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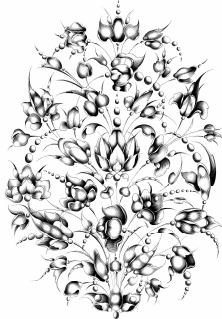
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How to evaluate network initiatives in urban planning – studying area based initiatives (Kvarterløft) in Denmark

WORK IN PROGRESS
First draft

Annika Agger



Abstract

Within the last decade attention has been increasingly paid across Europe to the importance of involving citizens by mobilising networks in urban planning processes. A large body of literature advocates for more deliberative and participative approaches to public engagement with decision makers at all levels of policy making. Both among scholars and public planners there seems to be uncertainty as to how to evaluate the output and the process of involving citizens and local stakeholders in public planning. This paper will reflect on how you can evaluate urban planning initiatives that focus on improving deprived urban neighbourhoods by mobilising networks. Some of the central questions raised in this paper are: how can we appraise the democratic consequences of network governance initiatives in urban planning? Who participates? What effect does the institutional design have for participation? What are the outcomes of participation?

The point of departure of the analysis is a rather new approach called "Kvarterløft" used in Danish local planning to empower citizens and local stakeholders. "Kvarterløft" can be described as a set of different network approaches to planning and change, and as a method for establishing active involvement of citizens and other local stakeholders by creating local arenas for dialogue by a variety of initiatives: community study groups, social events and meetings. The approach can be labelled as a bottom up network process, because it builds on the active participation of local actors. The empirical foundation for the project is a qualitative study of 49 citizens that were interviewed over a period of three years. The theoretical approach is inspired by the collaborative planning and deliberative democracy literature.

Keywords are: collaborative planning, deliberative democracy, institutional capacity, institutional capital and empowerment.

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1.0 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to contribute towards the debate on the complex issue of the evaluation of urban regeneration programmes. Actively involving citizens and local stakeholders has been one of the important strategies of Danish urban regeneration projects since the mid-1980's. This is done to empower citizens by mobilising local partnerships and networks in order to improve social cohesion as well as create more effective outcomes and physical improvements (Pløger 2004). The networks that I deal with in this article are ones initiated by a public agent (including a local government), which include both citizens and representatives of local organisations (e.g. sports, environmental organisations and other organized interests) as well as representatives of local public institutions (e.g. schools, day-care institutions, planners and public administrators).

Kvarterløft ("Area lift") is one of the newest initiatives within Danish urban regeneration. It was initiated in 7 areas in 1997 and had a project period of 5 years; five more areas were supplemented in 2001. Kvarterløft has been labelled as an experiment in citizen participation and is characterized by its focus on an integrated approach. It differs from other initiatives in emphasising bottom up processes and citizen participation. This approach builds on the premise that the local residents themselves are best placed to identify the main local problems and how to solve them, and that involving the residents results in better solutions and strengthens the residents' feeling of community (www.kvarterloeft.dk).

The point of departure for my analysis was a curiosity in "who" it was that actually participated in these new forms of collective action and arenas for deliberation. What if it was the local elites or others with resources and skills, typically middle-aged middleclass men? Would all these new channels for citizen participation turn out to be non democratic? Another urgent research question was the relation between the institutional settings for citizen participation for those who actually showed up. And finally the last question was how we can evaluate such processes, what criteria are relevant and which democratic consequences do they have (Agger 2005, Agger & Löfgren 2006).

First some theoretical reflections are presented in section 2 in order to identify concepts and theories that can help us to develop a framework for assessing new network initiatives. In section 3 the Kvarterløft case is described as an example of one of the new forms of governance steering by mobilising local networks for action and change. In section 4 I give a characteristic of "who" participates in the networks. Section 5 provides an analysis of how the citizens experience the institutional design of the participation processes. Section 6 presents potential outcomes from network processes involving citizens. Finally in section 7 I will conclude with the central questions.

