up is chapter four, which outlines the theoretical framework for power, discourse and knowledge.

In chapter five, before proceeding to the analysis, there is a short overview where the main events of the studied process are outlined. The analytical part of this thesis is presented in chapter six where the results of the study will be discussed in relation to theory. Answers to the research questions will be developed in this chapter. The last chapter, number seven, contains the final thoughts and conclusion about the study.
2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Methodological Approach
As a graduate student I held the role of the researcher in this study. I was familiar with qualitative research from previous studies so it was relevant for me to meet the study at hand with familiar methods. Furthermore, qualitative research approaches were appropriate because the topic of the study was highly contextualized both in time and place where circumstantial events would differ in another context. As stated by Groat and Wang (2002), qualitative research “...typically focuses on contemporary social and cultural circumstances.” (Groat and Wang, 2002, p. 14). Further explained:

“Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials.” (Denzin and Lincoln (1998) in Groat and Wang, 2002, p. 176)

Groat and Wang (2002) discusses three different approaches to qualitative research; grounded theory, ethnography and interpretivism. This study was approached with interpretivism, where it is my interpretation of gathered material that is the key factor behind the results of the study. Considering the aim of the study, interpretivism is suitable to get to know people’s perception and handling of a contemporary phenomenon, in this case urban trees. The results can therefore not be seen as true facts but should be taken as a probable truth, derived from my understanding of the subject.

2.1.1 Discourse analysis
A discourse analysis was performed to identify changes in the discourse for urban trees in Reykjavík and connect that with new knowledges, related to the second research question. The discourse theory and methodological approaches to discourse analysis are discussed by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) in their book A Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method. The first approach that is discussed in their book is Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory, which states that no discourse is fixed and unchangeable. Discourses expand and change with new knowledge and transformation through interacting with other discourses, causing discursive struggle (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002). The aim with the discourse analysis is to gain understanding of concepts, how they are linked together and how the knowledge has expanded the discourse, in order to elaborate on an answer to the second research question.

The theory introduced by Laclau and Mouffe’s is not tightly connected with a certain method. However, the methodological approaches are integrated in the theoretical elaborations.
Despite that lack of definite discourse analysis method, Jørgensen and Phillips summarize some of the concepts from Laclau and Mouffe that they find useful for empirical analysis; identification of key signifiers, then investigate how key signifiers are connected with other signs which gives them their meaning. Then there is identification of concepts concerning identity; group formation and representation, and identification of concepts for conflict analysis (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002). The discourse theory and method are grounded in social studies and the identification of the concepts strongly indicates an analysis within the social sphere. Despite the fact that trees themselves do not have any social reactions, I nevertheless used the summary of concepts to analyze the discourse about urban trees in Reykjavík by looking into how the trees are handled in the language and what kind of meaning is put into the concepts that influences the discourse. “Language is structured in patterns or discourses - there is not just one general system of meaning [...] but a series of systems or discourses, whereby meanings change from discourse to discourse.” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, p. 12).

2.2 Collecting data
There are various methods that can be used to collect data within the qualitative research field where the choice of strategies influence the procedures of inquiry. Creswell (2009) addresses four basic types of procedures suitable for collecting qualitative data; observations, interviews, review of documents and inspection of audio-visual materials. I follow Creswell’s procedures but leave out the observations as they are not relevant for my case. The methods chosen for this study are therefore; interviews, review of documents and inspection of audio-visual material, along with literature study that was performed to build the theoretical background for this study. These methods and their execution will be further described in the following sections.

2.2.1 Literature study
To build the theoretical framework around this study, literature from social- and planning theories were studied. I found many of the articles among literature from KTH’s planning courses which led me further to articles more focused on, first and foremost, power, power relations and discourse. The theories I read took, for the most part, their starting point in Foucaultian theory and I worked my way through other literature related and derived from that point of departure. To get a better understanding of urban trees, a body of literature from the ‘green sector’ (the multi-sectoral professions that handles greenery, trees and plants etc) was investigated in terms of getting in-depth understanding of the terminology and how definitions of urban trees and urban forests have developed. The literature also touches upon management and how trees can be dealt with in planning practice, which gave me a wider perspective of the process when I was preparing the study. An overview of facts for Reykjavík was assembled to put the current situation in a context with urban trees and the contemporary planning structure.
2.2.2 Official documents and audio-video material

In order to get an overview of and a deeper insight into the process I looked closely into official documents, reports and did a thorough online search. This was essential for the development of my study, as I was able to confirm certain events and actions together with identifying key actors. By investigating these documents from varied sources, I could get a clearer picture of the topic of the study and see the process from diverse angles. It also helped me to define the timeframe of the process, as I had to limit my study within a certain period of time. I started out by recognizing the initiator of the process, the Mayor, found his article on his party’s website, looked at interviews from media and read protocols from the city council. The Mayor’s article, from April 2010, marked the beginning of the process and soon after I began my work on the study, in February 2014, a new comprehensive plan for Reykjavík was confirmed. After I read the new comprehensive plan, I decided that it would indicate the end of the process’ timeframe as it gave some kind of contemporary closure for the urban trees in Reykjavík.

2.2.3 Interviews

Based on the theoretical framework assembled in the first step of this study, questions for qualitative research interviews were formulated. According to Kvale (1997) the qualitative semi-structured research interview is formulated with open questions that give interviewees the opportunity to talk freely and openly about the topic involved and gives the interviewer the possibility to address follow-up questions. The interviewer is capable to get in-depth knowledge about the topic in question, describe it in details and interpret the meaning of described phenomenon.

The qualitative semi-structured research interview catches a wide angle of opinions and perceptions from different persons about a certain topic and gives an overview of diverse human world. This is considered to be the most preferable strength of this type of interviews (Kvale 1997). I used this types of interviews to get information and gain knowledge about the topic of this research, which I was not able to get from only reading literature and examine documents. Metaphorically, this method gave me a tool to read between the lines and to find out, from the interviewees’ point of view, the things that have not been said or directly documented.

The interviewees were selected after an inspection of official documents and material from media related to the topic of research with the aim to identify key actors involved in the process. To begin with it was the Mayor of Reykjavík that caught my attention for the move he made on urban trees, described in the introduction. By following the process in the material I had inspected, I took notice of actors that were mentioned and actively involved in the process, both in practice and in the public debate. I contacted several of them by an email, introduced me and my study and asked sincerely about giving me an interview. I also asked if
they knew about other actors involved that would be beneficial for me to contact. After a while with sending requests and replies, it resulted in interviews with seven persons that in one way or another represent the actors that were involved in the process in question.

Here below is a list of the interviewees that contributed to my study with their time, followed by a short description about their relation to trees in the city. This group of people gives a kind of cross section of the actors that engaged in the process involving urban trees. There are, however, few actors that I found relevant to my study that did not have time to meet me or did not answer my requests. This gives grounds for certain limitations that will be discussed further in next section, 2.3 Delimitations.

- The Mayor of Reykjavík, Jón Gnarr. He was elected to the city council with his new political party, The Best Party in year 2010. Gnarr wrote the article about poplar trees that initiated this study.
- A member of the Environmental- and planning council, Karl Sigurðsson from The Best Party. Sigurðsson was one of the council members that dealt with the poplar tree topic in the environmental- and planning council.
- A member of the Environmental- and planning council, Kristín Soffía Jónsdóttir, a social democrat from the political party Samfylkingin. Jónsdóttir was, just like Sigurðsson, one of the council members that dealt with the topic in the environmental- and planning council.
- A lector from the Agricultural University of Iceland, Samson B. Harðarsson. Harðarsson is a researcher with extended knowledge about trees. He has written literature and worked on reports about the topic, along with seminars and conferences.
- An officer from the Environmental- and planning office in Reykjavík, Þórólfur Jónsson, the former Chief of gardening. Jónsson held the title Chief of gardening until January 2013 when the internal structure of the office was changed but he still works within the Environmental- and planning office. However, I will relate to him as the Chief of gardening throughout this paper. Jónsson got the assignment from the Environmental- and planning council to look further into the poplar trees in Reykjavík.
- The director of the Reykjavík’s Forestry Association, Helgi Gíslason. Gíslason has been active in the debate about trees in the city in addition to the positions he holds.
- A forester, working at the Reykjavík’s Forestry Association, Güstaf Jarl Viðarsson. Viðarsson was the editor of the report about urban forestry that was written during the adaption of a new comprehensive plan for the city.

