DEBATING PARTICIPATION

ACTORS SHAPING SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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I INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The research network "Public Participation in Environmental Projects" (PEP) was created by members of the Linked University Consortia for Environment and Development – Industry and Urban Areas (LUCED-I&UA) involved in studying, planning or advising urban environmental development or management projects and programs.

PEP started off through a dialogue between Danish and Thai researchers (also involved in DUCED activities), who experienced that a number of projects in Thailand, which had considerable environmental impact, came to a halt due to people's protests – they thus highlighted the importance and timeliness of promoting public participation.

One of the projects they mentioned was the implementation of two new ring-roads in Chiang Mai, which involved the construction of fly-over crossings at several intersections. They mentioned people's protests about a road infrastructure solution, which allegedly would lead to an increase in automobile traffic and would affect the historical identity of Chiang Mai. This initiative prompted us to renew our views on an issue which has been discussed for over three decades and which has become a catchword; and prompted a critical discussion of recent and current practices of public participation in environmental projects as well as conceptualisations of those practices.

An initial brain-storm meeting amongst interested LUCED researchers in 2001 identified research and networking needs of two kinds:

One group (the majority of the PEP Network) of LUCED members work as technical specialists in urban or environmental planning & management projects where participatory strategies are adopted. Their interest was in setting up a forum to discuss technical aspects of the practice of participation and their relationship to theory.

Another smaller group of members explicitly made the study of participatory processes a major focal point of their research and teaching. Their interest was to get access to more empirical case-data in order to further develop their research topics on participatory planning for sustainable development.

In response to this combination of interests, a workshop was organised at the Royal Danish Academy of Arts in Copenhagen, June 11-13, 2003 with the title: "Debating participation: Actors Shaping Sustainable Urban Development". The point of departure was taken in the claim that much effort has gone into defining the principles of partici-

pation and how to do it, but that not as much effort has been directed to the understanding of what actually goes on, when participation takes place in practice. This publication consists of the proceedings from that workshop. The papers that were presented in the workshop build on experiences and reflections of practitioners and academics and bring into question a number of issues surrounding public participation:

- Who participates?
- Who is excluded?
- What role do different segments of a heterogeneous community play in a participatory process?
- What role do leaders play in a development/environmental project?
- Who is the community? What role does it play in the process of initiation of a development project?
- Who has what knowledge and how is it used?
- What roles do specialists, such as architects, play in participatory projects?

Concerning the case of the flyovers in Chiang Mai, it emerged that those behind the protests were specific interest organisations, such as the Thai Architects Association, the Chiang Mai Tourist Board, and the I Love You Chiang Mai Association. The inhabitants of Chiang Mai were not mobilised by such an issue, not even those who had business or accommodation in sites neighbouring the flyovers. An Indian film-maker, Shaina Anand, who has spent the last few years documenting civic movements in Mumbai, wrote as she looked back at her experiences that: „There was a huge distance between the people's movement and the people"

Clearly, a closer look at so-called participatory practices challenges commonly accepted normative models. In the fly-over project in Chiang Mai, the protests by specific organisations surely caused a momentary ruffle, but the construction of flyovers has gone ahead unabated. The workshop was an opportunity to debate and reflect over such experiences.

Structure of the workshop

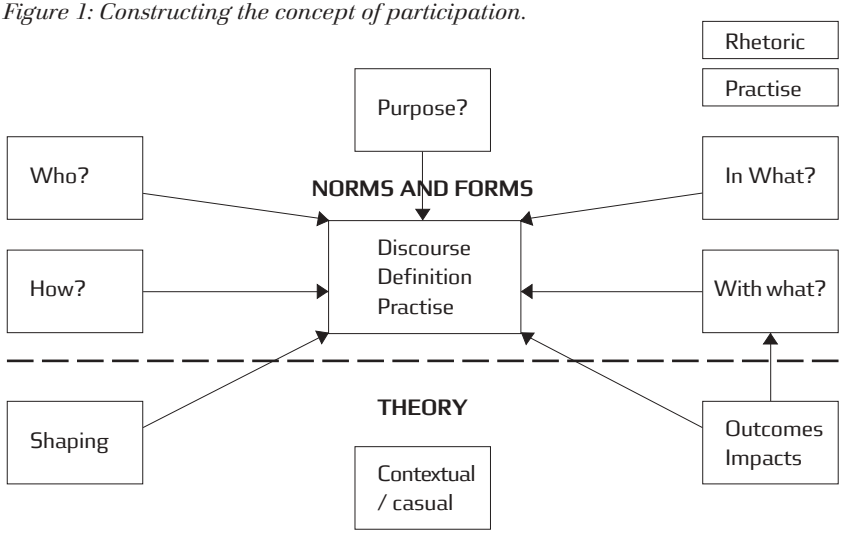
The subtitle: „Actors Shaping Sustainable Urban Development" provides a guide to the structure of this workshop, namely that the sessions that constitute its body are organised around actors such as communities, governments, civil societies, architects and planners. The workshop was structured with an introductory session followed by six sessions focussed on various aspects of participation. These proceedings are organised in the same order.

Opening session: The background and objectives of the workshop were addressed in the opening speech by the Rector of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Prof. Sven Felding and in Gustavo Ribeiro's introductory address. This introductory address was followed by a presentation by the Director of DUCED-IUA Niels Thygesen, who outlined its scope of interest, activities, partnerships and research networks.

Session 1, Debating Participation, was intended as a space for raising conceptual issues that could inform subsequent discussions throughout the workshop. As it was later expressed by **Søren Lund** in the conclusion and summing up of the workshop, the debates in question could be situated within a conceptual framework for the construction of "participation" (see Figure 1).

According to this framework, a number of different aspects can be discussed when debating participation. A very fundamental aspect is the underlying rationale or purpose of participation. The debate here essentially fluctuates between an *instrumental management* view of participation as a means to deliver certain collective goods and services (infrastructure, environmental management, etc.) or compliance with regulatory measures, or a *normative* view of participation as development goal, either as part of a *political strategy* of empowerment of marginalized and weak social groups, or as an element of practicing *good (democratic) governance* .This divide runs right through discussions of participation and urban (environmental) planning, too.

Figure 1: Constructing the concept of participation.



The purpose of participation is reflected in the upper half of figure 1, which covers the aspects which could be termed the "norms and forms" of participatory practices. That is, who is (or should be) participating in what kind of activities? What do (or should) they participate with? And how are (or should) the participation processes be handled (meetings, PRA sessions, contracts, facilitation, etc.)? The very definition of the term participation can vary as different combinations of these elements. And, as it was discussed during the seminar, there is often a wide gap between the rhetoric with which participation is prescribed, and the reality of how it is being practiced.

Part of the picture is our theoretical understanding of the term and the practice of it as a social phenomenon. Arguments for one or the other model of participation are not just referring to rationales and purposes, but also to such theories about what are the shaping factors of participation and the preconditions for its successful implementation. Discussions are also referring to more or less explicitly stated assumptions about expected outcomes and impacts occurring when applying participatory approaches. It is the understanding of this workshop that these theories are not properly explored. They are mostly appearing as more or less implicit assumptions. It is this "black box" of participation that we have intended to open up a little more with this workshop.

The opposition between norms and forms, between the "is" and the "should be" is an important one and deserves further elaboration. As in Bourdieu's theory of practice, a point of departure in practice has decisive consequences to theory - the normative "who should?" is replaced by the case specific and pragmatic "who does?" and "why?" This is conveyed on the one hand in the papers by researchers who record and underline the asymmetries of participatory projects [e.g. **Funder** and **Ribeiro & Sriswan**], on the other hand, it is witnessed in the work of practitioners such as **Somsook Boonyabancha**, where we witness inherent heterogeneity within communities and amongst communities and where a self-selective process of who participates and who doesn't prevails.

Andrew Jamison's key-note presentation addressed the gap between the rhetoric and practice of participation in urban environmental planning in Europe. He pointed out how there are cultural tensions in science and technology policy between different policy domains (bureaucratic, economic, academic and civic) who have different rationalities (order; growth, enlightenment, democracy), steering mechanisms (planning, commercial, peer review, public assessment), and ethos (formalistic, entrepreneurial, scientific, participatory). According to Jamison, these differences result in the huge gap between rhetoric and reality. Arguing that public participation requires social innovation, Jamison outlined a number of conditions, namely:

- Spaces for interaction across social domains.
- Processes of communication or translation across "discourses" or domains (knowledge brokers such as for instance "green economists").
- Organizational bridge-builders.
- Enlightened civil servants.
- Political support "from above".
- Cultural mobilisation "from below".

Jamison also pointed out that this social innovation produces new types of hybrid identities or social agents, such as organisers of networks (across sectors or within organisations), translators & interpreters (across scientific fields, between policy domains), mediators & facilitators (consensus builders/dialogue makers, bridge builders/social Innovators, i.e. people who create new forms of social activity), brokers & entrepreneurs (product managers and product champions of participation).

The concepts outlined by Andrew Jamison can be seen as constituting a map to navigate through the different papers presented in this workshop. A number of these concepts were already built in the vocabulary of practitioners as they described their work. In addition, they were recurring references in the group discussions. The notions of *social innovation* and the *creation of spaces for interaction*, for instance, became key-concepts of the conference during the presentations of public participation in ongoing environmental planning projects. They helped to give direction for the discussions on the "norms and forms" of participation – and for the attempts to understand the difference between objectives/rhetoric and practice of participation.

Hybrid identity became another key concept much referred to during the conference. Lykke Leonardsen, for instance, characterised herself as an *activist civil servant* – a hybrid identity which Somsook Boonyabancha also subscribed to. In that connection, one could say that modern activists may gain a better understanding of their own dilemmas and conditions of work by thinking this within a framework of creating hybrid identities.

A final aspect introduced by Andrew Jamison was the existence of the *cognitive practices* of sustainable development. A cognitive practice is an order of conditions under which knowledge is produced and applied in social processes (of sustainable development). A cognitive practice is composed by a type of agency (or actor), its forms of action, an ideal of science (or knowledge), its main sources of knowledge, and the type of tacit competences most held in value.

Jamison proposed a distinction between *residual, dominant, and emerging* regimes, relying on a perception of regimes evolving or changing over time *(Table 1)*.

Table1: Cognitive regimes of sustainable development

	Residual	*Dominant*	*Emerging*
Type of Agency	Local NGOs	Transnational /Corporate networks	Hybrids networks
Forms of Action	Popularisation Resistance	Commercial Exemplary Brokerage	Mobilisation
Ideal of science	Factual Lay	Theoretical Expert	Situated Contextual
Source of knowledge	Traditions	Disciplines	Experiences
Tacit competences	Personal	Professional	Synthetic (transdisciplinary, holistic knowledge)

He suggested that the environmental grassroots movements in the US and Europe in the 60s and 70s could be seen as the main carriers of what could be classified as a "residual" cognitive regime today, where the dominant cognitive regime is carried by trans-national corporations – a view which was later questioned by the Thai key-note speaker, Somsook Boonyabancha. She felt that the residual NGO regime in Thailand was expanding side by side with the other cognitive regimes.

Whatever the case, the importance of referring to cognitive issues when inquiring into the rhetoric and practice of participation lies in the extent to which these residual, dominant, and emerging orders of conditions under which knowledge is produced and applied influence or are influenced by the development of rhetoric and practices of participation. Thus, as we see it, the observation that agency is shifting from NGOs towards hybrids and networks, that the emerging ideal of science is situated and contextual, or that the experiential source of knowledge are assuming an increased strategic importance is helpful in seeing clearer where constraints and (new) opportunities lie for practicing participatory approaches.

Participation as Consensus?

In "Participation and Consensus-Seeking for Sustainable Development? The experience from the Danish LA21 approach", **Jesper Holm** reviews the Danish Local Agenda 21 approach in order to assess whether it has been successful in generating new modes of

public participation or co-operation, and whether by doing it in this way, the approach has also been successful in generating new policy content. Holm questions if there is room for consensus-based participation? Or if we are moving towards the conflicts like we had during the 70s? He argues that although public participation and public involvement are old issues in Denmark, LA 21 activities have advanced considerably more in integrating lay people's opinions in local environmental policies than has been possible within conventional public participation efforts. But he also points out that public participation may be said to have evolved into "brokers" being institutionalised in new sections of bureaucracy, so that "public participation" becomes "new expert participation", and to the fact that current conflicts on environmental issues such as GMO issues or green spaces cannot be handled by the Local Agenda 21 projects – or at least none of the A21 projects have addressed these issues.

Spaces for participation: Communities as a Resource

Session 2 looks into the concept of "communities". Somsook Boonyabancha from the Community Organisation Development Institute [CODI] in Thailand shared the Thai experience of working with a new funding mechanism, the Community Development Fund, which is jointly funded by foreign donors and the government of Thailand. The experience was a clear illustration of an attempt to work with **social innovation**, creating **new spaces** for interaction and negotiation between the local communities and the authorities (across "social domains"). She explained the importance of supporting the development of networks amongst the local communities in order for them to better engage in dialogues with the authorities, and better make their voices heard. Thus she clearly illustrated the tendency described by Andrew Jamison of moving into **hybrid identities** as social agents of change. Boonyabancha stressed the potentials of "open funding", judiciously being granted to local groups in an attempt to strengthen civil society and encouraging bottom-up initiatives.

The work of the Community Organisations Development Institute [CODI], involves support to communities and community networks, based on the identification and development of community **resources**. Each community, however poor and underprivileged, is perceived as a resource, which consists of its people and their will to improve their conditions through collective efforts. It is the point of view of Boonyabancha that such a resource is always there in one or another form, and is a potential for **creative development**, even when and despite the fact that community members may have different conception of themselves. CODI's work is about changing such conceptions and opening up **spaces** for development primarily with resources which exist within the

community. Besides human resources, financial resources are also brought into play through savings and loans schemes within each community.

CODI's focus on a community as a resource and creative potential acknowledges the internal power structure of a community without directly challenging it and works with that community on their own terms, as any intervention in the organisation and on its leadership would compromise any attempt by the supporting organisation at adopting a neutral role.

Through successive field visits to urban areas where CODI supported development projects were being implemented, a team from Denmark had the opportunity to meet community leaders, community committees and community members in Bangkok and Chiang Mai in the period between 2000 and 2003. Those people were engaged in the improvement of their living conditions through participation in activities such as savings and income generation groups and in environmental projects. In some cases, they found neighbouring communities with no involvement whatsoever in CODI supported projects, even though it seemed clear that such communities would have greatly benefited from them. In the attempts to find out why such communities were not involved in the above mentioned projects, they encountered cases where such an involvement was seen as a threat to the status of community leaders, who may be involved in illegal activities such as drug trafficking.

Faced with widely diverse responses to participatory projects by different communities and heterogeneity within each community, CODI engages in collaboration with those who are in a position to do so. Such an attitude is reflected in Boonyabancha's statement about "opening up spaces for people's movements."

But what to make of those who stand outside participatory projects, as in the case of several communities neighbouring CODI supported communities and excluded groups within the latter? CODI's answer to that is a focus on the creative process with those who are willing or prepared to be involved. As that process expands through the organisation of community networks sharing their experiences and promoting mutual learning, more people will join in.

The above discussion opens up the dimension of power in processes of public participation, an issue which is addressed through accounts of asymmetries within communities in participatory projects such as the case of coastal zone management in Southern Thailand presented by Funder or between communities and other actors such as NGOs, local authorities, etc as discussed in the case of the Mae Kha Canal in Chiang Mai by Ribeiro and Sriswan.

Who is the community?

As an issue is taken up in a participatory project, it is somehow formulated as a collective concern, something which is relevant for that which is conceived as the community – that is, conceptions as social constructs as to who the community is and what issues pertain in the collective realm. Such social constructs are tightly related to patterns of production and reproduction of urban spaces and the close interaction between the two. In some cases, production (e.g. self-help construction) and reproduction of urban spaces (which include physical changes through daily use) are part of a continuous process of dwelling. The creation of spaces through use, and the use of spaces following the layout of physical structures, consolidates the public realm in an informal settlement. But such a process of growth, which may take years or decades, tells us little about political structures within each community - another major element in the articulation of social constructs such as the collective. The cases in which the distance between what is experienced as problems, through daily use by the residents of a settlement, and what is perceived as a priority by community leaders may be so wide as to undermine the involvement of such a community in development projects supported by organisations such as CODI.

Gustavo Ribeiro and **Angun Sriswan's** paper on "Urban Development Discourses, Environmental Management and Public Participation: The Case of the Mae Kha Canal in Chiang Mai – Thailand" reveals that the complex constellation of decision making and practice of environmental management inevitably goes beyond the limits of a "community." The involvement of an NGO, local authorities and Central Government among others as major players in the process of environmental management is stressed in their discussion. The paper thus underlines the need to look beyond the limits of a "community" to include such broader domain of stakeholders when investigating public participation in environmental projects. Because such projects have a broader impact and interest, which include the inhabitants of a city and of a region, the issue of participation has to transcend the realm of the communities in question. The case Mae Kha Canal in Chiang Mai, taken up by the paper, provides an illustration of an environmental resource, which is both of immediate interest to the communities living along its banks as well as to the people of Chiang Mai city and Chiang Mai Province, The Mae Kha Canal can thus be seen as an interface between the local communities and the broader population of Chiang Mai. Targeting Mae Kha Canal, through environmental management participatory projects, as an element which can change the opinions by the inhabitants of Chiang Mai of those urban communities, towards the latter being perceived as responsible for its management, as proposed by CODI, follows such a broader conception of participatory projects as described above.

Mikkel Funder's paper presents some preliminary findings of his Ph.D. research project on the social dynamics of a participatory coastal zone management project in Southern Thailand. He shows how the very process of participation creates new distinctions of groups and individuals "participating" and gaining influence, and excluding others. In line with Jesper Holm, Mikkel Funder raises the issue of how to address the paradox of a participatory strategy based on the assumption that communities will agree on collective action and the social reality characterised by the existence of multiple lines of conflicting interests.

Government and Civil Society

The relationship between government and civil society is taken up in**Sessions 3 and 4**. **Jørgen Andreasen** in his paper "Planning and Democratisation in Ghana" introduces an issue, which is central to a reassessment of the impact of development assistance. He describes a story, which starts with independent projects being carried out in a community, followed by projects supported by a donor, followed by donor dependency syndrome. As pointed out by Andreasen: "The leaders have learned that big steps forward are taken with assistance from outside. They do not, as in the past, take independent initiatives. They concentrate their efforts in finding a donor or a government source of support. And they wait for a long time." Andreasen adds: "It pays better to invest energy in lobbyism and catching a donor than to struggle with shovels."

Jørgen Eskemose on the other hand describes a diametrically opposite condition in Mozambique in the following presentation, "Participation in a Post-Socialist Society – Cases from Mozambique". In Mozambique, the presence of weak public institutions and the absence of donor supported projects mean that communities have to be self-reliant and informal settlements are built, maintained and run by the residents themselves with hardly any assistance from external actors, such as government institutions.

Looking at public participation from the perspective of the donor**,** in her paper "Participation – a Road Leading to Democracy?", **Elisabeth Riber Christensen** describes a post 9/11 development where Danish foreign policy is increasingly polarised by a need to combat international terrorism and promote national security. This has a direct impact in the formulation of Danish development assistance and calls for a new paradigm which takes into account the role of education, democratisation, good governance and public participation according to this new foreign policy orientation.

Michael Søgaard et al look at the work of a CBO in Soweto dealing with issues of a mine dump management and waste handling. They investigate how public participation can be analysed by a social construction approach with focus on social-technical proces-

ses involving actors and their interpretation of environmental problems and solutions. The authors use a Social Construction of Technology methodology [SCOT], which proposes a simultaneous construction of artefacts [in this case a mine dump or waste] and social groups.

Architects and Planners

Session 5 on Architects and Planners addresses more hands-on experiences from ongoing projects of urban development and the implications for practices of communication of the challenge of creating "cultural support" to environmental action. These issues are taken up in **Rodney Harber's** presentation on practices of participation and urban planning in South Africa, in **Michael Mullins et al's** paper on 3D visualisation tools, and in **Steen Holmgreen's** paper entitled "The Electronic Neighbourhood".

Rodney Harber's paper "Architectural Practice in South Africa" explores the architectural consequences of South African socio-economic, ethnical, and climatic context in terms of an alternative and locally sensitive architectural approach to urban planning.

Michael Mullins et al explore the possibilities offered by new information technology such as virtual reality (VR) as a tool to promote collaborations with different actors in processes of urban design and planning. They describe a number of innovative experiments using VR in which lay people as well as professionals were involved in discussions and the elaboration of prototypes for the development of Ålborg waterfront. From these preliminary experiments, they draw conclusions and point out areas which require further research.

Steen Holmgreen described the project The Electronic Neighbourhood, which he developed together with Bruno Tournay, Bjarne Rüdiger, Kresten Storgaard and Ole Svensson, where information technology is used as a tool to support public participation in a project of urban regeneration. An **electronic neighbourhood** was set up with the participation of residents from Ydre Nørrebro Syd where the urban regeneration project in that area could be followed in an Internet site and which involved a 3D model of the area as a forum for presentation and debate of each project.

Lessons learned and emerging issues

Session 6 was organised under the heading of "lessons learned and emerging issues". **Jens Lønholdt's paper** on "Lessons Learned from Practical Application of PEP in southern Thailand: Ensuring Local Ownership to Projects" summarizes the lessons learned from his experiences of working with issues of public participation in the development of the Environmental Action Plan for the Songkhla Lake Basin.

As an example of an emerging issue, **Søren Skou Rasmussen** presents a stakeholder-sensitive up-coming planning tool termed "Beneficiary Assessment".

In her presentation, "Resident Involvement at any cost?", **Lykke Leonardsen** described lessons learned through the implementation of public participation in the urban regeneration project in the neighbourhood of Kongens Enghave in Copenhagen. Lykke Leonardsen explored a number of contradictions in an overall project framework for participation which she described as a top-down initiated bottom-up process. Leonardsen's presentation led to a number of questions, related to the following issues:

Participation and Consensus	How to tackle conflicts in local neighbourhoods?
	Are conflicts a good or a bad thing?
	Who decides when there is a conflict?
Participation and Democracy	Is participation a substitute for democracy?
	(Participation is not always the same as power)
	Participation or consultation?
Participation and Exclusion	What are the criteria for successful participation?
	Who participates?
	Is participation for everybody – or just for the skilful few?
	What about those who don't participate?

The problem of the open participatory approach in the implementation phase. How do you keep the process open for new participants – or is it just a myth?

It is somehow fitting that we end the presentations in this workshop, in much the way we start - with questions. The fact that experienced practitioners such as Lykke Leonardsen advocate a position of simultaneously acknowledging the importance of participation, as well as the need to question its assumptions, myths and practices, in many ways sums up the contents of this workshop's discussions. As the title of Lykke Leonardsen's presentation suggests, resident involvement comes with a cost, such as the fact that participation engenders exclusion or that the very act of participation involves joining in a process initiated external to a community. Yet, however removed from normative formulations on what participation should achieve, the practice of participation and the creation of spaces for participation provide unique opportunities for collaboration, education, empowerment and creativity for people who often have access to no other channel to affect decision-making. But it also involves potentials for the emergence of new forms of bureaucratisation, social exclusion and new elites – professional "participators" co-opted into the existing state bureaucracy or private business domains.

I DEBATING PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATION AND AGENCY

Hybrid Identities in the Making of Green Knowledge[1]

Andrew Jamison*

Technology has become the great vehicle of reification – reification in its most mature and effective form. The social position of the individual and his relation to others appear not only to be determined by objective qualities and laws, but these qualities and laws seem to lose their mysterious and uncontrollable character; they appear as calculable manifestations of (scientific) rationality. The world tends to become the stuff of total administration, which absorbs even the administrators.
Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man (1964: 168-169)

1. Introduction

In the course of the 1990s, the ideas and practices of environmentalism tended to lose whatever politically mobilizing force they might earlier have had, and largely came to resemble what Herbert Marcuse, in his classic text of the 1960s, termed the pure stuff of administration. The redefinition of environmental politics as an ambiguous quest for sustainable development can be seen as a form of reification, bringing environmental politics under the control of the established order and its administrative apparatus and making environmental problems amenable to the objective and instrumental procedures of technological rationality. What had seemed for many of us in the late 1970s to be a broad, social movement out to save the planet from further environmental destruction and ecological deterioration has given way to a much more amorphous, and socially acceptable political agenda and range of practical activity. The "environmental movement" has been effectively stripped of its underlying human meanings and motivations and instead transformed into institutions and professions; and the ideas of political ecology and the practices of appropriate technology have become a fragmented array of institutional, intellectual and practical activity, what I have termed the "making of green knowledge" (Jamison 2001). This paper is an attempt to explore some of the cultural dynamics of these transformation processes in terms of the human agency that have been involved in this multifarious shift in political agenda and practical focus.

At the level of discourse, the ideas of environmental protection, or, as they have come to be redefined in the 1990s, sustainable development, have more or less taken on a largely ideological or rhetorical character or function. In the northern European countries,

where the environmental movements of the 1970s were among the most visible and politically significant of any in the world, environmental ideas have become deeply embedded in the language games and discourse coalitions that have been characterized as ecological, or reflexive modernization (Hajer 1995). Within national governments in Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries, as well as at the European Commission, the dominant policy doctrines have been framed in the terminology of business management, and there has developed a repertoire of so-called market-oriented environmental policies that, among other things, attempt to encourage private companies to develop „cleaner technologies", institute environmental management and accounting systems, and devise strategies for „green product" innovations (Carter 2001).

When it was first formulated in the 1980s, sustainable development was seen to represent a new approach to environmental politics that was cooperative and constructive, by which environmental concern was to be integrated into all other areas of social and economic life. As formulated in the so-called Brundtland report, *Our Common Future* (WCED 1987), sustainable development was seen to necessitate the combination of environmental protection with economics and management, and as such, develop appropriate methods and techniques for measuring, assessing and accounting for the environmental and resource implications of production and consumption patterns, communication and transportation infrastructures, educational and welfare programs, and even social and political interaction. Environmental politics, the report contended, needed to embrace and eventually encompass the entire range of social and economic issues, and there was a need for everyone to be involved, to *participate*.

In the course of the 1990s, the meanings of the term – and of the ideas of environmental politics more generally - gradually shifted from the visionary to the mundane, or, as Karl Mannheim (1948/1936) once put it, from the utopian to the ideological. Whereas a utopian vision "orients conduct towards elements which the situation, in so far as it is realized at the time, does not contain" (ibid: 176), an ideology, at least for Mannheim, is a more closed and exclusive set of ideas. Ideologies serve to systematize and provide a sense of order – imputing an underlying logic for a set of ideas – whereas utopias are inherently something quite different, serving at best to inspire or encourage the imagining of alternative "logics" and possibilities, and at least questioning the dominant and socially-accepted logic, or forms of rationality (Eyerman and Jamison 1991). History is rife with recurrent shifts from utopia to ideology, from the visionary to the realistic, from the imaginary to the scientific, and it is perhaps helpful to view the discursive journey of environmental politics as yet another closing in of the visionary, and a narrowing of the collective imagination.

That discursive journey can be traced from the visions of the early 1970s – the programmatic report to the UN Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, *Only One Earth*, jointly authored by an economist, Barbara Ward and a biologist, Rene Dubos; the manifesto-like *Blueprint for Survival* that launched the journal *The Ecologist*; and perhaps especially the widely-read *Limits to Growth*, which brought to the world's attention the startling results of computer-based prognostications of patterns of resource and energy use - to the intergovernmental negotiated agreements of the 1980s and 1990s – the Kyoto protocol and, not least, the Agenda 21, the document that emerged from the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in 1992.

In the world of public policy, the open-ended and all-encompassing visionary thought of the 1970s – the "care and maintenance of a small planet" as Ward and Dubos had put it in the subtitle of their book - has, in the course of the journey, been broken down into sectorially separated and specific programs and projects – sustainable technology development, ecological agriculture, green product innovation, industrial ecology, sustainable transport, energy efficiency, etc. In the rarefied world of academic thought, new-fangled "green political theorists" have devoted many a book-length treatment to elucidating the interrelationships between the various components of environmental politics and the standard political grammar of justice, power and democracy (e.g. Dobson 2000). Indeed, in the course of the 1990s, all the academic disciplines – from history to sociology, from biology to physics – have been encouraged on numerous festive occasions to consider their "role" in contributing to an understanding of sustainable development and in making their particular science and sometimes even science in general more sustainable. And among influential politicians and their expert advisers, sustainable development has come to be embedded in the emerging language of *governance* and *deliberation*, suggesting that what is required if societies are to be sustainable is nothing less than a whole new way of thinking about politics, which can transcend the cleavages of class and nation: a new ideology "beyond left and right" (Giddens 1994).

On a practical level, the various activities that have been associated with, or characterized by, a desire to bring about more sustainable paths to social and economic development have largely left behind the space of civil society, or the wider "public sphere" where social movements are to be found, to enter instead into the rather more circumscribed confines of public administration and corporate management. The poorly funded and loosely organized activities of the 1970s have tended to give way to more formalized and well-subsidized projects, at the same time as those taking part in what might be termed the quest for sustainable development have tended to assume more narrowly-defined professional and/or vocational identities. In the 1970s, "participation" in regard

to environmental politics was for many people a primarily voluntary activity, a matter of individual commitment and personal engagement, in large measure a means to express one's sense of civic, or public concern in relation to one or another environmental problem or project. Whether driven by fear and foreboding for the future or by a sense of solidarity with the non-humans with whom we share the planet, the emerging environmental consciousness, as in many if not all social movements, allowed disparate individuals to find common cause in a public space of their own creation (Eyerman and Jamison 1991).

By the end of the 1990s, that movement space had largely disappeared, and there had emerged instead a range of new, more delimited spaces, or arenas in both the public and private spheres – corporate departments of environmental management, administrative offices of sustainable development, entire industrial branches of renewable energy, even green think tanks, such as the Wuppertal Institute in Germany - which fundamentally altered the conditions of participation. Thereby, both the possibilities for directly taking part *in* one or another activity, as well as the opportunities for feeling oneself to be a part *of* environmental politics, became more limited. There was a transition, in other words, from a kind of open-ended process by which environmental politics had formed a social movement's underlying "collective identity" to a more enclosed set of discourses and practices that were organized largely in the form of externally-funded projects, which had meaning more or less only for those directly involved in them, or who had a direct interest in them, often of a commercial nature.

In the following, I want to identify some of the main agents, or forms of agency, that have been involved in this process of cultural transformation, as I have come to recognize them in the course of my own recent research in Europe. The agency that seems particularly significant in the making of green knowledge, the cognitive dimension of environmental politics, is what can be characterized as mediation, either bringing people together (networking), creating communicative or deliberative spaces (facilitation), or transferring ideas and practices from one place to another (interpretation).

What is involved at the personal level is often a process of hybridization, or hybrid identity formation, which is remarkably similar to previous periods in history, when emerging ideas and practices struggled to win acceptance and support. Both the so-called scientific revolution of the 17th century, and the emergence of socialism in the 19th century involved similar processes of hybridization and hybrid identify formation, by which ideas and practices that had developed in social movements were taken over, or *appropriated* by the broader culture (Hård and Jamison 2003). My reflections are based, in large measure, on two projects supported by the European Commission: PESTO,

or Public Participation and Environmental Science and Technology Policy Options, which I coordinated from 1996 to 1999, and TEA, or the Transformation of Environmental Activism, coordinated by Christopher Rootes from 1998 to 2001, for which I served as the Swedish partner.[2]

2. A Cultural Approach to Participation

In the PESTO project, we made use of an analytical framework, by which the relations between various actors and institutions involved in the world of environmental science and technology policy-making are conceptualized in terms of ideal-typical categories of "policy cultures", or policy domains.[3] Each culture has its own particular principle, or overarching policy perspective, as well as its own favored approach or policy style: its particular way of doing things. Each culture also has its own characteristic ethos, or value system, which helps give shape to the ways that policies and programs are implemented and carried out in practice. The framework has been developed in order to be able to explore dimensions, or aspects of policy making that are seldom examined explicitly, namely the various "cultural tensions" that come into play, as those who represent, or embody, the different perspectives and value systems enter into interaction and negotiation with one another. Policy-making, according to this approach, is seen to be based on a conflict of interests among different "actors" and their institutions and recognizes the importance of transcending, or resolving those conflicts through processes of mediation and negotiation in the making of policy decisions (table 1).

Table 1: Cultural Tensions in Policy Making[4]

	Policy Culture		
	State	Market	Civil society
Principle	social order	economic growth	public accountability
Style	formal	entrepreneurial	personal
Ethos	bureaucratic	commercial	democratic

The PESTO project consisted of three main stages, or work-packages, as they are called in the language of the European Union. First, we described the historical development of environmental science and technology policy in our respective countries, with a particular emphasis on the ways in which the general public had been involved, or allowed to participate, in policy-making processes (Jamison and Østby, eds 1997). In our historical accounts, we found interesting differences among our sample of countries: in Sweden and Britain, for example, public participation was much less conspicuous and explicit than it had been in Denmark and the Netherlands, both in terms of the "theory" and the "practice", the ways in which it was talked about and the ways in which it was carried out. The Netherlands and Denmark had produced a number of innovative procedures in the name of public participation in environmental science and technology policy – science shops and state bodies for technology assessment, for example – while such innovations had been absent in Britain and Sweden. Similarly, the academic investigation of participatory approaches to science and technology policy was an area of some significance in Denmark and the Netherlands, while in Britain and Sweden, there had been far fewer studies and far less opportunity for such research to be conducted. In Sweden and Britain, the education of scientists and engineers was relatively free from any social or cultural ingredients, while in Denmark and the Netherlands, engineering students were exposed, as part of their normal educational experience, to courses in science, technology and society, or the history of technology, or environmental studies. There had thus developed, in Denmark and the Netherlands, somewhat more appropriate institutional and intellectual frameworks for making participation happen when the doctrine of sustainable development was articulated in the late 1980s (see Jamison et al 1990 for details on the emergence of environmentalism in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands).

Our second work-package was an attempt to explore the relations between public participation and environmental science and technology policy through case studies in the different countries. We wanted to investigate some of the specific forms that participation had taken in somewhat more detail, by focusing on particular themes: the role of non-governmental organizations, local Agenda 21, sustainable transport, the role of entrepreneurship in environmental science and technology policy (Jamison, ed 1998). The general ambition was to problematize public participation by studying it in different contexts, so that we might be better able to characterize some of the underlying conditions that were at work in the various activities. The transformations within environmental organizations – from the "protest" organizations that had been so active in the movements against nuclear energy in the 1970s to the more complex and variegated division of labor that characterized environmental activism in the 1990s – was especially notice-

able. In the TEA project, we discovered that this was a more general process that had characterized environmental activism across Europe, and, indeed, in North America as well: a process of institutionalization or normalization (Diani and Donati 1999).

In the PESTO project, our third work package focused explicitly on networks of environmental management, both in the private sector, and in the academic world, and not least in the emerging space of academic-industrial interaction. By interviewing a wide range of people active in these networks of ecological modernization, or green business, we wanted to increase our understanding of the types of brokerage, as we called them, that took place within the networks. What was actually taking place, in terms of mediating, facilitating, and interpreting, that is, in terms of human agency?

This kind of research is somewhat different from the dominant forms of research in the social sciences. I have come to characterize it as "action-oriented" in that it is problem-driven rather than discipline-driven, and focuses on ongoing processes in the making. Its findings thus take the form of inter-subjective insights rather than objective facts, lessons that can be learned from different examples rather than "iron laws" that have a universal validity. More specifically, what research like PESTO and TEA can help understand are the conditions that make participation possible, the kinds of contingencies and contextual factors that appear to be necessary for participation to have some cultural significance, or meaning, however small or fleeting that might be (see table 2).

Table 2: Some Conditions for Participation, according to the PESTO project

spaces for interaction across societal domains
processes of communication across "discourses" and disciplines
enlightened civil servants
organizational bridge-builders
political support "from above"
mobilization of traditions "from below"

On the one hand, we discovered the crucial need of new sorts of public spaces, or, perhaps better, social interfaces, where interaction could take place across the domains or policy cultures. Such social interfaces, as the cross-ministerial Sustainable Technology Program in the Netherlands, the agencies of technology assessment associated with national and regional governments, the local Agenda 21 offices in many municipalities, and, not least, the ad hoc projects and networks that have been created to deal with

specific issues, all provided opportunities for participation. Secondly, there was a need for communication and cross-fertilization across disciplines and "discourses". The spaces had to be filled with meaning, with projects and interactive workshops and conferences. Lay people and experts, bureaucrats and businessmen, needed to be brought together into communication and dialogue: the image of the roundtable, and the notion of "stakeholder dialogue" were recurrent aspects of the participatory activities that we studied (see also Fischer 2000).

In most of the projects of public participation that we investigated, we also noted the importance of support both from "above" and "below", that is, the importance of top-down initiative meeting bottom-up engagement. The quest for sustainable development, as we came to understand it in action, seems to require the active involvement of some centrally placed public authorities – whom we can think of as enlightened civil servants – as well as a receptive local base of support. People cannot be forced to participate in environmental politics. It seems that, for participation to happen, they need to feel that their participation contributes to, or is connected to, some other political project. The enlightened civil servants are important as promoters of social innovations, they serve to translate a new approach or method or concept into the relevant public (or private) context. In the making of the so-called Infralab, or Infrastructural laboratory in the Netherlands, for example, where local citizens are brought into the decision-making processes around new transportation projects, it was an official at the Ministry of Transportation who realized that things had to be done differently: a new structure was called for if the concerns of the public were to be taken into account. In the "green guides" program in Denmark, as well as in other projects of urban ecology that were instituted in the 1990s by the Danish government, civil servants in the Ministry of the Environment were given the task of making participation happen. It was necessary for public officials to break out of their normal routines: to innovate, think differently and envision new possibilities. Enlightened civil servants, often together with people who work for a non-governmental organization, have served to bring a kind of professionalism, and often crucially valuable official connections, into a wide range of projects.

