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Michael Haus¹ and Jan Erling Klausen²

Abstract

The article asks how political leadership and community involvement together can contribute to legitimate and effective policy making in the context of urban governance. Particularly, the question is discussed if the interplay between both increases capacities for governing localities. Conceptually, this is based on Jessop's assumption that every mode of coordination is failure prone and that there is a need for enduring "metagovernance." The concept of metagovernance is then linked with considerations on institutional contexts and a comparison of four case studies, situated in different contexts. Whereas the case studies can show different practices or failures of metagovernance in the interaction between political leaders and involved societal actors, the institutional contexts are shown to more or less facilitate these practices.

Keywords

urban regeneration, urban leadership, community involvement, governance

¹University of Kassel, Kassel, GERMANY

²Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Oslo, NORWAY

Corresponding Author:

Michael Haus, Universität Kassel, Fachbereich 5 – Gesellschaftswissenschaften, Fachgebiet Politische Theorie, Nora-Platiel-Str. 1, 34127 Kassel

Email: haus@uni-kassel.de

The Governance of Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration projects face a particular challenge in comparison to other fields of public policy. Targeting the living conditions of area residents, community involvement and large-scale participation is often crucial to enable a better understanding of problems, identify sound solutions, secure support and legitimacy, and mobilize a common desire for improvement. Such area-based initiatives, however, can be quite complex. They often pose severe challenges in terms of mobilizing and retaining political support and funding, coordinating the efforts of a variety of agencies and branches of government, and providing direction and drive. Managing such projects requires a delicate balancing act: Whereas securing participation is no easy task in its own right, it is also necessary to ensure that it does not cause the initiative to stalemate from a lack of direction. Although strong leadership may prove effective in the short run, a lack of popular support may jeopardize overall goal attainment in the long run. Finally, the solution to this balance has to be in accordance with the institutional, political, and cultural particularities of the local context, which is again embedded in a wider context of national governance. Transcending or accommodating contextual opportunities and limitations puts great requirements on political capabilities as well as managerial skills.

With reference to the hotly debated topic of a “shift to governance” (Rhodes 1997), we will contend in the following that *political leadership* and *community involvement* are central aspects when reflecting on the empirical shapes and normative challenges of urban governance (see Haus, Heinelt, and Stewart 2005). Drawing upon empirical evidence from four case studies conducted for the comparative project PLUS (see Heinelt, Sweeting, and Getimis 2006), we wish to explore the interrelated nature of these aspects.¹ The dynamics of the relationship between urban leadership and community involvement sometimes seems to develop a life of its own, affecting the progression and eventual outcome of urban initiatives in unexpected and more or less desirable ways.

In the second section, conceptual matters pertaining to leadership and community involvement in urban governance will be elaborated on. The third section starts by linking these general questions to reflections on the institutional context of leadership and involvement practices. It then presents the four case studies that demonstrate how leadership and community involvement are co-influencing parts of different approaches to modernize policy making within local settings. We have chosen examples of urban policy initiatives in four cities in Norway, England, Germany, and Italy. In the final

section we bring together conceptual, institutional, and empirical aspects by reflecting on the capacity for achieving complementarity between political leadership and the involvement of the local community in various contexts.

Urban Governance and the Idea of Complementarity Between Political Leadership and Community Involvement

Leadership/Community Involvement and the Orders of Governing

Leadership—like governance and community—is a notion as contested as it is loaded with messianic expectations (see Hambleton 2005; Stone 1995; Elcock 2001). Leadership has been analyzed as both the object of institutional reforms targeting a higher strategic capacity and democratic legitimacy in local democracy and the origin of more networked forms of policy making (John 2001; Borraz and John 2004; Haus, Heinelt, and Stewart 2005). Our understanding of political leadership is informed by an institutionalist perspective, but also shaped by the vital role of local government in urban governance. In our understanding, governance is not “governing without government,” but instead comprises collective practices of framing and targeting problems, namely, practices in which governmental actors play a crucial role, but for the success of which societal actors are also increasingly relevant. Thus, we combine the assumption that: (i) Political leadership is connected to institutionalized positions and roles within local government, as well as being endowed with some potential for shaping its institutional environment, and that (ii) these institutionalized positions are embedded in relations of public accountability that single out political leaders from other actors involved in urban governance. By urban or political leadership, we refer to democratically elected position holders at the top of municipal politics and administration (for a similar approach see e.g. Stone’s 1995 comparative analysis of “leadership performance,” understood as the role of mayors in constructing and maintaining institutions of governance). These position holders could be elected directly by the citizenry or indirectly by democratically elected councils.

When we speak of *community involvement* we refer to the nonpublic side of actors located in an urban area that are involved in initiatives for urban problem solving, whether they be corporate actors (organizations), associations, and social movements; experts in particular fields (e.g., architects in urban planning); or individual citizens. All these actors hold particular rights and

resources as well as more or less acknowledged positions in the life of a locality. According to the governance literature, these actors are becoming increasingly important for fulfilling public tasks, while at the same time the institutions within which governance takes place are becoming more and more complex (see Pierre 1999; Stoker 2000). As John (2001) stresses, strong personal leadership is often regarded as a precondition for responsive policy networks.

