

Lars A. Engberg

Reflexivity and Political Participation

- a study of re-embedding strategies

Department of Social Sciences
Roskilde University

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Preface

This Ph.D. study has emerged out of a long-term interest in citizens' political participation, and the ever-shifting boundaries between structures of governance and the modes of people's everyday life in late modernity.

Writing the thesis I have been affiliated with the Centre for Local Institutional Research (CLIF) at the Department of Social Sciences, Roskilde University, and the dissertation is defended at this department.

I would like to thank Thomas Boje, who was my supervisor during the first year until he moved to Umeå, and Peter Bogason, who has been very supportive throughout the entire process, Peter has the special gift of urging you to go on without showing his concern at all!

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A special thanks to Vincent Ostrom at the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, Bloomington University. As one of the many visiting scholars 1995-96 I enjoyed very much the weekly exchanges of memos we had with Vincent on the topics of institutional theory, constitutional choice and democratic reform. Though I have chosen to work within a somewhat different framework than the one developed in the Workshop,

Vincent Ostrom's work continues to be an inexhaustible source of inspiration with respect to theories of self-governance and citizens' roles in democratic reform.

Finally a deep-felt thanks to my wife Heidi and my daughter Sofie, who have both put up with me throughout the process of writing the dissertation, something which cannot be taken for granted, and a deed for which I am very grateful.

Lars A. Engberg
Frederiksberg, May 2000.

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1. Reflexivity and political participation

“Who today are the bearers of democratic values, who might conceivably act as the agents of democratisation? It is no longer possible, if indeed it ever was, to point with confidence to a single social class or stratum whose situation and interests align them unreservedly with democratic struggle. On the other hand, there are many people in all kinds of social situations who recognise that their pressing problems cannot be solved by individual action alone, but only through collective self-organisation or by a form of government that is more responsive to their needs. The idea that constitutional reform is only of potential interest to the so-called ‘chattering classes’, when ordinary people pay such a high cost for a system of government that is unaccountable, unresponsive and unrepresentative, is one of the self-fulfilling myths of our time” (Beetham 1996: 47).

This thesis is an empirical exploration of political participation from the perspective of reflexivity. Like Beetham, I will argue that engagement in political reform is not confined to small groups of privileged ‘chatters’, it is (becoming) an existential issue of every-day life. Politics matters to people, they do engage in democratic struggles to influence government in their everyday interactions with the political system, individually, or through collective self-organization. Borrowing the concept of re-embedding from the sociological discourse on reflexive modernization, the basic idea in the thesis is to show how individuals and groups of individuals struggle to re-define the relationship between the political and the social in a world where few things can be taken for granted.

In 1995 I was involved in an evaluation of the community council ‘Grantoften Bydelsting’ in Ballerup. It was established on an experimental basis in 1987 and combined representative and participatory dimensions (Engberg & Hulgård 1996). Starting from a network-perspective, we conducted a bottom-up

evaluation of the council, inspired by Hjern & Hull's distinction between intended and actual networks (Hjern & Hull 1982, 1987). Acknowledging Giddens' points on double hermeneutics, we started off with a deductive framework based on general criteria derived from the literature on political and administrative decentralisation. With this framework as a guiding perspective, we then developed our interpretative categories inductively in a dialogue with people in connection to the council, describing the complexity of interrelationships, beliefs and motivations from the participants' points of views.

Our visits to Grantofthen and the evaluation report inspired a number of questions that I try to address in the following. Essentially, the result of the evaluation was ambiguous: It appeared that the members of the council had limited influence on the politico-administrative level of Ballerup Municipality, despite initial intentions with the council. "No news is good news" as a civil servant remarked. Looking at the vertical dimension of the council's work, there was a relatively high degree of dissatisfaction and frustration towards the municipal level amongst the members. Examples of administrative delegation of tasks to the council were few, and the occasions in which the members had interfered in decision-making processes at the municipal level sparse. Horizontally, the council members experienced a long-term conflict with the tenants' association in Grantofthen, and on top of that they found it difficult to mobilise the tenants' interests in the council.

Despite this apparent lack of success, the members expressed enthusiasm in relation to their participation, and they were involved in a multiplicity of concrete activities in Grantofthen. So the question was, why meet on a monthly basis year after year, what were the attractions of the council from the perspective of each individual participant?

Reflecting upon our experience two questions came to the fore, the first relating to the relativity of the participation strategies; how and why did the participants use the council as a framework for their engagement, and how did they assess what they were doing? And at the methodological level, accepting the point that our approach evolved into a perspective that in turn framed the kind of answers we got, how did this approach correspond to the substantial dimension of the first question? In other words; was it an intentional, reflexive re-assessment of the terms and conditions of the political game being played in Grantofthen that we had observed? Or did the participants knowingly accept what seemed to be a marginal position, and if so, why? And methodologically, seeking to develop a framework sensitive to the situated and contextual character of the observed processes, to what extent did it allow us to identify the structured nature of these?

Starting-off with these questions, I decided to explore the theme of political participation from an every-day life perspective. What are the kind of day-to-day experiences that citizens identify as frames of reference for “going active”? And getting to know more about individuals’ action horizons and their perceptions of politics and social change, what is the nature of the individual, participatory strategies emerging from this perspective?

Empowerment as reform strategy

Contemporary efforts to modernise the state-citizen relationship focus on the mobilisation and integration of citizens into decision-making structures. Notions like participation, empowerment and integration have a prominent position in the reform vocabulary, and widespread reform efforts are targeted at stimulating the citizenry to take part in politics and the daily running of public affairs. Likewise, from a bottom-up perspective, research emphasises how citizens as grass roots

initiate political changes from below, challenging the rules and procedures of representative politics.

In an empirical study of a variety of community development projects in the Nordic countries, Prahl (1993), (1997) identifies the strengthening of “local problem solving capacities” as a basic characteristic of the “3rd decentralisation.” In most of the Nordic projects, the decentralisation strategy used is intended to mobilise, empower and integrate local citizens in relation to public services or in relation to the civil sphere. The common objective is to stimulate local development and empowerment processes, in order to enable local (public and private) actors “to solve local problems employing local resources” (1997: 233).

The heart of the matter is whether project activities result in learning and the development of new competencies; a question that however has not been addressed in the study (p. 234). Prahl puts forward the hypothesis, that the core of a resource-mobilisation strategy is to develop and co-ordinate leisure time activities, and “through these strengthen opportunities for social interaction in the locality”, a strategy he finds should be supplemented with specific empowerment efforts targeted at disadvantaged groups (p. 235).

In a British context, Taylor (1995) addresses the clash between traditional interest-based politics and a more individualised trend. Long-standing traditions of community work in the UK have moved from a focus on community interests and representative structures to a focus on identity-based modes of organization (p. 108). Taylor argues that strategies for community development should consider the paradoxes between values of solidarity and identity, and seek to “give people enough confidence and sense of strength in their own identity to recognize and come together on their common interests” (p. 109).

As a reform-strategy, mobilisation and empowerment not only refer to citizens' involvement in public sector activities, it also entails an aspect of personal empowerment in relation to individual life circumstances. Prior (1995: 169) defines empowerment as "the broader aim of enabling the individual to choose between, and participate in, the full range of activities and endeavours which constitute modern society." Democratic reform is about facilitating the development of individual and collective capacities to take part, not only in the more or less formalised running of public affairs, but also as active citizens in modern society. So the questions are; what is politics to people in the late 90s, and how do we analyse these processes of (re-) integration? Exploring participation "from below" (Hulgård 1997) getting as close as possible to the position from which actors creatively transform their own social situation, how do we analyse the relationship between governance structures and the everyday life of citizens, and what are some of the barriers to increased personal and collective autonomy?

To answer some of these questions, two decisions gradually materialised. First, I decided to seek inspiration in the sociological literature on reflexive modernization (Beck 1992, 1994, 1997), Giddens (1990, 1994a, 1994b), (Andersen 1994, 1997), Ellison (1997) and others. To what extent did the explanatory frameworks put forward in this line of reasoning provide a constructive perspective upon political participation?

Second, going through the literature and developing the theoretical and methodological ideas as presented in the following chapters, I decided to expand the empirical frame of reference to include one more case study. Reflecting back upon my own active participation in the co-operative society EVE ('Andelsselskabet EVA') from 1988 to 1997, I found that this process in many ways reflected the themes taken up by Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens. As a grass-root movement

originating from the Danish højskolebevægelse¹ the society invited economists and ecologists to enter a dialogue on the relationship between ecology and economy. It helped spark off the emerging Danish debate on green economics in the early 90s, arranging seminars and publishing 4 books on the subject.

The Grantofthen case (1989-98) The EVE case (1987-97)

Democratic experiment	Focus on ecology and economy
Mix of representative and direct democracy	Strategic expert-lay dialogue
Top-down initiative	Self-organised, voluntary association
Local level	National level
Quality of life in neighbourhood	Integration of economy and ecology

By bringing in the story of EVE in parallel to the one of Grantofthen Bydelsting, the empirical analysis of political participation as ‘re-embedding strategies’ allows for interesting contrasts and perspectives. Both processes have elements of a bottom-up approach to political participation, involving a collective of persons articulating both individual and collective projects or strategies, rooted in their every-day life experiences, but with reference to the established political system.

The reflexive modernization thesis

“...it dawns on people that the production of social consensus depends on traditional forms of solidarity – social and moral milieus, status and class cultures, familial forms, regional, national and ethnic traditions, as well as the power of religious traditions – all of which are being diluted and consumed in the wake of continuing modernization. They are being replaced by the tribulations of finding (or inventing) commonality and communal spirit in the variety and contradictions between situations and topics of fluctuating individual (self-) interpretations” (Beck 1997, p. 43).

¹ The term ‘Højskolebevægelse’ is difficult to translate without wrong connotations, a further introduction to the term is provided for in chapter 6.

Modern politics cannot be confined to conflicts over distribution of material resources, more than ever, politics is a matter of “personal experience and self-identity” (Giddens 1994: 85). Giddens uses the notion of life-politics to address this constant search for meaning in a post-traditional world where fewer and fewer things can be taken-for-granted: “life politics is a politics, not of *life chances*, but of *life style*. It concerns disputes and struggles about how (as individuals and as collective humanity) we should live in a world where what used to be fixed either by nature or tradition is now subject to human decisions” (Giddens 1994: 15).

In their analysis of ‘reflexive modernisation’, Beck, Giddens & Lash (1994) pursue relationships between modernisation processes and the political sphere. Traditional descriptions of the modern polity in terms of centralised authority are not longer adequate, procedural and substantial dimensions of decision-making processes are continuously made subject to negotiations and struggles at all levels of society. The process of *individualization* is at the core of the modernisation process, disembedding individuals from traditional ways of life, a process that has wide implications to the analysis of politics. As a notion, disembedding refers to a fundamental loss of pre-given (collective) sources of meaning (Beck 1989: 127-137).

When individuals are removed or liberated from historically prescribed social commitments and authority relationships (dis-embedded), they loose the traditional combination of dominance and support entailed in such social forms. This results, in turn, in a *loss of security* with respect to knowledge, faith and norms based on tradition. From this perspective, *re-embedding* refers to the integration of the individual into new social relationships, in a world where “everything that used to be natural (or traditional) now has in some sense to be chosen, or decided about” (Giddens 1994: 90-91). Obviously, Beck, Giddens, Lash and others who

have written about the topic approach the reflexive modernisation theme from different angles. Still, Beck argues that the authors share a common perspective: That late modernity is characterised by an “opening up” of the actor-structure dichotomy, in favour of the scope for individual choice: “the more societies are modernized, the more agents (subjects) acquire the ability to reflect on the social conditions of their existence and to change them in that way” (Beck 1994: 174).

This perspective is both intriguing and provocative. Accepting the general point that the social world has been made subject to decision-making, choice is still constrained in a world not entirely of our own making. This point is underlined by Ellison, who argues that especially Giddens tends to adopt a voluntarist position: “Social actors may become aware of the contingent nature of solidarity and community – and to this extent they may be ‘clever’ as Giddens implies – but their ‘reflexivity’ involves the appreciation of the transformation of traditional concepts of belonging and the need to pursue alternatives in circumstances of constrained choice” (Ellison 1997: 712-3).