2.0 Theoretical departures

Network governance has become a prominent phenomenon among and across private and non-profit sectors in contemporary European states over the past two decades (Sehested 2003). Theoretical and empirical inquiries regarding civic engagement in network settings have begun to be published within a variety of fields of literature. However, there seems to be uncertainty both among scholars as well as practitioners about how to assess these new types of political action and arenas for public deliberation, and there is a demand for frameworks or criteria for appraising the outcome and democratic effects of network governance (Campbell & Marshall 2000, Carr & Halvorsen 2001).

In reviewing the research literature with the intention of finding criteria or modes of evaluating citizen participation in networks I found that several research subjects such as political and social science, public administration and planning were relating to processes of collective action and the role of citizen participation. There seems to be an overall consensus that new ways of governing in the form of governance and steering through networks. Within each research area, however, there were disagreements about how to define and delimit the concept of citizen participation, and about the extent to which how network steering challenged democratic virtues. When I reviewed the theoretical literature with a focus on citizen's role in public planning processes I could observe that the concept of "citizen participation" was a much-contested term with many different underlying democratic ideals. And I could note that words such as "*decentralization*", "*community empowerment*", "*collaboration*", "*public participation – involvement*" and "*participatory planning*" have become fashionable phrases both in politics and in planning research. Public participation is presented in much of the literature as an unalloyed good (Rydin & Pennington 2000). The opening up of the planning process by expanding the scope of public involvement has become part of the political agenda in the last decade. Public participation and communication is viewed as a way of securing better informed political decisions. In this way according to Pløger (2001) it can also be a way of de-politicising planning. Given the interest shown in designing deliberative forums and processes aimed at enhancing citizen participation I choose to look first for ways of appraising network governance.

2.1 Communicative and collaborative planning

Governing by networks creates new challenges for the design of institutional mechanisms that allow political communities to address their common problems. Within the planning literature it has been debated which planning ideals are able to tackle new modes of governing. During the last twenty years a growing number of planning theorists have taken a "communicative turn" (Yiftachel & Huxley 2000). Communicative planning has become one of the most discussed theories within contemporary planning debates. *Communicative planning* (Forester 1989), *Collaborative planning* (Healey 1997), *Pragmatic planning* (Hoch 1984), *Planning as bricolage* (Innes & Booher 1999) are some of the terms that have been used as part of the "communicative planning paradigm" (Innes 1995, Sandercock 1998).

The communicative model draws on two philosophical approaches: American pragmatism as developed in the thought of John Dewey and Richard Rorty and the theory of communicative rationality found on the work of Jürgen Habermas. Even though these two approaches differ in their methodologies there are some common strands that provide a focus on the communicative aspects in empirical studies of planning processes. For example: planning is viewed as part of pluralistic political system and as an interactive and interpretative process, and a reformulation of rationality towards a communicative rationality (Allmedinger 2002).

A rapidly growing literature inspired by these theories has prompted some to articulate the emergence of new forms of “collaborative” (Healey 1997) or deliberative planning (Forester 1999). Communicative planning theory is often associated with studies of how planners do their work, accounts of particular episodes of formalized interaction between participants and analyses of the production of particular strategies and policy tools (Healey 2000, p. 918). By describing real-life cases, they hope to alert planners to the dangers of distorted communication and opportunities for more consensual modes of decision-making (Fischler 2000, p. 358). The collaborative approach is based on the concepts of deliberative democracy (Dryzek 2000) and is concerned with how to create institutional contexts and practices that promote “open dialogue” and encourage the emergence of shared solutions and consensus (Cambell & Marshall 2000). The communicative idea demands a renewed procedural focus of planners. However, there has been a growing debate, over the theoretical bases of, and possibilities for, communicative planning (Huxley 2000).

