

**INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES IN CRITICAL URBAN AREAS –
A QUESTION OF PARTICIPATION**

Senior Researcher Dr. Susanne Søholt, Senior Researcher Dr. Marit Ekne Ruud
and
Senior Researcher Einar Braathen

Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Oslo.

e-mail: susanne.soholt@nibr.no, marit.ruud@nibr.no, einar.braathen@nibr.no

In progress, not to be quoted!

TRACK 3, group 34. Friday 5th of June, 8.00 am – 9.30 am

Key words: urban interventions, critical neighbourhoods, governance,
participation, social capital

1. Introduction

Local involvement and participation in intervention programmes in critical urban areas, is the focus for this paper. More specific; what conditions concerning local involvement and participation can encourage and promote the inhabitants and the civil society to involve and develop their community during and after the programme are finished? In other words, we want to discuss how to contribute to a sustainable intervention process where the activities in the program are the first and not the last steps in community / area development. Our point of departure is an evaluation of the first stage of the intervention programme “Critical Urban Areas” in Portugal (Braathen, Lechner, Ruud and Søholt 2008). One of the main topics was to identify how to ensure the inhabitants participation and involvement in the development of their neighbourhood in a sustainable way. However, this particular programme will not be the only case for the discussion in this paper. To clarify the distinctions in such area based programmes, we will compare and contrast the Portuguese experiences with Norwegian intervention programmes, and to some experiences from other European interventions.

As a simplified statement, we affirm that there are *two main objectives* for area based interventions. These objectives can be separated or be part of the same intervention program. For analytical reasons they are separated here. One objective is to *improve the physical area* through different actions, e.g. refurbishment and upgrading of housing blocks and flats, including public places. These actions are intended to improve the inhabitant’s living conditions related to housing, as well as making the area more attractive, both in an economic, social and cultural way. This objective can imply demolishing and rebuilding housing blocks and renewing public space. Demolished or refurbished; peoples homes are affected.

Another objective is to *improve the general living conditions* for the people living in the area. The actions can still deal with upgrading physical surroundings. However, social improvements like better health care, education systems, care for children, reducing unemployment and increasing safety are included in the program. Closely linked to these objectives are an understanding that such changes need multilevel coordination and new ways of approaching critical urban areas. How to govern and to include the inhabitants pave it’s way to the agenda. The objective is that new activities and upgrading shall give the inhabitants in the area possibilities for a better life. In this approach people’s homes are not affected. This implies that they can choose whether to neglect or get involved in what’s going on in the area.

As a complicating dimension, we are interested in conditions for participation in area interventions where the intention is to improve the neighbourhood for (and with) the people already living there. This point of departure means that area upgrading which includes a shift of the population, or excluding the socially excluded, is outside our interest. As we see it, the challenges for urban interventions in critical urban areas are to succeed *with* the existing population, not to move in the middle class.

There are also distinctions in such intervention programmes related to degree of and complexity of problems. Some programmes are “prevention programmes”. The intention is to *prevent* a starting negative tendency. Other programmes can be characterised as *rescue operations*. They take place in seriously deprived areas where the decay has come too far for prevention. .

Further in the paper we discuss interventions that aim to improve the living conditions for people living in the areas, and we ask: Is it possible to improve peoples living conditions without their participation? A main challenge is to make people involve during the intervention process and continue to take care of and develop their area afterwards. One condition is of course that the dwellers find the actions meaningful and as a benefit for them. *From this point of view, our main question to be discussed in this paper is what kinds of interventions involve people during the intervention process and continue to take care of and develop their area afterwards?*

2. Some theoretical approaches

In an urbanisation discourse, new forms of governance evolve in metropolitan areas. Social relations and networks developing between urban dwellers are increasing (Lier 2009:12). The focus in urbanisation studies is the territorial entities and people living in the cities, rather than economic structures (ibid.). This point of view is to a certain extend attended in the European urban intervention programmes during the last years, as shown in the brief presentation below.

In the European Union there has been a focus on the urban distressed areas in its member states. A consensual definition of *urban critical areas* has emerged: *spatial areas that are subject to more social stress (e.g. through overpopulation, degradation of the habitat and life conditions, pollution, unemployment, crime) and, hence, to more public concern, than other spatial areas of a nation's urban population*. As a consequence, the EU has initiated several programs to cope with such areas. The programs URBAN I and II has for ten years (1994-2004) demonstrated cross-sector, integrated and participatory urban development

approaches to stabilise distressed urban neighbourhoods.¹ The Commission stresses the support of participative, integrated strategies to tackle the high concentration of economic, environmental and social problems affecting urban areas (Third report on Cohesion, 18/2/ 2004). The above mentioned declaration underlines that urban measures within European Social Cohesion Policy should preserve the opportunity to realise innovative approaches, especially as new instruments of urban management and governance are concerned. This should concern both interventions and research on sustainable developments in stressed urban areas.

The Critical Urban Areas (CUA) Initiative in Portugal is part of a European Union policy. The CUA Initiative aims to promote an integrated and comprehensive territorial approach, by piloting a new organisational model – one that does not solely focus on financial resources, but presents alternative ways of socio-territorial interventions among different actors (public, private and voluntary sector, central and local administration).

The implications of governance and participation in deprived areas have increased the requirement for research and investigation on these issues. There is a large body of literature that describes intervention programmes, governance processes and the advantages and problems encountered in these processes during the last years (Dekker and van Kempen 2009).

