

1. Introduction

Paralleled to the dramatic economic and technical changes that are affecting the landscapes of many European cities has been the growing concern about the fracturing of social relations on a variety of spatial scales. This is most commonly expressed in terms of generalised terms such as social exclusion, social inclusion, community capacity building and social integration. Traditional research in these areas have sought to highlight the widening gaps between the most affluent and poorest in society measured against a number of crude indicators (employment, education, health, crime etc) as well as potential avenues by which the balance might be redressed. In many European urban areas issues of social integration are perhaps most acute and visible in particular areas of the city where the spatial concentration of those deemed excluded (immigrants, the poor, etc) is most pronounced.

Social integration as it is commonly understood formed a key component of the Maastricht Treaty (1991) on the European Union as emphasis was placed on economic and social cohesion. However, there is no universal blueprint to achieve social integration, a feature of urban policy that is now realised by researchers and officials. For example Allen et al (1998, p.9)¹ note that:

“National context differ. Welfare regimes in each county reflect different patterns of social organisation and normative bases. Different cities are differently placed within the European economic and social space, some experiencing growth and others long term decline. Urban socio-spatial structures vary. In some, social exclusion and spatial segregation are virtually synonymous. Others experience a more fine-grained pattern of differentiation. In some places, ethnicity and race form fundamental dividing lines in socio-spatial structures. In other places, culture and kinship networks are more significant. Finally, specific patterns of local governance and welfare state provision affect local patterns of social exclusion”.

The current studies proceeds with this spatial differentiation in mind and a realisation that what we might call social ‘exclusion’ or ‘integration’ is a highly complex and multi-faceted concept. For example in UK government policy documents social exclusion has been defined as *“what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown”*². Furthermore, the Scottish Social Inclusion Network stresses the complexity of social exclusion and its operation on a variety of levels by *“limiting access to the basic necessities of life (food, clothing, shelter); compounding ill health and morbidity; denying essential services; preventing participation in leisure, recreational and cultural activities, disaffecting interest in school and continuing education; alienating participation in decision making processes and the political arena”*³. In terms of participation, these ideas can be simply adapted to mean the process by which individuals and groups are excluded from participation in decision making that effects the society in which they live.

2. Social Integration as an Element in the Restructuring Process

Drawing on examples from a number of countries in the NWMA, three main aspects of social integration to be analysed in this theme report. First, this will involve taking social integration as meaning public accessibility and influence on the regeneration project, looking at avenues of community participation, the level of access to the process and interactions between the community and the local government. Community participation in particular signifies the playing of an active part in the restructuring process along with a degree of power and control. As such the Community can be seen as: the beneficiaries of the programme and users of services; consultees and representatives of local opinion; the source of general community activity; a source of delivery for regeneration programmes; and potential long term partners in regeneration.

The second section will look at change in the social structure of the regeneration area as a result of the bringing together, or the separating out of different socio-economic groups and, how this impacts upon social integration. The third element is interlinked to the previous two, and is the principles of combating social exclusion to bring about a change in socio-economic factors and the reputation, and thus demand in, the area.

¹ See Chapter one in *Social Exclusion in European Cities – Processes, Experiences and Responses* (1998), Edited by Madanipour, A., Cars, G., and Allen J.

² See *Social Inclusion - Opening the door to a better Scotland*, published by The Scottish Office, 1999

³ See the *Inclusive Communities Report* of the Strategy Action Team presented to the Scottish Social Inclusion Network, November 1999

Avenues of Community Participation

Increasing the ability of formerly excluded stakeholders to take part in the processes of urban restructuring has been a priority of many European Governments in recent years. This refers to the communities routes and accessibility to the regeneration process, the ability of residents and those directly effected by any development proposals, to make comment or respond to any plans the local government may have. The route and level of involvement vary greatly depending on the type, size and location of the scheme, but in this section the basic elements of community participation across the NWMA will be discussed and analysed. First we look at the reasons for participation, why it is so important to successful and sustainable regeneration schemes.

The principle behind community participation in regeneration strategies begins with the democratic right that people have a right to be involved in changes affecting them. This assumption is, in large part, a reflection of previous attempts to involve communities' in the regeneration processes such as many in the 1950's and 1960's, which failed at this time due to the top-down structure of planning. Today the basis for community participation is actively encouraged and increasingly based on actual social and economic outcomes⁴:

- It enhances social cohesion because communities recognise the value of working in partnership with each other and with statutory agencies;
- It enhances effectiveness of regeneration as communities bring understanding, knowledge and experience essential to the regeneration process;
- It adds economic value both through the mobilisation of voluntary contributions to deliver regeneration and through skill development which enhance the opportunities for employment and an increase in community wealth;
- It provides relevance as community members can offer understanding and insight, thereby appropriately influencing priorities for action;
- It promotes sustainability because community members have ownership of their communities and can develop the confidence and skills to sustain developments once the 'extra' resources have gone.

Research, and indeed many Government guidelines, illustrate that to be at all meaningful, community participation must happen at all stages and levels of the restructuring process. Community participation is now commonly incorporated to varying degrees by lead bodies in regeneration partnerships but there is still a tendency for it to often appear as an 'add-on' and not be fully integrated into urban restructuring.

Community participation must be effective during initial planning, strategic development, implementation and evaluation, and at policy, programme, scheme and project levels as well as at regional, sub-regional and local levels. Whilst it is acknowledged that not all members of communities want to participate in regeneration, it also needs to be recognised that opportunities need to reach out beyond traditional representative structures and beyond those already most active. This then allows the fullest possible participation at levels appropriate to individuals.

Combating Social Exclusion

Problems of social exclusion are most commonly explored through research of large housing estates. Such work has highlighted that many of problems in housing areas are not caused by the actual buildings (although they do contribute to it) but from the social and economic malaise of the residents of these areas. Unemployment, racism, socio-economic factors or simple frustration at the circumstances that residents feel they are in can cause anti-social behaviour and start the cycle of decline that can lead to social disintegration. These issues commonly found in such areas need to be addressed in a joined-up and dynamic way, making it easier to comprehensively restructure and improve the area. However, concentrating resources upon a limited number of areas is politically difficult in all the EU countries and has, to a certain extent, limited the impact of such initiatives.

