# Area-based Initiatives – a Facilitator for Participatory Governance?

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## INTRODUCTION: THE EMERGENCE OF AREA-BASED INITIATIVES IN EUROPE IN THE 1990S

Area-based initiatives (ABI) emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a new policy tool in the context of urban regeneration in various European countries, most notably Denmark, the Netherlands, the UK, France and - somewhat later – Germany. These countries were considered as leading the way in their implementation and development (Oberti 2000; Atkinson 2000; Andersen 2001). However, it is difficult to say exactly when ABIs first emerged as policy instruments as there were initiatives could be classified as ABIs in the UK in the 1960s and in France in the 1980s. The wider application of ABIs across Europe was the result of a new discourse on urban poverty associated with the growing recognition of a new form of urban social exclusion that gained relevance in a number of EU member states during the 1990s (Mingione 1996). The identification of so called neighbourhood effects was part of this debate, indicating that the neighbourhood, understood as a socio-spatial entity, had a reinforcing negative effect on the life chance of individuals living in these areas (Friedrichs et al. 2003). Hence, neighourhoods were considered as the appropriate scale for more systemic approaches in which to tackle social exclusion and urban poverty. Although researchers have long pointed out that the causes of urban poverty cannot be eradicated at such a small scale level as they are the result of structural forces rooted in the wider social and economic system

1

(e.g. Hamnett 1979). Neverthless, ABIs have become very much *en vogue* in European urban policies.

What characterizes ABIs is a decentralized, integrated and multidisciplinary approach. The combination of physical urban regeneration with other policy sectors such as education, labour market policy, youth care, health care, and transport within a focussed territorial framework was believed to produce more effective interventions. Although policies differed considerably between cities and states in Europe we can say that following three aspects characterize ABI approaches in Europe:

- Partnership and co-governance between public and private social service providers and departments of local government

- Territorial or place-based approach, i.e. a concentration of resources within a functional space

- Participation of citizens (in part following the communicative turn in planning[1]).

Thus new tools such as neighbourhood management, integrated approaches, neighbourhood forums, flexible funding schemes and citizen participation were central to ABIs. The European Commission was strongly in favour of such an approach and has supported ABIs since the 1990s. The EU joint community intiatives URBAN I and II were a stimulant for many cities and can be seen as precursor of what was later called the place-based and territorial approach in the EU structural funds.

In the remainder of this chapter we will discuss the role ABIs played vis-a-vis participatory governance. As we will explain in Section 2, in theoretical terms ABIs contribute in a particular way to participatory governance. Section 3 will provide insights into the empirical

reality of a selection of 'typical' ABIs drawing on the UK and Germany as they illustrate some of the key trends in the use and development of ABIs as well as their 'problems'. In the conclusion we discuss the contribution of ABIs to a more effective participatory governance.

## PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE AND AREA-BASED INITIATIVES

It was hoped that ABIs would resolve many of the problems associated with public sector policies that had visibly failed to tackle social exclusion and deprived neighbourhoods. ABIs held out the promise that targetting and better coordination of (physical) urban regeneration policies with more traditonal social policies within a given spatial framework would create a more tailored approach for the particular situation and character of a place, along with the inclusion of private actors, these are the core elements of ABIs. In addition, as they developed, it was hoped ABIs would create new and innovative ways of delivering public services within these areas that would better meet the needs of those living there compared to the more traditional methods of service delivery. The inclusion of the residents of a disadvantaged area was also an important aspect of ABI as this considered to provide them with greater (local) legitimacy and would integrate the knowledge of local people into the process of problem identification and service delivery. However, the practice differed considerably between European states and even between cities within a state. Whether this can be called effective participatory governance depends very much on the definition of particpatory governance. In the context of ABIs, the aspiration to implement inclusion or participation often went further than stakeholder participation as the residents were asked, to varying degrees, to bring in resources (such as local volunteers), local knowledge and some

3

capacity for self-organization. Participation in ABIs also goes beyond traditonal notions of participation of citizens as many residents are not citizens in the strict sense of the word (as voters). In many deprived areas, migrants lack legal entitlements to vote but nevertheless take part in regeneration initiatives. ABIs go beyond the citizen approach by inviting all residents to participate and take over some responsibility for the neighbourhood. While, to a certain degree, being influenced by the 'communicative turn in planning', participation in ABIs differs from other particpatory approaches in planning such as conflict resolution for intractable policy controversies or conflict mediation with regard to controversial urban development projects (referendums etc.), arguably being longer term (for the life of an ABI and beyond) and more 'active' (in the sense of playing a role in the running of ABIs). In additon to gaining greater acceptance (i.e. legitimacy) for policies, participatory governance in ABIs is more about creating stable networks of communication, activitating residents and mobilizing ideas for the neighbourhood. This is also the reason why social capital theory found such a strong resonance in the ABI-discussion (Hibbit et al. 2001; Lowndes and Wilson 2001).

'Investment' in social capital, understood as a relational resource as well as preparedness for civic engagement, was thought to make integrated urban regeneration inititiaves more self-sustaining. At the same time, experience in the implementation of ABIs showed that civic networks existed in many neigbourhoods although they were not always considered a valuable resource by professional social service providers (Zimmermann 2010, IfS 2004).

