

Public deliberation, community capacity and neighbourhood dynamics

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to explore what happens when participatory processes are initiated in area-based urban regeneration programmes such as the New Deal for Communities in the United Kingdom, the German Soziale Stadt, and the Danish Kvarterloft. Many of these initiatives are based on a participatory approach with emphasis on active citizen participation and the involvement of local stakeholders. We argue that these initiatives are not as open and inclusive as they strive to be, and explore the different types of exclusion that take place when such programmes are implemented. Based on the theoretical literature, we identify three types of exclusion - structural, discursive and deliberate exclusion. This paper offers a theoretical analysis and an empirical account of these exclusions and concludes that practitioners as well as politicians need to reflect critically on different types of exclusion in order to create transparent and inclusive democratic processes.

1. Participatory area-based urban regeneration programmes urban planning for all?

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the active involvement and participation of local communities, citizens and other stakeholders play an increasingly important role in many European urban policy programmes¹. This is particularly the case in area-based initiatives where partnerships with local actors are often highlighted as core components for facilitating and encouraging local engagement, responsibility and sense of ownership both generally in the neighbourhood and specifically towards the new investments of the urban programme in question. Public participation in urban regeneration programmes is often considered by many governments to be a

¹ The new generation of European urban policy programmes include initiatives such as City Challenge and the Single Regeneration Budget initiated in England the early 1990s and more recently the New Deal for Communities, in Scotland Urban Partnerships and Priority Partnership Areas, the German *Soziale Stadt*, the Dutch *Grote-Stedenbeleid* (Big Cities) and Urban Programmes, the *Sociaal Impulsfond* in Belgium, *Politique de la Ville* (Cities Policy) in France, the Swedish *Storstadssattsningen* (Big City Policy) (De Decker, Vranken, Beaumont and Nieuwenhuyze 2003, Groth-Hansen 1998), and the Danish Kvarterloft which celebrates its 10th Anniversary in 2007.

precondition for achieving effective solutions to local projects, as well as for shaping sustainable political solutions (Pløger 2004:77). As a result, citizens have a number of new arenas where they can seek influence on issues that affect them directly in their daily life. In this paper we want to respond to a call from scholars, practitioners and policy makers for more empirical accounts that assess the interactive qualities of participatory processes (Collaborative Democracy Network 2006). In so doing we want to explore in depth "who" participates in these new arenas for participation? How are actors included or excluded and "what happens" in the processes in which local actors interact with other local actors and with (local) government planners and policy makers? These types of questions have become increasingly relevant, since a considerable amount of public funding has been invested in large-scale area-based integrated urban renewal programmes embracing hundreds of projects in most European countries over the last 10-15 years.

Based on readings of planning literature as well as observations of data collected through qualitative interviews with residents, neighbourhood politicians and representatives of local government in the Danish Area-based Urban Regeneration programme, we claim that different types of exclusion take place in participatory processes. In our view it is necessary to acknowledge and accept that exclusion of actors and issues does take place in designed policy programmes like area-based urban regeneration programmes, but that exclusion may have a beneficial impact on the progress of processes in such a programme. Thus, exclusion may serve as an instrument that reduces uncertainty and complexity of the process and makes it run more smoothly. On the other hand it is of no use to try to deny that there are undesired effects of exclusion and that it is vital not only to be aware of this, but also to develop means to cope with it. If not addressed properly, the detrimental effects of exclusion can be severe conflict, frustration, and mistrust among residents in the neighbourhood combined with loss of legitimacy and non-sustainability of the reached solutions in the neighbourhood programme. Therefore, in order to be able to distinguish clearly between the two opposite sides of exclusion, we see a need to distinguish between the different types of exclusion at play and identify the role they have in participatory urban regeneration programmes.