Governments at different periods have adopted particular approaches as they have attempted to increase social integration to combating social exclusion. In Britain, the priorities have gradually changed from an initial concern with physical infrastructure, to a welfare-based approach. More recently this has evolved into a greater concern with the underlying economic potential and performance of excluded areas and communities, with efforts to address it through labour market strategies and engaging the private sector. In The Netherlands, housing construction and renewal was initially the favoured policy approach. This was successful in physical terms but a failure in wider social terms. In France, a wider range of public urban infrastructure was the starting point, although France has now gone furthest in pursuing private sector-led urban regeneration.

⁴ Yorkshire and Humber Regional Development Agency, *Active Partners*, 2000

In all countries, an important factor in the creation of a sustainable and healthy community is the building/retention of community and social infrastructure, although how this is to be achieved differs according to local and national priorities. The residents of an area must feel that they are working together, both, within the area, and with stakeholders who may include the local government, the developer and other statutory agencies. For example, the strategic objectives of the Gateshead regeneration partnership (Northern England) include the enhancing of prospects, education and skills of local people, addressing social exclusion and enhance the opportunities for the disadvantaged and tackling crime and drug abuse and improve community safety. The fact that physical development is not the major element in this project suggests that it will be focused on improving social factors, and the lifestyles of the local people rather than simply transforming the urban landscape of the area.

In area experiencing social exclusion, attempts to promote social integration are significantly influenced by employment potential which is frequently the cause of tension between groups in a urban area. Economic and structural change is thus often seen as vital to the rejuvenation if these disadvantaged areas leading to improved social balance, the building of community identity, and putting pride back into the communities. For example, the Sachsen-Anhalt area of Germany contains a 20% unemployment rate combined with economic factors that include low purchasing power, lack of access to services and little investment in the affected areas. In recent years regeneration attempts, specifically aimed at reducing unemployment have also seen a marked improvement in community spirit and a more optimistic outlook from the residents of the areas.

Integration of Social Groups

The brief case-studies above highlight that in many cases it is often not enough to simply restructure the physical aspects of a declining neighbourhood. Much research has shown that this simply creates a situation of ghettoization, trapping socially excluded citizens both physically and psychologically in their disadvantaged community. The large-scale regeneration schemes of the 1950's and 1960's around Europe often failed to adequately consider the social needs of the residents, simply their places of residence and immediate service requirements. There were few attempts to create a social mix within the areas, to create a wide ranging vibrant and balanced community leading to the subsequent decline of the area occurred causing further lack of investment and no long-term improvement in quality of life for the residents.

One method that has been used across a number of the ReUrBA case studies is that of social integration through social mixing - to solve existing social problems it is necessary to create a range of socio-economic groups within one area, cutting across boundaries of affluence, race, age and situation. This can be applied to two different situations – increasing the population of existing neighbourhoods, and planning the growth of new settlements.

Urban Repopulation

One method to enhance social integration is to increase the influx of people from a range of social backgrounds, repopulating of existing declining districts within the urban area. The philosophy behind this idea is that such repopulation could have the potential to recreate the viable and sustainable communities that were generally successful in the pre-war years.

The principles of repopulation have been applied in the Province of South Holland, centred in the area in and around Rotterdam. Generally the problem in South Holland is a lack of quality in the urban areas in the South of the Randstad. The aim of the scheme is to make necessary changes in the housing stock supply and create a mix of land uses and facilities in certain areas to create a more balanced society.

The need for such a scheme was precipitated by a combination of a number of problems occurring at the same time, the most important of which being the necessity for renewal of the post war 'build-up' areas' which formed the biggest part of the housing stock. Due to the destruction of Central Rotterdam in the 2nd World War, the vast majority of post war housing was quickly built to a low standard and to a similar size, design and quality. The Government was more interested in building quantity, not giving priority to the quality or sustainability of the dwellings. This was combined with the changing preferences of the population where, improving wealth amongst the population has increased the demand for bigger houses and rural or semi-rural living. As people have become more affluent they look to buy larger private houses, but this narrow field of choice provided within the city is forcing many people to look outside the city boundaries to satisfy their housing needs.

Paradoxically, this movement of residents to the urban fringe and beyond was combined with a policy that aimed to build at higher densities and save space using all remaining sites within the urban area. The existence of nearby urban

areas with a higher quality (Amsterdam, Antwerp) and the other metropolitan areas in north west Europe further facilitated rethinking about ways to adjust and improve the quality of the South wing so as to allow the area to become more competitive on both a national and global scale.

As such, the planning policy pursued by the local Government has become a combination of redevelopment and integration of the different social economic and ethnic groups in the Dutch society. This has recently been backed up by the national government which has recently appointed a minister for Cities and Integration and set about trying to integrate the different social economic and ethnic groups in Dutch society, with the aim to achieve continuing vitality in cities.

The problem of the mismatch of supply and demand of appropriate housing is one that needs resolving as soon as possible because it is a large area (3 million inhabitants) with low quality physical infrastructure (mostly social housing and little choice for the middle and high-income groups) and surrounding land is not attractive (mostly polders and hardly any forests/dunes and lakes). These conditions coinciding with a prospering economy gives more and more people the opportunity to buy houses in the rural areas or in nearby cities. This means the region is left with concentrations of unemployed, immigrants and low-income groups who cannot afford to leave.

In this project the Province of South Holland used a novel approach which analysed the lifestyles rather than the housing demands to pinpoint areas where different styles of housing should be built. This aspect will be of growing interest in creating an enduring and flourishing city. It will be possible for displaced residents to return to the cities after any redevelopment, and it is hoped that there will be a mix of groups returning to create a new socially integrated society. The Province of South Holland are attempting to recreate the pre-war social structure with a range of social, economic and racial groups living in a high density sustainable environment in the centre of Rotterdam.

A further example of attempts at urban repopulation comes from Newcastle in Northern England. The West End of Newcastle has suffered many social, physical and economic problems over the last 30 years, as the area has become one of the most disadvantaged in the city, and the region. Population has declined by up to 43% in the last 20 years, while unemployment is between three and five times the national level in some districts (Newcastle City Council, 2001⁵). It is plagued by empty and abandoned properties, and in the last 10 years 1,000 dwellings have been demolished, with another 500 likely in the near future. Ambitious plans to re-populate the area have been developed under the city-wide regeneration scheme called Going for Growth. This plan aims to improve community/neighbourhood planning by directing funds into areas in most need both physically and socially, and improving area management.