In 1994 the European Commission launched the first URBAN initiative to promote integrated urban development in European cities. The aim of the initiative was to support the

4

development and implementation of innovative strategies for regeneration of disadvantaged urban areas/neighbourhoods, the results of which could then be disseminated to other cities to support them in their urban development strategies. URBAN I was considered a success and URBAN II was launched in 2000. Both rounds of URBAN aimed to support positive improvements in neighbourhoods in crisis and to create the basis for longer term change. This was to be achieved through a variety of interconnected actions: inter-sectoral coordination of activities; the focusing of funds on particular areas; horizontal coordination of urban regeneration actions and involvement of the local community and local stakeholders. This latter aspect was seen to be particularly important given that the local community living in the selected areas were those who were considered to be socially excluded and there was a recognised need to build community capacity and what we now term social capital (see Atkinson 2000). Both URBAN initiatives, including the emphasis on community participation, were considered to be a success and influenced the development of urban initiatives in a number of EU member states (e.g. Italy, Spain, Germany) that had previously not utilised such instruments. Post 2006 the URBAN approached was mainstreamed into the main structural funds, notably the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). However rather than being more widely used the view of the European Commission was that the 'URBAN approach' was either lost or became blurred (CEC 2008)

The emphasis on a greater role for citizens also chimed with arguments put forward in the European Commission's White Paper on European Governance (CEC 2001). The key issues the White Paper stressed were:  better involvement and more openness, better policies, regulation and delivery, global governance, and refocused institutions.

Good governance and local empowerment were central to these issues, particularly as the Commission sought to justify and legitimate its interventions by arguing that its actions complimented and added value to those of member states. In particular the Commission aimed to address the growing devolution of power to regions and cities by ensuring that these areas and their representative organisations were more effectively represented and integrated into EU decision-making processes.

While the European Commission's 'White paper on European Governance' (CEC 2001) did not specifically refer to urban policy (see Atkinson 2002 for a discussion of its implications for urban policy) it is clear that the issues raised were similar to many of the concerns of URBAN, particularly greater involvement of citizens in decision-making and influence over policies that affected their lives. However, as with the mainstreaming of the URBAN approach the issues raised by the White Paper became lost or blurred in subsequent debates and it is now a largely 'forgotten document'. Despite this many of the issues addressed by URBAN and the White Paper have reappeared in the post-2014 structural funds with the highlighting of issues such as Integrated Sustainable Urban Development, Community Led Local Development and the mainstreaming of the LEADER approach (see Atkinson and Zimmermann 2016), once again participation of local people in urban initiatives is on the agenda.

In June 2016 the new Urban Agenda of the EU was published under the Dutch presidency (Dutch Presidency 2016). The document is called Pact of Amsterdam and highlights – among many other things – an integrated and participatory approach to urban governance (p. 8). However, with regard to participation the Pact of Amsterdam goes not beyond the state of the

art of URBAN suggesting that thinking about this issue has reached its 'limits' at EU level and that we are unlikely to see any new innovations vis-a-vis participation in the future.

## Understanding Participation in Area-based Initiatives

In this section we discuss three approaches that throw light, albeit in different ways, on participatory governance in relation to ABIs. First of all we consider associational democracy (Hirst 1994 and 2000) in the context of the development of governance capacity, in terms of engaging with and in some cases managing ABIs, to associations of residents. Then we turn to an approach that has been particularly influential in both Anglo-Saxon literature and practice – Arnstein's (1969) 'Ladder of Participation'. Finally we provide reflections on the implications of Schmitter's (2002) analysis of different roles and types of stakeholders for ABIs.

### Associational Democracy and Governance

Hirst's 'Associative Democracy – new models of economic and social governance' (Hirst 1994) reads in many ways like a handbook for ABIs. He described a decentralized and pluralistic model of associational democracy that, according to him, provided for a balance between centralized decision-making and localist ways of governing welfare services and the local economy. Hirst formulated this model in opposition to the prevailing individualistic and managerialist models of the changing welfare state that dominated the discussion in the 1990s, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world where neo-liberalism had become firmly entrenched as the political ideology setting the agenda and as the driving force of politics.

Advocates of associational democracy also argued against the technical professionalism and bureaucracy that tends to separate out problems that require integrated and context-based solution (Hirst 2000, p. 21 and p. 28). This approach may be described as the 'silo mentaility' whereby complex problems, such as poverty and social exclusion, are broken down into disconnected elements considered the domain of particularly bureacracies and/or professions and then addressed in isolation.

Hence, Hirst is not only advocating the use of deliberative modes of decision-making but also associational forms of economic and social governance on a small scale. This includes a primary role for all kinds of civic associations and social entreprises in the coordination and delivery of policies and services. Participation acts as the mobilising force for the building of collective capacities and hence of collective action and innovation for solving problems of an area.

In the context of ABIs and urban regeneration in deprived urban areas this implies supporting associations of residents and/or local (civic) entrepreneurs to develop governance capacity to engage with them and run them. Examples are associations that take care of green spaces in the district (and receive funding for it), the management of cultural institutions or community centres in partnership with the municipality, child care facilities organized by parental associations, self-governing housing associations or cooperatives (*Genossenschaften*), associations of shop owners investing jointly in marketing or the quality of public infrastructure etc. The idea of *Genossenschaften* is very old in Germany but similar organisational forms can be found in other states as well (housing cooperatives in the UK, *société coopérative* in France, *cooperativa* in Italy). Many of the ideas of Hirst's associational

democracy have also been taken up in the debate on the relevance and effectiveness of the 'third sector' (see e.g. Wolf and Zimmer 2012). More recent debates on the sharing economy and social innovation can be seen as developments of the idea of associational governance.

