Arcidiacono, C. & Legewie, H. (Eds.)

Learning communities and
sustainable social-economic city development

*Proceedings of the 5th European Conference for Community Psychology
Berlin, Sept. 16 – 19, 2004*

Caterina Arcidiacono

Introduction

<div style="text-align: right">

Men make cities, not walls or ships without men.
(Thucydides: *The Defeat at Syracuse*, Book VII, 77)

</div>

The idea of this publication has been shared my colleague Heiner Legewie (Berlin) and me – conceivers and promoters of the session "Learning Communities and Sustainable Social-Economic City Quarter Development" in the 5th European conference for Community Psychology (ENCP, Berlin 2004). The symposium focused on community psychological approaches to sustainable social-economic neighbourhood and city quarter development consider psychologists and experts active in the field as social Catalyst.

For years we have been collaborating on the problems of cities, studying the human and relational factors which contribute to the inhabitants' well-being (ARCIDIACONO, 1999, 2004; LEGEWIE, BÖHM, 2000; LEGEWIE, 2004). We have applied community psychology to the study of cities, experimenting a joint approach. We are convinced that the conditions for health and quality of life are constituted in day-to-day living.

We are interested in the future of human communities, but our approach is not merely speculative; our aim is to establish what contribution can be made by the human and social sciences. Studying the *identity of place (*PROSHANSKY, FABIAN & KAMINOFF, 1983*)*, *sense of community* (MC MILLAN & CHAVIS, 1986) and *community identity* (PUDDIFOOT, 1995, 1996, 2003) is only the first step to understand the interaction between citizens and community. We have to further develop the tools of intervention, participation, mediation and negotiation between the various social actors, and set up interaction with the local authorities in such a way that the various social groups are represented in the communal decision-making processes.

The question is: how can we act to improve living conditions; what are the priorities and the problems? And first of all, what are the strategies and the actors?

The papers published below are the results of this research project involving experiences, communities and experts, to identify guide lines for the use of psychological sciences in a broad social context**.**

The symposium brought together different people in a collective *think tank*, arising from local experience as well as from methodologies and tools of community psychology. In our aims, participatory democracy should be pursued both by promoting methodologies of mediation and social dialogue and by detecting tools going beyond the mere social ritualism, able to use the inhabitants themselves as active resources. To achieve these objectives, as well as monitoring what is changing in societies, implies relying on suitable resources based on socio-relational competence.

We believe that the community psychology approach can improve the quality of life within living contexts. The aim is to develop human capital and participation so as to find shared development objectives and implement synergic and integrated policies.

For this reason, our symposium was an opportunity to exchange knowledge and increase mutual skills in order to operate within different territorial contexts. The debate was mainly focused on community development and social changes. We came up with an active proposal in which "know how" is developed and focused through the contributions of various social ac-

tors, giving equal scientific dignity to professionals, grassroots experts and key people. For a discipline which sets store by grassroots knowledge this might well appear a foregone conclusion, but in actual fact academic prejudice and scientific practice all too often make this impossible. Below we shall give a more detailed report of the perspectives of the various actors.

It is interesting to read the curricula and university departments of the various authors. Although they come from a range of backgrounds including sociology, pedagogy, economics and urban and sociological planning, what clearly emerges in the various contributions is the affinity of research interests and intervention contexts. This is an indication of how participation processes are being studied in a range of research spheres, and require specific competence in facilitation, visual mediation (LEGEWIE & BÖHM, 2000) and in the organization of learning and teaching (ARCIDIACONO, PROCENTESE & MENNA, 2003).

Finally we describe the competence needed by a community manager to act as a social catalyst with an awareness of participative methodologies.

1. Symposium methodology

Before discussing the contents, we shall describe how the topic was dealt with in the two sessions. With the aim of promoting an active exchange of experiences in which "know how" was developed and focused through the contribution of the various social actors.

We subdivided the sessions in**to** three phases:

a) First of all we asked our contributors to prepare a poster illustrating their thought and/or research. In this way we gave people the opportunity to focalize the main issues that come out of their professional work. The posters were put up around the meeting hall and each speaker gave a short presentation of his/her data explaining in a few words:

1. The principal aim and the expected results of the approach.

2. The focal difficulty and the significant advantage connected with the strategy.

b) Then we invited our participants to speak a second time by turns, focusing on the elements which seem to be crucial in relation to the other speeches.

That was a starting point for a general debate following the individual presentations.

In particular, our aim was to detect tools and methodologies of social action within the processes of social change. We try to identify the optimal circumstances for action, the criteria for context analysis, as well as the most effective strategies to be developed. We assume that there are great opportunities of well-being both for those involved and for the future generations; but at the same time social vulnerability is leading to the acceleration of collective impoverishment and social degradation. These sessions provided a special opportunity to bring together experiences from very different cultural, political and educational backgrounds, involving various continents.

In fact, such a participatory symposium was inserted in a wider framework of scientific and relational experiences: an academic keynote speech, a presentation by the Mayor of a Berlin district, a guided tour of an interesting neighbourhood, a photographic exhibition. All this allowed participants to discuss topics from many perspectives, taking into account different stakeholders and contexts. This multidimensional think-tank was designed to increase the knowledge in a very active and participative form, offering active training and interaction rather than key note-speeches in general assembly. Because of the language gap, the support of visual communication tools was very useful and greatly appreciated by participants.

2. Key Issues and Common Visions

There is increasing interest in the conditions constituting urban well-being. Social scientists and researchers into local transformation processes need to recognise the key issues in the relationship between individuals and the collectivity. The most advanced democracies have enabled the individual to shake off the shackles of obligatory relationships; those involving the nation, family and workplace are no longer coercive. The improvement in living standards (pensions, hospitals, benefits) and the action of the large-scale collective representatives (political parties) have reduced all forms of reciprocal ties depending on local customs. One side effect of this new importance of collective life and social conquests is that suddenly citizens find themselves all on their own, cut off from collective processes. This is the context for social interventions promoting aggregation designed to transform living contexts at the local level. Participation becomes the tool of individual well-being and collective transformation, both a need and an objective.

The need for interaction and the loss of community are critical issues for contemporary societies. For Gabriele BINGEL from Berlin, community and social ties combat anonymity and social isolation. In this view, relational ties are a social capital that societies have to discover and take into account. We are aware of the *interaction among pedagogical aspects, infrastructure development and politics* (civil society exchanges and relations) as discussed by BINGEL and have to take them into account. In brief, our problem is how to pursue all these aspects at the same time.

As the World Health Organisation states, individual well being depends on social living conditions, and this is well illustrated by DE PICCOLI, TARTAGLIA's presentation. In an extensive and detailed research the Authors show the connection between well-being, sense of community and participation. Because this research takes a psychological and at the same time social perspective, it makes it possible to take into account the *territorial and relational dimension,* and in particular *forms of action,* following AMERIO (2000). People who participate in social activities aimed at promoting the community in which they live express a higher social well-being. Those involved in social action feel they are doing something for others (*Social contribution)*, feel they have more in common with others (*Social Integration*), have greater trust in them (*Social Acceptance*) and consider the society in which they live to have more potential (*Social Actualization*). The key feature of participation is to have an active role in the organization of the group. The organizational role directly influences two dimensions of social well-being (*Social Integration and Social Contribution*).

The research underlines the importance of social action for the citizen, but one can only gain a fuller understanding of its functioning within everyday contexts by becoming familiar with the various modalities of thought, association and action.

2.1 To discover and understand "backstage" thoughts

Contemporary psychology is increasingly paying attention to narrative tools (MANKOWSKI, RAPPAPORT, 1995; RAPPAPORT, 1998). Songs, verbal interactions, poetry, interviews are the expression of each specific context. The development of new research methodologies is helping in giving meaning to all forms of stories. Collecting and analysing texts, choosing audiovisual materials, discovering background Knowledge, are the new tasks giving voice to both speaking and silent social actors, in order to explain social feelings and implicit meaning attributions. Through narration events take on a material existence and the community can be viewed through its narrations.

This is all the more important nowadays when traditional ties seem to respond only in part to the new collective requirements. Taking into account globalization of cultures and markets,

approaching new aspects of interaction between local and global, we have to discover new specific indicators to interpret community needs.

AZZOPARDI and MANN's work in the small island of Gozo introduces the concept of implicit "backstage thought" as a main issue in understanding social interactions and participative agency. In the territorial profile, giving voice to the islanders' cognitive and emotional rules, their ability to manage things "*Nirrangaw*" is seen as a consequence, but at the same time as a primary obstacle to a proper and adequate process of social intervention taking into account public institutions and social resources. It seems a very interesting perspective, that developing grounding theory approach could explain the *mistrust* and *hopelessness* of some disadvantaged communities. The research is directed to the discovery of a contradictory path of formal thought. Implicit rules, both silent and shared, show how different communities develop their own strategies of interaction. The study of social interaction underlying the formal social relational strategies makes it possible to transform recurrent tacit practices of coping into preliminary explicit ideas of knowing.

It is in this context that we assume a participatory methodology and a qualitative approach for the analysis of the data. To develop and compare the different measurement scales proposed in the literature is not enough. A vast debate is under way to compare the merits and limits of the different constructs in a particularly rich research context. In this framework the need to improve *situated studies* with a grounding theory approach is increased.

2.2 Local Community and Community of Interests

A preliminary question concerns the notion of living contexts: which is the framework to be considered? Which is the intersection between the different levels we want to analyze: Local territorial communities, interest communities, narration and representation of local communities, virtual communities?

Here our focus is mainly on local communities.The first question concerns the reciprocal inter- relations and whether belonging to a local communities favour or limit social well-being. This topic is of increasing interest and holds the key to understanding the processes of social transformation. Nowadays we are faced with a new phenomenon: the world of tradition is turned on its head and social ties take on different forms: what is local has a global scope?

Thus we see how even belonging to a local small group is influenced by issues of the wider, technological world; cyber interaction, going hand in hand with the local dimension.

In a small Greek village, Claudia VILLALOBOS MONTOYA and Petra SCHWEIZER-RIES (pp.) show the importance of *spontaneous participatory processes and of community actions* in order to encourage forms of sustainable development through the use of non – polluting new technologies. It is a simple and direct example of the use of participation in view of promoting local empowerment and sustainable development at community level. In this case spontaneous discussions among citizens are the tool for introducing a new energy supply (solar panels). It is a bottom up project using for its success social and active awareness. The use in the project of professionals dealing with participation methodology is very interesting and innovative, but the authors are aware that costs of participating should be lower than the benefits obtained. Their example is very useful to understand that in this case the benefits are not only an economical issue but also a social gain.

At the same time this is an example of how a local community, blinkered by its traditions, can acquire resources and a better quality of life by having recourse to professional skills in the area of social mediation and the use of new technologies.

This experience expresses the limits and peculiarities of social agency and demonstrates that participation requires the activation of bottom up processes; at the same time, however, it can only achieve results if the top institutional ceiling is convinced that the approach is valid and does not introduce obstacles, whether direct or indirect, to its implementation. In fact in all the projects described we see how the participative processes are integrated and interact with the decision-making level.

3. Well-being and community strategies

We assume that belonging processes play a role in social changes and well-being. The interaction of the various forms of belonging is complex, and influences social organization and the construction of well-being. In our view the idea of community includes three different dimensions: physical space, social relations and participation. This makes it possible to establish the interrelations between local context and people, whether in the psychological, collective or individual spheres.

In European cities neo-liberal and globalizing strategies have recently extended to booming new city areas with high profit rates as well as to neighbourhoods and city quarters with degradation dynamic accompanied by bad living conditions, high incidence of low income groups and immigrants, unemployment, violence, crime and drugs. To put a stop to the degradation of more city quarters, various urban social – economic development programs have been started both on a national and a European level.

3.1 Social action and participation

There is evidence that participation and collective learning processes are tools for active citizenship. In contrast to traditional investment programmes, Gabriele WENDORF and Doris FELBINGER stress the potential of citizens' participation and empowerment of people, giving a strategic and operational contribution. The suggestion of proceeding "bottom up", developing shared planning, is the first step in collecting the experience of grassroots experts and the voice of the citizens. The authors show how the problem of many urban realities is the renovation of housing built post-war. In these cases participation means being able to use resources for neighbourhood management, developing empowerment and cooperation. In the context of interventions for small groups of houses, it is not enough merely to give the resident the possibility of changing the colour of the tiles.

What is needed is to set up processes of cooperation for the management of communal areas in the buildings and of shared urban spaces, with activities of joint maintenance for areas belonging to private buildings and communal gardens. Such a cooperative approach, focusing on the joint maintenance of communal spaces, will make it possible to combat urban and relational degeneration without excessive costs.

On this topic I wish to refer to the research project concerning the historical centre of Naples (ARCIDIACONO, 2004) here described by PROCENTESE. It emerged from the accounts of the citizens how circumstances had made it possible to achieve a shared planning ability. The in-depth interviews made it possible to identify some thematic areas connected to what has been called social trust (ARCIDIACONO, DI NAPOLI, 2006). A participant (Lia of "Eva Luna bookshop", who was very actively involved in improving the urban environment in Piazza Bellini), for example, told with admiration and gratitude of how the Mayor went by in his own car to make sure that the rubbish collectors had done their job. This account is emblematic of how social aggregation is structured on the basis of shared objectives rather than shared dimensions of identity.

In this sense the individual narrations and civic exhibitions have something to tell us not only about the places but also about how the citizens relate to them: how they see, decipher and

interpret their environment. They show us how they inhabit them, and the interrelation between cognitive, emotive and relational aspects. In this sense the exhibitions are excellent narrative tools revealing links, relationships and identifications.

At the same time the citizens' exhibitions, as specific events, take their place in the dimension of agency. Getting citizens to think about how they see themselves and gain awareness of their own perception and history is a process of sensitisation which precedes action.

Identification and belonging, like social action and participation, influence individual and collective well-being, but they are substantially different. An urban intervention has to tread carefully in this dual conceptual matrix, establishing its terms of reference.

3.2 Social Communication as Social Agency

The dialogue between citizens and administrations is a significant form of participation and should be considered as a basic tool for local community policies. The need to create two-way communications with the local authorities and scientific referents is illustrated in the paper by PROCENTESE.

The paper goes on to identify process and outcome indicators of participation. PROCENTESE in her presentation summarizing empowering and hindering actions suggested that to get political representatives involved is a critical issue because of poor or inadequate information, poor legislative tools, lack of available communication. This paper highlights the need to investigate what hinders communication between administrators and inhabitants.

At the same time the mediation role of experts, the importance of sharing knowledge and reciprocal listening are important as empowering effects at the individual level (PROCENTESE). In the research project carried out in the historical centre of Naples, the newsagent in piazza del Gesù was unequivocal:

"I would invite the architects and politicians to consider that the best degree anyone can have is the one conferred by life in the street ... because no one can merely pretend he has graduated on the streets ... by which I mean, gained a sound knowledge of people in all their aspects."

The expert's task is to go beyond the simple data that the field research seems to supply, overcoming stereotyped analysis and developing resources and strategies proposed by the different social actors.

4. Final comments and future perspectives: community management as social catalyzation

Currently the offices of urban and local planning are only staffed by architects and engineers, and social planning has been viewed as 'a creative action involving experts of structures and the environment'. In such a cultural framework, which fully accounts for the usual approach taken to urban problems, this symposium wants to tackle some of the problems connected with dealing with social isolation, insecurity and exclusion: social learning, social planning and participation.

The various contributions we have discussed have highlighted the topic of participation as a tool for social empowerment, and the debate caused us to focus on an operator who can function as a "social catalyst", proposing this figure to politicians and local administrators. Such a figure will possess competence concerning the subjective dimensions of social life and be able to identify the needs of a community and enable these needs to be expressed and heard, mediating among different needs and interests. In addition, this figure will be able to dialogue with the intermediate social representatives of citizens, include the various political subjects

and give visibility to the emerging tendencies in the various social realities. What does this mean in concrete terms?

1) Accelerate and enhance the citizen-administration relationship and vice versa.

2) Build common ground between the "strategic visions and the street"[1], backing the administration in implementing the best initiatives in particular and gathering and elaborating the suggestions of "those who actually live in the city".

3) Monitor the efficiency, utility and conformity of the proposed measures in both the short and long term.

4) Be receptive to, keep open and activate direct dialogue with citizens by means of not only the media but also organized forms of consultation such as round tables. In brief, an expert in community management who is able to act as a catalyst of resources.

The term catalyst best expresses the functions we have identified and the role attributed to this figure, an expert who can "bridge" the various social entities. Will anyone be willing to make use of this figure, to catalyse the local context? We do not claim to provide an answer, but we hope we have illustrated the advantages for whoever should do so. The challenge is to change relationships among inhabitants and produce innovation to address chronic problems and develop new opportunities at the town level. Administrations must take responsibility for the newly emerging needs, and the community must act to express the needs of its own members. In this scenario social scientists have a dual role: helping to explain the evolution of social processes by identifying problems and resources; and helping to ensure the interaction of the institutional system with what emerges and is active at the local level: going more deeply into the subjective motivations underlying the social processes helps in creating communication and becomes a fundamental tool for effective social policies.

References

Amerio, P. (2000). Psicologia di comunità. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Arcidiacono, C., Procentese, F., Menna, P. (2003). Empowerment e action research nella formazione: il Master "Modelli di complessità ed ecologia umana. Strumenti per lo sviluppo di comunità". In: N. De Piccoli, G. Lavanco (a cura di), Setting di comunità. Gli interventi psicologici nel sociale. Milano: Unicopli.

Arcidiacono, C. (1999). Diagnosi di una città. Napoli: Magma.

Arcidiacono, C. (2004). Il fascino del centro Antico. Napoli, Firenze, Berlino. Risorse per la vivibilità. Napoli: Magma.

Arcidiacono, C., Procentese, F. (2005). Distinctiveness and Sense of Community in the Historical Centre of Naples: a Piece of Participatory Action-research. Journal of Community Psychology, 33 (6), 631-638.

Arcidiacono, C., Di Napoli, I., Sarnacchiaro P. (2006). A model for the measurement of juvenile Social Trust, First International Conference on Community Psychology: Shared Agendas in Diversity APA Conference Puertorico, June.

Legewie, H. (2003) (a cura). Narrazioni ed immagini della città: Qualità della vita e turismo nei centri storici di Firenze e Berlino. Schriftenreihe des ZTG. Berlin: Technische Universität.

Legewie, H. & Böhm, B. (2000). Moderation of Teamwork: Basics and Techniques (http://www.ztg.tu-berlin.de/Heiner_Legewie.html)

---

[1] Chiamparino, Mayor of Turin, in Arcidiacono 2004.

Legewie, H. (2004). Napoli, Berlino, Firenze: Strumenti per lo sviluppo sostenibile dei Centri Storici. In: C. Arcidiacono, Il fascino del Centro Antico, 93-121. Napoli: Magma Edizioni.

Mankowski, E., Rappaport, J. (1995). Stories, Identity and the Psychological Sense of Community. In: R.S. Wyer, Jr., Knowledge and memory: the real story. Advances in social cognition VIII. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Ass.

McMillan, D., Chavis, D. (1986). Sense of Community: a Definition and Theory. Journal of Community Psychology, I, 6-23.

Proshansky, H.N., Fabian, A., Kaminoff, R. (1983). Place Identity: Physical World and Socialization of the Self. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 3, 57-83.

Puddifoot, J.E. (1995). Dimensions of Community Identity. Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 5, 337-370.

Puddifoot, J.E. (1996). Some Initial Considerations in the Measurement of Community Identity. Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 24 (4), 327-336.

Puddifoot, J. E. (2003). Exploring "Personal" and "Shared" Sense of Community Identity in Durham City, England. Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 31 (1), 87-106.

Rappaport, J. (1998). The Art of Social Change: Community Narratives as Resources for Individual and Collective Identity. In: X.B. Arriaga, S. Oskamp (Eds), Addressing Community Problems, London: Sage.

Author

Caterina Arcidiacono – Professor of community and urban psychology; University of Naples Federico II.

Research interests: Participative Methodologies; Identity and Negative Belongings, Social trust; Gender issues; Qualitative Research.

Contact

Caterina Arcidiacono
Piazza Gesù e Maria 3
80135 Napoli, Italy
Phone: +39 0815497143; Fax: +39 0812535633
email: caterina.arcidiacono@unina.it

Gabriele Bingel

Social Risk or Social Chance? – Urban Neighbourhood in a Historical Perspective (full text only in German)

Abstract

The urban neighbourhood is both a place of social risks and of social potentials, a problematic world and a place for participation, solidarity and self-organisation of city dwellers at the same time.

The historical view on the urban space reveals its ambivalence. Is it a source of danger for inhabitants, especially for children and young people and for the whole community if violence, social marginalisation, economisation and a process of decreasing solidarity are gaining ground? On the other hand the urban areas seem to be a great chance for networking und joint activities, for the idea to establish a social community.

The history of urban communities demonstrates the continuous claim of different social movements, to create common life in the city, to develop and realise social ideas for life conditions. But the solutions and strategies for the urban areas within social work and social politics were very different. They reach from utopian ideals of reconciliation of social classes in the 20ies and the political awareness of the locals in the 70ies to the management of quarters and urban areas in the 90ies.

The research project intends to highlight the different perspectives on the urban neighbourhood and to show the most different options of social activities. It focusses on the perspective of the community orientated social work. In this context it wants to demonstrate that the organisation in the urban area finds itself in a contradictive field of interests between politics (promoting civil society), economy (politics and distribution of money and ressources), social planning (improving infrastructures) and social work (producing social integration). A theoretical analyses of social work handling with urban areas risks and chances shall be based on the historical material.

Keywords

Urban Space, Community Organization, Social Work, Social Space Orientation, Social Risk, Social Potentials.

Zusammenfassung

Der Lebensraum Stadt ist gleichermaßen der Ort der sozialen Risiken und der sozialen Potentiale. Er ist sowohl eine problematische Lebenswelt, als auch ein Ort der Partizipation und Solidarität, der Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten und Selbstorganisation von Bewohner/inn/en.

Ein Blick in die Geschichte verrät die Ambivalenz dieser Lebenswelt: Geht von ihm eine Gefahr für die Bewohner/inn/en aus, insbesondere für Kinder und Jugendliche, und schließlich für das gesamte Gemeinwesen, wenn Gewalt, soziale Segregation, Ökonomisierung und Entsolidarisierungsprozesse um sich greifen? Oder ist der städtische Lebensraum gerade prädestiniert für Netzwerke und gemeinschaftliches Handeln, für die Idee, ein soziales "Gemeinwesen" zu etablieren?

Ein Blick in die Geschichte zeigt den kontinuierlichen Anspruch verschiedener Wissenschaftsbereiche und gesellschaftlicher Kräfte, diese Lebenswelt mit zu gestalten, soziale Ideen für die Lebensbedingungen in der Stadt zu entwickeln und zu konkretisieren. Die Lösungsmodelle und Strategien für den städtischen Sozialraum waren jedoch höchst unterschiedlich;

sie reichen von den sozialutopischen Ideen der Klassenversöhnung in den 20er Jahren, über die Politisierung des Lokalen in den 70ern bis zum Stadtteil- und Quartiersmanagement in den 90er Jahren. Sie sind außerdem von vielen Widersprüchen und Konflikten begleitet. Die Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten im städtischen Lebensraum bewegen sich in einem Widerspruchsfeld zwischen Politik (zivilgesellschaftliches Handeln fördern), Wirtschaft (Wirtschafts- und Wohnungspolitik, Verteilung von Geld und Ressourcen), Stadtplanung (Infrastrukturen verbessern) und Sozialpädagogik (Integrationsfähigkeit herstellen).

Das Forschungsprojekt beleuchtet an historischen Beispielen die Perspektiven auf den städtischen Sozialraum als Ort sozialer Gefahr und sozialer Gestaltung und will gleichzeitig zeigen, zu welch unterschiedlichen Handlungsoptionen dies geführt hat. Dies soll anhand der *gemeinwesenorientierten* Aktivitäten Sozialer Arbeit, der Gemeinwesenarbeit aufgezeigt werden. Das historische Material und der Diskurs innerhalb der Sozialen Arbeit stellen die Basis dar, um theoretische Erkenntnisse zur Sozialen Arbeit im städtischen Lebensraum zu gewinnen.

Der folgende Beitrag gibt einen thematischen Überblick wieder.

Schlüsselwörter

Städtischer Lebensraum, Gemeinwesenarbeit, Sozialarbeit, Sozialraumorientierung, soziales Risiko, soziale Potentiale

Soziales Risiko oder soziale Chance? Städtischer Lebensraum im Spiegel der Geschichte

1. Die Stadt als ambivalenter Lebensraum

Seit ihrer Entstehung sind die Großstädte scheinbar die Orte, an denen soziale und sozialpolitische Probleme und Konflikte in besonderer Konzentration auftreten. In der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts erschütterten die westeuropäischen Gesellschaften umfassende Umwälzungen, die vor allem die Städte betrafen: Die Industrialisierung zog die Menschen in wirtschaftliche Ballungsräume auf der Suche nach Arbeit. Rapides Bevölkerungswachstum und Konjunkturkrisen begrenzten die Aufnahmebereitschaft und das soziale Potential der Städte. Großstädtische Massenelendsquartiere etablierten sich zunehmend getrennt von den Wohngebieten der Bürgerfamilien und leiteten eine Entwicklung sozialer Segregation ein, die bis heute anhält (vgl. HERING & MÜNCHMEIER, 2000). Auch wenn heute eher von *schrumpfenden* Städten die Rede ist (häufig gekoppelt an eine starke soziale und wirtschaftliche Spaltung), sind die besonderen Lebensbedingungen in der Stadt, Arbeitslosigkeit und Verarmung, insbesondere aber wachsende soziale Ungleichheit und Ausgrenzung spezifische Themen der Großstadt, die Politik und Öffentlichkeit, Soziale Arbeit, Polizei, Gemeindepsychologie, Schule und Jugendhilfe beschäftigen.

Im Blickfeld sind dabei die urbanen Krisenherde, also diejenigen sozialen Orte, an denen soziale Probleme kumulativ, nicht als soziale Einzelfälle, sondern als Notlagen, als kollektiv problematische Lebenslagen auftreten. Die Stadt bzw. der städtische Lebensraum für Kinder, Jugendliche und Erwachsene wird vielfach hinsichtlich der Rahmenbedingungen für Lebensqualität und Aufwachsen problematisiert, manchmal auch skandalisiert. Häufiger betrifft diese Skandalisierung jedoch weniger die Rahmenbedingungen des Lebensraumes als das problematische (delinquente, deviante oder in irgend einer Art und Weise ungewöhnliche) Verhalten der Stadtbewohner, mit der Folge, dass manchmal eher Konzepte zur Veränderung des

Verhaltens als der Verhältnisse (Rahmenbedingungen des Lebens und Aufwachsens) thematisiert, gefordert oder finanziert werden.

Die Thematisierung sozialer Probleme, deren Skandalisierung und entsprechende Forderungen für Lösungen und Reaktionen stellen eine dominante Struktur der politischen, sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Diskurse hinsichtlich der Stadt dar. Die Analyse dieser Struktur wäre jedoch unvollständig, wenn man unterschlagen würde, dass sich mit dem Lebensraum Stadt nicht nur Gefahren und Befürchtungen, sondern ebenso Hoffnungen und Erwartungen verknüpfen, die seine spezifischen Potentiale als sozialer Lebensraum hervorheben. Aktuelle sozialräumliche Ansätze gehen zum Beispiel von der Möglichkeit der Bekämpfung sozialer Ungleichheit, Deprivation und Benachteiligung durch Programme der Beteiligung, des bürgerschaftlichen Engagements und der Aktivierung von Bewohner/innen aus. Das Vorhandensein eines sozialen Potentials der Stadt wird dabei grundsätzlich unterstellt. Aber auch ein Blick in die Geschichte verrät die Ambivalenz dieser Perspektive:

Die "Moderne des 20. Jahrhunderts hatte ein ambivalentes Verhältnis zu den großen Städten". (MÜLLER, 2001, S. 15) Sie sah in ihnen "bedrohliche Ballungsräume entfremdeter Industriearbeit" *und* "Fluchtpunkte" (ebd.), insofern, als die Stadt den Wegfall repressiver Strukturen und ökonomischer Herrschafts- und Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse und einen Zuwachs an individueller Autonomie und Lebensführung versprach (vgl. ebd.). Der desintegrativen Wirkung der Verstädterung stand die Möglichkeit gegenüber, in der Stadt neue, selbstgewählte Bündnisse in freiwilligen Verbänden und Gemeinschaften einzugehen und in Reaktion auf die Negativbilanz der städtischen Lebenswelten positive Utopien zu entwickeln: "Dem dicht gedrängt Wohnenden kommen die Segnungen des Gemeinwesens mehr zum Bewusstsein als dem allein Wohnenden: Die Großstädte sind also die Stätten, an denen der Gemeinsinn am lebendigsten sich entwickeln kann und wo er sich auch am stärksten betätigt, wenn ein soziales Gewissen entsteht […]". (TEWS, 1911, S. 13)

Auf der einen Seite wurde die Stadt besonders in der kulturpessimistischen Perspektive des Bürgertums als feindlicher Lebensort identifiziert, der weniger verbindliche Strukturen (weniger Kontrolle und Hilfe) vorsah als dörfliche und kleinstädtische Lebenswelten; geltende Normen im Verhältnis der Generationen, der Klassen und der Geschlechter lösten sich auf.

Die These vom Gemeinschaftsverlust und der mangelnden Integrationskraft städtischer Lebenswelten lässt sich für das ganze 20. Jahrhundert nach verfolgen.

Gleichzeitig jedoch werden Städte bzw. Stadtteile immer wieder als Orte gesehen, an denen die Auswirkungen von Pluralisierung und Individualisierung aktiv bekämpft werden können, an denen Nachbarschaft, Gemeinschaft, soziales Interesse und Gegenseitigkeit mit politischen *und* pädagogischen Mitteln gefördert und gestärkt werden können. Diese ambivalente Sicht auf den städtischen Lebensraum als Risiko und Gefahr oder als Chance und Potential hat weitreichende Folgen.

2. Das soziale Potential der Stadt: Stadtteile als "Gemeinwesen" in der Geschichte

Die Perspektiven auf die Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten sozialen Lebens in den Städten divergierten im Lauf der Geschichte. Ebenso unterschiedlich waren auch die Ziele und die Interessen, die mit der Idee, Stadtteile als 'Gemeinwesen' zu gestalten, verbunden waren: Disziplinierungs- und Erziehungsinteressen und Ideen der bürgerlichen Wertevermittlung finden sich ebenso wie die Forderung nach Emanzipation und Selbstorganisation benachteiligter Bevölkerungsgruppen und radikaler Demokratisierung auf lokalpolitischer Ebene. Einige historische *Beispiele* sollen dies veranschaulichen.

Weimarer Republik

Ein wesentliches Motiv der sozialen Reformen in der Weimarer Republik war es, politische und soziale Konflikte einer zunehmend gespaltenen Gesellschaft der Chancenlosen und der Erfolgreichen "zu überwinden, zumindest zu befrieden und zu kanalisieren (Sozialreform statt Sozialrevolution)" (HAMMERSCHMIDT & TENNSTEDT, 2002, S. 64). Andere Reformbestrebungen hatten weniger einen reaktiven Charakter, sondern warfen gesellschaftspolitische Visionen einer besseren Gesellschaft auf. Diese Reformbemühungen der Weimarer Republik werden von der Überzeugung getragen, es könne in der städtischen Lebenswelt Gemeinschaften mit einem großen Potential an Integration und sozialer Versöhnung geben. Der Glaube an diese Integrationskraft steht im scheinbar unvereinbaren Gegensatz zu einer kulturpessimistischen Sicht auf die Stadt als menschenfeindliche dunkle Lebenswelt.

Sie geriet geradezu (kultur)optimistisch, wenn Ideen der verbindenden Nachbarschaft und der sozialen Gemeinschaft zur tragenden Ideologie wurde, wie im Fall der deutschen Settlements. Diese vertraten eine restaurativ-konservative Großstadtkritik, sie "wollten in ihrem Wirkungsbereich zeichenhaft das praktisch verwirklichen, was die Großstadtkritiker forderten: die Entflechtung der industriellen Megalopolis durch die Wiederbelebung von überschaubaren, quasi dörflichen Nachbarschaften" (BUCK, 1982, S. 51). Lokale Lebens- und Arbeitsgemeinschaften wie die Soziale Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ost in Berlin-Friedrichshain (SAG) sollten "Klassengegensätze und politisch-weltanschauliche Kämpfe durch persönliche Begegnung und gegenseitige Hilfe von Mensch zu Mensch" (ebd.), das heißt von Bürgern und Arbeitern überwinden. In Wohnquartieren und Nachbarschaften sollte die Reformwilligkeit und -fähigkeit des Bürgertums unter Beweis gestellt: Persönliche Begegnung von Menschen, der partielle und zeitlich begrenzte Verzicht auf bürgerliche Privilegien, ein umfassendes Programm an Bildungsmöglichkeiten, Gruppenarbeit und sozialen Dienstleistungen sollte zur *Klassenversöhnung* und zum Aufbau einer neuen *Volksgemeinschaft* beitragen (vgl. BUCK, 1982, S. 139).