In our approach the focus is participation and involvement in intervention programs. Involvement can contribute to strengthen and make visible the local knowledge and the local capacity for change. In this way involvement can add resources that can contribute to the capacity of the municipality in local intervention processes. Most important is to get relevant local knowledge related to problems and possible solutions :

The “local” knowledge of residents is privileged as the most insightful because it is generated from experience (Fraser and Lepofsky 2004:6, summarised in Hanssen and Klausen 2006:31).

To help us understand how these processes are organised and implemented we will make some distinctions on governance and participation in the following part. In addition, as an important part of participation processes and involvement, social capital will be emphasised in the discussion.

Governance and participation

Recently, an article from of Dekker and Van Kempen discuss participation, social cohesion and the challenges in the governance process, on the basis of

¹ The ‘Acquis Urban’, Common Declaration of URBAN cities and players at the European Conference “Urban Future”, Saarbrücken 8-9/6/2005.

post-world war II neighbourhoods in Netherlands (Dekker and Van Kempen 2009). The aim of their article is to add the understanding of the opportunities and restrictions in governance processes, and bridge the gap between the field of urban governance and that of social cohesion (ibid.:110). As pointed out in the article, one of the key aspects of urban governance is that not only the public sector, but also the voluntary and especially the private sectors are included in policy-making processes. Urban governance is also ideally characterised by diversity of stakeholders, fragmentation of political power between individuals and institutions, and increased uncertainty regarding the social, economic and political situation (ibid:112).

The type of involvement differs dependent on the neighbourhood level, or on types of participants and stakeholders. Involvement from the neighbourhood level often happens in addition to the ordinary, formal political and administrative processes. To identify how different participation processes are implemented, some dimensions have been worked out in a European study comparing different action programs (Hanssen and Klausen 2006). The *empirical* dimension deals with the right to participate and if the participation includes all or is selective. Often the need for effective processes and special knowledge states the reason for only including selective actors. The *normative* dimension is seen in a discourse of democracy, seen by a distinction between the aggregative perspective, promoting own interest, that is competition and *vote*, against a deliberative perspective, *voice*, promoting the interest of the collective and society (ibid:47).

The idea of participation often assume that different interest groups in the city are represented and allowed to voice their demands, and that urban planners and administrators will be allowed to integrate these demands into the formal urban development process (Lier 2009:21). This approach has been criticised by many observers because of the imbalance of the role of the stakeholders. The harmony-oriented understanding of stakeholders fails to grasp the power geometry between the participating social actors. Case studies shows that residents are often excluded from networks and partnerships, where the public or private authorities take the lead (Dekker and van Kempen 2009:126). The participation process is not equal and the residents are often the weak part, also described as “passive customers” served by the local authorities and the housing cooperation. The policymakers feel that involving the residents in the process may diminish the chance of quick results (ibid.).

Burgess expresses the consequences of unequal balance in the participation processes as followed:

“Urban development involves conflicts of interest between activities and social economic and political groups that are expressed in phenomena such as exclusion, gentrification, involuntary displacement, landlord/tenant conflicts, unequal provision of services, infrastructure and so on.” (Burgess et.al.1997:140).

Another criticism is the process of participation in planning. Often there is a stronger focus on the process rather than the outcome of participation, as Healy emphasise in her work on collaborative planning. The policy or plan of what the neighbourhood should be like is adjusted according to who has the power to govern (Healy 1997). Governance and participation is often one of the main goals of area based intervention programs, but as we will discuss in this paper, this goal can be hard to achieve even though local actors are invited into the process. The participation process then appears as pretended, something statutory provisioned, not as real.

Problematising participation as promoted through stakeholder’s discourse, participatory governance cannot be practised in isolation from already existing political processes as well as capital accumulation, labour market dynamics and state regulation.

Social capital

There are many definitions attached to the concept social capital, but the well most known theorist in social capital paradigm is Putnam. He focuses on social networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam 1995, 2000). The most common distinction is between bridging, bonding and linking. Putnam suggests that bonding social capital is good for “getting by” and bridging is crucial for “getting ahead”. Bonding refers to relations among relatively homogenous groups such as families. Bridging refers to relations with e.g. distant friends or colleagues, and linking refers to relations between groups in different social strata.

Social capital is also considered as an attribute of the individual, as Coleman and Bourdieu suggests. According to Coleman, social capital can take three forms: firstly obligations and expectations which depend on the trustworthiness of the social environment, secondly the capacity of information to flow through the social structure in order to provide a basis for action and thirdly the presence of norms accompanied by effective sanctions (Harper 2001:8).

Social capital embraces existing network and social relations, and the creating of new networks and meeting places. It also includes achieving and sustaining local knowledge of security and trust among neighbours. These distinctions also point

out the invisible parts of peoples living conditions in a neighbourhood. The invisible part of the social networks or social capital can be e.g. looking after of the old neighbour and be aware of irregular daily routines, knowing when the neighbour needs help, or feel security in your own neighbourhood by knowing the people and places. The informal and invisible ties between individual residents are often neglected or may be not known in neighbourhood interventions. Such ties and commitments are often difficult to discover seen from outside (Ruud 1987, 2003). The existing invisible social capital is hard to discover and take into consideration without local participation in intervention programmes. So far it is often a weak spot in such programmes. Without participation it might be difficult to keep or strengthen the social capital in the neighbourhoods, and transform this capital into a sustainable process. Local linking, bridging and bonding is a vital part of peoples well being.

In an article in Boston Globe march 2009, Rebecca Thus-Dubrow points out a growing realization of the strengths in squatter areas even though they have serious problems. Such areas can contribute to a strong sense of community. E.g. the crime rates can be very low because of protected by the watchful eye of close-knit neighbours. There is also an ethos of self-reliance in communities independently built and continually rebuilt by their residents. “When people are relocated to places where government thinks they can be housed in a better way, they often move back” (Thus-Dubrow 2009). Comprehensive intervention programmes affecting peoples’ homes are meeting such challenges. Even if the whole population is not relocated, some are moving out or moving to another flat in the neighbourhood. Social ties and commitments are disturbed and have to be re-established.