At the same time, there need to be bridge-builders, people who can facilitate interaction and catalyze processes of communication across the various social divisions and boundaries. In the quest for sustainable development, there are particular combinations of competence that are called for - linking natural science and social science, engineering and empowerment, ethics with economics, and, not least, environmental concern with professional management. In the contemporary world, this knowledge-making is increasingly being taken on by campaigning organizations or ad hoc networks, which

have been established for particular campaigns or events, in order to address particularly pressing global environmental issues. They tend to operate within particular sectors or interest areas. There are climate action networks and climate change panels, renewable energy networks and intergovernmental programs, organic agriculture networks, ecological design networks, as well as environmental justice networks. In many cases, the networks bring together people working in professional organizations and institutions with local activists and personal environmentalists. The difficulty is in sustaining these kinds of networks and temporary activities, and keeping them from being taken over by the large, transnational NGOs, such as Greenpeace or the World Wildlife Fund, or, for that matter, by business firms and their networks, such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

3. The Forming of Hybrid Identities

In cognitive terms, what seems to be involved in the quest for sustainable development is the making of new forms of knowledge, what I have come to characterize as green knowledge. Like the new mode of knowledge production that has been identified by Michael Gibbons and his collaborators (Gibbons et al 1994), green knowledge is often carried out in networks rather than traditional scientific disciplines, and it tends to be organized in ad hoc, or temporary projects rather than in more traditionally-defined research programs, or the puzzle-solving paradigms of what Thomas Kuhn so famously termed "normal science" (Kuhn 1962). Green knowledge is usually produced in relation to specific contexts of application, or action, and thus takes its point of departure in problems with which the researcher feels a sense of engagement; it is rarely the disinterested kind of inquiry that Robert Merton once characterized as central to the modern scientific enterprise (Merton 1973). Like many other new fields of knowledge production in the contemporary world – genetic engineering, gender studies, nanotechnology, cognitive science, cultural studies – green knowledge also involves the formation of a number of "hybrid identities" or emergent social roles, which bring together types of competence and expertise that have previously been separated from one another. In this sense, environmental politics embodies, or is grounded in, a new kind of synthetic, or synthesizing cognitive praxis, which brings different kinds of insights and expertise, interests and competencies, methods and experiences together into new combinations.

In the following, I want to describe some of these hybrid identities by briefly telling the life stories of some of the people I have come across in the course of my recent research. Each story is meant to illustrate one exemplary type of hybrid identity. There are certainly other ways to talk about these matters, but it seems to me that if we are to

grasp the cultural significance of sustainable development, we must at least in part begin to identify what is going on at the personal level (table 3).

Table 3: Hybrid Identities in Sustainable Development

Networkers	
horizontal	e.g. Johan Schot (Greening of Industry)
vertical	e.g Jacqueline Cramer
Translators/interpreters	
transdisciplinary generalists	e.g. Fritiof Caprapublic
intellectuals	e.g. Arne Næss
Facilitators	
consensus-makers	e.g. Lars Klüver (Danish Technology Board)
social innovators	e.g. Robin Grove-White
Brokers	
product champions	e.g. Donald Huisingh
project managers	e.g. Karl-Henrik Robert (Natural Step)

Obviously, the types of identity are not mutually exclusive, but they do require somewhat different kinds of competence and expertise in order to be carried out effectively. They also require a congenial cultural climate for providing opportunities for hybridization and combination.

Johan Schot, trained as a historian of technology at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, and one of the first people in Europe to work as a consultant in the field of environmental management and cleaner technologies, is a good example of a horizontal networker, that is, a person who works across the policy cultures, or domains in his or her networking activity. Throughout his career, Schot has combined his various interests in creating networks and projects that have been influential in the quest for sustainable development. He was one of the co-founders of the Greening of Industry network, which has organized a series of international conferences and workshops, where academics, business people, government officials and environmental activists could exchange experiences and discuss the various elements of industrial environmental management

and sustainable technological development. Schot's hybrid identity includes an organizational competence, as well as particular intellectual components that have been put together into new conceptual and methodological combinations.

Where Schot's networking activities – first GIN and more recently the European history of technology network, Tensions of Europe – have tended to be horizontal, in bringing people together from different countries and different professions; vertical networking often involves a different kind of hybrid identity formation. People who work as environmental managers or environmental accountants within particular organizations or companies are good examples of the ways in which an environmental or biological expertise is being combined with a managerial or organizational expertise. Schot's former colleague, Jacqueline Cramer, who has helped the Dutch firms, Unilever and Philips, establish environmental product policies, has combined her education in ecology and her personal background as an environmental activist with communicative and educational skills in her particular form of "vertical" networking. What is central to the vertical networking identity is the carrying of one or another sort of environmental competence into unfamiliar territory, the bringing inside of knowledge that was previously considered to be outside, even foreign, to the particular organization or company, and then devising ways to institutionalize that green knowledge.

The translators, or interpreters, are more like what Mannheim once termed free-floating intellectuals, in that they are often people who combine ideas from different academic disciplines or fields of knowledge and struggle to retain their independence from formal, or established institutions. The physicists-turned-environmentalists - Amory Lovins, Fritiof Capra, and Vandana Shiva – are good examples of this kind of hybrid identity, applying their trained competence in generalization and abstraction to the world of environmental politics. It is a kind of generalist identity, making explicit, as Capra puts it in the title of his most recent book, the "hidden connections" between different fields of knowledge (Capra 2002). Ecological philosophers, such as the Norwegian Arne Næss, who coined the term deep ecology, is another example of the interpreter, bringing a way of thinking'– philosophical, reflective, "deep" – into other life-worlds and other contexts than it is usually found. In the 1970s, Næss left his university post to become a "movement intellectual" and took part in some of the direct actions of civil disobedience that were carried out in Norway in relation to the exploitation of the northern rivers for hydroelectric power. Like the generalists, Næss has continually performed his expertise, or displayed his competence in public.

Throughout Europe, we find the mediators and facilitators at the new arenas that have been established at the boundaries, or interfaces, of the different policy cultures. A

good example of a consensus builder is the Dane Lars Klüver, long-term director of the Board of Technology, which has become well-known for its consensus conferences that are organized on a regular basis, bringing lay people together to discuss political issues with relevant experts. Such participatory technology assessment, as it is sometimes called, requires a kind of hybrid between an engineer or natural scientist (biologist in Klüver's case), on the one hand, and a politician (Klüver, like many of his counterparts in other European countries, was an active member of environmental organizations before moving to the Board of Technology).

Facilitation can also be carried out by hybrids within already established institutions – at universities, public agencies, environmental organizations, consulting firms. The strengthening of what the American political scientist Robert Putnam has termed "bridging social capital" has been particularly important in such contexts as local Agenda 21 activities, where local governmental authorities throughout Europe have often established temporary offices for mediating purposes. Like the forms of networking mentioned earlier, social innovation requires organizational skills and social competence, along with a range of experiences from working in different settings. In many of the local Agenda 21 projects that we investigated in the PESTO project we found social innovators, and we also found them at many a university, where new programs in environmental management or environmental ethics are being established. The career trajectory of Robin Grove-White, who, in the 1970s and 1980s worked within a large environmental organization (the Council for the Protection of Rural England), and then established the Center for Environmental Change at Lancaster University, and now serves as chairman of British Greenpeace and a member of the British Forestry Commission, is a good example of this kind of hybrid identity: a man of all trades, as it used to be said, but master of none.

The final categories of our typology are more specialized; these are, we might say, the promoters, or even the salesmen, of sustainable development, managing the projects and marketing the products, and generally taking the economic and personal risks that have long characterized the entrepreneur. Karl-Henrik Robert, the Swedish medical doctor turned environmental management consultant, who created the organizational and business concept, The Natural Step, illustrates one kind of entrepreneurial hybrid. As in the case of scientific popularizers, Robert's particular skills are in the arts of simplifying and operationalizing complicated ideas. The hybridization in his case refers to the combination of the popularizing sensibility with a commercial, or business mindset. One finds something similar in the promoters of the key concepts of environmental management, or green business. In Donald Huisingh, the entrepreneur of pollution prevention and cleaner

production, who established the Cleaner Production Roundtable and serves as consultant to many companies and university programs in environmental management, one finds the engineer and the ideologue in a kind of symbiosis; the hybrid identity recombines the technical interest of the engineer with the passion and enthusiasm of the politician.

4. Conclusions

The making of these and other hybrid identities in relation to green knowledge is certainly not seen by all people as something intrinsically positive or progressive. What has become especially significant over the past few years, in North America and Europe alike, is a kind of anti-environmental backlash, a mobilization of reaction against environmental politics in general and some of the specific forms of green knowledge making in particular. In Europe, the process has been most painfully visible in Denmark, where a neo-liberal government took office in 2001 and immediately began to eliminate the opportunities for environmental scientists and politicians. Many people were fired from the public environmental administrative authorities, and many of the innovative programs of the previous, Social Democratic-led government were disbanded, perhaps most dramatically the support to wind energy and the so-called Green Fund, which had sponsored a large number of locally-based projects in sustainable development. To replace the green experts, the Danish government established a new institute of environmental assessment, headed by the self-proclaimed environmental skeptic, Bjørn Lomborg, who has achieved fame and fortune by challenging the claims of green knowledge by making use of the traditional technique of cost-accounting, so that the Danish people, as he often puts it, can get "more environment for their money" (see Jamison 2002).

This backlash, similar in many ways to the behavior of the Bush administration in the United States, alerts us to the fragility of green knowledge and the difficulties in retaining and consolidating the hybrid identities that have been formed. To borrow a terminology that was used by Raymond Williams in the 1970s, we can characterize the making of green knowledge as involving a cultural political struggle on two fronts: on the one hand, against a dominant cultural formation that seeks to incorporate the new ideas and practices into its own scientific and professional modes of operation – into green business – and, on the other hand, against residual cultural formations, such as the reactionary forms of populism that have become so influential in America and Denmark, which seek to reject green knowledge in the name of traditional belief systems and ways of life (Williams 1977).

While the dominant culture operates on a transnational, global scale with commercialization and professional scientific knowledge as the main ingredients of its cognitive

praxis, residual cultures resist green knowledge by reinventing traditional ideologies and techniques: in Denmark, the ideology of rural populism and the techniques of the tight-fisted accountant. It is in between these poles of opposition that one finds an emerging ecological culture of green knowledge making, where hybrid identities and exemplary learning are the main cognitive components. It remains to be seen if this emerging culture can survive, and indeed reproduce and sustain itself, or whether the processes of incorporation and reaction that have been so prevalent during the past few years will succeed in appropriating or rejecting the ideas and practices of green knowledge. By clarifying some of the aspects of human agency that are involved in environmental politics, and by specifying, as I have tried to do here, something of the cultural dynamics of green knowledge-making, it might be hoped that the emerging ecological culture will at least gain a somewhat clearer sense of what it is all about.

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Notes

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2 PESTO included research teams in Denmark, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom; while TEA included teams in France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

3 This conceptualization was developed in earlier research with Erik Baark and Aant Elzinga. The findings of the PESTO project have been presented in the final report (Jamison, ed 1999).

4 In the analytical model that we used in the PESTO project, we referred to a fourth culture, or domain, the academic, which is not relevant for the discussion in this paper.

PARTICIPATION AND CONSENSUS-SEEKING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?
The experience of the Danish LA21 Approach

Jesper Holm*

1. Introduction

Chapter 28 of the United Nation's Programme of Action for Sustainable Development appealed to all governments and local authorities of the Member States of the United Nation to draw up local Action Plans for the 21st Century – the so-called Local Agenda 21, by 1996. For in accordance with the chapter, local governance is significant not only because „so many of the problems and solutions addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities"; but also because it encompasses a wide range of activities such as infrastructural operations, planning and implementation of national policies. Evidently, here, the *subsidiary principle* is used as one of the reasons for tasking local authorities with the responsibility of implementing Agenda 21. And whereas the *efficiency* principle is highlighted in the claim that local authorities are the governments' closest to the loci of environmental problems, the *effectiveness* principle is evident in the call for greater public participation. "As the level of governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilising and responding to the public to promote sustainable development. " (UN 1994, p. 233).

Fostering and encouraging a sustainable development, according to the AGENDA 21, are dependent upon something else than the hitherto normal environmental policy, with thresholds, standards, legal obligations and institutional control. Instead a serious involvement of local authorities and citizens for the planning of the common good is proposed. A spirit of deliberative commitment is dominating in the document, where all actors are supposed to have a common interest in co-operating for sustainable development. A dialogue process with citizens, local organisations and private enterprises forms the basis for a local Agenda 21 as a shared community image that takes place by "... consultation and consensus-building ..." where local authorities learn and acquire the information needed to form the best strategies." (ibid).

A very positive interpretation of this dialogue approach would be to understand it as the appeal for local governance to address citizens needs, potentials and ambivalence, and escape the commonly rationalistic, and expert-oriented environmental requirements, exterior to laymen's everyday orientation. From a bottom-up strategy new political identities may be exposed and new inter-policy linkages between environmental and e.g. social issues may be formed by local authorities.

In Denmark, national and local efforts have, by and large, been successful in implementing Local Agenda 21 (LA21). Three quarters of the 275 municipalities and 14 counties have a LA21 consisting of local action-plans, activities and projects.[1] LA21 has focused and enhanced local green activism and networking, while raising public awareness of local environmental problems and adequate responses. The process of implementation has been top-down, with innovative campaigning by the Ministry of the Environment and Energy (MEE) in cooperation with local authorities' associations. They have advanced a 'hands-on-practical-issues' LA21 regime that has been characterised by appeals for greater public involvement and participation – after being initially prepared by local authorities' programmes and planning. For the most part, Danish LA21 activities have been characterised by 'exterior *add-on* activities' to existing local environmental, social and business policies (see Holm, in Lafferty 1999). Therefore LA21 programmes and activities in general only appeal to *citizens*, *NGO's* and *public institutions* to voluntarily participate in local practical arrangements, debates and policies. Conventional regulatory activities on issuing permits, nature preservation and environmental infrastructures have been neglected. Business organisations, unions and private enterprises/farms etc., have rarely been involved, if at all, in LA21 activities. We have accordingly criticised the Danish LA21 strategy for having a narrow consultation approach and being soft- and easy-target oriented, lacking innovative policies for sustainable production (Holm, in Lafferty 1999).

We would suggest that the soft policy-style, exterior to hard core policy fields is in fact a immediate consequence of the consensus-approach that is established at the earth Summit. But to evaluate long term impact we need to know whether the dominating consensus story-line has actually been successful in generating *new modes of public participation or co-operation and by this approach also new policy content*. Are there signs of a new cultural-politics paradigm of shared responsibility and co-operation that may, in time, supplement or merge with the conventional environmental policy paradigm (Lafferty 1999)? The hypothesis might be: If a weak state wants to escape a systemic lock-in in environmental policy for enhancing sustainable development, then mobilising stakeholders and participation for generating new policy options and democratic pressure could be a way out.

First we look at the background of the 'deliberative democracy' policy style of Danish LA21 implementation. Of importance for this style, and for the subsidiary question, we focus on the development of an experimental bottom-up culture. Also of importance here is the institutional implementation process of LA21, consisting of new horizontal alliances, networks and initiatives among Danish government and associations of local

authorities. Secondly, general LA21 process developments are analysed in order to identify what kind of participatory efforts on what subjects have taken place. The status of the LA21 products is described to find whether new signs of shifts in environmental policy paradigms have occurred. Third, we turn into a more in-depth explorative study of the pioneering municipality of Albertslund, in order to look more closely at the relationship between forms of public participation and new environmental policy paradigms under very favourable conditions.

2. Background

2.1. Local experiments and community innovation

The culture of Danish policy is, in general, characterised by the tradition of a decentralised public administration, which also applies in the LA21-relevant legislation of spatial planning and public administration of environmental policy. With this comes the consensus-seeking approach, together with the Danish civic tradition (the so-called 'people's enlightenment tradition' dating from the turn of the century) that has, to a large extent, influenced the policy processes of social interest groups (Læssøe 1990). In areas such as environmental policy and spatial planning, practices based on consultation with interest groups have been commonplace. This Danish element of public, corporate and NGO consultation that implies relative openness in all areas of environmental policies is an important principle in the Danish Environmental Act and in the Spatial Planning Act. The policy culture[2] has come to provide, comparatively, a favourable infrastructure for the deliberative and stakeholder-democracy implementation style of the Rio Summit's appeal for a Local Agenda 21.

During the late 1980s, Danish environmental policy came to adopt a two-fold path partly due to criticism of lax enforcement of acts and rules and partly due to a new world-wide paradigmatic approach to environmental problems. On the one hand, environmental policy came to focus on cleaner technology options, pollution prevention and cradle-to-grave perspectives instead of a more general carrying-capacity approach. On the other hand, environmental policy came to promote active involvement of various stakeholders in designing and implementing pollution prevention in manufacturing, farming and transport. In other words, environmental policy turned 'eco-modernistic', interactive and de-formalising (Holm, in Lafferty 1999). This development gradually introduced local authorities to the challenge of relating environmental problems to underlying economic and technological causalities, and integrating corporate partners into new interactive regulatory approaches – all important LA21 features and themes. However, local authorities have, up to until recently, failed in the firm implementation

and enforcement of this new regulatory paradigm. Accordingly, by the mid-1980s, local authorities faced considerable pressure from the government and green NGOs.

One window of opportunity for the local authorities in this situation turned out to be a new 'practical activism' among NGOs and green entrepreneurs in many residential areas. Local politicians and employees from public institutions began to show interest in supporting combined social and green practical initiatives. This activism included, among other things: mobilising clients and citizens in making renewable energy utilities; developing energy-saving measures; renewing urban areas with ecology projects; reducing the amount of traffic, etc. The municipalities and the government thus found an open door, within the eco-modernistic, win-win approach, for gaining legitimacy by enhancing a shared-responsibility regime with green activists and entrepreneurs as a target group.

The Ministry of the Environment's 1988 campaign, *Our Common Future*, inspired by the Brundtland Report, was the first pre-LA21 policy initiative from *the government* that encouraged citizens and NGOs to join practical activities as part of a general environmental regulatory effort. With a fund for new projects for local authorities and citizen groups, over 600 projects were supported up until 1992. New political entrepreneur/practitioner identities were stabilised and new cross-sectoral and cross-public–private experiments were initiated. The campaign was meant to be a learning process for local authorities, by generating experiments and revealing options and hindrances for a bottom-up strategy (Læssøe 2000). The campaign also wound-up with a review of the four-year municipal- and county-planning documents where more qualitative targets were stipulated on environmental, transport and energy areas.

Similarly, following the government's action plan for 'Environment and Development' in 1988, the Ministry of the Environment initiated a 'Green Municipality' *(Grøn Kommune)* scheme. This scheme, which was scheduled between 1988 and 1992, created cross-sectoral experiments within the local public sectors in order to assess the institutional obstacles for a paradigmatic change and to experiment with new and less costly environmental innovation options. Nine municipalities were subsidised to join the various green projects that included educating children on environment matters, nature conservation and developing a cleaner technology option.

The experiences from these new practical-experimental initiatives influenced the Ministry of the Environment (MEE) to form a strategy for sustainable development through local master-planning. Thus, in 1992, the MEE's National Planning Document, a framework for regional and municipal spatial planning ('Denmark Heading for Year 2018'), made a plea for Denmark to become an environmental pioneer and to be a front-runner in sustainability issues. For many municipalities and counties, this document signal-

led a move towards more profound environmental concerns and activism within the areas of *spatial planning* and *urban development*. As a result of the planning document, and partly due to linking up to the OECD project on *Sustainable Cities*, eleven municipalities were funded to find new ways of realising the document's goal of a 'cleaner Denmark'. From 1996-1997, the OECD-project municipalities came to be partners with the MEE in developing LA21 ideas for information campaigns.

As is clear, these preceding and yet dispersed environmental activities inspired a number of publicly launched initiatives in practice .The initiatives and networks formed an important basis for the subsequent initiation of LA21 projects in the municipalities. Of great importance is that the experiments revealed a new paradigmatic way for developing a separate path in environmental policy, where supporting bottom-up approaches formed new visions for local development and social mobilisation. New partners were found for a number of environmental areas that were not under the rules of environmental acts and regulations. They formed the basis for a change towards the inclusion of citizens, NGOs and authorities in more comprehensive and constructive efforts to re-build cities and infrastructures. Resource accounting, quality of city-life and environmental goods became a positive focus, instead of protecting the environment through restrictions on activities.

2.2. LA21 activities/initiatives from the Danish government and association of local authorities

Following the Rio declaration, the Danish government took 2 years before it initiated the implementation of the Rio mandate on LA21. In the autumn of 1994, the Ministry of the Environment (and Energy since 1994, MEE) assigned two academics the responsibility of initiating LA21 campaigns among the municipalities and counties. They were placed in the department of National Spatial Planning and have been most active in travelling around the country in co-operation with municipalities. There have been no efforts to include others in LA21 activities – not even the departments for industry, agriculture, cleaner products or pesticides.

The MEE has, since the aforementioned initiation, adapted a collaborative regime with relevant interest groups, the National Association of Local Authorities (KL) and the Association of County Councils (*Amtsrådsforeningen i Danmark* (AF)). A network of active municipalities has functioned as the Ministry's access to local authorities when information and other types of campaign have been launched. MEE, KL and AF requested local authorities to start (voluntarily) using five terms of reference as guidelines for their planning processes. In summary, the local authorities were to initiate:

(1) cross-sectoral and holistic efforts; (2) active public participation; (3) a cradle-to-grave perspective; (4) global concern; and (5) a long time-span perspective. These terms of reference have become a crucial point for many local authorities in the Danish top-down implementation process of LA21. For our purpose, the interpretation of the second term of reference is of special interest: '... sustainable development will require thorough changes of society – from basic infrastructure to households... Within regional and municipal master spatial-planning procedures, public hearings are common [and mandatory]. But the aim is to go beyond simple hearings... it is also an aim to involve citizens in order to elevate the role of the municipalities from being authorities to becoming supervisors and partners' (Miljøministeriet 1995).

At approximately the same time, the MEE published a 30-page introduction booklet ('Local Agenda 21 – An introduction for counties and municipalities') for local authorities and other interested organisations. According to the booklet, LA21 activities were to promote *consumption reduction* and *pollution reduction*, while at the same time *improving the general quality of life*. Three levels of intervention were proposed: (1) an LA21 strategy was to be integrated in spatial planning documents; (2) sector action plans or internal initiatives such as green accounting or purchasing were to be stipulated; and (3) LA21 projects were to be initiated. In the same way, the booklet gave some advice on how to organise cross-sectoral initiatives and how to form new links for active citizen groups. It also proposed LA21 projects that could be of interest to Danish industry.

In 1994, the MEE adopted the ideas from the aforementioned campaign *Our Common Future*. It also established a financial aid scheme, *The Green Fund*; an initiative that turned out to be a key resource for over 100 local, full-time employed Green Guides that became green catalysts within similar LA21 processes. Furthermore, the Green Fund funded urban ecology projects: green information campaigns, international environmental collaborations among NGOs, adult training, the 'greening' of institutions, and cross-sectorally related projects. In 1996, The Green Fund was supplemented by a parliamentary programme, *Pool for Green Jobs*, which financed green-job initiatives and efforts that seem to have a competitive advantage on the market. Such projects have included green tourism, ecological clothing and environmental management systems for SMEs.

A number of networking activities, information campaigns and booklets from MEE, courses and LA21 forums have been giving advice on how to organise cross-sectoral initiatives and how to form new links to active participating citizen groups on new issues, e.g., transport and energy consumption. There has, however, been little focus on how to apply the guidelines to agricultural, transport and housing sectors, or within traditional environmental regulation fields. Accordingly, there has developed the aforementioned

lack of collaboration with NGOs, industries, trade unions, labour or farmers' organisations. The largest Danish environmental NGO, *Danmarks Naturfredningsforening* (DN), with committees in all municipalities, changed their negligent attitude towards LA21 in 1996-1997 for a short while, but have not really been actively involved. Similarly, very few local trade unions have been involved in LA21[3] and generally, even though MEE has financed a number of activities, campaigns and projects (under the Green Fund and the Pool for Green Jobs), there lacks a visible commitment for a united front for LA21.

The government also launched an initiative in September 1999 to develop a *national* Agenda 21 strategy until Rio+10 in 2002, which partially included efforts to co-ordinate and back-up local and regional initiatives from the MEE and other ministries. Along with the change from a socio-democratic to a neo-liberal government, the national strategy has become less ambitious. Besides, it was enacted (February 2000) that it is mandatory for all municipalities and counties during their four-year period of governance to make a formal statement regarding their strategy for sustainable development, according to the five LA21 terms of references. The statement has to include figures or initiatives on pollution prevention, biodiversity, consultation with citizens and manufacturers, and initiatives for the enhancement of environmental policy integration into a number of sectors.

The outcome of this step of further formalisation and aggregation is yet to be seen. Denmark will, however, definitely see more governmental political focus on Agenda 21, and LA21 free-riders will have to give greater consideration to the process.

Summing up the story-line of the Danish government's LA21 strategy is very much a continuation of a consensus-seeking, bottom-up, and practical-involvement approach from the experimental period of the mid-1980s. The aim has been to open up windows of opportunity for new practical initiatives, where lay people and green professionals may co-operate with local authorities on issues that are proactive, resource-oriented and with a visionary content, although rather local-oriented. The interesting new approach from the Danish LA21 is that the previous bottom-up policy support of practical activism was not only met but also initiated by a top-down approach, e.g., in spatial and strategic planning approaches launched from MEE, KL and AF, subsequently the local authorities. It is unique that the 'two cultures' of bottom-up and top-down seem to fit so well with each other in actual LA21 policy. The horizontal co-operation regime of shared responsibility has definitely formed a beneficial milieu for mutual learning and involvement of a plurality of actors. But the question is whether this co-operative regime has fostered a more widespread political will or identity that takes sustainable production and consumption seriously. As we shall see, efforts to link up to third-world problems have

been missing, with little effort of business innovation towards sustainable production and consumption. An orientation toward cultural politics may have formed the basis for such a policy.

3. Profiles, participation and new policy paradigms

3.1. General LA21 Developments

Several surveys have been carried out to evaluate the implementation of LA21 in Denmark and to use it for political campaigns, adjustment of implementation strategies and status reporting to UNCSD. In December 1995, a first survey of the early starters evaluated how 20 municipalities and two counties, all labelled 'green', were executing LA21 activities. The survey showed that half of the supposedly active authorities had not progressed further than expressing a political commitment, whereas one-third were about to embark upon such a process. In addition, the study showed that the majority of the municipalities used the mandatory, spatial planning system's strategic part and the formalised hearing procedure to introduce LA21 to the public. It is rather common that this procedure for public hearing is used for discussions on general developments, but it has become primarily a tool for post facto hearings.

An *external* survey of LA21 activities among the municipalities was carried out in 1998 for the aforementioned green NGO, DN. In DN's evaluation, four criteria were used to categorise the municipalities: (1) existence of a green enterprise; (2) existence of a manager and supporter of green lifestyles; (3) existence of a forum for ensuring citizen participation; and (4) the development of major sustainable development patterns. With a response rate of half of the municipalities, only three municipalities were categorised as 'green', that is, as working towards sustainable development (by scoring above average in at least three out of the four criteria areas). According to the survey, 123 municipalities could not be categorised as working for sustainable development. With reference to the question of consulting the public, the survey showed that, in general, most of the authorities (60 percent) used LA21 as a forum – not for consultation or participation, but for *new ways of informing the public on environmental infrastructure issues* (field studies, visiting waste water treatment plants, incineration utilities, etc.). On the other hand, the number of municipalities that have established *new dialogue groups* or *public forums* has been low, although this number has risen from 19 in 1996 to 44 in 1998. The number of municipalities in which authorities have established *working groups that also included lay people* has nearly doubled from 30 to 63 during this period. The survey also showed that the same municipalities claimed that they (economically) supported citizen initiatives, while holding public meetings to expand the agenda of environmental issues (DN 1998).

In 1999, DN carried out a follow-up survey of counties, where only Storstrøm County was classified as a green county, with positive scores on more than two-thirds of the criteria. Six other counties (of Denmark's 14) were reported to be on track. With reference to public participation, the survey showed that there was very limited public participation if at all at the county level. For example, only two counties had involved citizens in the drawing up of their respective LA21 plans, whereas four counties had not gone further than to endorse public participation in regional spatial planning. However, most of the counties stated that they were planning to promote public participation in the planning and design of the forthcoming county action plan document for the year 2001 (DN 1999). This is, however, what they have been obliged to do by law since 1976!

The MEE conducted its own survey between 1996-1997 (together with KL), claiming that over 50 percent of Danish local authorities were engaged in LA21 activities, highlighting the success of the national LA21 campaign (Miljø- og Energiministeriet 1997a) – a slightly different conclusion than the one reached by DN. Better still, in December 1998, the MEE carried out another survey that maintained that approximately 70 percent of Danish municipalities were engaged in LA21 activities. And, with reference to public participation, the survey conceded with the DN's (survey) conclusion that, between 1996 and 1998, the number of municipalities that started to consult or arrange dialogue with citizens through LA21 increased from 70 to 96. Out of these, 48 municipalities have initiated new experiments with consultation and dialogue, while 62 have institutionalised dialogues or citizen forums. A democratic improvement of 50 percent among the active LA21 municipalities, answered that in general they have initiated their LA21 activities *without* initial public consultation! With a top-down initiated LA21 policy, many of the municipalities may have actively supported and financed bottom-up citizen-initiatives, as the development in support has doubled amongst the LA21 active municipalities.

Individual 'activism' in LA21 activities is another case in point. For example, MEE's survey claimed that 'green individuals' initiated 33 percent of all LA21 activities, followed by green organisations with 24 percent, citizen groups with 14 percent, while local housing groups scored 7 percent. However, children, youth, business managers, labour unions and researchers have been inactive (Miljøministeriet 1999: 19).

In evaluating the scope and nature of involvement, surveys show that, predominantly, the municipal activities have been in-house measures, profiling the municipality as a green enterprise or a manager and supporter of green services/products. Table 1, however, shows substantially that the use of *structural* sustainability-oriented *policy instruments* for consumption and manufacturing has been limited.

Table 1. Source: Miljøministeriet 1999

Means and methods	**Percentage of LA21-active municipalities**
Energy management in public institutions	49
Environmental management in public institutions	29
Green accounting in public institutions	38
Green accounting for the whole municipality	13
EIA of decisions	7
Sustainability indicators	6
Green purchasing	33
Ecological food in public institutions	30

Table 2. Source: Miljøministeriet 1999

*= areas not covered by conventional, local environmental policy

LA21 activities	**Percentage of LA21-active municipalities that have put these types of activities into practice**
Health and quality of life	39
Sustainable housing/siting*	25
Lowering air emissions	24
Renewable energy + cutting consumption*	37
Forests recovering, etc.	20
Sustaining agriculture*	12
Enhancing biodiversity	11
Protection of oceans*	23
Protection of water-beds and drinking water	48
Protection of water courses, lakes, ponds	32
Cutting use of chemicals and toxic waste*	35
Solid waste and waste water	32
Greening business technology/development*	21
Greening tourism*	11
Education and awareness rising*	38

Table 2 gives us an indication that a considerable number of LA21 *projects* and *activities* have covered sustainability *policy issues* that were disregarded by the local conventional environmental policy.

Whether the other (non-asterisked) areas go beyond conventional regulation, is not clear from the survey. On their part, Danish LA21 activities seem to have overlooked global environmental issues such as climate change and ozone-layer problems, while prioritising local problems such as drinking-water pollution. Among the group of municipalities and counties that have been classified as 'best cases', 62 percent were 'early starters' and scored above average on: the more deliberate use of the LA21 concept; experimenting with new forms of dialogue; cross-municipality co-operation; and giving importance to sustainability issues more generally. Thus, the best cases that have had a high score on LA21 methods and content also happen to be the ones that have experimented more with new ways of public involvement and participation.

3.2. Best cases

If we turn to some of the best cases, the image from the survey remains. They have a far more integrated approach, covering substantial efforts to integrate both production, manufacturing and green lifestyle issues. Among these we find cases where the ideas from Rio were adopted so as to expand or re-orient *their already existing environmental activities* under a LA21 banner. For example, the county of Storstrøm, which participated in the Rio Conference, had in 1989 started a 'Green County Project' with the purpose of promoting sustainable development in the county. And between 1991 and 1994, the county focused its attention on environmental activities that promoted cleaner technology options together with environmentally sound housekeeping. This project later continued as an LA21 project, while expanding in scope and variety. Thanks to the local Green Council, the organisation has 17 members from NGOs, industry, agriculture, labour organisations, youth organisations, etc. In the same way, the Green Council has established six working groups that have involved local experts and laymen in developing ideas and concrete projects. Issues of concern have ranged from sustainable agriculture, green tourism, cleaner technology, environmentally sound housekeeping to environmental training. Other diverse LA21 activities include international activities in the county that have promoted and inspired its own ideas. For example, the county has been co-organising an environmental training course for employees in Riga, Latvia. In the same way, the county has not only launched an environmental campus in 1992 – being active in the ICLEI Conference, while participating in many UN projects – but has also, in its environmental activities, continued to use third-world experts as training consultants.

The pioneering municipalities of Albertslund (see the following section), Silkeborg, Kolding, Herning and Horsens, and the county of Vejle, are the most well-known best-cases as well as the early starters. In these municipalities, it has been argued that LA21 activities have not only improved the local environment, but, more generally, that they have served as a window for new policy measures or goals. This is exemplified by the green purchasing and climate projects in Albertslund; the comprehensive water-related environmental accounting and management plans in Silkeborg; and the green networks of environmental managers among industries in Kolding, Vejle and Herning, which have all made significant improvements to the local environment. These pioneers have shown that it is possible to start cross-sectoral and alternative environmental projects that may go beyond conventional environmental regulation, while providing new legitimacy for local governance. Whereas the global environmental focus that was underscored in Rio has encouraged local actors among these best cases to give pressing local environment an international profile, it has also helped to address more substantive environmental problems. In the same way, LA21 has provided a hospitable infrastructure for promoting and strengthening environmental focus under a joint strategy or purpose. Through this discursive and institutional embedding, a political platform has been provided for promoting the integration and internalisation of Agenda 21 issues within the municipalities' administration or politics.

It should be underlined here that the best LA21 cases were not only the municipalities or counties that substituted pre-Rio environmental initiatives with LA21. 'Generic' LA21 cases were also inspired by the KL/AF/MEE campaigns. The municipalities of Stenløse, Køge and Haslev are cases in point. Here, prior to Rio, public participation in environmental matters or green 'associations' from below were unheard of. However, inspired by the above-mentioned LA21 campaigns, together with enthusiastic contributions of new, young and enthusiastic staff in the planning and environment offices, new activities, new ways of organising and new issues developed. In 1997 and 1998 (respectively), Haslev adopted an environmental Action Plan and a Traffic Action Plan – plans that motivated the municipality to initiate LA21 activities. Though the comprehensive Action Plan for the environment was formulated and planned from above, there was an all-inclusive public-hearing process that gave the local public an opportunity to come up with innovative comments and suggestions. This meeting also prepared the general public for active participation in the preparation of a local Traffic Plan and other LA21 activities. And, during the preparation and formulation of an Environmental Action Plan, members of other sectors were involved, while coming up with substantial and precise targets that were stipulated in the Plan. For example, the reduction of energy consumption, waste

reduction, improvement of green areas, enhanced pollution prevention, dialogue with farmers and industry, resource consumption, waste-water treatment, soil contamination, noise, etc. Specific responsibilities, timetables and projects have been worked out for each sector. And, annually, the sectoral departments report back to the politicians and to the co-ordinating planning department.

Though the 1997 Traffic Plan had some top-down stipulated goals, after a comprehensive monitoring, resources were disbursed to local groups together with the freedom to find solutions and priorities within these restricted target areas. 1998 saw the launch of traffic projects covering mainly security issues, with the exception of one project, which deals with public transport problems. Together with this, a Citizen Board has been set up. The Board oversees the disbursement of funds to support LA21 projects or groups. Such projects include ecology projects, health and nutrition projects, the greening of housing areas and car-pooling. Most notably, in Harslev, LA21 activities are exceptional in the sense that the municipality has appointed LA21 staff in its planning and development department while all sector departments have particular persons who have been tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the Environmental Action Plan as well as LA21 activities.

All in all, however, whether LA21 cases were generic or add-on, the institutionalisation and integration of LA21 concepts seems to foster new forms of shared responsibility, thereby finding new issues beyond environmental protection. However, if we were to examine *how* new participatory activities in LA21 may provide an infrastructure for developing and promoting new and substantive environmental initiatives, we need to map the cases more closely. Accordingly, the following pages will closely explore LA21 initiatives/activities of a pioneering municipality – the municipality of Albertslund. The favourable conditions in Albertslund for democratic participation and environmental concern provide an opportunity to analyse more clearly what can actually be achieved.

4. A pioneering municipality in Local Agenda 21 activities: The case of Albertslund

The Albertslund Municipality, situated in the western suburb of Copenhagen, is a new town that was founded in the 1960s. It has approximately 30,000 inhabitants and 60 percent of the municipality is made up of green areas composed of state forest and different types of municipal green areas. There are 900 hectares of state forest and in an open valley with a stream there are four municipal nature parks. The municipality, which is made up of small units of villages with common electricity and water supplies, etc. was originally made up of four villages in an agricultural area that has now become a state forest.

Due to its social-democratic political orientation, the municipality has, since the 1970s, attracted a certain kind of resident; a good number of whom happen to be environmentally conscious. It is because of this that debates and issues of environmental protection in the municipality can be traced back to the 1970s, since which time there have always been people in the municipality who have been engaged, voluntarily, in environmental matters. Similarly, as a result of its young history, there is a general feeling of combined ownership and responsibility in all common matters, not least of which includes environmental issues. As a result, people in the area have developed strong interests in methods and plans for improving the local environment. This strong political will and dedication to environment protection issues on the part of the general public has continued today as depicted by the results of a recent survey. It showed that 94 percent of the local residents were willing to pay an extra 1,000 kroners in tax on top of the conventional tax (60 percent), provided the money was to be used exclusively to improve the environment in the municipality.