Die SAG arbeitete "in erster Linie im Anschluss an Siedlungen in Arbeitervierteln und sucht dort, gemeinsam mit der Nachbarschaft, die Ursachen der geistigen und wirtschaftlichen Not festzustellen und nach Möglichkeit an ihrer Beseitigung mitzuwirken". (§2 der Satzung von 1928) (SIEGMUND-SCHULTZE, 1990, S. 329). Die Idee, soziale Arbeit in den Nachbarschaftszusammenhang einzuordnen, also quartierbezogen zu lokalisieren, galt als Alternative zur verbandsmäßigen und behördlichen Wohlfahrts- und Armenpflege (vgl. BUCK, 1982, S. 139).

Der Gemeinschaftsgedanke war in der SAG ein ideologischer und exklusiver Gedanke: Die bestehende soziokulturelle Eigendynamik gesellschaftlicher Kräfte in den Stadtteilen wurde negiert, stattdessen sollten den Menschen in den Wohngebieten modellhaft bürgerliche soziale und bildungsbezogene Lebensformen vorgelebt und übergestülpt werden. Für die Protagonisten der SAG kann eine Zusammenarbeit mit den klassenbewussten Arbeitervereinen und Bildungs- und Fürsorgeeinrichtungen der organisierten Arbeiterschaft nicht in Frage, dagegen verstand sie sich als "sozialreformerische Gegenbewegung zum proletarischen Klassenkampf" (BUCK, 1982, S. 140).

Die Initiative der Sozialen Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ost ist weniger Teil eines gesellschaftlichen Reformprojektes als ein christlich-humanitär motiviertes, der inneren Mission verpflichtetes singuläres soziales Experiment. Die Akteure verbanden idealistische, gesellschaftsutopische, man könnte auch sagen gesellschafts-romantische Vorstellungen der Klassenversöhnung und Gemeinschaft mit sozialen Dienstleistungen und übertrugen bürgerliche Bildungs- und Erziehungsmodelle auf die Unterschichten (vgl. LINDNER, 1997). Sie zielten auf eine "Sozialpädagogik als konservative Ausrichtung von Erziehung auf die (völkische) Gemeinschaft zur

wenigstens pädagogischen, ideellen Überwindung von Konkurrenz- und Klassenkampf […]"
(WENDT, 1985, S. 204, herv. im Original).

60er/70er Jahre

In den stark politisierten 60er und 70er Jahren boten die westdeutschen Städte den Ort *politischer Betätigung*. Soziale Bewegungen und Bürgerinitiativen sahen ihren Aktionsradius vor allem auf der lokalen Ebene. Die sozialen Folgen einer kurzatmigen Wohnungsbaupolitik und der durch Sanierung verursachten Verdrängungsprozesse in den Städten wurden in Form der Gemeinwesenarbeit Gegenstand Sozialer Arbeit. Die Konzentration von Neubauten / Trabantenstädten, die Globalsanierung der Innenstädte und das Scheitern der Integration von Obdachlosen und Nicht-Sesshaften waren Anlass für eine verstärkte Hinwendung zu gemeinwesenorientierten Ansätzen in der Sozialen Arbeit (vgl. MÜLLER, 1974). Sie kamen auch einer gesellschaftlichen Stimmung entgegen, die Vorbehalte gegenüber disziplinierenden und kontrollierenden Institutionen hegte und das Engagement in Bürgerinitiativen zur Bekämpfung sozialer Probleme bevorzugte. Die Expansion der sozialpädagogischen Tätigkeiten in den 60er Jahren brachten Zweifel an der Wirksamkeit pädagogischen Handelns in sozial disziplinierenden und kontrollierenden Institutionen: Die Sozialpädagogik sieht sich zu "politischen Fragen nach ihrer gesellschaftlichen Funktion ebenso gedrängt wie zu gesellschaftspolitisch fundierten neuen Konzepten" (THIERSCH & RAUSCHENBACH, 1987, S. 999), zumal sie sich mit dem Verdacht gegenüber Bevormundung in und außerhalb von Institutionen konfrontiert sieht. Jenseits von institutionell-pädagogischen Arrangements suchte man Lösungen für soziale Probleme und Konflikte der eigenen Lebenswelt in wenig strukturierten Selbsthilfegruppen und Bürgerinitiativen. Die lokale Lebenswelt schien für Bewältigung von Lebensaufgaben wichtiger zu werden.

Städtische Milieus schienen zwar problematisch, jedoch glaubte man, sie beeinflussen, verbessern zu können. In dieser Zeit wurde ein optimistischer Blick auf die Potenz bürgerschaftlichen Engagements, auf die innovative Kraft einer Zivilgesellschaft als generelle Dynamik in den Städten untermauert.

Bürgerinitiativen zielten darauf ab, bei Bewohner/inn/en ein gemeinsames Bewusstsein über die kollektiven Probleme, die gemeinsame Lebenslage zu schaffen: Kapitalismuskritik, Sozialismus, Elite und Randgruppe, politische Agitation und Veränderung von Herrschaftsverhältnissen waren die Stichworte, unter denen soziale Problemlagen diskutiert wurden. Entlang diesen Diskursen mit gesellschaftlichem Sprengsatz wurden verschiedene Konzepte von Gemeinwesenarbeit (aggressiv, radikal-demokratisch, sozial-konservativ) diskutiert. Rezipiert wurde jedoch hauptsächlich das gemäßigt reformpädagogische Konzept von Murray ROSS, dem zum Vorwurf gemacht wurde, es beseitige nur "partikulare Missstände" (...) "in der Hoffnung, dass die Verantwortung der Bürger für das Gemeinwohl der Kommune eine als ursprünglich angenommene und prinzipiell wiederherstellbare Harmonie rekonstruieren könne" (MÜLLER, 1971, S. 232).

Die 70er Jahre brachten der Sozialen Arbeit die Kritik ein, sich in ihren Lösungsansätze von einem sozialpolitischen Wirkungsanspruch weitgehend entfernt zu haben und sich in den meisten Arbeitsfeldern den Aufgaben der Sozialisation und der Erziehung zu widmen. Gemeinwesenarbeit war seit den 60er Jahren eine mögliche Lösung für diese Leerstelle in der Sozialen Arbeit, da sie scheinbar in der Lage war, Lösungen für Probleme zu finden, die ein sich zunehmend als personenbezogenes Dienstleistungssystem etablierendes Arbeitsfeld (auch in Kombination mit einem sozialpolitischen System zur Vermeidung sozialer Notlagen und Konflikte) nicht bewältigen konnte und wollte. Sie hatte im Gegensatz dazu den Anspruch präventiv und regionalisierend zu wirken, auch wenn ihr gesellschaftspolitisches Potential in der Geschichte nur eine begrenzte Wirkung zeigte und im Rahmen der Gemeinwe-

senarbeit viel "Pädagogik" stattfand, was ihr die Kritik einer Verlängerung "des alten Konzeptes fürsorgerischer Fürsorge" (MÜLLER, 1974, S. 25) einbrachte. Dennoch kann die Gemeinwesenarbeit als der Versuch gelten, der strukturellen Erfolglosigkeit in der Sozialen Arbeit ein sozialpolitisches Gewissen entgegenzusetzen.

90er Jahre

Die Probleme mit den Städten, in den Städten und den Menschen in den Städten haben sich gewandelt. Das soziale Potential der Stadt unterliegt jedoch immer noch der dichotomen und ambivalenten Perspektive der lebensfeindlichen *und* sozial leistungsfähigen Stadt. "Überforderte" und "unfreiwillige" Nachbarschaften, "benachteiligte" bzw. "benachteiligende Quartiere" (HÄUßERMANN & SIEBEL, 2002, S. 52) führen immer wieder zu radikalen Diagnosen: "Es besteht die Gefahr, dass die Stadt als soziale Einheit zerbricht. Stadtkultur aber heißt: Vielfalt in der Einheit. Wenn Differenzen und Gegensätze nicht mehr verträglich sind, wenn ihre jeweiligen Pole an verschiedenen Orten separiert werden, dann bilden sich explosive Kräfte [...]. Die wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Fragmentierung der Städte macht es allerdings immer schwieriger, jenes soziale Subjekt zu erkennen, das Träger einer integrativen Stadtpolitik sein könnte" (HÄUßERMANN, 1998, S. 173).

Seit den 90er Jahren wird Partizipation und bürgerschaftliches Engagement als Teil einer kommunalpolitisch ausgelegten Strategie der sozialen Bearbeitung städtischer Probleme begriffen. Partizipation und Selbstorganisation, Förderung von bürgerschaftlichem Engagement und demokratischer Betätigung gehören heute unabdingbar zu Konzepten, die sich auf den städtischen Sozialraum beziehen. In der Lesart der Konzepte sollen sie Teil einer interdisziplinären Technik der Förderung problematischer Stadtgebiete sein und haben damit einiges Potential der Eigendynamik der spontan und unkontrolliert auftretenden Initiativen der 70er (und teilweise der 80er Jahre) verloren. In einem Verständnis, nach dem Beteiligung im eigenen Lebensraum (Sozialraum) sozial funktionstüchtig sein soll, z.B. um Stadtteile oder Sozialräume zu *normalisieren*, ihr Problempotential zu reduzieren, wird sie zu einer – im Sinne eines funktionierenden Gemeinwesens – lancierten und geförderten Fähigkeit der Bewohner/inn/en. Beteiligung läuft damit Gefahr, ihr kritisches Potential einzubüßen.

Mögliche Widersprüche zwischen dem Selbstzweck von Emanzipation und Selbstbestimmung, den notwendigen Freiräumen, die Partizipation jenseits von Instrumentalisierung benötigt, und ihrer sozialen Funktionalität bzw. Funktionalisierung für die Lösung sozialer Probleme laufen in einer solchen Perspektive Gefahr, verdeckt zu werden.

3. Soziale Fragen und soziale Ideen für den städtischen Lebensraum

Die Probleme des städtischen Lebensraums provozierten vielfältige soziale Ideen, sie haben aber ebenfalls soziale Utopien hervorgerufen. Sie standen in Kontrast zur Negativsicht städtischer Lebenswelten und tauchten auch als immer wiederkehrende und ineinander verschränkte soziale Fragen auf: Gemeinschaft, Integration und Lebensbewältigung, soziale Gerechtigkeit, soziale Reform, sozialer Frieden, soziale Kontrolle, Beteiligung, lokalpolitische Einmischung sowie Planung sozialer Prozesse. Diese Paradigmen sind zudem normativen politischen, religiösen oder aber auch disziplinären Beugungen und Konjunkturen ausgesetzt. Im Folgenden sollen einige Beispiele für diese *sozialen Fragen* und anschließend für die sich aus ihnen ergebenden *Konfliktfelder* für sozialpolitisches und sozialpädagogisches Handeln gegeben werden.

3.1 Bewältigung gesellschaftlicher Probleme im lokalen Lebensraum durch Gemeinschaft

In dem sich die Aktivitäten im städtischen Lebensraum an den Lebenslagen der Klientel in sozialen Räumen orientiert und sich programmatisch dem *Lokalen*, dem Stadtteil, dem *Gemeinwesen* zuwenden, schreiben sie dieser lokalen Dimension bei der Bearbeitung sozialer Probleme eine hohe Bedeutung zu.

Im 20. Jahrhundert existiert eine große Spannbreite an konkreten Vorstellungen hinsichtlich eines sozialen Raums und seinen infrastrukturellen Ressourcen bis zur ideellen Vorstellung einer Gemeinschaft oder eines Gemeinwesens, also einer auf dem Gemeinschaftsgedanken gegründeten Vorstellung gesellschaftlicher Gestaltung. Der Diskurs um *Gemeinschaft* und *Gesellschaft* wurde besonders um die Jahrhundertwende 19./20. Jahrhundert ausdauernd und leidenschaftlich geführt und reicht bis in die gegenwärtigen Gedankenmodelle in den Sozial- und Geisteswissenschaften hinein. Während der Nazi-Herrschaft wurde die Idee der Gemeinschaft ein zentrales Element der völkischen Ideologie. Verständlich ist es, dass nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg die Vorbehalte gegenüber Begriff und Idee der *Gemeinschaft* groß waren.

Auch die Soziale Arbeit hat ihre ganz eigene Geschichte mit der Idee der Gemeinschaft, vor allem auf der lokalen Ebene: Der soziale Nahraum als Ort für soziale Problemlösungen aller Art wird in der Geschichte der Sozialen Arbeit so gut wie nie als eine Sphäre rein privat-sozialer Beziehungen und Netzwerke verstanden. Stattdessen verbinden sich mit ihm (in unterschiedlichem Maß) gesellschaftspolitische Motive, insofern als sich im sozialen Nahraum gesellschaftliche Widersprüche oder soziale Ungleichheiten in lokaler Ausprägung zeigen.

3.2 Soziale Utopie, Soziale Reform und gesellschaftliche Erneuerung

Ist *Gemeinschaft* und die Funktionalität des Gemeinwesens ein wichtiges Motiv des gemeinwesenorientierten Arbeitens, so ist es jedoch nicht das einzige: Integration und Lebensbewältigung, soziale Gerechtigkeit, soziale Reform, Beteiligung, sozialer Frieden und soziale Kontrolle, lokalpolitische Einmischung sowie Planung sozialer Prozesse sind andere wiederkehrende Motive im städtischen Lebensraum. Historisch gesehen sind solche Motive für sozialpädagogische Diskurse leitend, ebenso wie die Erreichbarkeit dieser Ziele diskursiv erörtert und immer wieder in Frage gestellt wurde. Die Erfahrung der Unerreichbarkeit von Gemeinschaft, Gerechtigkeit, Beteiligung weckten im Diskurs besonders häufig Zweifel an der Bewältigung sozialer Problemlagen mit den Mitteln der Sozialen Arbeit. Jedoch gab es immer wieder Versuche, das Handwerkszeug bzw. den gesellschaftspolitischen Auftrag der Sozialen Arbeit zu erweitern, z.B. mit der seit den 80er Jahren verstärkten kommunalpolitischen Orientierung (kommunale *Einmischung*). Soziale Arbeit sollte ein Korrektiv sein und Widerstandsformen gegen kommunalpolitische Fehlentwicklungen bieten, sie ist selbst aber ebenso verfangen in den Interessenauseinandersetzungen des kommunalpolitischen Kontextes.

3.3. Risiken der Moderne und Soziale Arbeit

Indem sich ein Teil der Sozialen Arbeit, die *Gemeinwesenarbeit*, auf die Probleme in den Städten bezieht, widmet sie sich den Problemen der Moderne, dem Sozialen Wandel und den sozialen Risiken der Arbeitsgesellschaft sowie der desintegrierenden Wirkung der industriellen und postindustriellen Gesellschaft. Gemeinschaft, Nachbarschaft, soziale Gegenseitigkeit soll Konkurrenz- und Ungleichheitsbeziehungen der Modernen Gesellschaft, Anonymität und Vereinzelung bekämpfen. In diesem Versuch andere Regeln sozialen Lebens zu etablieren stößt Gemeinwesenarbeit jedoch aufgrund der Strukturbedingungen sozialer Problemlagen und aufgrund der Strukturbedingungen Sozialer Arbeit auf Grenzen.

Insofern sich im Lokalen die Blickrichtung vom Einzelfall zur sozialen Problemlage und ihren gesellschaftlichen Ursachen wendet, werden unweigerlich gesellschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen in diesen Blick aufgenommen. Diese Rahmenbedingungen verändern sich kontinu-

ierlich und sie gestalten sich im Rahmen von Modernisierungsprozessen und sozialem Wandel. Individuelle Lebensbedingungen und Probleme der Lebensbewältigung werden von Modernisierungsprozessen ebenso moduliert wie gesellschaftspolitische Diskurse in der Sozialen Arbeit, die diese Lebensbedingungen thematisieren.

4. Handlungsbedarf im städtischen Lebensraum

Die Stadt als Lebensraum und die Strukturen, die mit ihr entstanden sind, haben in der Geschichte einen kontinuierlichen gesellschaftlichen Reflektions- und Handlungsbedarf geschaffen. Ihre inneren Strukturen und Probleme, vor allem aber auch die Problemsichten und politischen oder pädagogischen Handlungsanlässe waren je nach gesellschaftshistorischem Kontext in einem stetigen Wandel begriffen und sind es auch heute noch. Sie variieren je nach zeithistorischem Kontext und im Kontext der jeweiligen politischen, sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Themen und Problemsichten, die die Stadt betrafen.

Die Problemsichtweisen auf den städtischen Lebensraum sind nicht von den sie begleitenden gesellschaftlichen Fragen und einer variablen normativ-sozialen Ethik zu trennen.

Die Lösungen, die für Problemlagen für Menschen in der Stadt, der Städte selbst gefunden werden sollten, waren im letzten Jahrhundert höchst unterschiedlich. Sie umfassten das ganze Spektrum sozialer Politik und sozialer Arbeit mit den ihnen immanenten Widersprüchen von Intervention und Prävention, Hilfe und Kontrolle, Normalisierung und Emanzipation.

Nicht nur die Integrationskraft der Städte und der *sozialen Subjekte*, die diese vorantreiben soll, war unterschiedlich. Auch mit welcher Intention mögliche Integrationskräfte herauf beschwört und aktiviert werden sollen divergierte erheblich: Die Perspektiven auf die Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten sozialen Lebens in den Städten divergierten im Lauf der Geschichte erheblich. Akteure traten mit Disziplinierungs- und Erziehungsinteressen, mit Ideen der bürgerlichen Wertevermittlung, mit Zielen der Emanzipation, der Selbstorganisation oder radikaler Demokratisierung gleichermaßen auf.

Soziale Arbeit ist nur eine gesellschaftliche Kraft, die kontinuierlich mit den Fragen und Risiken der städtischen Lebenswelt beschäftigt war. Im Laufe des letzten Jahrhunderts entwickelte sich ein unüberschaubares Feld sozialer Hilfsleistungen im Rahmen Sozialer Arbeit, die die Folgen der Industrialisierung und Verstädterung für das Individuum mildern und das wirtschaftliche und soziale Gefüge stabilisieren sollten.

Diese Entwicklung wurde begleitet von Fragen der Zuständigkeit und der Methoden einer wirksamen Bekämpfung von sozialen Problemlagen, der Planung und Gestaltung von kommunaler Wohlfahrtspflege, die von der Ambivalenz sozialpolitischer und pädagogischer Motive durchdrungen ist. Diese Ambivalenz ist einerseits aus den ursprünglichen Entwicklungsmotiven der Sozialen Arbeit zu erklären, andererseits macht sie deutlich, dass Soziale Arbeit ihre Zuständigkeit für soziale Problemlagen struktureller Art in der Arbeitsteilung von Sozialpolitik und Sozialpädagogik nicht vollständig aufgegeben hat und das Terrain weiterhin für sich beansprucht. Im Gemeinwesen zeigt sich auch der kontinuierliche Kampf der Sozialpädagogik um die eigene Reichweite. Die Beschäftigung mit dem Gemeinwesen und seinem bürgerschaftlichen Potential ermöglicht der Sozialpädagogik auch, ihrem emanzipativen Selbstanspruch näher zu kommen, "gegen die gesellschaftlich-restaurative Erwartung bloßer Kontrolle, Pazifizierung und Disziplinierung sozialer Konflikte und Defizite sowie gegen die Gefahr der individualisierend-pädagogisierenden Verschiebung von Ansprüchen und Hilfsangeboten innerhalb der sozialpolitischen Systeme". (THIERSCH & RAUSCHENBACH, 1987, S. 995)

5. Spannungsfeld städtischer Lebensraum

Aktuelle sozialräumliche Ansätze gehen von der Möglichkeit der Bekämpfung sozialer Ungleichheit, Deprivation und Benachteiligung in städtischen Lebensräumen durch Programme der Beteiligung, des bürgerschaftlichen Engagements und der Aktivierung von Bewohner/inn/en aus. Sie enthalten implizite Theorien der individuellen und kollektiven Bewältigung sozialer und sozialstruktureller Problemlagen durch Demokratisierung, zivilgesellschaftliche Dynamisierung und Emanzipation von benachteiligten. Eine solche Sichtweise ist zwar verständlich und für die sozial-politische Praxis wertvoll, sie kann aber leicht den Blick auf die Komplexität und Widersprüchlichkeit sozialer, politischer und ökonomischer Interessen und Konflikte im städtischen Lebensraum verstellen. Ein Blick in die Geschichte kann die unterschiedlichen Perspektiven auf die Chancen und Gefahren des städtischen Lebensraums aufdecken und zu einem kritischen Verständnis heutiger Entwicklungen beitragen. Tatsächlich zeigt die Geschichte, dass nicht nur Ideen der Demokratisierung und Aktivierung, sondern vielmehr ebenso Interessen der sozialen Kontrolle, der sozialen Befriedung oder der ökonomischen Standortsicherung nebeneinander existierten, ebenso wie z.B. antidemokratische Tendenzen stadtteilbezogener Gemeinschaftsideologien. Das folgende Kapitel gibt einige Beispiele für den sozialräumlichen Blick auf immanente Konflikte und Kontraste:

5.1 Soziale Kontrolle oder Emanzipation

In der Sozialen Arbeit wurden in der Regel hauptsächlich die Möglichkeiten der Emanzipation und Beteiligung benachteiligter Bevölkerungsgruppen sowie die Herstellung von Chancengleichheit durch Aktivierung betont. Sowohl die historischen Beispiele der Settlementbewegung als auch die aktuellen Motive des Quartiersmanagements zeigen jedoch wie anfällig auf Soziale Räume bezogene Soziale Arbeit für soziales Kontrollhandeln ist. Auch in diesem Konfliktfeld wäre zu untersuchen, wann und warum Aspekte von Kontrolle und sozialer Befriedung im gemeinwesenorientierten Handeln durchbrachen. Ideologiekritisch müssen die Möglichkeiten von Beteiligung und Emanzipation durch Soziale Arbeit hinterfragt werden und dargestellt werden, in welcher Form beteiligungsorientierte und kontrollorientierte Motive nicht nur nebeneinander existieren, sondern in einem dialektischen Verhältnis zueinander stehen.

5.2 Soziales Risiko oder soziale Chance

Soziale Probleme wurden in der Geschichte und werden heute immer noch als ein Risiko für die gesamte Gesellschaft betrachtet (und rufen damit die Forderung nach mehr sozialer Kontrolle und Steuerung wach). Andererseits sind sie ebenso eine mögliche Quelle für Selbstorganisation, für zivilgesellschaftliche Kräfte und für lokale Lösungsstrukturen. Es stellt sich also die Frage, ob die Motivation für sozialräumliche Aktivitäten die Unterstützung benachteiligter städtischer Räume ist und das Ziel, mehr Selbstbestimmungsmöglichkeiten und lokale Macht in die deprivierten Stadtteile zu geben, oder ob die Motive für Aktivitäten in der Stadt nicht eher die Kontrolle der Gefahren und Risiken sozialer Benachteiligung sowie die Wahrung des sozialen Friedens sind. In der Regel sind beide Begründungszusammenhänge für soziales Handeln jedoch keine Alternativen, sondern treten typischerweise nebeneinander auf, z.B. mit der Argumentation, man können soziale Risiken in Stadtteilen mit mehr Beteiligung und Aktivierung deprivierter Bevölkerungsgruppen begrenzen.

5.3 Sozialstrukturorientierung oder Personenorientierung

Personenorientierung und personenbezogenen Dienste und Hilfen sind im Laufe der Geschichte Sozialer Arbeit zu einem ihrer Professionsmerkmale geworden. In der Sozialen Arbeit verbirgt sich jedoch eine Orientierung an sozialen Fragen und an den sozialen Strukturen, die die Probleme der Klienten hervorbringen. Inwieweit es jedoch gelungen, daran nicht

nur ideologisch anzuknüpfen, sondern der Sozialstrukturorientierung auch eine überzeugende soziale Praxis folgen zu lassen. Es stellt sich also die Frage wie in der Sozialen Arbeit die Dichotomie von Sozialstrukturorientierung und Personenorientierung ausgehandelt wird. Im Fokus auf die Strukturen gesellschaftlicher Organisation waren ethische Ideen z.B. der Gerechtigkeit, an denen auch die Praxis Sozialer Arbeit gemessen wurde. Hier stellte sich z.B. das Problem der Erreichbarkeit sozialer Gerechtigkeit oder sozialen Friedens mit den Mitteln Sozialer Arbeit.

In der Geschichte der Sozialen Arbeit ist entsprechend beides verwurzelt: die Suche nach wirksamen individuellen personenbezogenen Hilfssystemen, die fachlich fundiert, nachhaltig wirkend und auf die demokratische Beteiligung und Selbsthilfe der Betreuten abzielt sowie die Suche nach den Wirkungen Sozialer Arbeit, die auf die Bearbeitung strukturell bedingter Notsituationen angelegt sind, mit den Merkmalen Prävention und sozialpolitische Einflussnahme.

5.4 Politik oder Pädagogik

Welche Handlungsspielräume hat Soziale Arbeit im städtischen Lebensraum gesehen? Unterschiedliche Begründungen wurden im Rahmen Sozialer Arbeit für gemeinwesenorientierte Aktivitäten gefunden, politische und sozialpädagogische Aufgaben (die Gestaltung von Lebensverhältnissen als politische Aufgabe und die Hilfe bei Lebensbewältigung als pädagogische Aufgabe) mussten immer neu ausgelotet werden.

5.5 Segregation oder soziale Gemeinschaft?

Das soziale Potential des sozialen Raums unterliegt historisch gesehen der dichotomen und ambivalenten Perspektive der lebensfeindlichen *und* sozial leistungsfähigen Stadt. "Überforderte" und "unfreiwillige" Nachbarschaften, "benachteiligte" bzw. "benachteiligende Quartiere" (HÄUßERMANN & SIEBEL, 2002, S. 52) machen die Diagnosen radikaler: "Es besteht die Gefahr, dass die Stadt als soziale Einheit zerbricht. Stadtkultur aber heißt: Vielfalt in der Einheit. Wenn Differenzen und Gegensätze nicht mehr verträglich sind, wenn ihre jeweiligen Pole an verschiedenen Orten separiert werden, dann bilden sich explosive Kräfte ... Die wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Fragmentierung der Städte macht es allerdings immer schwieriger, jenes soziale Subjekt zu erkennen, das Träger einer integrativen Stadtpolitik sein könnte". (HÄUßERMANN, 1998, S. 173)

Während soziale Segregation und Zersplitterung, wachsende Disparitäten zwischen sozialen Klassen die Sozialwissenschaften theoretisch und empirisch beschäftigen, dominieren Programme der städtischen Sozialen Arbeit die Ideen von Gemeinschaft und Nachbarschaft und zivilgesellschaftlicher Aktivierung.

6. Fazit

Eine Analyse der historisch gewachsenen Konflikte und unterschiedlichen gesellschaftlichen Ideen und Kräfte, die die Sicht und die Handlungsanlässe im städtischen Lebensraum bestimmt haben, könnte dazu beitragen, eine kritische Perspektive auch auf heutige Ansätze und Programme zu werfen. Dabei sollte verdeutlicht werden, dass nicht nur strittig ist, was genau mit *Partizipation*, *Aktivierung* und *Zivilgesellschaft* je nach unterschiedlicher Perspektive gemeint ist, sondern dass die Widersprüche, die dem städtischen Lebensraum selbst immanent sind, zu selten gesehen werden.

Stadtteilpolitische soziale Programme wie zum Beispiel das *Quartiersmanagement* fokussieren auf Partizipation und bürgerschaftliches Engagement als Teil einer kommunalpolitisch ausgelegten Strategie der sozialen Bearbeitung städtischer Probleme. Die Motive für die Beteiligung werden interdisziplinär von außen an die Gebiete und ihre Bewohner herangetragen:

Beteiligung und Mitbestimmung werden nach den Kriterien und Bedarfen der Auftraggeber (zum Beispiel um Geld zu verteilen) organisiert. Beteiligung wird als *Fähigkeit* der Bewohner/inn/en eines Stadtteils gefördert. Die Wirkungen und Ziele der Beteiligungsprozesse sind jedoch nicht ergebnisoffen, vielmehr ist der inhaltliche Rahmen bereits normativ abgesteckt und der Sinn und Zweck der Mitbestimmungsprozesse im Rahmen der Stadtentwicklung nach sozialen, politischen und wirtschaftlichen Gesichtspunkten bereits voraus gedacht.

Beteiligungsprogramme unterliegen damit einer sozialen Funktionalisierung für die Lösung bestimmter sozialer Probleme. Mithilfe *sozialer Potentiale* im Stadtteil sollen *soziale Risiken* abgemildert werden. Hinter dieser einfachen Formel werden jedoch vielschichtige Ambivalenzen nur notdürftig verdeckt.

Verschiedene gesellschaftliche Kräfte erheben einen Gestaltungsanspruch im städtischen Lebensraum. Politik, Sozialpädagogik, Psychologie, aber auch Wirtschaft und Sozialplanung fördern als Wissenschaften und in der Praxis das fachliche Nachdenken über die Stadt als Lebensraum aus interdisziplinär verschiedenen Perspektiven.

Städtische Lebenswelten als *Ursache und Ort der Lösung* für soziale Probleme zu verstehen, als Ort selbstverständlich vorhandener sozialer Ressourcen, von Gemeinsamkeit und Gegenseitigkeit untermauerte in der Geschichte auch den Gestaltungsanspruch der Sozialpädagogik (um die es in diesem Beitrag schwerpunktmäßig ging) auf sozialpolitische Einflussnahme in einer Ausgrenzung und Ungleichheit produzierenden Gesellschaft. Diese Gestaltungsansprüche sind selbstverständlich legitim. Sie entbinden aber nicht von einem historisch aufgeklärten und kritischen Verständnis der eigenen Praxis und der eigenen Programme hinsichtlich der Ideen und Aktivitäten im städtischen Lebensraum.

References

Buck, G. (1982). Gemeinwesenarbeit und kommunale Sozialplanung. Berlin: Hofgarten-Verlag.

Häußermann, H. (1998). Zuwanderung und die Zukunft der Stadt. Neue ethnisch-kulturelle Konflikte durch die Entstehung einer neuen sozialen "underclass"? In: W. Heitmeyer, R. Dollase & O. Backes, Die Krise der Städte. Frankfurt/M.

Häußermann, H. & Siebel, W. (2002). Die Mühen der Differenzierung. In: M. Löw (Hg.), Differenzierungen des Städtischen, 30-67. Reihe Stadt, Raum und Gesellschaft. Opladen: Leske & Budrich.

Hammerschmidt, P. &. Tennstedt, F. (2002). Der Weg zur Sozialarbeit: Von der Armenpflege bis zur Konstituierung des Wohlfahrtsstaates in der Weimarer Republik. In: W. Thole, Grundriss Soziale Arbeit, 63-76. Opladen: Leske & Budrich.

Hering, S. & Münchmeier, R. (2000). Geschichte der Sozialen Arbeit. Weinheim, München: Juventa.

Lindner, R. (1997). "Wer in den Osten geht, geht in ein anderes Land". Die Settlementbewegung in Berlin zwischen Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik. Berlin.

Müller, C.W (1971). Die Rezeption der Gemeinwesenarbeit in der BRD. In: C.W. Müller & P. Nimmermann, Stadtplanung und Gemeinwesenarbeit, 86-118. München.

Müller, C.W., Oelschlägel D. & Thürmer-Rohr, Ch. (1974). Gemeinwesenarbeit als entwickelte Form kommunaler Fürsorge. In: Victor-Gollancz-Stiftung (Hg.), Materialien zur Jugend- und Sozialarbeit, 14-47. 8. Reader zu Theorie und Strategie von Gemeinwesenarbeit. Frankfurt/M.

Müller, C.W. (2001). Die Wiederentdeckung der Stadt durch die Soziale Arbeit. In: Institut für Soziale Praxis (Hg.), Im Dickicht der Städte – Soziale Arbeit und Stadtentwicklung, 15-20. Münster.

Siegmund-Schulze, F. (1990). Friedenskirche, Kaffeeklappe und die ökumenische Vision. Texte 1910 - 1969. München.

Tews, J. (1911). Großstadtpädagogik. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner.

Thiersch, H. & Rauschenbach, T. (1987). Sozialpädagogik/Sozialarbeit: Theorie und Entwicklung. In: Eyfert, Otto & Thiersch, Handbuch zur Sozialpädagogik/Sozialarbeit, 984-1016. Neuwied.

Wendt, W.R. (1985). Geschichte der sozialen Arbeit. Stuttgart, 2. Aufl.

Author

Gabriele Bingel – Diplom-Pädagogin, wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Arbeitsbereich Sozialpädagogik, Schwerpunkte: Gemeinwesenarbeit, Kinder- und Jugendhilfe, Mädchen in der Jugendhilfe; Promotion zur Geschichte der Sozialraumorientierung in der Sozialen Arbeit.

Contact

Gabriele Bingel
Freie Universität Berlin
Arbeitsbereich Sozialpädagogik
Arnimallee 12
14195 Berlin, Germany
Phone: +49 30 83 85 50 73
email: gabriele.bingel@arcor.de

Norma De Piccoli & Stefano Tartaglia

Social Well-being and Participation in a Local Community

Abstract

This study aims to deepen relationship between participation and social well-being (KEYES, 1998). We consider that social activity participation makes up the base for a person's insertion into that particular type of social aggregation that defines community, contributing to the development of a social well-being. On these grounds the aim of the present research is articulated in three specific objectives: a) to verify the applicability of KEYES scale in an Italian sample of adults; b) to verify the assumption that social well-being is higher in subjects who are actively involved in social action groups; c) to point out which characteristics of social action (frequency of participation; role of responsibility taken on within the association; aim of the association) influence in a positive way social well-being. 300 participants were involved in the research: 150 socially active association members and 150 non-association members. An ad hoc questionnaire was created in order to gather data, including the Social Well-Being Scale and items about the level and degree of participation. Data confirm that people who participate in social activities aimed at promoting the community in which they live express a higher social well being. Other results are discussed.