Urban governance has various dimensions. Kooiman (2002) has suggested that governance can be conceptualized as a sequence of “governing orders,” an approach in which activities in one “order” are informed and structured by more general preceding “orders.” “Metagovernance” refers to the general policy discourse in society that demands, legitimizes, or criticizes, such as, specific contributions of the state, the market, civil society, and individuals to the collective life and the “common good.” For example, in such discourses the relevance and requirements of “globalization” for different spheres of social life and actors are constructed. In turn, this discourse forms the basis for the establishment and reform of legislation, political institutions, formal procedures, and other structuring elements, an activity that is denoted as “second order governing.” Globalization may be said to demand more efficient public services that might lead to the introduction of a business-like institutional design principle in the public sector. Finally, “first order governing” refers to the enactment of the system, of using the institutions and following the procedures in the creation of opportunities for solving concrete problems.

The practical implications for the current analysis is that community actors may participate not only in the policy discourse on regeneration (metagovernance), but can also take part in structuring the process by forming networks and developing formal or informal groups or bodies. But even if governing activities become more inclusive, they do not necessarily become more consensual—a not uncommon misconception. We should avoid the harmonistic notions often connected with governance rhetoric, which suggest that “common” problem solving and “partnership” are keys to new modes of governance. Governance networks can be understood as a reaction to the crisis of traditional modes of governing, and there is no reason to believe that their creation and operation are free of conflicts and hegemonic strategies (Jessop 2000). In the end, some type of solution must be found in order to address the complexities of current problems, though it may well be that conflict and contestation play a productive role in the struggle for governance.

“Complementarity”

Keeping in mind the understanding of governance discussed in the previous section, we maintain that the quest for *complementarity between urban*

leadership and community involvement is elucidative for discussing new modes of government-societal interactions. “Complementarity” refers to the practices that both political leaders and community actors become involved in, namely, what leaders and community actors *do* within governance processes as well as the *contribution* of their actions to the performance of these processes. As will be made clear, *providing* for community involvement is itself an essential contribution of leaders, but *getting involved* and *contributing to governance capacity* are genuine contributions of community actors. “Complementarity” is certainly a general term, which may take on several forms in empirical reality whenever we find that democratic legitimacy (by broad inclusion) and effectiveness (by mobilizing resources) have been realized. If participating societal groups have little or no influence on the development, decision, and/or implementation of a policy initiative, their participation makes little difference and the “complementarity” would appear to be less relevant.

Now, how can this alleged “complementarity” contribute to the realization of complex urban initiatives? Briefly stated, leaders may play a role in designing, redesigning, and interpreting rules for community involvement. They may make decisions on how to proceed with policy initiatives in critical situations. While taking responsibility for organizing, funding, and, not least, implementing results would also be expected contributions. The contribution of community involvement could be to increase democratic legitimacy and transparency. It can perhaps also enhance the effectiveness of policies by expressing more authentically the needs of policy addressees, feeding alternative knowledge into policy formulation, and strengthening feedback into the political system after policy implementation. Our case study presentations aim at exploring the empirical viability of such assumptions. The cases share a specific focus on urban regeneration projects, and so the analysis does not purport to characterize “urban governance” writ large. This said, we would contend that the complementarity of leadership and community involvement is a subject of general relevance to other fields of urban governance as well.

Experiences From Four European Cities

Selected Cases and Contextual Conditions

The four cities we have chosen to illustrate different ways in which political leaders and actors form local community interaction and the ways in which these interactions impact on urban governance are Bristol, UK; Bergen, Norway; Cinisello Balsamo, Italy; and Heidelberg, Germany. Besides the fact

that we think interesting constellations of leadership and community involvement can be found in these cities, an important reason for selecting them was to include different *types of local government* and *political leadership*, as they are rooted in state legislation on local government as well as norms and expectations spread throughout the respective political cultures. Since we understand “political leadership” as being connected with public chains of democratic legitimacy, these types can provide for information on specific contexts of authority and legitimacy. This is particularly true with respect to two central context variables:

1. *key local governmental relationships*, namely, the institutional place of local government within democratic states and its resulting role in terms of functions and democratic life, and
2. *forms of local government*, namely, the horizontal distribution of power in urban government that is important for identifying the concrete actors in charge of leadership positions and the opportunities and constraints connected to their position.

As for the first item, reflecting on international country studies, Hesse and Sharpe (1991) have identified three main groups of local government they distinguish along the lines of *input* (local government as a means for political integration) and *output* (local government as a means for fulfilling functional tasks of the welfare state). Whereas the former highlights local governments as arenas for constructing and expressing local political identity, the latter emphasizes task execution and service delivery. The four cases have been selected in order to ensure that all three of the following groups are included:

- The “*Franco*” group comprises countries in which, due to a common historical heritage, local governments have a low functional status but are acknowledged (not least by constitutional law) as units for expressing “community identity” (Hesse and Sharpe 1991, 606). The Italian Cinisello Balsamo case (Balducci, Calvaresi, and Prossacci 2004; Procacci and Rossignolo 2006) is selected as an example of this.
- The “*Anglo*” group consists of countries in which local government is predominantly considered as a means for delivering services in the most efficient and effective way. Local government in the United Kingdom, with its large administrative units and the rule of *ultra vires*, is a paradigmatic case. The Bristol case study (Carmichael

et al. 2004; Howard, Sweeting, and Stewart 2006) is selected as an example of an “Anglo” city in a (partially) decentralized unitary state.