While others have analysed and evaluated area-based programmes with respect to results and effect (for example Lawless 2006; Larsen, Andersen and Kielgast 2003; Sandberg and Suur-Nurja 2002), we want to focus on one particular aspect of the management process of such projects. We analyse the exclusion of participants and issues and propose that it could be fruitful to have a differentiated view of exclusion as its purpose, form, as effects vary depending on for example the phase of the programme and the issues at stake. The article is divided into three sections. First, we present a theoretical perspective on different types of exclusion in participatory processes. Secondly, we give an empirical account of the different types of exclusion in participatory processes represented by the Danish urban regeneration programme called *Kvarterloft*. In the final section we conclude the article and discuss briefly how practitioners should deal with the different types of exclusion.

2. Exclusion in participatory processes

Participatory arrangements can be characterised as complex systems according to Wagenar (2007). He suggests that the real strength of participatory arrangements is precisely the ability to handle the complexity of the matters at hand; that is in relation to urban regeneration e.g. neighbourhood decline and efforts made to reverse it. Here complexity refers to for example the extended web of actors -

people, groups, businesses, associations – involved in the neighbourhood programme, to the number, character and variety of projects and activities in an area-based regeneration programme, and to the soft and hard technologies that are developed, used and implemented. Coping with complexity in neighbourhood initiatives is not a straightforward matter. Wagenaar (2007) finds that participatory neighbourhood arrangements, in order "to function at all, need to hover between order and chaos, between hierarchy and anarchy". In the case of the former, information flows are restricted and managed top-down, while reverse flows either hardly ever occur or are downright neglected. In the case of anarchy, information flows freely among groups of agents but discussions continue endlessly and no decisions are made (Wagenaar 2007:43). We propose that exclusion, despite the negative connotations of the concept, is actually one of the mechanisms that make urban regeneration programmes run and more or less fulfil their goals. In order to ensure that a delicate balance is struck between restricted involvement but efficient hierarchy on the one hand and, on the other hand, inefficient but stimulating and enthusiastic anarchy, it is far from sufficient to advocate participatory and consensus-based decision-making. Mobilisation is a necessary but not sufficient prerequisite, as mobilisation in itself does not ensure that an effective balance between hierarchy and anarchy is struck. In a sense, one of the greatest challenges is to reduce mobilisation within the mobilisation itself, however without reverting to the old norms and practices of central control and hierarchy. This is why exclusion is relevant and to some degree also necessary, although it is a politically delicate issue. It is relevant to investigate what types of exclusion take place in participatory processes, in order to answer some core democratic questions, such as "to what extent are affected citizens and stakeholders represented in the process?" Based on readings of theoretical literature on citizen participation, we can identify different types of exclusion that can take place in participatory processes:

- *structural* exclusion of actors
- *discursive* exclusion of issues
- *deliberate* exclusion in the process

With regard to the increasing use of more participatory approaches in large-scale urban programmes, we find that too little attention is paid to the different types of exclusion that can take place. The following sections unfold the three types of exclusion, which based on the readings of planning literature and on empirical observations we find can take place in participatory processes.

Structural exclusion of actors

Structural exclusion refers to structural inequalities that make it more difficult for certain groups to participate and that favour citizens and representatives with resources (Fung 2004:49). Inspired by Young (2000), we distinguish between "*external*" and "*internal*" exclusions. External exclusion refers to the fact that allegedly participatory processes often exclude members of racial and ethnic minorities, have fewer women than men, have fewer working-class people than professionals, are often age-biased, and rarely involve people with disabilities (Fung 2004:49). Even though many of the participatory and deliberative processes seek to include everybody affected by a certain decision, they often have difficulties in overcoming some of the structural inequalities that make it easier for some groups to take advantage of formal opportunities for participation than others (Young 1996). Internal exclusion on the other hand refers to the way that some people's ideas and social perspectives are likely to dominate discussion and decision-making even when a forum has diversity in the room (Fung 2004: 49). In spite of the fact that public meetings are open to all, who wish to attend, the reality is that few citizens