The regeneration of the West End is part of a city wide, holistic approach that addresses the routes of the social problems and intends to eradicate poor quality housing, anti-social behaviour, housing voids and lack of jobs from the whole city. Under these plans the area will be redeveloped to create a new and improved environment that attracts new residents to the area and provide a mix of tenures and socio-economic groups. The Council has learned from 30 years of top-down, mostly unsuccessful schemes, that partnership and consultation with a wide range of agencies and bodies is the best and most efficient way of regenerating urban areas.

Research has highlighted that the problems associated with the West End of Newcastle are very complex, deep rooted and interrelated, meaning that short term, localised planning undertaken by a small, poorly informed group will have little or no positive effect on such a large, deprived area. A comprehensive and wide-ranging solution was therefore required, that attempted to involve as many different agencies and related individuals as possible, this will cover anybody with links or concerns in the proposed regeneration area. If the scheme secures broad involvement and a partnership board reflecting all relevant sectors from public, private and community, its reputation, and status will be much greater. This will empower local inhabitants, letting them have a say in any changes to the local environment, and also show the Government and funding bodies that the scheme has potential for social, economic and environmental improvement over the long term. This progression from top-down to a greater partnership between the two most important bodies – the Council and the Community – will hopefully give the city its' first long term success in regenerating the West End.

New Communities

The second situation that has been evidenced in the ReUrbA project where 'social mixing' can be applied in planning is with the development of new settlements, where it is vitally important to create the right social balance from the start to ensure a sustainable and viable scheme. This can potentially stop the creation of rich and poor areas within a city. However, the developers, responding to market forces, often prioritise creating wealthy enclaves in the city, often with

⁵ Figures from Newcastle City Council website, <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/pr.nsf/a/Unemployment>, September, 2001

high levels of security built into the design. This can be seen to create a sharp divide between rich and poor area and often gives rise to tensions linked to social and economic disparity.

As such, the sustainability of such mixed neighbourhoods must be questioned. It is not clear whether the projects currently underway around the EU are using these principles but care must be taken to analyse the social make up of the housing schemes before further development takes place. For example the neighbouring areas of Kop Zuid in Rotterdam generally have high unemployment and low incomes. Housing is generally cheap, but not very high standard. However in the new development beside the river, there will be more privately owned and high-quality housing built. This will not help in the social integration of the area and in fact may reduce it.

However, it can be seen that other schemes are embracing the sustainable measure of social mixing. For example the 19th *arrondissement* is amongst the poorest of Paris, with the second-highest unemployment rate of 16.33 %. In a bid to regenerate the area the governing authorities have decided to continue the policy of rebuilding run down areas, but with one major difference. In an attempt to avoid ghettoization in the eastern *arrondissements*, social housing projects will be relocated to more affluent western districts of the city.

In Newcastle local government no longer constructs new social housing for socially deprived citizens. Therefore the City Council has made sure that the Developers will provide a level of social housing within the privately funded Great Park development on the Northern edge of the city. The Development agreement signed by the developers and the Council states that development of residential land will be in a phased procedure, with construction of the 2,500 new houses taking place over the next 12 years. More importantly, this guarantees 160 affordable, low cost homes for people from excluded or less affluent backgrounds. Also, 40 will be for private sale to the elderly. More specifically this means building 60 for General low cost rental needs in the surrounding area, 30 for renting to the elderly, 30 as shared equity, 30 as Shared equity specifically for the elderly and finally 10 for people with special needs.

It can be said that it is the duty of the government, be it local, regional or national, to create policy or pass legislation to guarantee the successful implementation of social mixing within new developments. The policy of the Dutch government has changed to focus on integration policies for social, economic and physical elements. This encourages the regional and municipal authorities to incorporate socio-economic, and not just physical, policies into their future plans. In the UK, the National Government sponsored Urban Task Force advocates the creation of mixed communities to create a vibrant, sustainable and successful development in its Urban White Paper. It recommends the “*full involvement of local communities in the urban planning process.*”⁶

Planning Social Integration

At a local level the governing authority plays an important role in providing guidance or managing the social make up of development within their jurisdiction. This can be done through the policy written in the local development plan or from negotiation with individual developers on a site by site basis.

In Lelystad (The Netherlands) the development of the New Town is inextricably bound up with the continuing care and support for the existing communities, which must be able to live alongside the new communities. The Municipality aims to integrate groups from different backgrounds within small redevelopment areas. Therefore it is important to solve economic, social, and spatial/physical problems in these areas integrally and in a community oriented manner. By creating a land use plan (WOP) social, economic and physical factors can be addressed at the same time and receive equal weighting in planning policy. The two participants (the municipality and the housing corporation) have agreed to make the WOP a successful community led plan. Therefore to make a good community development plan which is supported by the majority of the inhabitants of the area plans in partnership with the inhabitants were drawn up.

During this process ‘lifestyle’ aspects were seen to play a key role in restructuring. For example, one of the problems in Lelystad is the lack of variation in housing size and style. All houses are more or less the same. People ask for different types of houses to improve their way of life. The land use plan (WOP) aims to provide a range of housing types to satisfy the people, of all social groups and incomes.

In Newcastle the City Council is the major driving force in creating mixed communities, as it negotiates with developers in all schemes to incorporate a certain level of affordable homes. However this level is not set, and is up to the private developer to agree on a number.

⁶ DETR “*Our Towns and Cities: The Future: Delivering an Urban Renaissance*” 2000, HMSO

3. Comparison of the Current Policies and their future development

The EU Policy framework

European Policy seeks to promote equal opportunities, social and economic integration and improved living and working conditions for people belonging to low-income, discriminated and other socially excluded groups in towns and cities as well as to support the regeneration of urban areas in difficulties. EU policy and action⁷ aims to contribute to the following objectives:

- Extend pathways to employability and integration, in particular for the hard core of the long-term unemployed, young drop-outs, lone parent families and ethnic or racial minorities and others who are economically or socially excluded.
- Provide adequate, accessible and reasonably priced basic services, especially in relation to employment, education and training, health, energy, transport and communications, policing and justice with a view to preventing as well as remedying problems of exclusion.
- Enhance economic development and employment especially through business start-ups, provision of suitable infrastructure and advisory and other support services for existing businesses and community enterprises.
- Improve the physical environment, reduce pollution and develop natural landscapes in urban areas and neighbourhoods in difficulty.
- Prevent urban crime including juvenile delinquency and increase security.
- Strengthen local capacities to respond to the specific needs and potential of communities in deprived urban areas and neighbourhoods in an integrated way.