3. The intervention programmes: The Portuguese and Norwegian case.

The “Critical urban areas” programme in Portugal

The “Critical urban areas” programme in Portugal includes three neighbourhoods. Two are located in the Lisbon area, the third in Porto. Two of the areas are social housing built in 1970 – 1980 (Amoreira and Lagarteiro). The third area is an informal neighbourhood (Cova da Moura). Portuguese people returning from the African colonies after the Portuguese revolution in 1974, started to build this community. Most of the land belongs to a farm property. The two social housing areas are characterised by limited informal networks, while the informal area is characterised by strong local organisations and a network of informal ties among the residents.

The program was initiated by the Secretary of State for Urban Planning and Cities. In September 2005, the council of Ministers’ Resolution was issued and

launched the 'Critical Urban Areas' Initiative. IHRU (The Portuguese Institute for Habitation and Urban Rehabilitation) was the coordinator of the program, and organised with cooperation from all the necessary Ministries. The main strategies and program was decided at the ministerial level. However, the concrete ideas, proposals and content in the three action programmes were developed at local level. IHRU and the local municipalities organised participatory processes to get direct information about needs and wishes for the future in the three neighbourhoods. or the of an innovative planning process, primarily in 2005 and 2006, based on strong participation methodologies and territorial approaches. It is being implemented in three specific neighbourhoods: Cova da Moura (Lisbon Metropolitan Area), Vale da Amoreira (Lisbon Metropolitan Area) and Lagarteiro (Oporto Metropolitan Area). The goals of the program are to (i) contribute to the social, economic, educational and cultural development of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and, (ii) develop the organisational and methodological framework as part of a national learning process.

Cova da Moura was selected as case for the first assessment report, because the Steering Committee for this area had started their work. Moreover, the community had been active in the planning process and in the follow up. It was also reported that Cova da Moura had made more progress in setting up participatory structures for residents than the other neighbourhoods, thus having gathered more experiences and having local key informants more readily available. Cova da Moura had the reputation as the most stigmatised area in the Lisbon region. The neighbourhood had approximately 6,000 – 7,000 inhabitants², of which 70 percent originated from Cabo Verde. About half of the population is under 20 years old.

The main challenges for the CUA program in Cova da Moura are the *land and ownership issues* since the neighbourhood was illegally built on private farmland. For 32 years the owners never claimed the land. *Social and economic developments* represent the subsequent challenges of the program. Cova da Moura has community problems related to its urban marginality and social exclusion. Common space in the neighbourhood is degraded, sanitary and electrical infrastructures are bad, there are no green areas and many houses have insufficient conditions. *Enhancing a* more positive image of Cova da Moura is another challenge. The territory may promote a special local brand for cultural deliveries, through skilful marketing.

The specific focus for the first year of the evaluation (2007) was to get an overview of the program in terms of objectives and organisation. Most important

² The exact population is difficult to assess due to the informality and to the non-legal status of many of its inhabitants.

was to identify and discuss how the participatory process was operationalised. In addition we needed to get a picture of how the implementation was carried out. Our ambition was to identify the stakeholders and their roles.

The inner city renewal programmes in Oslo

In 1977 a public *urban renewal program* started in Oslo inner city east areas. Three city districts developed in the 1880's were included. 26 000 dwellings in these districts were in need of extensive up-grading. The goal was to renew 2000 dwellings a year. In 2009 only 2000 dwellings are still without bathroom. The purpose of the program was first of all physical upgrading and improving homes and neighbourhoods the old inner city areas, improving the conditions for the people living there. The renewal program involved extensive upgrades of buildings and flats (inside: new bathrooms and toilets, kitchens, isolation; the construction: roofs, new windows etc). Some of the blocks were demolished and new houses were built, partly because of the standard of the buildings and partly because of a planning strategy for the area. The program was financed by "urban renewal" loans from the Norwegian state housing bank and the municipality of Oslo.

The program focused on dweller participation. However, it was not easy to carry out the plan because of gaps between knowledge on planning processes and experiences between the professionals and the dwellers. In addition, it was discrepancies between the need for upgrading the building and blocks, and upgrading the homes (Ruud 2003).

A second comprehensive public program started in 1997, the "*Oslo inner city east Action program 1997-2006*". This action program was a large public program going on for 10 years in these areas, supported with 100 mill NOK every year (about 12 mill euro), financed by the state and the municipality of Oslo. One of the articulated challenges from the politicians was the increasing number of ethnic minorities. The main focus was to improve the neighborhoods and dwellings as attractive places for families with children, and to improve the living conditions in the area. The main strategies were to improve the childhood conditions, improve the housing stock by new constructions, reduce the risks of diseases and improve the supplies for people with health problems, improve local initiatives for unemployed, improve the traffic situation as well as urban space and neighborhoods. The Action program had 250 local action projects.

A lot of evaluations of different actions and local projects were produced; mostly focused on the results and not the processes in the projects, except for a few projects, evaluating the internal methods and strategies (Holm and Søholt 2005, Holm 2006). There is no doubt that the Action Program contributed to a positive improvement in the public spaces in these three city districts. The

upgrading public spaces are appreciated and used among both locals and other citizens. The areas have also improved their images and have become among the most popular for different groups of people in Oslo, especially the young. There is a tendency towards gentrification in these areas: both as a result of a communicated goal in some programs and as an unplanned impact of the public initiatives. However, it is not possible to credit only the Action Program for these improvements. Some common tendencies the last years testify revitalization in inner city areas. We neither know if the program has contributed to social upgrading in these neighborhoods. But some experiences show e.g. that free kindergarten increased the Norwegian language skill for children, and when the program ended the language skills decreased. Another tendency is that an extensive turnover in the dwellings can be observed. The areas also have refugees moving in, as a new group of ethnic minorities. New challenges arise in the residents because of the absence of experience in house maintenance.