participate. And those who do are the ones that possess resources in the form of political know-how and resources such as information, time and professional knowledge (Innes and Booher 1999, 2000, DeSantis and Hill 2004). Young's argument is that in order to make inclusive deliberative processes, it is not enough simply to assemble members of different groups in the same room, since the problem is that certain groups are simply not being heard. Especially in relation to initiatives in deprived neighbourhoods, it is worth noting that many citizens do not subscribe to the middle-class model of participation and civic culture based on the notion of capable, eloquent, active and interested individual actors (Burgers & Vranken 2003:53). Far from all citizens of a neighbourhood can manage to mobilise resources like these, instead they are to a higher degree structurally excluded (Connelly and Richardson 2004). Atkinson (1999:69) reminds us that it is important to be aware that certain groups are disadvantaged not only in terms of access to material resources but also in terms of what they think is possible. He notes that:

"Whilst processes of partnership creation and empowerment may be a way of ensuring that (some of) the benefits of regeneration reach disadvantaged, they may also have the effect of reinforcing existing relations of domination and control, of legitimating a particular representation of reality which defines what is 'reasonable' and the language in which demands can be made"

Thereby the participatory processes can often be biased and the powerful and organised actors can drown out other voices (Innes, J. E. and Booher 2004). Therefore it is important to be aware that participation as such does not take place in a socio-political vacuum but is already premised on existing power relations (Pattison 2001). We find that it is important for practitioners to be aware of the different types of exclusion that can take place, and we call for more attention to be paid to the institutional settings for deliberations, since the choice of techniques and involvement methods is part of shaping the nature of the participatory process and their overall inclusiveness and representativeness (Gastil and Levine 2005). In order to strive for inclusive participatory processes, we argue that it can be necessary to take explicit measures to counter this trend.

Discursive exclusion of issues

By discursive exclusion we refer to the way e.g. problems and initiatives are articulated and discursively constructed in plans and programmes. Here we focus on the role of communication, and the key role it plays in shaping planning practices, public dialogues, policy making and processes of collaboration (Pløger 1998). In this sense planning can be regarded as a discursive practice, where e.g. oral and written texts, mappings and drawings are representations of power relations. As Pløger (2001:6) points out:

"A planning system regulates who can (discursively and by other resources), about what (planning issues, as well as power politics) and over whom (hierarchy of decision). Planning systems are ways to arrange the order of power through procedures and hierarchies, and therefore they are tools to govern and structure possible fields of others"

By focusing on the "discursive articulations" of a planning programme, we can get an idea of "who" are regarded as the relevant stakeholders, "what" problems are considered important and "what" criteria of success are expressed. But as Forester notes, it is not only the written words, but also the words used in practice that are worth studying (Forester 1999). The use of words in practice influences the agendas

and the arenas for communications. For example, if the planners mainly use a technical and scientific language some, well actually most citizens could be prevented from taking part in the discussions. Power relations are expressed through e.g. what counts as valid knowledge, and thereby has an effect on what is perceived as "truth" or "the reality". In this way different forms of communication and knowledge such as emotional expressions or storytelling are often marginalised in favour of a sometimes competitive style of debating more based on reason.

Another aspect of discursive exclusion of issues derives from the fact that many of the participatory processes strive to seek consensus among the involved citizens and stakeholders. According to Connelly & Richardson (2004:13) this can lead to a situation where planners pay most attention to areas where agreement is most likely to be reached. In the search for common visions and areas of mutual interest for the involved stakeholders more conflictual issues are excluded. However by excluding important issues and conflicting viewpoints, the result can be a "thin" consensus, meaning that it represents the lowest common denominator that could be agreed upon. Furthermore there is a risk in avoiding issues of conflicts that mutual learning and creating of reciprocity and trust cannot replace, since the ability to change positions requires some difference of interests rather than an illusion of common ground.