In order to bring about these aims the European Parliament and its committees have regularly sought public and expert views through consultation and public hearings, improving the quality of its policy deliberation. Some Member States systematically consult at a national level on proposals tabled in the Council.

However, generally, the Institutions and national authorities should reinforce their efforts to consult better on EU policies. Better consultation aims to complement, but not to replace decision-making by the Institutions. It can be argued that what is needed is a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue; a culture which is adopted by all European Institutions and which associates particularly the European Parliament in the consultative process, given its role in representing the citizen. The European Parliament should play a prominent role, for instance, by reinforcing its use of public hearings. European political parties are an important factor in European integration and contribute to European awareness and voicing the concerns of citizens.

In July 2001, the EU published its white paper on European Governance⁸. It proposes opening up the policy-making process to get more people and organisations involved in shaping and delivering EU policy. It seeks to promote greater openness, accountability and responsibility for all those involved. This should help people to see how Member States, by acting together within the Union, are able to tackle their concerns more effectively. In the White Paper, the Commission sets aims to adopt minimum standards for consultation before the end of 2001 and publish them in a code of conduct.

Furthermore it recommends that Member States should examine ways to improve their consultative processes in of EU policy. The Council and European Parliament should review their relationship with civil society and, building on the minimum standards for consultations, contribute to a general reference framework for consultation by 2004.

The following section will look briefly at past and present policy related to social integration. This will draw mainly on experiences in the Netherlands and the UK as the main case study sites for the ReUrbA project, although work that has been undertaken in France and Germany will also be highlighted.

⁷ Policy objectives from “*Promoting equality, social inclusion and regeneration in urban areas*” in *Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework For Action*

⁸ “*European Governance: a White Paper*,” Commission of the European Communities, COM (2001) 428, Brussels

The Netherlands

Background

The Netherlands is known for its efforts to reach agreement between public and private sectors in all aspects of planning policy. This is known as the Dutch *Poldermodel*, and is well known amongst EU planning theorists. The term *poldermodel* originates from the Middle Ages (16th or 17th century) during which the initial forms of democratic consultation and structure of responsibility were created in The Netherlands (within the geographic structure of that period). During this period it was determined that it was in everyone's interest that the polder was not allowed to flood. Furthermore this attitude implied that everyone had equal interests in the policy upheld in the polder concerned. Therefore everyone with an interest in the conservation of the polder was allowed to have their say (while helping with payments for maintenance etc.) and had responsibility to look after their own area.

In many ways little has changed in the Netherlands in the preceding century. If an interested party places itself outside the sphere of consultation, this party will run the risk of ridiculed isolation for several years during the later or subsequent planning process. This form of democracy continues to exist in the Netherlands, with regard to water management, although in an adapted form. The polder boards continue to have a committee in which the farming communities of the polders and the governing authorities have equality of membership.

Within this polder model, at an early stage when policy is still being formulated, the public and private parties involved attempt to make a record of the existing opinions in the area. These can be simply local concerns, controversial or significant planning themes, or any obvious problems that are in need of new, or an alteration to old, planning policy. At this stage, the local governing authority also starts to think about the implementation strategies and the desired end effect that will be included in the finished plan. The aim is to solve the problems identified through this inventory and to link similarities as far as possible so that synergy is reached between the separate initiatives. This requires a long-term strategy within the process of negotiations. From the outset, all the parties need to be aware that, within this lengthy process, no one will get exactly what they want. Every participating party knows that the end result of the negotiating process is directed towards the realisation of consensus, giving consideration to the fact that everyone will need to relinquish, or “give and take”, some part of their own final target to reach an agreement on common policy.

National Context

The VROM committee (Committee for housing, spatial planning and environment) is a bureau appointed by the government with the remit to provide advice and comment on any national plans or policy. This VROM committee has representatives from all sectors of the population and major interest groups, including business, industry, the public and environmentalists. There are also academic members (many of them professors of high standing and position in the field of spatial planning) and this advisory committee also has representatives from landowners, building contractors and housing corporations.

This VROM committee is permitted to advise the government, either upon request or unsolicited, and it does not need to be in agreement with the policy of the government, its opinions are independent of national or legislative policy. Furthermore, the government needs to consult the VROM committee if they have published an intention of policy (draft plan) for comment. By having no political bias the advice given by the VROM committee means that the use of their opinions in the draft plans will be fair and just. This high degree of support from social and academic organisations can greatly assist the reputation, further development and final implementation of the plan.

Regional Context

With regard to the building of co-operation between public and private parties, at local / regional level, it is the intention of the government and provincial authorities to emphasise the shaping of the co-operation between the government and the social organisations (down to the individual person). However, the provincial authorities retain the responsibility with regard to the investment of these government funds, while a large part of the creation of the policy framework is reserved for the local / regional governments and their social partners or agencies.

The decision making process commences after the government has published its plans. Through the submission of letters of protest the residents, private organisations and other authorities can table their objections to the proposal. The government is obliged to review and handle these critical observations through a subsequent proposal. Objections that are unacceptable to the government can be followed through as a legal procedure by those who submitted them, up to the highest court of law (known as Raad van State). This takes the decision out of the planning fraternity and into wider, national law.

In addition to the submission of objections, a resident can also apply pressure on the proposal via a political party or by gaining the support of a local politician. This will intensify the publicity and impact of a claim or protest, and make it more likely that a fairer or considered decision will be made. This use of influence via various political procedures applies in The Netherlands through all levels of government (national, provincial, and municipal), and can also be seen in the French planning and participation process.

Local Context

At the Local Authority level, efforts continue towards a structured co-operation between the municipal government, the local partners and residents. An example of such a co-operative union is in regards to the obligation of the provincial government towards the local government when compiling an investment budget for the improvement of the quality of neighbourhoods. It is a requirement that the municipal council consults with the local representatives of commerce, housing corporations and neighbourhood societies. The government, through an act of law enforces this obligation. This regulation is translated as an “Investment budget for municipal development”, or in Dutch, *Investeringsbudget Stedelijke Vernieuwing*.