- In the countries of the “*North and Middle European*” variant, local government is both a strong service provider within the welfare state and an acknowledged political arena linked to local identity. Since it is particularly important within in this group to consider the characteristics of *unitarian* and *federal* states, respectively (see Denters and Rose 2005), we have included one city located in a decentralized unitarian state—Bergen, Norway (Hanssen, Klausen, and Vabo 2004, 2006)—and one from a federal state—Heidelberg, Germany (Egner et al. 2004; Egner, Haus, and König 2006; Haus 2006)—in our sample.

The link between these types of central local relationships and the institutional forms of horizontal power distribution—the second item—becomes clear when seen in light of Wollmann’s (2003) considerations on variants of *presidentialism* and *parliamentarism* as specific “path dependencies” for the dynamics of changing the local political system. Taking this dichotomy, which is firmly established in comparative politics but not usually found in local government research, Wollmann points to the fact that forms of local government are in a process of “modernization.” They are gradually adopting features of “real” political systems, and the strengthening of political leadership is a crucial aspect in this development.² In Germany and Italy, the directly elected mayor is now both political leader and head of the local executive at the same time, whereby the form of local government is very much like a presidential system. By contrast, England and Norway have a tendency to organize local government much like a parliamentary system: The Norwegian cities are offered the possibility of replacing traditional committee rule with a professional city government (an option that our case city Bergen has made use of) and the various options given by the New Labour government to the local English authorities can all be considered as variations of parliamentary rule in which a kind of city government is responsible to representatives (the councilors).

Combining the two typologies, we can see an interesting mixture between congruence and divergence among the four types of government to which our case cities belong. With respect to the role of local government in the democratic state, Bergen and Heidelberg are in one group, combining functional and democratic/integrative tasks. With respect to forms of local government, Bristol and Bergen are on the path of parliamentarism, while

Table 1. Combinations of Intergovernmental Relationships and Forms of Local Government

Type of local government/case study	Role of local government	Form of local government
Anglo type: Bristol	Output	Parliamentarism
North European type: Bergen	Input and output	Parliamentarism
Middle European type: Heidelberg	Input and output	Presidentialism
South European type: Cinisello	Input	Presidentialism

Source: Hesse and Sharpe (1991); Wollmann (2003).

Heidelberg and Cinisello can be said to approximate a type of presidentialism (see Table 1).

As it regards each case, these rather generally held comparative considerations can certainly only be a first approximation. It is an open question as to whether the firmly established distinction between different types of local government (see Page and Goldsmith 1987; John 2001; Denters and Rose 2005; Heinelt and Hlepas 2006) and the newer contributions on creating “real” local political systems can capture relevant aspects of the institutional context of governance. In the previous discussion, we mentioned a growing complexity and instability within policy making and institutions as a challenge for urban leadership, for example, due to processes of vertical differentiation. In the end, multilevel policy making, urban decentralization, new steering models, or the fragmentation of the party system could be more important factors in shaping practices and producing results of urban governance than general characteristics of local government systems.

Bristol, England: Lockleaze Neighbourhood Renewal

Bristol is a city of 380,000 inhabitants located in southwestern England. We will focus on the case of the Lockleaze Neighbourhood Renewal initiative (Carmichael et al. 2004; Howard, Sweeting, and Stewart 2006). The Bristol City Council is a unitary authority responsible for all local government tasks such as education, housing, planning, and social services. After the Local Government Act of 2000, the city council has adopted a “leader and cabinet” system that is closest to the traditional committee leader model among the three options offered by this new legislation and by far the one most often used in British local authorities today. The leader and cabinet model puts a stronger emphasis on political leadership by: (i) abolishing the prescription

of proportional representation in the cabinet and (ii) clearly separating executive-leadership functions (cabinet, including the leader, executive councilors) from scrutinizing ones (ordinary councilors).

However, Bristol had the weakest or at least most unstable political leadership among our four cases. This was due to several circumstances: a notably low voter turnout (34% in 2003), a hung council, and the absence of a fixed legislature due to the fact that one-third of the councilors were up for election every year. The move to a *shared cabinet* was indeed an attempt to overcome instability in leadership. The cabinet was composed proportionally, comprising three Liberal-Democrat, three Labour, and two Conservative members. This meant that the “parliamentary” logic of the local government reform had been locally reversed if we take this logic to be that a one-party cabinet (or coalition) would have been established and controlled by a strong party leader. Finally, for years there had been no Chief Executive in Bristol, which meant that this function had to be taken care of by the cabinet—this being in a situation in which Bristol, like other U.K. cities, were required by the government to establish a multitude of “partnerships.”

A central role in revitalizing local democracy is played by the Bristol Partnership, which was the local version of the Local Strategic Partnership the government has established throughout the country, in order to implement its National Strategy Action Plan for neighborhood renewal, starting in 2001. The Bristol Partnership later developed into a smaller policy network with approximately 20 actors on the partnership executive board linked to a subset of further boards and partnerships. Initially, more than 70 organizations were members of the partnership, chaired by the Leader of the Council.