Deliberate exclusion in the process

The need to strike a balance in participatory processes is not only a matter of a finding the way to a workable equilibrium between hierarchy and anarchy, between control and broad popular participation. It is also a choice between the extremes of excessive conflict and excessive consensus. Excessive conflict means that networks disintegrate, while striving for consensus easily leads to "protracted deliberation processes that consume excessive energy and money but ultimately produce weak compromises, dead-locked decision-making or non-implementation (Koppenjan (2007). Obviously, the more positive vision of a consensus-building process would expect it to facilitate that all involved actors contribute on equal terms to the sharing of meaning and interests and the generation of new ideas for framing problems and developing new approaches to solve them (Hillier 2002). While this process may and probably should develop in a communicative spirit, it is, however, not a process free of differences of opinions, disagreements and conflicts. The other side of consensus-building becomes visible when interests and ideas are not shared, interests come under threat during the process, or values and norms simply differ too much. It is to some extent trivial that the result will often be conflict. It seems to be easy to come to a consensus regarding the overall goals and intentions about visions and improvements for the neighbourhood e.g. less traffic or more green areas. But in practice more often disagreements and conflicts arise when more concrete details has to be decided e.g. where to lead the traffic or locate parks, (Agger 2005). Conflict resolution is often added as yet another component to area-based programmes. But we are not interested in conflict resolution as a technical discipline that is activated when conflicts between specific actors turn into an obstacle for further progress in one or more specific activities or projects. Our focus is on the more or less implicit and hidden mechanisms in an area-based initiative comprising many projects and activities, where more or less pronounced conflicts are solved through the exclusion of viewpoints, certain ways of debating issues, issues from the agenda or even exclusion of certain people.

Whereas it is obvious that not just anyone can exclude issues, views or even persons from the consensus-building process, it is less clear what it takes to be in a position where you can execute deliberate exclusion. Exclusion need not be the outcome of a fight for example over the allocation of some specific funding or a similar conflict situation. What is often seen though is that ends are used to legitimise means. Bureaucratic or project management views on an issue necessitates the exclusion of views, viewpoints, diverging opinions, details, etc. in order to reach the goal, for example that a project has to be decided and implemented before some deadline, because funding terminates at a certain point. Thus it should be noted that deliberate exclusion may in fact often be operated with the best of intentions, i.e. exclusion takes place as a way to make things run better, to open the process if in a dead-lock, to speed up decision-making or to respect an external deadline. The power to exert deliberate exclusion is restricted to certain actors and is thereby a (governance) instrument that is not available to anyone. Some actors, most notably civil servants of the local government administration or the official local area-based initiative organisation, have much better access to include and exclude issues, debates, and other actors from the consensus process of the programme. Despite their local influence, even local political elites will often have to witness that issues that they find most essential have been excluded from the agenda.

From this we should expect that deliberate exclusion is used to reduce complexity, that some actors can exclude issues or other actors, and that without exclusion consensus processes in urban regeneration projects risk ending in deadlock and lack of decision-making. In principle, deliberate exclusion may take place at any time, i.e. *ex ante* as well as during a project, perhaps even *ex post* in order to influence the narratives that occurs in the wake of a completed project.

4. Exclusion in area-based urban regeneration programmes

In this section we present the results of our study of the Danish urban regeneration programme. The findings and examples we use in the following are based on qualitative interviews with residents, civil servants and local politicians, which we have collected over the course of the urban regeneration programme. We have previously examined other aspects of the area-based urban policy programme (Agger 2005; Larsen, Andersen and Kielgast 2003; Larsen 2001, Larsen 2003). Whereas the empirical foundation for the analysis in this article is a set of Danish data, it is our firm conviction that most of the illustrations we present here could have come from a project in almost any area-based urban regeneration programme in Europe.

The Danish urban regeneration programme is a large-scale urban renewal programme initiated in 1996-97 in seven deprived neighbourhoods with a project period of five-seven years; it was supplemented with five more areas in 2001. The first generation of the programme was introduced on the background of growing social, ethnic and employment problems in run-down neighbourhoods many of which with mainly social housing. There was a fear that these areas could turn into ethnic and socially deprived ghettos in the big cities.