Keywords

Social Well-being, Participation, Community, Responsibility, Social Action.

Italian Abstract

L'obiettivo del presente studio è l'approfondimento della relazione tra partecipazione e benessere sociale (KEYES, 1998). Consideriamo che la partecipazione sociale possa costituire la base per l'inserzione delle persone in quel particolare aggregato sociale che si definisce comunità, contribuendo allo sviluppo del benessere sociale. Sulla base di questa premessa lo scopo generale della ricerca è articolato in tre specifici obbiettivi: a) verificare l'applicabilità della scala di KEYES su di un campione di italiani adulti; b) verificare l'ipotesi che il benessere sociale sia più alto nei soggetti partecipanti a gruppi socialmente attivi rispetto ai soggetti non attivi; c) individuare le caratteristiche dell'azione sociale (frequenza, assunzione di un ruolo di responsabilità, scopo dell'associazione) che influenzano positivamente il benessere sociale. La ricerca è stata svolta su 300 soggetti: 150 membri di associazioni socialmente attive e 150 non membri di nessuna associazione. E' stato creato un questionario ad hoc comprendente la scala di benessere sociale ed alcuni items relativi al grado di partecipazione svolta. I risultati confermano che chi partecipa ad azioni sociali volte alla promozione della comunità in cui risiede esprime un maggior benessere sociale. Ulteriori risultati sono discussi.

Parole chiave

Benessere sociale, partecipazione, comunità, responsabilità, azione sociale.

Benessere sociale e partecipazione in una comunità locale

1. Introduction

The idea of community as defined by TÖNNIES (1887) and WEBER (1922) can be summarised in a few fundamental points: the interdependence of relational systems among people; the presence of a strong homogeneity of values and rules; the interiorization of such shared

and not necessarily formally expressed rules and values; the presence of a strong sense of the ingroup versus the external outgroup (AMERIO, 1996). These dimensions help in defining the idea of community that still remains a rather abstract dimension.

Classically this concept has been defined referring to two main dimensions: territorial and relational. The first has its origins in Tönnies "place community" defined as the area within which a community is organised. It draws up a kind of collectivity "in which members share a territory used as an operational base for daily activities" (PARSONS, 1951). The territorial dimension considers the community in its concreteness and visibility, whereas an "abstractly defined" community is more evasive and thus more difficult to study.

Local community makes up the concrete context within which social ties and interpersonal relationships, problematic aspects, and even resources and potentiality, take on specific forms. It is in fact within that territory, with those characteristics and those resources that it is possible to develop, or on the contrary to hamper, social ties, collective initiatives, as well as triggering forms of segregation and discrimination between groups.

The interpersonal relationship is intrinsic to the concept of community. Such a dimension takes on a particular value as an element which increases social capital, helps to develop forms of cohabitation and civicness (PUTNAM, LEONARDI & NANETTI, 1993). This is characterised by a network of values, rules, institutions and associations that grant and sustain civic tasks, distinguished by solidarity, reciprocal trust and diffused tolerance" (BAGNASCO, 1999).

Relational dimension acquires meaning in participation, seen as an opportunity of constructing possible worlds, decisions and responsibility shared through dialogue and exchange with others. The participation dimension takes us back to the idea of a subject in continuous transaction between things and others, as DEWEY (1917) and LEWIN (1948) had anticipated; in particular the latter showed the importance for the individual to be able to run his own life and, together with the others, a collective life.

In addition, many other researches (WANDERSMAN & GIAMARTINO, 1980; DAVIDSON & COTTER, 1989, 1997; CHAVIS & WANDERSMAN, 1990; PREZZA, COSTANTINI, CHIAROLANZA & DI MARCO, 1999; PREZZA, AMICI, ROBERTI & TEDESCHI, 2001; OBST, SMITH & ZINKIEWICZ, 2002) have shown a circular relationship between participation and sense of community: the active involvement is an expression of sense of community and in its turn the commitment in a social and collective activity contributes to increasing place attachment, sense of community and perceived social well-being.

On these grounds we refer to the idea of community including three dimensions: physical space, social relations and participation (AMERIO, 2000).

Within a community having the above-described characteristics, it is possible to grasp the interrelations between two different dimensions, those inherent to the objective sphere (economic, geographic, structural, etc) and those relative to the psychological sphere (perception, evaluation, individual and collective representation). In such an outlined context, participation is closely woven to the possibility of bringing the private sphere closer to the public one and individual interests closer to those collective in a continuous reciprocal transaction.

However, the kind of participation we are talking about remains to be defined, since the already existing numerous studies consider participation in reference to extremely heterogeneous contexts and environments. One possibility to clarify the concept of participation is to try and develop a classification of social action based on the aims and targets of the action (AMERIO, FEDI & TARTAGLIA, 2003; FEDI, GREGANTI & TARTAGLIA, 2004); the

other possibility is to point out the relevant participation features (i.e. frequency of action, individual role held in the group).

Participation contributes to build social context and it has been shown that social context decisively contributes to well-being: the relation between people and their environmental life is considered one of the fundamental dimensions of total well-being (DAVIDSON & COTTER, 1991; PREZZA & COSTANTINI, 1998). If we think that participation is a fundamental dimension of the positive and supportive social aggregation, therefore we have to assume that participation and well-being are related. Social well-being is in ratio to participation, awareness and feeling of belonging to a wider social entity, place of positive relationships and reciprocal identification (ZANI & CICOGNANI, 1999).

In particular we refer to the social well-being that many authors defined as the quality of one's social relationships to one's community and society (LARSON, 1993; KEYES, 1998; MCDOWELL & NEWELL, 1987). KEYES (1998) defines social well-being as "the appraisal of one's circumstances and functioning in society", considering that individuals remain embedded in social structures and communities linking private dimensions to public ones. In particular he individualises five dimensions of social well-being and found a relation between these dimensions and the involvement in community action. That model of social well-being has been validated in the United States of America on a representative national sample and also in Italy it proved its validity on a students' sample (CICOGNANI, ALBANESI & BERTI, 2001).

According to KEYES, the dimensions describing different aspects of social well-being are *Social integration*, *Social acceptance*, *Social contribution*, *Social actualization* and *Social coherence*.

Social integration is the evaluation of the quality of one's relationship to society and community; integration is therefore the extent to which people feel they have something in common with others who constitute their social reality as well as the degree to which they feel that they belong to their communities and society.

Social acceptance is the construal of society through the character and qualities of other people as a generalized category. Individuals who illustrate social acceptance trust others, think that others are capable of kindness and believe that people can be industrious.

Social contribution is the evaluation of one's social value. It includes the belief that one is a vital member of society, with something of value to give to the world. Social contribution resembles the concepts of efficacy and responsibility.

Social actualization is the evaluation of the potential and the trajectory of society. This is the belief in the possibility of evolution of society and the sense that society has a potential which is being realized through its institutions and citizens.

Social coherence is the perception of the quality, organization and operation of the social world and it includes a concern for knowing about the world.

Subjects rely often on an organized group to satisfy a need of participation because it permits and facilitates the goals definition and coordination (WANDERSMAN, JAKUBS & GIAN-MARTINO, 1981; PATE, MCPHERSON & SILLWAY, 1987); furthermore within an organization it is possible to define roles, tasks, responsibilities and the management of the different actions; all this encourages participation connecting the individual interest to the group goals and offers to the individual to choose the kind and the area of involvement.

This study aims to deepen relationship between participation to a group with a social visibility and social well-being; many studies have analysed, with some contradictory results, the rela-

tionship between participation and sense of community, i.e. CHAVIS and WANDERSMAN (1990) showed that sense of community is a catalyst for participation in associations; others studied the effects of participation on community life (EMMONS, 1979; PARKUM & PARKUM, 1980; SMITH, 1975; TOMETH, 1974) but in general researches analysing relationship between participation and social well-being are few.

We consider that social participation makes up the base for a person's insertion into that particular type of social aggregation we define community, contributing to the development of a social well-being. On these grounds the aim of the present research is articulated in three specific objectives:

1. to verify the applicability of KEYES scale in an Italian sample of adults;

2. to verify the assumption that social well-being is higher in subjects who are actively involved in social action groups;

3. to point out which characteristics of social action (frequency of participation; role of responsibility taken on within the association; aim of the association) influence in a positive way social well-being.

2. Method

Data were gathered from three municipalities[1] located in a definite geographic, cultural and administrative area: the mountain community "Valli Chisone e Germanasca". This zone brings together two northwest alpine valleys on the French boarder. It is clearly defined by geographic and cultural boarders and refers to a specific local body of government[2]. It includes 16 municipalities for a total of 20.000 inhabitants.

For this research we have chosen the municipalities with the highest number of residents including a total of 11.000 inhabitants (55% of the total). The members of associations were contacted by means of the Presidents of all the 11 different associations engaged into development of the territory and into preservation of traditions and local history (this Valley has a strong Waldensian tradition). Three of these associations pursue tourist promotion of the territory and eight are non-profit cultural associations. The non active residents interviewed were chosen controlling that sex and age were the same of the association members.

A total of 300 participants were involved in the research: 150 socially active association members (82 male, 68 female; Average age 43.9 years) and 150 non-members of association (80 male, 70 female; Average age 40.9 years). As regards educational level, association members (88 at least high school graduate, 62 lower educational level) were higher in comparison to non-members of association (52 at least high school graduate, 98 lower educational level); this difference is significant (Chi-square = 17.36; p<.001).

An ad hoc questionnaire was created in order to gather data, including the Social Well-Being Scale (KEYES, 1998; Italian version CICOGNANI et al., 2001), composed by 33 items, three items about the level and degree of participation (frequency, role recovered and aim of the association) and three socio-personal items (sex, age, educational level).

We used classic analysis techniques (Cronbach's Alpha) to verify internal consistency of the Italian version of Social Well-Being Scale (CICOGNANI et al., 2001); the difference in well-

---

[1] Municipalities are: Perosa Argentina (approximately 4.000 inhabitants), Pinasca (approximately 3000 inhabitants) e Villar Perosa (approximately 4.000 inhabitants).
[2] Mountain communities have been instituted in Italy in 1971 and are defined as communitarian areas in which persons identify themselves for history, traditions and convenience in order to obtain a certain level of self-government and self-administration.

being values between members and non-members of associations was verified by means of a general linear model to control the effect of educational level.

Subsequently a structural equation model was tested only within association members in order to investigate the influence of single participation features on well-being dimensions.

3. Results

3.1 Social well-being

The Italian version of KEYES' Social Well-Being Scale, previously used only on university students (CICOGNANI et al., 2001), showed a satisfactory internal consistency. All subscales obtained satisfactory values of Cronbach's alpha (see table 1).

	Alpha
Social Integration	.80
Social Acceptance	.88
Social Contribution	.76
Social Actualization	.68
Social Coherence	.72

Table 1: Internal consistency: Cronbach's alpha values

All correlations between well-being dimensions are significant and high except for Social Coherence that shows low correlations with the other dimensions and does not correlate significantly with Social Integration (table 2).

	1	2	3	4
Social Integration				
Social Acceptance	.589**			
Social Contribution	.682**	.334**		
Social Actualization	.498**	.535**	.320**	
Social Coherence	.145	.284**	.238**	.363**

** sig. $p < .001$

Table 2: Correlations between well-being dimensions (N = 300)

3.2 The participation effect

We compared mean scores of all the scales to verify if association members have higher levels of social well-being dimensions than non-members. We controlled the effect of educational level that is different between members and non-members of associations. We performed General Linear Models including the well-being dimensions as dependent variables and participation and educational level as independent variables. Association members obtained higher mean scores than non-members and also subjects at least high school graduate have higher mean scores than subjects with lower educational level (see table 3). The general linear models allowed us to affirm that participation has significant effects on all the well-

being dimensions except Social Coherence whereas educational level has significant effects only on Social Actualization and Social Coherence (see table 4). There are non interaction effects.

	PARTICIPATION		EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	
	Members of associations	Not members	At least high school graduate	Lower educational level
Social Integration	4.62	3.99	4.39	4.23
Social Acceptance	4.42	4.00	4.39	4.05
Social Contribution	4.55	3.72	4.22	4.05
Social Actualization	4.47	4.01	4.49	4.02
Social Coherence	4.70	4.39	4.89	4.25

Table 3: Participation and educational level groups: well-being dimensions means

	Participation	Educational level	Interaction effects
Social Integration	34.413**	.005	.421
Social Acceptance	6.588*	3.733	.679
Social Contribution	52.797**	.093	.912
Social Actualization	10.384**	11.318**	.540
Social Coherence	1.967	24.935**	.001

** sig. <.01, * sig. <.02

Table 4: Participation and educational level effects on well-being dimensions: F values

3.3 Participation features influence on well-being

Based on our previously expressed consideration that participation *tout court* is an excessive simplification of social reality, we tested a structural equations model (maximum likelihood estimation) to verify the influence of three participation features on well-being dimensions. These analysis has been carried out only on association members.

The model contains the five well-being dimensions, the frequency of participation, the role in the association and the kind of association. These last two variables are dummy that have an acceptable distribution (58 participants that do not have an organizational role vs. 92 that have an organizational role; 55 members of tourist association vs. 95 of cultural association).
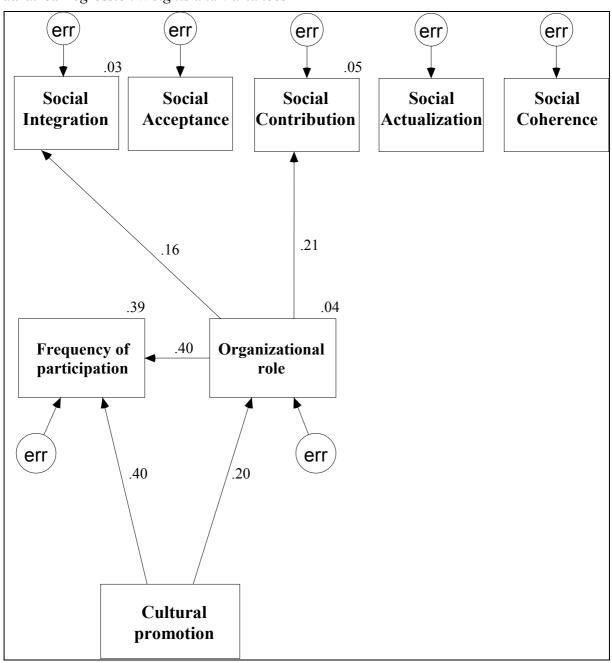
The first model we set assumed: a) influence of frequency and role on all well-being dimensions; b) influence of kind of association on frequency and role; c) correlations between dimensions previously resulted related (see table 2). The model fit was unsatisfactory so we tested an alternative model, the assumptions b and c were the same of the first model but we assumed that only the real engagement in social action (to take an organizational role) influence the well-being and this influence is just on two dimensions, the evaluation of one's own social value (Social Contribution) and the perception of the quality of one's own community

relationships (Social Integration). The model, represented in figure 1, fits data adequately. All the estimated parameters are significant.

We tested the model by means of some of the most used indexes in literature: chi-square, CFI (BENTLER, 1990), TLI (TUCKER & LEWIS, 1973) – also known as NNFI (BENTLER & BONETT, 1980) – and RMSEA (STEIGER, 1990). In order to attenuate specific limits parallel use of different indexes is usually recommended (BOLLEN & LONG, 1993). All values are good: chi-square = 20.89 (15 degrees of freedom) p = .140; CFI = .98; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .051.

Standardized regression weights and variances are reported in figure 1.

Figure 1: Model of influence of participation features on social well-being (N = 150): Standardized Regression Weights and Variances

Correlations between scales are reported in table 5.

	1	2	3	4
Social Integration				
Social Acceptance	.576**			
Social Contribution	.659**	.280**		
Social Actualization	.494**	.569**	.278**	
Social Coherence	-	.206**	-	.370**

**sig. p<.01

Table 5: Model of influence of participation features on social well-being (N = 150): Correlations between scales

To hold an organizational role influences positively Social Integration (β = .16) and Social Contribution (β = .21). Frequency of participation does not directly influence social well-being dimensions, whereas it is positively influenced by both the role (β = .40) and the belonging to a cultural promotion association (β = .40) To act as member of cultural promotion association also increases the probability of holding an organizational role rather than simply taking part in the group's initiatives (β = .20).

Social Integration and Social Contribution dimensions resulted, also in KEYES' research (1998), higher in those that are involved in community activities, confirming that integration is associated to the possibility of maintaining social ties in one's community and showing that the attempt to resolve a problem in one's community could be considered a productive activity that may be connected to a sense of contribution.

4. Discussion

The results allow us two levels of consideration; first of all we confirmed the quality of KEYES' social well-being model in a sample of different nationality, compared to the original validation (KEYES, 1998), and of different age and profession, compared to the preceding scale application in Italy (CICOGNANI et al., 2001). The KEYES' scale of social well being permits a detailed investigation of one's psychological experience linked to living in a community.

The second consideration based on the present study concerns the participation role in the promotion of a positive experience linked to social living. We verified that people who participate in social activities aimed at promoting the community in which they live express a higher social well-being. People involved in social action feel a greater Social Contribution, feel to have something more in common with the others (Social Integration), have greater trust in them (Social Acceptance) and consider the society in which they live more potential (Social Actualization). Indeed the intelligibility of the society (Social Coherence) grows with educational level, as Social Actualization does.

Participation influences the social well-being dimensions concerning the relation between people and a community made of concrete interpersonal relationships (Social Integration, Social Acceptance, Social Contribution) whereas educational level influences aspects referring to general society dimensions (Social Actualization and Social Coherence).

It seems that participation links individuals to the concrete network of social relationships instead educational level contributes to the development of cognitive schemata concerning the evaluation of the social world.

The in-depth study, only on the socially active association members, allowed us to define more clearly what participation is from an operative point of view. Structural equation models showed that the key-feature of participation is to have an active role in the organization of the group. The organizational role directly influences two dimensions of social well-being (Social Integration and Social Contribution); other participation features (frequency and type) have no direct influence.

KEYES pointed out that social contribution correlates strongly with generativity: people who feel socially valued also feel to possess the personal resources and qualities needed to guide others. Social Integration, on the other hand, correlates more strongly with the perceived health of one's neighbourhood. Thus people who feel close to others in their community also feel that their neighbourhoods are safe and that their neighbours are trustworthy.

The participation at the base of real community experience does not seem to be a simple sharing of intent and collective activity but rather a true initiative and the assuming of personal responsibility in the organization of shared activities.

In any case, the use of a linear causal influence model is only functional in verifying the hypothesis of the influence of previous participation on the present state of social well-being. Anyway, we do not want to refuse the possibility that, in line with circular causality models more coherent with the community psychology approach (AMERIO, 2000), social well being, in a kind of virtuous circle, in its turn makes more probable the engagement of people in participation activities regarding their own communities.

5. Conclusions

KEYES' scale seems to be a useful tool in studying the quality of life in accordance with a perspective that study psychological processes in their articulation between subjective and objective data between concretely available resources and the individual's expectations. In addition it is an interesting tool because nowadays the subject belongs to more than one community, some with a territorial identity, others that overlap geographic boundaries (AMERIO, 2004, i.e. provocatively uses the concept of mass community and BAGNASCO; 1999, uses the concept of local society in order to specify the idea of local community that should be reconsidered in the light of social changes). Social well-being scale could permit to extend the study of the relationship individual-context beyond territorial boundaries, contrary to sense of community scales that in general refers to specific local community (blocks, neighbourhoods, cities).

This study also showed how different forms and aspects of participation imply different psychological dimensions. Therefore the invitation is to deepen the study of participation, for example specifying which type of participation is referred to, what is the level of the individual's involvement, and so on.

A recent trend is that local government tends to develop forms of joint management in specific urban areas: we think that investigation of participation and its effects on important psychosocial variables (i.e. well-being and sense of community) could give an efficient contribution also to governors and politicians.

References

Amerio, P. (1996). L'evoluzione del concetto di comunità nella cultura occidentale. In: A. Palmonari & B. Zani (Eds), Manuale di psicologia di comunità, 19-40. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Amerio, P. (2000). Psicologia di comunità. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Amerio, P. (2004). Problemi umani in comunità di massa. Torino: Einaudi.

Amerio, P., Fedi, A., & Tartaglia, S. (2003). Azione sociale, appartenenza gruppale e costruzione identitaria. Giornale Italiano di Psicologia, 30, 605-620.

Bagnasco, A. (1999). Tracce di comunità. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Bentler, P.M. (1990). Comparative fit indexes in structural models. Psychological Bulletin, 107, 238-246.

Bentler, P.M., & Bonett, D.G. (1980). Significance tests and goodness of fit in the analysis of covariance structures. Psychological Bulletin, 88, 588-606.

Bollen, K.A., & Long, J.S. (1993). Testing structural equation models. Newbury Park: Sage.

Chavis, D.M., & Wandersman, A. (1990). Sense of community in the urban environment: A catalyst for participation and community development. American Journal of Community Psychology, 18, 55-81.

Cicognani, E., Albanesi, C., & Berti, P. (2001). Dimensioni del benessere sociale: applicazione di uno strumento di misurazione. Psicologia della Salute, 1, 105-122.

Davidson, W.B. & Cotter, P.R. (1989). Sense of Community and Political Participation. Journal of Community Psychology, 17, 119-125.

Davidson, W.B., & Cotter, P.R. (1991). The relationship between sense of community and subjective well-being. A first look. Journal of Community Psychology, 19, 246-253.

Davidson, W.B., & Cotter, P.R. (1997). Psychological sense of community and newspaper readership. Psychological Reports, 80 (2), 659-665.

Dewey, J. (1917). Democracy and education. New York: Macmillan.

Emmons, D. (1979). Neighbourhoods activities and community organizations: A critical review of the literature, Evanston: Northwestern University, Centre of Urban Affairs.

Fedi, A., Greganti, K., & Tartaglia, S. (2004). Quale partecipazione, quale identità? In: C. Arcidiacono, Volontariato e legami collettivi. Bisogni di comunità e relazione reciproca. Milano: Franco Angeli.

Keyes, C.L.M. (1998). Social Well-Being. Social Psychology Quarterly, 61 (2), 121-140.

Larson, J.S. (1993). The measurement of social well-being. Social Indicators Research, 28, 285-296.

Lewin, K. (1948). Resolving Social Conflict. New York: Harper.

McDowell, I., & Newell, C. (1987). Measuring health: A guide to rating scales and questionnaires. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Obst, P., Smith, S.G., & Zinkiewicz, L. (2002). An exploration of sense of community, part 3: dimension and predictors of psychological sense of community in geographical communities. Journal of Community Psychology, 30, 119-133.

Parkum, K., & Parkum, V. (1980). Citizen participation in community planning and decision making. In: D.H. Smith (Ed), Participation in social and political activities, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Parsons, T. (1951). The social system, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Pate, A., McPherson, M., & Silloway, G. (1987). The Minneapolis community crime prevention experiment: Draft evaluation report, Washington, D.C. Police Foundation.

Pretty, G.M.H, Andrewes, L., & Collett, C. (1994). Exploring adolescents' sense of community and its relationship to loneliness. Journal of Community Psychology, 22 (4), 346-358.

Prezza, M., & Costantini, S. (1998). Sense of community and life satisfaction: investigation in three different contexts. Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 8, 181-194.

Prezza, M., Amici, M., Roberti, T., & Tedeschi, G. (2001). Sense of community referred to the whole town: its relations with neighbouring, loneliness, life satisfaction and area of residence. Journal of Community Psychology, 29, 29-52.

Prezza, M., Costantini, S., Chiarolanza, V., & Di Marco, S. (1999). La scala italiana del senso di comunità. Psicologia della salute, 3-4, 135-159.

Putnam, R.D., Leonardi, R., & Nanetti, R.Y. (1993). Making democracy work: civic traditions in modern Italy. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Smith, D.H. (1975). Voluntary action and voluntary groups. In: A. Inkeles, J. Coleman & N. Smelser (Eds), Annual Review of Sociology, 1. Palo Alto, CA.

Steiger, J.H. (1990). Structural model evaluation and modification. An interval estimation approach. Multivariate Behavioral Research, 25, 173-180.

Tometh, A.K. (1974). Formal voluntary organizations: Participation correlates and interrelationships. Social Inquiry, 43, 89-122.

Tönnies, F. (1887). Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Leipzig: Reisland.

Tucker, L.R., & Lewis, C. (1973). A reliability coefficient for maximum likelihood factor analysis. Psychometrika, 38, 1-10.

Wandersman, A., & Gianmartino, G. (1980). Community and individual difference characteristics as influences on initial participation. American Journal of Community Psychology, 8, 217-228.

Weber, M. (1922). Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Tübingen: Mohr.

Wandersman, A., Jacubs, J., & Gianmartino, G. (1981). Participation in block organization, Journal of Community Action, 1, 40-47.

Zani, B., & Cicognani, E. (Eds) (1999). Le vie del benessere. Eventi di vita e strategie di coping. Roma: Carocci.

Authors

Norma De Piccoli – Professor at the Faculty of Psychology of Turin University where she teaches community psychology and social psychology.

Research interests: Social Identity, Social Participation, Sense of Community, Action Research.

Contact

Norma De Piccoli
Università degli Studi di Torino
Facoltà di Psicologia
Via Verdi 10
10124 Torino, Italy
email: depiccol@psych.unito.it

Stefano Tartaglia – Ph D., Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Western Piedmont, he collaborates with Department of Psychology of University of Turin.
Research interests: sense of community, urban insecurity, mass communication.

Contact

Stefano Tartaglia
Università degli Studi di Torino
Dipartimento di Psicologia
Via Verdi 10
10124 Torino, Italy
email: tartagli@psych.unito.it

Correspondence to

Norma De Piccoli
Dipartimento di Psicologia
Via Verdi 10
10124 Torino, Italy
email: depiccol@psych.unito.it

Joseph Azzopardi & Pete Mann

Nirranġaw – A Basic Social Psychological Process in an Island Community

Abstract

This contribution proposes a qualitative research strategy and method to attempt to inquire into problem solving processes which people apply in one particular location, at a specific point in time. With insights from the paradigm of action research embedded within a phenomenological perspective, the research combines a preliminary deductive analysis of secondary quantitative and qualitative data with a grounded approach to inductive analysis to generate and inter-relate data emanating from a wide range of real life qualitative sources. By externalising the tacit processes which small-island managers and business leaders consistently fall back on to solve their day-to-day problems, the research outcomes illuminate distinctive ways that people in the action scene both 'just manage' to survive as well as to thrive under restrictive conditions. The paper concludes that the core social psychological process of *nirranġaw* both enables and inhibits the small island's residents in developing their resourcefulness.

Keywords

Action Research, Grounded Theory, Qualitative Research, Deductive and Inductive Analysis, Tacit Knowledge, Human Resourcefulness, Gozo and Malta.

1. Introduction

The paper proposes a qualitative research strategy and method that help conceptualise a basic social psychological process to provide an answer to the question: 'How do we manage to cope with our most pressing problems characterised by smallness and restrictive geographical conditions?' It relates to one of the authors' (henceforth referred to as the 'main researcher') personal experience of attempting to research human resource development in his home island of Gozo.

Gozo is the second largest island in the Maltese archipelago that includes Malta (390 sq. km.), Gozo (67 sq. km.) and Comino (2.5 sq. km.). The Maltese islands are situated in the Mediterranean Sea, 100 km. from Sicily and 290 km. from North Africa. According to the 1995 census, the total population of the Maltese islands is 378,132; that of Gozo 29,026.

2. The Research Question

The research set out to find an answer to the basic question: *X' sa nħawdu*? (Maltese expression, pronounced: shsan-how-do) – "How do we manage?" (AZZOPARDI, 2002) The answer to that question, it was hoped, would explicate a better understanding of how we cope with our most pressing problems in Gozo through our one and only natural and relatively abundant asset: our human resourcefulness. To find an answer to this question, an investigative direction – and ultimately a substantive focus – was needed. Having considered strategic routes available in the social sciences, the main researcher chose a largely phenomenological rationale and qualitative methodology. This choice did not exclude the potential contribution a small amount of existing quantitative data could also make to the inquiry at its outset. This purposefully comprehensive strategy, it was hoped, would allow the researcher to:

- view phenomena under study as a product of human consciousness

- produce an organic and holistic understanding of actors in their action scene

- consider myself and my local 'co-researchers' as active creators of our own social order, and

- develop along the way an informed account of a core coping process that had deep explicatory power at this particular point in time – the turn of the century.

To complement this emphasis, a community-based, action-research tactical approach was also adopted with the hope of understanding the situation better by trying to enable some changes within it. Since the changes were unclear, a self-directing, action-oriented management development programme was proposed. This was begun by the two authors and a third consultant who worked with a group of twenty Gozitan managers, professionals and business leaders who seemed interested at the time in 'doing something' to develop themselves, their organisations and their community. To operationalise the above largely qualitative research strategy and the developmental action-research tactic, a grounded approach to inductive analysis (GLASER, 1978) was employed to raise and conceptualise data from a rich source of real-life scenarios. These data complemented some initial quantitative and qualitative secondary data that were publicly available also at the time of the inquiry.

The inductive grounded approach required the main researcher to enter the field of his inquiry – his own small island 'action scene' – with as few preconceived ideas as possible. By doing this, he intended to uncover hidden or tacit ideas, themes, images and perceptions that might be influencing the mental framework of his co-research participants – the managers and leaders in Gozo, a 'sample' that included the researcher himself who was also curious to learn more about his own mental models. By thus exploring into, uncovering and externalising taken-for-granted natural ways of 'doing things here' – in research terms, called 'fracturing' the data, codifying and inter-relating the ideas raised from the data, and finally writing the ideas out as text – he was able to transform recurrent tacit practices of coping into preliminary explicit ideas of knowing.
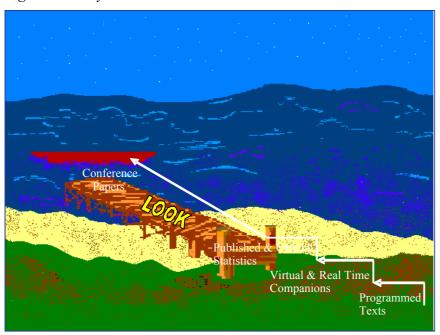
This explicit knowledge then became, at a higher level, the basis for a conceptualisation of the basic social psychological process that informs the study. This core concept accounts for how Gozitans continuously cope with their most pressing problems on their small island – in short, our own 'Gozo-made' modes of change, of learning and of development. Subsuming much data, this core category explains how we 'just manage' to make our life viable under our restrictive geographic and economic circumstances (AZZOPARDI, 2002).

3. Research as a Voyage

A critical review of the process and content of the inquiry reveals how the level of inference in understanding rose as the study progressed. An extended metaphor can describe this four-year journey: the research voyage began on the steady and stable 'ground' of a landmass, advanced out over a shaky 'pier' above a tidal waterline, to take the researcher deep out over his head into the insecure depths of the open 'seas'. Figure 1 below depicts the initial stage of the research as a voyage:

A review of hard facts produced by publicly available official statistics distinguished the demographic, employment and educational conditions of Gozo from those of 'mainland' Malta. The major implication drawn from this review was that Gozo was forfeiting the benefit of maximising the utilisation of its human resourcefulness due to the lack of employment opportunities that would satisfy the needs of a substantial category of its best-qualified people, particularly its younger generation.

Figure 1: Early Extraction via Deductive Research Process

The researchers' reaction to this implication was that the Gozitan community was at the same time also losing out on the possible contribution these same resourceful people could make to generate new and alternative economic activities through their much needed energetic managerial and leadership capabilities. The implications thus helped to focus attention in the research on how managers and leaders develop in Gozo and so addressed a preliminary concern of the study: how to approach the development of our island's human resourcefulness from a socio-economic perspective that took account of micro organisations, self-employment and small family-run businesses/partnerships. These small collectives cannot afford to support the development of people in the same ways as large-scale organisations invest in employee development, on which the perspective of most extant literature in human resource development is based (GARAVAN et al., 1999).

This concern directed the voyage off the 'mainland' onto its first steps beyond *terra firma*, to explore possible underlying conditions that might be motivating this scenario. As the main researcher walked over the less stable planks of the 'pier', he sought to elicit the concerns of participating commentators through an analysis of a series of recent conference papers topical to the research problem. These fortuitously were being presented at three separate conferences held in Gozo during the period of the study, two at the start of the millennium and the third in March 2001, as below:

1. "The Effects of EU Membership on the Island Region of Gozo", organised by the Gozo Business Chamber on 28th January, 2000, and subsequently published in book form in July, 2000 (BRIGUGLIO, 2000)

2. "Improving the Employability of the Workforce in Gozo", organised by the Bank of Valletta plc on 13th April, 2000, and subsequently published in book form in 2001 (BANK OF VALLETTA, 2000)

3. "Defining the Socio-economic Character of the Island Region of Gozo", organised by the Gozo Business Chamber in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo, The Central Office of Statistics, The Gozo Centre of the University of Malta and the Bank of Val-

letta plc, on 23rd March 2001, the proceedings of which have not been published as at August 2005.