Patsy Healey (1997) focuses on the institutional settings for deliberations, and has formulated a ‘collaborative planning’ theory. Collaborative planning seeks to bring together major stakeholders to address controversial issues and build consensus rather than use majority rule (Margerum 2002). Collaborative planning can be described as consensus seeking processes that can take many forms in face – to face dialogues, where forces are joined to create outcomes that could not be accomplished alone. The process criteria for a collaborative dialogue are (Innes & Connick 2001):

1. Includes representatives of all relevant interests
2. Is driven by a practical purpose shared in the group
3. Is self-organising
4. Is engaging to the participant as s/he learns and interacts
5. Encourages and challenges assumptions and fosters creativity
6. Incorporates many kinds of high-quality information
7. Seeks consensus following discussions that have fully explored issues and interests

Box 1: Process criteria for collaborative dialogue

These process criteria can be difficult to translate into practical questions that can be used to evaluate citizen participation e.g. “how are relevant interests defined” and by whom? Therefore I needed to find some other criteria for evaluating the outcome of deliberative network processes involving citizens.

Institutional capital and Institutional capacity

A claim among communicative planning theorists is that processes with deliberation and involvement of citizens and local stakeholders often are evaluated by whether agreement is reached (and implemented) or not, and that some of the most important outcomes of such policy dialogues often are invisible, or underestimated, seen through the lenses of the modernist paradigm of government and accountability (Connick & Innes 2001, p. 177). Therefore the communicative and collaborative planning approach applies a broader set of criteria concerned with both the processes themselves and the invisible outcomes, such as shared identities, agreed-on information, end of stalemates, social and political capital and learning and change (Connick & Innes 2003). It is assumed that when collaborative policy dialogues meets certain process criteria (see Box 1) to a substantial degree, a set of outcomes can emerge that go considerably beyond simple agreements.

A way of evaluating the "outcome" of governance processes is by focusing on how, e.g. networks make a difference or improve the institutional capacity in a given community. The concept of institutional capacity sheds light on some of the important democratic capabilities such as the ability to act collectively together towards common visions and goals. In connection to this I have found inspiration in the work of Patsy Healey, Claudio de Magalhaes and Ali Madanipour (1999). They introduce the terms "institutional capital" and "institutional capacity" in the context of urban planning and local governance. The aim is to investigate what these new governance initiatives such as the formation of networks and partnerships deliver and what institutional spin-off effects they generate. The notion of "institutional capital" is an extension of the concept of social capital (Putnam 2000), inspired by the work of Judith Innes and David Booher (1999, 2000). From empirical studies of consensus processes in California, Innes and Booher found that some of the most important outcomes of the processes were not formal agreements but the constitution of three types of capital; *intellectual, social and political capital*. Healey et al (1999) operationalize these concepts in relation to the evaluation of governance projects by focusing on:

- The building of **knowledge resources** (as an expression of intellectual capital)
- The **relational resources** (as an expression of social capital)
- **Mobilisation capacity** (as an expression of political capital)

Even though the communicative planning tradition might have a strong case in producing criteria for deliberation as such, it has not clearly linked to the overall democratic theory debate, and there is a tendency to observe these communicative procedures without taking into account existing representative institutions. Actual citizen involvement does not take place in a void isolated from already existing stakeholders. A methodological framework for studying the democratic effects must therefore also ask questions about the arrangement's connection to established procedures (Agger & Löefgren 2006).

2.2 Empowerment – and endowment

In the political studies literature I found inspiration in Torfing and Sørensen's (2003) work on political participation in a small town in

Denmark. A traditional way of analyzing political participation within political science has been to use the concept of "efficacy", divided into a internal and external dimension. Internal efficacy describes as an actor's self confidence while external efficacy describes the actors confidence in the responsiveness of the system. Sørensen and Torfing find that these concepts are primarily related to formal institutions and do not deal with some of the challenges related to network processes. Building on March and Olsen's (1989) processual analysis of identities and capacities, Torfing and Sørensen develop the notions of *endowment* and *empowerment* as a way of evaluating political participation.