Increasingly, the government strives to engage the individual resident in the creation of local policies. Through the active involvement of the residents in the development of the governing policy, there is the intention to increase the active and direct influence of the residents on the governing policy, so reducing the participatory gap between the governing bodies and the population. For example, one of these projects is the *Bestuursakkoord Nieuwe Stijl* (New Style Governing Agreement). In this instance the national government, provincial government and municipal councils are attempting to give the people more influence over the governing policies through involving them in workshops for local support groups and individual residents. With the results of these Municipality organised workshops and the creation of local committees containing neighbourhood representatives, it is hoped that new Government policies are more in line with the actual requirements of the residents.

A further example is the revision of the *Streekplan Zuid-Holland Oost*, (Spatial plan South Holland, East) which is currently being prepared. One of the main policy objectives of the provincial authority of South Holland for this revision is that the municipal councils within the region are required to formulate and implement schemes that will see them working together with the local residents and support groups. This will ensure that the policies contained in the new spatial plan will be both relevant and supported by the residents of the province.

Summary

The complexity of the decision making process at government level, the relations of responsibilities between the different government levels, the financial limitations and difficult relations in the areas of responsibilities of the related parties often result in the individual resident being unable to gain sufficient insight in what is actually happening. Furthermore residents may not fully understand the range of policies, principles and legislation, so enabling them to achieve any results within an acceptable term.

A lot of effort is therefore being spent in The Netherlands, through discussions and carrying out experiments, to make the decision making processes at governing levels more transparent for the individual resident. On one hand this might well provide a more democratic and publicly accountable planning system, but on the other hand it can have the potential to reduce the speed with which development might occur.

The UK

Background

In the United Kingdom until the late 1960's planning proposals and regeneration schemes were shown to the public almost as a matter of politeness, as it was assumed that decisions had already been made and the scheme was basically accepted. It was very rare for people or members of the community to be allowed to publicly comment or discuss the plans before development began. Although there were systems in place to allow formal objections or comments, this was a complicated and limited process, open to only “*a restricted range of interested parties*”. It was later modified to allow more public access, but it was still viewed with suspicion and “*remains less favourable than the normal judicial system*”⁹.

⁹ Cullingworth J.B, & Nadin , “*Town and Country Planning in the UK*” 12th Edition, 1997

This apparent lack, or distrust of, public participation stems from the political feelings of the time, influenced by post war prosperity and the public acceptance and trust in professional institutions, of which 'Town Planning' was part. Town Planners had a positive and popular public image, they were the "*builders of the Better Britain*", who would lead the country into a new and improved physical environment through their "expert knowledge" and techniques of design and construction. It was assumed that this physical development would lead to an improvement in social and economic fortunes, meaning that any proposal would be in the community's general interest.

However, by the mid 1960's these views began to be challenged, and not surprisingly, this occurred at the same time as the first signs of general public dissatisfaction with political judgements and outcry at the lack of access to decision making appeared. Although the planning system claimed to allow access to plans, it was becoming clear that it was not a neutral and fair process. Furthermore, the first large-scale "slum clearance" programmes were beginning to show social problems and people started to question the validity and reputation of the so-called "expert" planners.

National Context

In response to the growing public discontent, the government made a change in the statutory planning procedures. This 1968 Planning Act allowed consultation and participation to become an integral part of future development in the UK, but it was to remain a complicated and inadequate part of the development process until the 1980s. More recently planning frameworks at both regional and local levels have advanced notions of fuller consultation and community empowerment.

Regional Context

The Draft Regional Planning Guidance are a key mechanism at a regional /provincial level For example for the North East (1999) the guidance acknowledges that too many urban and rural areas are still suffering serious problems of social exclusion and access to facilities which must be tackled. It wants everyone to benefit from improvements to the economy and the environment, and everyone should have the same opportunities to learn and to succeed.

It is important that communities, as well as individuals benefit from the new initiatives. The Guidance promotes social cohesion and encourages the development of sustainable communities with a strong sense of community identity. Liveable and vibrant urban areas need to be created set in attractive new landscapes which make a major contribution to the health, well being and quality of life of local communities. An urban renaissance will assist in reducing pressure for development in the countryside. However, it will also need to integrate with rural regeneration, where the priority will be to ensure a living and working countryside. The wider community needs to participate in the preparation of this Guidance and have ownership of the emerging strategy.

It is hoped that the development of sustainable communities will meet the needs of local residents for affordable, good quality housing, employment and training opportunities, a wide range of shopping facilities and for easy access to sport, recreation and cultural activities. By integrating planning, transport, housing and regeneration policies on a local basis, the need to travel can be reduced and emphasis can be given to improving clean, safe, energy efficient forms of transport such as walking, cycling, bus and train. These policies will need to be supported by co-ordinated action to tackle social problems, for example in securing greater community safety. More recently many Regions have been undertaking studies of Social Inclusion which links to national strategies of neighbourhood renewal.

Local Context

The localised Urban Development Plan's that Local Authority's are obliged to write contain details of the location of various types of development, and the likely or desired future requirement for building sites within their jurisdiction. There is a statutory process for public consultation, although this is more in the form of publicity than actual interaction between Officers and the public. This is organised as a formal public inquiry in which supporters and objectors of the plan can argue their case. So the process was very much a reactive one, rather than proactive by consulting and receiving feedback before any plans are even made.

Since the 'New Labour' Government administration swept to power in 1997 a detailed analysis of previous area-based regeneration has been undertaken in an attempt to draw out the positive experiences and perhaps more importantly the mistakes of the past. This led to new approaches facilitated by the creation of a dedicated Social Exclusion Unit and 18 specific Policy Action Teams and by a number of strategic short-term programmes aimed at 'joining-up' service delivery. Importantly the new approach also sought to increasingly concentrate resources in the most deprived areas and

an insistence upon significant partnership between local authorities and the community with the aim of building community capacity.