Environmental-protection issues have received strong political support and engagement from Albertslund's local citizens since the 1970s. Environmental campaigns can be traced back to 1971, when local citizens first took voluntary initiatives to develop plans and methods for improving the local environment. This environmental activism together with the aforementioned tradition of citizen participation in all local policy matters has provided an unsurpassed infrastructure for the implementation of Rio's mandate for a LA21. In fact, following the Rio Conference, and even before Rio's LA21 mandate had received moral or political back-up from the national government, local citizens started to pressurise local politicians to initiate a LA21 for the municipality.

4.1. Public participation and local organisations

Principally, in the municipality's policy-making processes, we can identify two broad types of public participation. On the one hand, the binding direct involvement of grass-root organisations contributes to the policy process, operating within structures overseen by elected or appointed officials. On the other hand, the non-binding direct involvement of citizens contributes towards the deliberative processes, the outcome of which is mediated by an administrative or legislative body. These include stipulated periods for public comment, open meetings and some citizen-advisory commissions. This non-binding direct involvement allows Albertslund's citizens to express their preferences and increase their involvement in policy deliberations beyond reliance on their local government representatives. The public hearings and periods for commentary also allow local citizens to provide input into the policy-making processes. In the municipality's planning exercises, there

has been a greater potential for compromise while also providing an opportunity for more detailed expression of public preferences – which in turn provides a greater potential for more information to enter the policy-making process. It is through these broad types of public participation in all local policy matters, including LA21 activities, that all interested and affected groups or persons (in the environmental-political development of the municipality) express and define their targets, while also contributing useful information to the decision-making process.

This culture of public participation and influence is clearly expressed by the numerous grass-roots organisations that are found in the municipality, and not least the interaction and co-operation between these citizens or interest-group organisations. These are, for example, a User Group, an Agenda Centre, and a Green-Network Organisation, not to mention the various (local) nature organisations. The User Group through which each village is represented was formed in 1980. It has 79 members who represent landowners associations, local boards and 'Residents Tribunals'. The group expresses its opinion on all matters of environmental significance before they are presented to the Municipal Council. It also discusses relevant local budgets and accounts, while reinforcing local dialogue between citizens, local administration and politicians. All political decisions in the municipality must be aired in the User Group. It has real influence over all political decisions, as exemplified by the fact that the local authority has never ignored any of its suggestions. All matters of local residential interest are presented to the Group before they are forwarded to the Municipal Council for final decision.

The 'Agenda Centre Albertslund' was formed in 1996, and is an independent institution with its own board. It is financed by the above-mentioned User Group, and its primary task is to carry out LA21 plans with each individual housing area while also carrying out specific demonstration projects. One example of these projects is an organic garden project that cultivates, exclusively, organic crops. Another is the solar-cells project that is working and promoting the use of solar energy as an alternative source of energy for the municipality. The Centre, which has a limited number of employed staff and some volunteers, aims to encourage local residential areas to address environmental issues in their local neighbourhoods. In 1995, the Agenda Centre Albertslund and the Albertslund School of Ecology and Culture, together with Albertslund Municipality, joined together to form a 'Green Network'. The Green Network's main responsibility is to ensure that information and ideas that are derived from various LA21 activities are communicated to all local grass-roots organisations, citizen groups, administration, etc., in the municipality.

4.2. LA21 history, processes and activities

In 1992, on the suggestion of the aforementioned User Group, the municipality set out to define its 'environmental space' in order to establish a basis for LA21 objectives. To date, the municipality has managed to estimate its approximate environmental space for CO_2 and groundwater, but more work is being carried out to obtain a more detailed definition of environmental space and also to quantify the parameters for SO_2, NO_2, waste, etc. Similarly, by 1993, the municipality had drawn up its local Green Accounts, which quantified its consumption of energy and resources. It was this data that assisted the local authority's estimate on the resulting environmental load from this over-consumption. In line with this, these Green Accounts data made it possible for the municipality to spell out its LA21 objectives and targets more effectively, stimulating wider public discussions while inspiring local consumers to radically reduce resource over-consumption. With this, Albertslund became the first municipality in Denmark to effectuate a system of green accounting.

In 1993, following initiatives and pressure from local citizens – who in return received support from the local authority – the municipality set out to plan its LA21 initiatives. General involvement of citizens, the business community, associations and other interest groups in the planning, development review and revision of LA21 plans were encouraged. According to the local authority, sustainability cannot be achieved without greater participation of all its citizens. Therefore all interested and affected groups or persons (in the environmental-political development of the municipality) were invited to express and define their targets. They were also encouraged to take part in the process of ensuring that these targets were to be achieved.

It was not until 1994 that an LA21 for the municipality was stipulated. Albertslund was to become a 'Sustainable City', where resource and energy consumption were to fit the municipality's environmental space. All local activities were to preserve, strengthen and develop the municipality's natural environment. With the help of the environmental-space concept and the quantified Green Accounts, the municipality's technical and environment department – together with other interested local NGOs – drafted a Nature Action Plan, a Water Supply Action Plan, a Waste Action Plan, a CO_2 Action Plan, and an Environmental Action Plan.

The draft plans were submitted to the politicians who gave comments on the documents, and then in turn submitted to the User Group which provided further suggestions. From here, between 1995 and 1997, in the spirit of the municipality's tradition of dialogue and co-operation amongst the various stakeholders, the technical and environment department, in co-operation with the User Group and other (local) grass-

roots organisations, scheduled a series of public meetings and discussions. All interested and affected local citizens were invited for comments and suggestions to allow input into the formulation of LA21 goals towards a Sustainable City. The town mayor, the chairperson of the local Environmental Council and other local politicians attended the hearing sessions to show their political will and support for these LA21 exercises. After the public hearings, the technical and environment department drew up the final drafts that included the 'data' expressed in the public hearings. The drafts were then submitted to local politicians who, after commenting, submitted the final drafts (again) to the User Group for suggestions, before the final drafts were submitted to the Municipal Council for final endorsement.

These public exercises have provided useful data and more information in the formulation of the respective LA21 plans, while local grass-root organisations have been active in the planning, formulation and implementation of the LA21 plans. As an example of the latter, in the development and review of the Nature Plan, the above-mentioned nature organisations voluntarily helped in the collection of raw data. For example, they measured and counted plants and animal species in the locality; data that came to form the bulk of the Nature Plan's technical report. Together with this, in the formulation of the (main) Nature Plan Report, the nature organisations came up with proposals for the structure and development of a comprehensive Nature Plan.

4.3. LA21 goals and means

In the various LA21 plans that were to make Albertslund Municipality a Sustainable City in the 21st century, the municipality came up with some intermediate and long-term goals. Among the intermediate goals of the municipality were the reduction of CO_2, SO_2 and NO_2 emissions by 40 percent, and the reduction in the consumption of groundwater by 35 percent, both by the year 2000. For waste management, the municipality was to reduce the volume of waste production considerably by the year 2000. More waste was to be managed through recycling and 50 percent of green kitchen waste was to be recycled from the source or at the local areas by the year 2000, while land filling was to be reduced. Together with this, the commitment of local citizen' to LA21 activities was to be encouraged, so that by 1997, 20 percent of the local residential areas were to have worked out a sub-municipal LA21.

For the long-term goals, among other things, the municipality was to reduce CO_2, SO_2 and NO_2 emissions by 80 percent, and the consumption of groundwater by 70 percent, both by the year 2005. The municipality was also to minimise the volume of waste production considerably (by the year 2010). A major part of waste management was to

be through recycling, with land-filling minimised and 75 percent of green kitchen waste being handled at the source or the local areas (by the year 2010). By the year 2010, all (i.e., 100 percent) of local residential areas were to have drawn up a sub-municipal LA21.

Due to a lack of economic, judicial and legal support from the central government, as a whole, the municipality came to depend on 'voluntary' and structural approaches to environmental protection in order to realise the stipulated goals. Examples of the 'voluntary' self-regulation approaches include value-chain demands (customer or supplier requirements of environmentally friendly products), and self-augmented degrees of governmental incentives (such as public recognition through awards or public disclosure through reportage of the local environmental offenders in the local newspaper). With a structural approach to environmental protection, the municipality initiated public consciousness-raising activities (such as green fairs and green flag campaigns for schools) that were hoped to change the local public's behaviour and attitudes towards environmental problems.

In line with this, through the help of the User Group and the Green Network, the municipality is carrying out discussion campaigns about environmentally correct behaviour – discussions that are often based on the quantified Green Accounts' data. The campaigns are meant to raise public interest and awareness of LA21 activities in the municipality while also informing them about the environmental burden that is incurred by their increased consumption. Similarly, these campaigns are hoped to inspire local citizens to change their consumer attitudes and habits, while restructuring their everyday lifestyle in order to reduce the consumption of energy and other resources.

It should be added that, since 1996, together with a (visible) total ban on the use of pesticides on the municipality's own property and green areas, all day-care and public institutions have been consuming organic food while also purchasing environmentally friendly office articles. And, by the end of 1999, the municipality plans to introduce organic food to all public schools, old people's homes, public canteens, etc. The local authority's main objective with these activities is to make visible demonstrations that may raise public awareness, while encouraging local citizens to treat their natural surroundings in accordance with ecological principles.

Conferences about the various action plans have also been used to raise public awareness about environmental correctness and LA21 activities. These exercises are arranged to give local citizens and interested organisations an opportunity to participate in various LA21 activities. They are also arranged with a view towards increasing public awareness of LA21 plans and their status of development. In line with this, environmental 'topic-days' or forums are held by the municipality now and then to spread information

and exchange experiences amongst local citizens and stakeholders. Together with disseminating information through the local newspapers, local newsletters and other in-house publications, the municipality arranges citizen meetings and door-to-door delivery of leaflets, which have become the most popular and effective measures that are used to persuade local citizens to participate in Local Agenda 21 activities.

4.4. Impacts

We have argued thus far that, since 1992, Albertslund municipality has set out to make the municipality a Sustainable City in the 21st century. Due to a lack of economic, judicial and legal support from the central government, we may hypothesise that, in the main, the municipality has adopted 'voluntary' self-regulation and structural approaches to environmental protection as tools for realising its LA21 goals. Similarly, we have maintained that, in the spirit of its relatively old and rather unique tradition of dialogue and cooperation between the administration, local stakeholders, citizens and politicians, the municipality has adopted a non-binding, direct public involvement, and a binding, direct policy-making modality of citizen participation. This exercise has come to allow greater citizen input into the LA21 policy-making process. It would, therefore, at this point, be interesting to see whether these approaches to environmental protection have or may, in the long run, produce (better) environmentally sustainable results for the municipality than has been possible through the traditional command-and-control regulation, or through market-based instruments.

According to the municipality itself, it has, since 1996, witnessed positive developments that are now bearing fruits. For example, 1997 saw a reduction of 26 percent in the emissions of CO_2, 43 percent of SO_2 and 23 percent of NO_2. Similarly, the 1997 Green Accounts showed that groundwater consumption had been reduced by 21 percent, while the consumption of pesticides had been reduced dramatically by 91 percent. To this we may add that, today, almost everyone in the municipality knows what a LA21 is, and not least, what the current LA21 plans and developments in the area are. By 1997, 20 percent of the villages in the municipality had also initiated their own sub-municipal LA21 initiatives. Though these 'soft' policy approaches may have made headway in contributing to this progress, it is not clear whether LA21's exercises have exclusively affected this development, or whether it's activities in combination with the more conventional regulatory approaches are responsible. Though the success of these activities is apparent, without economic, judicial and legal support from the central government in the future, these 'soft' policy approaches will not be sufficient enough to fuel progress in alleviating environmental problems that extend beyond firms or individual self-interest.

All in all, if we were to conceptualise openness in the policy-making process as the potential for new and different types of information entering the policy process, the LA21 public comment and hearing exercises in Albertslund have facilitated the free flow of information from the local public to the municipal administration. This is largely because the exercises have provided an opportunity for more detailed expression of the publics' preferences, whereas the process has been relatively more open to taking advantage of the knowledge of the local public. On the other hand, through the binding policy-making modality, the grass-roots organisations have not only given technical assistance and substantial contributions to the planning process, but have also contributed to promoting an increased public interest and awareness of LA21 activities and environmental matters more generally. In the main, these LA21 exercises have not only influenced the local publics' general attitudes towards the environment and generated better dialogue between the citizens, stakeholders and the authority, but also have increased the awareness and understanding of LA21 activities and environmental issues in general.

However, if, as we have maintained, environmental initiatives and not least modalities of public-involvement exercises were already in place before Rio's LA21 mandate, then we come to identify informal pre-Rio LA21 practices and formal post-Rio LA21 exercises. Since the 1970s, local people who really wanted to do something for the municipality have initiated informal LA21 activities that in return have received political back-up and support from the local government. Therefore, in this case, what Rio's LA21 mandate facilitated was the opportunity for active local citizens and politicians to formalise and institutionalise the activities that were already in place, albeit informally. This formalisation and institutionalisation of the already existing local environmental initiatives or activities under the banner of LA21 has given local citizens and politicians an opportunity to relate their local environmental problems, initiatives or activities to national and global issues or discourses. This is exemplified by the adoption of the environmental-space concept and the Green Accounts that made it possible for the municipality to spell out its environmental objectives and results more effectively while relating them to global discussions.

All in all, this formalisation and institutionalisation of local environmental initiatives and activities through formal LA21 exercises has been apparently successful in improving the local environment through increased local environmental initiatives and activities. Equally, these LA21 activities have raised public awareness on environmental issues considerably and have added a new dimension to the municipality's tradition of citizen participation in which new modes of interaction and co-operation have inspired and generated new and more soundly based debate and decision-making/implementation processes.

5 . Conclusion

As argued at the beginning of this paper, the Danish tradition of a decentralised public administration and the consensus-seeking approach together with a tradition of 'popular enlightenment' have come to provide a considerably favourable infrastructure for the implementation of Local Agenda 21. In the same way, the local government's tradition, characterised by public participation in local planning together with a local environmental policy of integrated pollution-control measures (since 1991), has prepared local authorities for the implementation of Rio's LA21 mandate. In addition, the multi-partisan tradition that incorporates plural interest groups in the design and implementation of local policies together with a comprehensive number of local, green 'do-it-yourself' experiments has made it relatively easier for LA21 officials to initiate LA21 projects with a considerable degree of public interest.

In this paper we have claimed that although public participation and public involvement are old issues in Denmark, LA21 activities have nevertheless advanced considerably more in integrating lay people's opinions in local environmental policies than has been possible within conventional public participation efforts. For example, through LA21 activities, several local authorities have started to involve the local public in the agenda-setting part of the policy process. And increasingly the lay public has come to be a key actor in the problem-definition phase of the agenda-setting, while also stipulating targets and priorities and participating in the search for visible, socially and locally desirable solutions. Similarly, national and local governments have started to disburse human and economic resources for the purposes of enhancing public interest and public participation in LA21 activities. However, we are witnessing a paradigmatic change that still is going on, since the majority of municipalities in Denmark have not yet started a consultation process with their citizens on LA21.

With reference to public participation, most of the authorities (40-60 percent) have used LA21 more in the expert-lay tradition as a forum for new ways of *informing* their presumably 'ignorant' citizens. That is, LA21 programmes and activities have only promoted true, shared responsibility and co-operation regimes amongst local citizens and local authorities in the best cases. The participatory paradigmatic transformation has not affected any of the counties, with the exception of Storstrøm. We may, therefore, hypothesise that this has to do with the greater distance between the authorities and the citizens at this level of government, and a lack of common, cultural, political identity. When it comes to the question of *policy content*, a paradigmatic turn is traceable in deliberate greening of public administrative units, of purchasing, and of servicing, as well in efforts for greening lifestyles. LA21 has been turning many municipalities into

partly green enterprises, supporters of green lifestyle and a forum for ensuring citizen participation. These are targets that do not occur in traditional environmental policy. However, these LA21 initiatives have only been 'exterior *add-ons*' to existing local environmental, social and business policies, not addressing cross-sectoral sustainability policies. As stated at the beginning, this may also have been successful for the shaping of new discursive alliances from below, as bureaucratic and corporate interests were not threatened. LA21 is not making the municipalities and counties develop major sustainable structural patterns of manufacturing and consumption. New *structural measures* for sustainability are not generally apparent with LA21 in Denmark The global dimension, the cradle-to-grave perspective and the long time-span perspective are absent. This is, on the one hand, an effect from the consensus-seeking policy style of Danish LA21 in general, but also stems from a deliberate avoidance of mixing hard-core environmental regulation.

A third question is about how the vertical and horizontal *organisational structures* have developed and influenced the process. Here the government and MEE have been innovative in advancing a horizontal networking strategy for the top-down advancement of LA21 in Denmark. This seems to have benefited new kinds of catalysing approaches (Læssøe 2000); for example, the appointment of LA21 officials or Green Guides, not as administrative staff but as semi-public/private entrepreneurs, given the responsibility of making experimental innovation, mobilising citizens, initiating debates and establishing socio-environmental activities. Networking is another case in point. Through contact persons, informal and formal networks, and other collaborative national or regional LA21 activities, LA21 officials and interested citizens have been given the opportunity to exchange ideas and share experiences.

Our explorative study of some of the best-cases reveals that the options and resources in instruments, organisational structures and involved actors actually exist to start a paradigmatic turn towards a sustainability orientation. Thus, it seems to be a lack of political will, perhaps from the lack of public support that is the major hindrance in Denmark to developing LA21 into a more powerful instrument for change. In Haslev and in Albertslund, we have seen how the more conventional political, economic and technological approaches to environmental regulation are being supplemented by more cultural and everyday-life dimensions. Here citizens' moral and cultural rationalities come to play a new and important role. This has facilitated the 'ecologisation' of a considerable number of local projects, not least with respect to social relations. *The best cases that have had a high score on LA21 methods and content also happen to be the ones that have experimented more with new ways of public involvement and par-*

ticipation. In other words, we can conclude that pleas for politicians to address the 'real' targets and point at new structural means is not realistic if at least not embedded in a new public discourse for transformation, but that this discourse will have to develop outside public institutional arrangements..

Although a new participatory regime has occurred while stimulating a new type of local democracy that is beyond normal public-consultation practices, key environmental problems and rigid bureaucratic regimes have generally not been affected (although this is visible in some of the best cases). LA21 in Denmark today is such a mature phenomenon that our findings makes us pose the question why there is such a trust in the consensus seeking part of deliberative democracy. Structural change of consumption and production, ecological transition of industry and agriculture, life-style changes all address severe conflicts of interest that must occur when radical transformations are to take place. The state initiated participatory policy style does not seem to foster an enhanced demand for radical change as long as the policy agenda is framed within consensus. But can we expect a responsive state that calls upon participation in conflict with what state policies are about elsewhere!? The more reluctant and less democracy-and-environment oriented municipalities may at least have to be pressed by steps beyond moral obligations – traditional legal measures. Pressure is raised through participation but indeed of a conflictual nature.

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Notes

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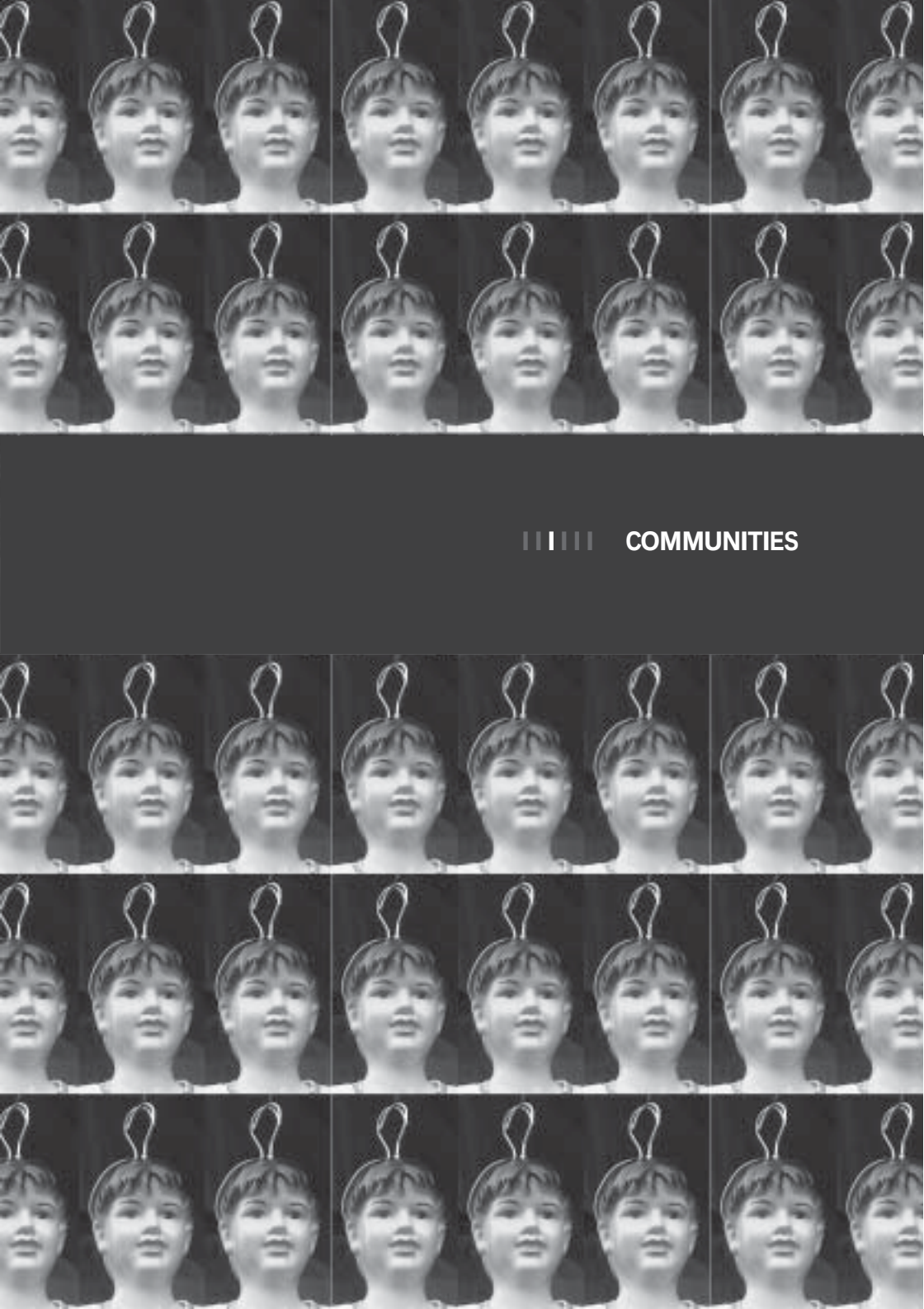
1 Between 1992 and 1994, only a few pioneering groups (between two and ten, at any one time) have been active in LA21 activities. However, since 1994, the figures have increased (1995: 80; 1996: 140; 1997: 190; and 1998: 200) by 69 percent.

2 The Danish Constitutional Act, enacted in 1849, came to guarantee autonomous municipal governance, which gave full authority to the municipalities (kommuner) and counties (amter) to rule under legally defined areas under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

3 The Danish National Trade Organisation (LO) published a pamphlet on Trade Unions and LA21, but with no further initiatives for Local Agenda 21 activities since then. Local trade unions have been taking part in LA21 activities in Køge, Kalundborg Silkeborg and Albertslund.



COMMUNITIES


SARA

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSES, ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

The Case of the Mae Kha Canal in Chiang Mai – Thailand

Gustavo Ribeiro*, Angunthip Srisuwan**

Abstract

This paper discusses issues of political influence and power struggles in connection with environmental projects through the lenses of a low-income settlement in the City of Chiang Mai, North Thailand. That low-income settlement has been an object of intervention in four different projects/programmes in the last five years, namely, (a) the Urban Communities Environmental Activities (UCEA) project, a community driven initiative implemented with the support of the public organisation Community Organisation Development Institute (CODI) and the NGO People's Organisation for Participation (POP); (b) the Chiang Mai 30 year Master Plan designed by the Lanna Architects Association for Chiang Mai Municipality; (c) the Living City Project elaborated by the Department of Town Planning at Chiang Mai Provincial Government, following an initiative by the Prime Minister Mr. Taksin Shinawatra, who is originally from Chiang Mai; and (d) the Programme for Conservation of Historic Monuments, currently under implementation by the Department of Fine Arts (Central Government).

Keywords: Thailand, Public Participation, Environmental Management, Urban Development.

1. Acronyms

CODI	Community Organisation Development Institute
DANCED	Danish Co-operation for Environment and Development
DFA	Department of Fine Arts (Central Government)
NHA	National Housing Authority
POP	People's Organisation for Participation (NGO)
UCDO	Urban Communities Development Office
UCEA	Urban Communities Environmental Activities Projects

2. Introduction

Projects targeting environmental problems can be seen as platforms for interaction between different social groups and stakeholders. Furthermore, such projects may function as forums for social change, through the promotion of dialogue, co-operation

and partnerships between low-income groups and those with power and influence - typically local authorities and land developers. In that perspective, environmental development projects could be seen to bring into focus environmental issues that to different extents are relevant to inhabitants of a locality or region. However, environmental development projects, despite their potential in creating spaces for co-operation, do not in practice carve a neutral space free of political interests and risk therefore becoming the scenario of power struggles and social conflict. In view of that, we ask in this paper: what role does the *environment* play in the actions and discourses by different stakeholders in *environment-targeted* projects? For the terms and formulation of a project as an environmental project carry in themselves a problem definition, which will guide the forms and scope of environmental management.

This paper discusses issues of political influence and power struggles in connection with environmental projects through the lenses of a low-income settlement in the City of Chiang Mai, North Thailand. The study of this particular settlement, Kampaeng Ngam, touches upon a number of issues, which, we believe, have a broader regional scope, notably relevant to other urban areas in Thailand. Especially important in this connection is the type of urban development that has taken place around canals (khlongs), where environmental decay has come to the foreground and where low-income communities have squatted on land owned by the Government. This type of development, which can be found in cities throughout Thailand, has become in many instances the ground for social conflict between these low-income communities fighting for the right to stay on squatted land, and governmental authorities, which attempt to evict them. In addition, low-income settlements, and the canals along which they are situated, have been targets in environmental projects supported by international donors, public organisations and NGOs.

In this paper, we look at the involvement by different actors (central and local authorities, public organisations, NGOs as well as local communities) who have a stake in Khlong Mae Kha (Chiang Mai) and the areas alongside it. We look at how the issue of environmental decay has been dealt with in the projects and programmes supported or implemented by these actors and at the political agendas behind their environmental discourses.

3. Historical Background

Chiang Mai was founded by King Meng Rai in the end of the XIII Century as the new capital of Lanna Kingdom, which comprised 17 provinces in Northern Thailand. Chiang Mai was originally laid out as an almost perfect square fortress with an additional, outer,

earthen and brick wall. Kanmpaeng Din, as the outer wall is called, follows a semi-circular layout stretching in a north-south direction along Khlong Mae Kha.

The historical importance of Khlong Mae Kha goes back to the foundation of Chiang Mai, as it was one of 7 elements, which determined the choice of location of the Old City. Khlong Mae Kha has its source in the Mae Ta Chang River and in the Mae Hyuak River. Both flow from the Suthep-Pui mountain range. It is about 11,370 metres long, between 1 metre and 10 metres wide and approximately 2.5 metres deep (Niwat Tuntayanusorn 1997: 1-16).

Throughout its history, the development of Chiang Mai has been closely correlated with trading routes, notably the Silk Route. Development prior to 1962 consisted of settlements inside the southern boundary of Kanmpaeng Din, in the north outside the old city wall and east of the River Ping (which has drawn a commercial route both by land and by water). The area along Khlong Mae Kha between the old city wall and the Ping River was initially not occupied because it was subjected to seasonal floods.

In the period between 1962 and 1982 the Thai Government elaborated the first four National Economic and Social Development Plans, which promoted an accelerated industrialisation programme for Thailand. And since the Fourth Plan (1977 – 1981), all of Thailand's five-year National Economic and Social Development Plans have included policies designed to promote economic growth outside of Bangkok Metropolitan Region and thus economic, political and administrative decentralisation. Chiang Mai was selected to be the main urban centre for economic development in the Northern Region. The economic growth of Chiang Mai attracted poor rural migrants, who settled in informal settlements, some of which were located in the banks of the Khlong Mae Kha (Yoddumnern-Attig & Attig (1993), cited in Yoddumnern-Attig Bencha *et al* 1999).

4. Informal Settlements in Chiang Mai

Sattayanuruk (1999) identifies three types of informal settlements in the city of Chiang Mai, according to tenure status, namely (a) settlements on land owned by residents, (b) settlements on rented land and (c) squatter settlements.

The first type of occupation has been characterised as informal by Sattayanuruk, because those settlements, which are typically over 50 years old, lack basic services – not provided by the Municipality. Informal settlements on rented land quickly become overcrowded and new generations of urban dwellers who would normally build their houses on their parents' plot have no choice but to squat on public land. This is the case of Kampaeng Ngam community, which has settled in the area between Khlong Mae Kha and Kanmpaeng Din. Immigration is also an important factor contributing to the growth

of squatter settlements. Together with new generations of poor urban dwellers, immigrants from rural areas squat on public land along canals, such as Khlong Mae Kha.

Most of those who form a second generation of shantytown dwellers have had very limited access to education, for their parents could not afford to send them to school. This second generation is mostly employed as non-specialised labour with limited earning capacity. Local people have only little chance to own land (Sattayanuruk, 1999).

Informal Settlements along Mae Ka Canal and Kampaeng Ngam Community

Tantayanusorn Niwat, in a survey carried out in 1997, identified 17 informal settlements along Khlong Mae Kha – 11 of these settlements are under the jurisdiction of Chiang Mai Municipality (Tantayanusorn, N., 1997, p. 34). More than half (63.64%) of these were designated squatter settlements (Chiang Mai Municipality, 2000). The fact that the choice of location of squatter settlements along the Mae Kha Canal is dictated by the availability of public owned land on which to squat and not by a wish to be located near Khlong Mae Kha is supported by data gathered through interviews with members of the communities in question.

The case of Kampaeng Ngam Community is particularly controversial because it is primarily located on land owned by the Department of Fine Arts – a central Government institution in charge of the protection and restoration of historic monuments. To make matters even more sensitive, some houses in Kampaeng Ngam were until very recently located on the remnants of Kanmpaeng Din. They have since been moved as part of a negotiation between Kampaeng Ngam community and the Department of Fine Arts.

Kampaeng Ngam started off with 4-5 families, which could not be accommodated in the neighbouring informal settlement on land owned by the Buddhist temple Wat Huay Fay. The land occupied by Kampaeng Ngam was originally farming land. The growth of Kampaeng Ngam was boosted by the arrival of young families, which could not settle on the plot occupied by the house of their parents in the neighbouring settlement. In addition migrants from the rural district of Chiang Mai Province came to live in Kampaeng Ngam, increasing the size of its population. In 1955 a slaughterhouse was located in the vicinity of Kampaeng Ngam further encouraging the growth of the Kampaeng Ngam. In later decades, the central location of that settlement has been a central factor in its growth.

Similarly to other informal settlements in Thailand, Kampaeng Ngam has neither sewage infrastructure nor garbage collection service. Nearly half of the 132 families in Kampaeng Ngam are ethnic hill-tribe people who migrated from the mountains surrounding Chiang Mai. The remaining families are from low-lying areas around the city.

5. Environmental Deterioration

A 1978 report about the quality of the water of Mae Ka Canal shows that Mae Ka Canal was already heavily polluted then (Sinclarenight and partner limited et al, 1983). The quality of the water was at that time classified as standard type 5, that is, unsuitable for drinking or bathing (Pormkattikaew Sakorn, 1995; Prungkaew Intira,1999). In a recent study, Kold, Rasmus and Lundtofte (2002) have found that the waste produced by informal settlements along Khlong Mae Kha only marginally contributed to its pollution. Still, Kampaeng Ngam dwellers are often perceived to be responsible for the pollution of the Khlong Mae Kha. In and article published in the "Northern Citizen" in February 2003, for instance, it is proposed that the pollution of the Mae Kha could be solved by providing sewage infrastructure to the squatter settlements in question (Northern Citizen, 2003). Such conception clearly perpetuates the perception of squatter settlements as those responsible for the pollution of the Mae Kha.

When interviewed, Kampaeng Ngam residents stated that, in their view, the main source of pollution of Khlong Mae Kha are private companies, such as a slaughterhouse and a factory located upstream.

The historical city wall, Kanmpaeng Din, on the other hand, has been destroyed in several areas, notably in the city centre. Particular destruction of the historic wall has taken place in connection with construction of commercial buildings as a result of the development of tourism. There seems, nevertheless, to be more tolerance for this kind of illegal occupation by more wealthy private parties.

6. Eviction Threats

Kampaeng Ngam has been under increasing threat of eviction. Such threat has recently come to a head with the elaboration of plans by the Department of Fine Arts to restore Kanmpaeng Din and the moat (Mae Kha and Koowai canals).[1]

The processes set off by these projects and the risks of eviction of the informal communities along Khlong Mae Kha have involved several interest groups and organisations. Amongst those are, as mentioned above, Chiang Mai Municipality, the Department of Fine Arts, the Lanna Association of Architects and of special interest in this paper, two organisations that have had a distinct role in their support to the communities facing eviction threats, namely, the Community Organisation Development Institute (CODI) and the NGO, People's Organisation for Participation (POP).

In this paper, we look at the community of Kampaeng Ngam and the above mentioned organisations, examining the way environmental issues are addressed in the light of each group's different political agendas.

7. Chiang Mai Municipality

Chiang Mai Municipality plays an important role in the status granted to informal communities. Such a status is a function of services provided or not by Chiang Mai Municipality, such as water and electricity supply, garbage collection, sewage infrastructure, health service and in particular house registration.[2] House registration affects a household's access to basic services such as children's public schooling, public health care and the right to vote.[3] Votes in elections for mayor have figured as the main reason for households in informal communities to be given the right to house registration by the Municipal Government – that is, house registration is used for political purposes. The same is true of provision of services to informal communities. Kampaeng Ngam community has been given financial support by the Municipality for the implementation of environmental improvements such as paved footpaths, piped water and electricity, and for cleaning Khlong Mae Kha.

But the political and administrative roles of Chiang Mai Municipality are often in conflict. Whilst a master plan has been in the past year developed by the Lanna Architects Association for the Municipality of Chiang Mai, which proposes the creation of a park and a promenade along Khlong Mae Kha (see for instance Northern Citizen, 2003b), the Mayor of Chiang Mai stated in a meeting with the community of Kampaeng Ngam on 21st February 2003 that he would work for the right of these communities to stay in their current location along Khlong Mae Kha. Considering that the land is owned by the Department of Fine Arts (Central Government), this is a source of further conflicts. At the same meeting, the elected community leader for Kampaeng Ngam community, Khun Namtheep Payopo, referred to the relationship between governmental bodies (central, provincial and municipal), concerning projects for Khlong Mae Kha, as one characterised by conflict. In the above-mentioned meeting with the community of Kampaeng Ngam, on the 21st February 2003, the Mayor of Chiang Mai presented in four occasions in his address his plead for votes in the coming election.

8. The Department of Fine Arts (DFA)

DFA (Central Government) has commissioned the elaboration of rehabilitation studies for the City of Chiang Mai, which include a proposal for the restoration of the fortification system consisting of the city wall and the moat (Mae Kha and Koowai canals). The 200 years old city wall, Kampaeng Din, is according to DFA a potential element for boosting tourism. In addition, it is the view of DFA that the communities located along Klong Mae Kha are spoiling an historical site.[4] DFA's policy is one of preservation of Kampaeng Din as an historical monument and the eviction of the informal communities located in the

area to a site 10 kilometres away from Chiang Mai city centre. A DFA official has openly stated that Kampaeng Din, Khlong Mae Kha and the area in between them form a historical monument that should not be squatted upon by informal settlements. In a meeting with the Kampaeng Ngam community on February 2002, the DFA official in question has conceded that informal settlements such as Kampaeng Ngam be allowed to stay on their current location, under the condition that the dwellings directly built on Kampaeng Din were moved down to the land between the wall and the moat. A scheme was then presented by the NGO, People's Organisation for Participation (POP), developed in collaboration with architects hired by the Community Organisation Development Institute, which fulfilled the requirements presented by DFA. After the meeting with Kampaeng Ngam community, the DFA official stated in an interview conducted by the present authors that such a concession was only a temporary one. In the long term, a project for the preservation of that historical monument was to be implemented.

Following that meeting, Kampaeng Ngam community implemented with the assistance of the Community Organisation Development Institute (CODI) and POP the removal of the houses on Kampaeng Din to a neighbouring site. The Mayor of Chiang Mai was taken to see the new houses in the meeting between government officials, human right and slum dwellers representatives with KPN community on the 21st February 2003.

9. Lanna Architects Association

The Lanna Architects Association role has been that of a consultant to the Municipality of Chiang Mai in the elaboration of a 30 year Master Plan covering an area of 30 Km2, entitled: "Urban Design Strategy & Design Guideline 2020."

"Urban Design Strategy & Design Guideline 2020" outlines a vision for the future of Chiang Mai, with a strong focus on the conservation of its historical heritage. Such a heritage includes both buildings such as Buddhist temples as well as urban elements such as Kampaeng Din and the Mae Kha Canal.

The proposal for the outer fortification of the city of Chiang Mai is to restore the wall and the moat and to create a park in the area. Community participation is built in the project through the inclusion of public hearings. The project is in its concluding phase and will be made public in the near future.

10. Community Organisation Development Institute (CODI) and the Urban Communities Environmental Activities (UCEA)

Community Organisation Development Institute (CODI),[5] a public organisation under the National Housing Authority (NHA), has consistently implemented community

development programmes, which adopt a bottom-up approach since its inception in 1992. Such programmes aim both at improving the living conditions of the urban poor communities and at strengthening their organisational capacity. [6] They range from the provision of credit to poor communities, through the organisation of savings groups, to loans for housing improvement and income generation.[7] (UCDO, 2000, p.1)

In its role as a support mechanism CODI has stood as a catalyst in a process of social change. Such a process, which aims at promoting "a large scale community-driven development movement," places the decision making and managing responsibilities largely on communities and community networks.[8]

In 1996 the Danish Government, through its now extinct environment and international aid agency, DANCED (Danish Co-operation for Environment and Development)[9], provided the Thai Government with a US$ 1.3 million grant for a project targeted at the improvement of environmental conditions in urban areas occupied by low-income communities. CODI had the responsibility of implementing the project in a number of urban areas in Thailand.