In Denmark there is a strong political tradition for decentralisation, public involvement in planning issues and a firmly rooted political culture of voluntary and influential community-based organisations (NGOs) addressing issues of urban regeneration and environmental protection. It was therefore not surprising that participatory approaches, community involvement, and democratic experimentation were major ingredients in the promotion of the first area-based initiatives in

Denmark from 1995-96. Whereas the "communitarian feel" did not enter into for example British urban policy until the introduction of Labour's urban regeneration policy New Deal for Communities in 1998 (Lawless 2006:2009). On the other hand, the notion of partnership was introduced in Danish urban regeneration policy directly imported from the UK. Apart from the inspiration from UK, most notably from Scotland, also the Dutch Big Cities Programme and some German programmes influenced the design of the Danish programme and inspired the participatory approach it employed. When the new approach in Danish urban regeneration policy was introduced - top-down from central government - it was strongly emphasised that the participatory approach was about bottom-up, multi-partner and consensus-based processes and decision-making, "associalism from above" (Nicholls 2006). Although argued with a variety of normative arguments, the participatory approach was also a necessity, simply because central government, apart from conditional funding, did not have any means of influencing local urban politics or controlling any instruments through which it could be implemented locally. It was nonetheless beyond the capacity of local government to tackle the new urban issues where local communities were confronted with social and ethnic problems that to a large extent were brought about by central government's immigration and social policies. In addition to this many other arguments have been put forward in favour of participatory approaches and public deliberation in neighbourhood regeneration. These include that so-called local knowledge of residents should be made available to decision-makers as this would improve the quality of decision-making, that involvement of neighbourhood representatives creates a stronger feeling of ownership which in turn makes solutions more sustainable, and that issues that otherwise would not be addressed are brought out in the open through the involvement of citizens. Furthermore, it is generally considered a benefit if more citizens become more involved in community activities, as increased democratic participation is considered positive in itself, particularly in deprived neighbourhoods where participation in democratic institutions traditionally is limited.

The Danish urban regeneration programme was launched as an experiment in citizen participation as it is characterised by emphasising bottom-up processes and citizen participation. The approach builds on the premise that the local residents themselves are experts in their own life and neighbourhood and are therefore best at identifying the main local problems and solutions. The formulated strategy states that involving residents result in better solutions strengthens the residents' sense of belonging to the community and ownership over the initiated projects. The approach was in many ways inspired by the theories on collaborative planning literature (e.g. Healey 1997; Innes, J.E and Booher 2003) due to its focus on creating institutional settings for open inclusive public dialogues among affected stakeholders (Sehested 1999). In the following we address different types of more or less intended and unintended exclusion that can occur when participatory urban programmes are implemented top-down in a local community.

Structural exclusion - domination of resourceful actors

In order to investigate what types of structural exclusion can take place when a participatory urban programme is implemented in a local community, we looked at who got involved in the formalised networks that were created in and between the projects and committees in the course of programme. The empirical data clearly illustrate that the urban regeneration programme by its organisation and methods of citizen involvement had an implicit selection mechanism, and thereby favoured citizens with resources for participation. These resources were e.g. free time to participate in meetings, literacy and familiarity with standard meeting procedures, knowledge of local political matters, and access to likeminded citizens and networks

(Larsen 2001). The active participants in the process could be divided into two different types of participants: *Elite activists* and *representatives from local institutions*. The majority of the participants among the citizens could be described as elite activists. These had often been involved in the community for several years and were often members of several associations, (i.e. school boards, sport groups, local cultural initiatives, local churches or local political parties). They were all heavily engaged in local initiatives and used to influence local politics. To be active in their community was almost a life style for them. The elite activists could be divided into those who had a constituency and therefore gave more attention to formal ways of participating, and those who participated from a local patriotic approach. The latter participated in a more "activist manner" i.e. in an informal way with less importance to formal procedures and dialogue with their support base if they had one. As such the elite activists could be described as a resource for the programme in the sense that they initiated many projects, and they knew how to fundraise and lobby for projects. But the study demonstrated that the elite activists also had a tendency to be closed to new and other modes of participation than their own. There were some tacit rules on how to behave and citizens who did not have access to these networks or who did not know the styles and habits of discussions and debate were therefore easily excluded.

