

Aline Delatte

Urban Development on a Participatory Democracy Basis

How to Actively Involve Citizens
as Local Experts and Partners
in Urban Governance

The Urban Renewal Program *Aktives Stadtzentrum Turmstraße*, Berlin



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Vorwort der Reihenherausgeber

Städtebau und Architektur formen jeden Schritt unseres Alltags. Sie eröffnen Spielräume, schränken sie aber auch ein. Über Städtebau und Architektur entscheiden traditionell wenige – Eigentümer, Unternehmer, Politiker, Verwaltungsleute. Sie entscheiden im Rahmen der gegebenen gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse und nach ihren Interessen und Fähigkeiten, und das trotz demokratischer Strukturen keineswegs immer zur Zufriedenheit der Bevölkerung. Städtebau und Architektur werden heute mehr und mehr zum Gegenstand breiter gesellschaftlicher Auseinandersetzung. Dies verändert wiederum die Entscheidungsprozesse. Das ist grundsätzlich zu begrüßen. Denn gesellschaftliche Auseinandersetzungen sind notwendig – gerade angesichts der aktuellen dramatischen Herausforderungen an Städtebau und Architektur.

Wir alle wissen: Unsere Städte sind einem tief greifenden wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Wandel ausgesetzt. Die mehr oder weniger präzisen Stichworte dieses Wandels sind: Klimawandel, Energieknappheit, Globalisierung, Alterung der Gesellschaft, zunehmende soziale Ausdifferenzierung, abnehmende Ressourcen der öffentlichen Hand, partielle Schrumpfung der Städte. Zentrale Merkmale der Industriegesellschaften der Nachkriegszeit wie relativ kurze Ausbildungszeiten, klar definierte Lebensstile bestimmter Altersgruppen, stabile Arbeitsplätze, ein bestimmter Tagesrhythmus, ein bestimmter Jahresrhythmus, langfristige Partnerverhältnisse, eine feste Verortung in politische und soziale Institutionen, vergleichsweise stabile Einnahmequellen der öffentlichen Hand, niedrige Energiepreise usw. sind im Verschwinden begriffen. Doch was diese Änderungen für Architektur und Städtebau im Detail bedeuten, ist alles andere als klar. Was ist nachhaltige Architektur, nachhaltiger Städtebau? Was sollen Städtebau und Architektur für die Gesellschaft künftig leisten? Dies muss kritisch erörtert, neue Zielsetzungen müssen im offenen Diskurs erarbeitet werden, über die richtigen Mittel und Wege muss gemeinsam gerungen werden.

Der Streit um die eigene Stadt, den eigenen Stadtteil, die eigene Straße oder das eigene Haus wird oft isoliert geführt: Not In My Backyard (NIMBY), wie die US-Amerikaner treffend zu sagen pflegen. Eine solche Haltung ist wenig nachhaltig, kann aber auch auf prinzipielle Probleme aufmerksam machen. Notwendig sind vor allem Strategien, die der gesamten Stadt, der gesamten Stadt-Region, in letzter Instanz dem gesamten Planeten zugutekommen. Um diesen Streit erfolgreich führen zu können, bedarf es umfassender Kenntnisse, eines intensiven Austauschs historischer und internationaler Erfahrungen. Diese Schriftenreihe im Spannungsverhältnis von Städtebau, Architektur und Gesellschaft möchte hierzu einen Beitrag leisten.

Prof. Dr. Harald Bodenschatz
Prof. Dr. Barbara Schöning

Preface

The present study focuses on one of today's most challenging aspects of urban development – citizen participation. While this has become mandatory in most western countries over the last decades, the level on which participation is allowed and the fields it occurs in differ widely from nation to nation. This shift from 'top-down' to 'considering citizens' interests' finds its political equivalent in the shift from 'Government' to 'Governance'. Despite that, recent years have shown that the level of trust between the civil society and decision-makers is rapidly decreasing.

While this growing mistrust is visible on many levels and across multiple political fields it becomes staggeringly obvious in the field of spatial planning. Not only mega-projects, like *Stuttgart 21*, or the Elb Philharmonic in Hamburg, but more and more smaller projects incite citizens to express their anger in protest on the streets, in initiatives and petitions, on subjects ranging from a lack of participation, the massive spending of public budgets or even ecological, architectural and urban design issues. Often it is not the building or project itself which is the starting point for a growing dissatisfaction, but the way a project is realized or approved. Sometimes it is rather the kind of change in a neighborhood that the project or building represents, that are the real triggers behind such sudden protests, than the building or project itself. This can be seen in Berlin as well as in other European cities, where protests against urban development projects increasingly mirrors the protest against a growing socio-economic divide – evicting people from their familiar surroundings and networks.