These documents were anticipated to produce a preliminary credible account of the current situation as perceived by prominent stakeholders. Presenters at each conference ranged from high-ranking politicians (Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Minister for Gozo, Speaker of the House of Representatives) to business persons, academics, consultants, the Bishop of Gozo and other observers of the local political, economic and social scene.
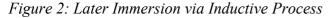
Accessing this first qualitative database enabled the main researcher to start 'animating' his action scene: observing people whose interest was not only that of describing what is going on but people who were also attempting to start making a difference by acting on their concerns. There was another characteristic of the conference-based database that elevated its potential as rich data for qualitative analysis: the presenters were a mix of people with varying political and personal agendas. Some were wearing their official hats and therefore were obliged to reproduce the official rhetoric of the entity they represented (often located on the larger island of Malta), while others in their personal capacity (sometimes based in Gozo, sometimes not) were free to deliver their views (and pose their questions!) unobstructed by the shackles of formal representation. Thus, the main researcher was intrigued to read between the lines of these various modes of delivery and interaction. They provided an excellent resource to start generating fresh questions and perspectives to understand the problematic nature of processes through which local stakeholders on the smaller island of the two engage and adapt in resolving the challenges they think they face.
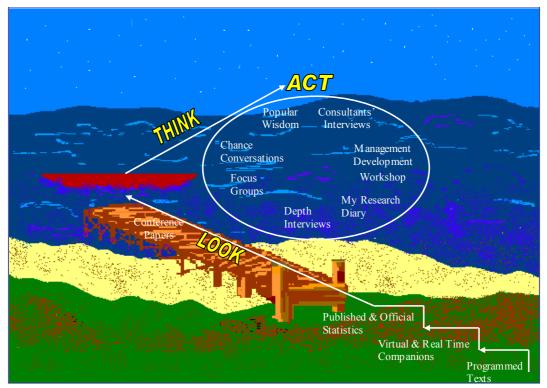
The twin conditions of smallness and 'double insularity' (Gozo as a small island alongside the larger island of Malta) were seen to promote commercial, social and, at times, even spiritual isolation. These conditions, plus the related problems of how to deal with resultant feelings of uncertainty and inaccessibility, emerged as main concerns that were afflicting the co-research participants. To resolve these problems, Gozitans were observed undergoing a painstaking process of differentiating between the two islands – deprived as they felt they were of the necessary statistical data that would officially confirm crucial differences – to convince authorities accountable to Malta that not all was well in Gozo. Did something need to be done to integrate Gozo with Malta, socially and economically, possibly by relinquishing the traditional view of Gozo as an appendix of Malta? To get closer to Malta so that Gozo would start to be perceived and treated as an integral part of the country: an island within an island? These images soon came to form the main contextual conditions of the inquiry and stimulated the main researcher's curiosity tremendously to find out more.

Up to this point no particular inferences had been made. Themes had been deduced from the readily available facts and figures in the official statistics and written conference accounts (extant secondary data) and from the contradictions apparent in the verbalisations of some conference presenters (new primary data). Given the seemingly insurmountable problems implicated by these concerns, however, the main researcher was both fascinated by the formidable challenges confronting Gozitan managers, professionals and leaders, and perplexed by the thought of how they have managed to survive so well so far.

This intrigue – to continue the metaphor of the research as a voyage in its later stages in Figure 2 below – pushed the main researcher off the already unstable pier of deductive analysis out into the rough open 'seas' to learn more about how we Gozitans actually manage and solve daily problems on Gozo: *how do we cope*? This time the main researcher found himself in a process of inductively generating his own informed accounts – from new, further primary data – through direct interaction with his co-research participants. Immersed in uncharted tidal flows and choppy waves, he began swirling from one qualitative source of information to an-

other, generating more ideas, themes and concepts that would come progressively to throw light on and construct meanings of how we manage our local concerns in the context of own small-island conditions. Qualitative primary data were sampled from the following sources (see Table 1 for details): in-depth interviews; a one-day management development workshop; focus groups; the researcher's own research diary; chance conversations and popular expressions of wisdom; and two consultants' interviewing of twenty Gozitan managers, professionals and leaders who had expressed interest in the action-oriented management development programme which the action research had encouraged in response to the Conferences.

Figure 2: Later Immersion via Inductive Process

For the purposes of operationalising the research, the sampling procedure that was adopted followed the key criteria or foundations proposed by GLASER (1978) in order to ensure that the researcher:

- maintains **theoretical sensitivity** by entering the research process with "as few predetermined ideas as possible – especially logically deducted, a priori hypotheses" so as to remain "open to what is actually happening" (GLASER, 1978, p. 3) in the data,

- uses **theoretical sampling** for the collection of data, being guided to look for further evidence and where to look for it by the emerging ideas themselves, while constantly remaining alert to events happening in the action scene,

- analyses data by **constant comparison** of incidents-to-incidents, incidents-to-concepts and concepts-to-concepts – simultaneously collecting data, coding and writing memos until 'theoretical saturation' is reached,

- sorts and re-sorts memos and data indicators to explore and account for links and interconnections until a higher level series of ideas emerges that **fits** the real world of the research participants, **works** by explaining what is happening in the substantive

area of the inquiry, and **is relevant** because it is not preconceived but has emerged from the data itself, and remains readily modifiable if new data emerge.

Table 1 specifies the sources and amounts of information accessed throughout the research voyage to generate primary and secondary qualitative data. Partial use was also made of computer-aided qualitative data analysis software. Although this software is equipped with sophisticated features that include sorting, report generating, code-mapping and even hypothesis-testing, its use was limited only to expedite and facilitate the coding and memo writing processes. It allowed the researcher to store all the sources of information in one qualitative database that could be expanded, retrieved, examined and analysed promptly and effectively.

At this stage it became clear that the research was moving from an initially deductive stance to a more inductive approach to inquire into basic processes. This type of inquiry – that searched for some governing variables that influence Gozitans' 'folk-frame of mind' in their day-to-day struggle to make ends meet – obliged the main researcher to make the most of his latent creativity to conceptualise systematically a core process, whilst at the same time remaining faithful to and recurrently grounded in the phenomena of his empirical sources.

The first challenging theme emerging from the initial stages of this inductive process was the apparent contradiction lying behind the largely collective spirit expressed and documented by commentators in the conferences. This seemed to contrast sharply with the strong individualistic approaches in Gozo to 'managing' that began emerging from a more sensitive, grounded analysis of the primary qualitative database.

The constant use in the conference proceedings of the collective pronoun "we" alongside collectivistic-related terms and phrases like *together, jointly, collectively, collaborative and participatory, spirit of co-operation, synchronisation, join forces, whole community, collective effort, spirit of collective goodwill, amalgamation,* and *joint ventures*, markedly pointed towards a predisposition for a high collectivistic attitude that would appear to dominate the mental model of the Gozitan manager and leader.

But one participant, clearly and explicitly (albeit cautiously), challenged this perception. He described Gozitans also as 'self-centred individualists'.

> ... [S]elf-centred individualism which is characteristic of some of our countrymen, is due to a large extent, to the system of central administration, geographically and effectively away from our people.

(CAUCHI, 2000, p. 5)

It was observed that we Gozitans tend to change our preferences according to the immediate situation we find ourselves in. When faced with a crisis situation characterised by changing conditions and uncertainty, and acting within the constraints of formality and in response to institutional demands, we tend to adopt a collectivist attitude to manage the crisis. Yet as the level of formality decreases and the situation becomes more stable, we tend to shift to a more individualistic mode. Both collectivism and individualism were therefore found to be significant factors that influence our mental model – depending on the degree of formality and the level of uncertainty that dominated the situation being managed. These kinds of observations prompted the main researcher to inquire further into the participants' mental processes, to explore the possible main influences that could account for informing our action strategies.

Source No.	Method	No. of Participants	Length/Time	Remarks
1	Depth Interviews	10	2 to 3 hours	Conducted one-to-one in various locations (one on telephone) with public and private sector managers/business people. Average age of interviewee: 45 years
2	Repeat Depth Interviews	5	30 minutes (average)	Same participants as from Source No. 1
3	Focus Group 1	8	2 hours and 15 minutes	Participants from public and private sectors – positions varying from clerk to supervisor to manager. Average age: 35
4	Focus Group 2	6	2 hours	Participants from public and private sectors – positions varying from clerk to teacher to manager. Average age: 31
5	Chance Conversations and Popular Wisdom	Numerous	N/A	Continuous process of observation and informal probing
6	Research Diary	N/A	N/A	Recorded events and ideas from October 1998 through September 2002
7	Conference Papers	22 papers	20 minute delivery/ 2500 words (average)	Two conference proceedings published, one not published
8	Consultants' Interviews	20	1 hour and 30 minutes (average)	Depth interviews with managers and business leaders by visiting consultants in preparation for individual feedback from psychometric self-assessment questionnaires (referred to as POTTER, 2002 in text)
9	Management Development Workshop	17	One day	Workshop organised by researcher and facilitated by him and two visiting consultants

Table 1: Sources of Primary and Secondary Qualitative Data

Uncovering the governing variables (and their properties) – mistrust (fear and suspicion) and powerlessness (distancing and bypassing) – that inform our action strategies required a moderately low level of inference, as these traits were relatively directly observable in the primary qualitative data. Examples of commonly used words and expressions in this database (from the interviews, from focus groups and so on) that related to high levels of mistrust include: *doubts; you have to keep an eye on them [workers]: you cannot trust them; you have to be careful not to get bitten; suspicious; procedures of dubious validity; we would like to know exactly what is being designed; lack of trust; behind your back; all of them are small family-*

run businesses and they do not trust; they [the workers] do not believe you; back-stabbing; lack of sincerity; cheating.

As these indicators were compared with other incidents and with concepts emanating mainly from popular wisdom and with direct reflection on what actually happens in the action scene, the main researcher started to produce more culturally hidden or taken-for-granted meanings. These analytic comparisons led to higher levels of inference as he induced other meanings that were less evident directly in the data. Through this process, hypotheses could be drawn and formal and informal processes of how 'we manage' conceptualised.

The above section on the research process has used the metaphor of research as a voyage to portray the main researcher's odyssey from comfort and re-assurance on stable land (extant quantifiable official database), to preliminary shaky first steps out on the pier over shifting water (*in vivo* qualitative database from conferences), into deeper meanings ebbing and flowing beneath the high sea's surface (subtle, tacit, 'invisible' sometimes seemingly contradictory behaviour from new qualitative data purposefully sampled). This iterative process, it is suggested, helped to generate a fuller understanding of the core coping strategy of this small island community – which includes of course the chief action researcher. We now proceed to elaborate the twin features of the basic social psychological process that appears to explain how people in the local action scene cope with their challenges – including the researcher's own challenges in his research.

4. The *Nirranġaw* Process – an Enabler?

If we start by reflecting on the 'formal side' of the coin (left side of Figure 3) of our basic social psychological process, we conceptualise 'mistrust' and 'powerlessness' as governing values or variables of which Gozitans are very much aware: we do not trust formal structures and we feel helpless when confronted with problems of power that have to do with government bureaucratic procedures or other forms of institutional authority, often symbolically (and sometimes concretely) associated with the larger island Malta when located there.

> *When I have a problem, first I try to solve it on my own. If I do not manage I go to my brothers for help, and then to some close friend. If it is a problem with the authorities, I do like the rest of the Gozitans: I go to some Minister or to someone very close to one of them ... It's useless to keep beating about the bush and try to solve the problem according to the procedures because they [people in authority] keep you in a state of suspense and anxiety and you never manage to arrive at what you want.*
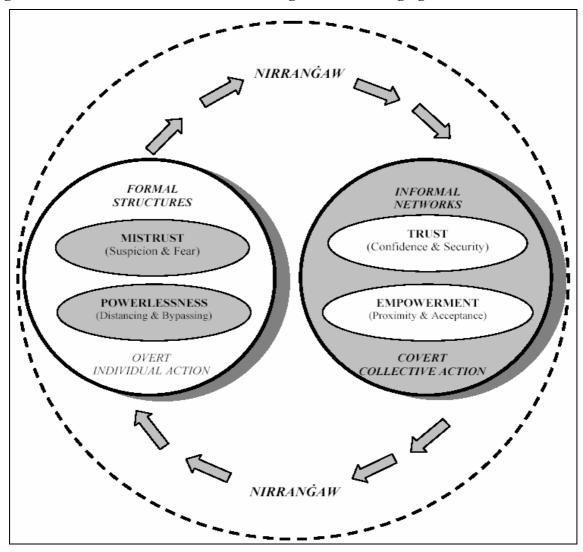
(Interview – Gozitan Manager and Businessman)

But Gozitans have learned how to overcome the mistrust and powerlessness by naturally reverting to the other side of the coin (right side of Figure 3 above). Activating the *nirranġaw* (Maltese, pronounced *nirran-jao*, j as in jar) process: we turn to our informal network of friends, relatives or friends of friends, 'gatekeepers' (BALDACCHINO, 2000) to the power, and so resolve our most pressing concerns.

Nirranġaw is a verb in the first person plural, derived from the Italian *arrangiarsi,* literally meaning: 'we set things right' (AQUILINA, 1990: 1235). In its infinitive form, the verb means:

1. to put right, rectify

2. to improve oneself, look better

3. to be the cause of trouble to someone

4. to settle a difference peaceably, come to an agreement.

(AQUILINA, 1990, p.1182)

Figure 3: The NIRRANĠAW Process: Enabling our 'Just Managing'

The verb *nirranġaw*, in its various verbal forms, was commonly used by the research partici-
pants in the sense of meanings 1 and 4 above, that is, to set things right and to come to an
agreement or settle differences peaceably. But the real meaning of *nirranġaw*, however, goes
beyond these two definitions, depending on the context in which it is used. Notwithstanding
the constant occurrence in everyday language and in the database (excluding the conference
papers which were delivered in English), the forceful significance of the word did not occur to
the main researcher immediately. The verb is so commonly used in everyday conversation, an
integral part of Gozitans' daily struggle to survive, that during the initial stages of inquiry its
potential significance, relevance and validity to the study were overlooked. But to the core
research question (*X'sa nħawwdu?* – 'How do we manage'?), *Nirranġaw* is the *in vivo* answer!
The potential in the word and its power as a key process was stimulated by an account from
the wife of the main researcher – not from a seminar but a Sunday sermon!

The commentary below from the main researcher's diary reveals this unexpected 'divine inspi-
ration':

> *The priest was explaining how many Christians in Gozo tend to misuse or perhaps abuse the sac-
> rament of reconciliation (traditionally known as confession), by transforming it into a tool of
> laundering their conscience periodically. "We think that we can feel at liberty to do anything we
> want because we know that we can 'fix things (nirranġaw) with God', and start a new page in our*

spiritual lives, over and over again. This is a dangerous practice which is negatively effecting our daily lives and behaviour as Christians in our relationship with our neighbours."

The correlation then occurs to me that if we are capable of twisting and breaking the law of God, knowing that ways and means of reconciliation do exist, what could prohibit us from doing the same with the law of man? If we have learned how to consistently 'fix things' with the Almighty, we must have also learned how to 'fix things' with the mighty!

This incident provides the missing central link, the heart, to my conceptualisation and their properties of a number of codes displayed in complete disarray on the flipcharts hanging on the wall of my study.

(Research Diary, 1998-2002)

Figure 4 below is a representation of one of these charts at a relatively advanced stage of the inquiry.
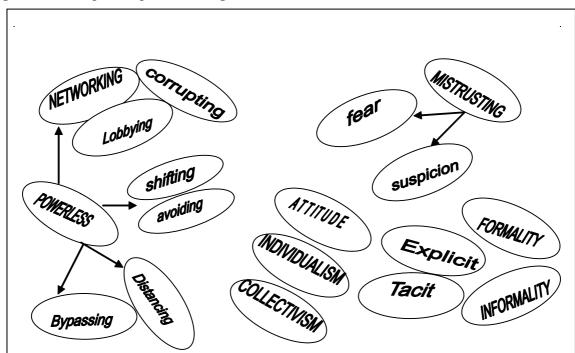
Figure 4: Concepts/Properties/Categories: But where is the Heart?

Although links could be established between the various codes, concepts and properties, the depiction still lacked a core linking element, a life force, perhaps a process that would subsume and inter-relate the various themes, processes and ideas with one another to provide a higher level, more coherent explanation of the variations that had emerged.

Thus, 'fear' and 'suspicion' could clearly be related to 'mistrusting' and so could 'bypassing' and 'distancing' be linked to 'powerlessness'. Other factors could also be inter-related ('Networking', 'Lobbying' and 'Corrupting'), as well as 'individualism', 'collectivism' and 'attitude'; And there was 'tacit', 'explicit', 'formality' and 'informality'. But what process could possibly subsume all the polarities and contradictions into a meaningful whole?

Nirranġaw meets the grounded methodologist's criteria of **fit, relevance, workability** and **modifiability** (GLASER, 1978) that place it at the centre of the process. The process enables managers and leaders in Gozo to identify the problem and to resolve it, thus making 'life viable in the action scene'. It is the basic social psychological process constantly being used by

the stakeholders to resolve their most pressing problem of survival in an island within an island severely conditioned by smallness and double insularity and completely dependent on its main sister island:

> *I solve the problem by giving orders to my subordinate heads of sections and they will see how to fix things (**jirranġaw**) on their own.*
>
> (Focus Group – Gozitan Public Sector Manager)

This manager takes it for granted that her subordinates have an innate capability to fix the problem on their own, without any need for her to 'micro-manage' (or interfere in) the problem-solving process. *Nirranġaw* also means modifying rules and regulations according to our needs and as they may best suit us:

> *All these regulations, but we in Gozo are a republic in a republic, if we do not like the rules or if they bite our pockets we know our way around them and to hell with the rules ... there's always a way out of it (**tirranġa**).*
>
> (Interview – Gozitan Businessman)

Nirranġaw knows no boundaries and may take place at all institutional levels, including the highest – the Courts of Justice:

> *Even at the law courts ... the lawyers ... fix things (**jirranġaw**) behind your back and you are like an idiot.*
>
> (Interview – Gozitan Businessman)

In civil-service career progression we see it:

> *My career in the civil service was constantly influenced by one person, a colleague of mine who although starting his career after me has always managed (**irranġa**) to take the best positions in government.*
>
> (Interview – Gozitan Public Sector Manager)

Nirranġaw is an all-inclusive process that provides remedies for every problem:

> *Somehow you always find a remedy (**tirranġa**).*
>
> (Interview – Gozitan Businessman)

The *nirranġaw* process has emerged as an 'informalising' core process that transforms the *prima facie* weaknesses or negative traits of bureaucracies into strengths or positive and resourceful routes of survival and reveals the real basic drive that enables the community to thrive. Through *nirranġaw*, mistrust is transformed into trust, and its corollaries of fear and suspicion become superseded by feelings of confidence and security:

> *Not only the Gozitans, at first they feel insecure, it's something natural, because of lack of trust, the attitude is: we'll fix things (**nirranġaw**) first.*
>
> (Focus Group – Gozitan Private Sector Manager)

Powerlessness is transformed into empowerment, while distancing gives way to close personal encounters in an atmosphere of brotherly relations and collegiality. Similarly, whilst preferring to distance themselves from formal structures and to bypass formal rules and regulations, Gozitans accept the rules and conditions of the informal game in an atmosphere of cordial reciprocity when resorting to their informal networks. In this climate what would be termed the corrupt or immoral practice of bribery and the irregular twisting of rules and regulations (under 'normal' conditions) are reframed into a culturally acceptable way of operating that characterises the intuitive way we cope here:

> *The clients know the laws better than I do, even though very often they are people of low education. They look at us with suspicion and anger because they know that they know more than we do. Someone leads them before they come to us. ... They come with details that show that they had already fixed things (**irranġaw**) with someone else.*
>
> (Focus Group – Gozitan Public Sector Manager)

Empowerment therefore stems from the ability to build strong informal networks of friends close to power sources. 'Who you know' becomes overwhelmingly more important than 'what you know' in order to succeed. Investing in informal networks is considered pivotal for success: *Ahjar habib fis-suq minn mitt lira fis-senduq*. This old proverb confirms the deeply ingrained belief that it is much better to have a friend who has contacts than to have a large sum of money in your chest:

> *You should go to the managing director. But I go first to people I know, there's contact, network, informal channel, then I go to the top, not straightaway to the top – first you try to fix things (tirranġa).*

> (Focus Group – Gozitan Private Sector Manager)

> *We were always at a disadvantage [when compared with Maltese] and therefore we have found a way of overcoming the system and to settle matters (nirranġaw) the way it suits us best.*

> (Focus Group – Gozitan Public Sector Manager)

> *The employee tells you: 'I don't care.' Of course he doesn't care, because he knows that the people at the top will fix things for him (jirranġawlu) and then he tells you: 'you don't want to settle the matter for me (tirranġali), but I will manage (nirranġa) anyhow'.*

> (Focus Group – Gozitan Public Sector Manager)

Formal structures are modified through the *nirranġaw* process and transformed into informal networks to overcome the inhibiting barriers imposed by formality. This enables stakeholders to deal with their pressing problems in an atmosphere of informality that conforms more with their natural way in Gozo of 'just managing'.

5. The *Nirranġaw* Process – an Inhibitor?

So having solved our problems (or are these puzzles?), we Gozitans return to our daily routines. But in returning, do we seek to question our basic assumptions that have just influenced our action strategy? Or to ask whether it would be feasible to seek out different ways of acting resourcefully? In other words, does the core process that helps us succeed in the first place also inhibit us from questioning the suitability of our action? It is as if we are very aware of the formal side of the coin – our mistrust of distant authorities and powerlessness in the face of bureaucracies – but is the informal side – our trust and empowerment within a small community that happens 'naturally' as a practising principle – out of our reflective awareness? "We are rarely aware of this type of theory of action [our informal side above] because it is ingrained in us from early childhood" (ARGYRIS, 1991, p. 86). The grounded approach to this inquiry, like ARGYRIS and SCHÖN's (1974) 'ladder of inference', has helped the researcher to become aware of, conceptualise, and codify a largely tacit property that is taken for granted within this core process (see Figure 5 below).

Now we can hold both sides of the Gozitan *nirranġaw* process up against the unified framework of ARGYRIS and SCHÖN's action science (1974). We find our locally constructed, Gozo-made mode – the basic social psychological process explaining the action scene – enshrined as what is called theoretically a 'single-loop' mode of learning and development: single loop because it does not re-cycle to address governing variables that influence the stakeholders' assumptions and beliefs underlying their behaviour in the first place. Action science distinguishes between single-loop and double-loop learning, and also between espoused theories and theories-in-use (see Figure 5). Single-loop learning occurs whenever "an error is corrected without questioning or altering the underlying values of the system (be it individual, group, intergroup, organisational or interorganisational)" (ARGYRIS, 1992, p. 8). Double-loop learning invites questioning and reflection and seeks to identify assumptions underlying people's patterns of thought. It occurs when "mismatches are corrected by first examining and altering the governing variable and then the actions" (ARGYRIS, 1992, p. 9). *Nirranġaw*, the basic social psychological process accounting for enabling how we 'just manage' in Gozo,

appears to restrict us to single-loop learning and to inhibit our shifting into double-loop, critically reflexive learning:
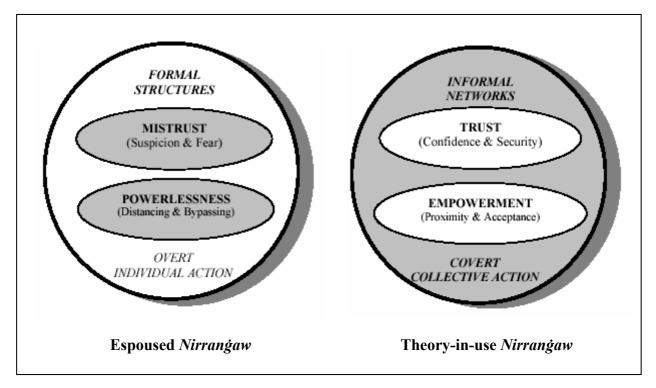
> *Gozo has always been an appendix of Malta. It's in-built in us not to protest about things that aren't right, but to accept and live with them. We have learnt to suffer. We don't try to get what is ours.*

(Participant 13 – POTTER, 2002, p. 32)

> *[Gozo] is driven by envy ... It's not changing. The mentality is constant.*

(Participant 12 – POTTER, 2002, p. 29)

Figure 5: The Nirranġaw Process – Restricting us to Single-Loop Learning?

Espoused *Nirranġaw*   **Theory-in-use *Nirranġaw***

When activating the *nirranġaw* process, our local 'action strategy' produces the expected 'results/consequences' of solving the immediate crisis. Yet it also keeps us entrapped within a 'functioning system' that has always worked to help us 'just manage' to solve our most pressing problems. So does a single-loop cycle of symptomatic problem solving take us round and round without fundamentally inviting us to refect on our core value assumptions?

Even though Gozitans might become aware during problem solving that there is some mismatch between what we are calling here their espoused theory (the formal side of the *nirranġaw* process) and their theory-in-use (the informal side), they tend to collapse the mismatch of these two different things into a unity – a 'match' – comprised of both the intention and the outcome of their action. This then satisfies their recurrent beliefs and values which they are naturally keen to maintain and so removes the impetus to re-consider and to change:
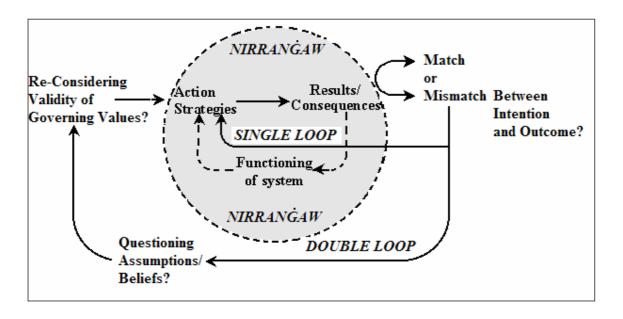
> *I am a bit afraid of the changes, because I like the way our ancestors lived.*

(Participant 5 – POTTER, 2002, p. 13)

Gozitans seem to be reluctant to reflect critically on the mismatch of their espoused theory with their theory-in-use. If they were to do so, they might then have to do something to change the variables that govern their behaviour. This in turn would challenge underlying

assumptions and beliefs that influence their folk-frame of mind in the first place. Fundamental shifts in their belief systems and values would then be implicated, which – while difficult as a discrepancy to reconcile – might begin to close the gap between their espoused theory and their theory-in-use. But would this take us into more innovative routes of addressing our problems? Figure 6 below illustrates the restrictive nature of our local mode by superimposing the *nirranġaw* process on the single-loop learning model. The capacity for critical questioning, for example, which can differentiate a match from a mismatch in an intention and an outcome, or can challenge the validity of an underlying assumption, is seen below to lie outside the scope of the *nirranġaw* process:

Figure 6: Nirranġaw – a Single-Loop Development Process?

Adapted from ARGYRIS, 1992, p. 8

6. Main Researcher's Reflections on Implications of Research Practice

What are the implications for a small islander of being locked inside a single-loop learning routine? For me there are three. As a Gozitan, the first is the overprotection of the *status quo* hindering us from devising innovative problem solving. What can we do to get ourselves out of the "self-sealing" (ARGYRIS, 1991, p. 87) process we have learned to activate since early childhood and in which we have become highly tacitly skilled?

Before setting out on the voyage, I was convinced I could introduce action learning to provide a developmental process that would help address the trade-off between protecting our local cultural values and modernising our community problem solving processes. I thought I could mobilise the Gozitan business community to start doing something, to change their current low-trust and high defusing practice when they encounter something new or different. Now I realise that, in an action learning spirit, I have first to start with changing myself, to be able to change what goes on around me (REVANS, 1998, p. 85). Like my 'comrades in adversity' on Gozo, I too scored high on the defusing style of managing conflict by avoiding it (in a spirit of collegiate inquiry, I went through the same comprehensive computerised self assessment that my co-researchers did who signed up for the management development programme). POTTER (2002, p. 5) reports 'high defusing' as the "classical Gozo pattern" of conflict han-

dling. According to the EDAC (2000) psychometric feedback report on my own conflict handling mode, over-use of this style can lead, *inter alia*, to disempowerment (powerlessness) and to low trust (mistrust) (POTTER, 2002).

So what can we do to gain more trust and empowerment to start resolving our intractable problems, instead of just managing to solve our superficial puzzles (coping through single-loop learning)? Can the *nirranġaw* process itself serve as a springboard to take us out of the same self-sealing cycle that is ingrained in our heads so that we can start to change ourselves and to change what goes on around us? Driven as we are by mistrust and powerlessness in an atmosphere ruled by feelings of suspicion and uncertainty vis-à-vis the formal authoritative structures – and as much as we try to distance ourselves and bypass these structures – we still prefer to hold on to a strong reliance on outsiders' actions, for example, government initiatives and Maltese or foreign 'experts' to provide solutions.

SENGE (1990) helps us to explain this behaviour. In the context of our smallness, aggravated by our over-reliance on our bigger sister island for survival and the dismal presence of innovative business opportunities, we do not afford to risk and to make mistakes. We therefore prefer to defend our turf to protect ourselves from possible outside threats. But what would happen if we started to focus our attention on our own mental models to develop critical awareness of what is influencing our 'habit' to see our problems as existing 'out there'? Would that be a first step to start realising how we contribute to our own problems and what we can do 'in here' to find their solutions?

A concrete example of the first implication of my learning from the research was my re-affirmation that community problems are not community problems unless perceived by others in the community as such – not just by me as chief observer! In effect, in providing an 'answer' for my co-research participants of how they might develop themselves through action learning, I was assuming they recognised the above tension between retaining values and modernising practices the same as I did. My own keenness to introduce action learning as a developmental strategy within the business community over-ran the business community's readiness of a need to develop themselves. Since these tend towards avoidant managerial behaviour, perhaps they did not express their reservations about joining such a radically different initiative – one in which no outside expert would tell them what was wrong and teach them what was right, but one in which they would have to ask tough questions of each other to help each other diagnose their difficulties and then hold themselves accountable for making progress on them. I will not succumb to that temptation again – although readers here might be receptive to them – of proposing ways forward of what 'ought to be done' on behalf of others. It is 'a learning' from my own action research I will not easily forget.

So I continue to reflect regularly on my own action-research practice, including the disappointment in not getting action learning off the ground. To what extent was I, myself, influenced by the same assumptions, images and values that have entrapped my co-research participants – constraining me inside the limiting box of my own *nirranġaw* process? Externalising the *nirranġaw* mode, therefore, becomes the very first step in a long and complex change, learning and development process. Along with SENGE, I have come to understand that once we become aware of our mental models, we can start to manipulate them. To do this we need to join in collective dialogue and to start practicing double-loop thinking so that old habits of the mind and established procedural obstacles are replaced and new insights become possible to act on and experiment with. If we can make progress in doing this we would be addressing yet another important concern of this study: that self-reliant development models and strategies cannot be imported, but have to be locally constructed through a process of empowerment (BALDACCHINO & GREENWOOD, 1998).

This study has suggested we are highly skilled in how to 'just manage'. Just managing may have served our requirements so far, but we might be reaching the critical juncture where if we do not move on to locally develop complementary skills of resourcefulness that would serve us the purpose of shaping our own destiny – rather than overly relying on 'others' to do it for us – we will find it ever harder to make ends meet. So, from 'just managing', can we, as MORRIS (1987, p. 115) puts it, shift our folk-frame of mind to 'manage justly': "In the company of others ... [to] work to mutual advantage, managing our affairs justly, rather than just managing."

This takes me to a second implication from my reflections on my practice of action research: I wonder now with the proposed action learning development programme dormant, does further action research remain viable? My earlier fear had been that the failure to proceed with the planned action learning programme would threaten the comprehensiveness of my inquiry. In the event, this worry was overcome, due to the flexible nature of action research, which is designed to deal with the 'real world' as it is engaged through real practice.

Action learning also is 'designed' for reality: 'real people' tackling 'real problems' in 'real time'. But fundamental to the challenge behind this strategy for developing human resourcefulness is a pedagogical acceptance of the belief in 'learning by doing' and 'learning while doing'. But are these beliefs held sufficiently in Gozo to mobilise readiness for and sustain reliance on this approach? Do our single-loop *nirranġaw* process and our cultural pattern of avoiding conflict reinforce too much the Gozitan reluctance to question and challenge each other? These are fundamental building blocks in action learning, which demands the risk to ask fresh questions out of ignorance, the same requirement characterising the practice of double-loop learning. So although the process of learning through experience is a natural one, akin to daily problem solving, is it that the less confronting process of action research provides a more acceptable starting framework to bring out in awareness the underlying requirements for double-loop inquiry that perhaps make action learning too demanding a starting point in Gozo?

It was my goal as the main researcher to learn and to create knowledge through an experience-based action 're-search' of my own practice and that of my co-research participants. The third and final implication for my continued practice as an action researcher, therefore, is about understanding that complex, iterative process better. Re-searching my own practice meant for me that knowledge could be created on the basis of my own concrete experience of the process of this very same research voyage. Through observing systematically and reflecting generatively on that experience, I could form abstract concepts and generalisations that explained plausibly the life situation of my practice and helped me to decide what to do next. Testing the implications of these concepts in new situations led me to new concrete experiences, and hence to the beginning of a new learning and knowledge-creating cycle (KOLB, 1984; HONEY and MUMFORD, 1989). ZUBER-SKERRITT (1991, p. xiii) summarises this process as "an iterative and cyclic approach of action and research with four major phases: plan, act, observe and reflect", while STRINGER (1999, p. 18-19) proposes a three-phase continually recycling set of activities: 'look', 'think', 'act'.