The Lockleaze Neighbourhood Renewal was one of 10 Neighbourhood Renewal areas in Bristol within this program. For a period of two years, £650,000 were allocated to the Lockleaze initiative, which followed a comprehensive approach of social inclusion, targeting problems of crime, health, employment, environment, and education. In the wave of New Labour’s euphoria for local governance and community leadership (see Stoker 2002), the program required that the priorities of the area projects be set by a partnership of local residents, voluntary organizations, and service providers, all organized within a steering committee and several working groups.

The Bristol Regeneration Partnership Committee was responsible for selecting the 10 neighborhoods that would take part in the program and prioritizing the allocation of funds, although these decisions seem to have been made without wider involvement. Although the Leader of the Council chaired the partnership board, we can recognize a lack of sufficient leadership by the city in the stage of policy development (defining concrete projects for

Lockleaze). It failed in establishing an organizational structure in time to manage the renewal program. Leadership for stimulating citizen involvement and establishing viable steering institutions at the neighborhood level had to come from a community development worker who succeeded in establishing an informal steering group, including various communities and organizations, and in organizing a day for an open forum in which local residents could articulate their needs concerning the neighborhood renewal. The delayed employment of a project manager resulted in pressure to spend the money quickly, which compelled him to adopt a “city boss” style of leadership (concentrating on running the administrative machinery) and to amalgamate considerations regarding various steps for realizing the initiative. Participation was not very broad since only 3 of the 12 regular participants of the Steering Committee came from the neighborhood, whereas service organizations dominated. Citizen involvement seems to be more appropriate for identifying needs and discussing priorities than developing professional projects ready for submission.

The research report (Carmichael et al. 2004) elucidates the unfortunate effects of central government’s spending requirements. Due to a slow start, the focus shifted to spending money or losing it. Projects were allocated funding before priorities had been established and were on a first come, first served basis based on general criteria. It’s obvious in the case of Bristol that both the personal commitment of the political leader(s) and the administrative capacity to organize the neighborhood network were missing. Although considerable resources were available in principle, building coalitions and establishing mechanisms of broader governance did not succeed because of a lack of governing capacity at the local level. Furthermore, strongly formalized organizational patterns for governance, imposed top-down, seem to be contra productive to network building since they urge actors to participate in certain activities they are not really committed to simply to obtain funding.³ The institutional arenas of community involvement became dominated by professionals, so collective action was missing a common perspective. Successful participatory governance cannot be created from scratch just by giving money and establishing an organizational framework, but instead must be generated gradually and reflexively. To be sure, clear rules are helpful because they empower actors and create reliability in collective action. Nevertheless, the problem in the Lockleaze case was that a *local* definition of clear rules was missing—as a result, a leadership task was not carried out. As things transpired, there was “very little positive complementarity between urban leadership and community involvement” (Carmichael et al. 2004, 58).

It has to be mentioned, however, that Bristol Partnership is still in existence and operates under different conditions today. There are now 14 partnerships covering the entire city area, and the Lockleaze Partnership was restructured in 2008 (see <http://bristolpartnership.org/neighbourhood-partnerships>). In the interim, there may have been learning effects stimulated by the robustness of the government financing scheme. Meanwhile, the post of Chief Executive has been reestablished. Moreover, since June 2009 the city cabinet has been in the hands of the Liberal Democrats, providing a long needed political stability the first time in quite a while. Voter turnout has increased, and the parliamentary form of local government might finally show some of its strength.

Bergen, Norway: Lovstakken Urban Regeneration Plan

Bergen is Norway's second largest city (252,051 inhabitants as of 2009). In Norway, the local government system is the main instrument for provision of the extensive range of public services associated with a "welfare state." Bergen's net running expenditures for 2008 were approximately €1.55 billion, a figure that illustrates why Nordic local government systems have been portrayed as a particular subtype of the "North and Middle European" group. The city introduced a citywide system of eight urban district councils in 2000, each of them headed by a politically appointed council and each with a sizeable administrative staff. As much as 85% of Bergen's net running expenditures were delegated to the urban districts (see Bäck et al. 2005 for urban district councils in large Scandinavian cities).

In the mid-1990s, there was a growing awareness of problems that had been developing in the former working-class area of Lovstakken, close to the city center, which is where the lion's share of Bergen's public housing was located. The Lovstakken area was marked by problems related to poor living conditions, environmental issues, unemployment, and poor public health. Originating from a city council initiative in 1998, the Lovstakken Urban Regeneration Plan involved governmental actors on several levels, as well as quite an extensive participation of community groups (Hanssen, Klausen, and Vabo 2004, 2006). Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) ranging from sports clubs to the Salvation Army became involved and open meetings were frequently arranged in the process of developing the program. All local organizations, civil initiatives, and other locally organized actors (e.g., the church) in the area of Lovstakken were invited to present their ideas and proposals at these meetings. An urban district officer formulated the program proposal based on the ideas and proposals from the organizations.