The Urban Communities Environmental Activities (UCEA) project (1996-2002) follows, as the name suggests, DANCED's overall policy of placing local communities at the centre of environmental programmes and giving them responsibilities for decision making, design and implementation. (Boonyabancha, 1999, p.103)

In line with CODI's approach, the Urban Communities Environmental Activities (UCEA) project focuses on a process where environmental improvement is not an end in itself, but a means for promoting social change (Ribeiro et al, 2000). In addition, the environment is attributed a transitory role for two main reasons: (a) the focus of UCEA is on activities as tools for people's education and empowerment; (b) the low-income communities in question are under the threat of eviction by the local authorities, so that the location and pattern of their settlements may be altered in the short term.

"UCEA aims at changing interactions and power relationships between organisations, networks, groups and individual stakeholders in a complex setting," through a focus on environmental management. (DANCED, 1999, p.9)

UCEA adopts a bottom-up approach, in which communities are the main actors in the processes of problem identification, project design, decision-making, budget management and implementation.

Public participation in environmental projects aims amongst other things to create ownership of interventions (sidewalks, bridges, etc.) by the community involved. By actively contributing to a project, from decision-making, through design, to implementation, the community will, thus, be in a better position to appropriate the project as

its own and to look after its maintenance. UCEA could be seen as a radical example of that approach, through its focus on environmental *activities* instead of environmental *products*.

UCEA gives priority to the process of learning and to strengthening the organisational capacity of communities (Boonyabancha, 1999, p.102, Ribeiro et al, 2000, p.3). An example of that is the project for the restoration of the embankment of Mae Ka Canal in Chiang Mai where it crosses Kham Phang Ngam settlement.

Mae Ka Canal used to be very narrow at Kham Phang Ngam, causing floods during the rainy season. Access to and from the community was cut off and, amongst other problems, children were prevented from going to school. The community decided therefore to widen the canal in order to channel the excess of water. The community planned and executed the restoration of the embankments of Mae Ka canal, but it was destroyed by new floods. After a second restoration, the embankment was destroyed once more (Ribeiro et al, 2000, p.16). In a recent visit to the settlement of Kampaeng Ngam (February 2003), the authors have witnessed the new restoration of the embankment through the use of plants, whose roots should help to hold the soil in place.

The case of the reconstruction of the Mae Ka Canal embankment was taken up in an interview with the director of CODI and overall responsible for the implementation of UCEA, Ms. Soomsook Boonyabancha, and her point was that the priority in that as well as in other UCEA projects was the process of learning by the local people. The fact that the community identified a problem, provided a solution, implemented it and then learned from their mistakes was the most important thing. (Ribeiro et al, 2000, p.3)

Activities can be seen in the context of UCEA as methods for actualising the community, for the empowerment of people, for promoting participation, social networking and learning in the community. Such an approach reflects CODI's overall policy: "CODI helps people to play a role in the development of their own areas. People see, people learn and they can believe they can do it. [CODI is interested in] the processes that will get the essence of the people out" (Interview with Boonyabancha in Ribeiro et al, 2000, p.4)

Under the administration of Prime Minister Taksin Shinawatra, CODI has come to play a prominent role in the improvement of housing conditions to the poor. A national governmental programme aiming at the provision of tenure of land to urban squatters is currently under implementation under the direction of CODI.

11. People's Organisation for Particiaption (POP)

CODI made use of its national network in association with local organisations to implement UCEA in different urban areas throughout Thailand. In the case of Chiang

Mai, CODI's main local partner in implementing UCEA was the People's Organisation for Participation (POP).

POP is a nationwide NGO, whose Chiang Mai branch has worked for many years with informal settlements with insecure land tenure. With the implementation of UCEA a network of squatter communities along Khlong Mae Kha was formed and POP assisted them in dealing with various problems related to the environmental deterioration of the Canal. Some of the problems were local, such as the decay of the banks of Khlong Mae Kha in the settlement of Kampaeng Ngam. Other problems were and still are common to all the settlements, such as the heavy pollution of the water of Khlong Mae Kha. Especially concerning the latter case, CODI and POP worked with a network of canal communities in organising events, such as a canal cleaning weekend, that could help to change the fact that those communities are perceived by many as being responsible for the pollution of Khlong Mae Kha. By helping to change that perception these communities could stand in a stronger position in their fight against eviction.

Gill Teena Amrit (2002) quotes Bonrueng Pala rangsi, a member of the Kampaeng Ngam community, where he states: "Not only have we been working together to clean up the canal, we have also been planting trees along the canal and are now preparing to make a new bridge (across the canal)..." A number of interviews conducted by the authors as well as articles (e.g. Northern Citizen 2003a) support the argument that the perception by Kampaeng Ngam residents of their role in the maintenance of the canal has been strengthened through their participation in environmental projects supported by POP and CODI.

Concerning the sources of pollution of Khlong Mae Kha, it is the knowledge of Chiang Mai Provincial Government[10] that the squatter settlements along the Mae Kha Canal contribute only marginally to the pollution of its waters[11]. The problem of pollution of Khlong Mae Kha is of more complex nature. It relates to the fact that Chiang Mai's sewage system only partially services the area under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Chiang Mai (outside Chiang Mai Municipality no sewage system as such has been implemented). A number of private and public institutions, notably small factories, use Khlong Mae Kha to dispose their wastewater (see report by Kold, Rasmus and Lundtofte, 2002).

12. Tourism and Historical Identity

Tourism is the dominant economic activity in Chiang Mai (see Ribeiro & Heitmann 2002). The importance of tourism can be illustrated by the number of guest arrivals in the year 2000 in the city of Chiang Mai, which reached 1,894,910 (Thailand in Figures 2001 – 2002, 2001: 481). A conception of environmental management in terms of the pro-

motion of tourism thus emerges as an important factor in the formulation of the "Urban Design Strategy & Design Guideline 2020," by the Lanna Architects Association, in the "Living City" project by Chiang Mai Provincial Government and in the preservation programme by the Department of Fine Arts. The fact that the very development of tourism has led to an accelerated economic growth and a rapid depletion of the environment of Chiang Mai is however not addressed in the formulation of the above-mentioned projects.

A conception of environmental management in terms of the promotion of tourism in those projects focuses on appearances that some consider an eyesore and thus discourage tourism. Such an attitude was visible through the protests against the construction of highway flyovers proposed by the Highway Department (Central Government). Organisations, which included the Lanna Association of Architects and the Chiang Mai Tourist Board were strong opponents of such a highway development.

However, such a conception begs the question of what factors may be relevant for the economy of tourism. It focuses on an aestheticisation of the environment to the detriment of robust policies and programmes, which address environmental degradation in the light of aspects such as economic development, education, and infrastructure (transport, sewage and electricity).

UCEA has stood as an alternative to the above-mentioned projects. With its focus on the empowerment and education of poor urban communities in environmental management, UCEA reached beyond short term political agendas.

But UCEA has also remained as an isolated initiative and there is little sign that its experiences and approach have a chance of being integrated in the other programmes and projects dealing with the City of Chiang Mai and more specifically with Khlong Mae Kha.

There seems to be very little communication between the above-mentioned projects. In an interview on the 26th February 2003, the director of the Lanna Architects Association acknowledged the lack of communication and co-ordination between the organisations responsible for the different projects that deal with Khlong Mae Kha and the informal settlements along its embankments. This lack of communication is seen here not simply as the lack of a forum for dialogue between the different stakeholders, but as a deeper divergence of political agendas and economic interests concerning the physical and cultural environment of Chiang Mai and the status of the informal settlements in the area.

The combination of a search for a quick-fix to solve environmental problems, the lack of public participation and the lack of co-ordination between different projects and stakeholders make the provision of a robust solution to the upgrading of Khlong Mae

Kha an unlikely scenario. Instead, the process of urban development and environmental management in the City of Chiang Mai is dominated by struggles at political, economic and cultural levels. At a political level, there is a struggle between central and local governments and civic representation. As we have argued, each of these political levels has a different agenda and relates to the others in complex and often conflicting ways. As pointed out earlier, divergences and conflicts are sometimes found within an institution, such as Chiang Mai Municipality.

The recent development, in which CODI plays a central role in the implementation of a central Government policy, by promoting the tenure of land to the urban poor, is an (unexpected) example of sudden reversal in the political balance, which will no doubt improve the chances of the communities settled along the Mae Kha to remain in their current location.

The economic level involves a complexity of interests by the private sector, ranging from companies which channel their sewage into Khlong Mae Kha to owners of land along that canal. Of especial interest to this paper are the interests associated with the tourist industry, which are closely related to the cultural issue of historical identity of the City of Chiang Mai and of the Mae Kha Canal. The point by Rem Koolhaas in his article "The Generic City" (Koolhaas, 1996) about the effect of mass tourism in undermining historical identities is relevant to the present discussion.

As we have attempted to document, urban development in Chiang Mai and notably housing conditions of squatter communities along Khlong Mae Kha is being shaped by conceptions of environmental management and historical identity by local and central Government and correlated political agendas. Environmental management appears in the light of an aesthetisation through the creation of parks and eviction of squatters: a move which only superficially addresses the current environmental problems of Khlong Mae Kha and its surroundings. Attitudes to environmental management go also hand in hand with the preservation of an historical identity. Conceptions of how such historical identity is affected through the complex urban developments taking place in Chiang Mai as a result of accelerated urban development boosted by tourism are, however, highly diffuse.

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Notes

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1 At the time this paper was written, negotiations were taking place between authorities and Kmapaeng Ngam and other Khlong Mae Kha communities fighting against eviction (see Northern Citizen, 2003a). A National Housing Authority (NHA) project has been designed to house Khlong Mae Kha (and other) squatter settlements in the Nong Hoi District (Northern Citizen, 2003b, Chiang Mai News, 2003).

2 In 1996, the Government of Thailand passed a law, which gives people in informal settlements a possibility to register their houses at the provincial registry department (Gill Teena Amrit, 2002: 2).

3 Lapanun Patcharin et al (1999:160-161) pointed out the beneficial results of registering the population of a squatter settlement in Khon-Khaen province, in the North-east of Thailand. Children in that community were given access to basic education adults were able to use a number of public services such as health care.

4 This view was openly stated by a DFA official in an interview conducted by the authors.

5 The Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) merged in July 2000 with the Rural Development Fund to become CODI.

6 In order to achieve that, CODI relies on a revolving fund which is made available to all urban poor groups who organise themselves to apply for loans for their development projects. According to a recent survey, by 2000 "over half Thailand's 2,000 urban poor communities in 50 provincesÉ linked together into 103 networks through a broad range of community development activities, including housing, income generation, environmental improvement, community enterprise and welfare " were members of CODI. (UCDO, 2000, p.1)

7 CODI encouraged the communities to identify their own problems and needs, and to acquire the necessary funding to address them. One vehicle for this is the Urban Community Environment Activities (UCEA) project. It was launched by CODI in Chiang Mai, a city in northern Thailand, in 1996, with funding from the Danish government's Danish Cooperation for Environment and Development agency. UCEA finances only self-help projects, channeling small grants to poor urban settlements to improve infrastructure and amenities. In October 2000, The Urban Communities Development Office (UCDO) became the Community Organization Development Institute (CODI), after merging with the Rural Development Fund, a Thai government fund for rural development. Despite the new name, CODI continues to emphasize link the poor through networks at various levels, and helping them gain enormous confidence and more control over their lives and futures.

8 CODI relies on collective instances represented by community groups and increasingly by community networks to achieve a type of management and decision making which aims at

representing the interests of socially and economically excluded groups. In that way, CODI aims at providing alternatives to decision-making initiated by authorities (local or central), by learned professionals (specialists, academics), by NGOs and by individuals with illegitimate power within communities (e.g. community leaders [called Nakleng] involved in criminal activities, such as drug traffic), (see for instance Phongpaichit and Piriyarangsan, 1994). CODI reports occurrences of misuse of power and funds within the sphere of its activities (UCDO, 2000, p.12), but has documentation to support the argument that community-lead processes are self-regulatory and that mismanagement and corrupt practices will be counteracted in time within community groups and networks. (UCDO Update, 2000)

[9] DANCED was established in 1984 with the objective of contributing to the greatest possible extent to the protection of the environment and nature in developing countries. With the ascension of Venstre (a right wing liberal party) to power in November 2001, international development aid by Denmark was severely cut down. In addition, the environmental concerns which figured very high on the political agenda of the Social Democratic Party, were relegated to a second plan. DANCED was done away with and its projects were placed under the Danish Development Aid (DANIDA).

[10] Interview with Head of Town Planning Department at Chiang Mai Provincial Government (12-02-03).

[11] A study has been carried out by students from the Danish Technical University under the supervision of environmental engineer Henrik Bregnhøj, which documents the fact that the squatter settlements contribution to the pollution of Khlong Mae Kha is marginal. The main sources of pollution of the canal in the municipal area are coming from point sources, which convey water from areas remote to Khlong Mae Kha.

PARTICIPATION AS SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE: THE SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

Mikkel Funder*

Abstract

The paper argues that we need to understand better the social dynamics of participatory environmental interventions, and explores this through a case study of a community-based coastal zone management project in Southern Thailand. Specifically, the paper examines three dimensions of the power relations within the project: The intra-community patterns of inclusion and exclusion; the role of the implementing NGO in the participatory process; and the implicit influence of Government staff and donor interests. It is argued that the participatory process facilitates and naturalizes certain patterns of domination within the project, and hence comes to serve as a form of symbolic violence.

Keywords: Participation, Power, Communities, Coastal Zone Management

1. Rationales of Participation

Recent decades have seen an increasing emphasis on stakeholder involvement in environmental management and conservation worldwide. In the development context there has, in particular, been an emphasis on participation of local communities in environmental conservation, especially in rural areas but increasingly also in the urban context. As such, the notion of community participation has come to form a keystone in the linking of local development to environmental conservation (Singh & Titi 1995, Borrini-Feyerabend et al 2000, Kothari et al 1998, Agersnap & Funder 2001).

Behind the push for community-based environmental management lies a fundamental assumption that the local community is the most appropriate locus for decision-making and practical efforts related to conservation activities. This is so partly because local communities often suffer the worst impacts from environmental degradation and pollution, partly because they may themselves be involved in degrading activities, and partly because they may possess elaborate knowledge of local ecosystems and sustainable management practices.

Within the world of development interventions, the above rationale has been advocated with increasing success since the 1970's. At this time, participation was coupled to poverty alleviation and the basic needs approach, inspired also by the notion of a wider "empowerment" of local communities (Freire 1972, Cohen & Uphoff 1980,

Cornwall 2002). From the mid-1980's, the concept boomed among NGOs seeking new approaches to development interventions, and methodologies such as Participatory Rural Appraisal emerged (Chambers 1983, Oakley 1991). In the 1990's, participation became mainstream, being widely adopted – by name at least - as an important principle by Government donor agencies, the multilateral organisations and, increasingly, by National Governments themselves (eg World Bank 1996 and Constitution of Thailand 1997, see also Cornwall 2000). This success of the concept of participation has to a large extent rested on its ability to satisfy both radical and liberal world views: The bottom-up approach and the notion of empowerment sits well with radical thinking, while the inherent critique of the dominant state and the notion of the freely choosing individual speaks well to neo-liberal thought (Mohan & Stokke 2000, Abrahamsen 2000).

2. Participation as the magic bullet

However, the broad embracing of participation also has its problems: It is notable that, despite 30 years of development, we know very little of the actual impacts of participation on the ground – both within development generally, and within the environmental field specifically (Gaventa & Valderamma 1999, Cleaver 2001, Guijt & Shah 1998). In the early years, one reason for this was the need to focus attention on promoting and justifying the concept in the first place. In latter years, however, the apparent convergence on participation as a general good has led to a "taking-for-granted" of the concept. Hence within environmentally oriented development interventions, participation has come to be widely seen as an almost "magic bullet", a clean fix of the "people problem" (Hildyard et al 2001). Indeed, from my own experience as a practitioner I have encountered a widespread tendency to think that, as long as we get the *design* right (the methods, institutions and incentives) people will automatically participate.

Such an un-reflected application of participatory approaches is highly problematic, because it suggests that participation is a somehow neutral intervention, a final truth in response to all the injustices and biases of earlier intervention forms. Yet participation is if anything a highly *subjective* phenomenon: Donor agencies, government authorities, NGOs and local communities may have very different interests in participatory environmental management, and very different means of asserting these interests within the project.

3. Demythologizing participation

The notion that participatory interventions are subject to given interests and power relations is the subject of a recent but growing body of literature. White (1996) was early

for her day when she pointed out how participation could be used to legitimise ill-intended external interests. More recently, authors such as Kothari (2001) have shown how even *well*-intended participatory approaches incorporate asymmetrical power relations, while Cornwall (2002) has explored the changing discourses and mythologies of participation among development agencies.

With these recent insights in mind, I would like in the following to elaborate on an aspect of participatory projects that has not been well-explored to date, namely the way different actors *within* communities relate to participatory interventions, and to the various other external players in such projects. In doing so, I draw on my own ongoing PhD field research from Southern Thailand, which focuses on the power relations among actors within a particular, participatory environmental management project. Specifically, I will discuss three dimensions of the power relations within this project, namely (a) the intra-community relationship between those participating and those not participating in the project, (b) the role of the implementing NGO in the participatory process, and (c) the influence of Government staff and donor interests. These are, of course, complex features that are difficult to do justice in the limited space available here. For the purposes of this paper, I shall therefore illustrate my line of argument through a few specific situations within the project, drawing where necessary on my wider findings also. First, however, a brief introduction to the project is required:

The *Coastal Zone Management and Networks in Southern Thailand* project was first initiated in 1993. The project seeks to enhance the quality of local fisherfolk livelihoods through sustainable coastal zone management in various locations throughout Southern Thailand. In particular, it emphasises strengthening of community-based fisherfolk or-ganisations and enhancement of local participation in environmentally sound planning and policy development. The project is funded by the Danish Government and implemented through a number of local NGOs, who have been instrumental in formulating the project through a participatory process. There has been no involvement of expatriate technical assistance in the project, with the exception of the standard appraisals and reviews - which have been largely positive. My own field study is focused on a single project site on the shores of the Songkhla Lakes in Southeast Thailand – a mixed Buddhist and Muslim community which, for the sake of discretion, I shall refer to here as *Baan* Singhala.

4. Intra-community participation

In June 2002, I attended for the first time the monthly meeting of the Singhala Fisherfolk Club, one of the community groups established under the project. These monthly

meetings constituted the main forum for discussion and planning by participating community members. On this particular day, the main task was to generate inputs for a proposal for funding of a third phase of the project, to be submitted to the project donor through the implementing NGO. The meeting lasted almost a full day, and was headed as usual by the easy-going, entrepreneurial Chairman and his aide, a young NGO volunteer.

As the community participants discussed and planned the various activities under the project, including both conservation efforts and livelihood support schemes, one thing began to puzzle me: There seemed to be very little talk of fishing. Or rather: of the practical, *everyday* aspects of fishing. One almost got the sense that this was not really *relevant* to the participating community members. For a project focused explicitly on sustaining and empowering traditional fisherfolk, this seemed rather odd.

It transpired that virtually all the community members who participated actively in the project were not actually dependent on fishing – neither in terms of income, subsistence nor as a significant diversification or crisis strategy. They were, in other words, not fishermen. This is not to say that there were no fishermen in Singhala: The community possessed also a large group of *actual* fishermen – people who depended largely on fishing - but these had been marginalized from the participatory process.

The project was, in other words, dominated by what appeared as a quite heterogeneous group of community members, seemingly distinguished only by the fact that they were not fishermen. Their interest in the project was guided by individual, implicit livelihood strategies, within which the project provided a platform for enhanced social status, improved networking options and access to beneficial activities such as loan schemes. In this context, the discourses of "participation and "conservation" – and thereby the project as such - provided a means of leverage which circumvented traditional political hierarchies. Hence these were not – as one might have expected – members of the traditional political elites in Singhala (eg members of the Headman-hierarchy), most of whom had been kept at arms length by the implementing NGO staff. What the participating community members did possess, however, was exactly those features that were *implicitly* afforded high value within the project.

Firstly, it soon became obvious that *religion* played a major role in defining participation in the project: Virtually all community members participating in the project were Buddhist, as opposed to the largely Muslim section of the village, and several of the project activities were not compatible with Muslim customs, such as the generation of interest from saving groups. Secondly, the project had increasingly come to evolve around developing economic *alternatives* to fishing, as a means of reducing the pressure on the resources of the Songkhla Lakes. This approach favoured the livelihood strategy of the

Buddhist community-members, many of whom had already abandoned fishing and possessed the economic resources, knowledge and family networks to engage in market-oriented income generation.

The Muslim fishermen, by contrast, opted instead for a continued livelihood as small-scale fisherfolk based on more traditional values and resource management practices. Thirdly, the emphasis on conservation and participation aspects provided an opportunity for the better educated community-members and/ or those who had in one way or another come into contact with these issues through contact with the NGO movement, Government programmes or otherwise. Finally, and importantly, the participatory process and its inherent critique of the political establishment afforded considerable value to the social reputation of members as being honest, non-corrupt and broadly respected. This favoured community members who had experience from other "beneficiary" activities such as members of health committees, school boards etc.

The project, then, included an unspoken yet highly effective, framework for inclusion and exclusion of community members in the participatory process, based on the value afforded to given resources possessed by the would-be project participants (the symbolic and economic *capital*, as Bourdieu would have it – see Bourdieu 1997). It is important here to note that these criteria for inclusion and exclusion cannot in any way be seen only as a result of the project design, or of the efforts of the implementing NGO staff. On the contrary, the community members participate actively *themselves* in establishing these patterns: Through the development of formal rules, codes of conduct and organisational set-up for the participatory process, the dominating group of community participants in Singhala gradually solidified and reproduced their positions within the project. Likewise, the non-participating community members took part in reinforcing the patterns of inclusion and exclusion, either by making explicit the fault lines between the two groups (eg by accusing project participants of wanting to monopolize fishery resources), or through silent withdrawal (as in: "such projects are not for the likes of us"). In doing so, most excluded community members would seek other means of influence on local fisheries management, primarily through the (also excluded) traditional political elite.

5. The role of facilitators

I turn now to a second dimension of the power relations within the project, found in the relationship between the participating community members and the implementing NGO staff. In doing so, I will return to the meeting of the Singhala Fisherfolk Club described above: The meeting followed a fairly well-known pattern of community-based project planning: Participants were asked first to discuss what the initial problems had been,

what had been done to solve them in earlier project phases, and how this had worked. Then, remaining and new problems were identified, and actions to address them discussed. The discussions and conclusions were recorded in simple diagrams, drawn with coloured felt-pens on large sheets of paper and stuck with cello-tape to the walls for all to see. The familiarity of this scene will not be lost on those who have worked themselves with such activities. No doubt at that moment, scores of similar exercises were taking place across the developing world. In some areas, the markers and paper would have been replaced with drawings in the sand, or pebbles on pieces of card. The objective, however, remains the same: To obtain the true "opinion" of the community on a given issue.

But what is it actually that takes place in such a process? As Christoplos (1995) and Kothari (2001) has pointed out, most participatory methodologies (whether labeled PRA, PLA, RRA or similar) tend to hide the fact that – despite all attempts to minimize the role of the external facilitator – we can never fully escape the fact that he or she *is* the facilitator and initiator, and that this position in itself embodies an asymmetrical power relationship between the "participating" and the "facilitating". If we consider the current meeting, it was the NGO staff who possessed the knowledge of how participatory meetings were to be conducted in the first place, thereby being in a position to organize (and thereby structure) much of the process, including what counts and does not count as "relevant" to discuss and record at the given time.

More basically still, it is the possession of such specialized knowledge on what participation is and how it should *be* that helps justify the role of the NGOs in the project in the first place. Along with the access to donor funding and the general networking position, this knowledge provides an essential means of *naturalizing* the role of the NGO staff within fisheries management in Singhala: Their role as external facilitators becomes taken for granted, even by the community members themselves.

How then, is such a naturalization created? In the current project, *intimacy* plays a central role. Within the project, NGO project staff form strong alliances with carefully identified community individuals who can act as facilitators and prime movers for the project activities. This process of selection is implicitly but directly linked to the values of the NGO staff, and centers on finding community members who are considered "ready" for taking on leadership roles. Being "ready" may include being non-corrupt and well-regarded in the community, but also involves possession of charisma, potential leadership abilities and good education – ie a particularly explicit assembly of the various features that help define the rules of inclusion and exclusion discussed above.

Apart from assuming a natural authority on their own behalf, the most "ready" community members are empowered further by their participation in project activities such as project planning and networking meetings, or training workshops on issues such as community mobilization and leadership. In this way, the NGO staff – consciously or not - play a highly significant role in developing a *hierarchy* of participation - both *directly* by actively encouraging and grooming particular individuals for a leading role, and *indirectly* through the ensuing frameworks for inclusion and exclusion that the leading community members in the project develop and maintain.

Tracing the project history shows that the alliances between NGO staff and the community leaders in the project was developed and nurtured even prior to the current project, by positioning volunteers in selected villages for extended periods of time, charged with identifying the "ready". Behind this lies a distinct strategy formulated over a number of years by the leading NGO-staff and closely associated University academics. Indeed, many of the values employed in the project can be traced to the influence of a small group of progressive academics, who served as supervisors for the NGO staff during their student days, and continue to be actively involved as consultants in the project.

For these academics and the NGO staff, community-based conservation forms part of a wider struggle of social mobilization of the fisherfolk in Southern Thailand, aimed at halting the destruction of traditional village life – as manifest in the increasing fragmentation, stratification and commercialization of fishing communities throughout Thailand. Behind this struggle, in turn, lies a broader critique of globalization in general, and the modernization rationality of the Thai Government specifically - embodied most clearly in the plans to develop Southern Thailand into a new industrial and economic growth area. In opposition to this, the NGOs and associated academics portray a different Thailand, made up of self-reliant traditional (fishing) communities, practicing sustainable resource harvesting in an un-fragmented, primarily *localized* (as opposed to globalized) world.

In this picture, environmental conservation serves a dual function. Firstly, it provides the *material* basis for sustaining such an alternative society. This is a clear and always explicit rationale with the project staff, supported an explored through environmental research and data collection by the associated academics. Secondly, conservation serves as a *discursive* strategy: Within the discourses of environmental management, the notion of a self-sufficient, sustainable society is afforded significant value, and may thus serve as an alternative arena for pursuing an influence that is not accessible through conventional political means.

6. Influence of state and donor

The question, however, is whether the project is in fact as distant and disconnected from the state apparatus as the NGO staff would like to think. The answer to this constitutes a further feature of the power relations within the project, to which I now turn. A general feature of the meetings in the Singhala Fisherfolk Club and most other project meetings is that no Government or donor representatives are physically present. A closer look, however, suggests differently: It would appear that these actors *are* in fact present, but in the symbolic rather than physical sense.

Let us consider first the Government representatives: Given its emphasis on sensitive issues and the close ties to anti-government NGO's, the District officers from fisheries, forestry and community development have chosen a careful tactic in which they avoid any open association with the project or its opponents. This, of course, does not mean they no agendas and alliances of their own, as any rural Government officer must in order to negotiate and survive local politics. Indeed, this individuality of Government actors is important to appreciate in order to avoid simplistic notions of the Thai state as a somehow singular monolithic entity. Here, however, I will limit myself to pointing out how the very existence of the state *as such*, with its claim to formal jurisdiction over the fisheries and related resources, more or less *automatically* writes the state apparatus into the participatory process.

For instance, when the project established a community fish conservation zone, it sought and obtained approval of the zone and its associated rules of use from the relevant local level Government conservation- and fisheries officers. Without such an approval, the project would not have been able to justify the conservation zone vis-a-vis those of the community members who opposed it, or outside fishermen, or indeed state law itself. The approval, once awarded, was seen by the community participants and NGO staff as an important victory, and a sign that the participatory process had been accepted and legitimised by the local Government officers in Singhala.

However, we may also turn this logic around: By seeking the approval of the Government Officers, the community participants and NGO staff were in effect legitimising the state, and its authority and right to grant such approval in the first place. Hence although most of the participating community members generally had little regard for the Government officers – and despite the fact that the project was aimed at enhancing the participation of communities in exactly this kind of decision-making – the role of the Government officers in granting approval was never questioned. This, as Bourdieu (1997) points out, is the real power of the state: That we, as citizens, constantly come to reproduce its conditions by considering its most fundamental elements to be more or less

natural. As one community member put it: "Of course we needed the approval. Otherwise how can anyone take us seriously?"

This naturalization of the role of otherwise absent actors is also evident if we return yet again to the community project planning meeting in Singhala: In order to secure funding, the proposed activities, outputs and objectives need to conform closely to the portfolio of the donor. This simple fact had considerable influence on the types of problems and activities identified in Singhala on that day: Whenever a point or idea emerged that was not relevant to the profile of the project and the participants within it, it was kindly but carefully weeded out by the more "knowledgeable" (that is, leading) community participants and facilitating NGO staff.

Again I see this not as a fully explicit and manipulative process. Rather, it is a subtle, almost tacit manoeuvring: A patient smile here, a humorous dismissal there. A change of topic, a point well made. Or less subtly: A tweaking of an argument when recording it, or even a failure to record it altogether. Gradually, the sheets of paper on the walls in Singhala reflected a matrix of problems and solutions that fitted remarkably well with the policy of the donor in question. Forgotten were other issues brought up during the meeting: A major conflict over resource use in the Government conservation areas within the lake, for instance, or the development of an improved water supply for Singhala. Both issues that conflicted with, or fell outside of, the scope of donor involvement.

7. Participation as symbolic violence

I have in the above attempted to briefly illustrate how the participatory project activities in Singhala incorporate a series of inter-related power relations between the actors involved. A recurring theme in this respect is the way in which these power relations are created and reproduced through *symbolic* violence:

The rules of inclusion and exclusion of community members in the participatory process are not explicit. There are no formal rules to say that Muslim fishermen cannot participate, there is no obvious attempt to keep them away. Rather, what takes place is a gradual and discrete process of shaping and defining what "counts" within the social field constituted by the project, thereby legitimising and reproducing the patterns of exclusion, inclusion and domination.

This *making natural* of power relationships within the project is clearly visible also in the legitimisation of the NGOs in the project activities in Singhala, as indeed it is in the absentee role of Government Officers and the donor agency. There is no flaunting of power here, no obvious struggle for domination. Rather, there is an implicit, sometimes almost tacit process. It is "power flowing smoothly", as Giddens (1984) puts it, it is the

doxa of Bourdieu (1997, Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992): A more or less unquestioned pattern of domination, maintained through processes of symbolic violence.

It may be claimed, of course, that all this is just yet another example of "bad participation", and that all we need are better methods. This, however, would be to miss the mark. Firstly, seen from an overall perspective the approaches used in the project activities in Singhala compared quite favourably with most participatory projects I have encountered as a practitioner myself. Indeed, the project incorporates elements that are, in some respects, relatively far-sighted. Secondly, and more importantly, a simple revision of the participatory techniques would not address the more underlying aspects of domination that take place within participatory processes.

Such domination is not necessarily ill-intended, but that is exactly the point: As a readily accepted and applauded approach to development, we come easily to ignore the inherent problems and dangers in participation, including its ironic tendency to highlight and counter some power relations while establishing and naturalizing others. A first step in addressing this paradox, I believe, is to undertake a critical examination of what it is that we do when we practice and preach participation – whether as community members, development practitioners or academics. Only through such increased reflexivity can we begin to visualize a new approach to participation.

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Notes

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III GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY

THE STORIES OF TWO BRIDGES IN GHANA

Facts from research spiced with a little fiction

Jørgen Andreasen *

In Mankrong Village, in central Ghana, there is a bridge. Before the time of the bridge, women had to cross the river by foot to reach their fields. It was not possible to cross during the rains and according to a local taboo, the people were not supposed to walk into the water on Tuesdays.

Then, one day in 1995, two women from the government contacted the village. They worked for the Strengthening Community Management Programme[1] [SCMP], which had the aim to empower people to take initiatives to develop their own community.

The two women, however, did not offer to build a bridge, but to help villagers develop awareness and in guiding the community in the process of problem solving, implementation and operating the desired outputs. In the first phase of the process, the village decided to build a bridge. That bridge became a 'best practice' showpiece, and many were taken the two hours by car from Accra to see the results.

I first visited the bridge in 1997, a year or two after the bridge was completed, together with the two women from SCMP – one of them being the Director. An enthusiastic male crowd including the chairman of the bridge development team showed us the bridge, a beautiful piece of craftsmanship. However, to us as strangers, the dimensions of the construction in expensive hardwood appeared completely exaggerated. It was the decision of the local bridge team, but at that time we wondered if the experts from Accra shouldn't have advised the local team to invest more modestly.

But women truly walked across, carrying their loads of produce, now also on Tuesdays and enthusiasm was conspicuous.

We were convinced that we were here witnessing the empowerment of a community that would be able to sustain in future a capacity for further, independent development. The assumption of the programme was that, using the bridge development process as a tool, the community would develop (as a main output of the assistance) sustainable skills in problem analysis, project identification and in implementation of projects, and that this would empower the community to take future development initiatives independently or in a partnership with the government.

A meeting was summoned with the elders and the 'kingmaker' in full ornate together with perhaps 70 community members. The 'linguist' explained about the entire process,

spicing the story with all the politically correct (development aid) catchwords and a jargon that made the observers suspicious of whether this was just a well memorised summary propaganda of the *intentions* of SCMP or the result of a genuinely acquired recognition and awareness. It even included the importance of the women as partners in the process, while a handful of very silent women sat on the margins of the meeting.

The linguist explained that there had been a growing scepticism as the awareness development and the training continued over an entire year. Would this ever result in a bridge? Now, afterwards, everyone agreed with the process that had made the community feel a special ownership to the bridge, the linguist explained.

Towards the end of the meeting, through the linguist, the Kingmaker asked the Director,n"when will we get the next project?" The Director blamed the linguist for translating the kingmaker's blatant question (in the presence of foreigners) giving an impression of a project that emphasised the product, rather than the process.

Two years later, in 1999, we met the leaders of SCMP in Accra. They told us a story that was too good to be true. The neighbouring village Osedu got a bridge the year after Mankrong. It was received as a gift from the outside and without participation or empowerment being an issue. Delivered and completed by a contractor. However, during the next heavy rains the river swelled (as usual) and destroyed the Osedu bridge. The Mankrong bridge survived. According to SCMP the design of the Mankrong bridge was based on local people's experience with the river. Feeling an ownership to the bridge, the Mankrong villagers had been out to protect their bridge from large trees carried along with the torrent. In Osedu, the bridge did not incorporate local knowledge and there was no sense of close 'ownership'. I distributed this educational story to friends and colleagues around.

In March 2001 we visited Mankrong to validate this story. We met the kingmaker and an elder who had both acted on behalf of the chief during our visit in February 1997. The Kingmaker confirmed what we knew, that the next village upstream had received (from the ruling party) a concrete bridge that had been built by a contractor without much consultation with the community. The pillars were placed too close to the central stream, and the bridge collapsed during the next annual floods. According to the kingmaker, at Mankrong, in contrast, the village had placed the pillars even further to the sides than prescribed by technicians. This together with an effort during the peak flooding to divert big floating trunks from hitting the bridge saved the bridge. Thus participation both helped in providing local knowledge to improve the design and pride in the self-help process, making people care more once the floods came.

We made a short visit to the next village Osedu. The bridge had been built in 1998, funded by the then ruling party, all in concrete and contractor made, probably very lasting and with little demand for maintenance (apart from damages by a fallen tree). It did collapse during the first flood, probably hit by a big trunk, but the same contractor rebuilt it. There were, however, no signs of the collapse in 1999.

The bridge in Mankrong was indeed very useful and had shortened the distance to the fields, particularly on Tuesdays and in the rainy season.

Mankrong, however seemed neglected. Erosion continued to damage the roads (women sweep too much, the two men suggested). Some of the upper flooring of the bridge made of 3 inches hardwood had starting rotting and was not replaced. The railing was in bad need of being painted. There was little left of the spirit observed in 1997. The leaders appeared somewhat unmotivated.

The leaders had learned that big steps forward are taken with assistance from outside. They do not, as in the past, take independent initiatives. They concentrate their efforts in finding a donor or a government source of support. And they wait for a long time.

A school and a health clinic had received assistance from the government. These projects were, by and large, governmental projects with labour provided on a voluntary basis from the town – as in the old days. People who did not turn up would have to pay 2000 Cedi. The highly prioritised public toilets (mentioned to us in 1997 as a next project) and a market had not received funding. Some other projects had also been applied for, but there was no positive response and no alternative initiative was considered. Development is decided by what casual government agencies or donors want to provide.

The same demobilising impact of assistance from government and NGOs was observed in almost all villages and urban neighbourhoods we studied. They narrated a long history of independent projects carried out, then a donor, and then the donor dependency syndrome.

Well, upon reflection, they act in a rational way: It does pay better to invest energy in lobbyism and catching a donor than to struggle with shovels. And people learn how to navigate in the donor market. In Nwodua in northern Ghana people had in vain searched for someone to fund an extension of 'tamale' water pipes to the village for drinking water. Then there was a donor interested in funding afforestation and a plant nursery. The villagers managed to get an extension of the water pipes for the plant nursery and now they have clean drinking water.

But how is it then with the government's respect for local people? Is there any progress in democratisation of planning?

There is the story of another bridge.

North of Mpasatia near Kumasi, we have followed the fate of yet another bridge. It was shown to us when we explained to the local chief that we were interested in studying development where local people participated in decision-making. He showed us the bridge as an example of the opposite.