In the event I have come to agree with STRINGER (1999, p. 19) "that action research can be a complex process" way apart from a "neat, orderly activity that allows participants to proceed step-by-step to the end of the process". Figure 7 below revisits my research voyage as I reflect, *ex post facto*, on the experiential characteristic of this inquiry. To illustrate, I 'looked' at the outset (on the pier) primarily at quantitative data (which were analysed deductively); I 'thought' (in deeper water) about the meaning of emerging dichotomies from the conferences (qualitative and *in vivo* material – inductively analysed); finally I 'acted' trying to promote

action learning. Now begins another iteration subsequent to my doctoral study: I am 'looking again' (attending the Berlin conference, preparing this paper; and so forth).
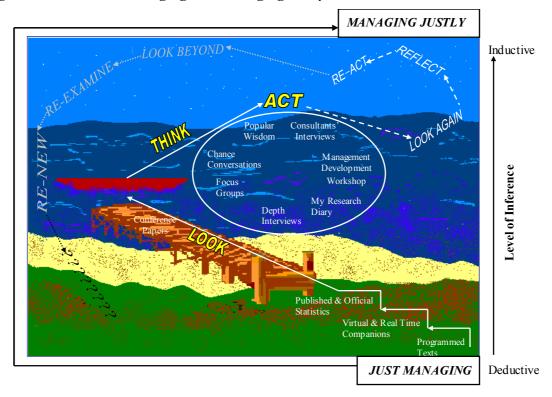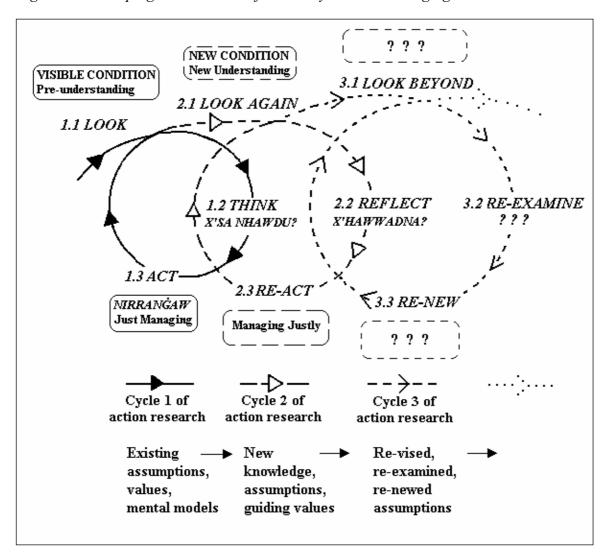
Figure 7: From 'Just Managing' To 'Managing Justly'

So this research voyage implicates a number of continually recycling action research activities that progressively develop a sharper understanding of the content and process of my own continuing practice as an action researcher (see Figure 8). In the first cycle, I continuously 'looked' (1.1) for relevant information and gathered data to build pictures and images that would best describe the situation first in quantitative terms and then qualitatively bring out the conditions within which we 'manage' in Gozo. 'Thinking' about this information (1.2) – the visible condition – I tried to explore and analyse further and deeper to find out what is actually happening here and then try to explain and interpret the results to answer the question: how and why are things as they are? how do we manage and why do we manage this way? From this process the main research question emerged: *x'sa nħawdu*? (Maltese expression, pronounced: shsan-how-do) – How do we manage? Finally, I acted (1.3) on my provisional understandings, trying (it turned out, unsuccessfully) to mobilise the local business community to 'learn with and from each other' through taking deliberate action.

Figure 8: Developing Gozo Resourcefulness beyond Just Managing

By the end of what I now call Cycle 1 of my action research, I had externalised the basic social psychological process of 'just managing'. But the unsatisfactory result of my action in not mobilising action learning prodded me to understand better the limitations of my own assumptions, values and mental models as a scholarly practitioner. So I began 'looking again' (2.1) at the situation and 'reflecting' further (2.2) on my own practice and experience of the voyage: I took myself through this second learning cycle armed with re-considered knowledge, assumptions and values, re-navigating through the influences on my thinking. My 're-action' (2.3) took me out of the constrictive box of the *nirranġaw* process and helped me to reaction' (2.3) took me out of the constrictive box of the *nirranġaw* process and helped me to re-conceptualise how I could perhaps start 'managing justly'. Is evidence of my new double-loop learning the unswerving clarity I now hold *not* to end this chapter on the level of 'action steps' on behalf of my absent co-research participants in Gozo? How tempting, for example, to 'set a next research agenda' on their behalf that would 'help' them? If I were to do that, I would be contravening the internalisation taking place within me that parallels the shift from 'just managing' to 'managing justly'. As a Gozitan accustomed to avoiding conflict, I can assure the reader such newly won assertiveness does not come easily!

'Managing justly', therefore, means achieving a firmer mastery over my internal self and over my external world. It necessarily includes a commitment to be 'honest' with myself in admit-

ting my ignorance as a pre-condition for my own internal change that is fundamental to the philosophy of action learning and of double-loop learning: I have learned that unless I am able to change myself I cannot change what goes on around me. I have learned that the first actionable step forward to start 'managing justly' the development of human resourcefulness in Gozo is the admittance that "without the power to discard beliefs shown to be wrong ... one cannot introduce action known to be right" (REVANS, 1998, p. 86). This study represents for me so far the two initial cycles of an infinite action research spiral that will hopefully continue to guide me in my future career as a Human Resource practitioner-researcher into another cycle (No. 3 above in Figure 8): to keep 'looking beyond' (3.1) new understandings, 're-examining' (3.2) new assumptions and guiding values, and continuously 're-newing' (3.3) my own practice.

References

Aquilina, J. (1990). Maltese-English Dictionary (M - Z). Malta: Midsea Books Ltd.

Argyris, C. & Schön, D.A. (1974). Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Argyris, C., Putnam, R. & Smith, D.M. (1985). Action Science. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Argyris, C. (1992). On Organisational Learning. Oxford: Blackwell.

Argyris, C. (1991). The Executive Mind and Double-Loop Learning. In: D.A. Kolb, I.M. Rubin & J.S. Osland (Eds), The Organisational Behaviour Reader (5th ed.). Sydney: Prentice-Hall.

Azzopardi, Joseph (2002). Human Resourcefulness in Gozo: Just Managing in an Island Within an Island. Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Manchester.

Baldacchino, G. (2000). The Social Structure: Issues and Implications. In: Bank of Valletta (Eds), Gozo Conference: Improving the Employability of the Workforce in Gozo. Malta: BOV.

Baldacchino, G. & Greenwood, R. (Eds) (1998). Competing Strategies of Socio-Economic Development for Small Islands. Canada: Institute for Island Studies.

Bank of Valletta (Eds) (2000). 2000 Gozo Conference: Improving the Employability of the Workforce in Gozo. Malta: BOV.

Briguglio, L. (Ed) (2000). The Effects of EU Membership on the Island Region of Gozo. Malta: Formatek.

Cauchi, N.J. (2001). Gozo and the Gozitans: The Uncertain Future of an Island Community (A Social Analysis), unpublished paper delivered at the Gozo Business Chamber Conference on Defining the Socio-Economic Character of the Island Region of Gozo. Gozo, March 23, 2001.

EDAC (2000). Executive Development Assessment Centre [Online]. http://www.edacen.com.

Garavan, T.N., Heraty, N. & Barnicle, B. (1999). Human Resource Development Literature: Current Issues, Priorities and Dilemmas. Journal of European Industrial Training, 23 (4/5), 169-179.

Glaser, B.G. (1978). Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Honey, P. & Mumford, A. (1989). The Manual of Learning Opportunities. London: Honey.

Kolb, D.A. (1984). Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Morris, J. (1987). Good Company. Management Education and Development, 18 (2), 103-115.

Potter, S. (2002). A Consultant's Notebook: Transcripts of Interviews with Leading Members of the Gozo Business Chamber. Unpublished edited version for research purposes only. Manchester: EDAC/University of Manchester - IDPM.

Revans, R.W. (1998). ABC of Action Learning: Empowering Managers to Act and to Learn from Action. London: Lemos and Crane.

Senge, P.M. (1990). The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation. London: Century Business.

Stringer, E.T. (1999). Action Research (2nd ed). London: Sage.

Zuber-Skerritt, O. (Ed) (1991). Action Research for Change and Development. Sydney: Abebury.

Authors

Joseph Azzopardi – Dr., B.A. (Hons.), M.Sc., Ph.D. (Manchester), lectures at the Department of Management, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy, University of Malta, Msida, Malta.

Research interests: Human Resource Management and Development; Action Learning and Action Research; Social and Community Psychology.

Pete Mann – Dr., B.A. (Wesleyan), M.Ed., Ph.D. (Manchester), FCIPD, lectures at the Institute for Development Policy and Management in the School of Environment and Development at the University of Manchester, UK.

Research interests: Applications of body-mind Psychology and Neuroscience within Human, Organisation and Management Development; Action Learning and Action Research; and the Strengthening of Practice through critically reflective, Interactive and Experiential Methodologies.

Contact

Dr. Joseph Azzopardi
Department of Management, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy
University of Malta
Msida, Malta
email: joseph.g.azzopardi@um.edu.mt

Claudia Villalobos Montoya & Petra Schweizer-Ries

Rural Solar Energy Supply and Participation – The Example of a Small Hellenic Community

Abstract

For many communities in rural areas worldwide a reliable energy supply is still not reality. Especially renewable energy sources can help communities to become more independent, to achieve higher life qualities and better income opportunities. Nevertheless, with the introduction of innovative technologies in rural areas it also happens that many difficulties arise, which avoid the sustainable use of those technologies. Due to an underestimation of the human factor many technically sophisticated projects fail. The active involvement and participation of the future users in the different phases of the electrification process therefore can promote a sustainable energy use.

The following article will describe how inhabitants of a small Greek community were integrated in an electrification project, which impact their participation had, and which potentials of their active involvement are remaining.

This publication is based on data obtained during a qualitative field-study in May 2003. The survey aimed at evaluating the technical project and focussed on socio-technical and socio-economical aspects of solar energy supply.

Our motivation is to highlight the role of application focussed psychological research on the field of renewable energy and to show how psychological interventions can contribute to a sustainable common use of energy systems.

Keywords

Participation, Community Development, Energy Use, Rural Electrification.

Resumen

Muchas comunidades en regiones rurales aun no disponen de ningún suministro energético fiable. Especialmente las energías renovables pueden ofrecer mejor calidad de vida y mejor posibilidades para la generación de ingresos lejos de la red eléctrica. No obstante, la introducción de las tecnologías inovadores trae difficultades que puedan impedir su uso sostenible. Debido a una falta de consideración del factor humano, muchos proyectos tecnicamente perfectos fracasan. En cambio, el involucramiento de los futuros usuarios puede promover un uso energético sostenible.

Tomando el ejemplo de una pequenia comunidad griega se describe cómo los habitantes han sido integrados en un proyecto de electrificación, cuál ha sido el impacto de su participación en el proceso y dónde quedan potenciales para su involucramiento. Este artículo se basa en datos obtenidos durante un estudio cualitativo de campo realizado en Mayo 2003. La investigación tenía como objetivo la evaluación del proyecto técnico y enfocaba los aspectos socio-técnicos y socio-económicos del suministro energético de la comunidad.

Se procura mostrar con este artículo el papel de la investigación psicológica aplicada en el campo de energías renovables y como medidas psicológicas pueden contribuir a un uso comunitario sostenible de sistemas con energías renovables.

Palabras claves

Participación, desarrollo de la comunidad, uso de energías, electrificación rural.

Zusammenfassung

Für viele Gemeinden in ländlichen Gebieten weltweit ist eine funktionierende Energieversorgung keine Selbstverständlichkeit. Besonders erneuerbare Energieressourcen können als fernab vom Stromnetz eine höhere Lebensqualität und verbesserte Erwerbsmöglichkeiten für die BewohnerInnen bieten und damit die sozio-ökonomische Entwicklung der Gemeinde ermöglichen. Jedoch ergeben sich bei der Einführung innovativer Technologien im ländlichen Raum zahlreiche Fehlentwicklungen, die eine nachhaltige Nutzung verhindern. Bedingt durch eine Unterschätzung des 'Einflussfaktors Mensch' scheitern viele, auch technisch perfekte Projekte. Durch eine aktive Einbeziehung der zukünftigen EndnutzerInnen in die verschiedenen Phasen des Elektrifizierungsprozesses kann jedoch eine nachhaltige Energienutzung gefördert werden.

Am Beispiel einer kleinen griechischen Gemeinde wird aufgezeigt, wie die BewohnerInnen in ein Elektrifizierungsprojekt integriert wurden, welche Auswirkungen ihre Partizipation auf den Prozess hatte und welche Potentiale ihrer aktiven Mitgestaltung an der Energieversorgung noch vorhanden sind. Die Grundlage bilden Daten, welche im Rahmen einer qualitativen Feldstudie im Mai 2003 erhoben wurden. Die Untersuchung erfolgte zur Evaluierung des technischen Projekts und fokussierte die sozio-technischen und sozio-ökonomischen Aspekte der solaren Dorfstromversorgung.

Ziel dieses Beitrages ist es, die Rolle der anwendungsorientierten psychologischen Forschung auf dem Gebiet der Nutzung erneuerbarer Energieressourcen aufzuzeigen und darzulegen, wie sozialwissenschaftliche Maßnahmen zu einer nachhaltigen gemeinschaftlichen Nutzung erneuerbarer Energiesysteme beitragen können.

Schlüsselbegriffe

Partizipation, Gemeindeentwicklung, Energienutzung, ländliche Elektrifizierung.

1. Introduction

Electricity is essential to our everyday life, because it facilitates us comfort in our households, possibilities of gaining income, access to information and culture. In industrialised countries, especially in urban contexts, most of us take it for granted. Yet, a reliable and affordable energy supply is far from the norm in the developing world, where over 1.7 billion people still do not have access to electricity (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2002). A negative consequence of this deficiency is a massive drift from rural to urban regions, which enhances the crowding in the cities, poverty, social and environmental problems. But we don't have to go that far; also in remote rural regions inside Europe, especially in mountain regions and on islands, there are numerous communities without regular energy supply.

In the past, in order to cover the electricity demand of these communities solutions were adopted like motor generators or individual solar home systems, which cause several inconveniences: The generators are expensive because of the fuel costs, they run only a few hours during the day and they contaminate the environment with noise and emissions. Individual solar systems produce direct current to run few small appliances like bulbs, a radio or a black and white TV-set. For more powerful devices or machines a generator is needed.

In the last two decades various rural electrification programmes with renewable energy sources have been realized and the advanced technology permitted to implement decentralised

community installations, which represent a considerable progress to the former energy supply: These village power supply systems produce alternating current similar to the national electricity grid and therefore permit the use of common appliances, energy is available during 24 hours a day, pollution and noise are avoided and fuel is not required (1) (SCHWEIZER-RIES, 1997; MITJÁ et al., 2003). This solution could be an ideal one for energy supply, but nevertheless, many installations did not work as well as expected although they were designed technically perfect. The problem was not a technical, but a social one: Concentrated mostly on technical and economical aspects the installers did not consider the social context, the local conditions, and especially the issues concerning the end-users sufficiently (SCHWEIZER-RIES, CASPER, DJUWITA, RAMÍREZ & HIDALGO DE ÁVILA, 2001). The challenge and the key of success for a sustainable community energy supply lies in the participation of the community.

2. A PV-Hybrid-System and its participation demands

PV-Hybrid-Systems consist out of energy supplies (a solar electricity (photovoltaic = PV) generator and (an)other source/s like wind, water power and/or a diesel generator, that is usually used as backup generator), a storage system (like batteries), a consumption side (means sockets for electrical appliances or directly connected appliances like e.g. street lights) and a management unit (this takes care for the popper charge and discharge cycles). Normal energy appliances can be used although energy saving devices are strongly recommended. These systems do have limitations in energy and power supply. Depending of the concept of the energy supply (the two extremes are: virtually unlimited and strongly restricted) the systems are more expensive and the supply limitations are less obvious. PV-Hybrid-Systems can be seen as socio-technical systems consisting of technical, human and organisational parts that interact with each other (SCHWEIZER-RIES, 2004; SCHWEIZER-RIES, VOGT & CASPER, 2001). Human actions are important in the following areas: maintenance on the supply side, appropriate use on the demand side and decision on the management side (SCHWEIZER & PREISER, 1995). If the system is used by more then one party the distribution of energy becomes more crucial (SCHWEIZER-RIES, 2000). Without limitations an overuse can reduce productivity and even destroy the whole unit. For the success of a PV-Hybrid-System several factors are important: the technology, the users, the organisation and the economic issues (SCHWEIZER-RIES et al., 2000). As these systems are not organised like our local grid, but isolated in remote areas, end-users' participation can take place in all the mentioned fields and is crucial for the sustainable use and operation of such a system.

3. A participation model for rural electrification

It is a widely shared opinion that the involvement of the community is crucial for a successful project implementation (NELSON & WRIGHT, 1995; WIESENFELD & SÁNCHEZ, 2002). Community participation is defined as an "attempt to exert influence over decisions relevant to the achievement of community goals" (WIESENFELD & SÁNCHEZ, 2002, p. 631). The community gains control about it's concerning conditions and promotes activities in order to obtain most appropriate solutions to its needs and demands. This experience of own decision power can encourage the community to personally get involved with projects and therefore to strengthen its further development. The price of community participation for the project implementers is to share decision power with the end-users; the benefit is to gain more sustainability of the project. The price of participation for the community is to invert its resources in the participatory processes and to assume part of the responsibility for the outcome of the project.

Participatory processes are characterized as follows (MINKLER, 2000 in WIESENFELD & SÁNCHEZ, 2002, p. 632):

1. Employment of bottom-up rather than top-down approaches, recognition of limitations of expert knowledge

2. Emphasis in understanding the meanings that different actors ascribe to the problems of concern

3. Tendency to be driven by community priorities rather than outside expert priorities

4. Emphasis of community strengths and its problem solving capacity.

Regarding the purpose of participation Jacqueline LANE (1995, p. 183) distinguishes between participation as a mean and participation as an end:

"Participation may be a *means* to improve project effectiveness through the use of local information to specify correctly problems and needs, improve solutions, avoid misunderstandings. […] Participation may however be seen as an end itself. It may have an intrinsic merit, if it increases self-esteem, confidence, and the individual's sense of power."

Often, this empowering dimension of participation has been ignored and the participation concept has been understood as a means, as a tool in order to decrease project costs or as a manipulation strategy (LANE, 1995, p. 183; HORELLI, 2002, p. 608; NELSON & WRIGHT, 1995, p. 2, 7, 15). But participation as end means "co-determination and power sharing throughout the […] programme cycle" (GTZ, 1991, p. 4 in NELSON & WRIGHT, 1995, p. 4) where users will be treated as equal partners from the initial idea of the project till the outcome evaluation and in addition they will get long term access to resources and decision making. "Effective participation implies involvement not only in information collection, but in analysis, decision-making and implementation – implying devolution of the power to decide." (PRETTY & SCOONES, 1995, p. 160).

LANE (1995, p. 182) pointed out that nowadays participation is very common in the implementation phase of the project and the beneficiaries are involved by contributing resources (e.g. time, man power). She concluded: "However this is only one stage in the development process, and we must also consider participation in decision making, in implementation and maintenance, in benefits, and in evaluation of both successes and failures." (id.)

Samuel PAUL (1987) defined four methods of participation, which describe different levels of participation intensity and different relationships between project implementers and beneficiaries:

1. *Information sharing*: Top-down approach, information flow and control only in one direction

2. *Consultation*: Use of local knowledge, information flows more equally, control remains top-down

3. *Decision-making*: Beneficiaries have some control over the process

4. *Initiating action*: Information and control flow primarily upward, but project agency retains some degree of control.

On the way to a participatory approach there are several barriers to overcome: How to convince project implementing experts that sharing decision power and resources, but inverting more time and energy in democratic processes will have any benefit for the project and their work? How to activate persons in order to participate as volunteers in community activities, if they are not used to be asked and maybe are not directly affected by the project decisions and outcome? How to manage the different interests and understandings behind the concept of participation among all stakeholders of the project, but also inside the community?

Rosalind EYBEN and Sarah LADBURY (1995, p. 193 ff) asked for the reasons for people's little participation in decisions, which affect them. The first argument is an economic one: the benefits obtained from participation must be considered higher than the costs of participating. They also emphasised the internal differences in the community and pointed out: "this idealized notion of community is a real barrier to understanding the dynamics of participation and explaining the circumstances in which participation does, and does not occur" (1995, p. 194). A political barrier for participation is the monopolization of the participation process by high-status groups (e.g. men). And the collective decision-making process can also exacerbate existing underlying conflicts inside the community. Another important fact is that lack of participation can "be the result of professionals' assuming the role of knowledgeable specialists who do not take users' views into account because users do not 'know enough' to make decisions." (id., p. 197)

A practical question is how to include end-users and local institutions properly in the project process? During more than one decade there has been developed a model for the introduction of solar energy technologies into rural communities in an interdisciplinary and intercultural team (SCHWEIZER-RIES, CASPER, DJUWITA, RAMÍREZ & HIDALGO DE ÁVILA, 2001). The basis assumptions have been worked out in an Argentinean village and further applications and adaptation have been taken place in Asian and African villages. Finally the participation demands have been formulated (see also VILLALOBOS, SCHWEIZER-RIES & RAMÍREZ, 2002/2003). It discerns five phases and includes general rules as well as concrete recommendations for technology implementers for each phase. Illustration 1 shows the model. The rhombuses, which represent the phases are inclined and have permeable limits in order to illustrate the interconnections and interdependency of the phases, which have fluid transitions and can overlap in the same time. The phases are strongly linked and cannot be seen isolated. The intensity of the rhombuses' colour illustrates the intensity of the community's participation. The blue arrows represent contacts of the intervention team members with the community or representatives of it. The red arrows indicate milestones, which are significant events in the electrification process. In other publications it has been compared with the social design approach of architectural and organisational psychology (e.g. SCHWEIZER-RIES, 2004). It is an ideal model and in reality several variations can be found. Nevertheless, in all of our investigated villages all the phases where included. As we can see below in our example village of this article one more phase could be seen, the experimentation phase. This phase is typical for scientific projects, where the installation is not directly handed over but used as "experimental station" later on.
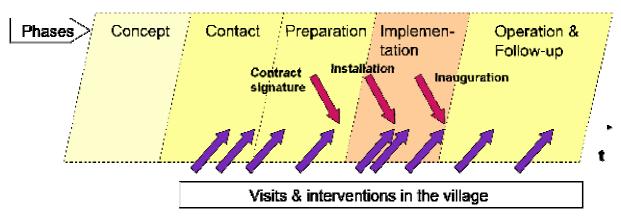

Illustration 1: Phase model of rural electrification, including interventions in the community and milestones of the process

4. The community under survey

The Cycladic Island with which we have been concerned is one of the less known Hellenic islands, situated in the Aegean Sea, 60 km south of Athens. Approximately 2000 inhabitants are living there distributed in five villages. In the high season (from May to September) and on important holidays mainly Greek tourists come to the island. Those five villages are supplied with energy from centralised diesel generators, a wind park and solar panels.

The settlement under survey, consisting of 13 households, is situated in a remote bay without blacktopped road access. All houses are used as second residences; nobody permanently lives there. The majority of inhabitants are visiting the place at weekends, holidays and in summer time. This is not so unusual for European villages and can be found e.g. in Spain as well. The owner of the houses live in cities with energy supply from the national electricity grid and come for weekends and vacations to the remote areas. This means in contrast to settlements where the energy users live permanently, on the energy side they are used to "normal" power supply, where no maintenance is needed and energy is available like virtually unlimited most of the times. Another difference to permanent settlements is that in some times only a few families live in the village and could easily use the limited energy source alone. The population of the surveyed community has a heterogenic socio-cultural structure and the settlement doesn't dispose of community installations like a bar, a meeting room, a church etc. Nevertheless all inhabitants know each other well and are interested in maintaining good neighbourhood relationships. Two years ago the community founded a neighbourhood association as an unofficial organization in order to promote infrastructural improvements.

Before 2001, when two multi-user solar hybrid systems (2) were installed, the settlement was not electrified. Some inhabitants used individual diesel generators. These two solar systems (actually they are unified in one system) supply 11 houses and one system vendor with energy. Each household can use lighting, a refrigerator and small electrical appliances during 24 hours. From the beginning on residents were asked to use energy-efficient appliances like fluorescent lamps and refrigerators with good insulation. All users, except the president of the neighbours association, have the same power limitation; the amount of electricity (currency) is not limited (3). Each household has a counter for its consumed electricity.

In order to assure good operation and maintenance of these systems, contracts between the implementing companies and institutions, the Municipality of Kythnos and the end-users of energy supply, concerning the responsibilities and rights of all parties have been signed. The installing companies are the owners and responsible for the maintenance and repairs of the system for about 10 years. After this period the system is planned to be completely handed over to a local organisation. One local electrician has been trained in order to carry out the maintenance of the system (SCHWEIZER-RIES & VILLALOBOS, 2003).

5. Community participation in the project

5.1 The survey

Exclusively technical institutions implemented the European project of rural electrification with renewable energy sources in this community. As the first problems with the end-users appeared the social scientists where invited by the Institute for Solar Energy Technology in Germany to join the group. After the preparation of an official assignment, environmental psychologists could carry out the evaluation study on the project and elaborate recommendations for improvement of the operation of the energy supply system two years after the installation. Therefore, a participative research design (FLICK, 1996; CROPLEY, 2002) including three steps – diagnosis, intervention and evaluation – was offered. The first step was contracted and realised with an action-research oriented field study (ORFORD, 1992, p. 199;

HORELLI, 2002, p. 612 f) in May 2003 (4). The research team followed some principles of a participatory research design (WRIGHT & NELSON, 1995, p. 57 ff) involving all stakeholders in the research process and sharing the results with the surveyed persons. In a preparatory meeting the expectations of the contracting company were explored and the objectives of the study were agreed on. First hypothesis about the topic were generated and developed further on. An autochthonous person who accompanied the researcher team in Greece, translated and facilitated the research process.

Following the classification of enabling tools for participatory planning (HORELLI, 2002, p. 613 ff) (5), diagnostic tools (observation, interviews, visits) and organizational tools (information dissemination, workshops) were used during the study. In total, four guided interviews with local stakeholders of the project (research centre, utility, mayor, local technician) on different levels and with eight end-users of the energy supply system were realized. The interviews were transcribed and translated into English. The hypothesis as well as operational tools were developed continuously.

A written summary on the survey results together with information material about energy saving was sent to end-users. The end-users were asked to express their ideas about the results in order to attain a consensual validation, and one end-user (the key person of the settlement) answered and expressed his agreement with the outcome of the survey.

Using the results were elaborated practical recommendations in order to facilitate improvements in the performance of the socio-technical system. Two workshops were carried out after the survey for the stakeholder companies in Greece and Germany in order to present the results and recommendations as well as to discuss open questions.

5.2 Involvement in the phases of the electrification process

The following subchapters briefly reconstruct how the implementers have involved the community in the different phases of the electrification process. Especially the participation is compared with the idealised model.

Concept phase

In the concept phase the end-users where not involved at all. This happens in many technical projects where the implementers decide by themselves what and how to install. In the example village no joint supply concept was found at all: One party preferred to offer the same conditions like in the national grid to end-users (virtually unlimited and paying as much as is consumed) (6). Others in contrast tended to the concept of energy sufficiency where users should be aware of the system as a limited resource and make a rational use of it. As no joint concept existed it was also not communicated to the end users. This brings the clear danger of wrong expectations in the community. To compensate the insecurity in our example village an additional phase was created: the experimental phase. After this phase, the final concept should be fixed. This lead the end-users to the thinking that they are included in an experiment and the Germans could manipulate the installation from Germany.

Contact phase

During the contact phase, one member of the project staff and the mayor of the island went to the settlement and talked to some neighbours. Both sides have signed a previous agreement. Also, future users were invited to a meeting with the project staff in Athens in order to get information about the project, but only one person attended the meeting. The inhabitants themselves met several times to speak about this topic. Users affirmed that they want to be involved and informed, but when there is a concrete possibility to participate in the meetings, it is not a first priority to them.

Preparation phase

In the preparation phase future users received information leaflets about the planned project. The rules for the usage of the system were established between the members of the project staff, but unilaterally, not in a negotiation process with the future end-users. The users know and formally have accepted the verbally accorded rules. Nevertheless, later on some users didn't respect the rules using devices, which were not permitted and overused the installation. In contrast to the ideal participation in this phase, there was no open commitment of the end-users to take care of the energy consumption.

The users, the Municipality and the implementing companies signed a contract which includes the rights and responsibilities of all parties. The end-users were not involved in the elaboration of this usage contract. The financing concept and the concept of energy supply were not finalized and agreements on these concepts (see also 4.2.1) were not achieved in this phase.

Implementation phase

The community was not directly involved in the system installation, but the users were asked, where they prefer the panels to be collocated, in touch with their houses or independent in the ground. This already evoked some conflicts. The users where not sure whether they will be paid for this assignment for beneficial use. The installation phase finished with the official inauguration of the systems, which doesn't initiate the operation phase, but an experimental phase (see above). The system was not directly handed over to the community or to the Municipality; during ten years it remains the property of the implementing companies for research purposes and monitoring. After this period, the ownership is open and the parties already have different ideas about its future.

Operation and follow-up phase

Is was already our recommendation to let the operation phase start with the unification of both systems and with the initiation of regular payment, one year after the official inauguration.

5.3 Summary of our findings

The end-users do not feel responsible for maintenance or care of the installation. They consider it as the task of the local technician. Only the leader has access to the systems house. The end-users did not take over any responsibility and did not pay neither the cost of consumed energy nor a yearly fee for a common fund for repairs. Nevertheless, they knew about their financial responsibilities and they are willing to pay, but they where not asked to do so till this moment.

The Greek institution responsible for the electrification project showed a great sensitiveness for the end-users; it took care of the information of the users by distributing leaflets and inviting to user meetings. Later on it maintained a frequent phone contact with the community members. One engineer tried to manage emerging social conflicts due to temporary shut downs of the system. But the project consortium didn't count on specialized professionals for social tasks.

The users showed interest in being involved and informed about issues concerning the energy supply, but usually they delegate the representation of their interests to the president of the neighbours association. At the moment this organization is not able to take over the responsibility for the solar system, as it is not a legal body. In this aspect it will be important to see how willing the community is to participate really.

The users were thankful to dispose over the energy supply system, because it increases comfort and saves money, which they have had to spend before for fuel. But, the users also complained about frequent shutdowns. In most cases, the failure was attributed to the improper usage behaviour of some neighbours, which leads to a high potential of social conflicts.

The privileges conceded from the installers to the president of the neighbourhood association caused disappointment among others, but the conflict remains unsaid. This leader is an authority in the community and the neighbours are very interested in maintaining good neighbourhood relationships. Another unwanted consequence of this inequality is the dynamic of increasing energy consumption: "If the other can use more appliances, I can do the same. Why I should use low consumption lamps, if the other uses a water pump?" The majority of end-users wish to have more equality regarding the energy consumption and that others respect the rules of usage. In order to avoid conflicts and to maintain the good relationships between them, the neighbours asked for an external solution (technical limitation and protection of the system against over-use).

5.4 Potentials for community participation

Till the realisation of the survey, a participatory approach between the involved institutions and the end-users has not been applied, because the project implementers were not interested in sharing decision power with the community and the community was not prepared or interested in taking over more responsibility for the electricity supply. The aim of the realized survey was not to promote as much participation as possible, but to recommend some modifications in the organization of the electricity supply system in order to obtain its sustainability. For this objective, an adequate involvement of the user community is required. In the following part some concrete measurements for the improvement of the socio-technical system, which have been discussed with the stakeholders, will be presented:

The institutions involved in the project should initiate a discussion with the Municipality, the end-users and the local technician about the distribution of tasks and responsibilities, ownership of the system and financial compromises of each part for the next years. Together, consequences for the case that some users are not paying their fees or not respecting the rules of usage should be introduced.

A common energy supply concept, as this seems to be missing at the moment, should be elaborated in collaboration with the community, taking into account the needs of the end-users and the technical possibilities of the system. There are different suitable solutions thinkable: Either all users get and pay the same, or a tariff system for different demands and rates will be established. The users should be actively involved in the decision making process.

The privileges of the president of neighbours association should be retired, because there is no justification for different treatment of end-users. A trustful and transparent treatment of the company based in equality of users will decrease potentials of social conflicts and dissatisfaction.

The end-users should always be properly informed about any modification of the system or the energy supply. If people are not well informed, they can feel a lack of control over the situation and they will fill this lack of information with their own hypothesis of what is going on, and they will act according to this hypothesis.

The rules of usage should be actualised and repeated to the community, if there is the possibility in workshops, training courses or visits of the settlement.

The neighbours association can be encouraged to take over more responsibility in the matters of energy supply.

