

How can we promote upstream and bottom-up approaches in deliberative and participatory processes?

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SIFO-seminar on "The future of deliberative processes in emerging technologies"

The Danish debate about nuclear power as an example of citizen involvement

- Included NGO activities, citizen meetings, media debates with many different experts etc.
- Involvement of the public on many levels and initiated by different institutions and organisations

Establishment of the Danish Board of Technology in 1986

- Institutionalisation of the debate
- Close relations with the Parliament
- Anticipating new debates, in particular about gene technology
- First consensus conference in 1987 about gene technology in industry and agriculture,
 - - followed up by support to local debates about new biotechnologies

Tensions

- A tension between legitimacy and enhancing democracy
- A tension between experts and lay people

'Bottom-up meanings' of science and technology

(U. Felt & M. Fochler)

- Involvement of the public as a 'gold standard'
- Collective experimentation vs. standardised best practises
- Fact/value division: accepting the superiority of scientific knowledge?
- Uninvited forms of civic engagement
- More complex visions of governance than producing a formal input to the government policy process must be envisaged

Two problems regarding citizen participation

- Most forms of public participation are focused on downstream risks or impacts, “reflecting the false assumption that public concerns are about only instrumental consequences and not also crucially about what human purposes are driving science and innovation in the first place”.
- It is assumed that the task of defining what the salient issues are within processes of public engagement automatically falls to experts, leaving citizens with “no capability nor proper role in autonomously creating and negotiatingmore diverse public meanings”.

(Brian Wynne (2005), Risk as globalising “democratic” discourse. Framing subjects and citizens In: I. Scoones et.al: Science and citizens, Zed Books, London)

Wilsdon and Willis: 'See through science: Why public engagement needs to move upstream' (London: Demos, 2004)

- Make visible the invisible, expose to public scrutiny the assumptions, values and visions that drive science
- The tyranny of risk assessment
- Who needs the technology?
- Opening up rather than closing down

Opening up:

- Tasting food, tasting sustainability: Defining the attributes of an alternative food system with competent ordinary people
Kloppenburger et.al. (2000), *Human Organization*, 59:2, 177-186.
- Question: "A sustainable food system is one in which...."
- Answers: Formulation of a number of new attributes of a sustainable food system as compared to existing academic or policy formulations

Two different sets of attributes characterising a sustainable food system: by "competent ordinary people" (left) and by academic researchers (right) (Kloppenburger et al., 2000)

Table 3. Comparison of MFAI and WFRP Formulations of Attributes of a Sustainable Food System

MFAI Rural-Urban Conference Project	Wisconsin Foodshed Research Project
Ecologically sustainable	Environmentally sustainable
Knowledgeable/ Communicative	
Proximate	Proximate
Economically sustaining	Economically sustaining
Participatory	Participatory
Just/Ethical	Just
Sustainably regulated	
Sacred	
Healthful	Healthful
Diverse	Diverse
Culturally nourishing	
Seasonal/Temporal	
Value-oriented (associative) economics	
Relational	

Community engagement for science and sustainability: Citizen science for sustainability, www.SuScit.org.uk

- Open and reflexive framing, and valuing local knowledge
- Supporting lay participants through the use of appropriate facilitation and engagement tools
- Work with and through the local community

Citizen science for sustainability, continued:

Five Phases of Action Research

Phase 1: Engaging Local Communities and Recruiting Participants

Three different groups participated in the SuSci dialogue process:

- The **Researchers' Panel** comprised senior academics with expertise across a broad spectrum of urban sustainability issues.
- The **Sustainability Practitioners' Panel** comprised professionals from local, regional and national stakeholder organisations.
- Three **Residents' Panels** reflecting ethnic and cultural diversity of the local area: A **Young Peoples' Panel** (16-21 years); a **Women and Lone Parents' Panel**; and an **Older Peoples' Panel** (65+).

Phase 2: Exploring Narratives and Perceptions of Urban Sustainability

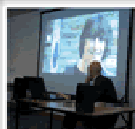
- Community Film Projects.
- Exploratory Meetings and Focus Groups.



Community film projects allowed residents to articulate their own perspectives. Residents developed their own stories of living in their local community and what the environment and sustainability meant to them.

Phase 3: Sharing Local Knowledge and Experience

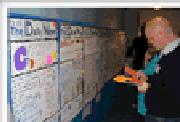
- 1st Shared Workshop.



All participants together watched and deliberated upon the films, which very powerfully brought to life the concerns and interests of the local community.

Phase 4: Visioning Sustainable Communities

- 2nd Shared Workshop.



Residents, practitioners and researchers together undertook simple visioning exercises to explore the community's aspirations for a sustainable urban future.

Phase 5: Developing a Community Led Agenda for Urban Sustainability Research

- Researcher and Practitioner Workshop.
- 3rd Shared Workshop.



Researchers and Practitioners sought to develop a research agenda which responded to the concerns and priorities of citizens in Mildmay and similar communities.