The second group of active participants in the regeneration programme was made up of representatives from local institutions in the neighbourhood, e.g. schools, kindergartens or major sport or interest organisations in the community. These people did not usually live in the neighbourhood but worked and participated while they were at work. Often they had contacts and knew the code of conduct or language that best facilitates communication with the municipality. The citizens interviewed for the study saw the participation of representatives from local institutions in the urban regeneration process as an advantage, because their participation contributed to a continuation in the process, especially after the first year where many citizens dropped out of the process. However, some citizens were critical of the institutions' role as part of the municipality and the resulting possible conflict of interest.

Summing up the Danish case demonstrates that those who were included and represented in the process were those who had resources for participation. The study demonstrated that it was an advantage and almost a necessity to have some familiarity with standard meeting procedures such as the importance of minutes in order to secure progression from one meeting to the next instead of having the same discussion over and over again. The institutional settings for many participatory processes such as the Danish urban regeneration programme are often based on deliberations that most often take place at different types of meetings. Those citizens or stakeholders that are not used to talking and less used to talk in front of an audience are often marginalised in the debates and discussions. Thereby our study illustrates that there was a tendency that the active resourceful citizens dominated discussions. This naturally caused a debate over issues about inclusion and representation. Questions were raised on who were included and what was their mandate? And who represented the voices or interests that did not take part in the process? Some of our informants criticised that planners and policy makers in many cases accepted that certain non-representative types of citizens dominated the agenda. And that the striving for consensus-based decisions mainly reflected the interests of the dominant, active and resourceful citizens. However an interesting finding revealed in the study was that both the elite activists as well as the representatives from the local institutions showed concern about integrating the

interests and views of some of the more marginalised citizens groups e.g. local alcoholics, drug addicts or youths.

Discursive exclusion - when planners set the agenda

Discursive exclusion was observed right from the start of the urban regeneration programme and in every of its local branches. It was a matter of defining in the initial phase of the process what type of project it was going to be. Moreover the definition and description of the point of departure in itself was essential. In order to attract central government funding local government often tended to analyse the neighbourhood and describe its situation much worse than actually experienced by the residents. The way the point of departure was described is nevertheless decisive to the following phase in which it was decided what the activities and changes that were needed and thus how the resources would be spend. Moreover it was seen in the criteria for the selection of activity areas and the main issues that should be dealt with as well as in the formulation of what means should be used to reach what goals. Discursive exclusion exterminated points of view that were deemed unrealistic, unobtainable, politically controversial or otherwise non-desirable by the authorities. Discursive exclusion literally wrote out - deleted - selected issues from the project document. Both the initial document presenting the initial idea of a coming urban regeneration projects in a selected neighbourhood and the long term plan for the entire area, which was written after consultations with citizens, were worked out by planners and other civil servants in the local government administration. The civil servants and consultants actually typed the document, and had thereby the power to include and exclude issues and problems as they felt appropriate, although they were of course formally obliged to adhere to decisions made by the local neighbourhood-committee². Many vital decisions were taken in the course of the last day(s) before the final deadline for submission of the complete project plan to the ministry.