In the beginning of April 2014, I travelled to Reykjavík to perform the interviews during two intense working days. The interview guide was divided into three main categories, a) a general understanding of the concept urban trees, b) the process that occurred and c) future strategies. After the first interview was completed I had already gained information and answers to some questions that I found either not relevant or the answers would be the same
in every interview. Thus, I tried to adapt the question guide according to each interviewee by adding questions matching each actor’s role. The follow-up questions became more spontaneously as the interviews went by and I gained more in-depth and thorough understanding of the case. The interviews were performed in icelandic but the questions were translated to English when writing this paper and are listed in a question guide in Appendix I.

2.3 Delimitations

The main purpose with this qualitative research was to gain understanding of affecting forces and how they influence planning processes. That implies that the results are based on, among other things, collected data about people’s experiences and comprehension that cannot be found in published material. Therefore, the study was limited to the number of actors that could participate and had time to meet me for an interview. Within the big picture I was only working with a micro-selection of all the actors actually involved in the process. My interpretation was based on their expression, consistency and the indirect information I got, filtered through their views. Furthermore, the study was not an analysis of personal achievements of the actors as persons, only how their role influenced the process. An evaluation of the process was not included in the study, consequently the results do not contain any comparison or suggestions about how the process could be different.

The research topic was contextualized, both in time and place. The timeframe of the process had to be limited so I could define my focus area. The timeframe was set within years 2010-2014 which gave the study a position within a certain situation with current authorities at that time. Also, the study was made in an Icelandic context but I was writing and working from Sweden, which made access to material in icelandic limited with practically only online sources.

It is not an easy task to grasp the meaning of the concepts urban forestry, urban forests and urban trees. The terminology is not fixed with one definition which was reflected with different views on the terminology by my interviewees. That did not directly put a limitation on the study but emphasized both the diverse role and background of my interviewees and the importance of being clear about the diverse definitions that can be used when talking about the concept urban trees. In the analysis later in this paper I will be guided further with the conceptual understanding of my interviewees, as it is contextualized with the study at hand.
3. REYKJAVÍK

Reykjavík is the capital of Iceland with 121,230 inhabitants, listed 1st of January 2014 (Hagstofan 2014). Reykjavík is situated on the south west corner of the country, open to the Atlantic Ocean and receiving warmth from the south with the Gulf Stream. The Gulf Stream provides the island with conditions that make it habitable so life can actually thrive there. These conditions play an important role in the growth of vegetation and survival of diverse species in otherwise harsh environment. Reykjavík is surrounded by five other municipalities, which in a larger context create the Reykjavík region, counting a total of 208,531 inhabitants (Hagstofan 2014), or around two third of the country’s population.

Figure 1 - Iceland, Reykjavik on the south west corner.

3.1 Planning structure in Reykjavík

The municipalities together with Reykjavík form the Association of municipalities in the capital region, (in icelandic, Samtök Sveitarfélaga á Höfuðborgarsvæðinu, SSH). A committee from SSH now works on a regional plan for the area that will replace the existing one which is valid to 2024, by putting forth visions and strategies for the region to year 2040. The strategies contains development visions about growth limits, transport axis and service centers among other aspects (SSH 2014). The next planning level is the comprehensive level that every municipality has provide for their area, based on the goals of the region plan. The comprehensive plan deals with issues like land use, transport and service, environmental issues and more and has to be confirmed by the state authority, the Icelandic National
Planning Agency, INPA. For the last few years a thorough review has been made on the city’s comprehensive plan and a new plan was confirmed in February 2014, further discussed in next section, 3.2 Reykjavík’s Comprehensive Plan 2010-2030. Last but not least it the level of detail plans. Detail plans are, as the name suggests, at the most detailed level where delimited areas are put in a context with the overarching goal from the levels above, providing terms of types of services, height of buildings, plot boundaries among building terms and other conditions (Skipulag 2014).

3.2 Reykjavík’s comprehensive plan 2010-2030

The current planning structure in Reykjavík is based on communicative planning theory where the practice of dialogues with citizens, communication and participation have been developing over the past few years, with increased knowledge and understanding of its function (Jónsson 2014). There have been a number of projects where participation has been tried with diverse results. There is a subpage on the city’s webpage that is called participation, where authorities enable citizens to comment on ongoing projects, vote for and comment on ideas about future projects and submit proposals and suggestions about what can be done in a better way in the city. The projects where inhabitants are able to vote for most desirable changes, constructions and implementations in their own neighborhood have, however, been criticized for not being visible enough for the inhabitants as the participation was below expectations in the last voting in March 2014, or about 5,7% (Guðjónsson 2014) The most extensive project though, where participation is included, is without a doubt the work on the new comprehensive plan for Reykjavík.

A decision was made in year 2006 about starting a revision of the comprehensive plan for the city. The revision process got a slow start and it was not until the winter 2008-2009 that meetings were actively held preparing the work ahead. During the autumn 2009 the working process was officially introduced. So called ‘Open Houses’ were held in each city district in October and November 2009; meetings where citizens got the opportunity to participate in the planning process by calling attention to issues that were valuable for the district and should be emphasized in the planning work ahead. The citizens could submit their vision and contribute with local knowledge about their district through participation. The work continued, managed by a group of politicians that guided through the process and the proposals were mainly discussed in the Environmental- and planning council. Extensive work on the plan continued and during the spring 2012 the first drafts of the new comprehensive plan were introduced to citizens, again with ‘Open Houses’ in each city district where comments from the citizens were taken into consideration (Reykjavík 2014a). And, as previously stated, the new comprehensive plan for Reykjavík was confirmed by the INPA in February 2014 (Skipulag 2014a).
The strategies of the comprehensive plan are submitted in several main themes related to different emphases in the future vision, divided in four chapters in the plan document; The City by the Sea, The Creative City, The Green City and The People’s City (Reykjavík 2014b). It is the chapter about The Green City that I will look further into, to get closer to the topic of the study.

3.2.1 **The Green City**

The main goal with the Green City strategy is to promote good urban life, contribute to better health and well-being and increase the greenery with trees and other vegetation. The access to nature and recreational areas will be emphasized with coherent green structure that intertwines with built environment connecting residents, service and other parts of the city. Today, around 92% of the citizens live in areas within 300 m distance from recreational areas that are bigger than 2000 m². The aim is to maintain this proportion even though the city will be densified and to ensure that the quality of nature and landscape will not be decreased near residential areas and within the city (Reykjavík 2014b).

![Figure 2 - The Green Scarf, from the comprehensive plan 2010-2030 (Reykjavík 2014b)](image-url)
The green areas of the city are categorized and further defined after a division into areas outside the built environment and areas within the built environment. The so called Green Scarf, a forestry and recreational area in the outskirts of the city, is a well-known area that gets many visitors per year. The area is illustrated by green color in figure 2 above. A part of this emphasis on green areas is an introduction of urban forestry, a concept that will be further elaborated on in the next section.

3.3 Urban forests and urban trees in Reykjavík

Trees in general have been a sensitive topic in Iceland because of the lack of forests and trees in the whole country. When Iceland was settled in the 9th century, it is estimated that wood and woodland covered around 25-35% of the country. Due to misuse, over-grazing and non-sustainable utilization, which on the other hand ensured the survival of the settlers, the woodland area decreased heavily. Today after over thousand years of settlement woodland covers only about 1.3% of Iceland (Benedikz and Skarphéðinsdóttir 1999). The capital of the country, Reykjavík, was founded in 1786 as a small trading town governed by the Danish Crown. The population growth increased slowly and in year 1890, the inhabitants of the city were only three thousand (Benedikz and Skarphéðinsdóttir 1999). At that time about 90% of the Icelandic population lived in rural areas but urbanization happened fast and now, around 120 years later around 208 thousand people live in the Reykjavík region as stated above.