Hirst's notion of associational democracy provides the theoretical underpinning for the argument that broader inclusion of the residents within the context of ABIs should be more than merely an instrument for better implementation of plans or finding majorities for the ultimate decision to make. Activitating citizens to engage in political and associational life is a goal of its own in many ABI programmes in Europe and goes beyond direct democratic elements such as referenda or communicative planning. Hirst did not claim that associational governance is the primary form of participatory governance but a necessary supplement: 'Elections and referenda are relatively infrequent and only decide certain salient issues, whereas governance is a continuous process and all of its decisions cannot be subject to majority approval' (Hirst 2000, p. 27).

In the model of associational governance, functions are transferred to civic associations on a permanent basis (Hirst 2000, p. 29). This is why new forms of social citizenship are a crucial element. A citizen forum, then, is not just an instrument for participation but a form of societal self-governance (see Schuppert 1989, p. 141; 1997). This also indicates how this approach differs from that of corporatism (Schuppert 1997, p. 125). In contrast to exclusive 'private interest governments' (Streeck and Schmitter 1996) the spectrum of actors and the organizational forms of associations in ABIs is much broader. Although civic associations may organize collective interest the idea of associative democracy implies that they produce public value.

**Community, Participation and Empowerment**

The Anglo-Saxon debates about ABIs have been closely associated with several key notions: community, participation and empowerment (see Atkinson and Cope, 1997; Atkinson 1999). Certainly in the case of the UK community and associated notions of community participation and community empowerment have been central to urban policy and associated ABIs since the early 1990s and the same can be said of other West European states. These terms have been the subject of much debate and we lack the space here to enter into them in any detail. However, it is necessary to at least sketch out the key issues surrounding each and their implications for ABIs.

In terms of community (see Lyons, 1987 for a discussion of the development of the notion) its relevance is derived from the assumption that ABIs have been directed at communities, more specifically deprived or socially excluded communities (see Atkinson 2000). In many instances the term community has been treated as self-evident, however, the meaning of the term has been increasing interrograted since its re-emergence in academic debates of the 1980s. Scholars referred back to work of Hillery (1955) who identified 94 different definitions of 'community' in the literature, arguing that generally they refer to 'persons in social interaction within a geographic area and having one or more additional common ties' (Hillery 1955, p. 111). More generally the literature identifies two meanings: communities of place and communities of interest. ABIs have tended to focus on communities of place, albeit implicitly assuming that those living in the space designated as an ABI shared a common interest related to that place. However, it has been increasingly accepted that people belong to

10

multiple communities with which they have simultaneous and different degrees of attachment. As Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett (1994, p. 228) noted they 'have multiple identities and linkages'. Thus they have flexible, shifting and coterminus membership of communities that change in relevance and intensity over time. As a result ABIs have had to acknowledge that they were dealing with multiple communities rather than a single unified community and must address this issue by developing approaches to participation and empowerment that takes this into account.

Participation and empowerment have been closely linked in the literature (see Atkinson and Cope 1997; Atkinson 1999 and 2008; Atkinson and Carmichael 2007) with the former being seen as a means of achieving the latter. The work of Arnstein (1969) has been particularly influential and widely referred to in these debates. Arnstein constructed an eight-rung 'ladder of citizen participation' (Arnstein 1969, p. 217) that seeks to identify 'significant gradations of citizen participation' (ibid.). 'Therapy' and 'manipulation' are placed at the bottom of the ladder and they are seen to represent forms of 'non-participation' as their aim 'is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable powerholders to "educate" or "cure" the participants' (ibid.). 'Placation', 'consultation' and 'informing' are found on the middle 'rungs' of the ladder and are tokenistic forms of citizen participation through which 'citizens may indeed hear and be heard [but] lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by the powerful' (ibid.). 'Citizen control', 'delegated power' and 'partnership' are situated on the uppermost 'rungs' of the ladder and represent 'levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making clout' (ibid.). The

attraction is obvious; the ladder of participation provides an apparently straightforward way of assessing and measuring citizen participation and empowerment.

Needless to say this ladder of participation has been subject to considerable criticism; Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett (1994, pp. 153-179) provide what is perhaps the most succinct and apposite criticism of Arnstein's ladder. They argued that citizens are likely to experience a range of forms of participation and degrees of participation vis-á-vis different domains and the level of influence they are able to excerise will vary in each domain (e.g. education, health , the local authority). Moreover, they go on argue that citizen participation and influence will vary in different arenas of decision-making, particularly where it is more 'technical' requiring 'expert knowledge' (e.g. finance and administration, air pollution policy, strategic environmental assessment). Taken together this means that using a single ladder of participation is at best a highly generalised measure of citizen participation. Moreover, they argue that 'the rungs of the ladder should not be considered to be equidistant' (Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett 1994, p. 161). Nevertheless Arnstein's work has continued to exercise considerable influence perhaps because of its simplicity and ease of use regardless of how adequately it is able to capture the complex nature of participation and empowerment.

**The holder concept of partipatory governance**

In his contribution to a book entitled 'Participatory Governance' (Grote and Gbiki 2002), Schmitter argues for the need to go beyond the common understanding of the stakeholder as an interest holder and starts from the observation that seeks to answer the question 'Who should get the right to participate?'. A response based on the idea of formal citizenship (i.e.