Now, from 2007 to 2016, a similar intervention program like the inner city Action-program has started in a *suburban area in Oslo called Groruddalen*. Groruddalen is a valley in the north-eastern part of Oslo, consisting of four city districts. Most of the neighbourhoods were developed from 1960 to 1980 with mostly high and low blocks. But there are also all kinds of detached and individual houses. 120 000 people live in the valley, that is roughly 25 % of the population in Oslo all together. In 2008 between 31 and 38 percent of the inhabitants in the four city district had immigrant background from outside the western world. Most of the inhabitants, included the immigrants, are homeowners in housing cooperatives.

Some tendencies during the last years have aroused some concerns, and are the reason for this ongoing intervention program. During the last years the pollution and traffic conditions have increased. The valley has two of the most important traffic machines in Oslo leading the traffic through the valley (and divides the valley in to parts), and most of the trailers and transportation of goods goes through the valley. In addition both the physical and the social challenges have increased. Some of the blocks need renewal, and especially the public places in between the blocks have been neglected for years. No one will take the responsibility for keeping these areas in good condition. A third tendency is the increasing number of inhabitants with ethnic minority background. Between 1997 and 2003 the number increased from 24 to 36 percent of the population. And a high concentration of minorities in some of these areas, correspond with relatively high scores on unemployment, low income, diseases, education, criminal activity etc. In addition we see the challenges in the light of integration both in the housing cooperation's and in the neighbourhood, especially for youngsters and women with minority background.

It is an interesting aspect, though, that one of the main purposes in the inner city program was to improve the areas to keep families with children staying in these areas. The statistical material shows that many families, especially with immigrant background have moved to the Grorud valley to get better housing and children’s conditions. However, new young families of Norwegian background are moving in to live in the inner city areas.

Summing up the intervention programs

The challenges in the Norwegian areas are quite different from the Portuguese case, and some may claim that the Norwegian areas don’t have any challenges of importance. In the figure below distinctions and similarities between the presented interventions programmes are highlighted. We argue that the degree of intervention and whether peoples homes are affected, have impacts for involvement and participation.

Area initiatives

	Home (private)	Neighbourhood (public)
Prevention	1	2. The Grorud valley Oslo The Oslo Action programme
Rescue	3. Urban renewal Oslo Cova da Moura	4. Urban renewal Oslo Cova da Moura, Lisbon Amoreira, Lisbon Lagarteiro, Porto

The figure has two main distinctions. First whether peoples’ *homes* are affected or whether the intervention is limited to the *neighbourhood*. Second; whether the intervention can be characterised as *prevention* towards a further negative development in the area, or as a *rescue operation*. We will argue that the impacts for people living in intervention areas will vary according to which cell in the figure they belong to. People in cell 3, living in areas where the intervention includes demolishing or up-grading of peoples homes, cannot escape the intervention. They are affected whether they like it or not. Changing the dwellings are more of a crisis even though improvement is wanted, because that means intervention and change of people’s homes. Someone from the outside are setting the terms; time schedule, volume and scope/scale, financing and later housing costs etc. In some cases the intervention is met with relief, the reaction is “at last!”. In other cases people might have maintained their flat, even

though the building is in bad shape. For these people the intervention is questionable. Even if they know that the building need comprehensive upgrading or in some cases is too bad to be refurbished, they fear that their home will be disturbed (Ruud 2003). Both the first urban renewal program in Oslo and Cova da Moura in Portugal are in cell 3 and 4.

In some cases the area might need a rescue operation, with or without changing the dwellings (cell 4). This is where the environmental and neighbourhood problems are understood to be serious, by the inhabitants themselves and by politicians. For example, the inhabitants are experiencing their area as so unsafe that they fear going out, unemployment is high, pollution is high and there is no functioning organisation to respond to local problems etc. Both the inner city of Oslo (first program) and the critical urban areas in Portugal fit the rescue category. In these cases peoples homes were affected as well as there was a need for a rescue operation in the neighbourhood (cell 3 and 4). However, the two other Portuguese cases, Amoreira and Lagarteiro are interpreted to find their place only in cell 4.

The least intervening operation is where the intervention is limited to the neighbourhood and where the problems are not yet too serious. Here is the goal to prevent an increasing negative tendency in neighbourhoods (Cell 2). Such tendencies are seen e.g. as increasing unemployment, increasing number of ethnic minorities (segregation tendencies), physical decay and unsafety. Such tendencies might not be very obvious and visible, but some signs are exposed. In a prevention-organised initiative program it is not obvious that people are motivated to involve. Their question is; what's in it for me? Their involvement might be balanced against other priorities and whether they foresee personal benefits. The Grorud valley and the Action program in Oslo inner east is in this category.