The government had decided to bridge two districts only connected by small boats across a river. A project was prepared by consultants, disregarding the advice of local people, partly with respect to the location, and partly refusing to appease the water gods with an offering. Not to the surprise of the local population, the first flood took entirely the half-built bridge. The chief has tried to appease the water gods, but five years after the start, the bridge remains incomplete. The water god has been seen during the day, and plays an important role in the cosmology and the rites related to beliefs in causes of problems facing people in the area.

We asked a person from another region whether he believed in this type of occurrence of the water god. He, a firm Christian, answered a clear no. Water gods are never seen at daytime, only at night, when he personally had seen one.

Why do we never learn about water gods in the university?

Notes

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PARTICIPATION IN A POST-SOCIALIST SOCIETY

Cases from Mozambique.

Jorgen Eskemose*

Abstract

Mozambique is transforming itself from a centrally planned and governed one party socialist state to a multi democracy introduced in 1997. Urban Planning and Housing initiatives cannot cope with the rapid urbanisation process that has taken place since independence in 1975. A civil war then destabilised and devastated the country for 12 years and the murder of the first FRELIMO president in 1986 further disrupted the political environment and after the peace accord in 1992 the country has gradually oriented itself towards the market ideology not least since the collapse of the socialist bloc in 1990. This shift in policy is complicated and having a wide range of consequences and the past philosophy of the state as a provider and in any sense the "mother" of the nation is still strong. The top-down approach practised by the socialist FRELIMO government is deep rooted in the society not least bearing in mind the vastness and cultural diversity of the country. Participation in the western understanding is far from a Mozambican reality in which the majority cannot read nor write and only 30% command Portuguese which is the official language. Furthermore the majority of the urban population is living in poverty on a day to day survival strategy and thus participation becomes a secondary priority. The land issue is finally dealt with as an important determinant in order for the urban poor to gain security of tenure and in the longer run invest in their houses and property. The paper takes point of departure in an ongoing urban environmental donor aided project as experienced by the author as a consultant to Danida.[1]

Keywords: Participation, democracy, planning and environmental management.

1. Background

Mozambique has a population of approx. 18 million inhabitants of which some 7 million resides in urban areas. Maputo the capital of Mozambique has approx. 1.5 million inhabitants. The second largest city is Beira with approx. 500.000 inhabitants, then Nampula with approx. 350.000; thereafter only few urban centres have more than 200.000 inhabitants.

Urbanisation in Mozambique only really took off after independence in 1975 when restrictions on the African population to live and work in urban areas were lifted. Up till

1975 Mozambique served as a labour pool for the industries in South Africa, not least the mines. This is to some extent still the case although some employment opportunities have been created over the last decade after the ending of the civil war which for twelve years (1980-1992) impeded all development in Mozambique. The destabilisation of Mozambique was supported by the South African (and Rhodesian, until 1980) government with a dramatic peak with the de facto murder of the Mozambican president organised by the apartheid regime in 1986. When apartheid fell in 1990 things began gradually to normalise in Mozambique.

Approximately 75% of the urban population lives in informal settlements lacking basic infrastructure, electricity and all weather access roads and walkways. School and health institutions are far from meeting the demand and many children do not attend school; many drop out after only a few years of schooling. Poverty is widespread, unemployment rates alarmingly high, HIV/Aids is creating thousands of orphans and the capacity of the government to guide and facilitate the urbanisation is extremely limited. Experience of this author after working and visiting Mozambique over the last 20 years indicates a missing political will to enter the urban scene and establish laws and regulations and not least to enforce these: "Attempts to prepare regulations for urban land have been unsuccessful, reflecting both lack of political agreement and the strength of the interests seeking to maintain the unregulated status quo". [2]

The local government elections which took place for the first time in 1998 in the newly created 33 municipalities received limited attention and only 16% of the electives voted. FRELIMO (The Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) won and are in power in all 33 municipalities, but there appears to be a growing mistrust and the forthcoming local elections in October 2003 may be the introduction to new local political leadership in some municipalities. In terms of Urban Environmental Management it is clear that participation is recognised as unavoidable if projects and programmes to improve the environment for the urban poor are to succeed, the open question however still remains on how to actively involve the inhabitants in a way that creates ownership and thus eases the process itself and not least secures sustainable solutions.

2. One Party State

Mozambique has since its independence in 1975 been governed by FRELIMO as the movement responsible for the liberation of Mozambique from the Portuguese colonial occupation. Only after 10 years of war (1964-1975) was it possible for FRELIMO to declare Mozambique an independent country. More than 10 years after Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda gained independence, but still ahead of Rhodesia and

South Africa. As education for the African population mostly was in the hands of the missionaries and as virtually no Mozambicans had access to higher education the country found itself in a extremely difficult situation at the eve of independence. This was worsened by the fact that over 90% of the mostly Portuguese relatively well trained population fled the country. It is estimated that 250.000 Portuguese left before or just after independence. Even if the FRELIMO government has embarked on a massive educational programme since 1975 qualified professionals in any field is still today a serious problem.

Another problem is that the state apparatus is offering very poor salaries to even academic members of staff, and thus finds it difficult to attract professionals and the academics to be found in the state department and ministries; they are too often busy supplementing their meagre incomes with other activities - often as consultants for donors.

In general government institutions suffer from low salary packages that make it difficult to retain high quality specialised staff in competition with the private sector. There is also a general shortage of sufficient quantity and quality of appropriate technical equipment in the government system. [3]

3. Planning law, regulation and education

Within the field of Architecture and Planning, a Faculty at the University in Maputo was opened in 1986 and graduates are now available. When considering Urban Environmental Planning and participation in planning there is still much left to desire in the curricula of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning. This is no wonder as a new country and a new faculty necessarily have to define their approach. After many years of central planning ideologies, now being questioned under the breakthrough of the market ideologies, the confusion is total. The Planning Law under preparation and at the moment out for comments among different stakeholders leaves in respect to participation little hope for a real change.

"Todos os instrumentos de planeamento territorial são sujeitos a um período de inquérito publico, a divulgar através da comunicação social, durante o qual, a população em geral poderá apresentar reclamações, observações, sugestões e pedidos de esclarecimento. And it continues: Ao longo da elaboração dos instrumentos de planeamento territorial de novel local a entidade responsável realizara convocatórias publicas para a discussão do estádio de evolução dos trabalhos, incluindo audiências com as autoridades administrativas locais e tradicionais e exporá os documentos em sítios acessíveis a todos os interessados, devendo reconhecer a recomendações e observações formuladas."[4]

The question is if it is a coincidence that the wording is so weak and broad. If approved and made a legal instrument with the present phrasing genuine participation in the planning process is wishful thinking and the former one party state can continue its central planning practise which has been the norm for decades. Under the free market conditions this in reality means a step back and it leaves space for influential peoples manoeuvring in their own interest. And this is exactly what is happening at the moment. Land speculation is enormous, not least in Maputo. The state and the poor people are the losers in this process where millions and millions of USD are deprived from taxation.

The extreme sharp division between the "White City" or the "Cement City" continues even today almost 3 decades after independence. The ever growing informal settlements in all Mozambican urban areas is a fact that the governmental authorities so far have had very limited success in handling. However some activities in the poor neighbourhoods did take place just after independence organised by the so-called Dynamizing Groups (Grupo Dinamizadores), in reality prolonged arms of FRELIMO. The Dynamizing groups and the neighbourhood FRELIMO representatives were the de facto municipal authority and were in those days politically extremely strong and unquestionable. However they did not posses any means to execute whatever decision was taken. Heavily backed up by the recent political victory and a spirit of FRELIMO being able to do anything for the "People" changes in the informal settlements did actually take place all organised and implemented by the people themselves. Those were the days when the slogan "A luta continua" (the fight continues) became famous and Mozambique became a model for the suppressed in South Africa under the apartheid regime. All activities were participatory in the minds of the ruling FRELIMO party. And true enough there was a strong belief in FRELIMO and poor people's livelihood relatively did improve, not least due to the initiative by the people themselves. The Maxaquene upgrading scheme was thus an important pilot activity in order to establish routines, norms and demonstrating the potential in peoples own forces. All in all, a model for future urban improvement in the informal settlements.[5]

4. Participation as a convenient FRELIMO tool

FRELIMO came into power just after the participation concept at the UN Habitat Conference in Vancouver conference on human settlements in 1976 became a blueprint concept. Since then sites and service and upgrading have become the orthodoxy in a number of developing countries including Mozambique.[6] The before mentioned Maxaquene experience and others are examples that unfortunately only have had rather limited national influence, as the era of the close relationship to the Eastern socialist

Bloc heavily supported mass produced social housing. Blocks of housing flats were in a number of Mozambican cities built in the first years of independence with assistance from the socialists countries. It was only after the acknowledgment of the inability of the state to continue to provide housing at affordable prices to low-income urban dwellers that gradually the concepts of sites & service and upgrading were (re)introduced.

Participation in the Habitat understanding of the concept was never widely accepted by the Mozambican authorities as appropriate. The FRELIMO representatives were present down to a ten cell (ten households) and representing the people in any sense so why worry about participation? Or rather; participation was a reality in all daily matters as FRELIMO was apparent everywhere taking care of its citizens and needless to say the ruling party was also involving the people, as seen by the party. But the agenda was set by the state, unquestionably. (Participatory) meetings were held regularly at all working places to brush up the memory of the people on the wisdom of the party's policy and the progress of the country. During the author's work in Mozambique from 1984-1989 this took place frequently and lack of attendance was recorded.

When the FRELIMO government obviously failed to deliver the services often promised in rallies and (participatory) meetings the concept of community participation was put in place as a mean of cheap labour trying to establish the missing public services. Too often with doubtful success. There are works that may be executed by communities and there are works that one certainly cannot expect communities to do. Water supply and public sanitation are prime examples beyond the capacity of layman community work. The tendency over recent years however is clear: Less and less voluntary community involvement in work locally, apart from very site specific activities such as drain cleaning near one's own plot, garbage collection nearby one's own plot, street cleaning near one's own plot etc.

5. Donor activities within urban areas

The urban areas have received limited donor attention as there previously was a wide spread understanding in the donor communities and also in Mozambique itself that development should first and primarily take point of departure in the rural areas. Thus most aid was geared towards the agricultural sector and in general the rural areas. In Mozambique the FRELIMO government went to the extreme and deported thousands of people living in the urban areas seemingly doing nothing, as work in the urban areas was very scarce.

FRELIMO was oriented towards the Soviet Union, The German Democratic Republic, Cuba and China and consequently Marxist ideology. Any activity that could be labelled

capitalism was banned. Those involved in activities of a capitalistic nature were at times arrested, chicaned or punished in public on Saturday afternoons! A culture of wall paintings also saw the light in these years, ridiculing any business, commercial or petty trade activity, not least with an individual character. The forced removals of urban people with no obvious legitimate occupation and the "hunt" for (small) business people is part of the FRELIMO history still to be uncovered by a new generation of Mozambican historians. This period may prove to represent a dark side of the young nation's record.

6. Danish support to Urban Environmental Management in Mozambique

Denmark established the Environment, Peace and Stability Fund in 1993 in response to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio 1992 and the strategy for environmental assistance was initiated in 1996. The objective is to assist the implementation of environmental projects and programmes at regional as well as national levels in accordance with sustainable development principles and on the basis of the countries' own development priorities.

The Danish Environmental Programme for Mozambique has five major components as follows:

- Development of Capacity for Environmental Management.
- Industrial Pollution Prevention.
- Coastal Zone Management.
- Urban Environmental Management.
- Participatory Environmental Management /Monitoring.

Currently two activities within the urban environmental sector are ongoing namely: Urban Environmental Management in 5 Municipalities and support to the development of a Greater Maputo Environmental Management Strategy.

Denmark has been financing a Pilot Project for the Environmental Rehabilitation of the peri-urban areas of Quelimane and Mocuba since 1998 and a pilot project on Ilha de Mozambique[7] since 1997. Both these activities are formerly considered a success by the Mozambican authorities and Danida. It is however evident to this author that the projects are biased in their approach to the issue of poverty reduction. Most activities are having a focus which is not directly benefiting the urban poor as the projects have supported to a great extent interventions in the "Cement City", which is where interventions are most visible (Ilha de Mozambique is an exception as the intervention was in the informal city aiming at draining the area and avoiding future floods). Garbage removal, street erosion and creation of urban parks are often by the authorities considered

key environmental activities which broadly speaking are having limited impact on the urban poor. "Power defines reality" it is argued by Prof. Bent Flyvbjerg in his book on Power and Rationality[8] and in this case the issue of the "documentation not produced is just as interesting as that which is produced" (Page 31). The local politicians and their supporters in businesses etc. are giving the central areas of the Mozambican towns and cities priority, whilst at the same time knowing by intuition at least that the real needs are in the informal parts of their towns. But being in possession of the local power and in order to demonstrate their ability and willingness to beatify the central parts of the cities, they ignore the enormous need in the informal cities. Partly by ignorance and partly to sustain their power base, built within the influential business and political elite, all based in the central parts of the towns. The voice of the poor informal settler struggling for everyday survival is rarely heard.

The NGO's and the civil society is maybe aware of this dichotomy but is unable to confront it and change practise due to its general weakness and missing belief in its own forces because of decades of central planning and political dictatorship in Mozambique. The civil society involvement is mostly taking place in the form of NGOs, which generally are weak with little or no funds to finance operation and lacking a clear focus. Most NGOs are donor dependent and in reality they would not exist if the donor community was not there promoting them. To some extent this has meant a mistrust from communities to the new times as they too often have been betrayed by their leaders in the past; promises of a brighter future were normal during the numerous rallies conducted by FRELIMO - but with limited result as seen from the poor urban dweller. This appears to be the case in Angola as well according to the work by Development Workshop:

"... people make rational decisions on the basis of their perception of available resources and possible benefits. The previous experience of many Angolans leads them to be sceptical that programmes will deliver any benefit, so they are not likely to accept an intervention that demands investment of time or money before they have any concrete proof that the intervention will take place. Education, mobilization and delivery need to be closely linked, working intensively in a particular area, for the programme to succeed."[9]

7. National Policy on Urban Environmental Management

The urban environment is one of the priority intervention areas defined in the National Environmental Management Programme approved in 1995 by the Ministry for Co-ordination of Environmental. Activities in this area have included:

- Responsibility for the co-ordination of the environment component of the Local Government Reform Programme concluded in 1999.

- Establishment of a Sustainable Development Centre in Nampula with responsibility for the formulation of a strategy for urban environmental management in Mozambique.
- Technical assistance to the urban environmental management pilot projects in Mocuba and Quelimane and Ilha de Moçambique.
- Surveys of the environmental problems of more than 23 cities and towns in Mozambique.

In 1999 the Ministry decided to embark on a comprehensive Urban Environmental Programme for Mozambique. The Danish urban environmental assistance is intended to provide practical experience for the formulation of a national urban environmental management policy whilst also tackling priority problems and increasing operational capacity at the local level. The question of technical capacity is the key. Most municipalities have only few professionals and are lacking basic working conditions: transport, equipment and not least funds to implement the interventions are needed.

Too often the limited financial resources are lost or mismanaged due to missing awareness of how to identify needs and how to prioritise. Furthermore the political process of local democracy and transparency is only in the making. Local politicians are rarely held responsible for their eventual mismanagement and poor performance of the different municipal bodies and departments. The dichotomy between the inhabitants in the "Cement City" and the majority in the informal parts of the city does not seem to influence the decisions in the Municipal Assemblies so far in favour of the many. The NGOs that in theory are in opposition to the ruling government are still in the making and in a number of cases the NGOs are simply the prolonged arm of the FRELIMO structures.

8. Urban Policy Development

The first steps towards creating a national urban development and management policy were taken with a World Bank Local Reform Programme funded initiative followed up now with a Municipal Development Programme. This aims to boost technical and financial management capacities in Maputo, Beira, Quelimane, Nampula and Pemba all provincial capitals and relatively big urban centres.

There is therefore in theory a good opportunity to complement and extend these development activities by ensuring that capacity in municipal environmental management is built concurrently. Practise however shows that coordination of donor driven activities is limited and often more or less absent. The reasons for this are manyfold. First and foremost donors have a strong tendency to believe that their project, component

or programme is "the best". Coordination is at times done, but more to be able to respond positively when asked in evaluations whether coordination is taking place. To the knowledge of the author, no donor project in Mozambique so far has been changed or prioritised differently due to a coordination process which could have uncovered unnecessary overlapping. Secondly the recipient Governmental institutions or NGOs are often reluctant to leave space for other donors to come in and influence what is taking place already. Sharing and exchange of experiences and valuable knowledge is rare and happens primarily in order to satisfy the donor.

In 1999 the Centre for Sustainable Urban Development in Nampula prepared a 'Terms of Reference' for the Urban Environmental Programme for Mozambique based on its experience research it has conducted since its formation in 1997. The main findings included the following: The definition of 'urban areas' in Mozambique by which urban centres are categorised into 23 cities and 68 towns is inadequate since it unjustifiably excludes a large number of human settlements at the periphery of the towns and cities.

Urban environmental problems are mostly concentrated in and around the urban centres located on the coast, and this tendency will be reinforced in the coming years due to the increased pressure on the costal zones from investors in the tourist industry from South Africa. This is taking place already and the huge Pemba Beach Hotel in Pemba is a prime example of an urban investment with extreme limited spillover effect in favour of the urban poor. Located as an island fenced off from the surrounding areas and relying on its own supply system in any sense it is a foreign element in the city of Pemba.

The main responsibility for urban environmental management rests with the municipal councils, although it is recognised that their capacities for this are extremely limited. Municipal councils should delegate as much as possible of the initiative for urban environmental management to the civil society through CBOs, NGOs and the private sector. This is the vision promoted first and foremost by the international community present in Mozambique but the experience by this author is that this only seems to take place to a limited extent and very much so to please the donor!

The recommended strategy is that programme activities should prioritise those urban centres that already have municipal councils. In the short to medium term, these councils will be encouraged to prepare participatory environmental action plans to be approved by the municipal assemblies. The ministry will assist in the preparation and execution of these plans in selected urban centres.

In the medium to long term, the role of Ministry will revert to co-ordinating actions, preparing policies and strategies, and providing technical support to municipal councils in the execution of urban environment measures.

These are however ideals. The reality is that the Ministry lacks qualified committed staff, equipment and financial means to support the municipalities which necessarily involves travelling to the municipalities in the vast country. The truth is in general that the newly formed municipalities are left to themselves and the limited resources that they posses are spent on a day to day maintenance of the outdated infrastructure and waste removal in the cement cities leaving the informal cities to themselves.

9. Urban Environment

The migration from rural to urban areas of Mozambique, especially during the civil war, combined with the concentration of economic growth in urban areas in the post-war period has led to a situation where approximately 40% of the population live in towns and cities. It is expected that the towns will continue to grow and more than 50% of the population is expected to be urbanised within the next decade.

To accommodate the continuing influx of people and the population growth due to natural increase, urban areas in Mozambique continue to grow in an uncontrolled manner with informal settlements proliferating on the outskirts of all urban centres. The housing in these area provides just basic shelter, is overcrowded and poorly serviced. The residents are mostly unemployed or under-employed and most seek their means of survival in the informal economy and some from subsistence agriculture. As a result it is estimated that 62% live below the absolute poverty line and 28% suffer from chronic malnutrition.

Lack of resources have prevented the extension of environmental services to newly created peri-urban settlements. As a result, only 31% of the urban population have access to safe drinking water, mostly from public standpipes (9% have house connections) while only 4% are connected to sewers. The few existing drainage systems have been destroyed or are blocked due to lack of maintenance. Regular collection of solid waste is restricted to the city centres.

This combination of factors has resulted in a severely degraded urban environment. The effects on public health are severe. Diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea, infections of the respiratory system, intestinal parasites, meningitis and food poisoning are rife. Cholera outbreaks are now chronic, with more than 37,000 cases in 1998 and 850 deaths in the cities of Maputo, Beira, Quelimane and Nampula, alone .

In many cases, the peri-urban settlements have encroached into areas prone to environmental hazards such as flooding, erosion and landslides. Destabilisation of the soil structure in such areas has often resulted in destruction of property and infrastructure, affecting both the new settlements and residents downstream. A dissertation by Allen (2002: 44) concludes concerning a case of serious erosion in an informal settlement in

Maputo: "Analysis of the causes of erosion in Polana Canico has demonstrated the complex links between environmental hazards, poverty and governance in the context of low-income cities. In this case, a naturally fragile physical environment has been severely damaged over o period of 25 years by human activities. The immediate causes can be summarised as: dense and disordered settlement by an impoverished, vulnerable population with mainly rural habits; second the city councils inability to provide adequate housing land with basic infrastructure; and finally the failure – by both central and local government authorities – to maintain the crucial storm drainage system."

10. Urban Environmental Management

Mozambique has a total of 91 officially classified urban centres, 23 cities and 68 towns. There are municipal councils in all of the cities but only in 10 of the towns. The Municipal Law envisions the gradual assumption of responsibility for local service provision and development by the municipal council, headed by a Mayor and overseen by an elected municipal assembly. Municipalities will, therefore, eventually have responsibility for most aspects of environmental management.

Municipalities rely for their operating budget on allocations from the central budget and on locally raised taxes, at a ratio of 50:50. The ratios vary from town to town and depend in part on how efficiently local taxes are collected. Funds for development or construction of infrastructure come mainly from the state or from donors.

The 5 urban areas included as targets for the Danida project are formally constituted municipalities with a democratically elected mayor and municipal assembly. The 5 cities have populations from approx. 60.000 to approx. 200.000. The towns were selected in collaboration with the Ministry and after consultation with the municipal authorities. A key criterion was that the vision and aspirations of the municipalities for the project coincided with the basic approach of Danida. The following criteria were also considered.

1) Geographical diversity. All the 5 towns are medium sized located in the north east of the country within a day's drive of Nampula where the centre for Sustainable Urban Development is located. 2) Previous Danish project experience in the area: Quelimane, Mocuba and Ilha de Moçambique have benefited from pilot projects. 3) Severity of the need: all have large peri-urban settlements with severe poverty; Mocuba and Montepuez in particular have virtually no access to other sources of funding. 4) Activities of other donors: no conflicts but some opportunities to leverage soft World Bank finance in Quelimane and Pemba.

The cities present a variety of institutional and environmental contexts that will provide a range of different challenges and experiences. For example their institutional

capacities vary from the well established units in Quelimane and Pemba, to the rudimentary facilities in Mocuba and Montepuez, with very limited staff and practically no equipment or trained technicians and inadequate office space.

Budgets of the 5 municipal councils differ significantly. While Quelimane is able to mobilise own revenues sufficient for the funding of certain development projects the city councils of Mocuba and Ilha de Moçambique can barely pay the monthly salaries of their staff.

11. Current state of urban environment in the 5 municipalities

A survey recently updated the environmental situation in the municipalities identifying priority areas for intervention.

The increase in population has not been accompanied by new layouts for expansion of housing either of infrastructures and services. The majority of the population lives in semi- or non-urbanised neighbour-hoods, in "traditional" houses with rudimentary infrastructure. Most peri-urban areas are occupied spontaneously, often in inade-quate areas subject to erosion or floods. The main environmental problems:

- Inadequate sanitary conditions and the general practice to defecate in the open.
- Insufficient collection and treatment of solid waste.
- Lack of access to water in sufficient quantity and quality.
- Lack of drainage causing floods and erosion.
- Unplanned settlements located in inappropriate areas.

All municipalities have no or only limited areas identified for expansion for the urban poor; hence informal settlements are frequently causing environmental degradation. The issue of reserving land for urban expansion and set aside land that must be protected due to e.g. its environmental fragility is a huge task involving a complex set of activities; most importantly, the need to argue in favour of reserving land for poor peoples housing. According to the World Bank World Development report 2003, this should be a relatively simple exercise.

New settlements in or near existing urban areas require the following actions:

- Setting aside rights of way for primary transport arteries.
- Proscribing settlement or other development of areas that are unsuitable because of environmental fragility or vulnerability to disasters – and projecting fragile environmental resources.
- Reserving areas for amenities, especially parks, and developing other public spaces with social and cultural value.

This effort has to take into account emerging supply and demand and avoid over-determining the city's future. A frequent problem is that city master plans may exclude large high-value sites, especially at the periphery, from urban development, while failing to fence off environmentally vulnerable or risky sites in an enforceable way (World Bank, 2003).

In Maputo for example, land along the coast in mangrove swamp areas is now rapidly being developed for first class expensive housing. This land should ideally and according also to the bank be reserved by the city authorities. What instead is happening, is a process of converting this low lying and fragile wetland into an expensive housing area for the elite - the same elite that is in control of the city authority. The exercise of reserving land for poor people's housing is extremely complicated and full of conflicts and as long as the legal framework is not in place and as long as civil society and the press is relatively weak, the elite will continue to manoeuvre in their own interest. Land is power and nobody anywhere anytime in history has given away that power for free. And nor will the elite in Mozambique until there is a strong public demand supported by the media, which is not at all the case today.

Many cases, not least along the vast Mozambican coastline, can be identified where the environment and the local people are the losers and the short sighted tourist investor the winner. Mozambique is so eager to please investors of any kind that laws and regulations too often are being violated and bent to suit the interest of the investor.

Mozambique seems to be trapped by the wish expressed by politicians and economists to attract any investor, what-so-ever the cost. When a huge aluminium factory in 2000 was to be located in Maputo, the City Authorities failed to guide, facilitate or require the localisation of the factory on a site which in developmental terms would benefit the city and its poor unemployed inhabitants. In the end the factory was located on the outskirts where no infrastructure is available and once in place will only service the new factory.

The multinational investor easily succeeded in persuading the authorities of the wisdom (as seen by the developer) to locate the factory outside the industrial parks already available with ample space.

The provision of advice to the programming of investments in urban infrastructure from a physical development perspective has been widely neglected and perhaps even forgotten among practitioners (Mattingly, 2001).

The weakness of the planners and their role in cases common these days all over Mozambique concerning missed opportunities to guide development physically to appropriate locations is maybe easy to understand when it comes to multinational cooperation's entrance to Mozambique. Unfortunately however it appears generally to be more the rule than the exception that the developers' location-wishes come true.

12. The Urban Environmental Project in 5 Municipalities in Mozambique

12.1. Objectives

The Development Objective of the Project is:

- Improved present and future living conditions of poor men and women in the urban and peri-urban areas in Moçambique by sustainable reduction of threats resulting from human induced damage to the physical environment.

The Immediate Objectives are as follows:

- Target municipalities and other relevant public institutions capacitated and using appropriate tools, systems and procedures effectively to identify, prioritise and address urban environmental threats within their jurisdictions.
- Groups within civil society in target municipalities strengthened and using appropriate tools, systems and procedures to contribute effectively to identify, prioritise and address urban environmental threats.
- Urban environmental priorities of the poorest men and women addressed in the target municipalities yielding improvements in public health access to services and amenity.

The Development Objective and the corresponding Immediate Objectives are considered to be compatible with the existing albeit weak Mozambican policy for urban environment, and they reflect the problems, needs and reality of the five municipalities of the Project.

During the initial stages of Project implementation, specific attention has been given to make it clear to the municipalities that the activities of the Project (particularly the small and micro projects) must aim at the "reduction of threats from human induced damage" and "urban environmental priorities of the poorest men and women addressed". The approach taken to counteract the tendency to give priority to "Cement City" interventions is a continuous dialog followed by workshops and seminars. It does not happen over night and in order not to distort the good relationship with the municipalities it may be necessary to accept some few projects which do not fully live up to the general objectives of the Project.

The three Immediate Objectives are all considered pertinent and conducive to the achievement of the Development Objective. The small and micro projects are considered vital for the strategy of the project. First and foremost they will satisfy concrete needs felt by the poorest urban population, and secondly they will serve as a vehicle for capacity development of both public and civil society organisations and be instrumental

in the public awareness and dissemination activities. In addition, the strengthening of the public institutions and civil society will enhance the sense of ownership of and active participation in the local development process.

It is clear that the goals set in the Project Document are ambitious and unrealistic, bearing in mind the limited resources that are available for capacitating the central ministry, the municipalities and civil society.

It seems to be an over-optimistic assessment of the capacity, when the Project Document envisages the following end-of-project situation: "the ministry will have developed the capacity to contribute to the development of strategies and programmes, inter-institutional co-ordination, training and technical assistance, monitoring and promotion of a co-ordinated and integrated approach to urban environmental management". This is however not the experience of the project until the present day.

The project document continues and states: "... it is expected that by the end of the project the ministry will have a team of qualified and trained staff capable of undertaking a broad range of activities relating to the urban environment." This is a desirable goal, but not feasible under the given conditions. The Project is first and foremost oriented towards developing capacity in the five cities targeted by the project. The Ministry in Maputo is in this aspect playing a secondary role under which it is difficult to expect 100% commitment from the staff, not least, as the incentives that the project so far may offer are poor. And the project design with a part-time technical assistance to the ministry is not particular supportive when it comes to long-term capacity building which is a long, slow process basically building on-the-job training philosophy.

Experiences during the first year of project implementation have proven that in the case of the Ministry it is unrealistic to expect a big difference at the end of project situation from that of before.

13. Approach

With the demand driven approach[10] the main responsibility for the activities and the advance of the project rests with each municipality. This approach differs substantially from the past, where the driving forces were the Ministry and the Provincial Directorates, in charge of the whole process from identification, planning and implementation of the activities.

Experience shows that it is not an easy task for the municipalities to respond to this approach. In general, they are not used to taking the initiative and to formulating requests to donors. This has been quite apparent during the initial process of identification of small projects. The municipalities simply submitted a "shopping list" of projects, in many

cases without meeting the basic requirements, without making budgetary analysis, etc. clearly reflecting an attitude of leaving the decisions to the Sustainable Centre in Nampula and not really having internalised the demand driven approach philosophy.

14. Assumptions

This section deals with the assumptions set in the Project Document, relevant to the scope of this paper.

14.1. Commitment by municipal councils, participating organisations and the communities to the improvements in urban environment

The fact that the infrastructure projects will solve real and tangible problems such as lack of water, basic sanitation, erosion, etc. and give the municipal councils an opportunity to implement urban environmental small scale projects will continue to ensure their interest and commitment. All municipalities have accepted to provide the necessary co-financing of between 5 and 10%. It is however doubtful if this promise in reality will hold.

Concerning the communities (neighbourhoods in Portuguese: *Bairros*) it is important to understand the general attitude by civil society that government is the provider of social services. The *Bairro* Secretaries have difficulty or are even unable to enforce environmental codes, particularly related to garbage. The reason for this is that great parts of the population are sceptical about information disseminated by the *Bairro* Secretary, the local FRELIMO representative.

14.2. Availability of qualified staff in the municipal councils

The capacity within urban environment varies from municipality to municipality, which is mainly due to lack of qualified staff. None of the five municipalities have staff educated specifically in urban environmental management. Quelimane has one engineer and one architect, and Mocuba, Pemba and Montepuez have one technician each in physical planning. Ilha de Moçambique has hardly any technical capacity.

Based on the experiences with the recruitment of the project co-ordinators and local consultants it can be concluded that it is difficult to attract well-qualified staff, especially to the minor municipalities. The number of people with a university degree in Mozambique is limited and they tend to look for jobs in Maputo, and in order to go to the smaller municipalities they are asking for much more than budgeted. This is mainly due to the level established by donors, not least the World Bank. It can thus be stated that the human resources and technical capacity in the municipali-ties are still rather insufficient,

and they are experiencing a very slow process of increasing their capacity. In terms of staff with qualification within the field of community participation and involvement the situation is critical. Many professionals in Mozambique are trained in Cuba, the Democratic German Republic and the Soviet Union and participation by ordinary people is not really their speciality. The people are considered as recipient of the technical staff's knowledge and wisdom. They were trained in this thinking and one cannot blame them for their behaviour in this respect. The process of changing this attitude is long.

14.2.1. Identification of capable and viable NGO/CBO

During recent years there have been a growing number of Mozambican environmental NGOs. NGOs, albeit weak, have been identified in all five municipalities. Many of them have been active in creating and later joining a national umbrella organisation, LINK.

It is by the project management expected that well implemented NGO and CBO activities satisfying felt and expressed needs will spur other NGOs and CBOs to identify and formulate similar or other activities. It is however obvious that the NGO's needs assistance and training in order to formulate workable projects meeting the basic criteria of the project.

14.3. The decentralisation process will proceed and increasing powers will be conferred to municipal councils

It seems as the decentralisation process has not brought about the expected changes in the way that key services are managed. Little progress has been made in the transfer of additional competencies – such as primary education and health care – from central government. The basic legislation set no timetable for this process, nor did it lay out the procedures and criteria for the selection of the services to be transferred or the municipalities to participate.

The municipalities also have serious problems in raising the resources needed to improve basic urban services. Ambitious plans were set out for 1999, with the municipalities anticipating that 78% of their revenues would be generated locally. Preliminary results suggest, however, that most of the municipalities failed to reach their targets, and as a result the municipalities remain heavily dependent on fiscal transfers and the municipalities' share of total public spending was just over 3% – based on the optimistic spending targets indicated in their budgets. Another problem is that much of expenditure was allocated to administrative functions, including 40% spent on staff, and a substantial share on payments to councillors in the smaller municipalities, leaving few resources for services.

14.4. Target municipalities will continue to prioritise environmental problems higher than other urgent needs and political agendas

As mentioned above experience so far shows that the municipalities will be committed to the implementation of urban environmental projects, but it should not be assumed that they will prioritise environmental problems higher than other urgent needs. This is a typical donor expectation: How can anybody expect that a public institution will give a higher priority to a certain activity in this case urban environmental problems!

14.5. General public will continue to prioritise communal environment problems higher than other personal poverty related problems

The assumption seems skewed, absurd and absolutely not realistic. When reading such an assumption one is left with a feeling that the project designers to a certain extent are trying to introduce ideals and norms practised to some degree in the North, albeit some belong to the 70s and most are used only for the sake of the law. But it appears that the donors still are daydreaming of the many advantages that participation can bring along. The reality is far more complex and just as it is with participation in North, it is in the South: Nobody joins anything without a clear, very clear indeed indication of the beneficial output.

14.6. Small and micro projects well designed to address fully the environmental priorities and yield sustainable results

Guidelines for a Project Concept Paper have been prepared, and the municipalities and NGOs have submitted proposals for consideration. The quality of the proposals varies quite a lot, and it must be concluded that much training, advice and monitoring is required in order to get the projects ready for implementation. It has been an unpleasant surprise for the project that the capacity to identify and develop proposals has been as weak as is the case.

14.7. Phase I of the project is implemented on schedule and the milestone criteria for continuing with a second project phase are fulfilled

The Project's ability to stick to the time schedule must be assessed bearing mind three major factors which have significant influence on project performance: 1) the technical capacity in the municipalities, 2) the rudimentary equipment if any to be found in the municipalities and 3) the municipal elections in June 2003 will doubtless influence Project performance and it may be that influential people may try to make use of specific Project interventions for their own political benefit.

14.8. NGOs and CBOs able to achieve sustainability

Some of the NGOs expected to participate in the project are already quite experienced and institutionally relatively sustainable. Others are still in the making and will require other support than financial for a long time, but it is expected that this assumption to a reasonable degree will be fulfilled by the end of the project period (4 years).

14.9. Participating organisations able to reach the general public effectively in awareness raising campaigns

When campaigning, it is important to ensure credibility with the target audience. The sender must be perceived as trustworthy and respected by the communities concerned. In some Municipalities a general anti-government atmosphere is quite evident, and the fact that people do not separate the different government institution - to them they are all the same - could mean that the municipality would be a problematic "sender". In the eyes of the people "they never do anything, they promise and nothing happens etc." This is maybe the most serious concern to the success of the project as it deals with the core of what it is all about: Democratisation of planning initiatives.

14.10. The Municipal Councils will have capacity to formulate and implement small projects

The Municipal Councils have not proved to have a capacity to formulate and implement small projects without intensive support from the project co-ordinators and the Centre for Sustainable Development in Nampula. It is expected that at 3 out of 5 will have the capacity installed by the end of the project period. This is a positive justification and it may prove to be false. The key issue continues to worry: Qualified staff, committed and paid (on time!) by the municipality and not least operating in a conducive political environment. Corrupt politicians with their own agenda are a danger everywhere in the Mozambican society.

15. Risks

This section deals with relevant parts of the assessment of risks as originally identified in the Project Document.

In general, the assessment of the risks in the Project Document are pertinent and points to some of the general problems related to capacity building activities, sustainability, commitment and participation.

15.1. The project has been prepared with a realistic appreciation of the capacities and resources of the local partners

This is a very optimistic statement. Capacity is extremely limited and in the case of 2 or even 3 of the smallest municipalities hardly in existence. The design of the project includes different measures to compensate for the shortcomings of the local partners. Capacity building takes time and projects too often fails to in reality acknowledge this. This project is no exception.

15.2. Local secondary interests may try to distort the environmental agenda of the project

The local government elections planned for 2003 could lead to changes in the municipal leadership that might temporary disrupt project implementation. The wide-ranging participation and strong community involvement will tend to mitigate the effects of secondary interests and political changes that may occur.

The issue about changes in the municipal leadership is pertinent and has been considered very carefully with relation to the analysis of the management structure of the project and procedures. The proposed guiding principle for allocation of responsibility between the main stakeholders of the project and the whole planning and decision making process in accordance with the roles allocated to the institutions in their mandate may mitigate possible negative effects. But the political reality with a rather dramatic political change must not be underestimated. And the so called "wide-ranging" participation and "strong community involvement" is typical donor document language and is not grounded in the Mozambican reality.

When the author in 1994 was on a consultancy job for UN Habitat in South Africa, the NGOs there were shocked when the Habitat representative, as a model for community participation, showed a video from the Habitat programme community programme in Zambia. The video showed how women participated in road construction and drainage channels, often with children on their backs. As expressed by a workshop participant, if this is what Habitat is bringing to us here in South Africa we had better develop our own ways of community involvement. What we see here is purely council-responsible work. Poor women have much to do already and should certainly not invest time and force in e.g. road construction without being paid.