Reykjavík city as an urban area is therefore young and the history of urban forestry in the city is young as well. Icelandic foresters in the 19th century who had been educated abroad saw the need for growing trees to counteract diminishing woodland. However, it was not until in the 1930s that urban forestry as official practice was recognized with the establishment of the Icelandic Forestry Society (IFS) that operated mainly in Reykjavík and its surroundings. Later, in year 1946, the Reykjavík Forestry Association (RFA) was founded when the IFS became a head organization for all forestry societies that had been established around the country (Skógræktarfélag Reykjavíkur 2014). Reykjavík city approved a proposal initiated by RFA in year 1949 of establishing a certain woodland frame or a ‘scarf’, the Green Scarf, on the city borders where the main purpose was to provide the city with a 1500 ha vegetated recreational area (Benedikz and Skarphéðinsdóttir 1999). Over time, these resources of trees have created area for recreation and experience of nature that supposedly majority of Reykjavík’s inhabitants is familiar with. Today, the RFA has the role of managing the woodland on the outskirts of the city, providing education and guidance and plan all-year-round activities in the area.

In a report that RFA recently published about urban forestry, there are some definitions given on urban forests that have been developed to fit to current contextual circumstances and is represented in two parts, inner city forest and forest on the outskirts of the city (Skógræktarfélag Reykjavíkur 2013, p. 9).
• **Inner city forest**: Forests within built environment, or so called inner city forests, are identified by trees and other plants that are connected to inhabitants and their constructions. Forests within the city can be defined as summary of all trees and plants that can be found within built environment, all from small dense areas to big cities. Urban trees are defined as trees that are managed by the city, for example trees that are planted along roads, in public parks or close to official buildings.

• **Outskirts**: Recreational- and leisure forests are cultivated outside built environment and are called the outskirts or the *Green Scarf*. The Green Scarf is a set of forests in the outskirts of Reykjavik and is essential for recreational activities. Within the scarf there are all kinds of forests and tree stands that create a green structure, diverse in density, around the city. Individuals, companies, forest associations along with various NGO’s have, for the most part, managed the forestry taken place in the outskirts.

The definition of inner city forests that RFA gives in their report is in line with what other theorists have elaborated on urban forests. Wolf (2003) for example, describes urban forests, not only as a combination of individual green elements in the city, but as planned, planted and maintained and therefore affected by the planning policies enforced in urban areas. The elements that together create the urban forest live in conditions that are created with planning, diverse in character and ranging from streets, public parks and squares to more open areas. Figure 3 puts the individual tree in a context with the overarching concept of urban forestry, explaining the relation between elements.
Urban conditions are more often extremely difficult for trees regarding limited root space, pollution, salt and other threats due to human activities. These are the conditions the cottonwood in Reykjavík lived in. However, despite the harsh conditions, there are high demands that the trees should grow without problems, have a big crown and be strong individuals. The conditions differ though with different surroundings. Urban trees are identified as trees that are planted along roads, in public parks or close to official buildings and there is a big difference in environment. Trees that are planted along roads or commonly known as street trees are considered to be distinct from other urban trees due to their settings in the environment. By taking into account the spatial qualities or the spatial restraints of the surroundings and choosing appropriate species, the growth conditions for the trees could be improved (Bell et al. 2005).

**Figure 3 - The urban forestry matrix, representing the magnitude and scope of urban forestry (Randrup et al. 2005).**
4. POWER, DISCOURSE AND KNOWLEDGE

There are multiple forces affecting planning practice and it can be a complex task to study them. Conflicts, relations, power and consensus are among factors that can be present which influence processes and interactions taking place. In the following sections the theoretical framework for the study is outlined, touching upon these factors by elaboration about power, discourse and knowledge. By exploring the theory and related literature it has become clear that debates and theoretical elaborations about the concepts involved are still going strong and are under constant reexamination. Flyvbjerg (2002) states that there is a lack of research about power and power relations in planning, not only in theory but in actual practice as well. Studies on actual cases are therefore needed to put power and relations in reality at their core.

There are a number of theorists that develop definitions and contribute with diverse understanding which agrees or disagrees with one another, which emphasizes that there is no right solution or settlement on fixed explanations and definitions when it comes to power and related concepts (e.g. Reed 2013, Haugaard 2003, Flyvbjerg and Richardson 2002). In this paper, I am aware of these various sources but chose not to go in-depth in elaborating on the sense of the sociological theories of power. I chose, however, to use literature which has its framework rooted in Foucault’s theories of power and knowledge, mainly because Foucault recognizes the existence of the aforementioned forces within planning practice (Flyvbjerg and Richardson 2002).

Foucault states that in every social interaction power is always present and, further, power and knowledge are inseparable (Flyvbjerg and Richardson 2002). Moreover, as Reed (2013) discusses, Foucault sees power as a generative force instead of a repressive power and by that he opened for debates about power to and power over, a complex relationship between those two conceptions while at the same time he contributed to the debates to broaden the perspective on the importance of discursive formations in constituting social relations. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) further state that Foucault’s coupling of power and knowledge has the consequence that power is also closely related to discourse. In other words, power, discourse and knowledge are intertwined and will be discussed as such in next sections.

To put power in relation to planning, Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002) compare two approaches to power analysis within communicative planning theory; the Habermasian ideal about consensus and conflict free communication versus the Foucaultian approach of recognizing the existence of the affecting forces in planning practice. The Habermasian theory can be seen as more idealistic than practical, neglecting the existence of power within the practice and its effects. As Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002) suggest, conflicts sustain society and therefore there are grounds for caution against such idealism that neglects these
forces. Foucault, on the other hand, recognizes conflicts and practical consensus and by his interpretation “…suppressing conflict is suppressing freedom, because the privilege to engage in conflict is part of freedom” (Flyvbjerg and Richardson 2002, p. 23) and states that power is always present in any communication.

4.1 Creating power...

Haugaard (2003) elaborates on several ways to create social power and according to his article the inception of power can be seen from two broad perspectives. On one hand, the creation of power through coercion where “…individuals get each other to do things which they would not otherwise do through the threat or use of physical sanctions or inducements - punishment or reward” (Haugaard 2003, p. 87), or on the other hand, where “…power is an outcome of the creation of social order which goes beyond coercion” (Haugaard 2003, p. 88). The social order comes from approval of actions where actors acknowledge others acts and thereby create power to the actors, making things happen that would otherwise not occur. The approaches to creation of power are brought together in seven ways as the following, derived from ideas from several authors in social theory; 1) social order, 2) system bias, 3) systems of thought, 4) tacit knowledge, 5) reification 6) discipline and 7) coercion (Haugaard 2003). The focus here will be on power created by reproduction of social order so the first five of the ways will be further discussed, whereas the last two of them will be disregarded as they indicate use of persuasion in terms of threats and violence which is considered to be of non-relevancy in this paper.

4.1.1 …by acting and relating

Social power is enabled with social order, a support from the society based on predictability. Members of the society acts in a predictable way and the meaning of the actions are accepted and confirmed by the society. It can be discussed if those who accept and acknowledge hold the power whereas they are essential part of giving the power to others by their acceptance. In either way, it is the society as a whole who approves acts or behavior and thereby creates power. However, Haugaard argues that this form of power does not automatically call for a consensus about actions. He gives an example from the political arena where political parties enter knowing the democratic rules of the game, where “…participation in democratic politics entails a prior commitment to accepting your own defeat” (Haugaard 2003, p. 93). The outcome is not always desirable but is accepted because of social order.

To be able to carry through a system change the existing structure will have to be challenged where the ‘rules of the game’ are changed, the well-known existing structural relations will be destabilized, a system bias (Haugaard 2003). Actors who wants to expand the existing structure by raising new issues will have to build consensus on new meanings and fight for it, “if successful, the social order will then be changed and a capacity for action will be created relative to issues which previously lay outside the conditions of possibility” (Haugaard 2003,
p. 95). It is easy to forget, in historical context, that social structures that we are familiar with today and are considered to be the norm are derived from challenges that the system faced at one time.