European cities often have to deal with similar problems. Segregation, poverty, unemployment and integration problems play a role in virtually every city. This matter of facts has resulted in intervention programmes in a lot of cities, but the approaches are different dependent on the challenges and priorities. The Norwegian prevention programmes, as showed, focused on improving life quality and environmental conditions as an intervention preventing further negative tendencies. In Sweden we see the same conditions. According to Swedish politicians, "Swedish deprived neighbourhood problems are not directly visible." The last comprehensive intervention programme in Sweden has a holistic approach towards urban neighbourhoods, in which various policy areas are involved and public and private partnerships play an important role (Pekelsma 2009). The main difference with other European cities is that when one lives in one of these neighbourhoods, one does not necessarily live under

bad housing conditions. Swedish and Norwegian building standard are very high. Even though many of these neighbourhoods are in need of renovation, they remain relatively good neighbourhoods, especially in comparison to problem areas in The Netherlands, Paris or London. In Swedish deprived neighbourhoods problems are not directly visible (ibid.)

However, the comparisons are also intra-national, not cross-national. In the Norwegian context the housing and social conditions in the Oslo inner City area and the Grorud valley were alarming concerning social and ethnic segregation. Compared to let say the suburbs in Paris and the three areas in the Portuguese program, the housing conditions in the Grorud valley are quite good. The housing conditions in the inner city, before the urban renewal was however alarming, even in a European perspective. Most of the buildings were in bad shape concerning fire safety, hygiene (lack of bathrooms and toilet in the dwellings), lack of sufficient heating in winter, mould and decay in the constructions etc.

Implications for participation are due to whether the interventions include interventions and change of peoples' homes, or whether the interventions are outside their home. In the first case, the inhabitants cannot escape being involved. In the second case they can choose whether to care and participate.

4. Discussion

Our interest is to discuss conditions for participation during and after the intervention programmes. Since extra public involvement is limited to the program period, the eventual follow up is dependant on local interests and engagement. There is a possible relationship between objectives and the organising of the intervention programmes, and resident and community involvement. To structure the discussion we use a model characterising some intervention dimensions that may influence engagement and involvement.

Program	Political philosophy	Program: Citizen roles	Decision-making	Implementation	Result
Cova da Moura 2007 - 2011 1. year	Comprehensive and integrated approach: living conditions	Equal in voice, but not in vote	State, municipality, Steering committee	Municipality, Local org. Local project organisation	Increased services Raised local awareness
Oslo Urban Renewal 1977-1985	Improving the housing conditions for the poor	Clients	Municipality Companies	Private/public companies	Home-owners “New” flat Belonging?
Oslo: Inner East 1997-2007	Urban development Living conditions	Clients User participation in projects	Informal Coordination Group at City District level. ↓ Representative political bodies at all levels	Local public institutions “Cultural entrepreneurs” Some local org.	Housing on the agenda. Upgrading and immense use of public space. Attractive areas.
Oslo: Grorud valley 2007 - 2017	Multiethnic society Social cohesion Equal opportunities	Housing co-ops equal partners. Ethnic minorities = clients	Political bodies. Thematic steering committees	Local public institutions. Housing ass. Local org. Housing Bank Private business	Upgrading of public areas

The table is not exhaustive, but it highlights some characteristics that might have impacts for participation.

The impact of the political philosophy framing the intervention programme

The ruling *political philosophies* that are framing the programmes are communicating, consciously or unconsciously, the target group(s) and the overall intention with the interventions. (The political philosophical framing might signal different commitment and strategic interest for participation.) For example, the urban renewal programme in Oslo followed the broad efforts of “building up the country” after the Second World War. The intention was better physical housing *and* a change from tenancy to home-ownership. Ordinary people should have control over their housing situation and no-one should make

money on others housing problems.³ In that way the ideology behind was both physical upgrading to acceptable housing standards, as well as an upgrading of the peoples position in the housing market. Turning people into home-owners meant a formal co-responsibility for the further up-keep of the building / property. This is in line with the Norwegian political culture, which is that all humans are equals, regardless of wealth and position. The later political ideologies shifted towards a belief in increased well-being through an attractive urban environment combined with improved living conditions. Also in the ongoing program there is a belief that attractive public space combined with social, cultural and educational activities can promote and strengthen the participative multiethnic society. Even though Norway has a strong emphasis on equality and participation, it has been argued that the citizens' main role in the inner city programs were the role of the client (Hanssen and Klausen 2006). The programs were *for* the benefit of individuals and groups, and to a lesser degree developed *with* citizens and local voluntary organisations. The exception was user participation in concrete projects.

The political culture in Portugal differs from the Norwegian. While Norway has well developed welfare municipalities serving all inhabitants, Portugal has limited public welfare services. On the other hand, Portugal has a strong third sector. Civil institutions for social solidarity on national and local level are important welfare providers. The church is one example. The tenants and community organisations responsible for leisure activities, day-care, food delivery to poor people etc. in Cova da Moura are others. Because there is (said to be) a general scepticism towards politics and politicians, one has to cooperate with the third sector to get something done. This kind of cooperation and involvement of third sector sends out a signal about local participation. Portugal's membership in the EU, participation in several European urban programs encouraging social cohesion, equal opportunities and participation is another driver for including participation in urban change and interventions on local level. This kind of rhetoric framing raises expectations for participation. This is probably of particular interest in areas where the level of participation is already high, like in Cova da Moura. The political signals about participation are co-current with the existing practice and expectations in the area, but not at all co-current with the general political culture in Portugal. One challenge for the program will probably be to meet the local expectations about participation in a legitimate and satisfying way.

Who takes the important decisions?