The work of Aline Delatte focuses on the limitations and difficulties of public participation within urban renewal programs. By means of an in-depth analysis of the restructuring of a Berlin park and the protests which arose throughout the restructuring process, she reveals the weaknesses of mandatory participation, which features citizens as field-experts and/or elected representatives in long term programs. Based on broad research of the theories of citizen participation and the way urban renewal programs are set, her findings not only reveal limits but also highlight possible alternatives at certain points in the process. In her case study on Berlin she defines seven phases, carefully looking at the planning process, key events, communication tools used, and the influence and behavior of the stakeholders involved, as well as the opportunities and challenges particular to each. Critically reviewing the measures and actions taken by individuals, groups, and

institutions and analyzing them against a broad background of theory is one of the key achievements of this work, which is much more than just a case study.

Aline Delatte manages to distinguish the limitations of an intended long term participation, which is designed to foster consensus building within the German urban renewal program of Aktive Stadt- und Ortsteilzentren. This includes its difficulties in dealing with unexpected events, such as protest arising in a late stage of a planning process. It is often not till then or even after the materialization of a project has begun, that individuals or groups for the first time become aware of the project, and realize that the project will affect them. While mandatory participation aims at establishing a long term connection between decision-makers and civil society, the work of local representatives within these programs - such as elected citizens' leaders – is easily impacted by the amount of time and work needed and the timeframe of the programs. A change in the administrations' commitment to participation might also add risks to the intended improvement of projects through participation.

Aline Delatte's work provides a manual on current approaches towards participation within state-led renewal projects, analyzing their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It provides an important dataset for the debate around more sustainable and innovative forms of citizens' participation, which is sorely needed.

Dipl.-Ing. Arch. Aljoscha Hofmann
Berlin, 02.07.2013

Acknowledgements

In the current global dynamic of 21st century society, citizen involvement on the local level plays and will continue to play an essential role. Involving citizens in the decision-making process is a tool to strengthen urban development in relation to citizens' needs. The elaboration of this study has been a milestone in my professional development and has contributed to build my own understanding of citizen involvement in the development of local neighborhoods. After six months of field work and a literature review, I have sharpened my perception of citizen participation in planning and decision-making processes in urban issues each and every day.

The citizens of Moabit, administration staff and urban planners involved in the renewal urban program *Aktives Stadtzentrum Turmstraße* (Moabit, Berlin) openly shared their point of view with me regarding the ongoing participative process in urban development of Moabit, allowing me to build the basis of my analysis and to identify the various aspects and challenges that come about with citizen participation. I would like to thank all the actors, citizens, planners, administrators and organizations for sharing their experiences with me.

I would like to thank Aljoscha Hofmann in particular. His competence and advice have been a tremendous support for the development of my study and research. I am particularly grateful for his trust in my ability to contribute to the theoretical debate on citizen participation. I would like also to thank Prof. Bodenschatz and Prof. Schöning for publishing my study in the series *Städtebau – Architektur – Gesellschaft*.

As a publication cannot be completed single-handedly, I would like to thank my friends Sarah Beaton, Isabelle Delatte and Samuel Soloman for their support in the finalization of my first publication.

When I wrote this study, I was an academic researcher motivated to understand the theoretical aspects of participation and to observe the applicability of participation in practice. Nowadays (2013), I myself am still engaged in the participative process of the development of Moabit, now as a local member of the neighborhood council.

Acronyms, Abbreviations and Translations

AG Grün	Arbeitsgruppe Grün
AZ	Aktive Zentren, Aktives Stadtzentrum
BauGB	Baugesetzbuch - <i>German Building Code</i>
BBR	Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung - <i>Federal Institute for Building and Spatial Research</i>
BMVBS	Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung - <i>Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development</i>
BUND	Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland - <i>German Environment and Nature Protection Agency</i>
BVV	Bezirksverordnungsversammlung - <i>Borough Assembly</i>
IBA	Internationale Bauausstellung - <i>International Building Exhibition</i>
INSEK	Integriertes Stadt(teil)entwicklung - <i>Integrated Neighborhood Development</i>
IRS	Leibniz Institut für Regionalentwicklung und Strukturplanung - <i>Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning</i>
KoSP	KoSP GmbH
KTO	Kleiner Tiergarten / Ottopark
NABU	Naturschutzbund Landesverband Berlin - <i>Nature Conservation Agency</i>
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SenStadt	Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung - <i>Senate Department for Urban Development</i>
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland - <i>Social-Democratic Political Party</i>
StV	Stadtteilvertretung - <i>Neighborhood council</i>
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
VvB	Verfassung von Berlin - <i>Berlin Constitution</i>

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Introduction

In recent years academics, practitioners and citizens have observed a growing tension between civil society and the public sector around the world. The global social movements against the oligarchy of the current financial system highlight the citizens' discontentment with this system. This tendency is exemplified by the riots in England in August 2011, which pointed to the ill-being of citizens suffering from strong social inequalities, and also by the tensions in the urban mega-project *Stuttgart 21* in Germany, which demonstrated the mistrust between civil society and decision-makers. These examples of social mobilization are consequences of a deep gap between decision-makers and civil society.