The political leader of the Urban District Council acted like a political coordinator in this development process. She was active in making proposals and initiating open meetings, and frequently met with the officer responsible for formulating the proposal. Her highly proactive approach stood in marked contrast to the rather passive approach adopted by the Urban District Council. In this sense, the leadership in the Lovstakken Urban Regeneration Plan seemingly deviated from what might be expected from the collective style often associated with Nordic local governments.

The Leader of the Urban District Council acted as a “facilitative leader”⁴—as an initiator and driving force behind the plan in all its phases. Her leadership strategy was that of a “network manager,” in the sense that the plan involved various attempts to solicit the support and commitment of actors outside the Urban District, especially other levels of government. She was also actively involved in the efforts to achieve a high level of community involvement.

Even though parts of the Lovstakken Urban Regeneration Plan were implemented, the plan as a whole can hardly be described as a complete success. The general goal of the regeneration effort was to improve living conditions in Lovstakken in terms of social, spatial, and environmental factors. These goals can be related to the 29 measures listed in the plan. According to the informants, approximately half these measures were implemented, which indicates a degree of substantial effectiveness. However, several important measures did not reach the implementation stage. Notably, the measures that required funding and support from actors outside the urban district were only implemented to a very limited extent. According to Bjørn Erik Kolstad (leader of the Aarstad Urban District Council, interview, November 11, 2009), a “community house” that was an element in the regeneration plan was never built, and the majority of the district’s share of Bergen’s social dwellings has not been significantly reduced. A number of parks and public spaces were to be established or upgraded, though at least one of these projects was implemented, others were not. Bergen’s Urban District system was terminated in 2004, and although a new system of Urban Districts was instigated in 2008, the four-year hiatus effectively shelved the regeneration plan.

The shortcomings in terms of implementation of the plan clearly had much to do with the considerable procedural challenges associated with the multi-level aspects of the process. Concerted efforts from Aarstad to build partnerships with other authorities were foiled to a great extent, in part due to a lack of interest or waning commitment from municipal authorities—and as previously mentioned the plan as a whole was not supported by national government. After receiving positive signals from a certain agency concerning

funding for the community house, the application for funding prepared by the urban district (which had to be forwarded by the city government) was delayed in the city government administration. A grant intended to reduce the amount of social dwellings in Aarstad was diverted to other purposes by the city council. According to some informants, the city government assumed a rather passive role in the lobbying process toward the national government, and their effort was not successful. An application by the city government of Bergen in June 2001 for NOK 50 million (approximately €6 million) from the state government was turned down.

Following this, a main conclusion seems to be that a genuine complementarity of urban leadership and community involvement indeed did occur in Aarstad, generating an awareness of the general problem as well as identifying specific challenges and possible solutions. The lack of a successful implementation of several goals should probably be attributed to the problems encountered in soliciting the support and commitment of actors external to the urban district. Within these severe constraints, we observed tenacious efforts by the leader of the urban district to take care of community involvement and strategy building. Even so, the complementarity of leadership and community involvement in fueling meta-governance, institution building and interactive problem solving could not be fully developed. In the shadow of higher levels of government and a vertically differentiated formal organization of municipal government, only some respectable informal flowers of governance can grow. The strengthening of political leadership at the city level (parliamentary system) did not support an initiative from below.

Heidelberg, Germany: District Development Planning

The city of Heidelberg is located in southwestern Germany in the federated state (Land) of Baden-Württemberg. It has a population of approximately 140,000 inhabitants and is shaped by the service sector (science and tourism). We will discuss the urban initiative of “district framework planning” that was initiated in the first half of the 1990s and finished in the middle of the 2000s (Egner et al. 2004; Egner, Haus, and König 2006; Haus 2006). As a “county exempt city,” Heidelberg comprises the functions of both a municipality and county and is therefore responsible for a large array of services. The municipal administration is headed by a directly elected mayor. The mayor also chairs the council and all its committees, including the district councils that have been established for all the city’s districts. The tenure of the mayor is significantly longer than the election period of the council—eight compared to five years—and he or she can only be removed from office

with great difficulty: The council cannot decide on this, nor can a referendum on the issue be held.

From the start of her tenure in 1990 onwards, the mayor adopted the style of a facilitative leader—trying to establish dialogical structures to achieve consensus, better knowledge, and identification with public concerns. One example of this new approach was the initiative for “*district development planning*” (DDP). Early in the beginning of her first tenure, the mayor started this initiative in order to meet two primary objectives: improving and democratically enriching the knowledge basis and political legitimacy for a decentralized form of planning as well as addressing and fostering the identification of citizens with their district in accordance with a communitarian participatory credo. Meta-governance was clearly focused on fostering a participatory identity and civic virtue among the actors of civil society, but also on developing more intelligent policy solutions.

Seen from the angle of *institutional design*, DDP constitutes various institutional arenas linked with the formal bodies of local government. District meetings, future workshops for women, and thematic workshops with invited stakeholders were all linked with the district councils and the city council. In addition, there was an informal intra-administrative arena with two levels: the level of the top executives (the mayor and the deputy mayors) and a working group whose offices gave input to the thematic workshops. But DDP was also very challenging with respect to endurance; in the end, the entire project unexpectedly took more than 15 years, so even the mayor’s tenure of 8 years would not have sufficed without reelection.