Participation as reflexive ‘re-embedding’

To research the question of “what is politics to people in the late 90s?” the thesis of reflexive modernisation is adopted as the sociological frame of reference in the empirical analysis pursued in the following. Two perspectives in particular will be pursued:

First of all the argument that political participation takes on a subjectivist quality in late modernity. To cope with the intricacies of everyday life people construct individual narratives creating their own anarchic composition of political profiles, mixing elements from (apparently) contradictory political positions and engagements. Ultimately, the individualisation argument results in a *politics of choice*, in

which the individual intentionally has to reconstruct the social in a process of choosing life-style, commitments and social networks. Second, I combine the subjectivist approach with an emphasis upon 'sub-politics' as a network-perspective on the fragmentation of political agency. In the governance structures of late modernity, various networks of individuals compete for defining the political. In this sense, politics has a second-order quality; politics is the process of defining the forms and contents of the political, Beck speaks of a 'politics of politics' or the 're-invention of politics' (Beck 1994, 1997). I assume the two dimensions to be dialectically interrelated, and developing the research strategy, the basic challenge is one of analysing the situated character of life-politics in a socially structured context.

The fragmentation of political agency

Recognising the fragmentation of political agency - that the forms and content of the political realm is in constant flux - how does one identify the spheres of politics from a bottom-up perspective? Traditionally, politics refers to the realm of state regulation. At the other end of the continuum, politics is about "the capacity of social agents, agencies and institutions to maintain or transform their social or physical environment"; the "resources which underpin this capacity and about the forces that shape and determine its exercise" (Held (ed.) 1991: 5).

The problem is that such a broad definition tends to dissolve the distinction between 'the social' and 'the political'. How do we identify a political community that is not related to formal political institutions? When does interaction become political interaction? Frazer shows how the term community is defined in a variety of ways: As a bounded geographic area; as networks of non-contractual relations including those of kinship, friendship and cultural membership. As a quality of identification with place, culture, way of life or tradition; as shared symbols, values, meanings, language and norms; as shared interests e.g.

occupational interests; and as political and cultural interests as in the 'gay community' (Frazer 1996: 93). Likewise, the notion of 'political community' can be defined in different ways, of which some are likely to have elements in common with the descriptions above.

The research strategy developed in the dissertation is construed around an effort to deal with this demarcation issue. In order to analyse re-embedding as a social and cognitive process I pursue two basic points:

1) The categories themselves become politicised. The construction of social categories and understandings as such is a political process, where actors conflict over and negotiate frameworks of understanding. As McClure puts (1992: 122) it: "today's erasure of the boundaries between public and private is accomplished not through the incursion of public authority into a pre-existing private realm, but through a 'proliferation' of new political spaces."

According to McClure, this expansion requires a rethinking of the basic political categories, towards "a politics which extends the terrain of political contestation to the everyday enactment of social practices and the routine reiteration of cultural representations" (p. 123). Adopting this perspective upon politics requires a basic conceptual openness: What are the conceptual frames of meaning within which actors orient their conduct, and to what extent are these conceptual categories contested and politicised?

2) The social world is stratified, and relations of power condition the outcome of 1). Having inductively mapped out understandings, concepts and world-views, the question is how this process of meaning construction is conditioned by differences in social positions and definitorial resources of

actors? What were the epistemological conflicts about, and who amongst the actors in the network-relation were in a position to define the categories in line with their understandings and world-views?

Research questions and hypothesis

Participation from the perspective of re-embedding does not occur within a fixed set of parameters. Traditional taken-for-granted ways of life no longer appear attractive or feasible, the routines, beliefs and values of everyday life need to be constantly scrutinised and re-invented. Thus, integration into the 'full range of activities and endeavours' of modern society can be viewed as a reflexive exercise, involving (micro-) processes of *re-embedding*, understood as the re-negotiation and creation of meaning at individual and collective levels.

Synthesising this perspective, I put forward the hypothesis that participation can be analysed as *re-embedding strategies*; a metaphor for the dialectic relationship between individuals' self-reflexive insertion into society through the strategic staging of biography and life-style, and the political processes of change that is a part hereof. Re-embedding underlines the existential necessity of actively shaping a personal life-context in relation to wider societal processes, and in this sense it establishes a connection between life-style and political activity, or between life-form and governance structure.

When participation is associated with strategic *re-embedding* the point is that a reference is made to the connection between individualisation as the disembedding of taken-for-granted ways of life, and the consequent necessity of finding or reinventing new certainties for oneself and others. The notion of *strategy* refers to the necessity (Beck talks of a compulsion) to reshape a meaningful social context under conditions of uncertainty and

complexity. Thus, from this perspective strategic action does not only imply a rational means-end analysis but a broader, non-deterministic approach to 'the struggles of how we should live.' From this perspective, I wish to explore the following research question:

What are the enabling and constraining features of individual and collective re-embedding strategies in concrete processes of participation?

To answer this question, I contrast 6 individual participation narratives with the historical accounts of the collective participation processes recorded in the cases of Grantoften Bydelsting and the co-operative society EVE. Participation is as an individual and a collective phenomenon, and developing an agency-perspective, emphasis is put on the facilitating and constraining dimensions of the collective context in which the individual experiences take place. As discussed above, the strategy is to look at the process from the 'inside': How do participants conceptualise what they are doing? And from the 'outside': What are the enabling and constraining factors conditioning their participation? To carry this through, I split up the above question into two:

Why do citizens participate, and how do they perceive the political nature and the possible impact of their engagement?

To give colour to the argument that participation has to do with re-embedding defined in the above terms, each conversation with individual participants was partly structured by a number of issues relating to the re-embedding theme as developed in chapter 2. The key issues related to a. why actors participate, b. what kind of meaning they attribute to political participation and c. the ways in which their activism is a part of their general life-style. I consider all participants to be part of what might be

called a community of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991); an ensemble of people with some kind of shared frame of reference with respect to the meaning of the activities they are involved in and what these activities mean to themselves and their communities.

The research question focuses on the *enabling* and *constraining* dimensions of the participation process; choice is socially conditioned and individual participation as such takes place in a social context. The constraining and enabling features of this context emerge with reference to relations of power between individuals and groups of individuals, and the analysis of re-embedding strategies has to be related to a concept of agency, understood as the capacity 'to make a difference' to pre-existing states of affairs or course of events. When people carry out interpretative strategies to understand and change the world they do so, not in a vacuum, but in a society inhabited by other acting individuals. Accepting the general point that the social world 'more than ever' is open to decision making, choice is still constrained in a world not entirely of our own making, and the question is how to operationalise this paradox?

To capture this a rule-dimension will be added to the analysis. Using a definition of politics as "the sphere of collectively binding rules and policies, and of the resolution of disagreement about what those policies should be" (Beetham 1996: 29) the political dimension of the process is analysed from the perspective of 'collectively binding rules.' Having mapped out patterns of network-interaction the question is; are strategies developed to change collectively binding rules, and how should we explain this rule-altering process with respect to differences in positions and relations of power between actors in the network? Defining the collective level along these lines, the process against which each individual narrative is contrasted

needs to be analysed from the perspective of 'sub-politics', and to guide this evaluation I pose the following question:

What are the collectively binding rules being addressed in the network of interaction, and how are strategies for changing or reproducing these rules conditioned by differences in roles and positions of actors?

Choice of empirical focus in the dissertation

I consider the dissertation to be an explorative study, further scrutinising the reflexivity perspective articulated in the reflexive modernisation discourse in relation to empirical research. As a zeit-diagnosis, the discourse on reflexive modernisation is phrased in terms of ambivalence, tendencies and side effects. It offers a perspective without claiming to be a substantial Grand Theory, and it does not enter the debate whether we live under modern or post-modern conditions. I perceive the status of the hypothesis along similar lines of reasoning. It is formulated in order to synthesise a theoretical discussion and to generate questions to be empirically scrutinised, and not to be subjected to a test of validity in the iterative testing of case studies in a process of continuous refinement of theoretical perspectives, moving from case to case.

Because the social science position advocated in the dissertation is not conceptualised in terms of such a testing of a hypo-deductive framework, no direct link between theory and empirical focus has to be established a priori. As historical accounts of collective participation processes the network analyses are the local configurations of worldviews and experiences of people in a given context, characterised by ongoing constructions and interpretations. While these have an existence independent of any external observer they are however

'fixed in time and space' and accounted for by the researcher's choice of focus and method reinterpreting the contexts.

Thus, the scientific legitimacy of the approach chosen is derived from the methodological handling necessary for allowing an insight into such situated experiences, as well as from the analytical and methodological choices made when interpreting these experiences. As I perceive it, the rationale behind linking theory and empirical focus from this perspective lies in developing a research strategy, that combines such a method while systematically posing and scrutinising questions derived from the theoretical perspective. In chapter 4 this choice of position developing the research strategy is accounted for in more detail. Further, the interview-persons have not been chosen to provide substantial evidence, the interesting perspective has been to expose the specific and relative nature of individual participation strategies, and to analyse this on the backdrop of the network analysis. It follows that individual participants have not been selected on the basis of a systematic reflection on their position in the collective context, or my prior assessment of the outcome of their efforts, the only selection criteria applied is that of prior involvement.

Method: How to develop a process perspective on reflexivity?

Reflexivity in its basic form entails the capacity of an agent or institution to monitor and account for its activities (Bhaskar 1993, p. 273). Researchers (and consultants) carry out second-order exercises of meticulously reconstructing meta-narratives (Roe 1994), advocacy coalitions (Sabatier & Jenkins 1993) or exposing ontological positions of different positions (Gephart 1997). Rarely, self-reflexive, second-order capacities (like 'double-loop learning' or 'reciprocal frame-reflection' (Schön & Rein 1994) are attributed to others than highly sophisticated

learners. This position has been criticized by Schön & Rein, who argue that practitioners do have “a capability for reflective inquiry in and on the practice situation – as well as on the effectiveness of their strategies of action, the meaning of the back talk generated by their design moves, the action frames that underlie the controversies in which they are involved, the stalemates and pendulum swings in which they are caught up” (p. 189).

Accepting this point, the epistemological and methodological theme pursued throughout the dissertation starts off from the premise that reflective inquiry in and on the practice situation is an inherent element of everyday life. Its imperative not to reproduce a division of labour between experts that position themselves outside the dialogue to contrast and debate the various positions, and practitioners who think and act within a fixed horizon. Methodologically, a research strategy aimed at reflexivity is faced with a paradox: On the one hand, it is necessary to assume that agents are creative, that they possess the capacity to reflect upon and transform their social conditions in the process. On the other hand, reflexive assessment of the conditions of existence does not automatically entail a change of these conditions, the enabling and constraining features of the process should be considered.

The methodological problem is this: If re-embedding strategies involve the suspension and/or reflexive re-assessment of taken-for-granted preconceptions and categories, a basic methodological question poses itself as the relativist dilemma: Any deductive-hypothetical position would automatically eliminate aspects of self-reflexive changes in understandings and categories, not addressed in the deductive perspective. So, how does the researcher establish a (self-reflexive) perspective on the ‘moving targets’ of self-reflexive actors, embedded as they are in situated contexts of action?

How can we methodologically and epistemologically establish an approach that combines an external perspective upon rule-altering politics, with a maximum degree of openness to actors' perceptions of the processes of change they see themselves engaged in?

Instead of arguing that there "is no ground on which we can stand to construct a world-view" (Reason 1994, p. 36) I proceed on the optimistic assumption that a constructivist position is possible, urging "us to continually inquire into what that ground might be" (p. 36). In the network analysis of 'Bydelstinget', we interpreted our roles as observers that did not interfere intentionally with the processes we observed. Developing the analysis as close as possible to the life-worlds, understandings and perspectives of the people in concern, the methodological challenge was one of 'getting access' to actors' accounts in the methodological oscillation between deductive and inductive dimensions of the analysis. Choosing to write about EVE the same problem got another dimensions, how to establish a critical position from which to describe a process that I had been involved in? What were the epistemological implications of such a choice, and how to create 'distance'? In other words, constructing the research strategy, questions of epistemology and ontology should address the relationship between the observer and the observed in a more systematic way.