Endowment refers to the aggregative theories of democracy that stress actors ability to gain influence on political decisions and their implementation. Citizens endowment refers to the rights (formal or informal) that entitle actors to act in certain situations as well as the resources (material or nonmaterial) and cognitive competencies (conscious or unconscious) that enable them to act politically (Sørensen and Torfing 2000, p.624). Citizen's endowment refers to the initial conditions for being able to take action in a political process. Sørensen and Torfing assert that it is the institutions that grant rights, resources and competencies on the actors, and there is often a struggle and conflict about the allocation of these.

The concept of empowerment refers to the integrative theories of democracy that stress the importance of the development of the citizen's political identities and competencies. Citizens must have certain political capacities that enable them to convert the initial conditions into effective political action. The types of skills that are mentioned are e.g.: confidence in their own qualities and the responsiveness of the system, political know-how, rhetorical competencies and the ability to create meaning and coherence in the political process (ibid. 624). Torfing and Sørensen (2000) find that the institutional context of deliberations plays a crucial role in the enabling and shaping of citizen's political learning.

3.0 The Kvarterløft case: *Planning through citizen networks*

The Danish Kvarterløft programme was initiated in order to solve some of the physical and social problems that were evolving in several deprived neighbourhoods. Two of the most typical problems were unemployment and a high percentage of immigrants. Kvarterløft is special compared to other Danish urban regeneration programs in the sense that it addresses the neighbourhood and not the single citizen or community owner. It is a comprehensive approach based on an integrated effort in coordinate different public sectors. Finally it is based on the active participation of local actors. The programs run over 5-8 years and are divided into three phases: the first one running focuses on local stakeholders formulating a community plan.

Kvarterløft can be described as a consensus seeking collaborative planning process that seeks to foster active citizen involvement by creating local arenas for dialogue, community study groups, social events and meetings. In all of the chosen areas a local Kvarterløft secretariat has been established with staff working to facilitate the network processes. Kvarterløft's purpose is partly to improve the individual residential areas as a whole and partly to provide models for urban policy in the future.

The empirical foundation for this paper is a qualitative in-depth study of 49 citizens, 15 representatives from the local Kvarterløft secretaries, and 9 public administrators from the municipalities. 21 of the citizens were interviewed two times, in the beginning of the Kvarterløft project and in the middle of the project that is 2 years after. All the informants that were interviewed were chosen because they were active in the first phase of Kvarterløft, which meant that they had some personal experiences of participating in the institutional settings set up to foster citizen involvement.

4.0 Characteristic of “Who” participates in the networks

The first central question is related to “*Who participates in the formal networks created as a result of the Kvarterløft strategy?*” From the interviews it was clear that Kvarterløft by its organization and methods of citizen involvement had an implicit selection mechanism, and thereby favoured citizens with resources. These resources could be: *relational* resources, *knowledge* resources or *time* resources. Relational resources can be defined as network capabilities that enable them to act. Knowledge resources refers to the ability to read and write large amounts of text and the tacit rules relating to meetings and decision procedures. So the active citizens who participate in Kvarterløft can be characterized as being able to to put their resources to good use, meaning that the formal networks that are established in the Kvarterløft process provides them with certain institutional settings, in which they can use and develop their resources for participation. The interviews shows that the motives for peoples participation varies according to which ideals of democracy they have, as well as which organisational experiences they have from previous experiences. In the following I identify two different types of active citizens: that is *expert activists* and *everyday makers*.

Expert activists

Expert activists make up the majority of the informants. They have commonly been involved in the community for several years. They participate in the Kvarterløft often as representatives of local civic associations or organisations. Expert activists are often members of several associations, i.e. school boards, sport groups, local cultural initiatives, local churches or local political parties. They are all greatly engaged and used to getting involved in local politics. The empirical findings illustrate that it is possible to differentiate between those expert activists that participate on the basis of a *local political party approach* and a *local patriotic approach*.