12

people with the legal right to vote) is deemed to be insufficient in a society where governing and the sphere of governance extend far beyond a state-centred vision of policy-making. He introduces the concept of multiple holders. Holders are 'persons (or collective actors such as community associations) that possess some quality or resource'' (Schmitter 2002, p. 62) that are relevant 'according to the substance of the problem that has to be solved or the conflict that has to be resolved' (Schmitter 2002, p. 63). Based on such particular 'qualities or resources' he identifies a number of holders (Schmitter 2002, pp. 62-63). In addition to the citizen as the traditional 'right holder', i.e. a person that has legal rights and obligations to act as a citizen and 'stake holders' and 'interest holders' that are well known in the discussion on stakeholder democracy and participatory planning, he suggest other types of holders. 'Spatial holders', for instance, are place-based residents (not necessarily citizens with a legal status or the entitlement to vote in elections). They are expexted to bring in place-based concerns or potentials (i.e specific deficits of a neighbourhood). 'Share holders' are owners of property or territory and therefore holders of relevant resources (business community in particular but also home owners). 'Knowledge holders' bring in local knowledge and/or expertise about the subject at stake. 'Status holders' are actors 'that have been recognized by the authorities ultimately responsible for decisions and formally accorded the right to represent a designated social, economic or political category' (Schmitter 2002, pp. 62- 63). This includes giving special status to women, children, migrants, etc. As

'Schmitter concentrates on "the apposite criterion according to the substance of the problem that has to be solved or the conflict that has to be resolved" (Schmitter 2002, p.63) his answer to the question: "Who should participate?" has a bias towards effectiveness. In

short, only those possessing some quality or resource to solve a particular problem or to resolve a specific conflict are given the entitlement to participate' (Heinelt 2010, p. 29).

In contrast to the other holder categories, this is different in respect to 'status holders' because their quality or resource which entitled them to participate is a particular politically defined status, i.e. a 'right to represent a designated social, economic or political category'. And it can be argued that 'status holders'

'have been "recognized" and formally accorded [this] specific right […] in the shadow of (potential) political conflicts [or] because without such recognition a particular policy [for example aiming to achieve social cohesion in an urban area; inserted by Atkinson and Zimmermann] runs the risk of losing or never acquiring legitimacy, or political and societal acceptance. In this respect, the 'granting' of a status addresses the effectiveness of a policy, but not in a simple economic or technical sense, [but] rather in an essentially political way, i.e. by addressing the issue of legitimacy' (Heinelt 2010, p. 30f.).


## AREA-BASED INITIATIVES AND PARTICIPATION IN GERMANY

The use and implementation of ABIs in Germany was closely connected to the urban development assistance programme Social City (*Soziale Stadt*) (Krummacher et al. 2003; Zimmermann 2010). The programme started in 1999 under the red-green coalition that came to office in 1998 and was a joint initiative of the 16 German federal states and federal government. It focused on stabilising and upgrading economically and socially deprived, run down quarters and communities. In particular the programme aimed to facilitate better coordination between physcial urban regeneration and social policies. Hence, the scope of the

14

programme was very broad. It included education, labour market policies, inclusion of migrants, economic development, housing and mobility, urban regeneration, cultural policies, housing and security. The programme was desigend to facilitate synergies between agencies responsible for all these policies through all kinds of partnerships and networked governance. New instruments such as neighbourhood management, district agencies and integrated district concepts were introduced into political practice. In part integrated concepts were made obligatory in the funding scheme to make sure that all policies were better coordinated within a territorial framework. In order to be flexible and allow for a maximum of precision of the intervention the decision on the territorial perimeter was left to the municipalities. The areas ranged from bigger districts to smaller neighbourhoods. In terms of residents the programme included areas with more than 50.000 in large scale social housing estates to less than 5.000 in smaller inner city areas (IfS 2004). Of course size and number of residents have an impact on the choice of the strategy for participation and the effectiveness of participation. Up to 2015 715 projects have been financed in 418 municipalities.[2]

The Social City programme was strongly inspired by URBAN I and II and in some cities URBAN and Social City were implemented in a complementary way. Although urban regeneration programmes (*Städtebauförderung*) for deprived neighbourhoods had existed in Germany since the early 1970s what Social City added was a more integrated and participatory approach to what previously were isolated financial aids and policies ranging from physical renewal of houses, investments in public infrastructure (schools, parks, streets) and social infrastructure. However, some of the German federal states such as Northrhine-Westfalia and Hamburg had already experimented with ABIs in the first half of the 1990s

(Selle 1991; Alisch and Dangschat 1993; Froessler 1994) and the nationwide programme drew on the experiences of these initiatives and, in addition, to the emerging European approach of integrated urban renewal (URBAN).

The aspiration of the programme was also to implement the idea of the so called 'activating state' (*Aktivierender Staat*) (see Jann 2003 pp. 111-113) that was part of the governmental agenda of the Schröder government in the early 2000s (Mayer 2013). In a sense the activating state complemented the new public management approach by bring about the modernisation of a welfare state that was deemed to be too costly and not effective enough in tackling social problems. Part of the agenda of the activating state was the use of new forms of partnership between public and private agencies and the mobilization of civic engagement and the third sector. This idea was quite influential in the design of the Social City programme that was considered to be part of the modernisation of local goverment and the welfare state.