6. Conclusions

The project staff showed a good disposition to involve the community and to consider their needs. Nevertheless, the involvement and the empowerment of the community were not an explicit aim of the project. Professional stakeholders of the project have not shared the decision power with the community. The project staff was composed only by technical entities which usually follow a pragmatic concept: Participation is utilized as a mean in order to obtain the collaboration of the end-users in the project implementation. Because social professionals can contribute their skills and know-how as facilitators of participation processes in benefit of a smooth project implementation, but also in order to obtain long term sustainability of the project, it is highly recommended to form an interdisciplinary socio-technical project consortium and follow an interdisciplinary approach. With the collaboration of social experts many potentials of participation of the community could be used in favour of the social, technical, economical and ecological sustainability of the project itself and community development as an additional benefit can be fostered.

The experience gained in the Greek village can be used for future community energy supply systems with renewable energies in order to make an appropriate participatory approach from the beginning of the project and during all phases of the electrification process in order to achieve a long term sustainable energy supply.

Notes

(1) Most of these installations count with a back-up generator, which runs in case of any technical incidence or if the batteries are not sufficiently charged. These generators run with conventional fuel (diesel or petrol). An objective should be to minimize the use of the back-up generator in order to save fuel.

(2) In this installation two systems are included due to scientific and project organisational reasons.

(3) The power limits the potency of the appliances; the current determines how long the appliances can be used.

(4) It would go too far to discuss the whole process of involvement and why no further participation of the social scientists in the project took place. The main argument was a financial one. Additional scientists need additional money and technical projects are most of the time finished shortly after the installation of the new technology.

(5) "Enabling tools refers to any techniques, even traditional research methods that enhance the transactions and knowledge creation of the stakeholders during the phases of participatory planning." (HORELLI, 2002, p. 614)

(6) This concept functions only if the diesel generator would cover the deficit of the required quantity of electricity. If the diesel generator is used regularly not only the cost increase but also the noise and CO_2 production.

References

European Commission (2002). Partnerships for sustainable energy. http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/wssd/energy_en.html. (29.08.2004)

Cropley, A.J. (2002). Qualitative Forschungsmethoden. Eine praxisnahe Einführung. Eschborn: Verlag Dietmar Klotz.

Eyben, R. & Ladbury, S. (1995). Popular participation in aid-assisted projects: why more in theory than in practice? In: N. Nelson & S. Wright (Eds), Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice, 192-200. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Flick, U. (1996). Qualitative Forschung. 2nd Edition. Reinbeck: Rowohlt.

Horelli, L. (2002). A Methodology of Participatory Planning. In: R.B. Bechtel & A. Churchman (Eds), Handbook of Environmental Psychology, 607-628. New York: Wiley.

Lane, J. (1995). Non-governmental organizations and participatory development: the concept in theory versus the concept in practice. In: N. Nelson & S. Wright (Eds), Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice, 181-191. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Mitjá, A., Torra, C., Satué, D., Peters, Ch., Vallvé, X. & Vosseler, I. (2003). L'alternativa sostenible per a l'electrificació rural. Micro-xarxes elèctriques amb Generació Solar híbrida – MGS. Barcelona: Institut Catalá d'Energia.

Nelson, N. & Wright, S. (Eds) (1995). Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Nelson, N. & Wright, S. (1995). Participation and power. In: N. Nelson & S. Wright (Eds), Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice, 1-18. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Orford, J. (1992). Community psychology: theory and practice. West Sussex: John Wiley.

Paul, S. (1987). Community Participation in Development Projects. World Bank discussion paper no. 6, Washington DC: World Bank. In: J. Lane (Ed), Non-governmental organizations and participatory development: the concept in theory versus the concept in practice. In: N. Nelson & S. Wright (Eds), Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice, 181-200. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Pretty, J.N. & Scoones, I. (1995). Institutionalizing adaptive planning and local level concerns: Looking to the future. In: N. Nelson & S. Wright (Eds), Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice, 157-169. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Schweizer, P. & Preiser, K. (1995). Interactions between Photovoltaic Systems and their Users. In: W. Roth & H. Schmidt (Eds), Photovoltaic Systems, 249-262. Regensburg: OTTI-Technologie-Kolleg.

Schweizer, P. (1997). Psychologische Faktoren bei der Nutzung regenerativer Energien: Eine Studie zum Einsatz von Solartechnik im Zentralen Himalaya. In: A. Buchner & J. Funke (Hrsg.), Aktuelle Psychologische Forschung, Band 19. Lengerich: Pabst Science Publisher.

Schweizer-Ries, P., Preiser, K., Schulz, M., Ramirez, E., Vallvé, X. & Vossler, I. (2000). Success factors in PV-Hybrid Systems for off grid power supply: results of a socio-technical investigation in Germany and Spain. Proceedings of the 16th European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference and Exhibition, 16, 1791-1795.

Schweizer-Ries, P. (2000). Perspectives: The future of village power supply systems including the users perspective. Proceedings of the 1st European Conference on PV Hybrid Systems, 1, CD-ROM.

Schweizer-Ries, P., Vogt, G. & Casper, C. (2001). Mensch-Technik-Organisations (MTO) - Analyse von netzunabhängigen Dorfstromanlagen. Tagungsbeitrag zum 16. Symposium Photovoltaische Solarenergie, 10, 287-292.

Schweizer-Ries, P., Casper, C., Djuwita, R., Ramírez, E. & Hidalgo de Ávila, E. (2001). Social interventions to achieve success with off-grid village power supply systems: Case studies from Indonesia, Spain and Argentina. Proceedings of the 17th European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference, Munich, Germany, 22-26 October 2001, 1951-1955.

Schweizer-Ries, P. & Villalobos Montoya, C. (2003). Report of the Investigation Study on Kythnos – First Part: Need-Analysis for the extension of the hybrid system and grid integration. [internal report]. Otto-von-Guericke-University of Magdeburg.

Schweizer-Ries, P. (2004). Nutzung von Solarstromanlagen – ein umweltpsychologisches Thema. Magdeburger Wissenschaftsjournal, 1 (9), 27-34.

Tschiedel, R. (1989). Sozialverträgliche Technikgestaltung: Wissenschaftskritik für eine soziologische Sozialverträglichkeitsforschung zwischen Akzeptabilität, Akzeptanz und Partizipation. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Villalobos Montoya, C., Schweizer-Ries, P. & Ramírez, E. (2002/2003). Apoderamiento y estrategias para la intensificación de la participación de las comunidades de usuarios en el proceso de la electrificación rural – parte 1 & 2. Energía y Desarrollo, No. 21 & 22. Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Wiesenfeld, E. & Sánchez, E. (2002). Sustained Participation: A Community Based Approach to Adressing Environmental Problems. In: R.B. Bechtel & A. Churchman (Ed), Handbook of Environmental Psychology, 629-643. New York: Wiley.

Wright, S. & Nelson, N. (1995). Participatory research and participant observation: two incompatible approaches. In: N. Nelson & S. Wright (Eds), Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice, 43-59. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Authors

Petra Schweizer-Ries – Prof. Dr. (Jun. Prof.) studied Environmental Psychology at the University of Freiburg where she graduated in 1992 as "Diplom-Psychologin". She finished her Ph.D. on the use of solar energy in the Himalayan region at the University of Heidelberg in 1996. From 1992 until 2002 she has been working at the Fraunhofer Institut für Solare Energiesysteme ISE/Freiburg and at the Institut für Solare Energietechnik ISET/Kassel and was concerned with social aspects of the introduction of renewable energy technologies mainly in developing countries. Since 2002 she is working as Junior Professor for Environmental Psychology at the Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg.

Claudia Villalobos Montoya – Dipl.-Psych., studied Community Psychology at the Freie Universität Berlin where she graduated in 1999 as "Diplom-Psychologin". From 1997 to 2001 she studied in a postgraduate programme and finished with a Master of Systemic Family Therapy at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Two years she has been working as freelance for the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems and was concerned with social aspects of the introduction of renewable energy technologies mainly in Spain, Latin America and Asia. With a scholarship of the Federal State Saxony-Anhalt she is studying at the Otto-von-Guericke-University of Magdeburg for a Ph.D. on participation of end-users in the electrification process with Solar Energy Systems since 2002.

Contact

Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg
Institute for Psychology
Department of Environmental Psychology
Post Box 4120
D-39016 Magdeburg, Germany
email: upsy@gse-w.uni-magdeburg.de
http://www.uni-magdeburg.de/upsy

Gabriele Wendorf & Doris Felbinger

Neighbourhoods: Cooperative Approaches to Counteract Undesired Dynamics of Degradation

Chances and Limitations of Participation in Reconstruction Processes as a Means of Sustainable Development in Post-war Housing Estates

Abstract

'Quartiersmanagement' (district management) in Berlin as a means to prevent stigmatisation and degradation of housing estates only focuses on a few target areas chosen by local government. Following the same objectives, housing societies consider new concepts to face problems like vandalism or intercultural conflict and to improve living together in neighbourhoods. Here especially reconstruction processes currently taking place in housing estates offer good opportunities to implement adaptable concepts of participation.

Participation and redefinition of social responsibility as possible outcomes of a common learning process lead to the question, in how far residents can participate and whether the idea of participation is restricted to questions of design, or it includes the aspect of use of improved housing and residential surroundings in the long run as well. Beyond that, the degree to which residents desire and – from the point of view of housing societies – are allowed to take on responsibility plays an important role in creating a learning community of neighbours combined with a redefined social responsibility.

Based upon this background, corresponding processes in several original and reconstructed post-war housing estates have been explored, accompanied by extensive interviews with experts. Here one can find evidence for possibilities and limitations to the idea of participation as a means of stabilizing problematic residential estates.

Keywords

Reconstruction of Post-war Housing Estates, Participation, Neighbourhood, Stabilizing Residential Estates.

German Abstract

Um der Degradation von Wohnquartieren zu begegnen, existieren zum einen von Seiten der Kommunalverwaltung initiierte Prozesse wie die Einrichtung von Quartiers-Management für Problemgebiete. Aufgrund knapper Ressourcen können dabei jedoch nur wenige Gebiete fokussiert werden. Vergleichbare Prozesse sind aber auch in nicht-administrativ ausgewählten Wohnquartieren zu beobachten. Wohnungsgesellschaften und Mieter haben dabei dasselbe Ziel: Stigmatisierung und Degradation ihrer Wohnsiedlungen zu verhindern.

Im Rahmen von Sanierungsmaßnahmen im Wohnungsbestand und damit verbunden auch der Umgestaltung des direkten Wohnumfeldes werden Konzepte für die Bekämpfung von Problemen wie Vandalismus oder auch interkulturellen Konflikten sowie insgesamt für nachbarschaftliches Zusammenleben überdacht. Partizipation und die Neubestimmung sozialer Verantwortung sind dabei mögliche Ergebnisse eines gemeinsamen Lernprozesses in den betroffenen Siedlungen. Dabei stellt sich die Frage, inwieweit die unmittelbar Betroffenen an Planungs- und Umgestaltungsprozessen partizipieren und was überhaupt unter Partizipation verstanden wird. Und zwar sowohl von Seiten der Wohnungsbaugesellschaft als auch der Mieter selbst: wie weit können und sollen bzw. wollen Mieter beteiligt werden. Über diesen Umgestaltungsprozess hinaus lässt sich der Partizipationsgedanke auch auf die nachfolgende Nut-

zung des Wohnumfeldes anwenden. Gerade hier zeigt sich, ob es gelingt eine lernende Gemeinschaft mit neu bestimmter sozialer Verantwortung zu schaffen.

Vor diesem Hintergrund wurden die Prozesse in verschiedenen Wohngebieten der 50er und 60er Jahre näher betrachtet. Umfangreiche qualitative Interviews mit Experten und Bewohnern verschiedener sanierter und unsanierter Nachkriegssiedlungen geben Aufschluss über Möglichkeiten und Grenzen von Partizipation als Mittel zur Stabilisierung von Wohnquartieren.

Schlüsselwörter

Umgestaltung von Nachkriegssiedlungen, Partizipation, Nachbarschaft, Stabilisierung von Wohnsiedlungen.

1. The relevance of participation beyond 'Quartiersmanagement'

In our research project we focus on redevelopment processes in post-war housing estates. Within that processes participation can be beneficial for both, neighbours and housing societies. To increase that benefit, participation should not be restricted to the physical renovation and redesign of houses and residential surroundings, but should include aspects of their use as well.

These neighbourhoods can be identified and demarcated on the one hand by geographical space (the floor, the apartment block, the close residential surroundings, the entire housing estate) and on the other hand by the quality of contacts and/or by the identification with or differentiation from certain groups within the residential quarter as we found in our empirical studies. The housing estates considered consist of a few hundred dwellings and contrary to 'Quartiersmanagement' they are managed by one single housing society, while the target areas of 'Quartiersmanagement' encompass larger urban residential estates[1]. There, neighbourhood management as a part of the management of residential areas consists of a variety of processes concerning formal and non-formal planning processes of urban development and urban renewal on the background of the 'Socially integrative City' program launched by the German federal government and the states ('Bundesländer') in 1999. Districts with special development needs were administratively chosen because of their particular deficiencies concerning urban planning, ecology, infrastructure, economy, of the specific socio-demographic and income-structural problems (a high percentage of migrants especially children and teenagers, high rate of jobless people/people with transfer incomes) and increasing crime rates, connected with a high potential for violence and a sense of insecurity among the residents. To face these problems the staff members of the 'Quartiersmanagement' have an agenda that aims at offering quality of life for the residents, forging a close link to the residential estate, avoiding destruction and vandalism as well as social conflict, i.e. to prevent degradation.

Concerning 'Quartiersmanagement', reinforcing civic participation and establishing neighbourhood management are integral parts of the programme which intends to promote social cohesion, economic development and thus improve the quality of life in overstretched

---

[1] In Berlin, for example, 17 residential quarters were designated as target areas. There are actually about 227.000 people living in those areas. Within the quarters in questions the population figure ranges from 4.500 up to 24.000 residents. Public participation and urban regeneration at the neighbourhood level is organized by the so called 'Quartiersmanager'. These managers are appointed by the ministries in charge, usually from nonprofit organizations that have conducted previous activities or consultancy in the area or had outstanding work experience in urban regeneration at neighbourhood-level like socially orientated urban development agencies (Flicke 2000, 59 f; Quartiersmanagement Berlin 2004).

neighbourhoods (European Commission and Land Berlin 2000, Quartiersmanagement Berlin 2004, Executive Summary Germany/NEHOM Project). But participation and civic engagement should not be forced only in those areas chosen by city government. Our project points out the role of participation in a smaller social and geographical context.

In 2003, the research project 'Zeilenumbruch'[2] carried out an extensive interview study in six post-war-housing estates (1950s/1960s) in Berlin (see **Appendix 1: The residential estates**).The interviews were designed as qualitative, problem-focused and semi-structured interviews having duration of at least one up to two hours. To obtain a more or less representative cross-sectional sample, we tried to consider different groups within the neighbourhood concerning age, children in the household, migration background and sex[3]. A total number of 53 residents were interviewed. The following table shows the socio-demographical characteristics of the sample.

Age		Sex		Children in the household		Origin[4]	
Category	Number of persons	Category	Number of persons	Category (age of children)	Number of children reported	Category	Number of persons
<= 18	1	Male	11	0-6	19	German	32
19-30	11	Female	37	7-12	14	Turkish[5]	9
31-50	18			13-18	10	Polish[6]	3
51-65	12					Bosnian	1
> 65	6					German/ Russian	1
						Ukrainian	1
						Uzbek	1

Table 1: Socio-demographical characteristics of sample

To encourage migrants to participate in the interview study, native speakers were appointed to carry out the interviews. Thereby migrants were enabled to describe their perception of the neighbourhood in everyday speech. This allowed us to receive a complex impression of their view which is necessary for a differentiated analysis according to Grounded Theory. This included the development of categories for analysis from the interview transcription in an

---

[2] Full title: Structural Alteration rather than New Construction: Potential for the Socio-ecological Redesign of Post-war Housing (http://www.zeilen-umbruch.de).carried out an extensive interview study in five post-war-housing estates (1950s/1960s) in Berlin (see Appendix 1).

[3] As the housing management companies themselves do not have detailed statistical information concerning the socio-demografic data of their residents, we had to rely on information from responsible employees of the housing management company, care takers, staff and the residents themselves.

[4] The corresponding question in the questionnaire for socio-demographic characteristics did not focus on nationality but on the regional home of migrants in the residential estate in question.

[5] Three of the Turkish interviewees have Turkish/German, one has Turkish/Austrian origin.

[6] One of the Polish interviewees has a Polish/German origin.

iterative process. All interview texts were analyzed systematically with ATLAS.ti[7] following this category system.

By means of interviews with experts from property management, housing companies and other persons in charge in the areas in question (e.g. charity nonprofit-organizations) we found similar problems to those of the target areas of 'Quartiersmanagement'. Furthermore, the housing management companies as well have a vital interest in economically, and therefore also socially stable residential estates to prevent *degradation* which is reflected in the image of a certain residential estate. Our studies show that especially in one residential estate in Berlin the image ('Mau-Mau-Siedlung'[8]) has not changed at all after renovation. Thus, one can conclude that image is not only a consequence of the appearance and the condition the housing is in but also of socio-demographic characteristics of inhabitants and the associated problems that cannot be solved by renovation alone. As one interviewee pointed out: "… it [the image] hasn't changed with the redevelopment of houses. The housing society thought it would change people or problems of people living there as well, but that was a fallacy" (manager of a neighbourhood centre).

As the apartment blocks of the post-war period were built with pure simplicity to reduce the housing shortage of that time, they now need renovation to meet the needs of today's residents. The actual need for reconstruction of this kind of housing, partially realized until today, offers a *chance for participation* of the inhabitants, whereas the housing management companies contribute to a major impact. Their interests and activities for stabilizing housing estates that go beyond renovation are of concern for this project.

In the context of 'Quartiersmanagement' one can state that especially the responsible persons of the housing market reluctance, to be included in the neighbourhood development due to economic logic along with bureaucracy and non-problem-oriented procedures in the public sector restrict action to sheer "business administration". Instead of this, it would be better to consider a context-oriented view of their role and of their opportunities, allowing them to concentrate on the built environment and at the same time on the social viability of housing policies. This conclusion from an evaluation project in which three target areas of 'Berlin Quartiersmanagement' are embedded (NEHOM[9]) and the fact that in many other residential estates of that program the housing companies only have a supporting (i.e., providing facilities) instead of an active role, holds in part for the context of housing estates as well.

In line with the discussion on the role of housing management companies, the dimension of participation has to be specified. In our opinion participation should not be limited to the reconstruction and renovation process. Especially the typical spacious greens of that kind of residential estates – the so-called common pool resources open for different kinds of uses and users – offer the chance for participation beyond just "choosing colours for the façades". Here rivalries in "consuming" this kind of resources and ways of solving such problems have to be elaborated.

---

[7] ATLAS.ti is a software programme for qualitative data analysis developed at the Technical University of Berlin.

[8] These kinds of residential estates were built in Berlin for refugees from the former GDR after the 17 June 1953 that had not been transferred to West Germany. The label 'Mau Mau-Siedlung' represents a negative image, referring to the constructional simplicity and the inhabitants living there (Outreach 1998: 4). The word 'Mau Mau' appears to be a European invention, while the movement of "real" Mau Mau in Kenya appeared on the scene in the early 1950s and quickly became a tangible army and active fighting force (kenyaweb 2004; ccs.neu 2004).

[9] Neighbourhood Housing Models

In general, participatory processes should be used to implement structures that allow people to participate in the long term. Making use of the skills people gain while participating in a planning process and of the social capital they acquire, can help in managing a sustainable use of the reconstructed housing estate.

2. Aspects of Participation

The term 'participant' is used with different connotations: it stands for people who participate in a certain action (in German: Teilnehmer) as well as for people having a share in something (in German: Teilhaber). The latter usually encompasses certain rights and duties that go along with having a share while the previous meaning restricts the role of a participant to that of visiting a workshop, giving an interview or filling out a questionnaire. Often this does not have any consequences for participation in the long run.

When speaking of participation, one has to consider questions regarding what kind of processes are appropriate to participation in certain residential estates and what role the participants play:

Participate in …:

Possibilities to engage in different processes concerning the individual and the common space in a housing estate have to be elaborated. This topic focuses on specific processes during the reconstruction or the use and management of a specific resource, where inhabitants could get involved.

Participate as …:

In contrast to the first topic this aspect points out the role of the inhabitants as participants. Participation not only in the planning, but in the use and the management of common pool resources within housing estates provides for different roles: beside from being merely a user, the resident have to be a caretaker; he or she can act as a coordinator of care-taking activities or can initiate events or activities. Connected with that kind of participation is the meaning of *empowerment*[10], and, respectively the question of the resources the residents need: What kind of power are the residents able to enact? Do they receive financial power, power of decision and/or power of control? Do they possess the social capital needed for this kind of participation?

The degree to which they are empowered in this way depends on the willingness of the housing societies to give away power and responsibility. This is first of all a question of the companies' culture, their routines and how far they allow and encourage the inhabitants to have an influence.

One example from our studies shows possible limits: the initiative of residents to take care of the planting vegetation in one residential estate was stopped due to non uniformity of front gardens. Chances are reflected by another example: residents of one residential estate care for the greatest part of their green areas for money saving reasons and do not face any restrictions concerning the appearance, because the housing society does not want to destroy internally grown structures.

The question to what extent people participate is connected with different requirements concerning social capital and needed abilities. The different character of the above-mentioned roles offers the chance to involve those neighbours who usually do not participate and to build up social capital.

---

[10] Empowerment refers to the possibilities and facilities that allow individuals and groups to gain control over their lives and their social coherence and to help them obtain the resources needed (Stark 1996, 17 f).

A third facet concerning participation that is also connected with distributing power is that of cooperation. Participation – especially in the long run – requires *cooperation*, which has to be understood as:

- cooperation among inhabitants,

- cooperation of inhabitants and the housing companies and

- cooperation of actors in the housing estate and the local area in question (inhabitants, housing management companies, nonprofit organisations, churches, youth clubs etc.).

A cooperative approach would, therefore, encompass not only the cooperation among the persons in charge of the housing management companies but of neighbours as well.

Participation as we understand it would lead to a new constellation of residents and landlords connected with more responsibility for the residents. Reciprocally, this could lead to a more responsible handling of *their* residential estates in the long run.

3. Findings from interviews

We analyzed our interview material considering what might be helpful to produce a stable situation in a residential estate and to prevent degradation in the long term.

Not surprisingly, one of the main findings is the key role of participation. Furthermore, this role should not be restricted to the physical reconstruction processes, but includes aspects of managing the use of so-called common pool resources.

For that reason our analysis encompassed, on the one hand, different levels on which redevelopment takes place. Here the relevance of physical changes as well as of their social impacts has to be regarded. These levels go along with different grades of private or common use, respectively.

- On the first level we had a look at the individual apartment, whereby means of better adjustment to actual needs tenants may be bound.

- On the second level we analyzed those activities concerning the residents of one single block or one section of an apartment block sharing one staircase.

- On the third level we considered activities concerning the entire residential estate, especially the surroundings.

On the other hand our analysis goes beyond a short term perspective. In addition to the process of renovation itself, we included aspects of further use of the redesigned apartments, jointly used areas like staircases and green areas in the long term.

3.1 Level 1: The apartment

Typical post-war period housing estates consist of rather small apartments (40-65 m^2) with a smaller number of rooms. To match actual needs it is often necessary to change ground plans. On the one hand, the housing management companies have to keep in mind that, after renovation, residents should be able to pay their rent. On the other hand, they like to offer suitable solutions for special target groups like families. Therefore, e.g., three apartments are joint together to form two new apartments with bigger or more rooms. Concerning the living standards of those apartments beyond sheer space it has to be remarked that in some houses there is still no central heating and hot water supply. We even found houses where apartments have no own bathrooms.

Within the process of modernising these apartments, tenants sometimes have the opportunity to participate in choosing only from a fixed variety of ground plans due to technical reasons

of feasibility and more complex planning and therefore of financeability of a set of various individual ground plans.

In one redesigned residential estate of our interview study, for example, tenants were asked to decide whether they would like to have an open connection between kitchen and living room or not. In other residential estates, participation in the planning process is restricted to the choice of colours of tiles for the bathroom among two options.

Although participation is an opportunity for binding customers with respect to their individual demand, some housing management societies avoid including participation of tenants because they prefer all-purpose apartments that match the demands of different kinds of potential residents.

In our survey examples were found, where the idea of uniform standards ruled out the idea of participation and the reconstruction process was even used to erase individual traces in the flat (e.g., in one case the wooden style doors of a tenant were replaced by uniform white panel doors). A consequent pursuit of the idea of neutral standards and the avoidance of participation go against the aim of binding tenants. Aside from risking a removal of tenants, when neglecting their needs, new residents could be won when offering not only standard but individually suitable solutions. Participation of residents should be taken into account by housing management societies as an opportunity and a competitive advantage.

3.2. Level 2: The apartment block

Our interviews do not provide evidence for existing participation in the planning of physical reconstruction of apartment block. On this level, participation in the long-term perspective in the sense of the use and maintenance of these semi-private spaces as well as of an influence on the "quality" of the neighbourhood plays a more important role.

Neighbours of one building jointly use staircases, cellars for bicycles and washing machines and in some cases other common rooms for leisure activities or as meeting points, for example. Here the maintenance of those rooms run by the neighbours themselves offers the possibility of cost reduction and, furthermore, of interaction between tenants. This may lead to cohesive processes, but can also hold the possibility of conflict among the various users. In one post-war period residential estate of a cooperative society tenants participated in cleaning their staircases. Tenants were informed about the costs of external cleaning service and decided to work out a timetable for custodial tasks and did it on their own. If certain neighbours do not carry out their duties, external services are ordered, which the responsible person has to pay for. From the point of view of the cooperative society as well as from the tenants these arrangements have shown to be successful. Although one may expect that cooperative societies can establish such regimes more easily and successfully, a survey among cooperative societies in Berlin shows the tendency to externalize custodial activities as well. That finding holds also for level 3, as is shown in the following section.

But there are also contrary examples. While some companies keep the tenants from taking care of entrances and front gardens others support them, for example, by providing flowers and plants for free and foster involvement by action like competitions for the most beautiful front garden. Again, this is a question of how much individuality the company concedes to the tenants. But even if housing management-companies fear getting less convincing "optical" results compared to that of a professional gardener, participation may have positive effects concerning a more intense contact among tenants and a stronger identification with the residential estate.

Aside from caretaking we also found participation in one housing society concerning the selection of new tenants moving in. Tenants were allowed to jointly suggest relatives or friends

to move into the same apartment building and those suggestions have been followed by the society. This is how the housing company in question tries to create a stable neighbourhood in an area with high vacancies. So far this has worked out to be successful.

3.3. Level 3: Participation as involvement within the entire quarter

The residential estates in question can be characterized not only by architectural design but also by their typical, spaciously green surroundings. These common pool resources are semi-public spaces, where there is often no "official" restriction on use, offering greater chances of participation in a planning process for different groups within the neighbourhood. But their redesign must be carefully planned to prevent rivalries among the user groups and to give the chance to take possession of these green spaces instead of a prohibition or "prescription" of use.

Not every redesign process takes into account the way inhabitants already use their green surroundings and the problems that can arise from new approaches to use as well. The first can be pointed out, for example, by statements in the interviews concerning beaten paths in the surroundings. Two inhabitants of two different housing estates suggested fixing those paths instead of a new designed system of ways through the residential estate that will not be used anyway: "That would save labour time and money. Thinking about things like that should be included in the planning process." Another example is the creation of playgrounds that are in many cases not suitable for the children addressed. Aside from problems of security or use for other purposes (dog toilet, meeting point for teenagers who leave cigarette butts and other waste) an intended "taking possession" and acceptance by the children can be followed by unwanted consequences like noise. Here groups of neighbours are affected who are not "rivals" to the use of the playground but concerning the common property 'silence'. These examples show the importance of including inhabitants in planning design *and* use and of involving *all* groups that are directly or indirectly affected by the action in question.

With reference to participation in the use of green spaces one has to consider activities already taking place. Here starting points can be found for a participation of inhabitants in the long run.

Involvement concerning the surroundings can be found in a multifaceted manner and quality. In many of the residential estates in question, caring activities not only for private but for common greens are carried out like planting, watering, collecting litter on playgrounds and so on. Another form of involvement is the collection of signatures to influence design or the quality of care-taking activities like the protection of a tree, the initiation of a speed-limited zone within the residential estate (30 km/h-zone) or reporting defect playground equipment.

Also, in many of the residential estates social control plays an important role as expressed in the following statement from one of our interviews: "Here, we have to keep an eye on it, so that nobody does something which others don't like. We have to watch out and to speak our mind." Many of the inhabitants interviewed treasure tidiness and point out the importance of a clean environment. In one residential estate children are sent to collect waste with the housekeeper to experience the labour connected with that and to prevent them from littering their surroundings.

The main reasons and flash points for participation in this sense, as we found in the interviews, are the following:

- The 'Golden Rule'[11] argumentation: "There was a youngster from here asking me why I pick up waste, that I didn't throw there. And I said, if everybody thinks like that, we gonna choke on waste.", "If everybody would just care for a little part of that …".

- People want their surroundings to be nice and tidy because "then everything looks pretty sane" or because of hygienic reasons (They don't want their children to put butts into the mouth or play on grounds used as dog toilet).

- People were asked by the housing company, whether they would like to do some planting.

- The gardening company became bankrupt, so people started to plant and care for the gardens on their own behalf.

- People just have time to do so.

- People want to use their environment more intensely like planting vegetables for the children, using front gardens for a get together with the neighbours (bringing chairs and food etc.).

Reasons for not engaging in activities can be found in statements which express that

- there is no or only rare contact and communication with neighbours,

- people care for and worry about other things,

- residents have no relation to the place or activities in question (children are out of the house, too young, too old for engaging in certain groups, events),

- surroundings are not the place to spend leisure time (residents use nearby parks and recreation areas),

- inhabitants have no time because of other voluntary engagements,

- residents might get into trouble when taking action on their own behalf, action could be misunderstood (In the sense of: What do you want? You have no business to be here.),

- sometimes people don't know where to turn to, and what kind of action to undertake, or in case they know,

- there is no permission granted by the housing management company/ administration,

- the question of financing certain actions plays an important role (Who pays for the plants?)

- infrastructural questions have to be answered (Who gets the key for the tap for watering plants),

- "most of the people think that there is someone else who cares, who can do that",

especially when

- there is a professional care-taker who is responsible ("I pay for it").

The last two points underline a finding which is worth discussing in depth.

---

[11] In a narrow sense that rule refers to the proverb "Treat others as you want to be treated". In multifaceted variations the moral rule incorporated is part of ethical considerations in many religions.

In three of the selected residential estates several people explicitly point out the role of a janitor as a direct contact person they can address ("… you can talk to him") or that is missing ("He [the janitor] once existed, but he was gone a long time ago, before renovation. There are cleaning companies that take care. We don't have a person we can address directly."). Other functions of a janitor are seen in organizing neighbour meetings and contacts or in governing commonly used playgrounds for basketball etc. (e.g. key service). Beyond such administrative functions, the already mentioned janitor, who accompanied the children for collecting waste, has a mediating function as well. She is living with all her kids in the residential estates and is accepted by all residents as an authority that the housing management company is afraid of losing. The interviews also show that the employees of the housing management companies on site do not seem to cover that function.

4. Conclusions

It may be assumed that renovation is able to stop the degradation processes by itself. The interviews showed that the renovation of façades and the improvement of the surroundings may have a positive effect. Interviewees state that they now take care of their environment and do control their neighbours as well. But in the long run it is more than a new decoration, new heating systems and new bathrooms which are necessary to stop and turn back degradation.

Moreover, our results show the importance of continuous participation of tenants. While participation concerning the apartment is completed after renovation, participation concerning the management and use of common property like staircases, cellars for bicycles or common green should continue. In most cases there are no such arrangements within the neighbourhood. Instead housing management companies outsource responsibility and residents pay for custodial companies with changing personnel.

How important continuous participation is, becomes evident on the third level particularly for the typical post-war residential estates in question. Furthermore, it is necessary to involve all groups that are directly or indirectly affected by the action in question.

That means, on the one hand, to consider "good ideas" that reflect the user knowledge. On the other hand, cooperation among residents and with housing societies is needed to create satisfactory institutional arrangements concerning activities like caretaking and beyond, so that ongoing participation can be promoted. One result that has to be pointed out with reference to the existing and increasing outsourcing activities is the obvious importance of a responsible person – like a janitor living there or another inhabitant – who has an integrating and mediating function, who is permanently addressable, who acts in the interests of the residents and – in the final analysis – who keeps an eye on what is happening in the residential estate. As a consequence, when deciding for reintegrating care-taking activities, housing management societies should not only have a look at the current costs, but should regard those functions so they can help save costs for vandalism repair (e.g., destroyed windows, bins) or costs for cleaning (e.g., graffiti, littered hallways). A caretaker who lives within the residential estate can not only be a mediator between different (groups of) neighbours but can also function as a mediating person between the neighbourhood and the housing management company. By managing conflicts this mediating function can help save human resources within the housing management company which can be invested for other purposes. In the long run the well being within the neighbourhood and the identification with the neighbourhood can lead to less fluctuation and more social stability.

In particular, more participation and shared responsibilities and duties are connected with delegating power. Empowerment of inhabitants might lead to a greater sense of responsibility for their estates. Furthermore, it can help to create social capital by making offers for participation. Compared to the idea of participation and civic engagement as is discussed in a politi-

cal context (e.g., the concept for a Local Agenda for Berlin 12/2004) those offers can be qualified as low threshold ones.