Discursive exclusion is as much about the analysis and diagnosis as it is about the initiation of activities and allocation of expected funding. Residents having lived in the area for many years do not want their neighbourhood portrayed as a disadvantaged part of the city in which the majority of residents get their income from transfer incomes, criminal activities or similar. Our study found that several of the informants found that it was stigmatising if their neighbourhood was portrayed in the media as an area that should be targeted by poverty programmes. Moreover they wanted to decide for themselves for what purposes incoming funding should be used. Their argument was that in their role as residents they had the best knowledge of local issues and challenges and that the discourse about ethnic problems and social deprivation raised by the local municipal administrations were to a certain extent exaggerated and gave a false impression of the neighbourhood. One interviewee observed that people wanted to attend the local urban regeneration project, because they did not want to leave it to the media and local government to portray their neighbourhood and decide what projects should be initiated. They wanted to highlight the strengths and the positive aspects contrary to views held by the municipal administration. The residents were provoked by the fact that "*in order to get funding for some activities or a project you have to be dependent on 15 crutches and a wheelchair*" (Agger 2005:157) as one of the residents formulated it. Many of our informants were frustrated by the fact that in order to attract resources for projects in their neighbourhood they had to articulate their residential area as full of

² The local committee represented citizens and representatives from the local institutions, housing associations. The actual composition of the Kvarterløft committees varies (see Larsen 1999)

social and physical problems. And this on the other hand contributed to a stigmatisation of their neighbourhoods and scaring potential newcomers away. Summing up our study demonstrated that many of the ideas and visions from the citizens were not taken in to account in the process, because the employed planners in the local programme-secretariats found that they were not realistic or did not fit in with the strategies of the municipalities. Many of the residents expressed disappointment with the selection of issues by the planners and called for the local politicians to make a more clear statement of the visions for the projects, instead of planners acting as gate-keepers.

Deliberate exclusion - when the hierarchy strikes back

The third type of exclusion, deliberate exclusion, was operated by powerful actors of the urban regeneration programme as a means of reducing uncertainty and risk and increasing probability of programme outcomes in terms of clear, visible, and measurable results based on expenditure correctly documented and acceptable for the National Audit Office. In other words, in order to manage the process towards clear and measurable outcomes, before the termination of the programme and the arrival of the evaluators, it was deemed necessary by powerful actors to focus activities and delimit number of persons involved in the decision-making process. In this way the hierarchy strikes back so to speak when participatory experimenting runs too far with slow or perhaps even lack of decision-making as a result. Such interventions obviously looked differently seen from the perspective of the individual citizen or local association. They found it a banal confirmation of their fear that at the end of the day decisions would after all be made at the town hall and not in the neighbourhood.

We have witnessed two main forms of deliberate exclusion in practice. In one case local government planners decided, even before the launch of the initial phase of the project, to aim at delimiting the participation and influence of specific citizen associations. This decision was made in order to encourage and strengthen the participation of other local associations and individuals that hitherto had been less influential and active. In our case studies deliberate exclusion generally had one of two forms or combinations of the two: a) from the beginning of the project the local municipality administration exerted a deliberate act intended to exclude certain actors in order to prevent them from monopolising the agenda. b) deliberate exclusion performed during the planning process as a necessity in order to overcome a stalemate/paralysed situation. c) Deliberate selection of incorporating representatives from public service institutions from the beginning of the project, they contributed to set/dominate the agenda from the very beginning. Summing up we can conclude that it is the professionals and semi-professionals that dominate the process and thereby the issues that are debated.

There are both positive and negative effects of deliberate exclusion. It is positive that funding is actually spent for intended purposes within the time frame. Local residents generally evaluate physical changes in the local environment positively, particularly if it does not take too long before they are implemented. The patience of local residents is relatively limited because people have very little knowledge of the bureaucratic and democratic processes that normally surround a change in a park, street etc. Moreover, at least in a Danish context, it is customary that major changes in urban land use and physical layout of streets, squares and parks go through a mandatory public hearing phase of eight weeks. Consequently, no matter how a urban regeneration-project otherwise develops as regards participation, exclusion and decision-making, there will almost always be a possibility of public influence and thus a certain minimal element of democratic involvement. Obviously

the other side of deliberate exclusion is that it results in intended exclusion of specific individuals, associations and interests that are deemed too uncooperative and considered to block decision-making for example because they want the granted funding spent on different purposes than the ruling majority in the dominant neighbourhood committee-coalition. It seems difficult to strike a balance - a third way - between a certain level of deliberate exclusion mainly legitimised with efficiency-arguments on the one hand and on the other hand a high degree of participation but excessive time delays, recurrent debates, conflict and lack of decision-making.