16. Land

A terra e propriedade do Estado e não pode ser vendida ou, por qualquer outra forma, alienada, hipotecada ou penhorada. (Lei de Terra, Moçambique 2000).[11]

The land is maybe the most crucial issue when it comes to urbanisation, urban planning and land use control. This author was involved in a site and service programme in Maputo which succeeded to lay out approx. 8.000 plots during the 80s. The relative success of the programme is first and foremost linked to the fact that land has no value as such and in principle it is just to identify and demarcate land for later occupation. And this is what happened during the 80s. The sparse existing population was relatively easily integrated in the new settlement although naturally they lost productive land and thus assets. But in the interest of the many landless newcomers, land was demarcated on the outskirts of the city and today these areas are well functioning urban areas, albeit with rudimentary infrastructure services.

It is relatively widely held, among academics at least, that urban squatting in the sense of occupying land without any legal or quasi-legal authority is unusual and very much so on the Sub-Saharan continent. Most informal settlers will have some form of authorization from the "land-owner". Unauthorised subdivisions (but often authorised by traditional, customary or other influential local people) as described by Andreasen (1989) is quite normal in many African big cities, including Mozambique.

The importance of security of tenure has been for decades widely acknowledged as crucial when it comes to provide housing for the poor. Unfortunately however it appears that little progress is being made on the ground. Even the World Bank is increasingly aware of the need to tackle the land issue for the poor urban majority and states in their 2003 Development Report: "Empowerment through Access to assets: Security of tenure. Although slums reflects institutional failures in housing policy, housing finance, urban planning , public utilities and local governance, one of the most fundamental failures is the absence of tenure security ...

Secure tenure is part of a country's rights, ranging from legal titles and contracts to customary recognition of use rights.

Access to urban land- the city's scarce natural resource and most durable asset- is key to a city's economic, social and environmental sustainability. Institutions need to allow people to settle securely, so that they can envision a future for their families and their city, while allowing flexibility in land use. Informal, illegal quasi-legal neighbourhoods with seriously substandard living conditions, often generically called slums, are an obvious manifestation of inequitable access to physical and financial assets, to secure land tenure and to political representation."

When one of the most powerful institutions in the world can write like this it should give hope for a different future for the millions of landless and homeless people in the south.

The question is whether the Bank in reality wants to support processes that gradually will change the uneven distribution of land in all towns and cities in the south or if the writing is just academic polish in order to convince the world of the good will and intentions of the Bank. The urban poor need actions and not just words in smart reports. In the case of Mozambique it is evident that the land issue has become much more critical with the introduction of the free market. Land is now being sold with huge profits escaping taxation, as officially land has no value (with the exception of the concrete investments made on the land) and all monetary transactions are thus illegal. It seems as part of the influential Mozambican society has no interest whatsoever in changing this system as it now has been taking place for quite some years and little or nothing has been put in place to introduce property taxation.

In a study made in Angola which to some extent has a number of similarities to Mozambique due to their common colonial past it is observed that;

- There has never been a strategic view of urban development in Angola.
- There is no clear legislation on land tenure in urban areas.
- Land has been occupied in an ad-hoc fashion and formalisation of the process of land occupation is done through the local levels of the state administration. Details of the process vary across the city and local administration boundaries.
- The land and housing occupied by the urban poor, remains their principal form of capital accumulation. In the economy of Luanda, where hyper-inflation has occurred frequently and where there are few mechanisms for the poor to accumulate savings, the land and housing that people occupy provides a margin of security that can be converted into capital in a time of crisis. Under current legislation, the urban poor's right of occupation remains extremely precarious and, without the means to legally secure tenure, the poor remain vulnerable to expropriation of the land that they occupy.

This is exactly what can be said about Mozambique as well. Too many promises too often with very poor benefits and at times after quite an investment in time and labour. In the study by Allen (2002) on the erosion in Polana Canico in Maputo it is stated;

At the start, when people were concerned about their property and other interests, there was a strong participation and few upsets. However, as immediate problems were solved, residents became less interested and more reluctant to contribute their time without payment, so no lasting participatory structures were established. Initially it was assumed that the residents would carry out routine maintenance tasks on a voluntary basis, through block committees - a highly inequitable proposal in which the poor would have contributed their time, which would be lost from livelihood activities, to obtain

something residents of mere affluent areas receive for free. However, when residents became aware of the amount being spent on the project, they refused to undertake any more tasks without payment.

17. Rented rooms

Closely linked to the issue of land is rental housing. It is often underestimated and even forgotten that a relatively big portion of the urban poor lives as renters; not necessarily in walk-ups or council housing but in shacks in the informal settlements. In peri-urban Luanda, Angola it is estimated that 25 per cent rent their houses (or a single room) from the owner of the house. In Kenya the percentage is 65% where most renters live in houses built by speculators in the informal settlement specifically for rent. The same goes to a certain degree for South Africa. Figures for Mozambique are not available but to this author's knowledge, renting in the informal settlements is frequent and there is no reason to believe that it is lower that 25 % as in the case of Luanda.

The issue of owner-occupied versus renters is central when it comes to participative development. Tenants are among the most disadvantaged sections of the urban poor population. Often they have limited motivation to invest energy in settlement improvements, particularly when the dwelling is privately owned. All experience indicates a much lower interest from renters in maintaining the house and the immediate surroundings. This is the point in much of Turner's writing; the fact that the inhabitant has a clear interest in his home and maybe even has built it himself incrementally, makes an enormous difference in the way the processes of involvement and participation takes place.

18. Do we learn from practise in aid projects?

This article has critically assessed an urban environmental project in Mozambique and has argued for an increased collection of data on the most critical parts of environmental projects. The argument is based on the assumption that it appears that projects continue to repeat past failures in their design. This has a number of consequences which all are costly as it means continued adjustments of expected outputs and project approach and the contextualisation of activities. In general, projects are designed far too optimistically in terms of the capacity and potential resources of partner institututions, pubic, private and nongovernmental.

Generally there is a mismatch between donor expectations and the reality the project eventually will have to operate within. The hidden and at times quite obvious conflicts between numbers of interests within the domain of the designed projects are not *comme*

il faut in the donor community. Donors seem to only be able to accept a relatively glossy picture of their partners.

This paper has argued thus in favour of a more realistic approach, taking into consideration the institutions' capacities and hidden agendas in a more direct open way. Governmental institutions in Mozambique all have some built-in corruption, the NGOs have agendas that may contradict the goals of the donor; and individuals in influential positions often succeed in bending project activities to their own benefit (Hanlon, 2001). The civil society is extremely weak, disorganised and far from united. In planning education there is a debate on how to make use of the planning practise in the development of planning theory and thus later contribute to a better practise (Watson, 2002). Watson argues for the value of in-depth case study research that takes the form of fully contextualized stories of planning practise (Watson, 2002). The same could be useful in respect to development of projects, programmes and components in the developing world by the north. The evaluations commonly seen, that could bring about new concepts and ideas to overcome identified obstacles and barriers, generally take a positivistic approach, avoiding to the extent possible conflicting statements and conclusions. Of the few urban environmental institutions having a realistic view on the complicated nature of the developing world, the IIED in London with its continued production of high quality working papers and publications is outstanding, the rest are to a great extent just confirming the donor in their prescribed concepts.

19. Conclusion

The experiences from urban environmental projects in Mozambique over recent years indicates a number of obstacles and barriers for the fulfilment of a general objective aimed at improved the living conditions of the urban poor in the informal settlements in the Mozambican cities and towns.

1) The issue linked to local democracy and the involvement of the civil society still has a long way to go. Municipal Council and Municipalities were only (re)established in 1998 and the first local elections were only attended by 16% of the elective voters. The heavily influenced FRELIMO era is still apparent in society; thinking of democracy along Scandinavian lines is daydreaming! 45% of the population are living in urban areas where an estimated 30% speaks the official language Portuguese. Poverty is widespread and un/underemployment is high; the informal sector is the only survival possibility for most people.

2) Participation in urban environmental projects is limited as peoples' first priority is survival and the struggle for an income. The introduction of the market economy has not improved the livelihood of the urban poor. The expected increase in job opportunities in the private sector has not taken place and there is a growing mistrust in the government's ability to bring about the promised changes in favour of the poor. At the same time however changes for the few are obvious. Smart cars, expensive restaurants, prostitution and huge bungalows are nowadays frequent sights. High ranking government officials, business men, people related to international aid agencies and a growing drug market indicates that the major urban centres in Mozambique are gradually moving towards the stereotype of an African big city. This cocktail of wealth and poverty over time may develop into an explosive mix with unpredictable consequences - something unheard of in the 1980s when the ideology of socialism was on the agenda.

3) The issue of land and security of tenure. All land belongs formally to the state and as such has no market value, except for the investments and improvements made. However land is now being marketed and is in reality a commodity like in any capitalist state. This has dramatic consequences for the settlement planning for poor people as land simply is not available at affordable prices. When poor people are competing for well located land the outcome is given, they will lose and a gradual push to the urban periphery is already taking place.

4) Institutions within the social housing sector are weak and without any political influence leaving the urban poor to them selves. Viewed in this light participatory approaches become anachronisms. On the other hand one may argue that community participation is high as most informal settlements are built, maintained and run by the residents themselves with hardly any assistance from governmental institutions. Based on this statement, the prospects for successful interventions in the informal areas in Mozambican cities and towns are bright, the challenge being to convince the poor urban dwellers of the good intentions (if any) of governmental agencies. The poor informal settlers in Mozambican urban areas have heard enough; only concrete intervention counts now.

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Notes

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[1] Danida is the agency responsible for Danish overseas assistance in developing countries.

[2] Paul Jenkins a British planner who worked for 12 years in Mozambique with urban planning and housing. He has been writing extensively in international journals on housing, planning and land issues with cases from Mozambique and mostly on the capital city Maputo. His work documents the seemingly reluctance by Mozambican politicians to effectively regulate the urbanisation in favour of the urban poor as an interest in being able to capitalize and pocket the enormous increase in land values that has taken place since the introduction of the free market in Mozambique.

[3] This quotation is from a Debriefing Note on Information System for Participatory Environmental Management. Danida 2003. This author is finding it relatively rare that it is acknowledged in official project documents that the extreme low wages in the public sector is a serious problem for progress. In the case of Mozambique technicians receives approx. 75USD a month while a employee holding a BSc. Receives approx. 250USD a month. Bearing in mind the cost of living in Mozambique it is not possible to sustain a family on such an income and thus people necessarily seek other sources. Unfortunately this situation at times lead to corruption not least when it comes to employees in the cadastre, urban planning or departments otherwise linked to construction and urbanisation. „Selling" of building permits, plots etc. is quite normal and in general casting a light of mistrust on the governmental officers.

[4] All planning instruments must be available for the public during a certain time which must be disseminated through relevant social channels during which the general public may claim, observe

propose and ask for clarification. And it continues; During the elaboration of the plan at the local level the responsible entity shall convoke the public for discussions of the state of the art of the planning process including audiences with the local authorities and traditional authorities and exhibit the documents in appropriate sites accessible for all parties and acknowledge the eventual recommendations and observations formulated.

[5] The Maxaqyuene project succeeded to demonstrate how a modest state contribution could be multiplied by local participation and initiative. The Dinamizing Groups and the FRELIMO representatives organised the residents and over a period of two years the upgrading of an area housing approximately 35.000 was completed. The impressive result with the establishment of block committees of 50 families responsible for plot division and housing removals to give way for roads and social infrastructure. A participatory according to the records of over 700 residents decided to assist one another to move homes and it was decided that no indemnity would be paid. Something which today would be impossible. Today many of the reserves established during the upgrading exercise has disappeared and in general Maxaquene today appears as any informal settlement with extremely high densities. An in-depth study of Maxaqune now 25 years after would offer valuable information on the processes taking place in such areas.

[6] It did take some years however for the concept to be fully accepted by the FRELIMO leadership as it was somehow considered to be "not good enough for the people" who naturally had different expectations, very much spurred by FRELIMO. The same happened when apartheid fell and the ANC government came into power housing soon became a crucial issue. The RDP suggested millions of houses built but to many South African's in a sub-standard quality. A discussion that took years and as a matter of fact is still ongoing. The site & service concept it can be argued in the case of South Africa has never really been accepted. "We want houses not just toilets"as it was claimed by informal settlers in East London when offered wet cores on serviced land.

[7] Ilha de Mozambique is first stronghold established by the Portuguese settlers in the 16 century. The town is on the UNESCO World Heritage list and many attempts to rehabilitate the traditional Swahili arab architecture has been launched over the years since Mozambique gained independence, but relatively with limited success. The reasons for this are manifold but the fact that the town is sharply divided with the majority living in the low laying area prone to frequent floods and the formal old capital city although partly in ruins still socially where the influential people are to be found.

[8] Flyvbjerg Bent: Power and Rationality; Democracy in Practise.

[9] Basic service provision for the urban poor; the experience of the Development Workshop in Angola.

[10] The demand driven approach means in the terminology of Danida that the recipient institution in this case the municipalities will identify their needs and priorities based on participatory and consultative grounds. Experience has shown that this is very complicated and what is participatory and consultative to the donor is maybe something else to the partner.

[11] All land belongs to the state and cannot be sold under any circumstances.

PARTICIPATION – A ROAD LEADING TO DEMOCRACY?

Elisabeth Riber Christensen*

Abstract

This presentation discusses the development of a new paradigm for international development assistance over the last ten years. In the new paradigm the donors attach more importance to the character of local governance and reform commitment to reduce poverty than to the level of poverty in the recipient country per se. Introduction of democracy, good governance and respect for human rights are increasingly promoted as a prima facie for sustainable development. Within Danish development assistance, this trend comes to the forefront in the government proposal for a new Danish Foreign policy issued on June 6th, 2003. Over the years, the strategy for technical assistance to promote good governance has changed from a technocratic concept to a more holistic concept entering the political sphere. Participation strategies fit into the new framework inasmuch as the strategies encourage a change of mind and behaviour whereby a population may become active citizens demanding influence on their own development. The presentation argues that a debate on the state of art of participation strategies today needs to address the new framework of development assistance and explore the potentials of the participation strategies in the development.

Keywords: public participation strategies, effective government, democratisation, good governance and human rights.

1. Introduction

Today, the concept of sustainable development is becoming intimately linked to introduction of democracy in the developing countries. In development assistance, the encouragement of participation and local self-reliance is seen to be the way of building institutional capacity for democracy.

In theory, participation strategies address the relationship between the state and the population. Public participation strategies create space in which collaboration between the government and the citizens can be developed and in which alternative arguments can be voiced. These arenas are by virtue political in nature and different participation strategies may be chosen to match the desired extent of public influence on the decision-making processes. Participation strategies cover different ranges of local influence on

the decision making process from information sharing to local management[1]. The vision of the democratic content of the political regime will determine which strategy to choose.

Public participation has been applied in development assistance to foster local self-reliance and empowerment of the previously excluded. Women and the poor have been assisted by these strategies to get access to the mainstream of development and influence on the development affecting their lives. The participatory democracy presupposes an organised population having the ability and the rights to express their demands and the participation strategies thus fit in very well with the new framework for development assistance.

It is important to reflect on the democratic agenda for the development and the methods to apply. We do not normally question the benefits of a democratic political regime but for the purpose of providing legitimate development assistance all parties need to discuss the possibilities for development assistance within this sphere of operation.

2. Towards a New Paradigm for Development Assistance

The background for the development of the new paradigm for development assistance is to be found in the trend of experiences[2] of the international financial institutions (IFIs) as well as more recent aspects of global politics.

During the last decade the policy of aid allocation of the IFIs has been based on policy performance and reform commitment to reduce poverty rather than solely on entitlements based on the "human needs" and the level of poverty of the developing countries. The introduction of the concept of governance in the development agenda reflected growing concerns of the IFI over the effectiveness of the development assistance, especially the endemic corruption[3].

In July 2001, the Genoa Summit made explicit the G8's understanding of the political dimensions of the "strategic approach to poverty reduction"[4]. The meeting recognised the linkages between democracy and good governance: "Open, democratic and accountable systems of governance, based on respect for human rights and the rule of law, are preconditions for sustainable development and robust growth"[5].

More recently, since the terror attack on USA in September 2001, the main topic on the international political agenda has been the fight against terrorism. Terror threats against the western countries and the USA in particular have been identified to come from weakly founded nation states in the South. These countries are seen as potential hosts of terrorists who are able to radicalise the local population and carry out terrorist activities targeted against USA and Europe.

Seen in this light the development assistance is from now on increasingly becoming an instrument among others in the foreign policy of the major international donors. The objectives of the development assistance are to create political change and to avoid that problems develop into open conflicts and terrorism. Poverty will be among the indicators of the potential threat from a country as well as the character of the political regime and the respect for the human rights. The technical assistance will tend to focus on creation of democratic political regimes and participation strategies will play a central role in the training of citizens for their role in the new democracies.

3. Participation Strategy to Develop Good Governance

By the late 1980s, the main objective of technical assistance by the IFIs changed from a reduction of the state, to an improvement of the state in the developing countries. Since then, the strategy of technical assistance to promote local governance has developed from a technocratic concept to a more holistic concept entering the political sphere.

Initially, the IFIs focused on the fundamental institutional weaknesses of the government system in the developing countries combined with inappropriate policies and un-enforced legal frameworks. The medicine prescribed to cure the governance problems consisted of judicial reform, legislative strengthening and state modernisation.

The wording "good governance", increasingly applied by donor countries, introduced a normative dimension addressing the quality of governance but the strategy was still based on a technocratic concept. The understanding of governance tried to balance on a sense of political neutrality, as it portrayed development without politics and was concerned with the effectiveness of the state rather than the equity of the economic system and the legitimacy of the power structure.

Today, a new concept of good governance may slowly be emerging in the lending policy of the international financial institutions. The challenge is to move from claims about the importance of institutions to more systematic analyses of institutional quality and their implications for various aspects of well-being, such as access of the poor to essential services and their degree of empowerment.

A good governance system puts further requirements on the process of decision-making and public policy formulation. It extends beyond the capacity of the public sector to the rules that create a legitimate, effective and efficient framework for the conduct of public policy. It implies managing public affairs in a transparent, accountable, participatory and equitable manner. It entails not only the soundness of economic management but also the overall quality of the political system and ultimately the nature of the political regime.

The quality of democratic institutions (capacity, autonomy, credibility and legitimacy) is a critical determinant of their effectiveness. Effective democratic institutions, rather than their mere formal existence are the key. The quality of good governance is ultimately attributed to addressing the issues of power, politics and democracy. A culture of good or poor governance reflects the history of the society and a culture of governance from one country cannot as such be transferred to another country.

Participation strategies are usually distinguished by their main objective: a means to obtain project effectiveness or a goal in itself. Where participation is a goal in itself it has a political dimension whereby the processes will eventually change the co-operation, the institutions or the political issues. Development assistance may assist in developing the institutions and mobilise the population but altogether the political culture is dependent upon the strength and respective recognition of the social actors.

If donors cannot transfer a political culture they may provide power and resources to create space for local empowerment. This space might form the locus of opposition to forces which are deemed to be exploitative and initiate democratic processes by use of participation strategies.

Participation strategies are based on the belief that development should be concerned with people and will involve a changed state of mind.[6] In this strategy, people are seen and trained to be subjects of their own development in a move to take government back to the people organised in small local institutions. Increased calls for participation have demanded that attention be given to those who have been excluded and to their interpretations of the world which have also been ignored or have remained invisible e.g. women and the urban and rural poor as the traditional objects of development.

The stress on appropriateness; on decentralisation; on self-reliance; on the participation of the public as active citizens; on sustainability; and on building up local institutions, all feed into an attack on oppressive centralised government. In the new framework for development assistance, participation strategies may fill out the role of preparing the population for their role as active citizens governed by democratic institutions.

4. Priorities in Danish Foreign Policy 2003

The new framework for development assistance is clearly visible in the proposal for the Danish Foreign Policy issued by the Danish government on June 6th, 2003 as the following quotes will show[7]: "International terrorism is a threat to our peace and security, and can strike any country and any population group- including Denmark and the Danes ..." (p.13)

"Violations of human rights, lack of democratisation and poor governance typically hit the poor hardest and simultaneously breed instability and political extremism ...

Development assistance must play a greater role in eradicating the seeds of radicalism and extremism that can lead to religious intolerance and terrorism." (p. 15)

"Denmark,s development assistance must be targeted at investments in people. In relation to poor countries, Denmark must work harder to mobilise the human ressource potential that is the driving force behind change in any society. Personal security as well as economic and political freedom are prerequisites for a self-sustainable development process that fosters stability and progress." (p. 18)

The quotes demonstrate how security policy is an increasingly important objective of the Danish development assistance. Democratic political regimes in the development countries upheld by an active and well educated population, firmly embedded in a democratic political culture, are seen to be the bulwark against future terrorism. Central to the mobilisation of the human forces for change is the concept of participation.

It will be interesting to follow the debate on the Danish development assistance in response to the government position paper. The emphasis on democracy and good governance in the new framework for development assistance raises questions about the extent to which recipient states have sufficient space to articulate their own development strategies and political development models. However, in this discussion we can also reflect on the present level of participation in Denmark in the preparation of the revised strategy for the development assistance.

It is known that a new five year plan for the Danish development assistance is in the pipeline but so far this process has involved very little public participation in Denmark.

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Notes

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1 See e.g. Samuel Paul, Community Participation in Development Projects, The World Bank Experience, World Bank Discussion Papers, 1987.

[2] The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the regional banks.

[3] Carlos Santiso: Governance Conditionality and the Reform of Multilateral Development Finance: The role of the Group of Eight, G8 Governance, Number 7, p.8f, 2002.

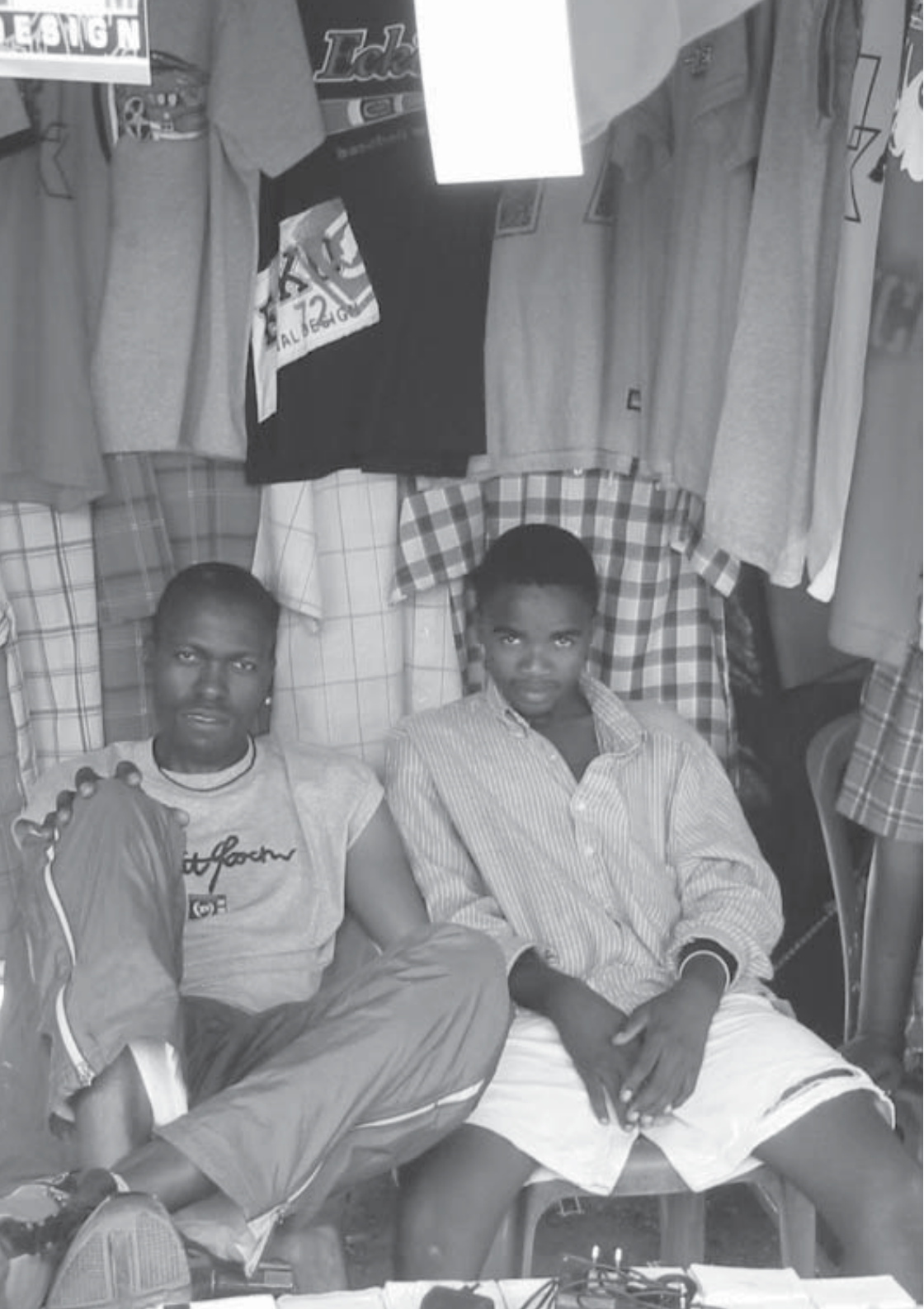
[4] The Group of 8 are the major stakeholders of the IFI and they have assumed a leadership role in steering the debates on the reform of the international financial system and improving the quality and effectiveness of aid.

[5] G8 Final Communiquè, 2001:6, in C. Santiso, 2002 p. 8.

[6] David Marsden, "What is community Participation" in Richard C. Crook and Alf Morten Jerve (ed.):Government and Participation: Institutional Development, Decentralisation and Democracy in the Third World, Bergen 1991 P.

[7] All quotes are taken from: A Changing World, The Goverment,s Vision for New Priorities in Denmarks Foreign Policy, June 6, 2003.


Coca-Cola



SOCIAL SHAPING OF A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATION'S ACTIVITIES

The Case of Meadowlands Environmental Group, South Africa

Søsser Brodersen [*], Christian Eghoff [**], Michael Søgaard Jørgensen [***]

1. Introduction

This paper analyses citizens' efforts to influence the environmental conditions in their local community based on a case study with a community-based organisation (CBO) in a South African township. The main basis for the paper is the master thesis of Eghoff, C., S. Rasmussen & T. Gildberg-Hansen, 2002.

In relation to the concept of 'participation' we see such efforts of citizens as participation in the shaping of the local environment in the township. This means that we are not only focusing on the participation in well-defined projects, hearings etc., but also on the shaping of what is seen as problems and what is seen as solutions in relation to the environmental conditions. We are of course also interested in formal procedures for participation, but see such procedures (or lack hereof) just as one of the structures involved in the shaping of the efforts of the citizens.

The aim of the paper is: To show how this type of participation can be analysed by a social construction approach with focus on social-technical processes involving actors and their interpretation of and practice in relation to the environmental problem and solutions

To discuss the outcome of this type of processes within the concept of 'capacity development in environment' (CDE)

The case study is from a township in Soweto, South Africa. The focus is primarily on two projects carried out by a CBO by the name of Meadowlands Environmental Group (MEG). The primary concern of the first project is mitigation of the impact of dust from deposit areas for mining waste situated close to the Meadowlands community, a residential area of roughly 150.000 residents. The second project concerns environmental education in schools in the form of workshops with special focus on waste management as an attempt to improve the waste management in the township.

The first part of the paper presents the theoretical and methodological approach of the paper, the second part presents and analyses the two cases and the final part discuss the capacity building, during and after the projects.

2. Theoretical and methodological approach

2.1. Case study and action research

The research analysed in the paper was carried out as a case study combined with an action research approach as part of a master thesis project. The project included three persons' field study in five month and one person on one week field study. The case study approach enables the researchers to involve, listen to, observe and understand people in their own terms and in their world. According to Yin (1984:23) a case study is "[A]n empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used."

The purpose of the case study was not only to generate knowledge, but also to co-operate with the CBO about the development of their capacity. Both purposes call upon the action research approach as feasible, since the researchers here work in close co-operation with actors about a subject a problem, while at the same time studying the actors. An important balance in action research as well as in case study research is the balance between proximity and distance. In the case study approach, the researcher has to have knowledge of the social perceptions of the phenomenon under investigation, but without becoming a 'native' – (s)he has to be able to withdraw and recount the 'field' (Launsø & Rieper, 1995:31). During the course of an action research project the relationship between researcher and the actors will change between proximity and distance. The researcher will need periods of distance to analyse the information gathered, whereas there will be more proximity in the periods when the understanding of the subject is enhanced and when information is shared with the actors and feedback given. It is in the tension between the researcher and the actors that the germ of a rewarding action oriented research project lies (Launsø & Rieper, 1995:37).

2.2. Social construction of technology approach

The social construction approach applied in the analyses is called the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) approach. The approach has focus on actors in relation to a technology, the shaping of the actors' room for action and alliance making and the choices made during the interaction in terms of 'routes taken' and routes not-taken'. By 'routes taken' and routes not-taken' are meant the understanding of problems and solutions, which either gain support or are seen as unfeasible. The illusive nature of the boundary between phenomenon and context mentioned in the description of a case study fits well with the social construction approach as the theoretical approach for the analyses in the case study, because this approach does not make a distinction between phenomenon and context.

In the social construction approach 'technology' is understood as a combination of both physical and social elements. Bijker et al (1987) describe technology as follows:

"First, there is the level of **physical objects** or **artefacts**, for example bicycles, lamps or Bakelite. Second, 'technology' may refer to **activities** or **processes**, such as steel making or moulding. Third, 'technology' can refer to what people **know** as well as they **do**; an example is the know-how that goes into designing a bicycle or operating an ultrasound machine device in the obstetrics clinic. In practice technologies ... cover all three aspects, and often it is not sensible to separate them further" (Bijker et al. 1987:4)

The SCOT approach was chosen because it focuses on the shaping of an artefact through the interaction between the meanings different actors attribute to the artefact. We see interaction among actors around environmental conditions as a parallel shaping of problems and solutions, which involves physical objects like a waste dump, activities and processes like the handling of the waste dump, knowledge about the sources and the effects of waste dump, and finally the practice of the actors in relation to the waste dump.

As an approach for describing meaning we use the Local Theory of Environment approach, which emphasises four aspects of meaning in relation to environmental problems and solutions (Forman and Jørgensen, 2001):

The element of experience: What do the actor group perceive and experience as problematic

The theoretical-analytical element: What is considered to be the causal relations behind the problems perceived

The legal-moral element: What is considered as a legal or morally justified claim to make in relation to environmental conditions

The element of action: What problems are possible to solve, and what course of action the actor group perceives as relevant to solve the problems.

Analyses based on the SCOT approach are built up around three methodological and analytical phases. In the first phase, socio-technical change is deconstructed analytically by means of showing what meaning different social groups place on the artefact under study. The focus is on the problems they see in relation to the artefact, and the solutions they pursue in order to solve these problems. Key terms in the first phase are the identification of such *Relevant Social Groups* and the *Interpretative Flexibility* among the different meanings (which means whether they are in contradiction to each other or are combined). In the second phase, the analyst looks at what mechanisms that are in effect inside the groups when the artefact obtains its meaning, how it is *Stabilised* within the

group, and how different groups use various mechanisms to obtain *Closure* and thereby limit the number of interpretations of the artefact. The third stage is the explanation stage, where the relevant terms are *Technological Frame*, describing the link between relevant social groups and artefacts, and *Inclusion* in technological frames, which is how groups try to recruit and include other groups to their technological frame. A technological frame includes cultural values, devices, material networks and systems. The technological frame describes how a group of actors see and use the technology. The terms to help explain power relations among the actors are *Socio-technical Ensemble* (the technological frame and the actors connected to it) and *Obduracy* of the technological frame, which means whether it is possible to change the technological frame. Figure 1 gives an overview of the three phases and their terms.

Table 1: Phases and terms in the SCOT methodology (Expansion of Hansen, 1997:23).

Phase	Terms
Sociological Deconstruction	Relevant Social Group Interpretative Flexibility
Social Construction	Stabilisation, Closure
Explanation and Generalisation	Technological Frame Inclusion Socio-technical Ensemble Obduracy & Power relations

SCOT uses an evolutionary model in the description of the development path of an artefact. What is important is the process of variation, selection, and stabilisation in three layers: In relation to the different problems posed by artefacts, the solutions proposed by the social groups, and the resulting artefact. An artefact is always changing character, and each time a problem or a solution is perceived by a relevant social group, the artefact changes meaning, whether the solution is implemented or not (Pinch & Bijker, 1987:28-30 & Bijker, 1995:51-52).

What is important about the social construction approach is that the socio-technical changes are not seen as an explanation in itself. This implies that these changes have to

be explained: why and how certain understandings of a problem and a solution became the dominating one(s). A starting point for Bijker for discussing power in relation to technological development is Giddens' definition of power as "the transformative capacity to harness the agency of others to comply with one's ends." (Bijker, 1995:262). In this definition, power is a relational concept; it is exercised in specific circumstances, and cannot be possessed. Like technological frames, power is located between actors, it is dynamic and it has to be reproduced all the time. Bijker (1995:262) draws a parallel between the context-dependent interactionist meaning of both artefacts and power.

In order to overcome the dichotomy between actor and structure, Bijker (1995:263) introduces the terms *Semiotic power* and *Micropolitics of power*. Semiotic power is the apparent order of taken-for-granted categories of existence as they are fixed and represented in technological frames. Micropolitics of power are how a variety of practices transforms and structures the actions of actors. The two types of power are linked in the way that semiotic power influences the micropolitics structures, while micropolitics in turn result in a particular semiotic structure.

Artefacts can exert power through their function as an *exemplary artefact*, where the relevant social groups have invested so much in the artefact through building up a technological frame around it that its meaning has become quite fixed or obdurate. The artefact can no longer be changed easily, because it is part of a fixed network of practices, theories, and social institutions. This means that the technological frame has obtained obduracy. The socio-technical ensemble becomes fixed because the artefact is fixed by the strong semiotic power of the technological frame. In other words, the artefact determines social development. Hansen (1997:50-51) points out that a technological frame does not only form a semiotic power structure by fixing the meaning of an artefact, but also by fixing relations between relevant social groups.

"The technological frame represents a (more or less accepted) *socio-technical contract* that delegates identity and roles, responsibility and competence, opportunities and resources, etc. to the relevant social groups in the socio-technical ensemble. However, the relevant social groups will never fully accept their place in the network, and potentially they will reject their position herein. Constructivist studies should therefore study both the exercise of power in the form of fixing of the meaning of artefacts as well as the reasons for the actors accepting or being forced to accept a given technology." (Hansen, 1997:51)

Hansen (1995:7) points out that identification of context-transcending patterns and continuities are important in order to develop a proactive perspective. Hansen (1997:48-49) recommends a reinterpretation of the concept of technological frame to help put

focus on patterns of power, dominance and deep-seated political agendas, which SCOT has been criticised for lacking. He recommends looking at the construction process as *the simultaneous construction of artefacts, relevant social groups, negotiation rules and discourses.*

The SCOT approach together with the Local Theory of Environment have been used as the way of identifying and analysing the shaping of different meanings and practices of the actors over time in each of the two cases. For example by describing the shaping of the different meanings and practices of different actors in relation to a mine waste dump.

3. Capacity building in environment

In our focus on the outcome of interaction around environmental conditions, we are inspired by the concept 'capacity development in environment', which by OECD is given the abbreviation CDE (OECD, 1995), and by research on the corporate competence building in relation to environment (Forman and Jørgensen, 2001).

A definition of capacity development in relation to environmental conditions often used is the following from OECD:

"Capacity in the environment represents the ability of individuals, groups, organisations and institutions in a given context to address environmental issues as part of a range of efforts to achieve sustainable development. The term *capacity development in environment (CDE)* describes the process by which capacity in environment and appropriate institutional structures is enhanced." (OECD, 1995:6).

When we here speak about capacity development we don't especially focus on capacity development enhanced with the assistance of donors, but on all forms of capacity development.

Where OECD speaks more generally about the ability to address environmental issues we see the capacity or the competence as abilities not only to address environmental issues, but also to work with the environmental issues and adapt to a more environmentally sustainable practice (Forman and Jørgensen, 2001).

Since it also is our aim to analyse the role of CBO's in capacity development we present our understanding of a CBO and the understanding of organisational capacity, which we see as different from what was discussed above (which we would call the societal capacity to address environmental issues). A definition of a CBO can be based on the definition of NGOs by the Development Resources Centre (1994) (Quoted in Motala and Husy (2001)):

"NGOs are independent, self-governing, voluntary, non-profit distributing organisations operating not for commercial purposes but in the public interest for the promotion of social well-being and development, religion, charity, education, research, human and environmental rights."

This definition assumes it is possible to work 'in the public interest', and that such a well-defined interest should exist. We see CBOs as grassroots' or people's organisations with the aim of promoting their interests (Mitlin, 1993, referred in Eghoff et al. 2001:44), why they will often only voice the interests of sections of the community. We see CBOs as organisations originating from a community (geographically or thematically defined) and define a CBO like this: „A Community-based organisation is a consciously co-ordinated social unit with some form of formalised membership, which functions on a relatively continuous basis to promote interests that are voiced within a specific heterogeneous community, defined by geography or common concerns" (Eghoff et al, 2002:43)). It is important to keep in mind that community organisations often are narrow in their focus and have a weak local resource base, which might prevent them from being able to offer a wide range of services (Gibb & Adhikary, 2000, referred in Eghoff et al. 2001:44)

We see capacity building in an organisation, a community or a society from three angles (as Gubbels and Koss (2000:3)): 1) as a **means** to strengthen an organisation's ability to carry out specific activities; 2) as a **process** whereby an organisation is enabled to continually reflect and adopt its purpose in response to change, and to connect the evolving purpose and vision parallel to a development of structure and activities; and 3) as an **end** with the goal of strengthening an organisation's ability to survive, become self-sustaining and fulfil its purpose.

4. The shaping of participation around a mine dump

The following paragraphs analyse the shaping of the two activities, which MEG has undertaken and the impact on the capacity building in the organisation and the community: 1) the work in relation to dust from the nearby mine dumps and 2) the work with waste management in the township.