This broad sense of participation affords a philosophy of being open for social innovations and organizational changes. Within the housing society a closer contact and cooperation of planners and administrative employees is essential. A more intensive communication between residents and the administrative staff of a housing society is also necessary. For that purpose, the employees in charge should be trained in mediation and moderation. Methods of participation should be applied that allow all groups in the neighbourhood to get involved. Furthermore institutional arrangements have to be implemented, that can manage potential rivalries in using common pool resources.

Obviously this kind of management works out mainly in small cooperative societies where a close contact is incorporated. But it is also driven by managers and planners who are open for and willing to accept the residents as experts. That does not mean to accept a sometimes predominant intolerance of individuals or groups of neighbours concerning what they judge as "disturbances". But to find compromises and to discuss desired and undesirable consequences together with those residents who are affected by the process of reconstruction and redevelopment.

Appendix 1: The residential estates[12]

The residential estates	Characteristics
Belß-Lüdeckestraße / Berlin-Lankwitz	typical post-war residential estate built from 1952-1953 as ribbon development, reconstruction from 1995-1998, ambitious architecture with technical and ecological standard, located in the south of Berlin (former West-Berlin), many new residents with children, migrants.
Bruno-Taut-Ring / Berlin-Neukölln	typical post-war residential estate built from 1953-1960 as ribbon development, reconstruction in 2003, Garden City, typically developed along a ring road, with kindergarten and school, small apartments, located in the south of Berlin (former West-Berlin), many first time users, migrants mainly from Middle Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.
Neumarkplan / Berlin-Neukölln	typical post-war residential estate built in 1954 as ribbon development, reconstruction from 2003-2004 of one apartment block, ambitious architecture and high ecological standard, typical development with ring road, all other apartment blocks need reconstruction, located in the south of Berlin (former West-Berlin), few migrants.
Schlierbacher Weg / Berlin-Neukölln	typical post-war residential estate built in 1953 as ribbon development, reconstruction from 1990-1992, ambitious architecture and high ecological standard, located in the south of Berlin (former West-Berlin), many families and migrants with different cultural background.
Quarzweg-Tropfsteinweg / Berlin-Neukölln	typical post-war residential estate built from 1956-1959 as ribbon development, spacious common greens and gardens for residents, located in the south of Berlin (former West-Berlin), many first time users, but also many new residents.
Heilmannring / Charlottenburg-Nord	typical post-war residential estate built from 1956-1961 as ribbon development, partly reconstructed, apartments turned into freehold flats, located in the north-west of Berlin next to inner-city highway, high noise level but no through traffic, predominantly older residents (first users), migrants with different cultural background.

---

[12] Most oft the post-war housing residential estates are located in the south of Berlin. Therefore, there is a concentration in that area. The main criterion for this sample of estates has been the architecture and not the location in the former East- or West-Berlin.

References

Quartiersmanagement Berlin (2004). http://www.quartiersmanagement-berlin.de/et_dynamic/page_files/130_download.pdf?1044545331 (06.09.2004).

Flicke, D. (2000). City of Berlin. In: European Commission and Land Berlin (Ed), The city in dialogue – Public participation strategies for urban development in central and eastern European cities, 57-62. Berlin: European Academy of Urban Environment (Europäische Akademie für städtische Entwicklung).

Stark, W. (1996). Empowerment. Neue Handlungskompetenzen in der psychosozialen Praxis. Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus.

Outreach (1998). Sozialraumrecherche – Lankwitz OST. Lüdecke-Siedlung und Umfeld. Berlin: Outreach – Projekt des Verbandes für sozial-kulturelle Arbeit, Mobile Jugendarbeit.

NEHOM (2004). Executive Summary German: The Berlin Case studies. http://www.nhh.no/geo/NEHOM/case_studies/executive_summaries/executive_summary_Germany.pdf (09.04.2004).

kenyaweb (2004). http://www.kenyaweb.com/history/struggle/ (15.10.2004).

ccs.neu (2004). http://www.ccs.neu.edu/home/feneric/maumau.html (15.10.2004).

Authors

Gabriele Wendorf – Dr., studied industrial engineering (with a specialisation in civil engineering) and was awarded her PhD in economics (Dr. rer. oec.) for her thesis on environmental labelling and environmental behaviour. From 1997 to 2002 she held assistant professorship in the field of Industrial Economics and Competitive Theory at the Technical University of Berlin. At the same time she worked in the research project 'Wohnen und Nachhaltigkeit' (Zentrum Technik und Gesellschaft, TU Berlin). Since March 2002 she has been project leader in the research project 'Umbauen statt neu bauen' refunded by the Ministry of Research and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany (Social-Ecological Research Program/ SÖF).

Contact

Dr. Gabriele Wendorf
Technische Universität Berlin
Straße des 17. Juni 145 – Sekr. EB 3
10623 Berlin, Germany
email: wendorf@ww.tu-berlin.de
Phone: +49 30 314 24 969, Fax: +49 30 314 23 247

Doris Felbinger – Dr., studied Economics with a specialisation in Environmental Economics. From 1999-2001 she worked as scientific assistant in the research project 'Wohnen und Nachhaltigkeit' (Zentrum Technik und Gesellschaft, TU Berlin). In the research project 'Umbauen statt neu bauen', she deals with Common Property and Institutional Economics. Since 1997 she has been member of the 'Arbeitskreis Nonprofit-Organisationen' (www.aknpo.de, Research Group on Nonprofit-Organizations) and has recently completed and published her doctoral work (Dr. rer. oec.) in that field.

Dr. Doris Felbinger
Technische Universität Berlin
Straße des 17. Juni 145 – Sekr. EB 3
10623 Berlin, Germany
email: felbinger@ww.tu-berlin.de
Phone: +49 30 314 24 969, Fax: +49 30 314 28 525

Fortuna Procentese

Follow Up and Evaluation of Participatory Action Research in Urban and Residual Areas

Abstract

This paper puts forward some considerations on the use of research methodologies and tools in developing urban participation. Two participatory research projects are discussed, one in the Phlegrean Area and the other in the historical centre of Naples. The data obtained from the follow-up interviews which followed actions promoted by residents and stakeholders in each area will be examined. The aim is to explore the role of participation and dialogue between: the administration and citizens, the administration and the investor/private companies and citizens and cultural associations. The methodologies used have been oriented towards promoting different levels of participation among community members and offering support to local development, above all through processes of community planning to reconcile personal and community needs. The follow-ups on these two studies identify indicators of individual and collective participation and evaluate the positive effects and limits of participative methodologies.

Keywords

Participation, Collective Belonging, Community Management, Evaluation.

Italian Abstract

Il presente lavoro è volto all'individuazione di metodi e strumenti che favoriscono lo sviluppo di partecipazione urbana. A tal fine viene discussa la metodologia utilizzata in due ricerche condotte in Italia. Vengono esaminati i dati ottenuti e i processi attivatisi attraverso interviste di follow-up ai partecipanti alle ricerche e ai residenti e commercianti delle aree considerate: l'Area Flegrea e il Centro storico di Napoli. L'obiettivo è esplorare il ruolo del processo partecipativo nell'attivazione del dialogo tra i diversi attori nei due contesti urbani e individuare gli indicatori della partecipazione a livello individuale e collettivo e gli effetti e i limiti delle metodologie partecipative utilizzate.

Parole chiave

Partecipazione, metodologie di partecipazione, senso di appartenenza, valutazione, management di comunità.

1. Introduction

This project is based on the assumption that urban participation is an essential prerequisite for sustainable development. In taking such an approach, the factors involved in developing urban participation are correlated with the interdependence of the psychological, urban, economic and political spheres. This interdependence can be seen in the effects of the continuous modernization of urban areas (HÄUßERMANN, 2004; FRANCESCATO, 2002), that gradually brings about changes in the social organization. These changes give rise to a system of urban relationships, which also affects the value systems of the pre-existing community and sense of belonging (ARCIDIACONO, 2004). Indeed, failure to involve people in planning the places where they live has negative effects on civil participation (PROCENTESE, 2002a).

Extensive city areas evolve without any reference to a memory of the past, thus favouring the development of urban complexes which become estranged from the original historical and cultural context of the city. In such cases the possibility of integration between past and present is lost, making for a lack of collective identity. This in turn prevents planning continuity between local culture and its modernization.

Municipal administrations and experts would do well to focus on local development in order to create a context wherein the culture of belonging is integrated with the culture of innovation and extraneousness (CARLI, 2003). Indeed, the estrangement of inhabitants from their own living context results in non-constructive attitudes and non-involvement in social well-being. In modern cities the problem is "… how to make this impersonal context speak, how to remove its dull and neutral aspects which characterize it today … how to restore outside reality as a dimension of human experience" (SENNET, 1990, Italian. trans. p. 13).

Moreover in Southern Italy the sense of extraneousness from a specific context seems to be associated with the lack of decision-making processes at the local level; in addition, the reality of life in the South is ignored in decision-making in the economic capital and the increasingly international seats of political power. The entire South of Italy has only one local bank and is totally devoid of large-scale industry and companies, while all political decisions are taken in the capital.

Thus the system of social exchange refers predominantly to private circuits of personal and family relationships which exist to assert petty social privileges and are in contrast with processes of social participation, preventing the development of dialogue with local administrations. The lack of recognition of the social scene produces a sense of alienation which weakens the very roots of participation processes.

A poor affective and participatory involvement in collective belonging and the failure to distinguish clear territorial borders might be reasons for the loss of the real significance of local community for the inhabitants of separate territories (BAUMAN, 1998) as well as for the predominant inability to conceive of one's future in one's own community (ARCIDIACONO, SOMMANTICO & PROCENTESE, 2001; ARCIDIACONO, PROCENTESE & DI NAPOLI, 2004). The consequences are also evident with regard to the sense of community, but above all, with regard to the lack of participatory involvement (ARCIDIACONO & PROCENTESE, 2005).

For these reasons inhabitants fail to recognize their own role in decision making and neglect their personal and institutional capacities for managing resources: citizen participation is today a need rather than a choice. For the public administration it represents a pressing need for developing sustainable processes.

2. Promoting urban participation

Participation necessarily involves setting up a network of referents for services and inhabitants with a view to implementing an organisation which can respond to the needs of the administration and the residents, empowering both the individual and the community. The involvement of citizens in designing territorial interventions is an essential part of the participative planning approach. Participation makes it possible to meet needs exploiting the social, economic and environmental resources present in the social context. At the same time it increases the potential of the territorial community and citizens' contractual power, giving them faith in improvement of the quality of life within a development context. Participation also makes it possible to reduce the distance (and resistance) that all too often exists between citizens and the local administration, making for dialogue in the context of a territorial community.

For these reasons local administrators should be interested in understanding and identifying the real needs of citizens and the possible solutions for participative planning, blending different visions and possible responses. To this end, it is essential to use tools that may meet individual and collective needs, so as to create a sense of social cohesion and be able to recognise shared objectives among all inhabitants (PROCENTESE, 2002b).

In social and community psychology, different interventions are proposed to citizens revealing the strengths and weaknesses of their community. More specifically, participatory processes enable individuals to take an active part in realising objectives arising in the community context (WANDERSMAN & FLORIN, 2000) with positive effects on the quality of local life (BERKOWITZ, 2000).

Participatory actions encourage the development of skills which are tested both in the social context and at the individual level (DE PICCOLI & LAVANCO, 2003).The participatory approach makes it possible to define priorities, identify resources and understand the strategies for problem solving. The involvement of people in decision making, their proposals for improving the planned action, the sharing of the advantages resulting from this action and its evaluation are key issues in participation (COHEN & UPHOFF, 1977).Therefore, within the framework of participatory research, it becomes relevant to understand which relationships develop planning competencies within community.

Starting out from assessment of studies carried out in the historical centre of Naples and in the Phlegrean area, this paper aims to measure the effectiveness of the tools used (PROCENTESE, 2002b; ARCIDIACONO & PROCENTESE, 2005) when activating participatory and sustainable planning competencies.

3. Participation Methodology

The two studies are presented briefly, illustrating their objectives, methodology and main results achieved, going on to analyse the evaluation made following the first phase of the projects.

The use of participation as a social tool in the historical centre of Naples and the Phlegrean Area was devised to answer the following questions:

- how to set up a dialogue between the stakeholders in city planning. To date in city planning bilateral cooperation has been common between administration and citizens, and between administration and investor/private associations and companies. There has been a lack of three way cooperation.

- how to feed the results of participatory research back into the community and the general public.

- how to enrich in participatory methods the rational and language-oriented focus by integrating the emotional dimension.

The methodology used within the framework of the above-mentioned studies leads us to appraise the role of people in participatory action within their own territorial context and the value they attribute to it. Starting from individual perspectives falling within the territorial context of belonging, special attention has been paid to participation methodologies as a tool for opening up spaces for discussions and sharing. Collected texts were analysed for thematic areas with a view to exploring the effects of the methodology used, based on grounded theory with the support of ATLAS.ti software.

3.1 First Study: The Phlegrean Area action–research: "Urban Catalysts – Strategies for Temporary Uses. Potential for Development of Urban Residual Areas in European Metropolises" (PROCENTESE, 2001)

Phase I

Objectives: this qualitative study, carried out by associations and universities in five European cities, examined characteristics of residual areas in order to understand the quality of the temporary use and to develop tools and methodologies for its management. In Italy the Phlegrean region was chosen, an area extending along the coast between Bacoli and Fusaro from Capo Miseno to Monte di Procida. This area contains seaside resorts which are very busy in summer. In this period of the year, the owners of bathing establishments and restaurants are responsible for keeping the beaches clean and providing facilities for bathers and visitors. However, out of season the beaches are left untended, and the whole shore area is only used by a few courageous individuals for water sports, or at the weekends by young people and families. In addition to its natural resources, the Phlegrean area offers archaeological sites which fail to attract tourists. In spite of the potential in the area, there are no projects for developing out of season use, although this would undoubtedly contribute to upgrading the area.

The aim was to explore the participation processes among local authorities, citizens, investors/private companies and cultural associations, with reference to territorial planning and local development policies.

Tools: The following tools were used:

Qualitative interviews focused on: context analysis, reconstruction of subjective views (understanding about biography, attitudes and motivations of temporary users and other stakeholders). Identification of interviewees with the residual space, district, archaeological sites and user group. Higher transparency concerning activities, goals and potential of temporary use. Analysis of conflicts between stakeholders (user-user, user-owner-municipality).

Photo-dialogue (LEGEWIE 2000, 2003): creating photos to express the oral history of people. During the interviews, people were actively involved in taking photos representing the places they considered significant, with regard both to their personal history and to the life of the place the area referred to. Later the collected photos were presented in an exhibition and a wide-ranging debate on resources and future sustainable plans for the area was held. The photo-dialogue played an important role, not in itself but as a tool for aggregation and communication between inhabitants and institutions. As a participatory tool it relies on three main components: (1) broadening of the rational linguistic approach through visual stimuli, (2) assumption of new roles by the participating inhabitants, and (3) the exhibition as a social catalyst (LEGEWIE, 2003).

The Public Exhibition is the catalyst for combining new tools. The results are presented in texts and pictures, the interviewees and interviewer meet, the general public is invited, while representatives of all stakeholder-groups make contact with each other and discuss the results. The exhibition creates a space for dialogue among people of the community. The stakeholders are invited to the exhibition. This launch can also be used for a workshop discussing research objectives and promoting public participation.

Participants

A) 15 semi-structured interviews carried out in September 2001.The people interviewed were chosen according to the indications and criteria laid down by the team of professionals in-

volved in the Urban Catalyst project; they included representatives of institutions, tradespeople and local residents (local administrators, restaurant owners, managers of bathing establishments, carpark attendants and boat minders) and individuals (visitors, day trippers, people practising sports) who make temporary use of the territory. The mean age of the people born in the district was considered in terms of age groups. Thus the mean age of the "middle group" (5 men and 1 woman) is 50.5, that of the young adults (two men and two women) 26.3; the adolescent and the child were respectively 14 and 6 years old.

Many of the residents emphasize the difference between the usual users during the course of the year. In the summer period, and especially in July and August, there is a mass influx of day trippers, so that beaches are crowded and traffic gets jammed. Then from September to mid-June there is no crowding and visitors are different. They are seen by the local residents and trades people as "more civilised, showing more respect for the environment".

B) The exhibition, open to the general public, involved 20 researchers engaged in the European project, 13 of the interviewees with 10 family members resident locally, 1 representative of the local administration, and 50 inhabitants; the average age of the participants was 42.

First phase results

In accordance with the objectives of the "Urban Catalysts" project, connection between the use of residual areas and both individual and collective needs are analysed. The residents were clearly aware of the resources available in the neighbourhood, but lacked consensus as to how to exploit them. Aggregation is the key to the way forward, making it possible to meet the needs of socialisation and fostering new ideas and initiatives, which currently are seen as attacks on the stable functioning of the community. There is a need for legislative initiatives to back up the economic activities, which operate illegally in order to circumvent the bureaucracy. This has a particular impact on territorial use, because environmental obligations are eluded and sites quickly become degraded and derelict.

The participants expressed the wish to take part in decision-making processes for territorial planning and local development. Moreover there was a clear need for developing and divulging a participation culture for safeguarding the environment.

Thanks to the confrontation between participants it was possible to identify new proposals and possibilities for intervention. The intervention of local administration representatives initiated a direct dialogue among inhabitants and institutions.

A first planning hypothesis has been to start a training activity with school pupils and the associations active in the area, since they are willing to participate and carry out projects.

Phase II: Follow up 5 months later

The follow up set out to highlight the most significant issues expressed by the various participants and discuss the indicators of individual and collective empowerment.

Follow up Interviews

9 semistructured interviews were carried out, focusing on the dialogue which grew out of the exhibition and the effects and changes perceived in the way residents related to the territory. In addition interviewees were asked to highlight proposals to increase the impact of the exhibition and the initiatives implemented, as well as the aims and the potential involved.

Participants

The people interviewed were chosen according to the criteria laid down by the research team involved in the Urban Catalyst project, including representatives of institutions, trades people and local residents. In practice this involved 2 local administrators, 1 restaurant owner, 1

manager of a bathing establishment, 1 car-park attendant and 1 boat minder, 2 inhabitants and 1 person doing sport as a temporary use of the territory. The average age was 41.

The persons interviewed were chosen from among the participants in the exhibition: 6 had given interviews and taken photos, while 3 visited the exhibition.

Results

The participants emphasised the importance of participating in the exhibition as a stimulus to undertaking further initiatives at both the individual and group level. In fact in a short period of time it did prove possible to act individually and through citizens' groups, such as a group of local pensioners; some residents acted as spokespersons and promoters of awareness-raising initiatives; owners asked the administration to intervene to ensure adequate management of the territory also out of season. The chief difficulty remained that of concerted action. The interviewees stated that there is no transparency regarding the actions designed to make the community able to exploit the available resources and activate processes of change. There is no sense of social cooperation, and it became clear that it is necessary to raise people's awareness not so much concerning the problems everyone is familiar with but the solutions and ways of taking part in interventions which can be constructive for the community.

Soon after the exhibition, steps were taken to create a dialogue with a view to promoting initiatives for the upgrading of places of everyday living. The participants in the Phlegrean Area international project contacted the mayor to submit requirements and make proposals for the redevelopment of degraded or ill-maintained areas; other participants had exchanges with the citizens aimed at improving the condition of the sites and squares. Moreover, the event was made public, thereby becoming a tool for public administration involvement.

In the interviews participants insisted that to obtain concrete results involving participation and sustainable development for the community it was essential to:

- Propose common goals;

- Make use of professional competence to support and increase the participation, voluntary cooperation and group experiences present on the territory;

- Promote the skills of local leaders, contribute to the coordination of services, public opinion bodies and social groups.

The exhibition seen as an opportunity for aggregation was a potential strong point, making it possible to meet the needs for socialisation and give expression to ideas. This process opens up prospects for sharing in future planning initiatives. The interviewees stressed the importance of further events like the exhibition with increasing impact and influence in order to achieve a concrete "territorial and social" project building.

The latter aspect highlights the importance attributed to the exhibition as a viable methodology in representing the participants in an active role and activating dialogue between the various actors in the community.

It is striking that the local administration implemented some activities for upgrading residual areas but failed to engage in further dialogue with citizens. This generated a sense of resignation among participants.

The failure to keep citizens informed of the interventions carried out by the administration meant that the exhibition was seen in isolation, contributing to the fragmentation of some social entities. Building confidence and acting within a self-perpetuating circuit of communication between citizens and decision makers remain a prime objective still to be reached.

3.2 Second Study. Historical Centre of Naples action-research[1] (ARCIDIACONO et al., 2001; ARCIDIACONO, PROCENTESE & ESPOSITO, 2003; ARCIDIACONO, 2004; ARCIDIACONO & PROCENTESE, 2005)

Phase I

The research explored the attitude of local inhabitants towards tourists in the historical centre of Naples, so rich in history and traditions. The aim has been to investigate the psychological sense of community in a very distinctive context on the basis of a participatory action research and using a qualitative approach in the analysis of the collected data. The aim was to explore the community identity and its representation among the inhabitants with regard to their belonging to the historical centre, as well as their representation of the resources, limits and potentialities of the area, considering also the social and cultural impact of tourism. The ultimate aim of the study was to support and implement policies of planning and participation through a bottom-up method promoting local management.

Tools

- *Preliminary analysis of the community* (FRANCESCATO, TOMAI & GHIRELLI, 2002*)* was carried out (ARCIDIACONO, 1999; MANNARINI, 2004; ARCIDIACONO et al., 2001) in order to gain accurate knowledge of the territorial context by studying the socio-environmental, demographic, anthropological and psychological variables. Through community analysis the researcher approaches and becomes acquainted with the local history and the representation constructed over time through the changes it has undergone. This tool contributes towards identifying resources, needs and problems with regard to the objective of the action in order to gain accurate knowledge of the historical centre by studying the socio-environmental, demographic, anthropological, and psychological variables of Naples.

- *Semistructured interviews* were carried out. The following thematic areas linked with the district's life were investigated: the historical background of the respondents' life; their needs, hopes; their views of the future; their well-being and quality of life; their ideas and proposals to improve the quality of life in the area; problems and incidence of tourism.

- *A photoexhibition* (http://psydok.sulb.uni-saarland.de/volltexte/2006/757) *using photo-dialogue* (LEGEWIE, 2003) and public debate was then prepared.

Participants

a) The participants were chosen from the various demographic groups who live and work in the area. In particular, making reference to the MARTINI and SEQUI pattern (1994), key people were selected from those who wield local power and influence ("in" people) and those who have less power (unemployed, non-authorized car park attendants), representing marginal and/or opposition areas ("out" people).

Finally, we chose 15 people assumed to be grassroots experts on tourism impact: 2 institutional and informal leaders, 5 people who worked in small shops of the ancient craft tradition (in the Christmas crib making, printing, and pastry sectors) and in jobs sensitive to the impact of tourism (bookshop assistants, newsagents); 2 territorial and social services workers, 2 members of voluntary and cultural associations (cultural centre, solidarity based trade), 2 representatives of the professional and associations of craftsmen (one old and one new inhabitant), and 2 university students, who were temporary residents. The average age was 45.

---

[1] The research project was part of the Masters degree: models of complexity and human ecology, administered by the Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo (Arcidiacono C., Procentese F., Menna P., 2003).

b) The final exhibition and open debate was attended by 200 people, including 3 local politicians, 30 representatives of associations active on the territory, 10 researchers, 2 representatives of foreign institutions.

Main results

The opening debate and the exhibition, prepared with a wide range of associations of the district, seems to have been a useful participatory tool. The exhibition showed the collected photographs, accompanied by quotations from the interviews. It provided an opportunity to discuss the collated data with the inhabitants, administrators and associations and have it validated by external parties. There are positive indications for further use of the methodology; the criterion of research transferability (STEIN & MANKOWSKY, 2004) may be met by re-proposing the used methodologies in other contexts.

However, the collected data confirmed the difficulty expressed by participants in developing initiatives together with the city administration. The predominant attitude towards the administration is ambivalence, and this has its consequences also for the sense of collective belonging. The tendency is to keep one's distance rather than invest in a context where there appears to be no possibility for development.

The sense of belonging is itself ambivalent and accompanies the lack of confidence in the local authorities (ARCIDIACONO & PROCENTESE, 2005), producing anger and feelings of impotence. This contrasts with the general atmosphere five years previously, when in the same context a wave of social unrest was gathering strength (ARCIDIACONO, 2004).

Phase II: Follow up 1 year later

In examining the effects, processes, challenges and problems associated with the participatory methodology following the public exhibition, we can report that the following tools were used in the follow up of the second study:

5 Focus groups with 15 participants in the exhibition (3 stakeholders, 6 referent associations; 3 citizens; 3 architects), average age 45. Two focus sessions were held to find out what had happened following the exhibition and debate; what difficulties were being encountered in initiating joint planning designed to involve territorial associations and the administration; and which tools were available to citizens and representatives of associations to take an active part in urban planning schemes.

5 Interviews with key people and citizens: 1 active resident, 1 young administrator, 3 representatives of associations promoting the historical centre, average age 42.

We would like to stress that follow up was carried out at different periods at the end of the research stated. This is important in order to monitor what may happen as a result of the action taken by the customer and by the researcher.

Results

In this case too initiatives were taken by groups operating in the historical centre and individual residents who created cultural associations in order to raise awareness of the problems and resources of the district among the inhabitants. Participative actions have the potential not only for gathering personal views and opinions on planning aspects but also for developing communication among citizens. Over a year meetings were organised in private houses and venues in the historical centre in order to create a network of associations to increase their contractual power with the local administration.

One result of the work carried out in Naples has been the organization of a workshop which has led to setting up a standing action committee named "Cento per il Centro". This was at-

tended by the representatives of the district's associations, citizens, interviewees, researchers and some institutional referents. The need for increased contractual power with the local administration has been an aggregating factor by inducing the associations' committee *Cento per il Centro* to elaborate a document collating the submitted proposals. Starting from this spontaneous group and the subsequent 5-month group work with the participation of representatives of associations and interested citizens, the *Centro Antico* association has been created for their realization (ARCIDIACONO, 2004).

Of particular importance has been the acquisition of a collaborative approach in identifying ways to meet the collective needs and interests. One of the results has been the redefinition of a scheme to refurbish a public square, not as the administration had conceived it "from on high" but according to the needs and wishes of the local inhabitants and visitors, following a series of meetings involving local representatives. In the space of a year a network was set up involving residents and representatives of associations.

Within the framework of the actions carried out in the historical centre of Naples contacts and meetings with the municipal authorities made it possible to increase public security in the area. Discussions and exchanges of views enabled the citizens to stress their desire to be active and to improve their environment, although the upgrading of the artistic and landscaping heritage, which characterizes both places, has not improved much.

4. Means for facilitating activation processes

We summarise below the results which were common to both the follow up. From the text analysis individual and collective factors emerge, enabling the citizens to become active participants within the communities to which they belong. These dimensions have been grouped into: visibility, sharing, feedback, acquisition of information and empowerment.

4.1 Visibility

Creating a space for potential communication with the "other", whether citizen or institutional representative, has made explicit the thoughts and actions of the participants as well as of those who have favoured this process through the researchers' work of mediation.

The exhibition has, more especially, been an important event, embodying the expression of the ideas of those who had participated in the research: *"to rediscover what one thinks and make it known to other people was great", "it was helpful to me because I had the feeling of being important" "and I think it is possible to upgrade the places which we are so strongly attached to".*

The main elements that emerged may be grouped as follows:

Presentation of participants' ideas about resources in a public context. Here living places are seen *"through the eyes of the people".* Exchanging ideas between the Municipal Administration and citizens permitted recognition of the personal view of the latter, which was no longer anonymous and lost in an extended community context, overcoming the feeling of being powerless.

Reciprocal listening: "people are talking and communicating with each other". The exhibition created a communicating place among various institutions, members of interest groups and citizens, where they are able to listen to each other. What is innovatory is listening to new proposals, the expression of the needs of all the citizens and no longer of the individuals only; so that in recognizing themselves in a shared request, the latter feel a greater sense of empowerment in respect to the local context.

Researchers are in the community life spaces. The researcher's activity during the working process is a mediation tool between the citizens and the institutions; at the same time it has become a point of reference representing a common interest.

The presence of *foreign* researchers allows one to play the mediation role between citizens and institutions, granting space to those who are usually *not heard*, or are hardly taken into account in decision making in local planning.

The researcher, as representative of the community's interests, has been able to play the role of facilitating communication processes, by making visible what is generally concealed.

4.2 Sharing

The exhibition has represented a first meeting occasion for the participants who had the opportunity to share their ideas, proposals and problems related to the context, with institutional referents, with other citizens, and with their own relatives and friends. Sharing is a significant element that does not arise from the mere collation of ideas and listening, but is constructed starting from negotiation among motivations, skills and interests pursued by everyone for the community itself. That is why the exhibition is not only a tool used by those who have directly contributed to its realization, but has also permitted the involvement of other citizens who joined the debate. This sharing process has been continued through discussion groups organized by the citizens themselves and seminars, also with the participation of associations active in the area. This aspect of the work is significant in view of the dialogue initiated between the participants and the citizens later involved.

4.3 Feedback

For some of the local referents the feedback concerning their work is very significant, enabling them to know the value attributed to their actions in the local context. As a result of this experience, the institutional referents have understood the value of the information, of the citizens' active participation and of more visible and sharable actions. The citizens also receive feedback with regard to their own personal capacities and their participation in carrying out actions in the area.

4.4 Knowing so as to undertake actions

Both during the interviews and in the discussion groups, people have had the opportunity to acquire information about access to plans, events and personal training. The exchange between the researcher and the participants is, in fact, a typical aspect of participatory research. The ability to listen to and identify needs and opportunities may enable the researcher to provide elements aiming at creating network synergies and giving access to the resources already existing in the area.

5. Factors hindering the participation process

Factors perceived as obstacles to the participation process may be summarized as follows:

- *Lack of meeting opportunities within the territorial context*

The *continuity* for future actions of groups that can interact with the local administration is one of the first needs. After the exhibition, it has been important for the people involved in the follow up to create support in order to start project-related actions that otherwise would not have been put into practice.

Thus, the researcher has to take into account the project schedule and provide for the setting up of a working group during the first project phase, which should have recognition within the territorial context considered.

Indeed, there are evident differences between the two projects in this regard: in the historical centre, it has been possible after one year to verify the creation of a working group; whereas in the Phlegrean Area no similar events have been observed five months after the exhibition.

- Lack of available communication channels and referents

The direct access to local referents increases the perception of possibilities and personal engagement.

- Poor or inadequate information

Giving more information, and above all circulating it in such a clear way that it may prove accessible for all social strata of citizens, is important for promoting empowerment.

- Discontinuous and long-lasting research processes due to poor legislative tools and financial resources

Research tools and participants' engagement are not the only tool required for a continued research process from an economic and legislative point of view. Discontinuity concerns not only the financial aspect but also the research timing related to people being favourably disposed and to the contact between local referents and citizens, which is not always easy.

According to some participants the absence of a planning phase, subsequent to this first occasion, has influenced the perception of the problems existing in that place as well as the processes of change, thus increasing the sense of mistrust felt by the inhabitants.

6. Positive actions

Most participants declared they were in favour of further initiatives. This shows how important it has been for them to express their ideas and to be active making proposals.

On the basis of the exhibition, project and administration referents have confirmed the importance of uniting the project ideas and actions with the citizens' knowledge and participation. In brief some proposals:

- Improving the exhibition

"A longer exhibition, in a more prominent and significant place, where citizens and visitors can meet for future actions."

This suggestion comes about more especially from the experience of the Phlegrean Area citizens who have been asking for further meetings and discussions following the exhibition, but the tools for realizing this have not been made available to them.

As a result, the participants from the Phlegrean Area see this event as *"lying in a drawer, waiting for someone to open it"* in order to enhance the proposals that have been put forward.

The work done in the old centre of Naples was also used at a later stage both by showing the exhibition's panels during workshops with the citizens and by using the material for an exchange of views and debate with the researchers to make them appreciate the effectiveness and limits of such a tool (Florence, 2003; Berlin, 2003; Naples, 2004).

In addition to the pragmatic aspects and to their effects on the participation and planning process, it is important for the researchers to take into account the local political situation, in order to ensure the collaboration of those able to put projects and proposals into practice through positive initiatives. The action of political representatives would ensure the contribution for carrying out planned actions and synergic shared projects.

- To get political representatives more involved

It is possible to launch projects drawing on policies of sustainable development which can be endorsed by the administration and political referents. This is why the involvement of administrative referents in the two experiences illustrated above has considerable significance in generating confidence and a sense of concrete actions in citizens.

Moreover, greater knowledge of legislation tools, administrative working rules, and communication tools is a key point in a dialogue that endows the citizens with the skills required for undertaking and supporting local planning actions.

The work carried out has created both a real and a symbolic place where the citizens are recognized as actors who are able to give their support to changing processes by identifying common and sharable objectives.

Table 1 shows processes and outcome indicators concerning the participatory methodology.