The New Labour Government seemed to promise a new positive role for local government, a more integrated and responsive approach to service delivery, and a socio-cultural agenda aimed to reverse the 'exclusion' of so many poorer people from the opportunities available to the wider society. Subsequently city councils have been urged to take a strategic approach to their activities, to focus on the 'well-being' of their citizens, to integrate their various activities in ways which are responsive to how their citizens configure issues, not politicians and professionals, and to introduce community planning and area management. At the same time, the so-called 'entrepreneurialist' agenda lives on in the national encouragement to build linkages to business, and to private investors who are to provide the capital for major changes. Today these take the form of stakeholder groups and local strategic partnerships which are cropping up across the landscape of British cities.

However, a review of four studies on regeneration and communities illustrates the continuing frustrations of failing to integrate the communities (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1999¹⁰). The research cites how residents in Liverpool (North West England) felt that they were not really trusted by the authorities to manage finances or to spend money wisely. In several cases the residents felt that their suggestions were not acted upon and that there was no follow up to what was said. Nor could they identify outcomes, which had occurred as a result of their involvement.

In September 1998, as part of the Government's response to a report on Social Exclusion entitled '*Bringing Britain Together – a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal*', the New Deal for Communities programme was launched and was seen as the Government's flagship area-based regeneration initiative. New Deal for Communities aimed to bridge the gap between some of the poorest members of our society and the rest of Britain. By focusing resources on small deprived areas, and working with the grain of other initiatives operating in the area, it sought to achieve maximum impact. Although problems vary from area to area, there are four themes - common to most deprived neighbourhoods - which the programme sought to address: combating; unemployment; improving health and social care; crime prevention; and raising educational standards and qualifications.

New Deal for Community partnerships work with national, regional or local services and with other organisations and bodies that are already delivering services and running programmes and aimed to provide joined up solutions to joined up problems. The programme is delivered through partnerships formed between local people, community and voluntary organisations, public agencies, local authorities and businesses. These partnerships must be robust and inclusive, each prepared to take responsibility for tackling the problems of social exclusion in order to make a lasting improvement to their neighbourhood. It also means harnessing the active involvement of the local community - not only during the life of the programme, but afterwards as well.

Summary

The British Government continues to press for regeneration initiatives in which local communities play a leading part and in particular those that seek to couple top-down and bottom-up approaches. It believes "*Community involvement enhances the effectiveness of regeneration programmes by encouraging better decision making, fostering more effective programme delivery, and helping to ensure the benefits of regeneration programmes are sustained over the long term*" (DETR, 1998¹¹).

The problems experienced by "top down" regeneration schemes in the past, particularly in the UK, has shown that it is vital that modern projects have, at least to some degree, a system to allow participation or comment by the general public to be filtered into the restructuring process. There are several avenues or systems that can be employed to accommodate this, ranging from a formal consultation process with set meetings and allowing questions, to informal gatherings in workshops, meeting with community representatives, or receiving written comments, although the latter will be a severely restricted form of participation.

¹⁰ Joseph Rowntree Foundation "*Neighbourhood Images in Liverpool: It's all down to the people*" by Helen Andersen, Ronnie Munck and colleagues for Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1999

¹¹ Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) "*Regeneration Research Summary: Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration*" Number 25, 1999, HMSO

Experiences from other countries

The policies linked to social integration differ from country to country, especially with regard to the degree of community participation. In France for example the regional level of planning is set out in the *Schémas directeurs d'aménagement urbain* (SDAU) which contains long term planning policy for each département in the country. However, the SDAU has no legal standing, and therefore the public participation that goes with it is limited in terms of accessibility and influence. Certain agencies, such as chambers of commerce or community representatives can comment on the plans, but actual resident opinion can only be fed into the process through sponsorship from local politicians. Therefore the consultation and participation process in French regional planning is dominated by political parties, and not the local communities and residents.

The local land use plan, known as the *plan d'occupation du sol* (POS), contains the type, location and size of future development. Local Authorities with a population of over 10,000 are required to create a POS, and it must follow the guidelines of the regional SDAU and the national planning laws and regulations. Again, these plans must be shared with the public, and participation is rather limited. The Local Authority need only present their proposals at a meeting with community groups before the start of consultation, which lasts for one month. The public do not have influence over or input into the plans before the first draft is published. Their concerns and local opinions are assessed but not involved in policy or objective setting, and not with the plan makers. Comments can be made through a formal hearing, where any objection will require support from a politician to create any change in the plans.

In Germany the situation with regard to public participation is somewhat clearer. The general public are involved in the initial consultation process during the plan making stage and before anything is published. They input ideas, give comment and provide a range of viewpoints for the planners to base their objectives on. The actual plan is still however created by the Municipal Officers, with the public allowed to raise objections or comments on the details of the plan up to a month after release. Large-scale projects with widespread effects are normally subject to a Public Inquiry, with unrestricted access for making a statement or submitting a comment. If residents are directly effected by the proposals in a plan, such as being forced to move house, they have the right to appeal to the courts. This process is only available to those who are under threat or have had their rights compromised, not the rest of the public.

5. Social Integration and the ReUrbA Case Studies

A number of examples have already been briefly highlighted in this report which draws on ReUrbA work. This section aims to highlight a number of examples in some depth – from Newcastle (UK) where a new culture of public participation is being forged; in Leidschendam (The Netherlands) where community involvement means informal meetings and discussions; Paris where commitment to bottom up restructuring means working from within the communities and finally, in Brebach, Germany where a holistic approach is being taken to restructuring, focusing on both physical and social improvements.

In recent years Newcastle City Council began looking for simple yet creative ways to consult with local people about a range of issues that effect residents of Newcastle. One such initiative was the *Big Event* held in June 1998 where local people in the City's West End were included not only as consumers of services but as active participants in the decision making process. The Big Event was a unique two-day community consultation exercise in which over 650 people attended voluntarily. Local people were also involved in the planning and organisation of the two days and were full partners in the process. The residents were very clear that the event had to be a true consultation exercise and outcomes of the event built into any future plans for the West End.

It was held in a local school in the West End of the City and was supported by many different agencies and organisations working in the area. Workshops were held to get resident's views on issues such as housing, environment, community safety, education and employment and potential rebuilding of the communities. The views expressed have been crucial to recent (and future) developments in the West End. Young people participated in workshops and social activities to ensure their views on "what it is like to be young" in the West End were heard. Their contribution to the event was creative and stimulating, proving they have a real influence in what happens in the communities.