Citizens have voiced their demand to increase the participation of civil society in the decision-making process as early as the mid-20th century. This resulted in the shift from government to governance in Western democracies in the 1960s, a tendency which highlights the growth of awareness to involve citizens in the decision-making process. Moreover, international policies were adopted globally to recognize the necessity of involving citizens in the decision-making process. Citizen participation became a crucial topic in societal debate. Despite these efforts, the gap between civil society and public authorities has been growing. This is due to citizens' mistrust and frustration regarding current decision-making processes (Gibson et al 2005). Citizens have a feeling that the 'top-down' process is strongly dominant and that administrations handle and take decisions without taking their interests into consideration (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2006).

Maintaining the distinction between the process of citizen participation exercised by individuals and the new institutional forms of government involving collaboration between multisectoral actors suggested by Gaventa, the present study focuses on the role of citizens in the planning and decision-making process of neighborhood urban renewal programs (Gaventa 2004). While the issue of the role of the citizens in the development of a society is not a novel one, it needs to be revisited and re-defined in order to be adapted to the current political context and current expectations of citizens. This study aims to answer the following question:

What is the role of citizens in the framework of a neighborhood urban renewal program?

By distinguishing participation of individual citizens in a pre-defined communication strategy and participation of citizen representatives within the local urban governance, this study inquires:

How can communication strategy be designed for a context-oriented citizen participation process? What criteria enable or limit the involvement of citizen representatives within local governance?

With these two central investigative questions defined, this research, thus, is structured around two pillars: (i) communication tools for citizen participation and (ii) prerequisites and limitations of citizens' involvement within local governance. The overall objectives are to understand the theoretical foundations pertaining to these forms of citizen involvement, to analyze practical implementation of these forms and to identify the challenges and the opportunities for enhancing citizen involvement. To answer these questions an in-depth case study based on fieldwork had been conducted in Berlin where, a few years after the reunification, several urban renewal programs had been implemented to revitalize socially disadvantaged neighborhoods with particular attention being given to involve citizens in the process. By analyzing the role of citizens in the institutional setting of the urban renewal program *Aktives Stadtzentrum* in Moabit, this research defines the role of citizens in the urban politics within their own neighborhood.

The study is organized in seven chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of some of the main directives regarding 'participation' and 'good governance' on the international level, European level and Berlin level. Current debates on public participation are presented in order to put the relevance of this present study into perspective.

In the second chapter, a retrospective analysis of the milestones of citizen participation in the urban politics of Berlin since the 1960s provides the key elements to understand the current context of Berlin. From the 1960s to today, a shift from 'government' to 'governance' is observed in the urban politics of Berlin. The awareness of citizen participation in urban development grew in the 1980s, driven by the changes in urban policies that had been established in the framework of the International Building Exhibition (*International Bauausstellung (IBA)*). After the reunification, the city's urban politics have been driven by the Leipzig and Aalborg charters, agreed upon at the European level, which focus on the development of neighborhoods with the participation of citizens.

The third chapter is devoted to establishing a theoretical framework for the analysis. Two types of citizen participation are identified: (i) citizens involvement within local governance, towards consensus building, and (ii) citizens participation as field-experts in 'top-down' participatory planning, using communication tools. Gaventa's work *Citizen Involvement in Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Governance* (2004) is used as a foundation for the analysis of the role of citizens within local governance. Concerning the second form of participation, Selle's contributions allow drawing a large overview of the communication tools that are currently available. However, relevant positive outcomes and threats to participation, as well as the requisites for efficient participatory planning in practice, are summarized in this chapter.

In the fourth chapter, the presentation of the urban renewal program *Aktives Stadtzentrum Turmstraße* in Moabit sets the background for understanding the planning and decision-making process for the rehabilitation of *Kleiner Tiergarten / Ottopark*, the local park. The current situation in the Moabit neighborhood is briefly presented and the actors involved in the *Aktives Stadtzentrum Turmstraße* are introduced.

In the fifth chapter, the rehabilitation project of *Kleiner Tiergarten / Ottopark* is presented as a case study. This project began in 2008 and was subdivided in two planning sections: The first planning section came to a close at the end of 2011. The analysis of the case is based on the planning process of the first section. Furthermore, a chronological critical review of the participatory planning initiated in the framework of the program is provided. From December 2009 to December 2011, seven main phases had been identified in the development of the project. These phases correspond to specific issues or events, which segmented the planning process. This critical review allows for the extraction of the key elements to support the analysis of this case study.

The sixth chapter is devoted to the analysis of citizens in the role of 'field-experts' in the 'top-down' participatory process of the *Kleiner Tiergarten / Ottopark* rehabilitation project. This chapter aims to assess the ongoing participative planning process and to identify the available areas and needs for improvement. The discourse focuses on the increase in the efficiency of the participative process by combining communication tools. Specific recommendations are suggested and