Comprehensive area intervention programmes with objectives to change the areas' attractiveness and improve the living conditions have to be anchored at

³ T. Bratteli, Prime Minister in Norway 1971 and 1973-76. Central in the Social Democratic party in the postwar period.

political level. This is the case both in Portugal and in Norway. All the programs are/were secured by national and municipal political support. In the Action Programme in Norway Parliament said that the cooperation between State and the City of Oslo should be binding, and it was a prerequisite that the inhabitants were actively included.⁴ Concerning involvement and participation, the question is on *what kind of decisions the local voices are invited in and in what forms?* As we interpret the programmes, the main agenda and the main organisation model for the governance and implementation structure are decided before the locals are invited in. However, in Portugal inhabitants and local organisations in the three different areas were invited to open and direct planning meetings to render concrete the content in the three area plans. Many of the ideas were included in each plan in such a way that people could recognise their inputs. Such local planning did not take place in the two area programmes in Oslo. Here it was up to politicians at city district level and local institutions, as representatives for the locals, to interpret local problems, needs and relevant solutions. They also proposed projects inside the frames of the overall objectives of the programme.

In the urban renewal programme in Oslo, the standard for the rehabilitation programme was fixed beforehand. The municipality decided what areas and block of buildings that should be renewed and in what ways. The decision about change of ownership was also on municipal level. The residents had a right to a dwelling and could choose if they wanted to stay or move, and if they stayed, they could influence the last upgrading of their flat, like colours etc. They could also choose whether they wanted to become home-owners in the established housing –cooperative, or if they wanted to continue as tenants.

In Portugal the inhabitants, through local organisations, are invited into the steering committee for the area intervention programme. However, in Cova da Moura, they are only represented by one person against five others representing the IHRU, the municipality, police, health and social sector. If the inner life of the committee is focused on what is called deliberative solution focused discussions, the voice is more important than the vote. However, to counterbalance the power relation with good arguments is more difficult for one person than for many. Also, the resident representative will be a lay representative, representing the local voices of different organised interests and 7000 people. The others are professionals, representing special interests in the area. It has to be added that the public representatives showed an extensive engagement for an integrated improvement of Cova da Moura, as far as possible in line with the population. Important in the Portuguese case is that the most difficult decisions, like the right to land, the detail plan for the area and the

⁴ Innst. S.nr. 174 (1995-1996).

question about what houses shall be demolished / rebuild or rehabilitated is outside the agenda of the steering committee. These kind of vital decisions with possible consequences for other territories are kept on municipal and national level.

How the decision structure influences the residents' involvement in an area might differ. Keeping the difficult decisions outside the local organisations and the steering committee might prevent conflicts among the locals and among the representatives. A bad example of how to include residents was tried out in the urban renewal programme in Oslo. People were invited to discuss and make local plans for traffic etc. Lots of work was invested. When the politicians at city level did not bother about the residents contributions, the public and local support for the programme decreased. People got frustrated, why should they engage and take responsibility for their area if they were not heard? Instead of working together, politicians and residents became opponents. This experience might have influenced an attitude like "wait and see" when the Action programme for the same area started years later. Drawing in the same direction is the experience that involvement increases the participants' expectations. By involving people, authorities fear that they won't meet the expectations. Another approach is to regard the residents expectations as a resource for keeping the programme on pace. We highlight these different experiences and attitudes to residents and communities involvement in area programmes because there are reasons to believe that *how* participation and decision making is understood and put into practise, might influence the residents ownership to the development process, during the area programme and afterwards.

Implementation

Implementation is closely related to decision making and participation. There are differences following the political culture between the two countries. At least in the beginning of the Portuguese programme, the local organisations were active implementers of the social and cultural activities in the programme, supported by the municipality. When it comes to the rehabilitation or demolishing / rebuilding we would presume that private architects, developers and building companies will take the scene. On the other hand, the residents in Cova da Moura have built their houses by their own hands, so there might be expectations that the locals get an active role also in the reshaping and rebuilding of the area. This could also be combined with capacity building among the residents to contribute to their economic development. Self-building was not part of or expected in the urban renewal in Oslo. The residents got extensive information, but they did neither take part in the building process, nor in the up-grading of the courtyards. This might be concurrent with the understanding of the inhabitants as clients in need of services (Hanssen and

Klausen 2006). In the later Action programs the residents played a role as users in user-oriented project. However, in one project, “Bydelsrusken”, marginalised individuals were involved to pick garbage and take care of the public spaces and parks in the area. This activity was combined with a mini recycling station localised in an attractive park. The first year, in 2002, the recycling station had 700 visitors; in 2007 the number of visitors had increased to more than 8000. The station is a success, as is the job of taking care of the area. Through this practical involvement the participating men got recognition and respect. They changed position from nobody to somebody (Holm 2006). The involvement fostered further involvement and responsibilities. An evaluation of the success of the Action programme concerning improvement of living conditions, highlight this aspect:

“As important as the material improvements are the individual experiences of participating through creating and influencing ones own living conditions.”
(Holm 2006)

The importance was the participation, directly in the realisation of a project or through cooperation with others. In one of the involved city districts, it was said that *“The most important methods for the city district is to stimulate and create conditions for cultural activities run by others (than the city district)* (Varang 2006). Others could be cultural entrepreneurs, local organisations and private companies. In 2008 the “Bydelsrusken” project got the Urban Environment Prize of the City of Oslo. The working methods of the project have proved sustainable by the fact that it continues after the program has finished and by the fact that the model is exported to other city districts in Oslo.