A particular feature of the programme was the support of self-organizing capacities by place-based civic groups and associations (IfS 2004 p.121). However, it was clear from the beginning that the programme was temporary in nature. This implied that after an estimated period of approximately three to four years, the programme was expected to stop and civic associations or third sector organizations should take over some of the tasks and functions of urban renewal and social development. Although successful in some cases, this goal turned out to be too ambitious. Many of the projects that participated in the programme over a period of ten years recieved urban development assistance or other forms of subsidies during the

years before – and continued to do so after the programme stopped (Bundestransferstelle Soziale Stadt 2014; IfS 2004; Empirica 2015).

With regard to participatory governance the programme was heavily influenced by the communicative turn in planning as well as by the ideas of associational democracy. It is almost impossible to evaluate the impact of the programme across Germany in this regard, not least because municipalities had some level of freedom to implement different forms of participation. The respective regulations/guidance did not give precise specifications of what was to be done and how. However, the regulation made it obligatory to document how participation of civil society had been implemented (Argebau 2000). Hence, the practice of the 16 federal states, as well as of the cities within the states, differed considerably (IfS 2004). The practice of participatory governance ranged from district conferences, citizen juries that were responsible for the decisions of so called citizens funds, citizen fora to all kinds of participatory workshops or district conferences with citizens as well as local entrepreneurs and shop owners. All in all, the purpose of participation differed in many ways:

– bringing people together in areas where a culture of non-participation and low interest for public affairs prevailed for a long period (mobilizing and raising awareness).

– finding ideas for future development of the area together (creativity) and not discussing (or consulting) prefabricated concepts (although the latter happened)

– Including citizens in the implementation of the programme, preferably in an organized form. That is why support for civic associations and social networks as partners was one of the crucial elements of the programme. The addressee was not so much the individual

cititzen but collectivities with the capacity for societal self-governance (associational democracy)

The quality and scope of participation differed substantially. Therefore, it is difficult to make an overall evaluation. However, based on the existing literature and evaluation reports it can be said that the results with regard to participation in the programme Social City were ambivalent and suggest shortcomings in the programme as well as misplaced expectations (Bundestransferstelle Soziale Stadt 2014; IfS 2004; Empirica 2015). Among the problems encountered were:

– There were *conflicts between different levels* of policy choices because all decisions that had been prepared and made on the level of the neighbourhood needed approval of the municipal council, in particular with regard to funding decisions. Often what had found a broad majority at the neighbourhood level was rejected by the municipal council or the heads of departments in the administration. The issue at stake was the question of accountability and where the final decision should be made. The autonomy given to neighbourhoods (and the respective newly created institutions such as citizens fora, associations) were limited as the municipal administration and the council claimed that they had to be accountable for all decisions and thus had the 'right' to approve them (or reject them). The only exception was the so called citizen funds that are in use today in many German cities also outside the context of the programme Social City. In these cases a limited amount of funding was given to the local community for local discretion without definite targets (up to €30.000 per year, the sum available for each project is usually restricted to an amount between €500 and €1.500). Citizens or groups of citizens make

suggestions for projects and present them in a forum and in the end a citizen jury makes a selection and ranking of the proposals. Interestingly this proved to be a successful experience as it allows for a very direct relationship between the ideas and concerns of communities and a funding opportunity. Suggestions usually refer to what might be called ordinary or everyday problems that are often below the level of recognition of the administration. In many cases the citizen juries were rather strict in spending the public money. In some cases, where formal districts (or wards) with elected councils exists, conflicts between the citizen juries on the one side on the elected district council on the other arouse because the funding available for the citizen fund exceeded the budget of the elected district council. The wards in German cities have only very limited competencies but had to accept that the newly emerging governance arrangements in the neighbourhood were influential and had more resources avialable.

– During the implementation there were irritation and misunderstandings and even conflicts between groups emerging from *problems of cross cultural communication*. In part this happened due to language problems and failures of cross-cultural communication. Participation of migrants without any experience in deliberative democracy was a challenge in the first years of the programme but learning processes could be observed.

– *Self-organising capacity in disadvantaged neigbourhoods was often rather low creating imbalance with regard to representaton.* Which in turn reflect a lack of relational resouces, trust, time and social capital.

– *ABIs were temporary* thus there was neither time nor a strong imperative to create selfsustaining networks.

In addition to these rather general and somehow eratic evaluations, the quality and scope of participation in the numerous cities participating in the programme differed substantially. Seen through the lense of Arnsteins ladder of participation, we can say that the citizen budgets allowed for a high degree of control and delegated power – in a limited financial sense. Citizen juries were not involved in the whole implementaion of the programme. Most of the participatory measures were informative or consultative. This ranged from initial surveys to neigbhourhood meetings (i.e. simply asking residents which problems and deficits they saw without guaranteeing that the problems would be addressed within the framework of the programme). This revealed one of the institutional shortcomings of the programme: the scope of competence (and power vis-a-vis the municipal departments) of the new agencies and actors (such as neigbhourhood management[3]) was not clear in the early days of the programme's implementation so that citizens argued for new bus and tram stops or higher frequency of bus connections but this was outside of the scope of the programme. At least it was uncertain if these kinds of needs could be adressed as local government departments were in some cases unresponsive. Coordination of departments from below called for a culture change that met with resistance from the professional staff. In many other cases residents were invited to discuss existing plans and projects intiated by the municipality, although for various reasons municipal planning departments did not give up their own agendas.