When the mayor wrote a letter to all the councilors informing them that DDP would take seven years longer than originally intended, the local media proclaimed the expected failure of the “mammoth undertaking” (see Haus 2006, 149). This longer time span was due to complications and criticism that occurred in the process. After many groups had demanded that DDP should be embedded in an overall framework, the mayor agreed and launched the initiative for a complex city development plan. Additionally, the mayor was already confronted with the realities of power politics within the first DDP. The straightforwardness of the mayor in promoting the participatory agenda (which, besides DDP, comprised several other projects) irritated the council and created pressure to redefine its own role. The first completed plan was not formally adopted by the council. Even though the following plans were adopted, the councilors passed a resolution that the plans were not to be understood as legally binding decisions on all the measures proposed in them. Top administrators successfully resisted regulations that the proposal of measures had to not be made in connection with costs and time horizons for

financing and had to not be included in middle-term financial planning. The mayor reached a compromise with these political interests, but in the end, this did not lead to a failure to implement the plans as demonstrated by the fact that most of the measures proposed in the plan were actually realized.

As it pertains to the dimension of *access* to institutional arenas, it can be said that the proceeding of DDP comprised a multitude of arenas that at some point gave access to nearly all who had an interest in participating. All interested citizens were invited to come to the district meeting and the district council's meeting; stakeholders could participate in the workshops, women had special opportunities for raising their voice, and the various political actors (both district and city councilors) were able to participate in workshops or deliberate in their arenas. Moreover, the invitation policy by the city could be called very inclusive. In workshops conducted in 1995, 1998, and 2002, more "key persons" were invited and more actually came—55, 71, and 96, respectively. It should be added that the relationship of key persons and city representatives changed in favor of the former. In the future workshops for women, there was an increase in participation as well. The district meetings that were open for everybody also involved some additional actors, although there was a high degree of overlapping with workshop participants.

Still, there was a clear social bias in the composition of the actual participants. Women who were rather well off with an academic degree and job flexibility were predominant in the future workshops, with the same for the middle class in the thematic workshops, and there were practically no foreigners in both cases. Even so, we can speak of a comparatively inclusive participation—all the more so since many advocacy actors participated. Nonetheless, it must be stressed that participating in a workshop for one evening does not mean that someone has become a member of a *network*. The workshops brought together actors, some of whom are members in smaller networks or policy communities and some do not belong to any significant networks at all. For that reason, the workshops were mainly important because they opened smaller networks to a larger audience. The general public was given access to documentation, and actors from the public administration and organizations were forced to give "good reasons" for their position. Agenda setting and priority definition were the most significant contribution to urban governance.

Thus, the case of DDP can demonstrate various *features of a complementarity between political leadership and community involvement*. The mayor was clearly accountable for the initiative as a whole as well as having a kind of procedural responsibility. First, this holds true with concern to the task of linking the various institutional arenas, particularly the arena of political decision

making (the council), with the deliberative arenas of the workshops; second, by coping with public criticism by redefining the role of DDP within city politics and urban planning; and third, by providing for organizational capacity for running DDP within her own administrative portfolio. On the other hand, the involvement of societal actors from different spheres of the city helped the mayor to develop and put into practice a policy agenda, despite the fact that she had no clear majority in the remarkably fragmented city council. By the time the mayor resigned from office and a new one without party membership was elected in 2006, all districts plans had been finished. The new mayor, however, has so far not continued the initiative.

Cinisello Balsamo, Italy: Eusebio Neighbourhood Pact

The southern European type of local government is represented in this article by the municipality of Cinisello Balsamo, a city of approximately 74,000 inhabitants north of Milan. The Eusebio Neighbourhood Pact was an urban regeneration initiative in an area marked by problems relating to a poor housing standard and social inequality (Balducci, Calvaresi, and Prosacci 2004; Procacci and Rossignolo 2006). Eusebio was mainly constructed in the 1970s to meet a growing demand for housing in the Milan area for migrants from other parts of Italy. The pact was characterized by a combination of extensive community involvement and a reliance on external funding, thereby reflecting key dimensions of the southern European style of local government, in which a traditionally low functional status is combined with a focus on the expression of community identity. It was funded with a total of €8.5 million from the “Neighbourhood Pact,” an experimental program set up by the Italian national government to provide funding for public housing projects as a means of addressing the problems of urban planning and social decay through a participatory approach (Balducci, Calvaresi, and Prosacci 2004).

Measures funded by the Eusebio Neighbourhood Pact primarily focused on the physical environments of the locality. These measures included physical interventions on housing stock, the refurbishing of existing houses, the construction of new housing for special users such as students and the disabled, the redesign of public places, maintenance work on facades, the construction of a new multifunctional center for the elderly and children, and the establishment of special premises for craft activities—the latter as a measure to stimulate the creation of jobs. In accordance with the pact, the broad participation of civil society actors was solicited. As many as 11 local associations signed the original neighborhood pact proposal.