Results relevant for participation

It is obvious that the programs for improving the public space and the dwellings in Oslo inner east worked. The housing conditions are improved, people became homeowners, and the areas have become attractive for the inhabitants and new groups of people. Although local community participation was not dominating, the results like improved public space and an increase in cultural activities have engaged people. The most successful criteria are that people from the area and other parts of the city are using the area a lot. That is probably the best guarantee for further public concern. The question in Oslo in summer 2009 is not to reduce the activities, but to equip the parks with enough grills, rubbish bins and toilets.⁵

However, looking back to the urban renewal period, it took time before the new home-owners internalised their new position as proprietors. They were used to demand the landlords for repairs and up-keep. Now they had the responsibility

⁵ Densely populated parks, with all kinds of groups of people leisuring side by side, is a relatively new phenomena in Oslo.

themselves. Courtyards were a new phenomena and the residents were not experienced gardeners. As a consequence, the City of Oslo had to engage in a second up-grading of half - private courtyards. In many cases, the residents and the small housing co-operatives had to learn how to take responsibility by practical engagement in the process (Søholt and Bjørneboe 1997). However, based on Norwegian experiences there are reasons to believe that the shift in tenancy to home-ownership contributed to a positive belonging to the home and possibly to the neighbourhood. Home-ownership increased the residents' autonomy and gave the household a formal influence in the development of the property; building and outdoor area. Even if they preferred to be anonymous in the neighbourhood, they might be interested in maintaining their flat and the building. Today, ten years after, there seems to be recognition for a minimum of engagement to maintain the buildings and the half private courtyards in these properties. In addition to a desire for a nice and active neighbourhood, there are other important drivers like the trendy focus on green outdoor areas, aesthetics and beauty. Moreover, rising prices in this segment of the housing *market* and part of the city underpin an individual interest in maintenance.

While the Norwegian inner city programs are finished, the Portuguese programme is half way. However the assessment study covered only the first year in one of the three areas. The residents' formal conditions are very different from the Norwegian case. The people in Cova da Moura live in an informal settlement. Originally they built their houses, which became their homes, on illegal land. At the time being, they don't know whether *their* home will be refurbished or demolished and rebuild. Despite the formal differences between Oslo and Lisboa, there are important common traits. Both in Oslo and in Lisboa, the housing conditions were so bad that the authorities decided to go through with a radical urban renewal plan. It was not the people themselves, but the condition of the buildings that decided the form of renewal; refurbishment or demolishing. What the inhabitants had invested of time, money and energy in their homes did not count. By investing in their dwellings, they created their homes, by building up a mental ownership to the dwelling they actually lived in. As in Cova da Moura, the former tenants in Oslo did not know if they would get compensation for their private up-keep of their flats. Nor did they know if they could continue to live in the same flat. However, they knew they had the right to stay on in the dwelling if it was physically possible, or they would get another flat. In Portugal, as in Oslo, the inhabitants had to become involved, since their homes were affected.

In the first year in Cova da Moura, the municipality invested in common goods. More school facilities, more police patrol, and increased support for babycare and trainingprogrammes for parents. A better schoolyard and improved garbage and recycling systems were forthcoming. All these activities were visible,

showing people that something was happening. We don't know if these actions are valued by the people in Cova da Moura. But experiences from other European programs have underlined the importance of concentrating on visible actions improving the daily life of ordinary people (Vestergaard 2004).

A central question for the further development in Cova da Moura, is how inhabitants and community participation will be included and organised in the further intervention process. The first assessment showed that people were double-minded towards the intervention programme. According to local voices, politicians had not favoured the area earlier. Even if people wanted physical improvements of dwellings and area, they at the same time feared that the "village image" and the internal solidarity might disappear as a result of the urban renewal process. The question is if the projects as such succeeds in taking care of and strengthen the inhabitants and the local organisations involvement and engagement in their community alongside the comprehensive renewal. As mentioned above, Portugal does not have a universal well developed welfare state. Much more than in Norway the success of the intervention programme will be dependant on voluntary and community engagement during and after the development process. While street level bureaucrats in many ways can take care of the continued up-keep of the renewed areas in Oslo, there is a need for local involvement in Portugal.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we have discussed conditions concerning local involvement in urban intervention programs. Questions are launched about the possibilities of interventions without resident participation. We asked what kinds of interventions involve people during the intervention process in such a way that they continue to take care of and develop their area afterwards. Our discussion is based on an evaluation of the first stage of the intervention program 'Critical Urban Areas' in Portugal, compared with urban area based programs in Norway. As shown in our paper, one of the goals in the intervention program in Portugal was to develop an organisational and methodological framework. In the case of Cova da Moura, the governance and participating perspective was stressed.

In general, it is obvious that community development that includes local knowledge in the process have potentials for being accurate and appeal to the residents. By such approach the people and the community experience that their voice count for what goes into the program or how the development process is organised. The discussion in the paper has been organised along two dimensions: Governance and participation related to different kinds of urban interventions. In this last paragraph we will point out some distinctions.

a) Governance and participation

The processes discussed in the paper can be identified as deliberative solutions focused discussions and dialogues which:

- builds up/ strengthen/ take care of local networks (bridging) and strengthen the dialogue between the local civil society and the local public services
- have resulted in new ways of serving the public, or doing the same things in new ways.
- increased political attention for urban social/ cultural problems and challenges. Quicker political response, meaning a renewed understanding for social/ cultural prevention and rescue work in urban areas
- embraced a variety of dimensions, which means that people in different situations and with different interests can be included. They are all winners – but in different ways.
- focus on peoples' daily life. The results of the intervention makes peoples' life easier, it is useful, and all together this might imply a stronger belonging to the area.

b) Interventions improving the physical and/or the social living conditions. Prevention or rescue operation to reverse negative tendencies.

Home vs neighbourhood

The need for participation is due to whether the interventions include change of peoples' homes, or whether the interventions are outside their home. In the first case, the inhabitants cannot escape being involved. In the second case they can choose whether to care and participate. When the intervention includes peoples' homes, the involvement often concerns not only the physical standard, but also how the upgrading has implications for their everyday life and future.