4.1.2 …with knowledge

It is the social consciousness, *a system of thought*, that keeps the current structural practices. If you want to change something you will have to change the meaning people put to it. Connected with the destabilizing of the system, discussed here above, it is hard to put forth new meaning if the system of thoughts does not accept it as a part of new knowledge, “...if a new meaning is not consonant with the current interpretative horizon, destructuring will take place, hence, powerlessness will be reproduced with respect to the issue” (Haugaard 2003, p. 98). Further, Haugaard uses the concepts practical and discursive consciousness where social knowledge is divided between. “Practical consciousness knowledge is a *tacit knowledge* which enables us to ‘go on’ in social life, while discursive consciousness comprises knowledge which we can put into words” (Haugaard 2003, p. 100). Converting the common sense knowledge into words and be able to discuss it, which gives a broader perspective on that particular knowledge, brings power to the less powerful. When these changes occur from tacit knowledge to discursive knowledge we can, by better means, distance ourselves from the issue, evaluate it and learn from it.

4.1.3 …with ‘the truth’

Truth reinforces social power by *reification*. Truth is confirmed by science which also confirms knowledge, hence, science are therefore a big part in this creation of power (Haugaard 2003). Actors will have to have reliable and relevant knowledge to maintain their power relations and credibility. However, knowledge and science do not always play an important role as argued by Flyvbjerg (2002), especially when things are already decided upon. Power and private interests can dominate the real ‘truth’ provided by science when already made decisions that are unofficially discussed end up in the final outcome. In his research, Flyvbjerg found out “…that knowledge can be so important that people in powerful positions find it worth their while to repress it.” (Flyvbjerg 2002, p. 354). Someone’s view on the reality does not necessarily align with others view on the same reality in an analytical rational way. In other words, there is one reality and multiple views and perceptions on it, influenced by experience, knowledge, different perspectives, visions and passion. “It is a classically clear example of an evaluation that is dependent on the eyes of the beholder” (Flyvbjerg 2002, p. 360). The understanding and perceptions that holds the stronger power base represent the ‘truth’ understood as the actual reality (Flyvbjerg 2002).

Power can repress or promote knowledge regarding the purpose it should serve. Knowledge about power can be at least as important as the knowledge itself. Rationality in planning says that we should get to know the problem before we can decide upon interventions. However,
power can ignore that knowledge when it does not serve the best private interests and interferes with already made decisions. This linkage between rationality and power is a grey area that has not been thoroughly studied in planning theory. Understanding about that grey area is “...necessary for changing planning practice in a direction that would leave less scope for the kind of undemocratic power-knowledge relations” (Flyvbjerg 2002, p. 355).

4.2 Reeds dimensions of power
The sources of power; how power is created by Haugaard, should not be mixed up with the dimensions of power that are discussed and further expanded in a recently published article by Reed (2013). Reed elaborates on three dimensions of power by drawing on the conceptual link between power and causality; relational, discursive and performative dimensions of power. These forms of dimensions are not put forth in order to get a better critique of power but rather to contribute to a better analysis of it. Reeds dimensions are therefore applicable when studying the utilization of power.

4.2.1 Relational concept of power
With emphasis on social capital and positions of key actors the power moves within the first dimension that Reed (2013) elaborates on; the relational concept of power. It is the dynamic structure of social relations that creates networks of relationships which matter for the utilization of power. These relations facilitate priority and can be a defining factor when it comes to identify the ‘winners and losers’ of a certain act. The positions within the network radically decide who and what will characterize the outcome (Reed 2013), indicating a certain hierarchy and uneven distribution of power between actors.

4.2.2 Discursive concept of power
The second dimension discussed by Reed (2013) holds the discursive concept of power. The formulation of an issue and how it is represented can create a certain power within the discursive field. It is the use of symbolization and narrative that gives the talk a good meaning, so good that it can be perceived as the only truth. When such ‘truth’ is repeated through conversations and interactions, it spreads believe about the truth and things become obvious and seem right. It can be seen as a persuasive storytelling, with or without being aware of the power that follows as “...people are produced to do this or that by the repeated talk and writing that they engage in” (Reed 2013, p. 194). This is in line with Haugaard’s claim that if changes are wanted, the meaning people put into the matter will have to change. According to Reed (2013) this can be done through repetition of the ‘truth’ and rhetorical tactics.

4.2.3 Performative concept of power
Changes are not only carried through by rhetorical tactics but also by acting, where the acts
“...produce new realities and thus account for why the whole process went one way or another” (Reed 2013, p. 194). This is involved in Reed’s third dimension that holds the performative concept of power. It is the situated creativity and temporal ordering of the actions that produce the outcome. Those who act probably hold positions within a certain network and are good at telling convincing stories, that is, already move within the first two dimensions of power; the relational and discursive dimensions. However, it is the actual performance that creates a space for power. According to Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002) an action is the exercise of power, indicating that understanding of how power works would be the first prerequisite for action. That defines in a certain way the dynamics of power (Flyvbjerg and Richardson 2002). Timing, transformative moments and the current, up-to-date actions are to be taken accountable for the changes according to Reed.

4.3 Discourse

As mentioned in section 2.1.1 Discourse analysis, there is no clear line between theory and method in discourse analysis discussed by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002). Discourses contribute to the extended found of meaning about objects, therefore help to create the objects themselves by adding meaning to their definition. Subjects and objects do not exist before they are constituted in discourse which means that a discussion about them has to take place to establish them, fill them with meaning and the ‘new phenomenon’ is given a certain status in the temporary society. That meaning can easily change with new knowledge and contribution to that discourse. The expansion of discourses is dependent of how issues are framed in speech and written language, how new knowledge is introduced and what can be seen as the ideal truth. The constant expansion and changes can create struggles between competing discourses, and because of this discursive struggle with definitions and guideline settings, a discourse can never be fully established (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002). Society is, therefore, under constant reproduction because it changes according to new discourses shaping the reality we face daily. According to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) this “...discursive practice - is a social practice that shapes the social world” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, p. 18).

4.4 Knowledge

Diverse knowledge foundations identify and determine what is ‘the truth’ and what is false. Truth is always a discursive construction as different meaning is given to objects according to different discourses, creating multiple truths. By redefining moments of existing discourse and give further meaning or truth to its elements, the discourse is shaped for contextualized conditions. And to connect knowledge and meaning to power, discussed in the previous sections, the production of meaning is the key for stabilization of power (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002) and “through the production of meaning, power relations can become naturalised and so much part of common-sense that they cannot be questioned” (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, p. 32).
Foucault (in Jørgensen and Phillips 2002) claims that power and knowledge are inseparable. Therefore, power is tightly connected with changes in discourse and the knowledge that expands and changes it. When examining knowledge in a planning context, Rydin (2007) states that to carry through changes in planning the use of knowledge is a key element. By activating variety of actors where the planning is taking place, a local and contextualized knowledge will be attained. Local knowledge can guide in the contextualization of conventional scientific knowledge when drawn upon in local policy practice (Rydin 2007). As knowledge is communicated through different discourses it is the role of the actors to give space for open debate and be aware of that involvement can co-produce knowledge within a discourse.

Throgmorton (2003) involves actors in storytelling, as he claims that actors such as planners can shape communities, cultures and character with their writing and talking. Further he states that

“... planners (and others) have to recognize that they are embedded in an intricate web of relationships, that they have to construct understandings of that web, and that they then have to persuade others to accept their constructions. But they also have to accept the fact that people tell diverse and often conflicting stories.” (Throgmorton 2003, p. 130).

There is a certain power included in the actors role when he can chose to tell a story this way or another. When an actor chose a certain way of expressing his thoughts, the choice of words and rhetoric phrasing can give his ideas their power, making it more believable to others. Emotions are known to give stories their power and shape their meanings. This has to be kept in mind when discourses are analyzed while they expanding and being structured (Throgmorton 2003). The actors’ stories and how they are told can influence what is being accepted as knowledge and therefore accepted as truth. The actors gain the readers’ trust by making space for diverse understanding when telling their stories. That is how the stories become legitimate (Throgmorton 2003).
5. COTTONWOOD IN THE CITY CENTER – AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

As discussed in the introduction, it was during his campaign for the city council elections in Reykjavík, in spring 2010, that Jón Gnarr wrote an article about cottonwood in the center of Reykjavík. Gnarr wanted to decrease the amount of cottonwood in the city center and replace it with other species with the argument that cottonwood was rough, with powerful root system that is not suitable in built environment. Furthermore, he argued that some people didn’t like the cottonwood, the trees were ugly. He wanted to replace the cottonwood with species that were more traditional in context with Reykjavík, beautiful trees that are more suitable within the built environment (Gnarr 2010).