The Big Event saw a change in the way that the local authority sought public views or concerns. The Council did not invite various or regular representatives to get together and attempt simple or insignificant "consultation". Instead they

organised, listened and joined in discussions with nearly every community group in the area. After the exercise, the Council created a task group that looked at the most important or prevalent themes that became apparent over the two days. They reported back to another Event in January 1999. This made it very clear to the Council on what issues it should take action or give priority - such as safety, young people and quality housing.

Information gathered from this initiative was used to help prepare the next major initiative undertaken by the City Council, called "*Going for Growth*" which is the focus of the ReUrbA Mixed Use study in Newcastle. Prior to the publishing of the Draft Going for Growth Masterplan, every resident was given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire about it through the free Council Newsletter *City Life*, the only publication to reach every household in the city.

The Going for Growth Consultation on the Draft Masterplans took place between 20th June and 22nd September 2000, with the objectives being to get feedback and to engage stakeholder commitment. The consultation launched Going for Growth citywide and regionally, and there have been over 100 Council led events in neighbourhood areas. Citizens were talked to on a one-to-one basis and their views and any questions were recorded for later analysis. There were also seminars throughout the city on request from individual stakeholders, often meaning more than one meeting per day.

During the consultation period, special information and consultation events were held at key community venues in both the West and East ends of the City. The purpose of these events was to give local residents access to maps, plans and information about the outline proposals and options for developments. Local Authority officers and City Councillors were present at each meeting to answer questions, explain the principles behind the scheme and clarify the impacts on individuals living in the neighbourhoods.

In this three month period, over 3,300 citizens signed in to the consultation meetings, although the overall attendance list may be double that figure. The people who signed in represented 2,900 households mainly in the East and West Ends. The attendance and content of the meetings varied greatly. Although response rates were low, every attempt was made to make consultation events accessible to all sectors of the community. For example, at some events aimed at the community in general there were over 500 people present, while at others aimed at smaller groups (such as Asian women) there were less than 10. However, the number of attendants did not affect the proceedings, where individuals could ask questions solely related to their own circumstances. This allowed the residents to feel that they were being listened to and consulted on plans that would directly affect their lives. This is instead of large, formal meetings where the Council representatives would be giving a presentation speech to a group, with only limited question time afterwards, and restricted to those who are confident in front of crowds.

A total of 112,585 invitations went out to people to attend public events, with some overlap occurring (people may have been invited to more than one meeting). It could be that those people who chose not to attend an event were in favour of the proposals, uninterested in the proposals or just apathetic. In addition to the views of the immediately affected areas, a city wide perspective is needed as the Going for Growth proposals affect the whole city. Residents and businesses will feel a knock on effect of any developments and have a vested interest through payment of local taxes.

On a smaller scale the Dutch town of Leidschendam, in Western Holland tried to involve the public from the beginning in the development of its local development plan. Planners and members of the Council organised and participated in small, informal meetings held in community centres and schools. The format was informal and relaxed, with each Council representative sitting at a table of between 5 and 10 local residents. The local authority had drawn up no plans or agendas, and they went to these early meetings with simple maps of the area. Local people were asked what they would like to see in the area, improvements, demolitions or other forms of development, and they were allowed to draw on the maps themselves.

The Council employees were not allowed to discourage any ideas or guide the discussion in any particular way. However outrageous or impractical the suggestions may have been, each was recorded and ways to get round the difficulties were examined. This process obviously included major amounts of paperwork and graphical translation, but the Leidschendam authorities thought it would be worth it.

Unfortunately, it took 2 years for the plans based on the consultation exercise to be interpreted into a draft plan. By this time, the residents had forgotten about their suggestions, changed their views or moved out of the area, meaning that the process would virtually need to be done again. A revised process to be started this year will have a much shorter and stricter timetable in order to get the plans prepared within a reasonable period (less than one year).

A small-scale regeneration attempt in a declining district of Paris was involved in one of the first full public participation exercises in the city. Development has traditionally been top down in the capital, so this scheme was monitored closely. A team of architects spent nearly 2 years in the district, interviewing people in small groups or families, asking for suggestions for improvements, or problems needing to be solved through development schemes. This proved to be relatively successful, however, the time consuming process lessened the impact that the project may have had if it had worked to a shorter timetable.

In all three examples mentioned above, the local authority were willing to go into the communities and talk to them directly, and more than that, the meetings were small, with the chance for one on one discussion. In the past, a large formal meeting may have been seen as intimidating to members of the local communities not used to speaking in public or in front of a large group of both their peers and government officers.

A further example can be drawn from the region of Saarland, located on the German border with France, the population structure is changing, with the traditional industrial, working class town seeing a massive growth in upper middle and upper working class inhabitants. Within the town, the change in wealth distribution had seen fluctuations in the housing market with both loss of demand and gentrification changing the normally mixed communities into segregated zones, creating declining ghettos of socially excluded residents. The Local Government acknowledged that physical regeneration alone would not solve the problems of these declining and excluded areas, social development and support was required to improve both the buildings and the opportunities of the disadvantaged residents. The two communities that were most in need of support were the working class Turkish and indigenous German inhabitants. The Turkish community was traditionally socially stable, but this was starting to break up. The German groups were suffering from both social and economic decline, with many families completely dependant on social welfare.

New plans were created to solve the problem in a “joined up” approach. Initially, this proved to be a problem as the different Government levels along with the variety of fields and Officers involved did not work efficiently together. Departments, such as Housing, Education, Health or Planning, that had nothing in common or had forged no links in the past, were unable to integrate themselves to allow for successful restructuring in the region. However, with time and practice, the different Departments were able to integrate and provide a comprehensive strategy for holistic renewal. Funding was provided by the three Government Levels – National, Regional and Local – each paying 33% of the costs.

The main objectives are for social integration and physical improvements for the whole region. In Brebach there are after school lessons for teaching languages to immigrants, in an attempt to fully incorporate them into the wider German society and equip them with skills that will allow them to find work and interact with other members of the community. The project also aims to improve the housing and environment in which these people live, with commitments to investing and renewing the local open spaces and streetscape. Small and medium sized businesses are being supported to foster local economic growth, which will increase job opportunities, bring money into the region and be a source of community pride. The scheme appears to be working, and constant monitoring and meetings between Officers and community representatives every six weeks help to continue the good work.