Content

In chapter 2, a framework for the empirical analysis of re-embedding strategies is put forward, based on a brief recapitulation of the reflexive modernization thesis as developed by Beck and Giddens. The framework is perceived as a heuristic tool, inspiring in a systematic way the analytical questions to be pursued in the empirical analysis. The framework is construed from a distinction between an endogenous and an exogenous or

radical process perspective on reflexivity. The former intends to explore the reflexive process from the 'inside' claiming a conceptual openness approaching the process, while the latter looks back on the former and asks: Why was the process of meaning-construction structured as it was?

The purpose of chapter 3 is to further expand upon the epistemological and methodological guidelines directing my research strategy. Exploring the distinction between an endogenous and an exogenous perspective, the chapter is split in 2 sections. Section 1 takes up the question of epistemology in order to establish a platform from which to proceed when mapping network-interaction. Inspired by the post-modern rhetoric, the point is made that an open and relational epistemology based on criteria of inter-subjectivity is a feasible starting-point, a position much inspired by Jeffrey Alexander's concept of 'approximate objectivity'. In section two, the attempt is made to formulate a position from which to step outside discourse (radical reflexivity). With reference to Roy Bhaskar's Critical Realist ontology, a distinction between social action as a. perceived by actors and b. the reproduction of institutionalised roles and positions is introduced, allowing for a position from which to analyse the structural conditioning of the reflexive process. To assist the methodological transition from Bhaskar's abstract arguments to an operational approach, Margaret Archers morphogenetic approach is borrowed, as a framework for the analysis of how understandings and conceptualisations mapped in the network approach were structured by differences in roles and positions.

In chapter 4, I account for my research strategy and choice of method. The chapter is divided into 3 sections. First I recapitulate the arguments put forward in the general analytical perspective pursued in the dissertation. Then I discuss the methodological connections theoretical concepts and empirical

research, focusing on how the ontological position advocated points to a number of methodological choices. Finally I present the research strategy, and to through its 4 steps focusing on the collective and individual levels of analysis being explored in the dissertation.

In chapter 5, the first study of participation from a network perspective is introduced, exploring the implementation and development of Grantoften Community Council in the municipality of Ballerup. The process is followed from the constitution of the council 1988 to the renegotiations of the council statutes in the summer of 1998. In part 2, the account is evaluated along the guidelines identified in chapter 3: First, what were the collectively binding rules that emerged in the network interaction? And second, how were strategies for changing or reproducing these rules conditioned by differences in the roles and positions of actors in the network?

In chapter 6, three personal narratives of political participation are presented, all three interviewees have participated over time in the context of the social and political life in Grantoften. *Susanne*² and *Helle* are members of Grantoften Community Council, while *Ole* is as a member of the local social housing committee. Each conversation is structured according to themes derived in chapter 2, and the narratives are interpreted in the light of the hypothesis articulated above. To emphasise the situated character of the participation strategies, each narrative is related to the enabling and constraining features of the participation process as analysed in the network evaluation.

Chapter 7 presents the story of the co-operative society EVE ('Andelsselskabet EVA'). EVE was constituted at 'Vestjyllands Højskole' in 1988-9 by lecturers and participants at a seminar

² The names of the 6 individual participants are fictitious.

about the Danish priest, poet and politician N.F.S Grundtvig (1783 - 1872), in order to challenge conventional economic thinking from an environmentalist perspective. To do this, the members of the society initiated an interdisciplinary dialogue inviting economists and ecologists to explore the relationship between ecology and economy. With its first publication in 1990 'Pengene og Livet' the society helped spark off a Danish debate on green economics, and in the following 10-year period EVE continued to nurture the dialogue, arranging seminars and publishing books to a wider public. In parallel to the first network analysis in the local area of 'Grantøften', the political dimension of the EVE process is evaluated from the perspective of collectively binding rules. Again, the key question is how the outcome of the process was conditioned by differences in the 'definitorial power' of actors in the network.

Chapter 8 presents three personal accounts of participation strategies pursued in relation to the EVE-context. *Helle* is a present member of the board of EVE, *Anne* was among the 'founding fathers' of the co-operative society being one of the lecturers at the Grundtvig course, while *Erik* has been a member of the society for a number of years. Based on each conversation I suggest a synthesis of each individual approach, and relate this to the analysis carried out in the previous chapter. Thus, by viewing the process from individual perspectives while contrasting these with the governance dimension explored in the network analysis, it becomes possible to discuss examples of 're-embedding' strategies as they are employed and developed by people in the context of everyday life in the 90s.

Finally, in chapter 9 the general findings are discussed, and a number of perspectives for further research outlined.

2. A framework for the analysis of re-embedding strategies

In this chapter I construct a framework for the empirical analysis of what I term 're-embedding strategies', seeking inspiration in the sociological debate on reflexive modernization. In their analysis of politics in late modernity, Beck, Giddens & Lash (1994) pursue relationships between modernization processes and the political sphere, emphasising how the process of individualisation dis-embeds individuals from traditional ways of life, with wide implications to the analysis of politics. Using the concept of re-embedding strategy, I wish to make a connection between individualisation, as the disembedding of taken-for-granted ways of life, and what I suppose is the consequent more or less compulsive urge to "find and invent new certainties for oneself and others without them" (Beck 1997: 95). While the term re-embedding connotes the sociological points developed below, strategy is thought to signify intentional action, but in a non-deterministic, broad sense.

Transforming this type of analysis into a research strategy, the challenges present themselves at (at least) two levels, at a sociological and an epistemological level. At one level, the question is how can we operationalise the sociological points put forward in the 'reflexive modernization' thesis exploring the reflexive character of individual participation strategies? At another level, the epistemological and methodological question is how to approach an object defined in terms of (self-) reflexive change? Any deductive-hypothetical position would automatically eliminate aspects of self-reflexive changes in understandings and categories, not addressed in the deductive perspective. The first set of issues are discussed in the

following, the latter are addressed in chapter 3, in which I go through some of the epistemological discussions related to the relativity-problem of reflexivity.

Reflexive modernization: The general analysis

“If simple (or orthodox) modernization means, at bottom, first the disembedding and second the re-embedding of traditional social forms by industrial social forms, then reflexive modernization means first the disembedding and second the re-embedding of industrial social forms by another modernity. Thus, by virtue of its inherent dynamism, modern society is undercutting its formations of class, stratum, occupation, sex roles, nuclear family, plant, business sectors and of course also the prerequisites and continuing forms of natural techno-economic progress. This new stage, in which progress can turn into self-destruction, in which one kind of modernization undercuts and changes another, is what I call the stage of reflexive modernization” (Beck, Ulrich, in Beck, Giddens & Lash 1994: 2).

In the context of a general theory of reflexive modernization developed in (Beck 1992) and (Beck, Giddens & Lash 1994), Ulrich Beck puts forward a very interesting analysis of politics in late modernity, later developed in (Beck 1997). The core argument in Beck’s analysis of reflexive modernization (Beck 1994) is that the victory of industrial society has resulted in a new stage of modern development, in which the basic premises of the old order are systematically undermined by the latent creation of risks essentially beyond the scope of societal control.

The dynamics of this new *risk society* lie in the conflict between the rationality of the industrial order (linear economic progress and abstraction of ecological threats) and the gradual realisation of the unintended, undesired and uncontrollable side effects produced by industrial society. The development from the innocent age of industrial modernity to the age of reflexive modernity proceeds in two stages: at first, the produced side

effects are explained as externalities i.e. residual problems which can either be ignored as general public concerns or controlled within the parameters of modern institutions. Eventually, the actual and potential dangers or risks are acknowledged as societal threats, exposing the conflict that arises when the institutions of industrial society produce and legitimate risks they cannot control.

In Beck's theory of reflexive modernization, the term reflexive does not in the first place imply reflection, but self-confrontation: "Reflexive modernization' means self-confrontation with the effects of risk society that cannot be dealt with and assimilated in the system of industrial society - as measured by the latter's institutionalized standards" (p. 6). In Beck's perspective, (institutional) self-confrontation does not refer to 'modernity's reflection upon itself' in terms of increased scientization and production of knowledge (e.g. institutionalised scientific standards for 'acceptable' risk-thresholds) but to the abstract identification of risks. These risks cannot be determined by scientific methods, and the danger they represent is a social and cognitive construct, leaving modern societies with the task of identifying and defining the basic limitations to their own long-term viability, limitations which eventually will become evident to the extent that the institutions of industrial society continue as if nothing has happened.

Unpredictability and uncontrollability

However, reflexive modernization also connotes self-reflection (in a narrower sense of the word). The systematic occurrence of risks which cannot be predicted nor controlled, results in a fundamental institutional crisis, where the "the recognition of the unpredictability of the threats provoked by techno-industrial development necessitates self-reflection on the foundations of social cohesion and the examination of prevailing conventions and foundations of 'rationality'" (p. 8).

The possibility of order created by the logic of instrumental (goal-oriented) rationality in modern societies appears to be an illusion in risk society, where the unpredictability of risks lies behind any effort to calculate or plan in a rational mode of logic. Once the issue of risks is recognised as an inherent element of decision making, a lack of clarity sets in. It becomes impossible to take any kind of action without risks, and the point is that intentional efforts to extend the scope of control ultimately ends up producing the opposite. In Beck's view, the crucial question is whether this new ambivalence will be opposed (thus rejected) within the horizon of the traditional rational claim of control, or whether the ambivalent nature of reflexive modernization will be accepted, with consequences for all areas of social action? (p. 9-12).

From government to governance: Neo-Machiavellianism

In Beck's view, the rationality-crisis implies that modern societies question the very basis and logic of the institutional forms, which become unreal and therefore dependent upon individuals (1994: 16). Institutions developed as solutions to welfare problems (welfare state, industrial enterprise etc.) are now the cause of problems while their principles and practices remain constant; traditional institutionalised solutions turn into problem-generators and new ideas, modes of interaction and solution-sets are being sought for across individual and institutional boundaries.

Recognising the shortcomings of the hierarchic model of politico-administrative steering, it is clear that the description of the modern polity as a (cybernetic) central of centralised authority is not longer adequate. Procedural and substantial dimensions of political decision-making are continuously made subject to negotiations and struggles, and (representative) institutions develop legitimisation strategies, involving the creation of alliances with networks that transcend institutional

boundaries. This institutional crisis opens up for a neo-Machiavellianism (Beck 1994: 44) because institutions have to be legitimised, negotiated and supported by networks that transcend institutional boundaries and established orders. In all areas of social action, order must be created, forged, negotiated.

This development towards a politics from below Beck refers to as 'sub-politics', underlining that agents outside the political or corporate system also appear on the stage of social design. Professional and occupational groups, the technical intelligentsia in companies, research institutions and management, skilled workers, citizens' initiatives etc. as well as individual citizens all compete for emerging power to shape politics (Beck 1997: 103).

Sub-politics is associated with citizens' movements and grass-root activity, but it also connotes a general opening up of the political, where professional and occupational groups, various expert cultures, the intelligentsia etc. compete with individuals to formulate and redefine the nature of the political. The claim is that the traditional political structures of party-politics aggregating 'objective', class-based interests have become of less importance, while dimensions traditionally outside the political realm like technology, sex, the physical environment, sexual orientation, life-styles etc. have become politicised.

Disembedding and the reflexivity-thesis

Beck understands modernity in terms of processes of dis- and re-embedding, as indicated in the quote at the top of the chapter. Disembedding is the process by which modern society undercuts social formations of class, occupation, sex roles, the nuclear family etc., while re-embedding is the replacement of industrial social forms by 'another' modernity. To grasp the consequences of this process, Beck points to his theory of individualisation (Beck 1989: 127-137): If disembedding implies a fundamental loss of pre-given, collective sources of meaning, it sets people

free to reflect on tradition and society. But when people are removed or liberated from traditional historically prescribed social commitments and authority relationships, they are also disembedded from the combination of dominance and support entailed in such forms, thus losing a basic security with respect to knowledge, faith and norms based on tradition. Maybe there is an increase in opportunities of choice and life-style management, but this involves the potential risks associated with the staging of one's own life-style, commitments and social networks. As Beck argues, "even the traditions of marriage and the family are becoming dependent on decision-making, and with all their contradictions must be experienced as personal risks" (1997: 96).