The potential for associational governance in the way described by Hirst (1994 and 2000) was limited. As expected the self-organising capacity of civic association in disadvantaged neigbourhoods compared to other more well off neigbourhoods was rather low due to a lack of relational resouces, trust, time, social capital and finances. In some cases even rooms or

opportunities for civic associations were not available. Sports associations, public schools and cultural instititions took over this role in the more successful districts. However, although the temporary impulse of ABIs was not strong enough to create self-sustaining civic networks, investments in social capital and the identification and support of civic leaders was a successful strategy in the longer term.

Seen from the perspective of Schmitter's holder concept the participatory arrangements were kept as open as possible for all kinds of actors (in the sense of holders) Going beyond a narrow understanding of status holders as citizens entitled to vote implied including children and adolescents or female migrants that were expected to bring in their specific claims and different kinds of resources such as knowledge and civic engagement. In fact mobilization of local knowledge and civic engagement can be considered as one of the success stories of the programme. However, in cases where self-selection of participants was the dominant mechanism (as in the case for open accessible citizen fora or district conferences) neighbourhood management had to accept that the active part of the population dominated the agenda thereby creating an imbalance with regard to representaton of the whole population. Despite the practice and experience in the various neighbourhoods we can say that the impact of the programme created a broadening of the spectrum of actors that were deemed to be included in the whole discussion on urban regeneration and participation. Seen from the perspective of the concept of holders of Schmitter, the complexity of this participation strategy becomes obvious. Status claims of all kinds were encouraged and in fact formulated against different individual backgrounds: home owner or renter, unemployed or pensioner, single parent, migrant (with different legal status), religious groups, middle class, elderly etc.

The management of these different status claims in the context of participation resembled opening Pandora's box.

## AREA-BASED INITIATIVES AND PARTICIPATION IN THE UK

The UK, as part of its wider urban policy, has utilised and experimented with ABIs since the late 1960s (see Atkinson and Moon 1994; Atkinson, Crawford and Finn 2008; Tallon 2013 for overviews). Participation has been a central concern of ABIs since the early 1990s with the launch of City Challenge, it was further entrenched in the Single Regeneration Budget and reached its apogee in the New Deal for Communities (NDC). In terms of the UK the underlying rational for community participation in urban regeneration partnerships has been based on a number of assumptions: 1) it is thought that it will make schemes more efficient and effective as it will mean they address the problems local people see as important; 2) residents may well provide new and novel ideas/methods for addressing problems; 3) their participation helps support the legitimacy of regeneration initiatives; 4) it is a way of promoting social cohesion in an area and building community identity; 5) pre-existing community groups, and their actions, are included in the regeneration process.

As we have already pointed out over the period since the early 1990s community participation has been allocated a key role in urban regeneration at local level and more widely, and this was particularly the case post 1997 under New Labour. While successive ABI initiatives sought to allocate communities a role in urban regeneration partnerships NDC represented the most recent, and arguably thoroughgoing, attempt to create 'community-led' regeneration partnerships that placed the needs of local people at the heart of regeneration. As

22

well as seeking to bring about physical transformation of these areas considerable emphasis was placed on building social cohesion and solidarity within communities/neighbourhoods in 'Excluded Spaces'. This was seen as a key element in their transformation. Such spaces were thought to contain 'disorganised' communities who had become disconnected from mainstream society. It was argued that the way to tackle this was through promoting social cohesion, solidarity and self help principally by generating social capital (see Leigh and Putnam, 2002: Johnston and Percey-Smith 2003; Kearns 2004). This approach entailed changing communities' internal social structures ('social mix'), way(s) of behaving and `persuading' those who lived there to internalise certain values related to responsibility, respect and civility and in the process to develop new ways of `governing themselves' (see Atkinson 2003; Whitehead, 2004).

The problems associated with community participation and urban regeneration partnerships are well documented (see Atkinson and Cope 1997; Atkinson 1998; Geddes 2006). Many excluded communities lack the capacity to effectively participate in partnerships where other players in the `regeneration game', who had superior resources and knowledge, frequently set the agenda. Indeed even where local communities did have the capacity to engage effectively in partnerships they often found themselves disadvantaged by the need to `learn a new language' which frequently made it difficult for them to effectively express their own interests in partnerships (see Atkinson 1999). Moreover, as noted earlier, it cannot be assumed that communities are coherent, identifiable bodies with a single set of interests; conflicts of interest frequently exist within communities and make it difficult to articulate a coherent series of proposals that partnerships can address. Furthermore, only a small number

of people from local communities are actively engaged in these activities leading to the possibility that they will succumb to `participation fatigue' as the constant launching of initiatives makes more and more demands on their limited time.