Conclusion / Recommendations

In terms of Land Use Development Plans in France, The Netherlands and the UK, the level of participation in statutory plan-making procedures is restricted to formal processes, often constrained due to the bureaucracy and procedures needed to make comments heard. In the UK, it is caused by the strictly controlled, formal objection process. Official complaints are dealt with in a public, and therefore intimidating, setting. This is a system where the general public feel uncomfortable in entering, and increasingly, the process is dominated by solicitors or professional, experienced citizens who have less to lose from changes in land use. Similarly, plans may only be changed in France and The Netherlands if the local politician supports the objection, and again, this is unlikely to benefit all sectors of the population. Political support is mainly dependent on the influence or importance of the beneficiary, and unless there is strong, organised public opinion, the objection may be ignored. This places additional emphasis of the role of organised ‘pressure groups’ within the planning process. This process of reactive participation is not sufficient to represent the feelings of the whole population which is. Legislation or policy must be in place to force the Local Authority into seeking public opinion before any plans are made. This will provide a more balanced, fairer and sustainable plan, as it is vital to find consensus if the plan is to be in place for several years.

In regeneration schemes however, integration and public participation is much greater. When looking at examples of regeneration consultation exercises it is possible to see that there have been positive and focused attempts in recent years to actively seek public involvement. The Leidschendam experience is one of promising intentions, but the actual

practice and resulting comment was disappointing. The reason for this was simply a delay in applying the results to physical or social development in the town. By the time processes or schemes had been organised the reason for their implementation had changed. Similarly, the Parisian model was both sustainable and visionary in its attempt to reject all previous planning and participation systems in the city, but it too was let down by the slow process and the length of time spent in the declining areas. It is possible that the initiative gathered too much information, lessening the impact of a locally based improvement scheme.

Newcastle showed real commitment to community involvement, with the Council being proactive by visiting the chosen area, rather than simply inviting people to attend formal meetings on Council time or property. It is such changes in policy that create sustainable plans, with all the information gathered being fed back into the Council plans, with the aim of creating a fair, balanced and community sensitive result. This is a far cry from past attempts at community engagement that were tried.

However, it is important that Local Authority Officers take notice of this feedback, not simply dismissing it due to perceived problems of implementation, greater public opinion or inappropriateness. The information from *local* areas should be used for *local* improvement, it does not need to be applied to the whole city, or need lengthy review or justification.

The integration of social groups is now being seen as vital to the successful implementation of an urban regeneration programme. Many believe that the best method of ensuring the long-term revitalisation of an area is to create a mixed community, where people of all cultures, socio-economic and demographic groups can interact and develop a community spirit that will help combat anti-social or harmful behaviour. The alternative side of this argument is the market and residential preferences often favour the development of mono-style housing catering exclusively for one type of housing (more often than not the wealthy) because of enhanced profit margins and ease of construction.

Combating social exclusion is linked to theories of disintegration and integration, but takes it further in noticeable efforts to bring about equality of service provision in socially declining areas. The painful after-effects of past schemes that primarily focused on physical regeneration to the detriment of social management are still being felt in many cities across Europe. The lessons to be learned from these schemes are not simply to create a mix of population, but to actively seek to eradicate the causes of exclusion. Newcastle, for example, attempts to address the routes of the problems and intends to eradicate the causes of poor housing, anti-social behaviour, voids and lack of jobs, and replaces it with a new and improved environment. This approach intends that the area will become more attractive to live, meaning that people will want to move in while the existing resident still want to stay. In this way, combating exclusion creates an increase in demand, and benefits the social and economic sectors of the area.

Lessons to be Learned

Although many modern development projects and Government policy talk about community involvement, communities are often the last to be considered when plans are being developed. It is important to be seen to be valuing community partners by ensuring they have an equal voice from the very start rather than half way through the process. Communities need to have the same opportunities to influence where a scheme or project might develop and to bid for delivery monies. They should therefore be encouraged to play a leading part in regenerating their areas and be the first port of call for developing and delivering projects.

Communities often feel that it is other partners and external agencies that control or benefit from regeneration resources rather than the community itself. Those resources that are available for community groups and interests may be small, and end up being given to those community groups, and interests who are more organised or 'in the know'. Additional funding needs to be made available to community and voluntary organisation to allow them to contribute, in a meaningful way. for example through the production of alternative plans.

It is important that there is a strategic approach to information collection and dissemination rather than bits and pieces on an ad hoc basis. Uncertainty between different levels of Government (National, regional/provincial, local /municipal) also hinders strategic thinking. As such lack of information is commonly cited as one of the greatest barriers to participation. Participation can be hampered if communities do not know what is going on at the scheme level but also if one council department does not know what another is doing for example.

Many of the barriers to participation relate to inequality of opportunity. An understanding of these, of the degrees of confidence and power to participate, is crucial in creating equal access. An opportunity for one person may be a barrier for another.

The process of working up a policy needs to be as inclusive as possible to enable the development of understanding. Policies will include a statement of intent, and commitments in relation to employment, volunteer recruitment and support, committee membership, and accessibility of procedures and services.

Communities are rarely, if ever, homogeneous. They comprise a range of people with different needs, interests and perspectives. This diversity needs to be understood and valued. Regeneration partners should make every effort to ensure they are reaching a broad range considering such factors as gender, race, age and faith. For example, the diversity of black and minority ethnic communities, the differing priorities and agendas of disabled people, young people or older people should be illustrated through involvement in consultation processes through to representation on decision-making bodies.

Creative approaches are required to ensure that everyone can participate. Many people do not like meetings but would participate in other ways. Although community groups and networks provide a crucial channel for community participation there are also many community members who are not, and do not want to be, involved in community activities. That does not mean, however that they do not have views and ideas about the regeneration of their communities. Local Authorities should develop ways to make contact with those people not involved with community groups, and in general this is the majority of the population. This requires a unique and unorthodox approach to gathering information, such as through mail shots, a regeneration newsletter, or even talking to parents outside the local school.

Finally, it is important to note again that schemes and initiatives to improve social integration are historically and geographically contingent upon local circumstances. Thus attempt to transfer lessons between areas must be done with caution. Social integration is viewed by most institutions as a positive process, fostering principles of democracy and accountability. However, it is important to be aware that some social groupings might view integration as undesirable, unprofitable and an imposition of conformity.