The nature of the community involvement in the Eusebio Neighbourhood Pact can be said to have *changed* according to the successive phases of the program. In the policy development phase, community involvement mostly took place in the form of information and consultation on a wide basis. A number of meetings with small groups of residents (in the same stairway) were held. A “Neighbourhood Workshop” was established as a forum for dialogue and proposal formulation. Nevertheless, the coordination of the project and the formulation of proposals in detail were managed by a municipal agency called the Neighbourhood Pact Office in cooperation with a coordinating group consisting mainly of public officials—personnel from ALER (a regional agency for residential housing) and the municipality—as well as outside consultants.

When the proposal was presented in detail at a large-scale public meeting, it was met with heavy resistance by some of the residents. A protest action was initiated, and a petition to the municipal council was signed by 150 residents. In addition, a new tenants’ association was set up to block further cooperation if residents’ demands were not given consideration. These actions proved to be effective, as discussions with residents and local associations were resumed in order to reach a solution by consensus. Four working groups were set up to address various aspects of the project through discussions between local community and public authorities. This process eventually succeeded in producing a revised plan that met with the consent of the local community.

The *mayor* was the central political leader of the Eusebio Neighbourhood Pact. The mode of leadership changed markedly during the progress of the initiative, apparently as a consequence of the changes in community involvement noted previously. The initiative to submit a proposal to the competition for neighborhood pact funding was made because of the mayor’s expressed wish to exploit all available resources at the national and European level in order to resolve local problems. Partially because of the very limited amount of available time, she chose a leadership strategy very much based on her own position in conjunction with the local government administration, a strategy that to a small extent involved local residents and their associations. The obtainment of fast results was seemingly given priority over concerns about community involvement. As the proposal won the competition for funding, consultations with the local community became somewhat broader. The real change in leadership style apparently took place following the reservations expressed by residents to the detailed plan proposal. Following this, the mayor’s involvement became less direct.

All in all, the initial phases leading up to the rejection of several proposals by the residents very much confirm the expectations formed by the strong mayoral model associated with the South European type of local government system. The subsequent broadening of community involvement can be interpreted as an attempt to alter the mode of governance in order to transcend the apparent shortcomings of this type. The principle of inclusion in the later stages seems to have been close to all encompassing. Residents were informed and consulted by means of several public meetings of a varying scale. Residents and their associations became directly involved in the reformulation of the proposal, and there is no evidence in the case study report of any groups being denied access to the process (see Balducci, Calvaresi, and Prosacci 2004).

The Eusebio Neighbourhood Pact can be regarded as a policy success in the sense that quite wide-ranging measures largely pertaining to the physical infrastructure of the locality were implemented based on the obtaining of external funding that was largely in accordance with the demands and wishes of the residents. These results were accomplished through a process that when seen as a whole was marked by a complementarity between urban leadership and community involvement.

If the neighborhood pact is seen as a *policy network*, the relationship between the actors appears to have shifted from vertical to horizontal during the progress of the various phases of the project. The formulation of the original proposal as well as the development of the first detailed plan of the project were carried out without granting much influence to actors outside the sphere of public government. This essentially vertical relationship between governmental and nongovernmental members of the network shifted because of the expressed dissatisfaction of the residents with the proposed plan. The residents acted as a protest group, signing a petition and organizing a new tenants' association that opposed the plan. In order to meet this challenge, the mayor and municipal project management decided to give residents a greater say through an interactive process of reformulation. Following this decision, the community groups were given direct influence, thereby resulting in a relationship that shifted to a more horizontal pattern.

Leadership and Community Involvement in Different Contexts

The case studies portray four city governments struggling to come to terms with the practical, down-to-earth reality of managing the various orders of governing, as described by Kooiman (2002). They develop strategies for

combining leadership and community involvement in order to get policies debated, processes structured, and specific decisions made. Yet these strategies are not always easy to manage, and they often play out in unexpected ways. Contextual differences between the cities in terms of their national type of local government system seem to provide some explanatory power, but only to a limited extent. Leadership styles and local particularities must also be taken into consideration.

Starting with Bristol, the *Anglo* group case, the predominantly output-oriented role of local government is consistent with a relative failure in terms of establishing participatory governance. Urban leaders did not succeed in achieving a successful “complementarity” between urban leadership and community involvement, and this can be regarded as a major impediment to goal achievement. As for Bergen, the Nordic (unitarian) variant of the *Middle European* type of local government, the highly complex institutional setting of the urban initiative seems to have obfuscated the progression of the regeneration plan. The involvement of three tiers of representative government—district council, city, and national government—did not provide a context in which the urban leaders were able to transform the quite extensive community involvement into actual outcomes.

The Heidelberg case (the *Middle European* type in a federalized context) demonstrates a certain complementarity between strong, visionary leadership and extensive community involvement. The variety of institutional arenas for community involvement designed by the urban leader served to support agenda setting and priority decisions, while retaining the momentum of the planning process at the same time. Compared to the Bergen case, the clear-cut leadership role of the directly elected mayor seems to have been the more beneficial in terms of achieving a complementarity between leadership and community involvement. However, the success of the entire initiative very much depends on the political leader and her support in the electorate.