What are the implications of the approaches discussed above in Section 3 for participation in ABIs in the UK? Arnstein's ladder of participation has an obvious appeal as it appears to provide a straightforward method of understanding and measuring the changes in the nature and intensity of participation by and empowerment of communities in ABIs. Clearly one could argue that since the initial experiments with community participation in the early 1990s that the process has progressed up the ladder from the 'lower rungs' of therapy and manipulation, through the 'middle rungs' of placation, consultation and informing to the 'upper rungs' of citizen control, delegated power and partnership associated with NDC. However, this would be too easy and simple a description of what took place. Even within the NDC programme there were considerable variations between the 39 NDCs in terms of exactly where they might be located on the ladder in terms of participation and empowerment, nor does it capture the differing degrees of control local communities were able to exercise through the parnership boards that ran each NDC. Moreover, it does not reflect the differential relationships and influence they had in relation to other organisations involved in the NDCs who were responsible for delivering key services to the relevant issues that central government designated at the key targets (e.g. health, housing, education, policing and worklessness). Much dependend on the attitudes of key individials (e.g. Chief Executives) in those organisations. NDC partnerships were dependent on decisions made by outside agencies particularly with regard to funding decisions and service delivery and the level of influence

24

over these varied considerably. Nor is it able to take into account the complex relationships that many NDCs had to develop with private sector organisations (e.g. private developers) that often had a crucial role to play in the regeneration of the areas. Perhaps most troubling is that Arnstein, at least implicitly, treats the community as a single, undifferentiated 'body' with a common set of interests, whereas the reality is that communities are complex, multidimensional and often conflictual entities where individuals and groups have multiple links and identities both inside and outside the relevant designated 'community boundaries'. Indeed they are perhaps best thought of as 'imagined communities' constantly undergoing processes of creation and remaking. Finally, despite the rhethoric about local control, central government continued to play a key role in the process through setting and monitoring policy domains and targets (see Lawless 2010).

Hirst's notion of associational democracy is more attractive as it emphasises the role of civic associations and social entreprises in the coordination and delivery of policies and services – a key aspect of participation and empowerment of communities in ABIs, particularly NDC. Such an approach also holds out the potential of building social capital and social cohesion. However, even in NDC only a relatively small number of local people were actively involved confirming a great deal of research on community participation that only a very small number of people (often less than 1% and usually no more than 5% of the local population) are actively involved in community development and decision-making (see Chanan 1997). Moreover, participation in the running of regeneration programmes carries with it `responsibilities' (see Atkinson 1999 and 2003). By this we mean that in order to succeed community representatives have to learn certain ways of `doing things' (playing the

game) and learn a form of language (the `language of regeneration') in which to express themselves. This language seeks to inculcate individuals with a particular morality, sense of what is achievable/thinkable and way of behaving (a form of responsibilisation; see Atkinson et al. 2007) that conforms to the underlying rationale of regeneration policy. We are not simply seeking to portray these individuals as helpless victims, indeed there is scope for resistance but as Lawless (2006, p. 208) has pointed out NDC has become a "…centrally imposed, locally effected, delivery vehicle". The complexity of participation in ABIs does not fit comfortably into the notion of associational democracy anymore than it does Arnstein's ladder of participation.

If we turn to Schmitter's approach and his notion of 'holders' we can see the presence of 'mutliple holders', ranging from local residents with different social backgrounds, the local authority, service delivery organisations, churches and private sector companies. All of which had, to varying degrees, to work together in order to deliver the overall programme. However, while Schmitter's concern is with the issue of legitimacy in relation to the effectiveness of policy this does not fully capture some of the complexities of the situation in ABIs. For many, socially excluded residents living in NDC areas, it was precisely some of these other 'holders', especially the local authority, that they viewed as responsbile for their situation and, at least initially and in some cases for much longer, they were reluctant to accord these 'holders' a legitimate role in the regeneration process. A great deal depended on the willingness of of the relevant organisations and individuals to actively engage with community concerns, and this willingness to engage varied considerably from organisation to organisation. For instance the police were perhaps the most willing to engage with local

26

communities (arguably because this fitted with prevailing notions of community policing) and readjust their policing to address the problems identified by local people, to play an active and constructive role on partnership boards and to work closely with representatives of the community. Yet the police, and other 'outside' agencies, do not fit comfortably into Schmitter's categories, perhaps they could be defined as status holders, but this status was bestowed upon not by the local community but by central government and law. Although in the case of the police they surmounted this obstacle by taking community engagement seriously while other outside agencies took much longer to do this. The problem was that by being 'outsider' status holders the community questioned they legitimacy.

Moreover, if we consider the various categories of 'holder' (some) members of the community in a regeneration area are likely to be simultaneously a 'rights holder', stakeholder, interest holder, shareholder, knowledge holder and status holder. For instance a community leader with extensive knowledge of the area and its problems, who is a home owner and has a local business could easily be a multiple 'holder'. Does this give them a privileged position? Or do they have to find ways to reconcile the different holder categories? Given that Schmitter's approach has not been used in the UK it is difficult to offer an answer here as we are not engaged in an *empirical* study of ABIs.

Another tension that emerged was related to the role of elections. In each NDC community representatives made up 50% of the membership of the partnership board that ran the NDC programme in each area. In all 39 NDC areas elections were held for these representatives, in contrast all the other 'holders' on the partnership board were appointed by their organisations which at times created tensions around the legitimacy of different participants in decision

making. In addition the community elections often had a higher turn out than the elections for relevant local councillors who were involved and this also created tensions, with councillors feeling their democractic legimitacy (i.e. that deriving from a system of representative democracy) was being challenged or undermined while elected local community argued they had a 'stronger mandate' from this more direct form of democracy.

So while Schmitter's notion of 'holders' does capture the complexity of participation it does not necessarily fully encompass the variety of challenges to legitimacy (and by extension effectiveness) that participation raises in ABIs. While it could be argued the focus on 'holders' and the distinct possibility that some members of the community are likely to be 'muliple holders' is potentially enlightening and opens up a new approach to understanding the multiple dimensions of 'community' todate there is no way of assessing the value of the approach in the UK based on empirical studies.