There are several interesting points arising from these two cases in terms of the mechanisms shaping the participation processes. Various actors have different practices in relation to the mine dump and to the waste management in the township at various points and have at the same time influence on other actors' practice by trying to make these actors accept another practice. It will be shown how different ways of trying to gain influence on other actors' practice demands qualitatively different types of knowledge and deliberate coalition-building. The course of action is constantly changing

depending on the definition of the problem and the inclusion and/or exclusion of actors. It is also shown how the impact of the cases on the capacity to deal with environmental issues is a function of how the problems are defined, and the resulting participatory process.

4.1. Mine dump: resource and/or nuisance

MEG was established in 1996 at a time, when concerns about nuisance and health problems from dust from a mine dump the size of 70 football fields was being voiced in the community. The mining company had not dealt with the problem to an extent that satisfied the community. The complaints from the residents had resulted in monitoring stations being put in place to measure the amount of dust blowing from the dump. Through the intervention of the Minister of Minerals a forum was created with the aim of involving the community in the initiatives of the mining company to deal with the dust problem. Although some attempts were subsequently made in order to mitigate the dust problem by irrigating the mine dump and planting grass on the sides, these proved to be non-sustainable solutions, because people walked on the dump and thereby destroyed the vegetation.

When a larger NGO, Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM), held a workshop on waste management in Meadowlands in 1996 the group of about 20 participants decided that the mine dust was a bigger problem and that this problem needed to be addressed, before they could work on issues of waste management. MEG was created out of this workshop, and the initial MEG members saw the mine issue as something that could make their name known, so that future projects would be easier to carry out. MEG tried to get the ear of the mining company and claimed that the waste is a nuisance to people, because it goes in their homes, education has to be cancelled temporarily at a school close to the dump, and cars have to turn their headlights on in the daytime. MEG claimed that the community representatives present in the community involvement forum had no mandate.

In stead of participating in the forum created by the mining company, MEG created their own forum with the aim of dealing with immediate community needs. MEG wanted to try to force the mining company to accept that the measurements of dust showed levels high above the permissible according to Department of Environment guidelines. However the mining company refused to see the dust problem as anything other than a nuisance, they did not recognise any health risk, although this was claimed by doctors and nurses in the area. The emergence of MEG result in another type of power struggles in the local community, because some of the ANC activists see MEG as a threat and

tried to stop the work of MEG. Through the intervention of a local councillor the ANC activists were informed that MEG was only working on environmental issues and not trying to gain a platform of local power, so the ANC activists stopped trying to counteract the work of MEG.

In order to get the attention of the mining company MEG planned a demonstration. The demonstration was never held, but because of the threat of bad publicity the mining company accepted to participate in meetings with the community, where the local authorities acted as facilitators. However the mining company claimed their right to keep the mine dump as a backup deposit site, so they were not willing to bear the costs of any permanent solution. A new strategy was tried by MEG by writing a letter of complaint to the local authorities in charge, stressing their constitutional right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being. The letter did not result in any action, so a meeting was convened with participation of representatives from national, provincial and local government, as well as air pollution researchers, GEM, and a new actor, the Legal Resource Centre invited by GEM on behalf of MEG. LRC is a legal advisory NGO.

LRC held the view that it does not matter if the dust causes a nuisance, or if it is a health problem, either way the mining company is breaking the law. The meeting received broad coverage in the press. LRC threatened to take the mining company to court on behalf of the community. This made the mining company agree to hire a company to plant grass on the mine dump in order to prevent the dust from being blown away. However although this solution was agreeable to all parties involved so far, a new problem cropped up in terms of people using the dump as a short-cut and a playing area, making the planting of grass difficult. Also, there was theft of the equipment used to irrigate the new grass-seedlings. Eventually the rehabilitation was carried through, but MEG decided not to follow the process in the monitoring committee that was set up and left this job to LRC.

A parliamentary committee visited Meadowlands and the problem was taken up in parliament. LRC gathered material to sue a number of mining companies collectively. The interviews in the case study showed different opinions about whether the rehabilitation was falling apart and whether it has given less mine dust in the township.

4.2. Analysing the mine dump case

The previous description has shown several different practices in relation to the mine dump. We call the different practices different technological frames in order to distinguish between practice as something materialised and different from an actor's understanding or thinking.

We have identified seven different technological frames coming into play during the process. They come into play around the specific issue at hand – the mine dump – but contain also elements of the surrounding society as well as elements specific to the mine dump. The seven frames are: The Resource Frame, The Nuisance Frame, The Health Frame, The Legal Frame, The Theft Frame, The Public Space Frame, The Nature Frame.

4.2.1. The Resource Frame

For the stakeholders included in this frame the mine dump is first and foremost a resource, which is owned and managed by the owner exclusively. The dump is a resource in two respects: it can be used to deposit more tailings material (and is thereby a resource in terms of storage space) and it can at a later point in time be re-mined, whereby the dust is reprocessed to extract remaining gold by using new, more efficient techniques.

This frame has elements of tradition, as it is guided by the usual practice of the mining company and the mining sector in general, whereby the operations of the mine are left to the management of the authorities and the surrounding communities, and environmental issues are not prioritised very highly. The mining company is highly included in this frame, but also the ministry for mining and some local authority officials are to some extent included in this frame by accepting this interpretation of the mine dump.

4.2.2. The Nuisance Frame

The first complaints, related to the mine dump, concerned the nuisance from dust from the mine dump. The people from Meadowlands who make the complaints see dust from the mine dump as a nuisance in their everyday life and as a negative psychological effect. They are affected by the dust in various ways, which are felt directly when the wind blows, such as the dust going into their laundry and their houses, affecting electrical equipment, and interrupting educational activities in a nearby school. Apart from the direct effect of the dust the mine dump is not seen as a problem. The way people go about solving the problem is to complain about it to the local authorities. The residents living close to the mine are all included in this frame to some extent. The mining company also accepts to some extent the nuisance problem and monitoring stations are set up. However, the mining company also argues that they will not accept any measures that prevent them from a later re-mining of the waste dump. They accept to irrigate the mine dump and plant grass on the slopes, but after some time the grass is covered by dust. This is probably due to a combination of the grass not really helping and the fact that some people see the mine dump as a place they have to pass in order to get to the other side and some children see the mine dump as a place to play.

4.2.3. The Health Frame

Stakeholders included in this frame see the mine dump as not only a nuisance but also as causing health problems, e.g. respiratory diseases and skin irritation from the dust, and drainage water from the dump with low pH causing a danger to playing children. Radioactivity from the dump (in the form of radon) is also seen as a problem to people and wildlife in the area.

One problem-solving strategy is to enter into dialogue with the owners of the mine dump and to network inside and outside the community to involve more stakeholders in a process of coalition-building for a solution to the problems caused by the dump. A linked strategy is measurements of dust deposition and the pH and chemical composition of the drainage water in order to prove the problems scientifically.

MEG and environmental health officers and air pollution researchers are highly included in this frame. Some Meadowlands residents are also included. However these actors do not manage to convince the mining company by these more scientific arguments that the company have to do something more about the mine dump.

4.2.4. The Legal Frame

For stakeholders included in this frame problems related to the mine dump is a matter of social and legal justice. Their goal is to ensure the implementation of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, especially section 24 ensuring the right to a clean and healthy environment. The stakeholders included in this frame see all problems caused by the mine dump as pertaining to the quality of people's lives and as social discrimination or environmental injustice, and the dump is a problem because the owners are breaking the law. A key problem-solving strategy is to engage in legal battles to obtain justice for the disadvantaged groups in society.

The primary constituent of this frame is the Legal Resource Center, but MEG is also supporting this practice, as they see it as an opportunity for making the mining company accept that they have to do something more about the nuisance and the health problems. It can be discussed whether the legal frame actually is a separate frame or it rather is a micro-political strategy to recruit the mining company to the nuisance and health frames and make the mining company accept that they have to do more about the nuisance and the health problem.

4.2.5. The Theft Frame

The solution to the nuisance and the health problem by refurbishing the plantation by planting new grass and installing new irrigating equipment is destabilised by the theft of

some of this equipment. Characteristic for the people included in this frame is that they see the equipment for the rehabilitation of mine dump as a source of personal profit; they steal equipment and materials used to prevent the spreading of dust from the dump. The frame is developed along the way as a result of the solutions to some of the problems. Inclusion in this frame means that material deprivation or opposition to the previous apartheid government makes the actors destroy the rehabilitation. Elements of this frame are theft and violent attacks on persons.

4.2.6. The Public Space Frame

The public space frame is solely constituted by the practice of people using the dump as public space, either by playing on the dump, by using it for sports, by walking across it in order to get to the other side, or by dumping waste on it. To them it is the openness and accessibility that means that the dump is useful or it is the constraints of the waste dump to free passage to other communities which make them walk on the mine dump. As described this practice to some extent also destabilises the solution introduced within the Nuisance and Health Frames.

4.2.7. The Nature Frame

Lack of green spaces and the lack of wildlife on the dump are put forward by people included in this frame. They see the problem as belonging to the mining company, but there is no specific strategy linked to forwarding this problem. The dump is also seen as a public space, but not only in terms of openness and accessibility as in the public space frame – it is seen as a resource in terms of its potential value as nature.

5. Analysis of the social shaping of the practices

The case shows different mechanisms, which are used when recruiting to technological frames and mechanisms, which might destabilise frames:

- Manipulating meeting minutes.
- Including weak actors in a coalition.
- Questioning legitimacy of involved actors.
- Threatening economic survival of company.
- Not including or not able to impact present practice of other actors General socio-economic conditions.

The fact that people steal from the dump or use it as a shortcut to get to the other side shows that local conditions have to be taken into consideration, when considering a

solution, in order to make it stable by obtaining support from other stakeholders. The need for short cuts might have been included in the rehabilitation by establishing certain routes across the mine dump. The theft is so deeply a part of the poor social and economic conditions that it might be difficult to see how the problems can be solved, since guards surveying the equipment did not stop the theft. This shows that it is not always possible to create local consensus about the solution to a single problem due to socio-economic conditions, which thereby turns out to be necessary to include in a technological frame in order to stabilise it.

6. The shaping of participation around waste management

After the rehabilitation of the mine dump was decided, MEG wanted to continue their work in the township by addressing the poor waste management with waste being dumped at different places inside and outside the area. This topic was the initial interest behind the forming of MEG. MEG sent a proposal for a waste education project to Danced. A NGO (GEM) should run a mentoring scheme to build capacity in MEG based on MEG workshops in local schools supplemented by attending organisational focused workshops and seminars in this NGO. MEG saw the dumping of waste a result of lack of proper service from the waste handling company and lack of awareness towards environmental problems among the citizens in the township. The project they proposed focused solely on the citizen awareness, as they argue that one has to start by teaching the children proper habits. They say it is too late to educate the adults, but the other hand they also expect the children to have an impact on the practice of their parents.

When they got the funding they carried out the project with workshops in nine schools, focussing on how to reduce, reuse and recycle waste. The project ended with a debating competition among the schools, which is a well-known pedagogical tool in South African schools. There was, however, no further follow-up by MEG, even though this was specified in the project document. They consciously chose not to involve the waste management company, as they felt the waste management company would take credit for the project. The only involvement of other actors was the involvement of local councillors through the creation of a waste management forum that only existed in order to get approval for MEG to do the workshops in the schools. As a result the project was not developed into a continuous learning process and no substantial change of behaviour took place. The interviews in the case study showed that some of the schools actually had been waiting for MEG to get back to them as promised to continue the activities.

7. Analysis of the waste management case

Like in the mine dump case several different practices can be identified in the waste management case. The different practices can be described by the following technological frames: The Waste as an Economic Resource Frame, The Environmental Health Frame, The Dumping Frame, The Nuisance Frame, The Service Frame, Environmental Justice Frame, The 3R-ecology Frame.

7.1. The Waste as an Economic Resource Frame

Waste is in this frame seen as a resource, where one can earn money or save money by handling the waste in a certain way, such as recycling or reusing cans, bottles, plastic etc.

One way to save or earn money is to recycle domestic waste for cash by segregating the waste at the source. Another way of recycling is to go to the landfill or the illegal dumping grounds and scavenge for parts and materials in the waste, which can be used directly for food or sold to a recycling company.

Stakeholders included in this frame are people who recycle for cash, and scavengers at the dumping grounds and landfills, as well as the companies involved in recycling, such as the waste management company Piki Tup, to some extent. Some MEG members are also included in this frame. One can discuss whether this frame actually is one frame or more frames, since some citizens see the waste dumping as a way of giving scavengers the opportunity of collecting waste, which they can sell, while MEG wants waste segregation in the households in order to avoid the waste dumping. MEG does not seem to be aware of how the solidarity with the scavengers destabilises a household source segregation strategy.

7.2. The Environmental Health Frame

In the environmental health frame the goal is to have a clean, healthy and beautiful physical environment. Inclusion in this frame means lack of awareness regarding waste management and waste practices are seen as causes of environmental and health problems in the community. A problem-solving strategy is to raise people's awareness of waste-related health and environmental issues and in that way motivate the citizens to change their practice.

Main constituents of this frame are MEG and the waste management company.

7.3. The Dumping Frame

The only thing that constitutes this frame is the practice of people, who dump their waste illegally. It is a practice with roots in history, as the apartheid regime encouraged

dumping by not investing in sufficient waste management infrastructure in order to make the townships unpleasant to live in, and people used the practice to show discontent with the system.

7.4. The Nuisance Frame

A group of people sees the waste, and particularly dumped waste, as a nuisance. Some people in this group burn their waste to get rid of the bad smell from the waste and to prevent waste paper from flying about. They are affected by the waste in various ways, such as bad smell from the waste or from an increased number of rats and flies attracted by the waste.

7.5. The Service Frame

Inclusion in this frame means that the actor sees waste management as a service problem. The service includes waste being picked up the every week and regular clean-ups of the dumping grounds. The strategy to improve the service provision is to improve the physical infrastructure.

In the frame lies an aspect of economy related to the waste removal service, since labour and machinery is needed to remove the waste. There is also an aspect of whether waste removal is something one is willing and/or able to pay for. Some people might not be able to pay for the waste management and some people might not want to pay for the service, because they find the service too poor. Some of the waste dumping problems might be caused by the supply of too few and too small waste containers from the waste company compared to waste pick-up frequency. Also the practice of some people, whom see the big waste containers as a resource which can be sold or can be used for transportation of different goods, contributes to destabilisation of the service frame.

7.6. The Environmental Justice Frame

Different stakeholders perceive the problems related to the waste management issue as a matter of social injustice. The overall goal for stakeholders in this frame is to bring about social justice in the field of environment and health.

The problems that are encountered, when included in this frame, are that laws are not complied with or enforced as well as large differences in service and environment between different groups of people in different parts of the society. Most environmental organisations are constituents of this frame, and so are some residents and authorities.

7.7. The 3R-ecology Frame

The key problems for stakeholders included in this frame are waste as an ecological problem, and waste management as a question of environmental sustainability. The problem solving strategy duly becomes to minimise the waste stream by Reducing, Reusing and Recycling, and thus minimising the environmental impacts of consumption on the environment. This frame is in this case integrated with the economic resource frame, since MEG combines the two in their teaching in the schools.

8. Analysis of the social shaping of the practices

The presented frames are not all interacting within the waste project itself, but are the practices that were identified during the interviews, which should analyse the practice of the different actors and the possibilities for organising follow-up activities. It might be argued that the frames focusing on waste in relation to environmental health problems and environmental justice are not separate frames, but are rather micro-political arguments for recruiting people to the 3R-ecology strategy.

Two aspects prevent the activities from leading to changes in waste management practice. One aspect is the fact that the CBO, MEG chose only to focus on the schools and not involving the waste management company in the dialogue around the waste management problems. Apart from that, the MEG members do not seem to be aware that some people see the waste dumping as part of a strategy supporting as well the Waste as an Economic Resource strategy and the 3R-ecology strategy. The other aspect is the lack of follow-up with the schools, which meant that the schools did not continue activities in relation to the waste problem. At one of the schools teachers said that it is difficult for the teachers on their hand to include waste management as a new topic in the school curricula without governmental support.

9. Analysis of the capacity development

When the funded activities of the waste project had been carried through, the MEG members begin to get families and move away from Meadowlands, which meant that the organisation was falling apart after the waste management project. They got a consultant to write a funding proposal for them, which did not pay off, but they managed to get MEG approved as a registered non-profit company. Several of the members have now got jobs in the environmental sector, but the knowledge they gained is not rooted in the community. The sustainability of both projects is questionable, as MEG only has shown capacity to start the processes, and not to follow up on them. The problems were understood in such a way that a project approach was seen as sufficient to solve the

problems, while a more complex understanding of the problems would reveal that solving them would demand a sustained effort with ownership among several stakeholders for example those crossing the mine dump and those stealing the rehabilitation equipment. MEG skipped their co-ordinating role as soon as an immediate solution was agreed upon, so they were not able to survey the development in the rehabilitation.

The waste management strategy could have involved the waste management company and the schools, which are actors with resources, which could have been mobilised. MEG did not develop an understanding of environmental strategies, where environmental problems and solutions are understood in connection with the socio-economic conditions of the community and the country. The more or less dissolving of MEG shows how vulnerable a project approach to environmental problems and strategies in developing countries might be. If this approach implies that the funded organisation is afraid of involving other actors and organisations on more permanent basis in the project, it is because they fear that these actors and organisations might get (some of) the recognition from a successful project. The project approach implied that MEG got some funding for the waste education project, but when the project stopped the active members which all had some training related to environmental issues moved out of the township as part of establishing a family and trying to find a permanent job. Since they had not involved the waste management company and the schools these were not able to continue the activities themselves.

10. Final remarks: methodological and strategic reflections

In terms of methodology the cases illustrate the level of researcher involvement, which is needed to get a deep understanding of how the processes described above are shaped. It has taken three master students five months of field research and another five months to analyse and write a thesis on the basis of the research. The underlying mechanisms shaping participatory processes are far from always obvious, especially because of the numbers of actors involved and the complexity of their interactions. These cases have been studied retrospectively. An interesting topic for future action research and future development aid is whether the social construction of technology approach with its focus on the diversity of actors and their practice and the embedding of these practices in the society, can be used proactively in the planning and implementation of projects within environmental and development aid. This will probably imply a much more process-oriented approach to development aid, where the actual implementation strategy is shaped 'along the road' in a project or programme, when different actor practices emerge and need to be accepted as legitimate and taken into account in the project.

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Notes

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ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Rodney Harber*

Abstract

Although South Africa and Denmark share architectural values at the superficial level which are broadcast in glossy magazines, there is the opposite, more demanding and more interesting approach. These arise from the South African multi-cultural population, climate, socio-economic disparities and the impact of HIV/AIDS.

The paper explores the architectural consequences of the above concluding with examples to demonstrate how important a locally sensitive approach should be.

Keywords: African urbanisation, Community architecture, HIV/AIDS.

1. Introduction

Architecture has become the bedfellow of globalisation. Watered down versions of fashions and fads, immune to local conditions, are broadcast around the globe in self-congratulatory, glossy magazines. China is probably the most serious example. After major buildings were being orientated north/south for over three thousand years, Beijing is now building air-conditioned glass façades. South Africa and Denmark also share buildings at this level.

I propose to focus on the opposite, more demanding, and certainly more interesting, end of the scale. There are significant differences between our respective countries due to:

- The South African multicultural population.
- Climate.
- Socio-economic disparities.
- The impact of HIV/AIDS.

Examples of the above will intermesh to suggest very significant imperatives for a relevant local architecture. An example of the two extremes will be provided at the conclusion to reinforce the argument.

There may be lessons for all to learn. Perhaps Scandinavian architects could be challenged to indulge in a greater degree of public participation when projects are being formulated.

In contrast to the relative mono-culturism in Denmark, South Africa has eleven official languages; there are few countries remaining on earth where one can still experience hunter-gatherers, for example.

I recall visiting the "Africa, the Art of a Continent" exhibition in London six years ago. A tiny exhibit stood alone in the first hall – the oldest known artefact on Earth: a stone hand axe from the Transvaal, 160 000 years old.

It should not be possible for this ancient history to leave Architecture unscathed. The new political dispensation is actively searching for the *Amasiko*, the unstated, indigenous knowledge systems. I will only illustrate one example, the Royal Kraal of Queen Modjadji with its hierarchies of interlocking circular spaces, natural materials, totems and, on a practical level, a seat to sit at the base of every wall.

Africans have universal, deeply engrained beliefs about death and the afterlife. Bodies are ritually buried and the ancestors live on as reference points. They are regularly communicated with for guidance. Cremation is inconceivable.

In contrast to the Western tradition where forefathers are little more than faded sepia photographs near the telephone, Africans look back positively for guidance. I know a black Catholic priest who wears a strip of animal skin around his wrist; this is a remnant of a beast sacrificed to his ancestors.

In spite of all of the above, the insatiable drive of Modernism prevails. The Zulu beehive hut, one of the finest examples of crafted architecture on earth, is being replaced by the convenience of industrial waste materials.

The relatively generous climate of Africa has an obvious impact on buildings. The generous sunshine means that a huge variety of plants grow abundantly in a profusion of bio-diversity. One impression of the Africa Exhibition I mentioned earlier was that, apart from Egypt (which can be dismissed as a Mediterranean culture) even stone was hardly ever used for buildings in Africa. Great Zimbabwe was an exception.

Everything in pre-colonial Africa is bio-degrading. Even modern buildings are under inordinate pressure from a lack of maintenance.

The result is that Africans tread lightly on the landscape. For ecological reasons, pre-colonial settlements seldom exceeded 20 000. Even the major one thousand year old settlement at Mapumgupwe, on the northern border of South Africa, had to be revealed by archaeologists.

When modern man migrated out of Africa 100 000 years ago and fanned out across the world, adverse climatic conditions made pre-planning, specialisation and consolidation necessary. Cities and civilisations were born.

2. The Legacy Of Apartheid

In contrast the African system of survival is dispersal to avoid straining natural resources. The Western intellectual tradition is consequently rooted in planning and control. In contrast the *isiZulu* world for 'future' means 'tomorrow'. There is no traditional concept of the future.

The legacy of apartheid has left deep scars on South Africa. Forty years of racial separation and degradation will take longer to heal. Cities are slowly being restructured, services distributed, but years of inferior education and lack of training are virtually insurmountable. Addressing this social setback must be the primary imperative for all building processes. The democratic government is tending to address irregularities in the construction industry by making it difficult for so-called white, previously advantaged architects to practice. For this reason professionals are emigrating in droves.

A well thought out Reconstruction and Development Programme was imposed but it misses the point socially. Hastily constructed roadside stalls cannot generate new economic opportunities if there is no passing trade.

Building has to be viewed as an economic and social process and not merely a product handed out by government. One way to achieve this is the extensive use of a variety of models which form a visual commitment to a community. Models for upgrading structures, the use of arable land or new concepts such as greenhouses. Every building must involve accredited skills training including management, and must be designed and detailed to leave a target 40% of costs within the community.

The process is drawn out and demanding but the results can be very rewarding. Mr Gwigwi Zungu and fellow farm labourers received training and built the *Sewula* resort entirely from models. Today it is run by the young men who hand mixed the concrete and who, in tern, undertook an intensive course in English. It provides seven permanent jobs. Exploiting the bio-diversity, sunshine and the Rainbow Nation with tourism is one of South Africa's best prospects. Seven tourists represent one permanent job and South Africa is currently the fastest growing tourist destination in the world.

3. Meaningful Change

The outset of HIV/AIDS is an entirely different prospect. The tragedy has marched on relentlessly in a conspiracy of silence and official denial. Retroviral drugs are only available to those who can afford to buy them and now the indicators are severe. Bodies are even buried in road reserves with formal cemeteries looking like freshly ploughed fields.

What has all of this to do with Architecture? Regrettably architects also appear to be in denial. It is no use building unnecessary solid structures when 40% of the sexually

active population will be dead in less than eight years' time. 'Loose-fit' buildings, recycled buildings and compassionate buildings are needed, schools with more sickbays, eating facilities for after-hour orphan care, sliding screens between classrooms to enable absent teachers to cover for each other, wheelchair ramps .... It has everything to do with architecture.

Construction workers in compounds on sites away from home are a significant group that are at risk. Every contractor should be forced to provide HIV/AIDS counselling to his staff before a contract is signed.

New, more sustainable models of living need to be advocated. Scandinavian co-housing could be a positive contribution in contrast to the 'lonely' houses delivered in the guise of modernism.

Architects have a wonderful opportunity to participate in a tangible contribution to change in South Africa.

I would like to illustrate two projects to make this point. The Mbazwane Rural Community Centre was conceptualised, built and occupied in close ongoing consultation with a remote community, in contrast to the recently completed, adjacent government "One Stop Service Centre". The latter illustrates how architects retain the ability to deter development.

In spite of the forces which operate against locally sensitive architecture in South Africa this approach to delivery is essential if meaningful change is to be brought about.

Notes

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PARTICIPATION AND 3D VISUALIZATION TOOLS

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Abstract

With a departure point in a workshop held at the VR Media Lab at Aalborg University, this paper deals with aspects of public participation and the use of 3D visualisation tools. The workshop grew from a desire to involve a broad collaboration between the many actors in the city through using new communication and visualisation media. It is largely experimental in nature and has a qualitative approach in analysing some of the actions and arguments which took place. These experiences and preliminary results form the basis for a discussion towards an understanding of virtual space and the varying perceptions of architectural representation in urban design where 3D visualisation techniques are used. It is the authors' general finding that, while 3D visualisation media have the potential to increase understanding of virtual space for the lay public, as well as for professionals, the lay public require preparation in grasping differences in the representation of abstract concepts and form.

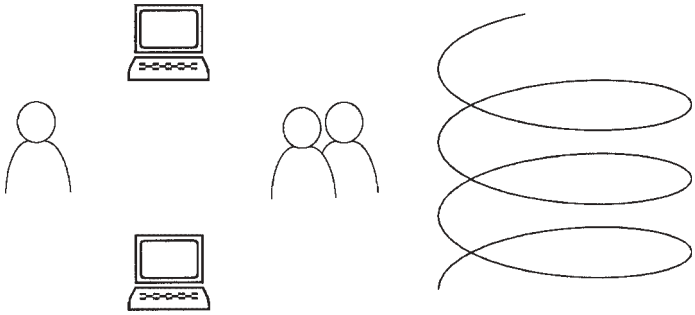
Keywords: Urban design, public participation, 3D real time modelling.

1. Introduction

This article describes a workshop in public participation using 3D visualisation tools. The workshop was part of a study project in urban design at the Institute for Architecture and Design, Aalborg University. The project has its point of departure in web pages prepared initially by the project group (see www.designdinby.dk), with the purpose of broadening the discussion on the future of Aalborg's development and to create a forum for debate between the actors in the city's planning process.

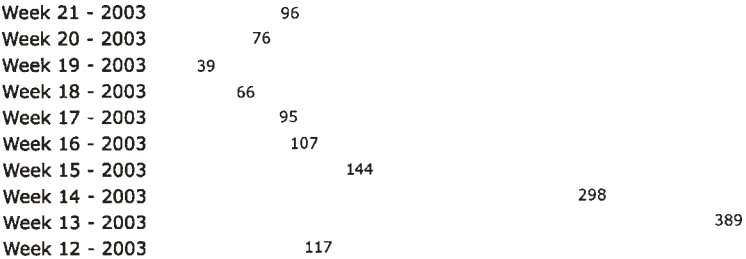
In concrete terms, various suggestions and proposals were submitted to the web pages by interested public, via the internet, for the development of a specified harbour area situated in Aalborg. These proposals were worked into text and collage representations by the project team and which were then presented on the web pages as part of the discussion. This process should be seen as a hermeneutic spiral in which knowledge levels for both parties are increased.

Figure 1: Actors submit suggestions for development of a specified area in Aalborg. The project group reworks the suggestion into text and collage, which in turn is presented on the web page. The process is thus iterative.



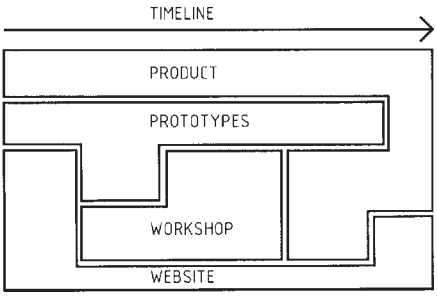
The intention was to make the process of the city's development more visible and transparent by attaching images to the process. To enhance the discussion, much background material and information was also placed on the web site, with regard to the area specifically as well as to urban design more generally.

Figure 2: Number of unique hits per week.



The web pages, as a forum for exchange of ideas between interested lay persons and urban designers, is part of a process of participation that comprises many elements, as can be seen from Fig.3.

Figure 3: Process timeline: participation process that comprises many elements.



2. Method

The debate on the web pages formed the basis for holding a workshop with the participation of various actors in town planning procedure, and as a stimulus for negotiation on the development of Aalborg's waterfront.

All those who had contributed ideas for the area via the web pages were invited. In addition, architects, planners and representatives from local politics were also invited to participate. To further the discussion and dialogue, three groups were created such that representatives of both 'users' and professionals were on each team.

The departure point for the workshop, as mentioned above, was the ongoing debate on the web pages; from the submitted proposals and an analysis of the area's spatial and functional potential, a number of 'urban prototypes' were created in advance by the project group, representing various prototypical elements of the city. Examples included 'bridge', low-rise residential', 'vegetation', 'commercial offices', etc. Negotiations turned around the placing and modification of these prototypes, together with their relationship to each other.

The actual negotiations were commenced with 'prototype-shopping', where each participant chose a prototype he/she wished to place in the area under discussion. These were presented as 2D images, named, numbered and described. The participants then met in their respective teams to present their choice of prototype and agree a strategy for negotiation with the other teams.

The teams alternated in placing a single prototype onto the map, and followed with arguments for their placement, their function and their form.

After placement of the prototype on the map, the authors placed a 3D computer model of the relevant prototype into a 3D city model of the area and projected the scene onto a wide-vision 'panorama' screen. The model could then be moved, scaled, rotated etc. in relation to the participants' wishes and comments. The panorama screen gave participants the possibility of experiencing the prototype's spatial implications on the city plan at a scale of 1:1. In this way, the negotiation became an exchange between the two different media – the two dimensional map and the three dimensional city model. The debate was thus split into a discussion of *function* in relation to the two dimensional maps, and *form* in relation to the 3D city model. This division was not categorical however, as the two types of discussion overlaid each other.

3. Experiment and results

In order to analyse the participants' understanding of the 3D city model, it is necessary to reflect on the discussion's initial premises. All the participants had prior knowledge of the local context and knew in advance exactly which area would be the subject of the workshop. The prototypes which were to be implemented and developed were presented to the participants as conceptual forms with included functions. In using conceptual forms, we of the project group were of the opinion that the prototypes were figurative abstractions of urban concepts – a kind of representative icon. Moreover, the figurative abstraction was an example of how the prototype could be realised. The ambiguity between concrete form and abstraction was not directly drawn to the attention of participants. This omission was intentional as the experiment in part prioritised an investigation of how the participants perceived the prototypes, including their formal aspects.

To illustrate the role of the 3D model in the workshop, we will describe a characteristic example from the debate. The workshop suggested that an existing industrial area of the harbour be transformed into a residential area with tree and vegetation planting of various kinds. The 'vegetation' prototype was first chosen by a participant who then placed it on the 2D map; thereafter a conceptual representation of vegetation was shown on the 3D city model. The 3D model then received the following round of comments:

User 1: "I think it looks wrong somehow."

User 2: "Lower the height of the vegetation, perhaps."

User 1: "Those are very big trees with very thick trunks".

Architect 1: "The idea is to soften up the area in different ways. There is something beautifully monumental about those buildings, but they must have some function or other and not just stand there as empty shells".

The comments show clearly how the 3D model is perceived in different ways. User 1 believes that the model "looks wrong", and that the trees are "very big" with "very thick trunks". User 1 takes it as given that the 3D model shows representation which is close to reality. The user's prior experience and knowledge of the area is represented by forms on the screen which he can immediately recognise. On presentation of forms representing ideas still in generation, and thus not already experienced, the excerpt from the discussion above indicates that there is an expectation that it is the concrete forms which are to be discussed.

Architect 1 on the contrary takes hold of the idea "to soften up the area in different ways". He thus does not see the 3D model of trees as the actual form of the trees, but rather more as a representation for a conceptual idea or thought – that is to say, he shows a more abstract way of seeing the model. The architect is aware of the ambiguity in the prototype – that it functions as a conceptual idea and as an example of its formal character.

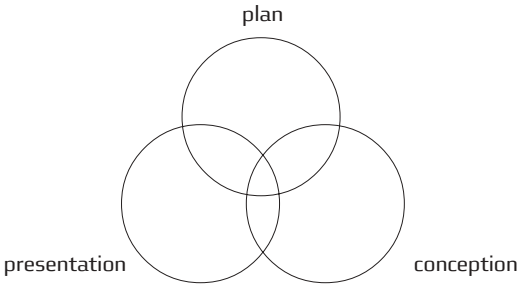
These comments thus indicate that the model is perceived very differently by user and professional, in this case at least. In a more general sense, the comments have such variation in their level of abstraction that the discussion is fragmented in a field of tension between abstraction and concrete form. If this argument is accepted, it must be concluded that it is experience and practice in visual language that results in the varying perception of the prototypes.

4. The concrete and the abstract

At the workshop in Aalborg, we did not draw specific attention to the role of the 3D prototypes in relation to the question of concrete form and abstraction. This however showed itself to be problematic, as many of the lay public participants observed and reacted to the 3d objects as if they were represented in their final form – that is to say a 'what you see is what you get' perception of the models. In this connection, it can be recommended that, before a 3D session, one attempts to explain and clarify the character of 3D modelling in the light of the problem of abstraction and concrete form. To facilitate a clear point of departure would create a higher degree of similar premises for participants in the discussion. In this way, it can be avoided that the discussion's participants talk past each other. This problem could also be possibly solved by showing examples of transformation of abstract concept to concrete form, or by allowing participants to themselves develop urban prototypes from abstract idea to concrete form. This would however require collaboration with participants for a longer period than only a single-day workshop.

Troels Degn Johansson, Ph.D in film and media studies, has researched the subject of "Open communication landscapes and the understanding of 3D visualisations" and writes: "The departure point for a successful visualisation must be that the interested parties should be able to connect the image with the relevant landscape and the projected action. In this regard, visualisation should in principle attempt a degree of reality; that is to say that the visualisation is real in its way of depicting planned action in the landscape in relation to the interested party's perception of that landscape and his or hers understanding of the project content" (Johansson, 1998).

Figure 4: Illustration of the focusing of graphic presesnatiuon with users geographic imagination and the concrete plan.



5. Discussion

In connection with the planning of Oslo's new opera house, it has been suggested to build a full scale model of the building, so as to judge its correspondence with the existing cityscape. This idea has been rejected by architect Knut Ramstad, who suggests a 3D real time model, which he sees as the future communication and collaboration tool for the building industry. Ramstad is behind the development of a virtually-real construction of the Telenor building at Fornebu near Oslo.

"It is important to point out that this is a decision making tool and not a presentation tool. That it is a decision making tool means that we can simulate all possible eventualities, make changes and see the consequences before it costs money. This means that we ensure the decision process in a completely new way." (Jåsund, 2001)

While the article described in this paper is concerned with urban design, Ramstad's Telenor project is an architectural one, which is why the level of detailing is higher, and with a lesser degree of abstraction required. The 3D real time model was, in the Telenor project,

an arena for decision making for client and architect. In addition, it functioned as a showcase for everybody, from Telenor's staff to local officials, neighbours and building site employees; in total, approximately 10.000 people experienced the 3D model of the building. This has ensured an openness of communication between all the actors in the project and which, according to Ramstad, will become an important part of future building processes. This openness of communication is just as highly needed in urban planning, where the diversity of actors is even greater.

The workshop described in this paper has been an experiment precisely in communication between the actors in urban planning. In the view that models, icons and figures in virtual space are a language in themselves, there will naturally always be differences in various peoples' perception of them.

There will also be a direct relation between the individual's knowledge of that language and his/her understanding of the model. One can in this regard propose the thesis that 3D simulation and VR are an expansion of virtual space in relation to earlier times' production of drawings in the context of urban design (Daugaard, 2002).This expansion can be a contributing factor in qualifying users to understand the spatial dimensions of various proposals within urban design.

Figure 5: Greater exchange between user participation and professional design work.

Following the assumption that models, icons and figures in virtual space are a language in themselves, it will demand practise by users in achieving an understanding and cognition of the language, and thereby the media's treatment of representation in relation to actual form. It will thus require a longer process to qualify a group of users of differing backgrounds in taking nuanced urban design decisions where 3D simulation and VR are used.

The workshop would then be one of a series of workshops (see fig.8) and one of many forms of collaboration with the participant group, whereby a concretisation of the project's principle ideas would be kept current. The project would be an exchange between user participation and professional design competence.

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Notes

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LESSONS LEARNED AND EMERGING ISSUES

LESSONS LEARNED FROM PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF PEP IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

Ensuring Local Ownership to Projects

Jens Lønholdt*

Abstract

The EmSong Project (Environmental Management in the Songkhla Lake Basin), funded by the former Danish environmental aid agency DANCED (Danish Co-operation for Environmental Development) and conducted from 1996 to 1999 in the Southern part of Thailand, provided an Environmental Action Plan for the Songkhla Lake Basin. This EAP, which was approved by the Songkhla Lake Basin Committee, is firmly embedded in the local institutional context including NGO, CBO and local people through extensive and intensive public participation especially in the last part of the project period using different kinds of tools and methods for this PEP. As a consequence local ownership has been ensured to the more practical and action oriented part of the EAP, which is a number of projects the implementation of which is to a large extent based on the concept of local stewardship of natural resources. A number of lessons learned for practical application of PEP has been extracted from this integrated environmental and development endeavour.

Keywords: integrated environmental management, lake systems, strategic orientation, and public participation.