As for the *South European* type of local government in Cinisello Balsamo, the complementarity of leadership and community involvement of the Eusebio Neighbourhood Pact lies in finally achieving a broadly inclusive network with a close to horizontal relationship between the actors. This observation seems to deviate from what could be expected of a *South European* type of local government in the sense that the position of the “strong mayor” became less decisive in the later phases. In this case, community groups provided not only specific inputs to policy decisions, but were also instrumental in bringing about a shift in the *nature* of community involvement. This case provides the clearest example of how the complementarity of leadership and community involvement can deal productively with conflicts.

Furthermore, our four cases could be said to display a rather representative mixture of (formal) *institutional change in political leadership*. Except for Heidelberg, all city authorities operated within institutional settings that have confronted major changes in the past decade with an emphasis on a strengthened position of political leaders, in addition to the attempt to give incentives to political leaders to “go outside” traditional city hall politics. The cases reveal that formal institutional changes in the realm of representative government cause significant turbulence and uncertainty in policy making. The crucial question might be whether this questioning of political routines can be given a productive and innovative direction.

Achieving effective “meta-governance” and a capacity for “institution building” seem to require some form of institutional consolidation in local government to allow interaction with the local community. If attention is absorbed by internal instability of leadership positions, there is a danger of a separation of arenas for community involvement and “official” city politics. The consolidation of political leadership seemed to be most challenging in Bristol. Here, we can see how the attempt to modernize decision making through “second order” governance—by introducing a parliamentary system—is obstructed by the maintenance of older institutional elements (midterm elections), growing voter volatility, and political fragmentation within the council. As a result, until recently political leadership lacked visibility and reliability and was not able to address the wider community in a visionary and sustainable way. A lack of awareness of projects for community involvement is fatal in a time in which institutions become fragmented and networks have to be developed. Attempts to consolidate leadership by settling a proportional executive may be regarded as attempts at “counter implementation” of the parliamentarization of local government. In Heidelberg and Cinisello, political leaders enjoy a rather secure position after having been elected, though in order to get things done they have to find support for their agenda. The example of Cinisello demonstrates the temptation of a “bossy style” of politics by strong mayors, also fostered by the requirement to mobilize resources from higher governmental tiers that is typical of the Franco type structures. But it also demonstrates that “city bosses” can turn into political leaders striving for public support.

If our small selection of policy initiatives presented in this article illustrates some measure of the variation in urban leaders’ institutional design approach to community involvement, it also illustrates some variation in the response of the community actors to these approaches. These responses are related to differences in the “vibrancy” of local communal life in the respective cities or

districts, which becomes obvious in the rather striking difference between the initiatives in Bergen and Cinisello. In both cases, urban leaders were primarily looking to establish arenas of *consultation* with community actors. In Bergen, community actors needed to be induced at all stages in order to participate. In contrast, community actors in Cinisello were not content to be relegated to mere consultations and went to great lengths to obtain a greater amount of power. The interaction of community involvement and leadership helped to transcend the shortcomings of the initial approach, which was rather in line with the “strong mayor” form typical of the *South European* type of local government, as well as helping to find new meta-governance grounds for constructing common institutions. In other words, an “in time” conflictive mode of interaction between political leaders and community actors in Cinisello seems to have forced a change in the expectations toward different actors, as well as the mix of governance, through an ongoing experience of learning. Although the municipal authorities may have been less than enthusiastic about the shift in approach forced upon them by the community groups, it could be argued that this kind of self-empowered dynamics is a hallmark of vital and potentially successful community involvement. In Kooiman’s (2002) terms, the cases emphasize the importance of including all “orders” of governance in the analysis of policy. Productive meta-governance in long-term initiatives depends on the extent to which leaders not only obtain a measure of community involvement, but also allow such involvement to significantly shape the governance process itself.

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1. PLUS (Participation, Leadership, and Urban Sustainability) was conducted in the period from 2002 to 2004 and funded by the commission’s fifth framework for research. Nine academic partners and 18 cities in Europe and New Zealand were involved, in addition to two nongovernmental organizations. We are indebted to our partners in the project for both the conceptual discussions and empirical analysis. Original case study publications are cited early in each case presentation.

2. On the contrary, the typology by Mouritzen and Svava (2002) has a strong focus on administration (“professionalism”) and honorary elements (“laymanship”), thus (implicitly) emphasizing the difference of local government to “real” government.
3. Clarence Stone (2004) reflects on British examples in which the formalization of partnerships even led to a decrease of cooperation in those localities where there had already been a vivid informal cooperation.
4. Here and in the following we refer to the leadership style typology elaborated on by Getimis and Grigoriadou (2005). The authors distinguish between “visionaries,” “consensus facilitators,” “city bosses,” and “caretakers.”

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Bios

Prof. Dr. Michael Haus is professor of political science at the University of Kassel, Germany. His research interests include democratic theory, public policy, institutional reforms, and urban governance. He has published on the relationship between democracy, institutions, and changing patterns of governing. He is currently one of the speakers of the standing group on local politics in the German Political Science Association.

Dr. Jan Erling Klausen is a political scientist and a senior researcher at the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) in Oslo, Norway. He presented his doctoral thesis on the democratic governance of Oslo's urban districts at the University of Oslo in 2004 and has conducted extensive research in the fields of urban and regional governance. He is the practice editor of *Urban Research and Practice*, the journal of the European Urban Research Association (EURA), and is a member of the EURA board.