To support the notion of individualisation as a general mode of socialisation in post-industrial societies, a point is that it has become increasingly difficult to determine social stratification boundaries. The traditional connection between individual class position on the one hand, and political values, family situation, social relations etc. on the other is no longer evident. Instead, such individual characteristics are increasingly subject to individual choice and planning. Social reference units as class, family and status group are less relevant when analysing individual life situations, instead the individual himself or herself has become "the reproduction unit for the social in the life world" (Beck 1989: 130). One of the consequences is that the potential abolishment of social classes and the abolition of social inequality no longer coincide (Beck 1997: 26), social inequality no longer follows large identifiable groups but is fragmented across life-phases, space and time (p. 26).

The other side of the coin is the institutionalisation of living conditions that individuals as 'planners of their own biographies' face. They are before anything else depending upon access to the labour market, and consequently upon the range of

secondary institutions facilitating this access (education, health, social security etc.). This institutional dependency is an essential feature of the individualisation model. Individuals plan their personal biographies, but they do so in the context of institutionally provided resources and barriers. In this sense, the individual is removed from traditional social ties like class and nuclear family, and placed in the hands of secondary institutions, subject to the impact of different institutional policies carried out in the market, the social system etc. Herein lies the apparent contradiction in the individualisation process between the 'disembedding' of individual life situations understood as liberation, and the exposure to risk conflicts (unemployment, inadequate educational opportunities, lack of social security etc.) beyond individual influence. In Beck's terminology, individualisation occurs under general social conditions that replace traditional ties with a new dependency upon secondary institutions contrary to the image of individual autonomy and control (Beck 1989: 131).

Riding the juggernaut

Giddens also construct his analysis in terms of dis- and re-embedding. In contrast to the metaphor of risk society he compares late modernity to a juggernaut, a run away machine of enormous power threatening to destroy itself and with it collective humanity, seeking to gain control over it. As Giddens puts it, "the ride is by no means wholly unpleasant or unrewarding; it can often be exhilarating and charged with hopeful anticipation. But, so long as the institutions of modernity endure, we shall never be able to control completely either the path or the pace of the journey. In turn, we shall never be able to feel entirely secure, because the terrain across which it runs is fraught with risks of high consequences. Feelings of ontological security and existential anxiety will coexist in ambivalence" (Giddens 1990: 139).

Developing his analysis Giddens argues that disembedding is the process by which social relations are lifted out of local contexts of interaction, and restructured “across indefinite spans of time-space” (Giddens 1990: 21) evacuating traditional or customary contents of local contexts of action. Two mechanisms in particular are the disembedding engines of the juggernaut: Money as symbolic tokens, and expert systems as systems of specialised expertise and knowledge. Both media disembed the social in the sense that they decontextualise social relations, promoting a time-space distanciation. Money by allowing transactions independent of time and space, expert systems by the “impersonal and contingent character of their rules of knowledge-acquisition...place is not in any sense a quality relevant to their validity” (p. 85).

As a logical consequence of this analysis, Giddens defines re-embedding as the “re-appropriation or recasting of disembedded social relations so as to pin them down (however partially or transitorily) to local conditions of time and space” (Giddens 1990: 80). Expert systems tend to sequester people’s experiences, routinising and institutionalising existential and moral questions, hereby contributing to feelings of alienation and meaninglessness (Tucker Jr. 1998: 145).

Both Beck and Giddens discuss in length the point that expert systems as social institutions per se produce relative knowledge, and they underline the democratic issue of how lay persons then relate to these various competing expert environments. In Beck’s view, the non-ambiguous knowledge-production of expert institutions in industrial modernity needs to be replaced by dialogue and ‘code synthesis’ across institutional and epistemic boundaries, if the fundamental ambivalence of risk society is to impact upon ‘rationality reform’. To deal with this ambivalence on a democratic basis, he suggests some

democratic norms of dialogue in his “round table model” (Beck 1994: 28 - 30):

- A demonopolisation of expertise should take place, expert-cultures and administrations do not possess all (if any) answers, a development that should be recognised by the lay public.
- Informalisation of jurisdiction; different social groups should have access to decision-making processes not according to internal expert considerations but to general social standards.
- An opening of the decision-making structure, ambiguity means that decisions are open to negotiation.
- A partial publicity should be created, changing the closed negotiations between decision-makers and experts into a public discourse.
- The involved partners should agree upon the procedures and rules governing these new inter-mediating bodies in a self-legislative process.

Beck summarises the reflexivity theme that the two sociologists share in a central thesis of reflexive modernization. In his view, the combination of the process of individualisation, and the institutional crisis connected to the conflict between the rationality claim and the ambiguity of risk society lies at the core of a central thesis of reflexive modernization: That there is an ‘opening up’ of the actor-structure dichotomy, in favour of the scope for individual choice: “the more societies are modernized, the more agents (subjects) acquire the ability to reflect on the social conditions of their existence and to change them in that way” (Beck 1994: 174).

At the same time he underlines that his theory of reflexive modernization should not be equated with this optimistic emphasis upon self-reflection and empowerment. In the age of side-effects, reflexivity should be understood first of all as the *self-confrontation* that occurs when industrial society is confronted with the unforeseen, autonomous and unwanted effects of risk society, fundamentally undermining its institutional forms and logic's. Reflexive modernization implies an unintentional process of self-dissolution and self-endangerment, "the further the modernization of modern societies proceeds, the more the foundations of industrial society are dissolved, consumed, changed and threatened...this can quite well take place without reflection, beyond knowledge and consciousness" (p. 176).

Lash (1994: 115-116) sums up the perspective introducing a distinction between self- and structural reflexivity: *Structural reflexivity* he associates with agency's reflection on the social conditions of existence, the process by which agents set free from the constraints of social structures reflect upon the rules and resources of these structures. *Self-reflexivity* is the process by which agency reflects upon itself, as in the autonomous monitoring of individual life narratives. Thus, the reflexivity perspective assumes a capacity for self-monitoring and reflection of ones own conduct, and it contains a strong element of rationalisation of past actions, when action is explained in self-reflexive terms the implicit assumption is that humans act for a reason.

What is re-embedding?

According to Beck, disembedding is the process by which modern society undercuts social formations of class, occupation, sex roles, the nuclear family etc., while re-embedding is the replacement of industrial social forms by 'another' modernity, the concepts are discussed at the level of system change in line

with his “zeit-diagnosis” type of analysis. Giddens defines disembedding as “the lifting out” of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space” (1990: 21) while re-embedding implies the “reappropriation or recasting of disembedded social relations so as to pin them down (however partially or transitorily) to local conditions of time and space” (p. 80).

The two authors approach the two concepts from different angles, but basically agree to the mechanism of the lifting out or the systematic undercutting of existing modes of social formations (be it local or global) with the consequent focus on the issue of re-embedding. However, Giddens formulations on this issue indicate a certain ambiguity: If late modernity is characterized by time-space distanciation in the global community why is re-embedding (the reinvention of social cohesion in late modernity) conceptualised in terms of the “pinning down” again of these social relations to local conditions of time and space?

It seems as if Giddens tries to drive back his own line of argumentation by looking for *the* medium of social re-integration and situating this in the context of local conditions of time and space. The issue here is the traditional sociological argument about social order; what are the constituent features of (or underlying mechanisms behind) social cohesion vis-à-vis social fragmentation in modern societies? It appears that within the general framework of reflexive modernization theory, it is somewhat difficult to identify a stable platform on which to reconstruct or “re-embed” social relations (however transitorily).

Scott Lash argues that community in any substantial sense must be rooted in shared meanings and background practices (Lash 1994: 149) involving a number of characteristics: 1) practices with purposes (telos) that involve other human beings 2) this

involvement is mediated through language and other informational tools, 3) everyday activities in the "we" is involved in the routine achievement of meaning and the production of substantive goods. "Though activities are guided by such substantive goods whose criteria are set internal to a given practice, this guiding is not by rules but by the example of such present and traditional practices" (p. 149-150).

With these formulations, Lash comes close to a pre-modern understanding of community as taken-for-granted sets of meanings and practices. Instead the argument can be turned around, the continuous re-negotiation and reinvention of meanings and practices (purposes with practices, practices with purposes) is sharing, creating a 'we.' The community dimension manifests itself because of this mandatory, inescapable scrutiny and consequent re-embedding of sets of collectively agreed upon rules in the dialectic between the individualised-individual-in-community and the institutionalised setting of individualised community. The 'we' is necessarily ambiguous (like a marriage) because it only comes into existence when individuals subject themselves to (some degree of) shared rules of interaction and develop a shared practice on the basis hereof. But these shared understandings are per se subject to continuous questioning and the consequent possible disagreement and conflict, dissolving or disembedding the 'we.'

Probably I exaggerate the critique of Lash's formulations somewhat, as he defines a *reflexive community* (1994: 161) along similar lines: it is one that "one throws oneself into" and it is a community that consciously poses itself the question of its own creation and continuous reinvention. Lash further expands upon his definition by arguing that it may be "widely stretched over 'abstract' space, and also perhaps over time" (ibid.) and that the 'tools' of such a community tend to be not material but

cultural and abstract, hereby adding qualities which come into conflict with Giddens' definition of re-embedding.

Reflexivity in its basic form entails the capacity of an agent or an institution to monitor and account for its activities (Bhaskar 1993: 273). In contrast, Giddens suggests a dialectic view when he understands reflexivity as using information about the conditions of an activity as a means of redefining what that activity is. I believe that for the concept of re-embedding to have some degree of explanatory power, it should be perceived along these lines of a dialectic understanding of reflexivity. Thus, I approach re-embedding as a process of ongoing *conscious self-questioning at the constitutional level*; re-embedding is a kind of peculiar mix between 'existentialist doubt and social analysis' (!) forced upon both individuals and groups in their continuous effort to redefine and reinvent themselves as well as society.

Accepting the general ideas put forward in the discourse on reflexive modernisation, such reflexive capacities appear to be a key quality in the continuous re-embedding of social life in late modernity. In the following, the reflexivity theme is discussed in further detail, in order to provide the analytical focus adopted in the study of individual and collective processes of participation. This is done by developing a framework for the analysis of individual and collective "strategies of re-embedding," bringing together the theoretical discussions on reflexivity with the empirical research strategy adopted in the dissertation.

Discussion: Reflexivity and everyday life

At its core, the reflexive modernization discourse views modernisation as a process in which agents as (subjects) become better at acquiring the ability to reflect on the social conditions of their existence and to change them in that way. The perspective is one in which 'everything solid melts into air', just to be reconstructed in (self-) reflexive processes of re-

embedding, each individual has to reconstruct the social from her point of view. In this interpretation, reflexive modernity is a historical period in which individuals, in processes of choice, reconstruct the fabric of society. Thus, modernization means empowerment because people are set free to reflect upon their existence in world in which still fewer things are fixed by tradition, and one could argue that the reflexivity-thesis assumes some kind of causal relationship between dis- and re-embedding.

Re-embedding is an abstract concept allowing for wide interpretations, the key point however is that it is conceptualised in relation to disembedding. Re-embedding of social relations may be in a local context or it may be in a virtual community. The point is that it blurs the distinction between the social and the political; social relations cannot be taken for granted, they are continuously re-embedding in the intentional act of reflexive re-construction, and community building therefore can be perceived as political action. Social communities are also political communities, in that they derive from a systematic process of self-questioning and dialectic re-framing of basic assumptions in the specific contexts of everyday life.

In his analysis of reflexivity and western reasoning, Sandywell points to the same connection between everyday life and general processes of reflexivity: "Everyday existence is primarily the interpersonal world of linguistic, cultured, reflexive agents cooperating in making sense of their activities, reconstructing their projects and ongoing social life through a continuous dialogue with others. And reflections on selfhood and identity cannot be divorced from larger social commitments and political allegiances. If anything the fabric of 'the political' enters immediately into the rhetoric's and institutions of concrete reflexivity. Metaphysical notions of 'community' are to be dismantled in favour of the differential and pluralistic processes

of self-formations, self-development, and transformation” (Sandywell 1996: 425).