The elections were a total success for Gnarr and his new political party, The Best Party, and Gnarr became the Mayor of Reykjavík on the 15th of June in 2010 (Reykjavík 2014). Gnarr continued to pursue his interests about replacing the cottonwood and put this topic on the agenda at a city council meeting in January 2011. A proposal was presented at the meeting and that proposed to the Chief of gardening that he would create a plan to reduce the number of cottonwood in the city center and replace them with other species. His proposal was phrased as following:

“The City Council of Reykjavík proposes to the Chief of gardening that he will form a plan to find a way to reduce the number of cottonwood in the city center. The project should start with cutting down cottonwood on Sóleyjargata, Vonarstræti, Laugavegi and Tjarnargata and replace them with other species. The space that cottonwood needs in general should be professionally evaluated so trees will thrive when planted in other areas.” (Reykjavík 2011).

The Mayor was criticized for bringing up the topic in the city council, followed by a long discussion about cottonwood and how there was a clear lack of future strategies about trees in the city. However, the discussions ended with a consensus about further work on that matter and that the Environmental- and planning council would look further at the proposal (Reykjavík 2011). The proposal was discussed and accepted in the environmental and planning council and the Chief of gardening, Dórólfr Jónsson, was asked to compose a plan to perform this action (Reykjavík 2011a). Jónsson contacted a private consultant to evaluate the condition of about 300 individual trees in the city center and the evaluation was already performed in February 2011 (Jónsson 2014).

The cottonwood topic created an extensive public debate and when the discussion had reached a certain level, the Agricultural University of Iceland decided in collaboration with Reykjavík city and the labor union for gardeners to organize a public meeting where trees in the city were discussed in several lectures. This meeting was held in February 2011 and was well
attended by the many who were interested in the topic (LBHÍ 2011). Following the meeting, Jónsson asked Harðarson to work on a report about trees in urban environment and what species would be suitable as street trees in Reykjavík, which he did finish in November 2012 (Harðarson 2012). The cottonwood project continued and following the evaluation of the trees, made in February 2011, the first trees were replaced in November 2011 (Morgunblaðið 2011).

Apart from the cottonwood trees in the city center, there are other trees in Reykjavík that also need to be taken care of. In a meeting at the RFA office in January 2012, the Mayor and his representatives together with the RFA decided that the RFA would work on a summary about urban forestry in Reykjavík. It was suggested that this summary could be used as an underlying document in the process of the city’s strategy for urban forestry in relation with the new comprehensive plan that was being reviewed at that moment. The RFA worked for over a year on this summary and published a report about urban forestry in November 2013 (Skógræktarfélág Reykjavíkur 2013).

Alongside this work on the urban forestry report, the Environmental- and planning council decided to establish a committee to develop a strategy for urban trees in the city. The committee was officially formed with several officers in October 2012. The committee introduced their strategy about urban trees in June 2013, which was accepted in the city council in November 2013 (Reykjavík 2013a).

The replacement of the cottonwood continued in November and December 2013. The media kept following the implementations and reporting to citizens what was happening. Jónsson explained the replacement in the news and told about the knowledge and experience that were gained in 2011 when the first trees were cut down and replaced (Morgunblaðið 2013a, Morgunblaðið 2013b). The timeframe for the process ended when the new comprehensive plan for Reykjavík 2010-2030 was accepted and confirmed by the INPA in February 2014 (Skipulag 2014a).

The key events of the process that has been outlined here above are shown in the figure below. The key events are divided into decisions and actions, where actions are put above the timeline and decisions are placed below the timeline. The many actors involved in such this process will not be listed here. However, the actors I interviewed in this study can be seen as the key actors taking part in the process. Their actions influenced and affected the development of the process.
Figure 4 - The timeline of the process with key events. Actions are shown above the axis and decisions below the axis.
6. ANALYTICAL DISCUSSIONS

In previous chapters I reviewed how power can be created and executed in a planning context, discussed the terminology behind urban trees and put it in a context with the topic of this study, the process of urban trees through the planning system in Reykjavík. The process was outlined in chapter five and the key events of the process revealed. By analyzing the gathered material I will be able to connect these key events in relation to the theoretical framework, furthermore, elaborate on the results and answer the research questions that were presented in the first chapter of this paper.

The process that is analyzed in this study would not exist if it weren’t for forces that both initiated it and kept it going. Without any power there wouldn’t be any process to study. As claimed in the theoretical framework, power is present in each and every social action and with that as a starting point I discuss the actions and the role of each actor that I interviewed, for most parts in relation to Haugaards (2003) creation of power and then position their actions within the three power dimensions that were discussed by Reed (2013). The analysis follows the events of the process more or less in a chronological order.

6.1 Proactive act

The Mayor initiated the process with his article about cottonwood in the city center and was well aware of his powerful position when he put the topic on the city council’s agenda. Or as he said in the interview “I hold that powerful position so I could do it.” (Gnarr 2014). The Mayor gained his position from very unusual circumstances. One could argue that his power was created by challenging an existing structure with his unusual candidacy, which can be characterized as organizational outflanking, where he created a new competing arena for reconstructing existing system (Haugaard 2003). Further, “…in a contemporary context, new social movements attempt to create rival arenas where certain issues are confirm structured as ‘relevant’ or ‘appropriate’ and over time systemic change is forced upon those who try and maintain the status quo.” (Haugaard 2003, p. 95). Despite that act against the existing structure, he got elected and gained his position with votes from the public who accepted his challenge. It can be argued that after all, his power was created with social order since the public confirmed the organizational outflanking by trusting him for this powerful position.

The Mayor’s act of putting this topic on the council’s agenda was criticized and questions being raised if it was the right platform for this kind of discussions. According to the council minority, this topic was considered to be irrelevant and not large enough in scale to be discussed at council level (Jónsdóttir 2014). He answered the criticism about the procedure, mentioning the power he held:
“I would indeed like to bring up the process of this topic as council member Þorbjörg Helga Vigfúsdóttir mentioned here earlier in her speech, in other word, is this the correct procedure? Would it be more appropriate, just because I am the boss, that I would just give orders to the Chief of gardening and just say: cut down the trees. And something like that. And now I have been trying to find out what is the normal procedure in a case like this and I haven’t found any procedure that is the normal correct one and that is why I am presenting it here in the council. To try it out sort of. And I also believe that this is a topic that needs clarification and discussion and that people get to know these ideas and hear about them.” (Reykjavík 2011)

After all, the Mayor has a big interest in trees and knowledge about them from the time when he was working with planting trees in the city. However, with his answer he showed that he is not only working on his own interests, he also points out the lack of discussion and clarification about the topic among public. He acknowledge the city’s responsibility when it comes to informing and teaching the citizens about trees, especially when many trees, that are considered urban trees, are located in private gardens and not managed by the city but by the citizens. With his act, the Mayor produced a new path that created and guided the whole process. However, a public debate and dialogues had already started among the citizens about cottonwood and the Mayor was considered to be proactive by taking this up to the city council level. He listened to his environment and picked up a current issue (Jónsdóttir 2014). Harðarson agrees and puts forth the obvious that the trees were getting older, the cottonwood had started to create problems and the citizens had already started to complain about the trees. The Mayor was perceptive and raised the issue at the right time. (Harðarson 2014).

According to all of my interviewees, the discussions about the role of urban trees in Reykjavík reached a certain peak after the Mayor introduced the replacement of cottonwood in the city council in January 2011. Public debate started on the topic and people divided into groups, either for or against cottonwood. The Mayor discussed that he is not an enemy of the cottonwood and that tree is a good tree in other places and conditions than as a street tree in the city center. The public though, thought after reading the news about the topic that his act was against cottonwood in general. He was for instance called ‘a cold hearted cottonwood killer’, both in online discussions (Jónsson 2012) and in council meetings (Jónsdóttir 2014). The citizens got their information through media, which have the tendency to leave out information and lack of details that could be relevant. The public didn’t have access to the report that was made when analyzing the conditions of the trees and people didn’t realize that these trees were in a bad shape, many of them already ruined. That emphasizes the need for open dialog and democratic participation where the reality is introduced from the actual source that holds the knowledge. According to Flyvbjerg (2002) the understanding and perceptions that holds the stronger power base represent the ‘truth’ understood as the actual
reality, affecting the discourse. Headlines in media, in this case, control the societal perception of the discourse as the reality as it was understood among the citizens was indicating that the Mayor was against cottonwood. However, he was thus clear that he was only talking about cottonwood in the city center in his article and especially names streets, where to replace the trees, in that context.