Ownership vs tenancy

Ownership has different status in Norway and Portugal. In the Norwegian case it was intended that the transferral of property rights to the residents should motivate for up-keep and development of the building and the close neighbourhood. Home-ownership implies responsibility for the property. However, the interest and the involvement from the homeowners were not visible the first years. One of the explanations can be that the porter, previously hired by the land-lord, did that job before the intervention started. It took some time before the residents realised that home-ownership was followed by duties. A concurrent explanation, as pointed out in the discussion, is that the inhabitants were seen as clients in need of services during the intervention process. If they internalised this picture, a change in attitudes were needed before the inhabitants involved in continuing development of their neighbourhood. In Cova da Moura

in Portugal, the inhabitants wanted the property to the land, to influence and control their future. In the Norwegian case the municipality acquired the properties and then decentralised the property rights to the inhabitants. In the Portuguese case the Municipality wants to get control over the land, and keep it on municipal level. It is a question how this can be done in way that simultaneously satisfies the inhabitants need for a predictable and safe future. It is also an open question whether this kind of assurance is necessary to motivate people to continue their community involvement.

Physical vs living conditions

In interventions focusing physical up-grading in the neighbourhood, our cases demonstrate that participation from the residents is not necessary to get positive results. However, that doesn't mean that the results of the actions are not of importance. Up-grading public space in urban areas in Oslo shows an increase in the use from both local neighbours and people just passing by. A new life style is emerging.

We have pointed out that there are different ways of improving living conditions by involvement.

Improving the living conditions through engaging individuals in a collective creating process, where they create better conditions through cooperation. As shown in this paper, involvement in social and cultural actions is of great importance for people living in the critical urban areas. And as pointed out, the level of participation was high, specially in the Portuguese case. The local organisations were active implementers of the social and cultural activities in the programme.

In Norway the residents played a role as clients and users in most of the user-oriented projects. It might be argued that the extent of different socio-cultural projects in Norway is proving that the public local services may not be fitted to meet new social challenges. Together with a weak developed tradition for cooperation between local public services and neighbourhood organisation, this might explain difficulties in engaging in new challenges. In Portugal we have the opposite situation, where the third sector is strong developed and involved in cooperation with the local public services.

References:

Braathen E, E Lechner, M E Ruud and S Søholt (2008): *The 'Critical Urban Areas' Programme in Portugal – First Assessment*. Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research. Oslo.

Burgess, R, M. Carmina and T. Kolstee (1997) Contemporary policies for enablement and participation: A critical review. In *The challenge of sustainable cities. Neoliberalism and urban strategies in developing countries*. Zed Books.

Byfornyelsesprogram (Urban renewal program) Del 1. April 1977. Municipality of Oslo.

Dekker, K and R van Kempen (2009) Participation, Social Cohesion and the Challenges in the Governance Process: An Analysis of a Post-World War II Neighbourhood in the Netherlands. In *European Planning Studies* Vol. 17, No 1. 2009.

Hanssen G S and J E Klausen (2006): *Nettverksstyring i en velferdsstat. En analyse av Handlingsprogram Oslo indre øst. (Network governance in a welfare state. An analysis of the Action Programme for Oslo Inner East.)* NIBR-report 10. Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research. Oslo.

Harper, R (2001) *Social capital. A review of the literature*. Social Analysis and Reporting Division Office for National Statistics. England.

Healy, P (1997) *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*. London: Macmillan.

Holm A and S Søholt (2005): *Bolig, bomiljø og levekår. Evaluering – handlingsprogrammet Oslo indre øst. (Housing, neighbourhoods and living conditions. Evaluation – Action Programme Oslo Inner East.)* Norwegian Institute of Building Research, Oslo.

Holm A (2006): *Nærmiljø og levekår. Evaluering – handlingsprogram Oslo indre øst. (Local environment and living conditions. Evaluation – Action Programme for Oslo Inner East.)* NIBR-report 12. Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Oslo.

Lier, D Chr (2009) *The urban challenge: Researching the politics of the urban environment in the global South*. Paper, unpublished. Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research.

City Futures 2009 Madrid. Søholt, Ruud and Braathen.

Pekelsma, S (2009) “*In Swedish deprived neighbourhoods problems are not directly visible*”. From www.eukn.org 06-05-2009.

Putnam, R (1995) *Bowling Alone.: America’s Declining Social Capital. Journal of Democracy* 6, 65-76.

Putnam, R (2000) *Bowling Alone – The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Ruud, M E (1997) *Historien om en gate. Motzfeldtsgate på Grønland i Oslo 1890-1980. (The history of a street in Oslo inner city 1890-1980)* Master thesis. University of Oslo

Ruud, M E (2003) *Byfornyelse og endringer i urbane bomiljøer. En studie av beboeres erfaringer fra området Grønland /Nedre Tøyen i Oslo 1980-2000. (Urban renewal and changes in urban neighbourhood; resident’s experiences. Oslo inner City 1980-2000.)* Dr. thesis. Faculty of Arts, University of Oslo. No. 169.

Søholt S and J Bjørneboe (1997): *Bedre gårdsrom. Beboerdeltakelse og revitalisering av to byfornyeede gårdsrom. (Up-graded courtyards. Resident participation in revitalising two urban renewed courtyards)* Norwegian Institute of Building Research, Oslo.

Tuhus-Dubrow, R (2009) *Learning from slums*. Published in Boston Globe 2009.03.01.

Varang K (2006): *Internal evaluation of the Action programme Oslo Inner East, Sagene City District*. The Municipality of Oslo.

Vestergaard H (2004): *Neighbourhood Governance – Capacity for Social Integration*. Danish Building Research Institute, Copenhagen.