Several of the interviewed citizens were members of a political party, but it was not always that they talked about their memberships to other fellow citizens. But the membership of a political party can be seen as a resource because it provides networks involving and contacts with decision makers and local authorities. Some of the local party political controversies and prejudgements among the members of local politic parties were transferred to the kvarterløft process. But there seemed to be a tendency towards trying to find common understandings and compromises rather than get into conflict.

The outset for the participation of the local patriotic approach is typically a membership of one of the local housing or community associations. Their style of participation is often more “grass route like”, which should be

understood as a less formal way in contradiction to the more political that give more importance to formal procedures and dialogue with their support base. Even though that they participate as members of an association they tend to participate in a more individualistic style. They are often the "initiators" and "drives" in many local projects. Larsen (1999) describes these type of participants as "city mammas or neighbourhood fathers". They have often initiated successful local projects in the neighbourhood, and know how to act politically and strategically when it come to realising procects.

Expert activist are a resource for the Kvarterløft project in the sense that they initiate a lot of projects, they know how to fundraise and lobby for projects. But they can also have a tendency not to be open for new and other modes of participation. Citizens who do not have access to these networks or who do not know the styles and habits of discussions and debate can therefore easily be excluded from efforts aimed at enhancing cooperation and negotiation between many interested parties and local authorities.

Everyday Makers

The term everyday maker derives from Bang and Sørensen 's (XXXX) study of political participation in Denmark. An everyday maker can be described as a person who participates in relation to a particular issue or case, and they are not members of any association or organisation. As a result they have no support basis that they can relate to and often no experience with participation. Their style of participation can be characterized by that they participate part time or ad-hoc in projects that are close to their everyday life.

The informants in the study that are labelled as everyday makers were often young women, some with children and some studying for qualification. Their reason for participating was often a particular interest in e.g. improving the traffic around their childrens school or the sports facilities close to their home. The empirical study shows that everyday makers can be divided into those who participate in order to obtain concrete physical improvements in their community in relation to their everyday life, and those who participate because they find that they can develop skills that they can then use in their studies or working life.

Representatives from local institutions

A third group of active participants in the Kvarterløft project was made up of representatives from local institutions in the neighbourhood, e.g. schools, kindergartens or major sport or interest organisations in the community. These people do not usually live but rather work in the neighbourhood and they participate while they are at work. Often they have contacts and know the code of conduct or language that best facilitates communication with the municipality.

Citizens interviewed for the study saw the participation of representatives from local institutions in the Kvarterløft process as an advantage because their participation contributed to a continuation in the process, especially after the first year where many citizens dropped out of the process. However, some of the informants saw it as a disadvantage that representatives from the local institutions did not live in the

community. They suggested that there could be a risk of the interest of the municipality and that of the local institutions coinciding, since the latter often were an integrated part of the municipality.

Characteristics of citizens who drop out or do not participate

The characteristics of those who do not participate is based on interviews with the active citizens in the Kvarterløft project. This is important to bear in mind because a group that is often missing in the Kvarterløft project is e.g. the busy or those groups with many resources that choose not to participate because of lack of time.

Based on the interviews with the active citizens those who do not participate in the Kvarterløft projects or other similar projects are typically ethnic minorities, the young and those with few resources. It is a democratic right not to participate, but the question is whether certain groups consciously choose not to participate, or if their non-participation is caused by structural power relations.

The empirical material shows that many of those citizens who in the beginning showed interest in the process drop out during the first year. One of the conclusions in this project is that it requires political resources to participate in processes that run over a longer period. Those citizens who do not have knowledge resources and positive experiences from previous projects have a tendency to stop participating after a short period. The Kvarterløft projects have been attentive to this and have sought to create "small visible projects" within the first year, in order to show the citizens that their participation matters.