6.2 Making strategic decisions

When the topic had been discussed at the city council it was decided that the environmental- and planning council would discuss further actions, with requests about a work on strategies and that any implementations should be performed in phases. The environmental- and planning council got the topic for discussion the next day and sent it directly to the Chief of gardening. The members of the environmental- and planning council trusted the Chief of gardening to make rational decisions about the topic but they were most concerned about the cost and technicalities (Jónsdóttir 2014, Sigurðsson 2014). Their positions are similar to the Mayors positions when it comes to define the creation of power. They are elected council members, who gain their positions through representative democracy, and therefore their power is confirmed with social order. And because of that they will have to make decisions based on what is economically profitable considering the use of tax money, on behalf of their voters. The topic could be handled differently within the system, as Jónsdóttir touches upon, where the trees should be part of an investment plan instead of within the management field. That should teach both the politicians and perhaps the citizens too, to pay more attention to trees and have more respect for them (Jónsdóttir 2014). Unlike the Mayor, there aren’t any personal interests at stake for the environmental- and planning council members but as stated earlier, they need to protect the interests of the whole. As involved in their positions, they have to have knowledge about a lot of issues but cannot, due to amount of topics that is being discussed, have in-depth knowledge about everything. They trust the rational decisions that are made by the officers, but have the power to confirm or dismiss these decisions.

To be able to make strategic decisions the knowledge about the topics has to be present. From the politicians’ point of view, the concept of urban trees is understood as all trees that are managed by the city. There lies their knowledge foundation, as soon as it can be shown that trees provide something beneficial to the city, the higher status they will get in decision making. However, there is a distinction between urban trees and street trees. The management of street trees, as the cottonwood, is the most expensive management of trees compared to other trees in the city that do not have ‘gray man-made environment’ as their surroundings. That is what the politicians base their decisions upon. And that is also the reason for that the environmental- and planning council asked for a strategy about urban trees later in the process, to be able put these issues in more formal structure and to be better prepared for future decisions about urban trees. According to the politicians during the interview, the city’s reactions to new issues are considered to be slow but the politicians say that their job is to
make strategic decisions and the rest has to follow in terms of actions. In line with their views on the city’s slow reaction to new issues, RFA also mention how the society handles changes and new urban trends and ideas that are relatively new to the Icelandic arena. Viðarsson claims that as a nation, icelanders react rather slowly when picking up new things but when it is done it happens fast, there is where the lack of experience becomes obvious. However, the society starts to learn from the experience regarding the cottonwood and realizing what could have been done better when the trees were planted.

6.3 The benefits of networking
The Chief of gardening took over from the environmental- and planning council regarding the next steps of the process. He held the role that takes the most practical decisions about trees in the city and decided to contact a private consult to evaluate the cottonwood. Relationships between actors are often invisible to the public sphere but the Chief of gardening has a good network of people who hold the knowledge that is essential in cases like these. As both the social and professional sphere is quite small in Iceland, the network of actors is also quite small. That means that within the profession, the actors are few and many of them know each other. The Chief of gardening can chose which actors he contacts to work with him on in certain projects, holding the knowledge and experience within a fixed setting. According to him, the sector is very small and only few names that can be connected to the topic of trees in the city. The private consult got the chance to work on these issues and gain knowledge about urban trees partly because the Chief of gardening has hired him for the task, both to evaluate the cottonwood and to supervise the implementations when the trees were replaced. The same consult has worked for the city in other projects regarding plants and trees and because of his opportunity to work for the city, he has a lot of experience related to these issues. Having a dense network is clearly an advantage and the actors within that network benefit from that, where the social capital is strong and positionality of key actors can control the outcome of a process (Haugaard 2003). This control of the outcome, however, doesn’t have to be a negative thing. Considering the size of Reykjavík and the number of actors that can actually be involved in a process regarding such a specific topic, the close networking can create a knowledge base that would otherwise not built up. That knowledge base can be seen as fundamental for further work on the matter.

The sector is small and apart from building a knowledge base within a small group of actors, the actors more or less know each other personally. They are former colleagues, went to school together or work on other unrelated projects together. These close relationships strengthen the communications and make the communication paths short between actors. However, the size of the sector has disadvantages that other countries are not faced with. There is a lack of research on a number of matters that the academia takes care of in bigger societies. Reykjavík is often positioned between roles and has to perform its own research or pay for research that would otherwise not be performed. Knowledge is indeed being adapted
from other countries but the circumstances for trees in Reykjavík are more often in another context than in other bigger cities. Despite that, there is a good collaboration between the Chief of gardening and the Agricultural University as he and the lector, Samson B. Harðarsson are old colleagues and still work together on diverse levels. There is a common understanding of concepts and the knowledge of what the other is capable of.

When the Chief of gardening got the assignment to look further at the cottonwood trees in the city, the public debate had gotten louder and even reached its peak. To respond to that heated debate, the Agricultural University together in collaboration with the city and the labor union for gardeners held an open public meeting to discuss the topic. At this point in the process, academia played a big part and had a chance to influence the process. With diverse lectures given in that meeting, the information to citizens was expanded and the knowledge base was opened up. The results of the meeting were profitable for the continuation of the process, as it was discussed what species could be suitable for street trees in Reykjavík instead of the cottonwood trees that were cut down. The meeting reached a conclusion that the cottonwood is a very strong tree but maybe there can be found other species of the genus populus (a type of tree) that would be better as street trees. The participants at the meeting also showed interest in looking further into the soil that street trees live in and examine the use of structural soil for Reykjavíks conditions. It was implied that this kind of examinations could be a collaboration of several actors (LBHÍ 2011). However, the role of the street tree was a center point and following the meeting, the Chief of gardening asked Harðarson to write a report for the city about urban trees and selection of species.

6.4 Knowledge is power

Harðarson has a strong role within the ‘green sector’ as a lector at the Agricultural University and as a part of the small sectors network. He acknowledges the role of academia in informing the public about new research. The academia holds the most powerful weapon to build up understanding among politicians and the public. This weapon is not always used as Harðarson admits. The obvious benefits of entering the academia are to be able to affect the society in a good way, both by participating in public debates and by teaching and having dialogues with students. Those who have specific knowledge that society is generally not aware of, have some kind of ethical duty to step forward and inform the public. In that way, the academia is therefore given power which has to be handled delicately, the information has to be right and reliable. The knowledge, and therefore the truth, is confirmed with science. Hence, power is created by verification of truth (Haugaard 2003).

Despite the power of holding the knowledge and have a responsibility to forward it, it takes time from everything else to write articles, other than academic text, articles that the general public can understand and gain something from. The academia is not productive enough in that area. However, it is not only the question about productivity, it is also a question about
economic issues; in other words, money for research. The lack of money to research within this sector is serious. Everything that has to do with research on trees is time consuming and costly and because of the small sector, money get prioritized to other matters. Harðarson claims that there are traces of a certain hierarchy when it comes to the green sector. It seems that its status is not high enough when it comes to the public debate and general discussion. The gardening is usually placed last in priority and is seen as a bit lame profession. That is a part of the reason that money is not available for research. However, that gives the academia even stronger reason for discussing the matters of the green sector and informing about the benefits of it. Here, the discursive power of academia is strong and to contain respect it is essential for the academia to use it.