In sum while all three approaches have something to contribute to understanding participation in ABIs in the UK none is sufficient unto itself.


## TOWARDS A CONCLUSION: FROM AREA-BASED INITIATIVES TO THE PLACE-BASED APPROACH

ABIs have become a state of the art approach in many urban policies and in many cases the implementation of ABIs resulted in some form of inclusion or even empowerment of residents. As we has been ilustrated, the use of ABIs in urban regeneration in the UK and Germany highlighted a very specific form of participation. Creating problem-ownership, mobilizing self-help and empowerment of residents in disadvantaged areas differs to some

28

extent from more fomalized instruments of participation in planning (such as consensus conferences). In the interim evaluation report on the implementation of the programme Social City the authors claimed that the programme offers citizen particpation although it has not been requested 'from below' (IfS 2004, p. 122). Therefore, we conclude that participation in ABIs needs strong support and moderation by the municipality in order to avoid the unbalanced representation of the various interests within an ABI. In some cases, effective participatory governance requires the building up of self-organizing capacities which may be seen as posing a challenge to traditional elected councillors. This is why Selle mentioned in the German case the role and relevance of so called 'intermediary organisations' (1991). This includes semi-professional agencies and/or neighbourhood managers that mediate between the municipalities and the (unorganized) residents. Moreover, in both cases there were significant differences between areas selected to ABI initiatives in terms of the capacity of local people to organise and articulate their interests and act upon them once agreed. Indeed, divisions/differences between groups within ABIs may actually have impeded this process.

Perhaps equally important is that the areas selected to be the recipients of ABI initiatives were themselves largely confined to existing administrative units (e.g. within local authority boundaries often being wards or sub-districts). The problem with using such areas has long been known; they are 'artifical constructs' often unrelated to the causes of the problems being addressed containing disperate populations with little in common. Yet governments have persisted in using them for over 30 years. As Atkinson and Moon (1994, p. 265) argued in relation to British urban policy: 'we see urban initiatives as symbolic, set up to mitigate the

worst excesses of urban decline and demonstrate governmental concern without raising fundamental questions or grasping the nettle of consequences.'

In short they give the appearance of being seen to 'do something' on a very small spatial scale which was unable to address the underling structural causes of the problems in the selected areas. The turn to community participation in the 1990s added another layer of gloss, arguably devolving responsibility to local citizens.

More recently the notion of area based approaches has been replaced by the place based approach strongly associated with the Barca Report (2009) and in part referred to in the EU Urban Agenda of 2016 (Dutch Presidency 2016). The place based approach can be distinguished from the area based approach in that it deliberately eschews reliance upon pre-existing administrative bounds as the relvant spaces of intervention. This approach seeks to simultaneously address the territorial, social and economic factors underlying the problems of designated spaces of intervention. As with more recent ABIs it acknowledges that they cannot be addressed in isolation. Thus initiatives must be developed in an integrated manner. What is perhaps different is that the Barca Report argues such initiatives should be directed at what the report calls 'meaningful places of intervention' (that is, not limited by administrative boundaries and borders; see Barca 2009, p. 93) and that the areas selected have a coherent functional geography. Of course this raises new issues/problems, not least those of how to develop effective working and coordination relations that cross administrative boundaries. The Barca Report recongises this issue and argues strongly for the need to engage in institutional change.

'The intervention needed to tackle these problems should take the form of the provision of integrated bundles of public goods and services aimed at triggering institutional change, improving the well-being of people and the productivity of businesses and promoting innovation. The goods and services concerned need to be tailored to places by eliciting and aggregating local preferences and knowledge and by taking account of linkages with other places' (Barca 2009, p. XI).

Furthermore if such changes take place it is likely that new arrangements for citizen/community organisation will need to be developed that bring together spatially and socially disperate groups to create 'deliberative fora' that can adequately represent their interests in policy development and implementation. Moreover, there is still the issue that the causes of the problems in a designated space of intervention lie within that space and not, at least in part, in the wider regional, national and even supra-national context. It is not unreasonable to suggest that regardless of the degree of citizen participation and how well integrated and coordinated policies are within that space that they alone cannot resolve the problems facing it. Of course the counter argument would be that this is precisely why integrated multi-level governane arrangements and actions are so important in order to combine exogenous and endogenous actions. Whether or not this is achievable remains open to doubt and only time will tell.

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1 The highly influential 'Communicative Turn' in planning is closely associated with the work of Healey (1997) who argued for the need to focus on the processes whereby (planning) decisions are reached. This involved an emphasis on 'communication' between the participants (influenced by the work of Hambermas) and the role of the planner as a 'faciliator' bringing together different stakeholders and creating a dialogue between them in order to research a consensus. As noted the emphasis is very much on process of decision-making rather than the outcome.

2 See http://www.staedtebaufoerderung.info/StBauF/DE/Programm/SozialeStadt/soziale_stadt_node.html (last access 03/11/2016).

3 Neighbourhood Management (Quartiersmanagement) was designed as a new interdisciplinary task in the course of the implementation of the programme. Neighbourhood management oscilates between classical social work, advocacy planning (empowering citizens) and management of funds. The idea was to create an agency with considerable freedom outside the municipal administration. Ususally an office in the neighbourhood was the organizational base for neighbourhood management that was

responible for organising participation and project management. The practice in the 16 German federal states differed considerable.