5.0 Citizen's Experiences of the institutional settings of the planning process

The second central question in this paper is: *what significance does institutional setting and time scale have for how citizen's experience participation?* The case study shows that institutional design plays an important role for "Who" participates. The Kvarterløft strategy is built implicitly on an idea of the "engaged citizen" who has the time to participate in meetings, be part of local study groups and is able to understand legal and technical language. The empirical study indicates that citizens have different perception of the kind of support they needed from the local Kvarterløft secretariat. This difference can be related to different notions of democracy and participation. The *expert activists* seem to be inspired by a perception of democracy where elected politicians should delegate power to the active citizens. In their opinion the Kvarterløft process did not provide them with the decision making competence that they had expected. Several of the expert activists find that they have been delegated responsibility but no real decision-making competences. In opposition to this perspective is the everyday maker who is more inspired by an ideal of representative democracy. They express that they have been positively surprised by the influence that they have got. They feel that they have got sufficient resources to participate in the process and they have faith in their own capabilities as well as the responsiveness from the municipality.

The Kvarterløft strategy is based on a perception that local consensus among the stakeholders can be reached after a fair and rational debate. This is in line with the theories of deliberative democracy and collaborative planning. It can be concluded that the Kvarterløft strategy with its emphasis

on creating consensus is remarkably effective if there is agreement among the involved actors. In spite of this positive feature the Kvarterløft strategy seems to have difficulty in those cases where there have been conflicts and differences in interests among the local stakeholders. It is as if the Kvarterløft strategy assumes that simply by bringing different interest groups together as "stakeholders" in the process in a consensual decision will result. But in practice there were many kinds of differences in interests that resulted in conflict, and there was uncertainty about how to handle these. In several cases citizens have asked for guidelines on how to overcome conflicts. Some wanted more time to discuss the conflicts, which were typically the expert activists, where the everydaymakers preferred politicians or civil servants to deal with the disagreements at an early stage. In some cases disagreements between groups of citizens can be interpreted as conflicting concepts of democracy. Some of the established networks will see themselves as selected representatives with a broad platform in the community, while other voluntary groups or citizens do not feel that these groups have public legitimacy to talk on behalf of the community.

The case study demonstrates that it is difficult for the planners and civil servants to facilitate and mediate conflict. This is partly caused by the fact that often civil servants from the different departments within the municipality were not clear on internal roles, such as who was responsible for the process. Another condition that made it difficult for the local planners to facilitate the process or act as mediators was that the expert activists did not regard them as the legitimate democratic actors for this role. Instead they demanded political announcements when there were conflicts around certain issues. In practice in several cases it was the chief planners who intervened when the process came to a dead end.

6.0 The outcomes of deliberation

The third central question was: *What are the outcomes of deliberative processes?* In order to answer this question I looked at the individual citizen's empowerment and endowment and at the generation of institutional capital and capabilities at a more societal level.

Outcomes for the individual citizen

From the analysis it is possible to conclude that the majority of citizens who participated in the Kvarterløft project over a period of one year achieved improvements in their political skills. They become better at engaging in local politics and they gain knowledge about the formal and informal paths to influence that can be used to push forward a given issue. Another outcome is the increase in social capital among participants. Following Putnam's concepts about bonding and bridging social capital the case study reveals a shift in the character of social capital. In the beginning of the process the bonding type of social capital among groups of citizens that knew each other from former projects was more evident. But in the middle of the process the interviewed citizens indicated that an important outcome of participating in the project was that they now worked and participated with new and other kinds of groups and people. In relation to this the empirical data also show a shift in the preferences of "why" the citizens participate in the process. In the beginning of the Kvarterløft process the citizens gave more particularistic motives for their participation, whereas in

the middle of the process their reasons are more common or altruistic. Another outcome for individual citizens was new knowledge and an increase in intellectual capital. Several of the citizens expressed that they have been endowed by becoming more aware of their own resources and the possibilities that exists to act and gain influence politically.

Outcomes for the community

The Kvarterløft case demonstrates that local neighbourhoods have become better able to act together in participating in the process.