A dialogue between the academia and politicians is also important. It has to be clear for those who hold the power to decide upon urban trees that street trees are enormous investment. To plant one street tree costs few hundred thousand Icelandic kronas, therefore it is too costly to just plant somewhere, somehow. And if matters should be taken seriously and managed on right premises then the sector needs money. However, Harðarson puts forth the question that is rarely discussed; do we want to have street trees in Reykjavík? Why do we plan for trees and green areas if there is no economic base to take care of it? The history of trees within built area in Reykjavík is relatively young and the experience with trees is therefore scarce. Nevertheless, to show both the politicians and the public the use and benefits of green areas, the academia must be diligent to argue for it and inform in everyday media. Media is the general way to get through to the public but it matters how information is presented. Harðarson has experienced how media can bias the information and not deliver the right messages. In an interview that was performed in relation to a conference about forestry, Harðarson was asked about street trees as he talked about the lack of experience about managing and choosing street tree species. He answered that cottonwood was a strong tree and that Reykjavík hardly had any experience of other species than the cottonwood. The headline of the news piece was that cottonwood was the best street tree (RÚV 2014). That is a clear example of how misunderstanding can take place, the knowledge is put in a biased form on its way to the public and their judgment is influenced with information that is not totally correct. The assumption cannot be made that the audience will receive the messages that the informer intends to convey (Throgmorton 2003). Even though that was not his intention to state anything about the cottonwood, Harðarson got both criticized and acknowledged for what was presented in the headline. He had to explain afterwards what he actually said in the interview, correcting the misunderstanding that it created (Harðarson 2014).

6.5 The power of independency

The role of RFA is to stand up for the trees and fight for their interests as an independent actor and as such, they are motivated by their own goals. Their purpose as an association is to promote forestry, arboriculture and strengthen the interaction between humans and nature.
The members of the association are occasionally contacted for consulting matters, and they provide comments on debated issues, either when they are asked for it or just when they want to express their opinion as an independent organization. They were at first skeptical about the replacement of cottonwood but as Gíslason puts it in the interview:

“It was a bit strange with the Best Party because they showed officially big interest in forestry and arboriculture but at the same time they were completely against cottonwood in the city center. Well, alright, fine by me, that is just their preferences. It is nothing wrong with cutting down one species if it is replaced by another. It was sort of an emotional issue for them. We did not criticize them because they were going to replace the trees. However, if they had not replaced the trees we would have been be furious!”

(Gíslason 2014).

For the members of RFA, the trees are more than just interests; it is also their full time occupation to talk and think about trees. With that in mind, they were asked to write a report about urban forestry by the Mayor’s initiative who wanted to start a work on some future vision about urban forestry in Reykjavík, which could be used as an underlying document in the new comprehensive plan. With their knowledge and experience about forestry they wrote the report, in a collaboration with the editor of the comprehensive plan and the city’s Chief of planning, as they provided comments and thought how the strategy could be better suited for the comprehensive plan and better suited to the city’s district (Skógæktarfélæg Reykjavíkur 2013). However, the report was written on RFA’s terms and they had the control of the outlines and the context of the report. The report was not financially supported by the city and RFA carried all the cost to cover the making of the report.

Some parts of the report ended up in the new comprehensive plan, though with editing and adapting of text. The Chief of gardening was sceptic about the report and said that they had made strategies about inner city areas, the districts that were not the territory of RFA. He thought the report was a good document in itself but implied that RFA should focus on their areas which are the outskirts of the city (Jónsson 2014). According to Viðarsson (2014) the report did not tackle urban trees as in street trees or other individual trees managed by the city, only suggesting areas within each city district that could be suitable for more dense grouping of trees or tree stands.

Parallel to the work on the urban forestry report, a committee on behalf of the city was working on a urban tree strategy. When the urban tree strategy was presented in the city council, it got criticized for not mentioning any cooperation between other actors in order to share knowledge and encourage communication and cooperation. Actors such as RFA were not mentioned, nor any other private companies such as nurseries (just the Reykjavík’s own
nursery was mentioned) that are innovative and productive. Or as stated at the council meeting “There is no doubt that it can only be beneficial and lead to good results to work together with the companies and NGOs that are specialized in that area, have gained experience with good results” (Reykjavík 2013a). The collaboration between RFA and the city goes way back and it seems that there is a certain tension marked in history that is hard to put a finger on. It could be a question of not letting a NGO get more power in the city than they already have with their current position. If that is the case, it could stand in the way of further collaboration and sharing of knowledge bases. It looks like that power is an influencing factor or as Flyvbjerg states “...power defines what gets to count as knowledge. It shows, furthermore, how power defines not only a certain conception of reality. It is not just the social construction of rationality that is at issue here; it is also the fact that power defines physical, economic, social, and environmental reality itself” (Flyvbjerg 2002, p. 361).

In the following table the results from the analysis related to power are summarized by listing the actors and their creation of power by Haugaard together with their dimension of power by Reed.

Table 1 – Results of creation and dimension of power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Creation of power</th>
<th>Dimension of power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Mayor</td>
<td>Social order/system bias</td>
<td>Performative/discursive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>Social order</td>
<td>Performative/discursive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chief of gardening</td>
<td>Social order/system of thought</td>
<td>Relational/discursive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lector</td>
<td>Reification (verification of truth)</td>
<td>Relational/discursive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rvk. Forestry Association</td>
<td>Tacit knowledge</td>
<td>Discursive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.6 Words have power

The Mayor did not use the exact words *street tree* nor *urban tree* in his article but was nevertheless clear in his meaning. Therefore, when studying the role of urban trees in Reykjavík it is relevant to look into when these words and concepts actually entered the scene in public documents, everyday media or in other forms of reaching to the public. In the former comprehensive plan for Reykjavík 2001-2024 which was confirmed in 2002, the word *tree* cannot be found within the whole planning document (Reykjavík 2014c). There is a short description of the Green Scarf in a section about open areas, where it is declared to be the boundary between built environment and the outskirts of the city, where forestry and recreational area is intertwined (Reykjavík 2014c). The absence of trees in official documents at that point gives a certain impression of the importance of their role. The first sign of the concept *urban tree* where both the words themselves and a definition of the concept is given can first be seen in the report from RFA, which was published in 2013, and in the new comprehensive plan for Reykjavík where the definition is derived from the RFA report. Before that time, these words have not been used in the same sense as discussed in this paper.
This indicates that the issue of urban trees did barely exist publicly before Gnarr made it into an issue. Harðarson (2014) however, points out that the word urban can be seen as a current international trend. It influences the discussion and by using the word urban, people’s attention can easily be attained. It is an international trend of everything being urban and the word urban sells according to Harðarson.

My interviewees stated that the definitions of urban trees vary, depending on the role of the actor. Both the Chief of gardening and Harðarson, mention that it can be questionable to strictly attach to one definition of urban trees. Urban trees can easily be seen as all trees in the city, both on public and private properties. However, the actors agree on that when they talk about urban trees they are referring to trees that are planned and managed by the city. Harðarson even distinguishes between urban trees and street trees because of the difficult conditions the street trees live in, in contrast with other trees in the city. And as he wrote in his report for the Chief of gardening, he defines trees regarding their surroundings and the species that can handle harsh surrounding environment. The politicians define urban trees as street trees because that is the trees that have to be maintained and managed by the city, with gray surroundings. They will have to look at the case from the economical point of view and street trees are the most expensive ones in the city. They further discuss the cottonwood and as a tree, the cottonwood isn’t a problem except where the tree has gray surroundings that limits it physically. The RFA follow the same line point to their definition from the RFA report, where urban trees are defined as trees that are managed by the city, for example trees that are planted along roads, in public parks or close to official buildings. The Mayor gives a little more poetic description of how he defines urban trees; “Urban tree is a tree that is seasonal, fits well with its surroundings and has a purpose, preferably manifold purposes. It should be a landmark, aesthetic and be a certain wind protection. The beauty of it should not be limited to the eyes. It should also have a fragrance, a scent of trees.” (Gnarr 2014). Here, the Mayor is not using any technical or economic valuation behind his descriptions; it’s his emotions and feelings that create that description. Even though other actors in the process did not use these words to describe the concept, it is a good addition to the discourse.