1. Introduction

The EmSong Project (Environmental Management in the Songkhla Lake Basin) was a co-operation project between the Royal Danish Government and the Royal Thai Government (October 1996 to April 1999). The Project was executed in co-operation between the former Danish Co-operation for Environment and Development (DANCED), and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE) in Thailand. The EmSong Project was implemented by the Office of Environmental Policy and Planning (OEPP) within MOSTE supported by the Danish research and development institute VKI Institute for the Water Environment (as of 1 January 2000 DHI Institute for Water and Environment). The main aim of the Project was to develop a strategic environmental and development planning framework for the largest lake system in Thailand, which covers three provinces in the south.

The Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB) is situated in the Southern part of Thailand close to the border to Malaysia (see figures overleaf). SLB has a total area of 8,000 km^2 and a population of 1.5 Mio of which 75% resides in rural areas. 88% of SLB is land area and the remaining comprises four interconnected lakes: Thale Noi, Thale Luang, Thale Sap and Thale Sap Songkhla. The latter connects the lake system to the Gulf of Thailand. Due to this connection the lake system has seasonal changes in salinity.

For a number of years the lake system, which supports extensive fisheries, and which contains a rich bird life and a rare fresh water dolphin, has been under pressure. A number of plans have been prepared in order to manage this, from an economic as well as ecological point of view, very important lake system. The most comprehensive planning effort was done in the mid 80'ies when an in-depth Master plan was prepared. However, the Master plan was never implemented as it was quickly rendered obsolete.

The major reasons for non-implementation were the limited flexibility of the Master plan to accommodate changes in the assumptions, and the way of preparing the Master plan, as a "Stand-alone Consultancy Plan", with only very limited ownership in the Thai system. Consequently when the Master plan needed revision neither the commitment nor the capacity to revise the Master plan was available in the Thai system, and the Master plan was shelved.

In line with the planning history for the Songkhla Lake Basin it has been increasingly recognised World wide that Master plans are more often shelved than implemented. On this background the Danish research and development company VKI Institute for the Water Environment has developed an Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) approach, which has been applied successfully to the Songkhla Lake Basin through the EmSong Project.

The main outcome of the EmSong Project is the Environmental Action Programme for the Songkhla Lake Basin (EAP), which was approved by the Songkhla Lake Basin Development Committee (SLBDC) at its 9th Meeting 8 October 1999. The Environmental Action Programme is given in three volumes:

Volume I: Strategies and Implementation contains a description of the comprehensive planning process leading up to the EAP, the scope and content of the EAP and the implementation of the EAP.

Volume II: Project Catalogue contains a selection of projects, which addresses the necessary strategic actions presented in Volume I. Projects have been selected which are immediately needed in order to substantially move the development in the Songkhla Lake Basin towards sustainability, and more specifically attain the objectives presented in Volume I.

Volume III: Background and Justification contains a more elaborated and detailed description of the background, rationale and justification for the EAP as presented in Volume I.

The EmSong Project has been planned and implemented in accordance with the concepts and principles for Integrated Environmental Management. In this connection the EmSong Project has focused on two major areas of technology transfer and capacity development:

The interactive and objective oriented strategic and participatory process where the state of the exploitation of the natural resources and the impact on the ecological systems are assessed and on this background objectives and implementation strategies formulated in close cooperation with all stakeholders; *Decision support tools* introduced, developed and applied, which constitute one of the most important support functions in the above strategic participatory process.

The EmSong Project was premised on the basic principle that the Project, as an "outside" consultancy based project with a limited time frame, should "boost" the integrated strategic and participatory planning process for the area and at the same time ensure the sustainability of the planning process after project completion. For more details about the scope, content and results of the EmSong Project please be referred to an overview paper (Pakawan et al., 2001).

2. The EmSong Planning Process and Results

Through the IEM process, entailing extensive cross agency coordination and public participation, widespread consensus has been reached in the Songkhla Lake Basin concerning:

- The goals for the desired state and management of the natural resources and the ecosystems.
- The Key Issues that need to be addressed in order to attain these goals.
- The Strategies that need to be applied in order to address the Key Issues.
- The Immediately Needed Projects that need to be implemented.
- The Institutional Structure to manage the above.

An overview of the IEM approach applied is given in the Figure below comprising the following main elements and activities:

- The process was planned and conducted by the *EmSong Working Environment* .It consisted of the following institutions: Office of Environmental Policy and Planning (OEPP), Environmental Office Region 12 (EOR 12), the EmSong Permanent Working Group (EPWG), the EmSong Project Team, comprising permanent Thai staff as well

as expatriate and local consultants, and the Public Participation Activities comprising scheduled activities such as Workshops and Forum Meetings, as well as unscheduled activities.

- The public participation activities covered organised Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) and Community Based Organisations (CBO) as well as people at large.
- The knowledge and findings of the EmSong Working Environment was structured in relevant sectors and issues and reported in *35 Technical Background Reports*. These reports constituted the main technical background for the further planning process, and as shown in the Figure, they feed into every stage of the planning process.
- Based on a processing of the 35 Technical Background Reports an *Environmental Diagnosis* was prepared, *Goals* were discussed and articulated and *Potentials and Constraints* for the environmental development in the Songkhla Lake Basin were identified.
- The end result of the above process was the agreement about and the formulation of the *Vision* for the Songkhla Lake Basin.
- This Vision was then detailed into a time bound *Mission Statement* for the implementation of the EAP for the Songkhla Lake Basin, which constituted the main outcome of the EmSong Project.
- This Mission Statement was then further detailed and quantified into *Objectives* for the four main resource systems, and for application of IEM, which is envisaged as the main carrier of the environmental planning and management process in the Songkhla Lake Basin.
- By applying the 35 Technical Background Reports through *"Eight Guiding Principles"*, and based on the 5 Resource Objectives, *22 Key Issues* were identified for environmental development for SLB.
- These 22 Key Issues were grouped into *9 Strategic Thrusts* that needed to be applied in order to address the Vision, achieve the Mission Statement and meet the Resource Objectives.
- The 9 Strategic Thrusts were then detailed into *32 specific Strategic Actions* that needed to be implemented.

Based on this, and again by using the comprehensive EmSong Working Environment, *25 Immediately Needed Projects* have been identified and prioritised, which address the Strategic Actions which need to be implemented as soon as possible. These projects that are grouped into six main groups of projects have been described to an international pre-feasibility level.

3. Scope and Content of the Public Participation Process

In accordance with the IEM approach, which has been used as the main executing strategy for the EmSong Project, the EAP has been developed through a structured public participation process, which was especially intensive in the last part of the project. Important and main milestones in this interactive and participatory planning process were:

- *An Inception Workshop 7-8 March 1997* in Hat Yai, where the background and scope of the project was presented in order to stimulate active participation in project implementation.
- *An EAP Scoping Workshop 15–16 October 1998* in Songkhla, where the Preliminary Draft Environmental Action Programme was presented and discussed.
- Comprehensive environmental assessment and identification of key environmental issues prepared by the EmSong Permanent Working Group (EPWG) and published in *The Analysis of SLB Natural Resources and Environmental Status*. The said Report, which is prepared in Thai with an English summary, is rather unique in a Thai context. It presents the joint agreement about the state and the problems of the natural resources and the environment of the Songkhla Lake Basin, crosscutting relevant governmental line agencies, national and regional, as well as the NGOs and CBOs.
- Results from an *Extensive Public Participation Programme* conducted December 1998 – April 1999.
- Results from frequent, both scheduled and unscheduled, *meetings and interactions* between the Project Office, Environmental Office Region 12 and Office of Environmental Policy and Planning.
- Results from frequent, both scheduled and unscheduled, *meetings and interactions* between the Project Office and the Project Environment including regional and local government offices, the Prince of Songkla University and different stakeholders as local NGOs and CBOs.
- The concluding *EAP Workshop 1–2 April 1999* in Songkhla, where the Draft Environmental Action Programme was presented, discussed, and approved.
- *The National Seminar 28 April 1999* in Hat Yai, where the Draft Final Action Programme was presented and discussed in a national audience.
- *The Completion Workshops 12-14 and 21-22 July 1999*, where the 25 Immediately Needed Projects were assessed and prioritised by the local institutional environment comprising local and regional governmental institutions as well as organised NGOs and CBOs as well as people at large.

A number of important decision support tools have been developed through the EmSong Project as a mathematical model for the lake system, which was used in connection with the preparation of the EAP and is now available for the further integrated planning process for the SLB. The whole project and its results are presented on an interactive CD, which is available on request from Office of Environmental Policy and Planning within the Thai Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, includes an English as well as an Thai "click" for the Project.

4. Sustainability of the Project Induced Public Participation Process

As stated previously the main tangible outcome of the EmSong Project was the *Environmental Action Programme for the Songkhla Lake Basin*, which has been developed through an interactive and strategic participatory process, and which has been approved by the Songkhla Lake Basin Development Committee. An equally important, but not so tangible outcome of the EmSong Project is that through the interactive strategic process during the course of the EmSong Project a committed and very active working environment has been created for the Songkhla Lake Basin. In connection with this important "process part", capacity has been increased locally as well as regionally for the integrated planning and management approach. A very visible expression of this is that the EAP is firmly embedded within the local and regional agencies as well as within the local and regional NGOs and CBOs. In a Thai context this is fairly new and unique.

Consequently at project completion in early spring 1999, the necessary enabling environment for supporting the further strategic and participatory environmental planning and management process for SLB was in place. The post-project planning and implementation activities took its point of departure in the results produced within the EmSong Project and equally important used the enabling environment and the planning "boosting" introduced and developed through the EmSong Project.

In the following, a condensed overview is given of what has happened since project completion in April 1999. For more details please be referred to (Pakawan et al., 2003). The 25 Immediately Needed Projects comprised soft capacity development projects as well as hard sustainable livelihood and environmental infrastructure projects. The soft projects addressed legal and regulatory issues, institutional strengthening, and public participation. The hard projects concerned ensuring sustainable livelihood through i.a. mixed farming and eco tourism development, and a number of environmental infrastructure projects for improvement of water, wastewater and solid waste management. The total project package entailed an investment need around 75 million $ of which the environmental infrastructure projects took 85 %.

At project completion in April 1999 it was jointly and wide spread envisaged that the financing package would include the following main actors: bilateral funds through DANCED for the softer capacity development projects, funds from ADB (Asian Development Bank) for the harder sustainable livelihood projects, and funds from the Thai Government and bilateral funds from Japan for the harder environmental infrastructure projects.

For boosting this finance package DANCED had set aside substantial funds as they regarded the project as being successful in practical application of public participation driven sustainability projects. However, due to a long post-project evaluation, which then run into the closing down of DANCED and limited awareness at the national level in Bangkok of the project results, combined with remerging economic problems for Thailand, the financing package was never agreed upon officially and consequently not implemented. Naturally this created a lot of frustration not only amongst the involved stakeholders in the Songkhla Lake Basin but also in OEPP, which was the project owner.

However, from this joint frustration sprung a unique and very prosperous partnership between OEPP in Bangkok, the local and regional stakeholders, and the local university Prince of Songkla University. This "triangular partnership" has since April 1999 jointly implemented parts of some of the softer projects and parts of some of the harder sustainable livelihood projects with very limited outside funding. The environmental infrastructure projects have been implemented neither full nor partly. Consequently the frustration and negative energy of not being "heard" in Bangkok and Copenhagen has been turned into positive implementation energy and a very strong and viable implementation framework has been established, which with very little means but a strong dedication has achieved remarkable results over the last 4 years.

As a result the paradox is presently that local people fight for their projects that the national government is reluctant to approve and implement as opposed to the normal situation where the national government try to impose projects on the local people who react and protests as they have not been involved.

Presently the following project related activities have been implemented in full accordance with the approved Environmental Action Programme and by further develop the participation practices introduced through the EmSong Project:

- Sustainable natural resources management.
- Sustainable irrigation management.
- Eco tourism development.

5. Lessons Learned

As can seen from the previous chapters an unprecedented concerted effort towards ensuring sustainable development for the Songkhla Lake Basin through a comprehensive strategic and participatory approach has been going on for the last 7 years with the aim of empowering people with natural resources management through structuring the process and provision of the necessary planning and decision support tools. A very visible expression of the success is the fact that as given above, the local people in spite of lack of outside support continues and even strengthens public participation based implementation after project completion based on the following *Vision* for the Songkhla Lake Basin, which was developed through the EmSong Project and approved by all involved stakeholders:

5.1. Vision for the Songkhla Lake Basin

"Sustainable development is ensured for the Songkhla Lake Basin covering natural resources sustainability, and protection of important ecosystems, as well as socio-economic sustainability. Local capacity is developed to be the main guardians of the sustainability based on the concepts and principles of Integrated Environmental Management"

The planning process was initiated, structured and boosted through an "outside consultancy" project, which from day-one was very well aware of its role as a short-term initiator. The sustainability of the results of the EmSong Project, and the impact of the Project, has been very visible as the participatory strategic process towards sustainability really took of after project completion in early spring 1999 as has been presented in the previous chapter. In this connection the "project concept", that is using participatory strategic planning tools to identify the "right" projects, and then implement through individual projects, has proven to be one of the best way to activate local people.

The process is just beginning, but an excellent indicator of the degree of ownership by the local communities and their representatives is their active participation and "take-their-own-initiative" activities. Even though the participatory planning process now is fairly deeply rooted in the local enabling environment, and the process is well under way, funds and support from outside are needed to implement the more complex and expensive projects as the costly environmental infrastructure projects. So at this stage the activation and involvement of national governmental agencies is the biggest challenge.

The EmSong Project has had international exposure recently as it has been chosen as an international reference project for integration of integrated river basin management and coastal area management within the FreshCo Initiative, which was an outcome of the Johannesburg Summit in 2002. As a visible recognition of this the first international

FreshCo Workshop was conducted in Songkhla 27 – 30 January 2003, where the EmSong Project and its sustainability and post-project results were presented (Pakawan et al., 2003). In this connection representative for the local people participated in the workshop.

Based on the EmSong history, and the post-project activities, the following lessons learned in relation to practical application of public participation can be condensed:

- Introduce public participation in the beginning of the planning phase and not when projects have already been identified and defined.
- Use a planning approach as the IEM, which is strategic oriented and entails intensive public participation, and apply an orientation towards practical projects which are easy to comprehend and consequently easier to discuss in broader forums.
- Tap into local wisdom, which have a lot of "data and information" concerning state and cause effect relationships.
- Be flexible and adaptable in approach and methodology for public participation including the selection of means and measures.
- Form working groups to produce background material and provide technical as well as administrative secretarial functions for these. Fishermen and monks do not have any problems in sitting in working groups and providing written material provided the necessary secretarial capacity is available.
- When working with an outside support project be very aware from day zero of how sustainability of project results is ensured after project completion. In this connection find one or two project champions as soon as possible and support and motivate these persons as much as possible during project implementation.
- Ensure that a proper, elaborated and relaxed project completion is conducted ensured embedding of all the project results and the post-project activities in a capable institutional environment.
- Use substantial time and resources to jointly market the project and especially post-project activities in relation to important and relevant national and central governmental organisations and potential funding agencies. Consequently as soon as possible think about and elaborate the financing package.

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Notes

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HELLO DEAR
HOW DO YOU FEEL

WHY AND HOW TO NEGOTIATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Søren Skou Rasmussen

Abstract

This presentation of how beneficiary assessment contributes to the overall theme of debating participation is introduced through a discussion of why social scientist, planners, and researchers participate in development initiative, where the focus is on participation. The idea and principles behind the beneficiary assessment is established and discussed, and including the development of the technique. Added to these fundamentals is a discussion of the use of beneficiary assessment including recent generic examples from various environmental context, which illustrates the usage of beneficiary assessment in various stages of the project cycle and research.

Keywords: Beneficiary Assessment. Who are the participants and why participate? The participatory environment.

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the 1980s, our involvement as practitioners and participants in the development environment has coincided with events, trends and an ever changing context. A context that has shaped and sharpened our interest and participation and challenged, defined and redefined our own participation. Defining environmental events and contexts includes the dynamic urbanisation in the developing world, the realisation of the globalised environment (Rio and Kyoto), and not least draughts in the Sahel in the early 1980s, which led to death and poverty, but ironically also to my first encounter with Participatory Rural Appraisal as a participatory planning tool in Western Sudan in 1983. However, these events and contexts are not unique and personal but have indirectly or directly informed the environment of this case oriented workshop.

2. Why we participate

Had the environment not increasingly demanded participation, anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists would never have been invited to participate in environmental management during short-term conferences, workshops, and seminars eager to debate, negotiate and learn the otherwise rather long-term nature of environment and participation.

Assignments, including consultancies and research related to the environment, have developed from project focused assignments of communities' participation in environmental management to an increasing inclusion of macro issues such as decentralisation, poverty reduction strategies, democratisation and civil society, where participation is still a crucial parameter for success. Today neither environmental management nor participation stands alone but is increasingly contextualised in the broader development discourse.

Anthropologists – and the like – have a long tradition of researching culture, cultural tradition and cognition. Early studies in the 1920s - 1960s rarely saw their informants, or culture for that matter, as a participant - „from the door of my tent"[1]. This changed as the issue of development was introduced in the 1970s. And in the late 1980s especially, American anthropologists[22] started to reflect and recognise both the culture and individuals they studied as negotiating participants and increasingly included their own presence as participant and change agent.

Participants challenged and confused anthropologists on research and field work, as well as practitioners in development work. The challenge has fuelled a constant strive to continuously develop tools and methods that can generate experience and better practises regarding participation. Many of these tools and techniques have focused on the modalities of participation resulting in catalogues or menus (RRA, PRA, PAR, SWOT, etc.) on what to do. However, there is an increasing need to pay attention to the participants as individuals and social beings acting in a larger context, as development initiatives rarely occupy a large amount of time and space in the life of the participants.

Techniques and methods are undergoing constant changes. Yet the idea and technique of beneficiary assessment (BA) are still a valid departure for investigating the individual. The individual, who rarely becomes a full-time participant, but sometimes chooses to become a beneficiary, stakeholder, partner, actor and agent.

In the following the technique of BA is shortly presented and discussed in an experienced context of planning and monitoring of participatory environmental initiatives.

3. Beneficiary Assessment as Idea and Technique

„As agencies have come to focus on the participation of ‚primary stakeholders', generally defined as ‚the poor and marginalised', including women, perhaps the first question that might be asked is: Who, then, are these ‚primary stakeholders'"[3]?

BA is defined as an approach to information gathering and ownership creation, which assesses the value and processes of an activity as it is perceived by its principal users[4]. BA is often used in a response to task managers' need for an in-depth understanding of

the beneficiaries' participation and as a basis for initiating changes in a given initiative. In the project cycle BA is often used as part of a review. Yet the World Bank has included BA linked to the social assessment as part of their planning process, and with an increasing understanding of social assessment and BA as tools to be used throughout the project cycle - in other words as a monitoring tool[5]. This presentation also includes generic examples of how the tool has been used during research.

Whether used during review or evaluation, the findings of a successful BA provide information on issues that demand immediate change. However, the findings and analysis during a BA can also feed into a possible best practice development. This development is possible, as the beneficiaries' participation is analysed in a generic context that investigates and answers **why** beneficiaries participated and what **circumstances** led to **fluctuations** in their participation. When beneficiaries (including stakeholders at all levels - managers and users) involved in a given activity develop an understanding of these processes, it provides a strong basis for process-oriented decision-making, change management and possible best practise development. The traditional assessment (review) of **what** has taken place is not superfluous. However, when an activity goes wrong or becomes successful, its duplication, expansion, and repetition depend on the understanding of why that activity was successful. In other words, a BA can improve a process and activity to include a sustained process more than an output-oriented process based on conventional thinking, risks and assumptions.

In short, BA is about answering the questions of **how** and **why** a certain process and activity will take place or took place and was perceived by beneficiaries[6]? BA is focused on the beneficiaries' process of accessing and negotiating benefits as a result of their participation in an activity. And the development activity is put into perspective, when the BA evolves. A necessary perspective, as development projects tend to occupy a far larger space in the external developer's perception than in the beneficiary's perception. While the **target** of most BA is decision-making in all its perspectives, the **goal** is the improvement or duplication of the particular project, policy and institution.

Another aspect of the BA, as it discovers and analyses the processes involved in the planning and implementation of a given activity is its substantial decoding of beneficiaries' participation. This decoding leads to exclusion of previous information, which is often based on non-substantiated speculations, anecdotes and rumours regarding beneficiaries' participation and benefit.

4. Beneficiary Assessment, the Process, Tools and Recent Developments

The conversational interview has a central position in BA. The conversational interview

is, in principle, less single-question-oriented than the semi-structured interview. Ideally it consists of a checklist of issues that should be gradually included during the conversation with the beneficiary. However, the idea of the BA includes a need for quantification of information in addition to the otherwise qualitative focus. Experience shows that the conversational interview includes more quantitative sections, where the interviewers have agreed to include quantification ahead of the assessment. In the end, it is harder to listen with a questionnaire than an interview guide/check list; the former makes the interviewee the object of a pre-structured inquiry, while the latter allows the person being interviewed to become the subject of his or her own discourse.

Who are the beneficiaries? In the kind of user survey represented by the BA, who one decides to listen to is of the outmost importance. Initially, it has proven useful to distinguish between stakeholders and beneficiaries of a given process and activity. E.g. a District Executive is better addressed as a stakeholder than the farmer, who classifies as a beneficiary of benefits - when participating. However, experience shows that the full context of participants' participation becomes more complete if, e.g., ministers and chief executive officers are included. And when included they should if possible not participate post-assessment commenting on findings, but be subject to an (almost) identical check-list as the one used while interviewing e.g. primary users. Executives should also be asked why they participate[7] in a given activity, why they requested a given activity, what makes their participation fluctuate, and which benefits they themselves have experienced. And experience shows that the challenge is to focus the executive on his/her experience as beneficiary, as many executives are used to and seem to prefer to represent others - and speak on behalf of others. Moreover, the planner and researcher can better analyse how development is dependent on different beneficiaries having different expectations when executives are included.

In short, a successful BA samples all beneficiaries in order to explore and utilise their different positions. A BA will develop ideas regarding how beneficiaries can improve their interaction and thereby change plans, processes and institutions. The principle of listening to the widest sample of beneficiaries makes triangulation an important principle of BA. Furthermore, diversified sampling followed by triangulation can ensure that beneficiaries are not lumped together in a group for the convenience of project planning but to the disadvantage of the beneficiaries, who always benefit more from a situation where their differences and similarities are fully incorporated in project planning[8].

What about those not participating? Often non-participants are excluded from BA. However, if included they can provide information on why they do not participate, how they wish to participate, and what is needed to facilitate their participation. Often the

identification of non-participants will also show that they actually do participate, but often according to their own perception of participation - and not that of the planner and developer.

What are the benefits? As poverty reduction, income creation, and empowerment often hold a prominent position in development initiatives these benefits should be scrutinised, analysed and quantified. However, experience shows that benefits also include benefits for the participants not thought of by the developers including „social recognition", „pride" etc.

Who collects the information? The persons conducting an assessment should be of service to the planners and researchers, but not be subservient to them. Similarly, the focus on the beneficiaries should not become an over-identification with their immediate interests. „Although the participant observer evaluator must know management, project, and beneficiaries well, his allegiance is to none of the three, but rather to what the project is meant to be"[9]. Initially, the idea was that interviewers conducting the BA should be external only, with no stake in the activity or organisation. This has changed as the practitioners have experienced that analysis benefit from internal interviewers' views and insight into the larger context. These insiders can provide the background for a more situational analysis. Today it is recommended that BA be conducted by a mix of external and internal interviewers. However, internal interviewers can in some cases unwillingly distort the assessment. Therefore, exchange of internal interviewers can sometimes be necessary (see example below in Section 5.2).

As with other participatory techniques, information is analysed while being collected as well as immediately after. Reporting on BA has many faces depending on the purpose of the assessment. Beneficiaries are given a voice both in the process of the assessment but also very much during reporting to management and planners. Quotations and remarks from the beneficiaries are an integrated part of any BA report.

What does it cost? BA takes time and resources to conduct, which is often used as an excuse by institutions, donors and planners for not embarking on a BA. Experience shows that rather large programmes can have a meaningful BA for between USD 25,000 - USD 100,000.

5. Beneficiary Assessment in Environmental Projects

The purpose and length of this paper does not allow in detail presentation of completed BAs. However, a few generic experiences will be briefly presented to highlight, illustrate and participate in the important sharing of knowledge. The examples include four examples from different phases of the project cycle and research. Lessons learnt regarding

the technique of BA are the main purpose of the presentation:

Beneficiary assessment and planning: Sustainable Agricultural Development Project, Papua New Guinea, (proposed project 2004 - 2009). A comprehensive BA is proposed to be included in the project planning during 2003. World Bank, May 2003.

Beneficiary assessment and monitoring (institutional and activity): Land and Water Management Programme, Consolidation Phase; 1999 - 2003 (BA took place in 1999 and 2000). The BA was part of monitoring of the ongoing activities and included all beneficiaries from field to directors and ministers. Danida, September 1999 and December 2000.

Beneficiary assessment and monitoring (approach and activities): MEMA, Natural Woodland Management Project and Udzungwa Mountains Forest Management Project. Danida, June 2002.

Beneficiary assessment and research (poverty reduction): Ghana Poverty Reduction Initiative (GPRI) European Delegation/Ministry of Finance (Ghana), August 2001.

5.1. Beneficiary Assessment and Planning, Papua New Guinea

The experience and lessons learnt include: The World Bank has fully institutionalised BA in its planning procedure and recognises the importance and possibility of creating ownership through beneficiary assessment during the very early start of planning. The beneficiary assessment gives an excellent opportunity to create initial ownership to a process. The World Bank has useful Guidelines[10] regarding beneficiary assessment made accessible on the internet.

A brief stakeholder analysis during early identification becomes validated and substantiated when conducting BA. The early BA also identifies beneficiaries that need special attention during the planning - and later implementation. If BA is conducted using identifiable beneficiaries (register participants by name), it provides an important input to the baseline study and later monitoring (return interviews etc.), as the initial BA includes statements, views, and documentation of a pre-project situation.

The BA forced planners to think very carefully about involvement of beneficiaries in the project and provided beneficiaries and planners with a vital forum for project planning.

The BA is closely linked to social assessment that is a continued process throughout the project cycle.

The BA gave the best opportunity to verify the importance of identified Safeguard Policy issues.

The early BA led to rethinking the project rationale and benefits for beneficiaries.

5.2. Beneficiary Assessment and Monitoring (Institutional and Activity), Ghana

The experience and lessons learnt include: The BA experienced some difficulty in sampling beneficiaries in a nation-wide programme.

The BA confirmed the need for permission from senior staff of the Ministry to conduct the BA. The Ministry originally demanded the BA, but did not initially envisage the involvement of very senior staff. The lessons learnt were that senior staffs are best interviewed by an external interviewer.

Executives participated fully and were especially interested in the later triangulation, analysis, and implications of the material - including discussions of changes at the institutional level. The BA became an example of successful advocacy as farmers have no access to their executives. The BA ensured that farmers' and field workers' voices were heard and findings led to change.

The BA showed that participation never gets better than the interface between the fieldworker and the beneficiaries.

The beneficiaries confirmed or rejected actual benefits (higher yield, income), but also included „social recognition", „increased awareness" and „pride" as benefits. Another benefit recorded was participation in itself in a project that otherwise and according some beneficiaries included no other benefits ....!

Beneficiaries not participating were also included in the sample (40% of the sample). It turned out that some participants were indeed participating. However, these participants were not included in the field workers' visits and knowledge. This group of non-participants included many women and youth. The BA gave an excellent opportunity for the field worker to listen directly to a group of beneficiaries that he/she did not reach in the daily work. Other beneficiaries not participating proved that other family members' participation was part of the participation of the household, family, clan, and village. Not everyone must participate to make an initiative successful. Distribution of participatory initiatives within the family, household and village should not be underestimated. Are benefits shared is the question that follows.

The BA was conducted by ministry staff with external facilitation. The Field Workers were circulated in order to ensure that interviewers did not work in their own operational area. This arrangement proved very useful for the contextual analysis of information.

BA can be a painful experience for both interviewers and beneficiaries interviewed. Careful facilitation when interviewing non-participants is necessary to avoid stigmatisation. Some field workers experienced that listening to beneficiaries' accounts regarding the lack of support, misappropriation of information and other inconsistencies by their

immediate colleague was difficult to witness. External facilitation became important to ensure that information, which otherwise could be misused, are used properly both during and after the BA, as otherwise internal interviewers will exclude more unpleasant information.

5.3. Beneficiary Assessment and Monitoring (Approach and Activity), Tanzania

The experience and lessons learnt include: The earlier conducted Baseline Study collected substantial information regarding the large amount of illegal activities being part of the future beneficiaries' economic activities. It was ensured through an „ethical" agreement between the Royal Danish Embassy, the consultancy firm responsible for the Baseline Study and the District Natural Resources Office that the information would not be used against the offenders.

The BA was conducted by external interviewers. One interviewer had participated in the Baseline Study. The BA documented the difficulty of environmental projects' securing immediate benefits to participants - and especially when the focus of the programme is more on protection than economic use of the same natural resources. The BA led to a crucial discussion on how joint is JFM (Joint Forestry Management).

Although the Baseline Study provided the background for formulating a process leading to Joint Forestry Management plans accommodating beneficiaries' different economic activities, the later process and planning failed on two major issues: Planners and managers at the local level (Village Council) consist of two groups of beneficiaries: 1) farmers with relatively large farm sizes and secondary users of the natural resources, including carpenters, fish smokers, canoe builders, and brick makers, and 2) primary users, including timber collectors, charcoal burners, and pastoralists. Very few beneficiaries with primary economic activities (e.g. pastoralists, timber and charcoal workers etc.) related to the natural resources were found in the village management and local project management. The BA made it very clear that the Joint Forestry Management plans did not mitigate this situation. E.g. restrictions were only directed at primary beneficiaries.

The BA is the classical example of beneficiaries first separated and studied during initial project planning and then „when it comes to creating consensual products, such as Community Action Plans, differentiation disappears"[11].

The BA documented that some beneficiaries (pastoralists, primary users) were largely excluded from the planning and management process. The only option left for this group of „beneficiaries" was to continue their illegal activities but with the major difference that their activities would now be sanctioned by their fellow community members.

The BA highlighted the crucial distinction between beneficiaries of the original natural resources and the beneficiaries of a project.

5.4. Beneficiary Assessment and Research, Ghana

The experience and lessons learnt include: The BA was part of a research on poverty reduction related to decentralisation and civil society participation. The BA had no project as an object, and beneficiaries had to account for their previous and ongoing benefits in a general poverty reduction process. The focus of the research was entirely on benefit defined as participation in a process and how that process could improve.

The BA included the full sample of beneficiaries and stakeholders. The research had a strong element of advocacy as the research not only provided an input to the national poverty reduction strategy process but also the direct involvement of high-ranking officials.

The BA highlighted that also poor people constitute very diverse groups of individuals that call for careful attention to reach and include in poverty reduction initiatives, decentralisation and civil society participation.

The BA made full use of the principle of triangulation of information and its systematic verification.

The BA highlighted the issue of forced participation of poor people and women. Poor people and women work considerably more than wealthier community members on communal working days and project-related work days, which often represent a community's contribution. When an option exists to contribute work instead of payment, the community leadership often chooses to contribute work, meaning that poor people work, while the management rests. Planners and managers often think that beneficiaries (lumped together!) are too poor to pay for services and that payment as contribution of labour is convenient. However, in many cases communities are able to pay as a community.

The BA analysed the beneficiaries' right to participation.

6. Conclusion

This presentation has illustrated the necessity for, and many aspects of, understanding participation. It has focused on a presentation of one particular technique and idea – the beneficiary assessment. The paper argues that understanding and improving participation should be based on a continued process of assessing a complete sample of beneficiaries. The conclusion is that BA provides planners and researchers with a useful and dynamic tool that helps answering the questions of who the beneficiaries are, and the process needed to maintain beneficiaries as participants. In the presentation, the

beneficiary assessment is discussed and exemplified through a number of generic examples of how beneficiary assessment relates to the project/research cycle.

Participation never gets better than the interface between the fieldworker and the beneficiaries. Some of the generic examples indicate that our participation and agenda are not fully understood by beneficiaries and in some cases hinder beneficiaries' full participation. Indeed, this presentation of beneficiary assessment only reinforces the beneficiary assessment's own agenda - the necessity to include all beneficiaries and formulate a process which includes and balances the different expectations, experiences and economies. The experienced beneficiary assessment demands that we also improve our participation and become better participants. This development of the beneficiary assessment will include a process emphasising a more clear dialogue and information sharing. Only then can all beneficiaries benefit from their participation.

7. References

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3. Cornwall, A., Making spaces, changing places: situating participation in development, IDS, Working Paper 170, 2002
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10. Salmen, Lawrence F., Listen to the People: Participant Observation Evaluation of Development Project, Oxford University Press, 1987
11. Salmen, Lawrence F., The Voice of the Farmer in Agricultural Extension, AKIS Discussion Paper, 1999
12. World Bank (author Rasmussen, S. S.) Sustainable Agricultural Development Project, Papua New Guinea, Working Paper, May 2003
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Notes

1 Evans- Pritchard, E. E., The Nuer (1940).

2 Rasmussen, S. S., Den Etnografiske Dialog, fra Feltarbejde til Mission i Sudan, 1989.

3 Cornwall, A, p. 52, 1999.

4 Salmen, Lawrence F., 1999.

5 Salmen, Lawrence F. 1999. The report gives an account of a decision by task managers of major agricultural extension programmes in ten African countries who decided to include beneficiary assessment when monitoring, following their programme's participation in a beneficiary assessment initiated by the World Bank.

6 What has happened is still the output focused review or evaluation of an activity.

7 This is not the same as asking executives why they conduct beneficiary assessment. Salmen, F. Larry (1999) takes in that other aspect of the BA (why conduct beneficiary assessment) and writes „Beneficiary assessments can provide a vital instrument to Task Managers in overseeing their projects at all stages. ... Most of the Task Managers interviewed stated that the BA was an extremely useful tool for them in making mid-course changes to their projects or in designing subsequent projects" (p.12).

8 Cornwall, A. (2002 et 1999). Cornwall has analysed the wider consequences of lumping beneficiaries or „poor people. „Lumped together in a group, the particularities of the interests and identities of the „poor" become submerged", (p. 52, 1999).

9 Salmen, Lawrence F., „Listen to the People: Participant Observation Evaluation of Development Project, Oxford University Press, 1987. The 1987 publication is one of the first publications addressing Beneficiary Assessment. The Beneficiary Assessment Approach is later described at length in „Beneficiary Assessment - An Approach Described", Salmen, Lawrence F. World Bank 1995.

10 World Bank, Social Analysis Sourcebook, 2002.

11 Cornwall, A (1999), p. 53.

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

Debating Participation

Actors Shaping Sustainable Urban Development

A case-oriented workshop, Copenhagen 11,12,13 June 2003

PROGRAMME 11 JUNE 2003

09:30 am — Welcome by the Rector of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, Sven Felding

09:40 am — Danish University Consortium for Environment and Development – Industrial and Urban Areas
Niels Thygesen, Managing Director DUCED-IUA

09:50 am — Introduction to Workshop
Gustavo Ribeiro, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture

Session 1: Debating Participation
Chair: Søren Lund, Roskilde University

10:10 am — Participation and Agency – Hybrid Identities in the Making of Green Knowledge
Key-note Address by Andrew Jamison, University of Aalborg

10:50 am — Particiation and Consensus-seeking for Sustainable Development – The Experience of the Danish LA21
Jesper Holm, Roskilde University

11:45 am — Discussion

Session 2: Communities
Chair: Jørgen Andreasen, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture

02:00 pm — Urban Communities Environmental Activities (UCEA)
Key – Note Address by Soomsook Boonyabancha, Community Organisation Development Institute – Thailand

02:40 pm — Urban Development Discourses, Environmental Management and Public Participation: The Case of the Mae Kha Canal in Chiang Mai – Thailand
Gustavo Ribeiro, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture
Angunthip Srisuwan, Chiang Mai University, School of Architecture

03:05 pm — Participation as Symbolic Violence – The Social Dynamics of an Environmental Project in Southern Thailand
Mikkel Funder, Roskilde University

04:00 pm — Discussion

PROGRAMME 12 JUNE 2003

Session 3: Government and Civil Society I

Chair: Steen Holmgreen
The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture

09:30 am — The Stories of Two Bridges – Facts from Research Spiced with a Little Fiction
Jørgen Andreasen, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture

09:55 am — Participation in a Post-socialist Society – Cases from Mozambique
Jørgen Eskemose, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture

Session 4: Government and Civil Society II

Chair: Steen Holmgreen, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts

10:40 am — Participation - a Road Leading to Democracy?
Elisabeth Riber Christensen, NIRAS Consulting Engineers and Planners A/S

11:05 — Social Shaping of a Community-Based Organisation's Activities
– The Case of the Meadowlands Environmental Group, South Africa
Søsser Brodersen and Christian Eghoff, Michael Søgaard, Technical University of Denmark

11:35 am — Discussion

Session 5: Architects and Planners

Chair: Gustavo Ribeiro, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture

02:00 pm — Architectural Practice in South Africa
Key-Note address by Rodney Harber, University of Natal, Durban, South Africa

02:40 pm — Participation and 3D Visualisation Tools
Mikkel Holm Jensen, Sune Henriksen, Mette Haase, Morten B. Kristiansen, Morten Mogensen, Michael Mullins, Aalborg University, Dept. of Architecture and Design

03:05 pm — The Electronic Neighbourhood
Steen Holmgreen, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, By og Byg

04:00 pm — Discussion

PROGRAMME 13 JUNE 2003

Session 6: Lessons Learned and Emerging Issues

Chair: Michael Søgaard, Technical University of Denmark

09:30 am	Lessons Learned from Practical Application of PEP in Southern Thailand Jens Lønholdt, NIRAS A/S and Technical University of Denmark
09:55 am	Why and How to Negotiate on Environment for Participation Søren Skou Rasmussen COWI
10:20 am	Participation – at Any Cost? Lykke Leonardsen, Københavns Kommune
111:15 am	Discussion
12:15 am	Summing Up Søren Lund, Roskilde University
12:40 pm	Closing of Workshop Gustavo Ribeiro, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture