

DEN IGANGVÆRENDE BY – BORGERDELTAGELSE I BYUDVIKLING

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In my PhD-project I address citizen participation in current urban development with a particular focus on challenging existing (political) practice through theoretical reflections as well as case based interventions. The focal point for the project is a discussion centred on key challenges for citizen participation in urban development with the specific aim of developing and qualifying forward-looking strategic and methodological reflections.

The project has an interdisciplinary basis and I position it methodologically at the intersection between *Participatory Action Research* and *Research by Design*. The project is based on my active participation in a number of case-based interventions in collaboration with external partners and the company Kollision as a primary community of practice. In the methodological chapter I discuss the differences and similarities between action research and research practices within the field of architecture, design and planning with a strong focus on the role of casework and design interventions in a research context.

This leads me to formulate three types of objectives, respectively *action objectives*, *development objectives*, and *idealistic objectives*, which form the basis for the analysis in the case chapter. Action objectives are the specific tasks to be solved in each case, typically in collaboration with the external client organization and the community of practice. Development objectives are the strategic, methodological and tool-oriented considerations, which lead to new insights in an iterative design process based on the notion of prototyping. Idealistic objectives reflects the project's goal of challenging existing practice with a strong focus on the

political ideals underlying active citizen participation in urban development.

In the theoretical chapter, I discuss three main theoretical concepts, respectively *citizen*, *city*, and *participation*. The discussion of the concept of citizenship include a brief review of the origins of the notion and the view of the citizen's role in relation to different perceptions of democracy with a specific focus on deliberative ideals. This brings me to a definition of *interactive democracy*, which takes into account the need to support citizen participation in urban development processes when we no longer have a strong perception of 'the common good' to guide us. Consequently we have to accept fragmentation and substantially diverse notions of democracy as a fundamental premise of participation. This means that we have to organize participatory processes in a way that enables citizens to act (politically) in relation to the situation at hand, i.e. we need to allow different democratic perceptions to come into play, depending on the purpose of the specific process.

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In the section concerning the city I discuss current urban development trends on the basis of a brief historical overview towards a definition of *the city as a work in progress*. The idea of the city as a work in progress involves, among other things, that mutually exclusive interests, must be present at the same time and consequently the city should be seen as a collaborative work, based on a diverse concept of culture, acknowledging both consensus and conflict, and an understanding of the complexity of the problems facing the city in the sense that there are no simple, final, or true/false solution to the perceived problems.

The section on participation is based on a discussion of the challenges associated with active citizen participation - or lack thereof - in urban development processes. I discuss levels of participation, as well as justifications for participation, and practical challenges of participation processes. This brings me to formulate a concept of *the competent participant*, meaning that participants, through the participatory process, are equipped with the necessary skills for participation, including motivation, willingness to learn, reflective skills, goal-orientation, dialogue-orientation, and action-orientation.

Through the PhD.project, I have developed a general strategic approach to citizen participation in urban development, which has been named *the AELIA-model*. The premise is that (urban) development processes should be designed to grab the *Attention* of citizens, give them a novel *Experience*, support mutual *Learning* and capacity building, empower

citizens and offer them genuine *Influence*, and focus on *Action* during the process as well as subsequently. I have also coined the term *utopiatyping* as a methodological approach to participation based on the notions of interactive democracy, the city as a work in progress, and a view of the citizens as competent participants.

In case the chapter I describe the project's three main cases, respectively the Mediaspace in Aarhus, a development process in Køge and the project AARHUSCO2030, as well as a few minor cases, also included in the the cases have influenced the development of the AELIA-model and PhD-project. The main cases are analysed on the basis of the objectives defined in the methodological chapter: action objectives, development objectives, and idealistic objectives. Through the analysis I explain how utopiatyping as a methodological approach. I also discuss the relation between cases and theoretical positions and how theory and case-based design interventions have affected one another.

In the final chapter I summarise the key challenges related to my view of active citizen participation in urban development processes and the relation to the main strategic and methodological considerations, I have discussed in the thesis. I also discuss my own methodological approach and the possibility of reinforcing it through stronger ties between action research and design research. Additionally, I outline some perspectives on future research into, and development of, citizen participation, which might strengthen our knowledge in this area and supplement my own research. In closing I discuss some of the prospects and challenges for current urban development practices based on a high level of citizen participation.