According to Harðarson (2014) there has been a lack of understanding about the emotions and feelings that the design of environment can result in among citizens. He honors the actors that do involve describing adjectives when they talk about qualities of urban areas, especially has he noticed this use of words among the city’s actors, when they talk about beautiful environment. To talk about positive environmental impact where health and qualities of the environment are emphasized gives the green sector a stronger role. He claims that this way of talking is an essential part of the debate and discussion and that it is important that politicians are aware of that. Thereby, build an understanding about these values, which again makes it easier to argue for their goods. The Mayor did also use this kind of phrasing during the interview, as he talked about the lack of romantic places in the city. Places where space is
created with plants and give the feeling of embrace in a way. Other values of trees are also hard to argue against when the benefits contribute to a healthier environment. It is the end user, the citizens that will be affected in a positive way. However, it is not only a beautiful and healthy environment that trees can contribute to. All of my interviewees agreed on that wind protection is one of the most important value of urban trees that are beneficial for the conditions in Reykjavík. That is one of the values that are highly contextualized for the city as it is very exposed for wind due to its location. Other values are not as well-known to the public but it is the city’s responsibility to teach and inform about those values. It is a positive thing when the debate can be based on understanding and criticism can be made from different perspectives, widening the knowledge base (Gnarr 2014).

6.7 Widening the knowledge base

It is not only the city that has to teach its citizens, it is also the city that has to learn. During the implementation period when the cottonwood was replaced, the city decided to learn from previous mistakes and went through a number of stages in that learning. Some of the trees that were replaced were taken into a laboratory to analyze how the limited root space did affect the trees. The root space was examined among the soil that surrounds the roots. The city went through a study of different soils with the aim to find the best one for extended root system in limited root space. The examinations lead to structural soil that is being used in certain site limitations. The knowledge about the structural soil could be found within the academia but there was a change to bring it up on the surface and start to use the knowledge in general discussions about street trees. Further, to adapt the soil and site limitations to Icelandic conditions (Harðarson 2014, Jónsson 2014).

The commonly known values that urban trees contribute with were, as previously stated, more or less tied to wind protection and amenity. However, when the debate was ongoing there were other values that were brought up to the surface. Both Gíslason (2014) and Jónsdóttir (2014) mention the health benefits, for both mental and physical health. The politicians are aware of that knowledge about the benefits is essential to be able to work with the topic with a greater stability than before (Jónsdóttir 2014). It is clearly an addition to the discourse when more people are starting to grasp the meaning of the concepts and the consequences that it can have. The concept urban trees did vaguely exist in the public discussions and debate for about four years ago. Now the trees have gained attention and were discussed in the new comprehensive plan. It is therefore obvious that the value and meaning of urban trees have increased immensely over the last few years where the trees have apparently gained a stronger status, both within the city’s planning structure and among the public. However, the actors hold the power to shape the contextualized discourse and the societal meaning of urban trees that are being structured around the phenomenon.
Figure 5 – Discursive changes.

An example of the discursive expansion around urban trees in Reykjavik is outlined in a very simplified illustration here above, figure five. Trees are identified as the first key signifier in year 2010. The words and concepts that have appeared on the surface during the process are listed as signifiers that connect the two key signifiers, some examples of signifiers can be seen in figure five. The second key signifier is urban trees, added to the discourse in year 2014 when the new comprehensive plan was confirmed. This example highlights the addition to the discourse, with possibilities to widen it even further for discursive extensions. The main factors that contributed to the expansion of the discourse are listed in the following table, together with the factors that created new knowledge which also contributed to the expanded discourse.

Table 2 – Contributors to the expanded discourse and knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New knowledge</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended meaning</td>
<td>Clearer definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New words/concepts</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New definitions</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrasing</td>
<td>Strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. CONCLUSION

When the topic of this study first caught my attention I had imagined that trees were of a certain non-issue in the city planning structure. I had my information from the media like everybody else and followed the news when the cottonwood trees were actually replaced. But after the heated media debate peaked it felt like the discussion had fated out and I got the feeling that no one was paying attention to the topic. After I started collecting material for the study, reading official documents and then contacting my interviewees I soon realized that a lot had happened since year 2010.

The vague status of trees is somehow rooted in Icelandic history and the citizens in general do not seem to be aware of values of the trees. However, by putting this topic on the political agenda the Mayor started a process that he did not see the final consequences of. What started out as being the Mayor’s “war” against cottonwood resulted in deeper knowledge and discourse which was richer of content. The Mayor’s actions also resulted in that the comprehensive plan which serves as an overall strategy for the whole city now contains a chapter about urban trees and how to develop their role in the city for the next 20 years. It is a big step for the trees to get this kind of coverage in the comprehensive plan. It is surprising how one man’s interests can have such impact on the end-users. However, the Mayor was not the only one who influenced the process. The process was driven by many other actors which each hold an important role. By their input they paved the way for urban trees in Reykjavik.

Trees have gained a stronger role in the planning structure through the process but that is only the first step. The next step is to follow through with the strategies and consolidate even further the idea about trees in the urban environment. It is up to the involved actors to use their positions to promote for the values and importance of trees. It is up to the people with power to act and make decisions that are beneficial for the citizens. The topic of trees within the city demands a multi-sectoral approach that reflects the multi-sectoral nature of the management and decision making around urban trees in the city. Then it is important to bear in mind that the Icelandic planning system is really small and therefore holds each and every actor much power. The power is concentrated on few and is present in every action within every position. This concentrated power often creates delicate conditions that involved actors have to be aware of, because it is after all their actions, decisions, knowledge and discourse that affect our living environment.
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Verbal sources


APPENDIX I

Interview questions

General understanding of urban trees and values
● Are trees of your interest? why?
● How would you define urban trees?
● Is there any certain definition that is normally used in Reykjavik? From where is it derived?
● What meaning do you think that urban trees have for the community? What values can/do they provide?

The process of poplar trees
● What kind of a process started when the poplar trees were discussed in the City Council?
● Would it be possible to have the process in a different way? how? (your opinion)
● Could you identify who are influencing the process? Who has permission to do something and who has the power to decide?
● How is the collaboration between actors involved? ex planning department and the chief of gardening…. or between the chief of gardening and Forestry Association, are you aware of that?
● How do you experience the will to cooperate between actors involved? Does it matter who are involved?
● Can you identify anything that can be seen as an obstacle in the cooperation? (certain actors, laws and legislation, money, politics, distribution of power)

Future strategies
● Are you aware of the report that FAR wrote last year? Has the report been introduced to you in any way?
● Do you think that this report will change anything regarding urban trees?
● What strategies would you like to see in the future about urban trees?
● Who should indeed have the initiative in such cases if not you?
● Do you think that there is a need for clearer procedures? In what way?
● Wherefrom do you get information and knowledge about different topics? To what extent do you consult specialists?
● Do you think that urban trees is one of the topics that is neglected if there is no direct interest that push things forward?
● Have you notice any changes in the public debate about urban trees for the last few years?
The Mayor - Jón Gnarr (the Best Party)
● What was your intention when you wrote this article?
● Did you study the current situation beforehand? Did you consult specialists?
● Did you expect these enormous reactions to your topic?
● Have you in any way tried to address trees in other perspectives than the cottonwood?

The members of the planning council - Karl Sigurðsson (the Best Party) and Kristín Soffía Jónsdóttir (Social democrats)
● Is Agenda 21 involved in this matter in one way or another?
● Would this process have been realized if not for the Mayors article? Who do you think would have initiated it?
● Do you have any goals about the number of trees in the city? (like in Stockholm, one tree for each apartment)

The Chief of gardening - Þórólfur Jónsson (Reykjavíkurborg)
● Is Agenda 21 involved in this matter in one way or another?
● Would this process have been realized if not for the Mayors article? Who do you think would have initiated it?
● Do you have any database or registration of trees in the city?
● Do you think there is a need for more clear strategy about urban trees?
● Do you have any goals about the number of trees in the city? (like in Stockholm, one tree for each apartment)

Member of FAR - Gústaf Jarl Viðarsson, Helgi Gíslason
● Could you tell me about the definitions inner city forest and the outskirts? Are they definitions that already existed?
● Did you present the RFA report for any actor?
● How did the collaboration with Reykjavík go, related to the report?
● What were your instructions for the report?

Lector at the Agricultural University of Iceland - Samson B. Harðarson:
● Do you have any collaboration with other actors as a lector?
● Do you think there is a need for more clear strategy about urban trees?
● Are we behind when it comes to strategies and future vision?
● Which countries can we learn from?
● Do you know if trees are being cultivated for future use in Reykjavík? What are the guidelines?
● How did the meeting in February 2011 go about? Any results?