In the early stages of the Kvarterløft process many of stakeholders tended to talk primarily with those they already knew or shared meanings with. But as time passed, stakeholders with opposing views came to know one another and developed empathy and reciprocity for each other's interests. Many of the networks developed shared understandings of a problem and a sense of collective responsibility. They also developed informal relationships by working together and several of the interviewed citizens expressed that it was the social relations that made them stay in the process. In this way, the community has improved its institutional capacity. This is also demonstrated by the fact that citizens have gained a stronger sense of neighbourhood identity.

Another result of the process was that many new networks were established involving actors that had not been working together before. These new networks were formed both at a horizontal level, involving citizens and representatives of local organizations in the community, and at a vertical level involving planners and civil servants from municipal institutions. The social capital created in these new relations can be characterized as both bonding and bridging. They are bridging in the sense that they contain a broader set of local actors who previously had competed for the same resources now work together towards common visions and goals. But these networks can also be characterized as exclusive in the sense that members of the networks have, due to their participation over a longer period, developed strong bonds and common understandings and visions. As a result, it can appear difficult for outsiders to follow the tacit rules and modes of interaction that the network has developed over time. The analysis illustrates that social relations help to maintain participation.

Another important outcome mentioned by the citizens was that the Kvarterløft strategy had contributed to a change in municipal planners and civil servants attitude towards collaboration with citizens. This was especially evident in the new ways in which public meetings were held and information was communicated to the citizens.

6.0 Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to discuss how best to evaluate the new forms of governance that have emerged the past ten years. The mobilisation of citizens in networks involving public and private actors is a new approach evident in Danish Urban regeneration projects aimed at tackling social and physical problems in deprived neighbourhoods. My intention was to present a tentative framework for assessing these new deliberative arenas in order to reflect on whether they are more "effective"

in tackling these type's of urban problems, and in order to discuss the democratic challenges that they pose.

The theoretical framework was based on new theories of collaborative planning that provide us with a focus on some of the many invisible outcomes of deliberations that often go unassessed in traditional evaluations of policy processes. That said, collaborative planning does not look at the democratic effects of network processes nor does it assess certain initial conditions or platforms required for participation, or indeed if these platforms provides possibilities for the development of political capital and a political identity. As a result I chose to turn to the concept of endowment derived from aggregative theories of democracy that stresses the formal rights and resources required for participation. I also looked at the concept of empowerment referred to the integrative theories of democracy that stresses the fact that deliberative processes can also develop citizens political capacities.

The case study of the Kvarterløft project was chosen as an example of a consensus-seeking collaborative process focused on involving citizens by creating and mobilising local networks. The results of conclusions from the analysis showed that the Kvarterløft can be seen as an effective way of using public resources. Target areas prioritised by the affected citizens themselves has contributed to a stronger sense of "local identity", which has led to a stronger sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. Finally, the Kvarterløft strategy has played an important role in mobilising a number of new networks involving private and public actors from the neighbourhoods, which continue to bring new resources and are able to undertake and coordinate efforts in the area.

Whether the Kvarterløft strategy can be labelled as a more democratic mode of tackling urban regeneration depends on the democratic yardstick against which it is evaluated. It is important to note that only a minority of the total number of residents in the neighbourhood actually participate in the process. Participating in the process requires certain skills and resources that not everyone has, such as the time to attend evening meetings on week days, the ability to understand scientific information and legal material. In this way the Kvarterløft project and other projects focused on involving citizens can indirectly favour a minority of citizens since not many people have the knowledge and time to engage properly in such a comprehensive voluntary planning process.

So the irony is that instead of being a inclusive bottom up process involving a broader scope of citizens than in many traditional planning processes it ends up being "participation for the few".

A question that emerges from this fact is whether these new kinds of network governance are justified if only very few members of the community are able to participate. My point is that it is important for planners and other civil servants that seek to work mobilise citizens through networks to recognize that methods or institutional designs attracts certain types of participants. Therefore it is essential not only to use a wide range of methods but also to identify and invite groups that do not normally get involved in participatory processes. I

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