5. Discussion and implications

In this paper we have presented a new view of exclusion in participatory urban policy programmes. Our aim was to move beyond the literature's traditional rhetoric in which exclusion is mostly a matter of the dominance of one social group over other social groups or that professionals dominate over voluntary project participants. We also wanted to apply a differentiated view of exclusion as we expected it to be a phenomenon that is expressed very differently depending on the context, phase, character and situation of the participatory project etc. Finally we wanted to examine whether exclusion is to be viewed as an entirely negative phenomenon, as in the main body of the literature, or if we could identify other aspects too.

From the initiation of the Danish urban regeneration programme it was critically observed that it should be expected that the local neighbourhood-projects would be established as arenas in which capable, organised actors could formulate projects and achieve results whereas the intention of integrating less organised segments of the local population would be difficult to realise (Jensen 1998). A decade later we can see that the doubts expressed back then were almost prophetic. Area-based urban regeneration appears to be an efficient strategy for implementation of public investments in run-down urban neighbourhoods, whereas the democratic experimentation and the participatory dimension of projects and programmes experienced exclusion in many forms. Generally, some social groups get excluded more often than others but the mechanisms that cause exclusion are different depending on the phase of a project, its context etc.

We have identified three different types of exclusion: structural, discursive and deliberate exclusion. The first type is mostly triggered by unequal or asymmetric distribution of resources to participate in public activities such as projects in area-based urban regeneration programmes. This has a lot to do with economic resources. Citizen with fewer resources are more likely to be excluded, no matter how fair and open and thereby legitimate a process the planners design. The second type, discursive exclusion, is more associated with political resources. The power to initiate, dominate and change a discourse is, just as resources to participate, mostly unevenly distributed although a dedicated effort from a disadvantaged minority from time to time can change an agenda. Discursive exclusion excludes issues and thereby only indirectly people. The third type, deliberate exclusion differs from the first two types in that it have influence on the project processes rather than the project's goals, plans, activities, budgets and resource allocation. Deliberate exclusion is definitely operated by the more powerful actors in a project or programme. Deliberate exclusion seems to serve as a way to make processes run productively rather than be blocked by either excessive conflict or endless consensus seeking debates. Thus there are definitely positive effects of exclusion too, but we would also stress again that the exclusion takes place in almost every project. Therefore it would be illusive to maintain that such a thing as fair and legitimate processes open to everyone exists in the real world of area-based urban regeneration programmes.

Exclusion takes place, it occurs in different forms and it is operated on the basis of economic or political power. Sometimes exclusion may be detrimental to a neighbourhood project, sometimes deliberate exclusion can further and improve a project process and its outcome. Consequently, in practical urban planning it is decisive to incorporate exclusion as a factor that is at play in any case, rather than denying or ignoring the existence of it.

Therefore, it is important to be very conscious about the institutional settings for deliberations since the choices of techniques and involvement methods is part of shaping the nature of the participatory process and their overall inclusiveness and representativeness (Gastil and Levine 2005). In order to be more aware of which facilitation methods and institutional settings that appeals to what types of citizens it is necessary to have a better notion of who the citizens are that participate and what are the specific types of exclusion that take place, in what situations does exclusion occur. Finally, it should be recognised that exclusion in some cases may be a factor that contributes positively to the processes of a project by reducing the influence of destructive forces. E.g. in order to ensure the entrant of new groups of actors a prerequisite may be that someone, typically local government planners or external consultants, helps curbing the influence of a dominant local elite. Similarly, In order to reduce the extent and length of strife, fights and competition between local elites and the resulting impasse, intervention from outside the neighbourhood may be a necessity.

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