The quote is interesting because it combines two arguments. First, existentially motivated and reflexive agents co-operate to make sense of their everyday life in a continuous dialogue, a process that cannot be separated from their reflections on larger social and political issues (the link between self- and structural reflexivity as phrased by Lash). Second, reflexivity implies a critique of foundational and metaphysical ontologies; social life is not a static field (only) understandable through the use of predefined, abstract categories. Rather, it is a field in a continuous process of change where “the very categories actors use to depict it are productive of the shifts themselves” (Nicholson & Seidman 1995: 24).

Thus, when Sandywell discusses reflexivity as an analytical perspective, he underlines both a sociological aspect of dialogue and community formation, and an epistemological dimension of meaning construction which can only be grasped from a relational or non-foundational position, with reference to the pluralistic and differential nature of the reflexive process. Following Sandywell the two dimensions cannot be separated in processes of *concrete* reflexivity. The defining feature of reflexivity is precisely that discursive transformations of meaning categories at the epistemological level are intimately connected to sociological questions of how individuals and groups interact trying to make sense of their world, reproducing or developing collective understandings in processes of dialogue and conflict.

Giddens emphasises an epistemological definition of reflexivity when he depicts it as the use of information about the conditions of an activity as a means of redefining what that activity is. Yet he underlines that reflexivity is a basic human feature and

pursues the sociological consequences of this perspective in great length. Beck also refers to a relational definition but emphasises that (self-) confrontation is as much part of the process as (self-) reflection, and he discusses the implicit and explicit crisis-dimension of reflexive modernisation processes.

Critiques and paradoxes

The “freizetsung” thesis can be criticised on a number of accounts. When Beck argues: “in reflexive modernity individuals have become evermore free of structure; in fact they have to redefine structure (or, as Giddens puts it, tradition) or, even more radical, reinvent society and politics” (Beck 1994; 177) the question is, where does the phrase “evermore free” lead us? The argument does not rest upon very solid ground, probably Beck will not argue that agency at some stage will be totally free of structural constraints? If Beck is right, the consequences of reflexive modernisation will eventually dissolve the premises of the sociological argument at the core of the theory (the dichotomy structure-agency) in effect dismissing this analytically necessary dichotomy.

Further, because we as individuals live in a disembedded world, we do not automatically acquire the ability to reflect on the social conditions of our existence. And if we do have or develop this creative ability it does not necessarily entail a (structural) transformation, to reflect upon the social conditions of existence is not automatically to change them, though it might be a consequence.

Ellison (1997) has emphasised this type of critique, arguing that the writings of Beck and especially Giddens come close to voluntarism: “in an increasingly contingent world, social agents do not possess quite the degree of reflexivity would place greater emphasis on the role of contemporary citizenship as a defensive strategy – in a complex and potentially hostile social

and political environment(...). Social actors may become aware of the contingent nature of solidarity and community – and to this extent they may be ‘clever’ as Giddens implies – but their ‘reflexivity’ involves the appreciation of the transformation of traditional concepts of belonging and the need to pursue alternatives in circumstances of constrained choice” (p. 712-713).

Giddens however is aware of this critique, when he reminds us that all choices always reflect back upon pre-existing power relations. The “opening-out of social life to decision-making therefore should not be identified ipso facto with pluralism; it is also a medium of power and stratification” (Giddens 1994: 76), obviously the process of meaning construction is socially conditioned in terms of differences in access to cognitive, symbolic and material resources.

Reflexivity as a framework for the analysis of participation strategies

In the following, these general observations are synthesised into a number of questions, which I use to guide and inspire the empirical analysis in the dissertation:

Re-embedding at the level of individual participation strategies

Summing up the discussion thus far, the key perspective on individual participation strategies is the active link between personal reflections on selfhood, identity and ‘life-planning’ with the social and political commitments of individuals. Borrowing the concepts suggested by Lash, re-embedding from the perspective of individuals is about the *creative linking of self- and structural reflexivity with the intentional aim of impacting the level of collective interaction*. Instead of joining a party or a political organisation, the individual becomes her own

mediator between personal beliefs, motivations and interests embedded in every day life-experiences, and the political rule-change at the collective level. Following this line of reasoning, the substantial aspect of individual participation has to do with a process of connection a. reflections on selfhood, the context of everyday life circumstances and individual life-planning with b. considerations of how to affect change at the level of collective interaction. The perspective can be synthesised in the following two questions:

a) Do actors orient themselves towards identifiable projects or strategies framed in terms a re-assessment of specific phases of the personal life-context in relation to wider rule-changes at the collective level?

b) What are the change-agendas expressed in these narratives, i.e. the underlying social analysis in terms of perceived institutional prerequisites and barriers for their implementation, and how do actors assess the overall outcome?

To further clarify the focus, participation as reflexive re-embedding has a cognitive and a social dimension; the former points to the process of questioning and examining one's own theories of reality (values, beliefs, interests), the reassessment of such beliefs and world-views being a key dimension of participation. The social dimension refers to the integrative aspect; do individual projects have to do with explicit 'self-staging' of social commitments and networks, to what extent is the question of social integration (finding a place in the community) an inherent dimension of the participation-strategy?

Re-embedding at the level of collective participation strategies

At the level of collective participation, the perspective suggested is that of 'sub-politics,' a category referring to a situation in which everybody competes for the emerging power to shape politics. With the politisation of life-style issues and other dimensions traditionally outside the realm of politics this perspective underlines the blurring of traditional distinctions between the social and the political. Political action is characterised by fights between different epistemological positions from which actors (reflexively) seek to draw the conceptual boundaries according to their respective world-views and interests.

The point is that the reflexivity perspective blurs the distinction between the social and the political; social relations cannot be taken for granted but are continuously re-embedded in the intentional act of (self-) reflexive re-construction. Thus, social communities are also political communities in that they derive from a systematic process of self-questioning and dialectic re-framing of basic assumptions in the specific contexts of everyday life. In a strict interpretation of the dis-embedding thesis all communities are reflexive communities, they question is whether they acknowledge it by explicitly posing questions of their own constitution and continuous transformation. Pursuing this perspective from an empirical perspective, the key questions are:

- a) What is the nature of the political dimension articulated by the group of participants?

- b) Whose accounts count; how is in the process of collective meaning construction conditioned?

The cognitive dimension: What are the basic frames of understanding questioned by participants as self-reflexive political strategy? And how is such questioning intended to impact upon collectively binding rules? And the social dimension: how is the 'we' conceptualised? And how is the 'we' organised?

Knowledge and power in networks

Despite the open-ended ('differential and pluralistic') nature of the reflexive processes of meaning construction, some accounts or world-views come to dominate collective understandings, any process of knowledge creation is embedded in relations of power. To analyse this power dimension the key analytical question is 'whose accounts count?' What are the sources of perceived authoritative knowledge that influences individual and collective beliefs in the process? How can this distribution of (for lack of better word: epistemological authority) be explained in terms of stratification as differences in (material, cognitive, normative) resources?

As emphasised by Long (1992) processes of knowledge creation are embedded in social relations, in turn conditioned by relations of power, authority and legitimacy. Therefore such processes are "just as likely to reflect and contribute to the conflict between social groups as they are to lead to the establishment of common perceptions and interests" (p. 27). A network entails a cognitive dimension (meaning-construction) and a social dimension (recasting of social relations). Healey (1998) suggests a network perspective closely associated with the outlined perspectives when she argues that a network is a relational space in which people relate to each other constructing their identities, values and aspirations, and different networks embody different worlds of (local) knowledge framing how people think and validate. But it is also a relational space that distributes access to material and social resources, knowledge and power, in this meaning

network relations map out stratification, showing differences in the distribution of resources, knowledge and power.

Towards a research strategy

The themes and questions relating to the issue of reflexivity outlined above constitute the ordering perspective thought to inspire the substantial and procedural dimensions of the research developed in the dissertation. As stated in the introductory chapter, the key hypothesis is that citizens' participation can be analysed as re-embedding strategies which at this stage can be defined as an attempt to link self- and structural reflexivity in an intentional effort to affect changes at the level of collective interaction. In order to turn this abstract argument into a more operational research strategy, a number of issues have to be addressed.

I consider reflexivity to be an integrated feature of social action as such, in a sense the concept of 're-embedding strategy' is another word for social action. Alexander has pursued this point, arguing that action is interpretation and strategization simultaneously (Alexander 1987: 299 - 303). Human interpretation can be seen as composed by typification and invention³: We understand all new phenomena according to

³ Jeffrey C. Alexander is one of the sociologists that has criticised the tendency to view actors as either rational and objective or irrational and subjective (Alexander 1987: 295). Both positions have valuable contributions. Rationalistic exchange theory underscores the fact that actors have finite amounts of knowledge, time and resources at their disposal, actors *do* confront external conditions they cannot change without (irrational) costs, that outweighs potential or real benefits. In Alexander's words, practicality is to grant what actors decide cannot be changed a conditional status (as exogenous, independent or determinate). Traditions of ethnomethodology/phenomenology interpret action as order-seeking activity: "given means, norms and conditions, actors employ cognitive processes in open, contingent situations to establish ends that are consistent with, though not exclusively

internalized classification schemes, turning new things into old ones (typification). But reality does not conform to our classification schemes, and to understand the world we continuously invent and create new ways of classifying experience, modifying our categories in a creative process (invention). From this position, human action can be seen as being composed of a simultaneous process of interpretation and strategization: to interpret the world is to typify it and to invent it. We understand the world but we also act upon it, with and against people and things. Acting upon and changing the world provokes strategic considerations: What does it take to change it, and how can the means-ends relation be optimised? "To act against the world requires time, energy and knowledge" (p. 302).

The interesting perspective is to explore such creative re-embedding in relation to *specific* individual experiences, how do actors go about making these *links* between their personal situation and societal change, employing strategies of creative (self-) questioning and learning? And further, it's interesting to explore these individual efforts *in a context*, how were individual strategies conditioned by outcomes at the level of collective interaction?

derived from, overarching rules" (p. 297). The other important non-rationalistic tradition - symbolic interactionism - does not focus at means and ends but at "the utter contingency of individual interpretation itself" (p. 297), interpretation is the individual's response to the intentions and actions of others in the situation. How to integrate these ontologies into one notion of action? Well, by arguing that Further, Alexander argues that action is interpretation and strategization simultaneously (Alexander 1987: 299 - 303). Obviously, rationality understood as strategic considerations is embedded in irrationality. Rational calculations implies (qualified) guesses about future outcomes which are necessarily based upon (irrational) understandings (logically, the future cannot be predicted). Rational, cognitive and normative processes are intertwined dimensions of action. The interpretative processes of typification and invention lie at the heart of "rational choice", "making sense" is tied to "strategic considerations."

A strategy in its narrow sense is a rationally calculated set of actions in order to achieve specified ends. In its broader sense, it can be perceived as adaptation, as tailoring needs to options and resources, thus moving away from being an entirely voluntaristic concept focusing more on questions of power, access to resources and structural constraint" (Wallace 1993: 107). Connecting to Alexander's points, there is an obvious relationship between *strategy* and *narration*: Stories, metaphors, narratives etc. are interpretations of experience that reflect accumulations of experience and wisdom, and they function as a means to interpret new situations (diagnosis) in constantly changing circumstances (Brown & Duguid p. 44-45). Wishing to analyse participation strategies from the perspective of reflexive re-conceptualisation and learning, narrative analysis is useful with its focus on how stories and metaphors are accounts that map out individual and collective experience and shared understandings of complex and ambivalent contexts.

Yet, having to agree with Alexander, it is still clear that intentional strategies do not always result in structural change, and the concept of strategy is a tricky one as it reflects this duality of the actor-structure relationship. Despite the sometimes-optimistic formulations by Giddens in particular but also by Beck and Lash, the paradox is that reflexivity does not necessarily entail structural change. The challenge, as I perceive it, is to convert this ambivalence into a feasible research strategy in order to explore the dialectical relationship between individual actions and collective outcomes. Maintaining this distinction between reflexivity and structural transformation necessitates some kind of critical outcome assessment: What is the relationship between agents' (reflexive?) change-agendas and the issue of structural transformation?