The processes show which events can serve as indicators of the activation of social processes. From the outcome indicators we see that the results can be found both at the individual and group level. It is worth mentioning that group actions also featured the participation of citizens who promoted initiatives in the local context.
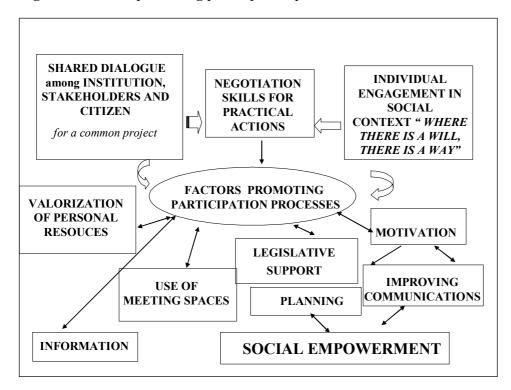
Process Indicators	Outcome Indicators
	At the collective level
Television Programmes	Organisation of activity groups following the citizen exhibition and project communications
Press and Media Contributions	
Political Interventions	
Local Information and Narrative Video Creation	Constitution of Associations
	Request for Interventions in other districts
New Associations	Active participation in communal assemblies to obtain interventions for local security and upkeep
Existing dialogue (meetings)	
Development of school projects promoting local participation	Further aggregation of existing associations i.e in the old centre of Naples as expression of group empowerment
	At individual level
	Poetry and creation of written texts
	Increase in school attendance
	Further photographic exhibitions

Table 1: Process and Outcome Indicators

7. Factors Promoting Participation Processes

We now point out the factors that represent significant elements of participation in local planning initiatives (Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Factors promoting participation processes

The sharing of ideas, viewpoints and problems among citizens, institutional referents and stakeholders makes for a shared construction which brings together the various needs. In this sense, *sharing* represents a communication process which starts from a mutual listening and from everyone's own expression of needs. This framework of a *common pathway* is built up by *negotiating* everyone's priorities and skills with a view to carrying out collective actions. This process is constructed through an involvement of individuals whose motivation for personal engagement is being answered by the collective context. In this regard, it is possible to develop a process that – starting out from the motivation towards social action through the improvement of communication channels – leads on to concrete actions giving social power to the citizens. The circular process characterizing these dynamics leads to reciprocal events acting on the perception of individual and collective empowerment.

Thus, social participation seems to be relevant not only because it creates a group context that possesses contractual power, but also because individual action can produce effects in the wider context of the local community. In this way, the involvement and the actualisation of individual and group resources may be expressed.

In particular, the Exhibition is a tool that allows the development of social autonomy from the process started by the researcher. This is in contrast with most forms of traditional planning, which give rise to a poor sense of territorial identification, decision-making and planning power in the city context.

To achieve all this, as stated by PARK (1915), "… it is important to know which forces tend to break the tensions, interests and feelings characterizing each *group to which the action is addressed*. In general we may say that these forces are expressed by everything which tends to make people unstable or that separates and focuses attention on highly separated interest areas" (p. 6).

Therefore, encouraging participatory processes means people are allowed to make actions in favour of their own, since they are sharing ideas, emotions, and making proposals for achieving real changes.

This makes the urban fabric alive and inhabited, and people will attend common places outside their own private lives. So they participate actively, by discovering the peculiarities and contradictions of the connective tissue in an urban community in contemporary society.

The question of the lack of peculiar cultural values makes cultural belonging a prime consideration "... with respect to the ways in which people manifest the need for territorial spaces, and also the behavioural models they adopt to define and regulate them" (BONNES & SEC-CHIAROLI, 1992, p. 120). For a planning process to become operative there must be spaces and actions which offer confrontation, going beyond the usual stereotypes in communication.

Spaces for social mediation must be found in order to re-establish interpersonal trust, both in society and in the local authorities. At the same time individuals must be encouraged to cooperate with others in their common interests.

8. Some reflections from the follow up

The promotion of participation initiatives has to rely on a network between referents of the services and inhabitants with the purpose of implementing an organization responding to the administration, to the residents' needs, and to the empowerment of individual- and community.

These actions have been oriented to promote participation of community members and to support the local development; the main purpose is community planning in the conciliation between personal needs and those arising from the planning of the city.

According to BERKMAN (1995), well-being is improved by socially-oriented behaviours, which are, in turn, improved by people's belonging to a significant social context, which enhances individual participation and social engagement.

In this sense, the events organized after the Exhibition were meant to express the willingness to undertake an engagement. The citizens discover the opportunity to extend communication as well as new ways of expression, such as for instance photography, poetry and organization of debates (Tab. 1). Therefore, taking an active role in the local context has given them motivation for making proposals.

Finally, the actions that should be carried out in order to achieve practical results are: the identification of shared aims; the recognition and use of professional skill to support and enhance participation, voluntary cooperation, experiences of the groups in the area; promotion of the local leaders' capacities; to improve the coordination between services, opinion movements and social groups.

In spite of its recognition of the usefulness of such resources, borne out in legislation making specific mention of the importance of participation in urban planning, local administration still seems to fight shy of a true participative culture, failing to extend it or make it more concrete. It stops at a level of participation corresponding to the expression of citizens' needs. Thus while the administration apparently attributes importance to setting up participative planning processes, it does not seem to know how to ensure continuity for such schemes or be willing to assign financial and administrative resources to making them work.

References

Arcidiacono, C. (1999). Diagnosi di una città. Napoli: Magma.

Arcidiacono, C. (2004). Il fascino del centro Antico. Napoli, Firenze, Berlino. Risorse per la vivibilità. Napoli: Magma.

Arcidiacono, C. & Procentese, F. (2005). Distinctiveness and Sense of Community in the Historical Centre of Naples: a Piece of Participatory Action-research. Journal of Community Psychology, 33 (6), 631-638.

Arcidiacono, C., Procentese, F. & Di Napoli, I. (2004). Paese, quartiere di appartenenza e benessere percepito. Un'indagine con giovani campani. Proceeding VI Congresso Nazionale: I contesti della salute. Napoli, p. 315.

Arcidiacono, C., Procentese, F. & Esposito, M. (2003). Una ricerca-intervento nel centro antico di Napoli. Risorse e limiti della comunità attraverso parole ed immagini degli abitanti, Proceeding V Congresso Nazionale. Sezione di Psicologia Sociale, AIP, Bari, pp. 196-197.

Arcidiacono, C., Procentese, F. & Menna, P. (2003). Empowerment e action research nella formazione: il Master "Modelli di complessità ed ecologia umana. Strumenti per lo sviluppo di comunità". In: N. De Piccoli & G. Lavanco (a cura di), Setting di comunità. Gli interventi psicologici nel sociale. Milano: Unicopli.

Arcidiacono, C., Sommantico, M. & Procentese, F. (2001). Neapolitan Youth's Sense of Community and the Problem of Unemployment. Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology. 11, 465-473.

Bauman, Z. (1998). Globalization. The human consequences, Cambridge: Polity Press; trad. it. Dentro la globalizzazione. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2001.

Berkman, L.F. (1995). The role of social relations in health promotion. Psychosomatic Medicine, 57, 245-263.

Berkowitz, B. (2000). Collaboration for Health Improvement: Models for State, Community, and Academic Partnerships. Journal Public Health Management Practice, 6 (1), 67-72.

Bonnes, M. & Secchiaroli, G. (1992). Psicologia ambientale. Introduzione alla psicologia sociale dell'ambiente, Roma: NIS.

Carli, R. (2003). Il contributo della psicologia per lo sviluppo della convivenza nella città. www.http/psiconline.it

Cohen, J.M. & Uphoff, N.T. (1977). Rural development. Participation: Concepts and Measures for Project Design, Implementation and evaluation, New York: Rural Development Committee.

De Piccoli, N. & Lavanco, G. (Eds) (2003). Setting di comunità. Gli interventi psicologici nel sociale. Milano: Unicopli.

Francescato, D. (2002). Processi di globalizzazione e voglia di comunità. In: F. Di Maria (Ed), Psicologia del benessere sociale, pp. IX-XXX, Milano: McGraw-Hill.

Francescato, D., Tomai, M. & Ghirelli, G. (2002). Fondamenti di psicologia di comunità. Roma: Carocci.

Häußermann, H. (2004). Theoretical conceptions of neighbourhood interventions. Relation presented to the 5th European Conference for Community Psychology, Berlin, Germany. September, 16-19.

Legewie, H. (2000). Workshop: Strumenti di partecipazione sociale, Master europeo in Modelli di complessità ed ecologia umana. Strumenti per lo sviluppo di comunità, Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo, Napoli.

Legewie, H. (2003). Ricerca sul campo nei quartieri storici: Berlino – Firenze e ritorno. Resoconto di un'esperienza. In: H. Legewie (Ed), Narrazioni ed immagini della città: Qualità della vita e turismo nei centri storici di Firenze e Berlino, pp. 82-96. Schriftenreihe des ZTG. Berlin: Technische Universität.

Mannarini, M.T. (2004). Comunità e partecipazione. Milano: Feltrinelli.

Martini, R. & Sequi, R. (1994). Il lavoro nella comunità. Manuale per la formazione e l'aggiornamento dell'operatore sociale. Roma: NIS.

Park, R.E. (1915). La città: suggerimenti per la ricerca sul comportamento umano nell'ambiente urbano. In Società e Metropoli. La scuola sociologica di Chicago. 1995. Roma: Donzelli.

Procentese, F. (2001). Urban Catalysts – Strategies for Temporary Uses. Interviews for the Participative Exhibition. Unpublished Research Report for Fifth Framework Programme of the European Union.

Procentese, F. (2002a). Follow up – Urban Catalysts – Strategies for Temporary Uses. Unpublished Research Report on Interviews for the Participative Exhibition. Fifth Framework Programme of the European Union.

Procentese, F. (2002b). Luogo aggregante e comunità territoriale: la finzione rappresentativa dei luoghi nel mantenimento dell'identità collettiva. Proceeding Congresso Nazionale di Psicologia di Comunità, Università degli Studi di Torino.

Sennet, R. (1990). The Conscience of the Eye. The Design and Social Life of Cities, New York: Knopf, trad. it. La coscienza dell'occhio. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1992.

Stein C.H. & Mankowsky E. 2004. Asking, Witnessing, Knowing, Interpreting: Conducting Qualitative Research in Community Psychology. American Journal of Community Psychology, 33, 1/2 March, 21-37.

Wandersman, A. & Florin, P. (2000). Citizen Participation and Community Organizations. In: J. Rappaport & E. Seideman, (Eds), Handbook of Community Psychology. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Author

Fortuna Procentese – PhD, Researcher of Community and Urban Psychology.

Research interests: Participation Methodology, Urban Security, Gender Studies, Action-Research in the Territorial Context, Qualitative Research.

Contact

Fortuna Procentese
Dipartimento di Scienze Relazionali G. Iacono
Università Federico II, Naples
Via Porta di Massa 1
80135 Napoli, Italy
email: procente@unina.it

Heiner Legewie

The "Social City" as a Laboratory for Sustainable Urban Development and Community Interventions

There have been three thematic inputs accompanying the symposium's contributions which formed an integral part of our final discussion on future approaches and desiderata for a sustainable and healthy city-quarter and regional development.

1. Historical City Quarters in the Vortex of Globalization

In the main entrance hall of the conference, a photo exhibition of the influence of mass tourism and globalization on the quality of urban life in the historical centres of Naples, Florence and Berlin has been presented (Arcidiacono et al., 2006, http://psydok.sulb.uni-saarland.de/volltexte/2006/757).

Prior to the ENCP conference, this exhibition has travelled in modified versions to:

- *Naples*: December 2002 (Ex Refettorio di San Domenico Maggiore and Fondazione Mediterraneo)
- *Florence*: September 2003 (Chiostro dell'Ammanati, Santo Spirito)
- *Berlin*: November - December 2003 (Willy-Brandt-Haus).

Naples, Florence and Berlin seem to be three European metropolises, whose historical centres impress more by their differences than by their similarities at the first glance. Beyond the differences, however, a closer analysis shows astonishing similarities of the current dynamics of their development. Historical neighbourhoods formerly abandoned to decay have recently experienced an economic boom due to mass tourism and gentrification. The result was a temporary increase in profit rates for investments and a radical transformation of the social structure.

The exhibition has been the result of our cooperation in the years 2001 - 2003. We ran three projects of field research, each in a teaching context with the participation of our students in Naples (group of Caterina Arcidiacono at the University of Naples Federico II and of the Fondazione Mediterraneo), Florence (Heiner Legewie as Guest Professor of the University of Florence in collaboration with Maurizio Mordini) and Berlin (group of Heiner Legewie at the Technische Universität Berlin). For details see the accompanying internet presentation of selected parts of the exhibition (http://psydok.sulb.uni-saarland.de/volltexte/2006/757) and our respective publications (Arcidiacono 2004; Arcidiacono & Procentese 2005; Legewie 2003).

The three research groups have been working independently, but with a common methodology. Our leading research question was: How have the urban quality of life and the social fabric of European cities been affected by the transformations of recent years, in particular by mass tourism and by the increase in economic value of historic housing areas?

In the projects, open interviews with inhabitants, professionals and experts from the historic city centres of Naples (Centro Antico), Florence (Centro Storico) and two touristy historic city quarters in Berlin (*Spandauer Vorstadt* and *Kollwitzplatz-Viertel*) were carried out to collect narratives and information on the following themes:

1. The background, local identity and goals in life of the informants
2. The significance of the cultural heritage for the informants' own quality of life
3. Quality of life, problems and conflicts in the city area
4. Manifestations of tourism and repercussions on the quality of life
5. Ideas and initiatives for the improvement of urban quality of life.

The understanding of the informants' viewpoints and their contexts of meaning, and the deciphering of their perceptions of the city were at the centre of our research project, which comes into the field of qualitative social research. The strength of the qualitative approach lies in the depth and richness in detail, which the informants could give expression to their perspectives.

A total of 15 interviews in Naples, 40 interviews in Florence and 71 interviews in Berlin were carried out. The majority of the interviewees have given their assent to this exhibition and for that purpose had themselves portrayed in their home or work environment. For lack of space it was not possible to include in this exhibition all interviewees who had expressed their willingness to participate. In the selection we have endeavoured to capture as broad a spectrum of viewpoints as possible.

The aim of the projects was not a conventional research report but a "citizens' exhibition" (SCHOPHAUS & DIENEL, 2003) or "photo-dialogue" (ARCIDIACONO, 2004): By combining interview excerpts with accompanying photographs we have intended to offer a forum for the citizens, in which they get a chance to speak as subjects of their own life worlds. For this purpose we have juxtaposed key statements from each of the verbatim transcribed interviews with a very brief text. In order to retain the character and charm of the "original tone" of the interviews, we have deliberately abstained from adapting the colloquial language of the interview excerpts to the rules of the written language.

The inhabitants regret the explosion of housing and living expenses, the expulsion of autochthonous city quarter populations, the loss of social cohesion, quality of everyday life and city quarter identity. By the process of brutal commercialization the historic centres have changed more and more into shopping malls and museum-like theme parks, losing their urban quality of life. But there are also ideas and proposals about how the economic and socio-cultural change of the historic city centres should be shaped according to an "human measure". But this short summary is not intended to communicate the richness of viewpoints and the reader is invited to study the exhibition with its citizens' voices by him- or herself (http://psydok.sulb.uni-saarland.de/volltexte/2006/757).

2. Problems of disadvantaged city districts: The District of Neukölln

During the last decade in many West-European states political programmes for city quarter development have been established. In Germany the Federal Länder programme 'Neighbourhood with special need for development – the Social City', a joint policy of the national and the Länder-governments, is aiming at old inner city neighbourhoods and at big estates constructed in the 1970ies and 80ies as well. The Federal Lander Programme "The socially integrative city" describes the problems of disadvantaged city districts as follows:

"The population in disadvantaged districts is affected by various exclusion processes, which sometimes compound each other: Economically, because they have no access to the labour market; institutionally, because insurmountable barriers spring up between them and political or public welfare organizations; culturally, if stigmatization and discrimination lead to a loss of self-confidence and moral integrity; and socially, if social isolation and life in a closed milieu destroy the links to 'normal society'.

Children and young people develop a "deviant culture", as their environment offers them few positive role models and representatives of a "normal" life, and they no longer see the point of schooling, training and career. On the contrary, they engage in "negative social learning". Many urban districts are tarred with a negative image which can lead to stigmatization. The more derelict these areas become, the more disadvantaging their effects are, aggravating their peripheral social position, if nothing else.

In the last 20 years or so, urban districts largely isolated from macrosocietal and metropolitan developments have evolved across Germany. These areas are breeding grounds for disadvantage and detriment. This impairs living conditions, curtails opportunities and dampens the neighbourhood mood and social climate.

- *Problematic local conditions*: e.g. housing and living space shortages, lack of green areas and open spaces, poor infrastructure and advice services, inadequate local facilities, noise and air pollution, vacant properties, insufficient training opportunities and jobs, problematic school situation, juxtaposition of population groups with very different backgrounds;

- *problems particularly affecting the district image*: e.g. blight, disinvestment, neglect, vandalism, social conflict, negative perception by residents and outsiders;

- *problems affecting individual situations*: e.g. low income, unemployment, dependence on transfer payments, poor skill levels, low purchasing power, illness, addiction, dependence, insufficient knowledge of German;

- *psychological problems resulting from difficult living conditions and stunted opportunities*: e.g. loneliness, resignation, withdrawal, despair, lack of perspective, insecurity." (GERMAN INSTITUTE OF URBAN AFFAIRS, 2003).

Berlin as a metropolis has the status of a Federal Land (Land Berlin) which consists of 12 districts (Bezirke), each with its own mayor and citizens assembly. One of these, Neukölln, a district with 307.380 inhabitants, is known as being the district with the highest rate of disadvantaged people and social problems. The participants of the symposium had the occasion to know the problems of Neukölln (http://www.berlin.de/ba-neukoelln/index.html) by a discussion with its Mayor and an excursion to two specially disadvantaged quarters of Neukölln which are included within the programme of city quarter management. The Mayor, Heinz Buschkowsky, a Social Democrat and authentic "Berliner", is famous for his engagement in city quarter management and his direct speech often lacking political correctness.

According to Buschkowsky the concentration of families with no working income forces the district to spend 60% of its budget (370 million Euros) on welfare transfers, while only 3% remains for maintenance and investments in streets, public buildings and green recreation areas. 70% of young people are without or only have the lowest degree of school qualification which would not suffice to find a job. The biggest challenge is the integration of immigrant youth to the German work market: Only 5% of youth with migration background find their place for professional training.

Buschkowsky especially emphasizes the problems of city quarters with a high rate of immigrants, which he considers partly as the result of 20 years of a wrong integration policy. For years there has been the illusion of a multicultural society, which should function without any efforts to integration, especially without obligatory offers of the society and corresponding demands for immigrants to learn the German language. The results, according to Buschkowsky, are shown in the disadvantaged city quarters with an extraordinarily high percentage of immigrant population. In these quarters you will find a high rate of crime, violence and dealing with illegal drugs. Different Turkish and Arab communities have developed which meanwhile function as parallel societies with their own values and laws of the "clans", with extreme suppression of women, forced marriages and even "honour murders" of family members, whose victims are mostly women immigrants of the second generation deciding to conduct their autonomous individual lives according to the western style.

Buschkowsky stresses the need for an offensive integration policy with children and youth as the primary targets according to the principle "formation is integration". Promotion programs

should be concentrated in the problematic areas of the city. Buschkowsky is proposing the following measures:

- The principle of equal living conditions for the whole city, which has been anchored in the constitution of the Land Berlin, has to be followed as a criterion for the financial budget policy.

- All city quarters identified as segregation areas have to be included in a city *Quarter Management Program (*QM). The QM is considered to be the only intervention with measurable positive results regarding the socialization of city areas.

- Schools in disadvantaged quarters have to be developed in a way that they attract families from other city areas rather than repel them, e.g. by markedly smaller school classes and attractive pedagogic programs.

- The districts with disadvantaged quarters have to be supported financially to offer German language courses according to the needs of their inhabitants.

- Communal qualification and work programs for disadvantaged youth have to be developed with high priority.

- Delinquency and neglect of public space has to be stopped at the neighbourhood level by community policing and other approaches.

Buschkowsky's emphasis on problems connected with the immigrants' communities has been discussed controversially in the Berlin public debate as well as within the symposium. His analysis as well as his proposals for political action partly were approved as an alternative to the attitude of non-perception out of political correctness. His critics considered his position as exaggerated and not helpful for the intercultural dialogue. The deficits within the disadvantaged city quarters were considered in the first place as general problems of exclusion from the labour market and poverty, which is connected, among other factors, with the low level of school qualification. The mayor's contribution was considered as a stimulus to reflect the challenges and limitations of our community psychological approach.

The meeting dealt with the topic of rethinking immigration policies and the difficulty in western metropolises of ensuring the coexistence of social groups from different cultures. It highlighted the need for active policies both for education, with introduction into the world of work, and for creating consensual social processes. In her address the Mayor urged the need for political strategies affirming individual rights as the basis for citizenship. Such rights cannot be betrayed in the name of respect for differences or policies of mere tolerance of immigrant groups. The principle of the "intolerability of the intolerable", to use a phrase coined by the Algerian feminist writer TAMZALI (personal communication 2005), forces us to rethink social inclusion policies for minority groups. It is clear that the need for dialogue between cultures cannot turn a blind eye when confronted with an abuse of human rights carried out in the name of whatever religion and/or family bond. This matter is highly topical.

3. City quarter management

During the last decade in many West-European states political programmes for city quarter development have been established. In Germany, the programme "Districts with special development needs – the Socially Integrative City", a joint policy of the national and the Länder-governments, since 1999 is aiming at old inner city neighbourhoods and at big estates constructed in the 1970ies and 80ies as well. The programme provides financial support for investments and socio-economic development.

In a keynote speech, the known urban sociologist HARTMUT HÄUßERMANN (2004) discussed the underlying theoretical assumptions of these programmes. The 'Social City' programme reacts to problems that have become visible in many towns and cities due to the economic and social structural change. Simply put, this change came about in two ways: neighbourhoods become areas with a high concentration of problems through the general rise in unemployment (social decline). An increased level of conflict, erosion of the infrastructure due to a drop in purchasing power and an overtaxing of the schools through a high share of migrants all trigger selective mobility processes and lead to further segregation ('downward spiral'). As regards the question of what the problems of these quarters are, three different paradigmatic views can differentiated.

The *traditional paradigm* of urban city quarter renewing regards the shortcomings of spatial environment and housing conditions as the main cause for the concentration of social problems and correspondingly propagates refurbishing buildings and improving the neighbourhood environment. The *paradigm of social community development* points to the social situation of the inhabitants, first and foremost. the second advocates the elimination of poverty and unemployment. Either point of view or strategic orientation has its justification. The innovative core of the new programme is to be seen in the *interlacing of the two perspectives*, thus forming a third view that guides the attention, above all, to the 'contextual effects', i.e. the additional inhibition of the opportunities in life, which results from living in a deprived neighbourhood.

The working conception of city quarter management in Berlin has been laid down in a paper of the STADTFORUM BERLIN (1998):

1. City quarter management has to be founded on social and economic strategies, which concentrate on the activation of the inhabitants' and local actors' power (empowerment).

2. The means and strategies for QM have to be coordinated by a person (quarter manager) and local office with coordination power.

3. The problems of socially not integrated groups (e.g. Hooligans, violent youth gangs, delinquency, drug dealing, vandalism in public space) have to be actively addressed for achieving a higher quality of life and for respecting the need of security within the quarter.

4. An efficient quarter management has to be supported by the different departments of the communal administration. It needs not only its budget for personal and material costs but also a separate quarters' budget for realizing its own local projects.

5. The organization of the quarter management may only be predetermined in a sketchy way, because it has to consider local development and tradition.

In an excursion, the participants of the symposium visited two city quarters out of the quarter management programme, both in the district Neukölln. The *Reuter-Kiez*, centered around the Reuterplatz, consists of 80% old buildings (before 1st world war). It has 19.500 inhabitants, with more than 32% of immigrants and an inoccupation rate of 16,5%. The *Rollbergviertel* has been built in the years 1967 - 1982, it has 5300 inhabitants, with 34% of immigrants form more than 30 nationalities.

The participants of the excursion met first at the quarter management office where the quarter managers gave an introduction to the neighbourhood and the activities of the management. The problems of the area have caused the wealthier families to move away. The aim of the quarter management is to activate the power of the neighbourhood to create better living and environment conditions and to offer qualification and recreation facilities for the different groups of inhabitants. Afterwards the excursion participants visited different projects organ-

ized or stimulated by the quarter management and got the opportunity to speak with visitors and operators of the projects. In the Reuter-Kiez one of the projects was the Internet Café "Mittenmang", which offers not only a communication place for the neighbourhood, but also a cost free internet access and internet qualification courses for different groups of interest. An other project was the first "youth street" with non motorized traffic and creative arts manifestations of young immigrants of the quarter, produced at the adjacent Youth Club "Manege", which has an arts factory, a photo lab and a theatre room. The Club "Manege" is managed by two engaged artists who conduct the young visitors in their creative works, e.g. in creating the decorations for the famous Carnival of Cultures. A project in the Rollbergviertel was the multicultural Club "MaDonna", which offers communication, recreation and qualification activities for girls of different ethnic background.

Certainly it is extremely difficult to evaluate the results of complex programme activities such as quarter management. An interim appraisal of 140 programme areas in 112 cities, which included not only the assessment by players directly in charge of the programme implementation but also players "outside the programme", summarized the results so far (AEHNELT et al., 2004, pp. 11-12):

"In the case study areas, the socio-economic contextual data (e.g. unemployment and social security recipient numbers) did not show any positive change so far (to the extent the respective data was available); the economic and social problems remain greater in these areas than in the city's average. There were positive changes recorded in many areas of the neighbourhood environment, the offers for children and young people as well as the cleanliness or the condition of public spaces. Furthermore, the players interviewed in the case areas pointed out the 'soft effects' time and again, such as an improved mood among the inhabitants or a rising identification with the neighbourhood. In some areas, such 'soft effects' can be proved with the help of residents' surveys. Appraisals of the results and effects of the 'Social City' so far are possible on a broader basis using the interviews of external players carried out within the framework of the interim appraisal. The interviews yield a comparable picture to the case studies: the developments in the fields of building and urban development are regarded as positive, as well as the developments in the offer by social institutions and offers for children and young people. The development of the 'soft' dimensions of neighbourhood life, the living together of the people and the 'atmosphere' are evaluated as weaker by the external players but still much more often as positive than negative. With regard to the economic and social situation, however, there are more or less no improvements to be seen, often even worsening, no doubt reflecting more the general than the neighbourhood specific developments."

Of special interest are the deficits discovered by the appraisal study (AEHNELT et al., 2004, pp. 12-14):

"The appraisal makes clear that the following fields of action: 'school/education', 'integration of migrants' and 'local economy' did not or could not play the role they should actually have played in the neighbourhood development. All three fields have in common that the opportunities of activity as well as the success of neighbourhood policy depend to a great degree on overriding developments and the framework conditions set by the Federal Government and the Länder. The situation in the *schools* represents a central key for breaking the 'downward spiral' or for a 'change in the trend' of the development. It is among the positive findings of the interim appraisal that there are efforts being undertaken in most programme areas to include the schools to a greater degree in the development of the neighbourhoods and that the commitment of the schools is actually high according to the survey outcome. However, there is only rarely a concept for interlacing the schools with the remaining aspects of neighbourhood development: there is more or less no formation of strategic alliances between the school authorities, the schools, municipal administrations and the neighbourhood management visible so far.

The schools should be supported more consistently in fulfilling their task of education in difficult framework conditions and in doing so open up to the neighbourhood and its players. The Länder take on a central role in this respect. The Federal Government may also provide impulses. For instance, at

the initiative of the Federal Government for introducing all-day schooling, interfaces have developed between school policy and neighbourhood development.

In all cities (at least in the former Western part of Germany), segregated spaces have developed along ethnic groups. In the neighbourhoods indigenous losers of the structural change live together with *migrants*, among whom the share of unemployment and transfer payment recipients is also high. As the consequences of this situation are not overcome easily, it represents a frequent field of action for neighbourhood policies. However, the higher level of administration has so far not made available effective concepts and tools for an active integration at the neighbourhood level. There are many ideas and also a considerable number of projects. But they do not live up to the tasks, apart from a few exceptions. From the view of the interim appraisal, the integration of migrants should form a focus of the future programme design.

The 'strengthening of the *local economy*' in practice often lags behind the programmatic claims of the 'Social City'. In part, this is due to the unrealistic expectations. In this important area of activity, one needs more of a sober analysis of where the potentials and possibilities of action actually lie for the 'Social City'. Based on this analysis, achievable objectives should be developed subsequently. In many programme areas, the local economic structures are so weak that at the end of the day, it is only about securing the immediate supply of the neighbourhood. In areas with a mixed use, attention is focused mostly on preventing vacancies or wasteland as well as maintaining or producing a varied mix of use, which makes the life in a neighbourhood (and a visit from outside) more attractive.

The support of local business, especially also of the ethnic economy, is of central significance in such areas for the stabilisation of the neighbourhoods. Only in a part of these areas, there is also further potential for achieving a medium-term increase in employment through promoting the local economy and thus triggering economic dynamism. The role of the 'Social City' is to be seen in attracting to these areas and networking such institutions that have specialised in promoting the economy and employment. Furthermore, infrastructural prerequisites may be improved. Own supporting offers make sense where companies, start-up businesses and inhabitants face serious thresholds in availing themselves of the established tools or where gaps are identified in the offer of support."

4. Conclusion

The symposium has shown that sustainable City Quarter Development, besides economy, is largely dependent on human factors. In different scientific as well as applied areas there have been developed a wide range of strategies and methods to manage these human factors in a professional way. Community psychologists and other students of the field are used to practice diagnostic tools like community profiles, actors' and conflict analysis, and intervention tools like: *moderation techniques for creative team work, citizens' activation and participative planning, conflict mediation techniques, future factories, citizens' juries, community action research and city quarter management*.

To propagate a broader application of these strategies and methods, as a result of the symposium we propose the interdisciplinary development of national and European institutions offering know how and intervention capacities to regional and communal administrations as well as to other interested institutions and groups confronted to different problems of community development like urban transformation processes, renewing programs of city quarters in degradation, conflicts between different groups of citizens, participative planning of new areas and institutions, processes of local agenda 21 and so on.

The institutions to develop should promote the dissemination of these different approaches and techniques by interdisciplinary *training programs* for people working in the field (urban administration operators as well as planners and practitioners as well as researchers in the fields of community psychology, urbanities and other social sciences).

References

Arcidiacono, C. (2004). Il fascino del Centro Antico. Napoli: Magma Edizioni.

Arcidiacono, C. & Procentese, F. (2005). "Distinctiveness and Sense of Community in the Historical Center of Naples: A piece of Participatory Action-Research". Journal of Community Psychology. 33 (6), 631-638.

Arcidiacono, C., Legewie, H., Mordini, M. & Dienel, H.-L. (2006). Centri storici nel vortice della globalizzazione. Mostra fotografica presentata alla V Conferenza Europea per la Psicologia di Comunità (Berlino, 2004) – Historische Stadtzentren im Strudel der Globalisierung. Fotoausstellung anlässlich der 5. Europäischen Konferenz für Gemeindepsychologie (Berlin, September 2004).
http://psydok.sulb.uni-saarland.de/volltexte/2006/757 (URN:nbn:de:bsz:291-psydok-7574)

Franke, T. & Löhr, H.-P. (2001). Neighbourhood Management – A Key Instrument in Integrative Urban District Development . Paper delivered at the EURA-Conference "Area-based initiatives in contemporary urban policy – innovations in city governance", Copenhagen, 17-19 May 2001.
http://www.difu.de/english/occasional/neighbourhood-management.shtml.

German Institute of Urban Affairs (2003). Socially integrative cities. Implementation of the joint programme of the German federal government and the Länder: "Districts With Special Development Needs – the Socially Integrative City" – Experiences and Prospects.
http://www.sozialestadt.de/en/programm/

Häußermann, H. (2004). Theoretical conceptions of neighbourhood interventions. Invited keynote. ENCP Conference.

Aehnelt, R. et al. (2004). Interim appraisal of the Federal-Länder-Programme 'Districts with special development needs – the Social City' ('Soziale Stadt'). Institut für Stadtforschung und Strukturpolitik Berlin.
http://www.sozialestadt.de/en/veroeffentlichungen/evaluationsberichte/zwischenevaluierung-2004/pdf/DF8635-english.pdf.

DiFu Socially integrative citty team (2003). Activation and Participation – A Survey of Seven European Countries, Soziale Stadt – Info 14, newsletter devoted to the federal-Land Socially Integrative City programme, German Institute of Urbans Affairs (Difu), Berlin, 2003.
http://www.sozialestadt.de/en/veroeffentlichungen/newsletter/DF5804-info14-english.pdf.

Author

Heiner Legewie – Dr. med. Dr. phil., Prof. emeritus for Clinical Psychology and Community Psychology, Technische Universität Berlin.

Research interests: Organisational, Urban and Rural Development, Methods of Qualitative Social Research and Knowledge Management.

Contact

Prof. em. Dr. Dr. Heiner Legewie
Zentrum Technik und Gesellschaft
Technische Universität Berlin
Hardenbergstr. 36 A – Sekr. P 2-2
D-10623 Berlin, Germany
email: legewie@ztg.tu-berlin.de
http://www.ztg.tu-berlin.de/Heiner_Legewie.html