Endogenous and radical reflexivity

The analytical perspective is one of cognitive re-orientation (as intentional self-reflection or crisis-provoked confusion) and the methodological challenge is to exploring how worldviews or basic frames of meaning become subject to changes over time? Re-embedding is a relational perspective, and reflexivity is situated in concrete processes of social interaction. As such, there is no there is no way of getting direct access to this movement of conceptual change for the outside observer, any research strategy embedded in a specific epistemological position ignores aspects of self-reflexive changes in understandings and categories not addressed within the perspective.

To work with this relativist dilemma, the researcher has to establish a (self-reflexive) perspective on the 'moving targets' of self-reflexive actors, embedded as they are in situated contexts of action. As a starting point for developing a methodological platform from which to address this challenge, Gephart's discussion of *endogenous* and *radical* reflexivity is relevant (Gephart 1996: 204-5): In Gephart's vocabulary, endogenous reflexivity refers to how a local framework (stories, narratives, situated knowledge) construe the (local) social order and vice versa.

Endogenous reflexivity thus investigates the self-generating character of account and context, he gives the example of how a reconstruction of the narratives of an environmental group *shows how the framing of the environmental narrative composes or constitutes the setting of the group*. Radical reflexivity refers to the attempt to go outside the framework, an exercise Gephart describes as 'abnormal discourse.' In his opinion, radical reflexivity "...involves an analyst who is self-referentially aware that analytical reflection occurs within an arena of assumptions that are themselves anterior to the process of reflection or the

phenomenon on which one reflects“ (p. 205). Recognising this, the task of the researcher is to reveal the hidden ontological assumptions (ontological practices) creating the domain or framework of the reflexive process.

To recapitulate; the endogenous perspective focuses on how people construe meanings, narratives etc., and how these come to justify the way that interaction in the network is organised in terms of social relations. Having thus investigated the social context from the inside, the second strategy is to jump outside of the reflexive arena. By (retrospectively) creating a distance to the endogenous perspective, the process can be evaluated from an external perspective, showing how local reflections occur within a field of assumptions not made subject to scrutiny and change. To the extent that such a jump is possible, it adds a second layer to the analysis, establishing an alternative position from which to argue that the reflexive process develops within a set of tacit assumptions, and constitutes a first step towards.

The distinction between endogenous and radical reflexivity encapsulates the main themes discussed in the previous. It allows for an analysis of power as it emerges in the relationship between meaning and social relations. It addresses the twin dimensions of meaning (epistemology) and social relations (sociology), and it establishes an external perspective upon the reflexive process, allowing for a discussion of changes in assumptions and categories taken for granted by actors. Thus, working with this distinction is very much in line with the research questions as developed above, and it is therefore adopted as the backbone of the research strategy pursued in the dissertation

However, Gephart's distinction between endogenous and radical reflexivity deserves a closer scrutiny: How to get access to the endogenous perspective? How to step outside the endogenous

perspective in order to evaluate different ontological positions in the reflexive process? As an analytical category, the notion raises the twin problems of relativity and the actor-structure problem: How to understand reflexive agents from their perspective while also 'jumping' out of their reflexive domain in the attempt to identify its boundaries? In chapter 1, the challenge was phrased as: How to methodologically and epistemologically establish an approach, that combines an external perspective upon rule-altering politics, with a maximum degree of openness to actors' perceptions of the processes of change they see themselves engaged in? In the following chapter, these issues are dealt with, developing the double perspective of endogenous and exogenous or radical reflexivity.

3. Reflexivity and epistemology – some challenges

The aim of this chapter is to outline some general epistemological and methodological guidelines directing my research. In search for an epistemological platform from which to proceed, the discussion is split up in two. In section 1, the endogenous perspective outlined in the previous chapter is pursued. From a recapitulation of the ‘death of epistemology’ argument, a starting-point is found in Charles Fox and Hugh Millers’ anti-foundational framework (Fox & Miller 1995).

However, there are some difficulties in the post-modern rhetoric. Therefore, epistemology is revived with help from Jeffrey Alexander (Alexander 1995) who proposes a ‘hermeneutically rooted universalism’ as a seemingly feasible epistemological position. The core argument is that inter-subjectivity is possible, allowing for commensurability of categories, a position that is adopted as a starting-point in the construction of a bottom-up approach to the mapping of network relations.

In section two, the attempt is made to formulate a position from which to step outside discourse (radical reflexivity). Much in line with Alexander’s epistemology, Roy Bhaskar (Bhaskar 1979, 1991, 1997) goes a step further when he proposes his Critical Realist ontology, combining epistemological relativism with an actor-structure conceptualisation based on a principle of duality. In his position-practice system, Bhaskar distinguishes between social action as perceived by actors and as the reproduction of institutionalised roles and positions. This distinction leads to a position from which the reflexive process can be analysed from the perspective of structural conditioning.

The question is when evaluating the networks, is it possible retrospectively to induce patterns of stratification on the basis of the endogenous perspective? Defining 'expertise' as authority to define reality, how do the understandings and conceptualisations mapped in the network approach explain privileged positions from which to define reality?

The Critical Realist ontology as presented by Bhaskar is a platform from which to analyse the actor-structural relationship from a relational perspective while allowing for explanations of a mechanistic nature that goes beyond the linguistic relativism of post-modern approaches. As Bhaskar likes to remind us, social reality is not identical with the conditions of its intelligibility. But the CR-ontology is complex and difficult to convert into a clear and pedagogical research strategy. Therefore, the methodology developed by Margaret Archer (1995) in her morphogenetic approach is introduced at the end of the chapter, as a guideline in the retrospective analysis of social stratification and power.

Part 1. Getting access (endogenous reflexivity)

"..just show that the thing doesn't exist by itself, but depends on something else. Which is true. But why repeat it? The only reason for doing so seems to be to undermine epistemology...And once you've shown your object doesn't rest on sure foundations you can sit back and relax" (Mol & Mesman: 423).

The death of epistemology

The methodological challenge of a research strategy is this: How can one justify beliefs? Often, political analyses are constructed around a confrontation between aggregative and integrative mechanisms. Analyses advocating communitarian values are primarily focused upon integrative mechanisms, while analyses clinging more to (neo-) liberal values emphasize aggregative dimensions. Accepting that analyses differ in focus, which

position is the more important or relevant? And if one chooses between the two, how to justify such a choice?

The problem is one of 'foundationalism' versus 'relativism': Does democracy rest upon self-evident and incorrigible pre-political and pre-theoretical foundations, from which e.g. the notion of citizenship can be deduced (as a minimalist version derived from a liberalist stance, or a maximalist communitarian version)? Or is the object of democracy to extrapolate working abstractions from concrete situations, refuting the existence of 'an independent ground' thus rendering the notion of e.g. citizenship contestable at a fundamental level? (Inspired by Barber 1984: 43, 64).

The key issue is to establish a position from which to form an opinion on the epistemological dimension of an analysis. If the task of epistemology is to determine "the nature, scope and limits, indeed the very possibility of human knowledge" (Dancy & Sosa (ed.) 1992: 89) sceptics are not long in arguing that this very exercise is impossible, there is no independent ground outside discourse from where discourse can be evaluated. Since we cannot step outside discourse to check whether it corresponds to reality, the classical question about the adequacy of our epistemological framework is in principle unanswerable and therefore misconceived (Marshall 1994: 154).

Judgements like 'this discourse is rational', or 'this discourse is merely expressive' are arbitrary statements (and if stated anyhow, evaluations from a specific normative perspective). Thus, according to sceptics, epistemology is dead; differences in justifications for our beliefs cannot be accounted for. Because no independent Archimedian view-point exists, a differentiation of the legitimacy of beliefs cannot be established, "with respect to this or that area of putative knowledge we are never so much

as justified in believing one thing rather than another” (Dancy & Sosa (ed.) 1992: 89).

The ‘death of epistemology’ argument is closely tied to ‘the social construction of reality’ argument: As a well-known relativist, Rorty argues that it is misleading to think that we can align our beliefs and concepts with a reality independent of the mind because no such mind-independent reality exists. Therefore, we will never know if there is a mismatch between this external reality and our beliefs about it. Instead, Rorty advocates a pragmatic approach, where the ‘adequacy’ or justification of our beliefs can be measured against particular, concrete problems in specific, historical contexts (Dancy & Sosa (ed.) 1992: 89).

The relativist line of reasoning is born ambiguous, to launch a critique against epistemology implies that the term is somehow relevant, and it’s hard to see a relativist position that does not construe itself on some kind of epistemological basis. However, the sticking point is that knowledge about the social world is relative. As *The Blackwell Companion to Epistemology* underlines, knowledge is relative “to time, to place, to society, to culture, to historical epoch, to conceptual scheme or framework, or to personal training or conviction – so that what counts as knowledge depends upon the value of one or more of these variables” (Dancy & Sosa (ed) 1992: 429). The doctrine of epistemological relativism is not unproblematic (typically the notion is criticized as self-referentially incoherent) but this has, according to the *Blackwell Companion*, to be viewed against the alternative position: to accept certainty, dogmatism and privileged frameworks.

An example of an anti-foundational position

Fox and Miller's (1995) discussion of post-modern public administration exemplifies a relativist, social constructivist

position. As I see it, the core argument is that there is no reality outside subjective categories. Social reality is a human construct subject to continuous interpretative processes, there is no objective reality in the sense of reality-imposing, impersonal or material forces outside of human beings: "In the process of backing away from these underlying assumptions, we come to understand that many of the categories that we uncritically employ in daily discourse are reifications, that is, socially constructed categories that are mistaken for things that exist "out there" in the world of "objective reality." Reified categories are those that are unsuitably endowed (by their human creators) with autonomous, non human force and are thought to exist independently of human social interaction" (p. 8).

Using a constructivist position, Fox and Miller seek to establish a 'non-foundationalist' framework based in a 'pre-categorical life world', which (simply put) is constructed by 'situations' and 'intentionalities.' Situations refer to contextualism, the fact that human activity takes place in culturally conditioned social contexts. The notion of intentionalities refers to the observation that consciousness is consciousness about something, it has a content. "Intentionality, as it is most generally meant, is the synthetic act of consciousness by which the phenomenon is made to be" (p. 81).

According to Fox and Miller, subjectivity is not limited to the mind in a cognitive sense, subjectivity is connected to mind and the human body, the latter being in a 'primordial' contact with the world. Through the body, human beings have a 'preconscious bodily orientation', that incorporates subjectivity and objectivity thus constituting the 'body-subject' as the appropriate unit of analysis. In this language, intentionality is rooted in body-subjects' relation to the world, and defined as "the active voluntaristic sparks emanating from body-subjects"

(p. 82), and action is “a physical expression of intentionality, conditioned by the sense one makes of the situation” (p. 83).

Simplifying Fox & Miller’s platform, they underline that a constructivist position is radically nominalist. The applied categories are just words, they do not represent universals, but arbitrary, socially agreed upon signs with relevance to particular groups. At the same time, they do not entirely reject the notion of universals, stating that “because all consciousness occurs in bodies, with significant overlapping capacities with all other similar bodies, we will ultimately be able to foil incorrigible incommensurability. Discourse is possible, neotribalism need not, in principle, prevail because of this concrete universal” (p. 84). In other words, the fact that human beings possess bodies with ‘overlapping capacities’, allow them to understand each other.

A non-foundational epistemology points to hermeneutics

The persuasive point in Fox and Millers discussion is that there is a need for epistemological sensitivity in the effort to avoid a positivist reification of substantial, pre-defined categories. To achieve this, one has to accept a nominalist position and the epistemological relativism that follows from this. Epistemological relativism means that our beliefs are socially produced, transient and fallible: “There is no way in which we can look at the world and then at a sentence and ask whether they fit. There is just the expression (of the world) in speech (or thought)” (Bhaskar 1997 (1975): 249).

A person who employs a relativist argument typically argues that there is no difference between the word and the world, and because we have no privileged position outside language we have only access to knowledge about the world through language. Since the basic building blocks or elements of language have no reference to (essential) qualities in an

objective world (nominalism), they are social constructs reflecting social forms of life: "...social life does not exist independently of the concepts in terms of which agents think their own existence...given that the subject matter of social science is constituted by the way in which agents conceptualize their conditions of existence, explanation is to be achieved by understanding (or, as it were, reconceptualizing) their conceptualizations; that is by grasping the way in which they grasp (or understand) their existence" (Bhaskar 1979: 172).

From this argument it follows, that Verstehen (interpretative understanding) is a technique whereby the mode of understanding employed by the people under study is adopted by the social scientist. Guiding questions of hermeneutics are: How do agents and collectivities conceptualise their social conditions? How does meaning regulate action? Some of the arguments from the anti/non-foundationalist critique can be summarised as follows:

- The position that no privileged frameworks exists from which to generate knowledge of the social world entails a commitment to self-reflexive methods or procedures of bridging the gap between the knower and the known, between researcher and 'the researched'. Any pre-conceived conceptual framework automatically creates a devastating blindness to 'otherness,'⁴ and the challenge is to avoid this initial reductionism.

⁴ The anti-foundationalist critique underlines how knowledge systems are contingent and connected to power, showing how privileged belief-systems and power structures are mutually constitutive. As an example, Foucault shows "How an Other is always pushed aside, marginalized, forcibly homogenized, and devalued as that cognitive machinery does its work. This Other may be other actors, external nature, or aspects of our own physical or psychological life; but in every case, Foucault awakens in us the experience of discord as otherness is generated" (White 1991: 19).

- It follows that the social constructivist argument is political at a basic level. No categories should be 'taken for granted' as objective or 'pre-existing', they are labels subject to discursive conflicts, de-legitimizing or legitimizing different views and interests. Viewing social reality as a 'construct' implies that this construct is "based on acts of decision and thereby also of exclusion. So the task for a social science must be to find the moments of exclusions and decisions that gave the results we find our self situated in" (Hansen (1997: 7)).

Epistemology revived: consensus about impersonal worlds

The incommensurability thesis that often precedes the relativist/constructivist argument points to an interpretative barrier between fundamentally different epistemological communities; how to investigate the conceptualisations of social practices, and what claims do researchers have of privileged access? How do we get to know social practices if conceptualisations are always relative, maybe differing to an extent incomprehensible from an external perspective? How is it possible to understand the world-views of a specific community without being a member? And if one eventually does become a member, how do we know that one goes on 'in the right way', what is the basis for making general statements about specific experiences? (problem of induction).

From a relativist position, 'radical' reflexivity is impossible. But if epistemology is dead, what is left for theory and method, how should we then carry out research? If one cannot step outside discourse, either the analyst already knows and has no reason to inquire (being inside the perspective), or s/he does not know about what to inquire having no access to extra-discursive perspectives? So it seems as if the logical next step is to try to establish a point of departure, where the problematic nature of universals is recognised but not refuted altogether.

The epistemological dilemma

An interesting interpretation of the epistemology-debate is provided by Jeffrey C. Alexander (1995, Chapter 3) who frames the problem as follows (p. 91): if knowledge of the world is unrelated to the social position and the intellectual motivations of the knower, there is a case for universal knowledge and general theory building. If, on the other hand, knowledge is determined by its relation to the knower, knowledge of the world can only be relative and particularistic.

Alexander seeks to reformulate the epistemological dilemma, which he calls 'a simplistic choice' and a 'false and dangerous' dichotomy between 'scientific theory' and 'anti-theoretical relativism'. In his opinion, a third position is possible, where the search for universal truth is not abandoned but developed in an approximate manner while avoiding the reductionism and simplifications of positivist methods, a position he refers to as a 'hermeneutically rooted version of universality'.

In the following, his argument that approximate objectivity is possible will be recapitulated. Two prepositions constitute the foundation of his argument: First, reason does not create the world as such, reason is a framework through which the world is understood. Second, action is partly determined by factors external to the individuals engaged in the actions. In other words, there is a reality outside individual perceptions of reality, but since the world can not be seen as such, individuals have to rely on their (subjective) frameworks.

Creating a distinction between 'reality' and 'framework', one has to focus on the correspondence between the two, which is in Alexander's words "the relationship between "reason-created" conceptual structures and reasonable "observational statements" about the world" (p. 113). In this sense, objectivity is conditional, reality is a subjective interpretation of a socially

constructed reality. But because subjectivity is developed within a social context, shared and binding norms are created, that allows for commensurability of categories.

Subjectivity is rooted in a social context, where human beings share historically developed (discursive) categories of thought, which makes a methodological depersonalization of categories or frameworks possible. Empirical observations are obviously rooted in preconceptions, but these conceptions are based on the historical development of categories of thought, shared by communities of people, and researchers.

Following Alexander, the solution to the epistemological dilemma is to recognise such generalised categories as impersonal categories, allowing for extra personal control and evaluation. Hence, the first criterion for universality is the acknowledgement of impersonal worlds. To the extent that the scientific community acknowledges the impersonal status of applied categories, researchers can share ontologies allowing for extra personal control and evaluation. The second criterion for reaching scientific objectivity is the possibility of establishing the criteria for consensus. Through processes of interpretation social reality is constructed, but it is possible to reach a consensus about the criteria for the validity of such constructions, within different ontologies.

The general argument about approximate objectivity or contextual universalistic understandings Alexander summarises in the following quotation with reference to Dilthey: "Dilthey believed that it was precisely the ineluctable centrality of experience that made the supersession of particularism a continuous human project. Because experience is personal, mutual understanding becomes problematic and hence of ultimate importance. Precisely because we are primarily experiencing the world, we are always trying to understand

others and not only ourselves. This leads us to strive for common knowledge and to construct categories. Thus, Dilthey can insist...that "understanding alone surmounts the limitation of the individual experience"..Because human understandings "possess an independent existence and development of their own", individual actors are bound by universals, by generalized "judgements of value, rules of conduct, definitions of goals and of what is good""(p. 116).⁵

Concrete universals!

To return to Fox & Millers analysis: a non-foundationalist, constructivist position is confronted with the problem of justifying the ontological level at all, in a sense the epistemological dilemma penetrates the argument. Either the notion of universals has to be refuted altogether, or one has to acknowledge that human beings share commonalities that transcend subjective perceptions of reality. To identify the body as *the* (objective) truth about human beings in a constructivist perspective is as arbitrary as the statement that for instance our capacity for self-reflection is what ultimately defines us as human beings.

⁵ In the social sciences, agreement is rare, and different research paradigms compete with each other. But in Alexander's view, they are not as incommensurable as Kuhn suggested, in that the categories at various levels of theory are not necessarily coherent within a paradigm, which makes it harder internally to evaluate standards, but increases the likelihood of shared references between competing schools. "To engage in foundationalism is to put forward general theoretical arguments, to create criteria for truthfulness that are so universally compelling that they produce agreement about validity claims between practitioners in a field" (p. 122). The foundationalism of the social sciences is the very existence of paradigmatic knowledge. Theoretical discourse puts forward standards of validity within each scientific perspective, thus allowing for a continuous contestation of the provisional consensus about the basis of universal arguments.

A relativist position cannot base itself upon universals, which first of all makes it problematic to give 'body-subjects' 'irreducible commonalties', and secondly to argue that it is precisely our bodies that allows for such commonalties, and not shared experiences, cognitive competencies or something else. Fox and Miller's anti-foundationalism can be seen as an attempt to establish precisely a foundation. Developing the categories of 'the situation' and 'intentionality', they arrive precisely at a mixture of contextuality and subjectivity, which can be argued to allow for commensurability on the basis of approximated universality.

To recapitulate, the point pursued thus far is that truth is not a propositional content but a "temporal specificity" (Dancy & Sosa (ed.) 1992: 78). The way that the 'knower's' knowledge-horizon is made up of pre-judgements, historical location and conceptual tradition, inevitably enables and limits understanding. Reality is a subjective interpretation of a socially constructed reality. But because subjectivity is developed within a social context, shared and binding norms are created, that allows for commensurability of categories. Subjectivity is rooted in a social context, where human beings share historically developed (discursive) categories of thought, which makes a methodological depersonalization of categories and frameworks possible. Empirical observations are obviously rooted in preconceptions, but these conceptions are based on the historical development of categories of thought, shared by communities of people.

Part 2. Creating distance (radical reflexivity)

”..when the idea of scientific certainty eventually collapsed, the absence of an ontological dimension discouraged anything other than a purely voluntaristic reaction - in which it was supposed that because our beliefs about the world were not causally determined by the world then they must be completely “free creations of our own minds, the result of an almost poetic intuition”” (Bhaskar 1975: 44).

“God has given ontological arguments a bad press” (Bhaskar 1993: 177).

What to do of structural explanations and the notion of causality? Acknowledging the existence of multiple realities and ‘silenced voices’, one has to ask ‘silenced by what, whom and why’? What are the mechanisms at stake in relation to the articulation and non-articulation of complementary/competing worldviews and conceptualisations? A structuralist⁶ would argue, that social causation and structural constraint are synonymous notions: It is necessary to assume the existence of structural factors that facilitate and restrict individuals’ articulations, choices and actions, which cannot be fully explained by means of induction from patterns of individual behaviour or conceptualisations.

Meaning is a social construct, but the process of construction is conflictual, and some actors are more powerful. Acknowledging the contingency of action, one still has to accept that action environments are structured in various ways. The question is,

⁶ By structure I understand a level of reality not directly visible, thus not directly observable, existing beyond the visible relations of individuals, constituting the underlying logic of the system as a “subjacent order by which the apparent order is to be explained” (Godelier 1972a: xix in Richter 1996: 596).

who has the power to draw the lines or dominate the definitions, using what resources and with what consequences? In Elsters words, the challenge is to acknowledge two radically different images of man that should be brought together in the social sciences: “as a rational creature capable of reflection and choice and as the passive plaything of causal forces that operate “behind his back”” (Elster 1993: 139).

Critical Realism

Roy Bhaskar has in ‘A Realist Theory of Science’ (1975), ‘The Possibility of Naturalism’ (1979) and consequent books provided a systematic philosophical account of a worldview (ontology) which is complex, stratified and changing. He argues against ‘actualism’ as the tendency to reduce explanations of the world to ‘the actual’; to what is directly accessible through sense data. Bhaskar advocates the relevance of transcendental⁷ type arguments allowing for explanations of a non-empirical nature. In the following, a rather brief outline of Bhaskar’s (early) ontological position is presented. Having done that, the methodological implications of this position are outlined, and related to the analysis of the network analyses: having mapped the networks, how to evaluate them from the perspective of social conditioning and stratification?

Social reality is not identical with the conditions of its intelligibility

Against the hard-core constructivist arguments put forward in the first part of the chapter, Bhaskar argues that a purely conceptual approach to social science denying the criteria of

⁷ Arguments about a reality of mechanisms, structures etc. which cannot be experienced yet cause events or phenomena to happen are transcendental (defined as “going beyond the limits of human knowledge, experience or reason, esp. in a religious or spiritual way” (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary)).

causality is not without its' problems. According to Bhaskar, social behaviour does not exist independently of some concept, but independently of its adequate concept! Agents' concepts and accounts are corrigible, they might serve to mystify or mask behaviour, or they might be inadequate in describing social behaviour (but the corrigibility of conceptualisations is always contingent).

From the critical realist perspective it is inadequate to analyse changes in the world as changes in beliefs about the world: You can have changing beliefs, different descriptions but of an unchanging world. Therefore changes have to be analysed with reference to an intransitive dimension (to understand how changing knowledge of unchanging objects is possible).

Essentially, the conceptual criterion ignores the material aspect. For example, being disadvantaged is not entirely a conceptual matter of how subjects think about their disadvantage, it also involves a material aspect (if that was the case they could think it away - social change does not only happen in the minds of people. Other examples are being in prison or at war, conditions that involve ideas about what is going on but also definite physical positions, like being excluded from society or party to a conflict (Bhaskar 1979: 174).

The list is endless, social life always has a material dimension. Social forms have a reality and causal efficacy on the material world, in that they make a difference to the state of the material world that would not otherwise have occurred (pollution, roads, noises etc.).

The point is that there are (more or less) strict rules governing how predicates are used to distinguish meanings. But this does not imply that there are more or less strict rules governing that to which predicates apply (e.g. there are criteria for the correct

application of the concept 'anarchist', but no correct way of being one), "In short, social reality is not identical with the conditions of its intelligibility; and the meaning of an action is not equivalent to its occurrence. The conditions of the possibility of knowledge (or description) of objects are not the same as (and do not determine) the conditions of the possibility of those objects (or vice-versa) - in social life just as in the natural sphere. Thus it is not the case that all actions are, or can be modelled on, or can be explained in the same kind of way as, or are in any kind of correspondance with speech actions or their analogues (signifying and/or communicative actions). There is neither identity nor homology between what is real and what is knowable, or sayable: the limits of language are not the limits of the world" (Bhaskar 1979: 182).

The implications of this view on the social world Bhaskar pursues in length, below a rather inadequate synthesis of his ontological position is presented, leading up to some methodological guide-lines developed by Margaret S. Archer (1995).

Ontology: The domains of the real, the actual and the empirical
The Critical Realist ontology is derived from the claim that an intransitive dimension exists which can only be grasped by reasoning along the lines of 'knowing this, what must the world look like for it to be true?' According to Bhaskar, the existence of an intransitive dimension becomes clear when looking at scientific experimentation. An experiment produces a closed system in which events are caused in order to prove the existence of underlying or hidden mechanisms or laws. The events that occur are 'produced', while the mechanisms or laws identified by the experiment are not. The interesting aspect of an experiment (apart from what can be shown to exist) is the fact that the events that occur in the experiment can result in an understanding of natural structures, processes, mechanisms etc.

by analysing what does not happen in the experiment. A distinction between (intransitive) mechanisms or laws therefore has to be introduced in contrast to visible events or series of events to make experimental activity intelligible. Thus, a distinction between the real, the actual and the empirical can be construed:

	Domain of real	Domain of actual	Domain of empirical
Mechanisms	*		
Events	*	*	
Experiences	*	*	*

The empirical domain is that of experiences (sense data). But some events take place un-experienced or unperceived therefore there must be a domain of the actual. But what causes events to happen? As derived from the experiment-example, the reality of mechanisms cannot be sensed, it can only retrospectively be argued to explain phenomena in the domains of the actual and empirical.

The existence of an intransitive dimension in the sense of real whether knowable or not (however mind-boggling that might be) is necessary in order to explain phenomena like mechanisms that might endure (unchanged) but inactive, latent, non-actualised powers etc. Causal explanations allow for arguments like; this being the outcome, the postulated mechanism must be real; if another outcome, another mechanism, thus asking questions and getting replies which are not already implicit in the questions (Collier 1994: 53).

Social structures

How to proceed from natural mechanisms and laws to social structures? Applying the mechanism/event distinction to societies – which are open systems in which therefore no

constant conjunctions of events occur - the only feasible approach to mechanistic or law-like explanations is to assert multiple co-determination and analyse causal laws as tendencies. From a critique of methodological individualism (not to be repeated here) Bhaskar basically follows an (Aristotelian) logic that sees society as the ever-present condition and the continually reproduced outcome of human agency (p. 43). As argued by Durkheim, society is always already made (be it language, beliefs and practices etc.) and in this sense humans never create it but either reproduce or transform it. "Society stands to individuals, then, as something that they never make, but that exists only in virtue of their activity" (1979: 42).

The point that social structures (=society, Bhaskar uses the terms interchangeably) exists only in virtue of the activities that they govern has two implications: 1. Social structures cannot be empirically identified independently of these activities, and 2. Thus, they do not exist independently of the conceptions that agents have of what they are doing (some theory to explain their activities). Social structures are essentially social products, which implies that people - through their activity - make social products AND the conditions of their making (structures).

The social character of structures further implies that they are (potential) subjects to transformation, and thus only relatively enduring. Bhaskar lists one further qualification (1979: 48) because social activities are differentiated, social structures are interdependent and thus only relatively autonomous. From this ontology, "society may thus be conceived as an articulated ensemble of such relatively independent and enduring generative structures; that is, as a complex totality subject to change both in its components and their interrelations" (p. 48).

A relational actor-structure model

Analysing social reality all we see is human activity and its effects. Yet, human activity in society happens as it does because social structures are as they are: "If we were not reproducing/transforming social relations all the time, they would not exist: that is the truth of "humanism." But all human action presupposes the pre-existence of society and makes no sense without it. Its social context determines what actions are possible and what their outcome will be. That is the truth of structuralism" (Collier 1994: 145).

Bhaskar combines these insights into a model of 'the duality of structure and praxis', the transformational model of social activity (1979: chapter 2). The model advances a relational concept of sociology in which the axiom is that social life is embedded in a network of social relations. In a constantly changing world, social identities are constituted relationally, in differentiating systems of differences and/or changes (1993: 155), society is the provisional outcome of a heterogeneous multiplicity of changing mechanisms, agencies and circumstances.

The duality of structure and praxis:

	condition	production
Society	of human agency - praxis	of conditions (society)
	outcome	reproduction

Duality refers to the essential distinction and the interdependence of structure and praxis. The essential distinction implies that individuals and society are radically different 'kinds of things', and therefore not mutually constitutive (in Giddens's sense). Establishing a 'real' difference between individual and society, individual reflexivity,

purposefulness and intentionality does not necessarily entail structural transformation.

Social structures are a necessary condition for human agency, but they exist only in virtue of being reproduced or transformed. Against Rorty⁸, Bhaskar argues that creative/reflexive re-description might be necessary but is not sufficient to change a social structure, normative social science involves more than description and re-description. From a critical realist perspective the webs of social relations can be discovered and disentangled, and explanatory critiques of the conceptual schemes/vocabularies that sustain these relations can be put forward.

Accepting the Transformational Model of Social Activity, it follows that actors' accounts are limited considering unintended consequences, unacknowledged conditions, tacit knowledge and unconscious beliefs. Therefore, actors' conceptualisations may be false about the social relations in which they stand. Two points follows from this: For the social sciences, there is no incorrigible foundational base for social scientific knowledge in actors' accounts, and because hereof social science has a potentially cognitive role to play for human agents (Bhaskar 1991: 148).

Research strategy

Bhaskar does not spend much time suggesting more specific methodological approaches to convert these general insights into an operational research strategy. Yet, he suggests a logic of the sort: "this being the outcome, this postulated mechanism must

⁸ "To see a common social practice as cruel and unjust...is a matter of re-description rather than discovery. It is a matter of changing vocabularies rather than of stripping away the veil of appearances from an objective reality, an experimentation with new ways of speaking, rather than of overcoming "false consciousness" (Rorty 1986: 14, in Bhaskar 1991: 72).

be real" (1991: 70-72). A social science explanation of a social event needs to develop an interpretation of the event based on twin assumptions: A. that it occurs in an open system (the social world is always open, contingent as opposed to determined). And b. that it potentially can be explained with reference to the interaction of a multiplicity of mechanisms (a conjuncture of mechanisms).

The starting-point is the agents' conceptualisations, i.e. a hermeneutic understanding of reflexive remoulding at the level of level of social interaction, there is no shortcut to avoid the barrier between 'the knower' and 'the known'. To explore point b. the question is: Is it possible to identify generative mechanisms using the logic of metaphors/analogies for mechanisms, which if they were to exist and act would explain the phenomenon in question?

Following point a. one needs to recognise that social events are consequences of a conjecture of mechanisms. Therefore other mechanisms potentially explain the phenomena in question, and the logical next stage is to ask: Is it possible retrospectively to correct the explanation with reference to other (tendencies of) 'mechanisms'?

Thus, Bhaskar poses the analytical challenge of generating a retrospective explanation of the structured nature of the social setting based on actors' accounts. Carrying out such a transcendental type of analysis is by no means a straightforward exercise. Doty (1997) argues that Bhaskar's TMSA model is based upon an essentialist notion of structure that denies explanatory power to the practice of agents, and she discusses how everyday practices of agents come to be regarded as generated by enduring generative structures.

Disagreeing with Bhaskar's argument the question is "whether rules are essentially deep, generative properties of enduring structures or intersubjective understandings of agents in their immediate and local practices; or if they are both, then conceptualizing them as the definitive feature of structures cannot be entirely correct; i.e. if agents and structures can be defined by some of the same properties, then how are we to differentiate them?" (p. 371).

Doty argues that perhaps structures cannot be separated from the social and discursive contexts within which they are embedded, from her point of view the rules and norms that make up structures are inherently intersubjective. Thus, Doty argues that: "perhaps there is no external objective structure to be known at all, i.e. that the very possibility of "objective" structures is lodged within the self-presence of the subjects, who are themselves socially/discursively constructed. Any neat distinction between subjects and objects is thereby effaced (erased)?" (371).

The point taken up by Doty is a relevant one, and it can be repeated in relation to the concept of reflexivity. This has been done by Tucker Jr. who remarks: "...because reflexivity is the way in which people actively make social reality, it cannot be separated from the social context in which it occurs" (Tucker Jr. 1998: 57). Thus, we end up with an infinite regress, if the social context is a reflexive construction how to distinguish between the two?⁹

The idea pursued in this context is to approach reflexivity employing Bhaskar's transformational model as a platform underlying a research strategy, in which a hermeneutic approach

⁹ "How a historical society that is transforming itself categorically can be observed by social science remains an unanswered question" (Beck 1997: 18).

to actors creative narration of their social realities is combined with a retrospective analysis of the conditioning features of social interaction. I believe that both Doty and Tucker Jr. have some strong points, and they are dangerously close to undermining Bhaskar's transformational model of social activity as such.

However, I find that a (pragmatic) solution to the difficult actor-structure problem has been developed by Margaret S. Archer (1989) (1995) who has a reply in hand when she offers her *morphogenetic approach*, suggesting the time-dimension as a solution to the actor-structure problem posed by Doty and Tucker Jr. I find that Archer's interpretation of Bhaskar's position is less susceptible to this critique and I have chosen to employ her framework in order to anchor the retrospective analysis in a systematic response to the issue of stratification.

Archer's model is in accordance with the meta-principle of analytical dualism suggested by Bhaskar (Archer 1995: 66): 1) The social world is stratified, implying that the emergent properties of agents and structures are irreducible to one another and thereby analytically separable. 2) The assertion that agents and structure are temporally distinguishable (pre-existence and posteriority) a distinction that can be used methodologically to investigate interplay and changes in both over time.

The time-dimension is crucial in that it allows for a distinction between actor and structure. Previous actors have through their activities constituted present institutions, while our present actions either reproduce or transform these institutions: "To stress temporal separability is never to challenge the activity-dependence of structures: it is only, but very usefully, to specify whose activities they depend upon and when" (p. 66).

Below Archers' analytical method is presented, and it forms the backbone of the research strategy adopted and accounted for in chapter 4, in which the social conditioning of the network interaction described in the case studies is analysed.

A critical realist methodology: the morphogenetic approach

“Society is that which nobody wants, in the form which they encounter it, for it is an unintended consequence. Its constitution could be expressed as a riddle: what is it that depends on human intentionality but never conforms to their intentions? What is it that relies upon action but never corresponds to the actions of even the most powerful? What is it that has no form without us, yet which forms us as we seek its transformation? And what is it that never satisfies the precise designs of anyone yet because of this always motivates its attempted reconstitution?” (Archer 1995: 165).

In the following a rough outline of Archer's methodology is presented, approaching the actor-structure problem by introducing a time-dimension in the analysis. When social action has been explained based on actors' theories of what they are doing, the next step is to pose a question of structural conditioning. The whole point following the critical realist ontology is *that positions predate practices and analytically can be seen as a constellation of structured interests, resources and constraints embedded in each position by webs of relationships* (Archer 1998: 201). Empirically, the question is; “on whose activities is it that distributions, roles, positions and institutions depend”?

Working with a time dimension

The implications of working with a time-dimension are formulated in two basic assumptions: 1) that structure necessarily pre-dates the actions which transforms it and 2) that structural elaboration necessarily post-dates those actions (1995: 76) These assumptions are developed into the following model:

Figure 3 – double morphogenesis

Structure

T1

Social interaction

T2

T3

Structural elaboration/reproduction

T4

(Source: Archer 1995: 76)

Time 1 (T1): Reality is stratified, which implies that social action will always be structurally conditioned through different resource distributions, group formations, variances in access patterns etc., all features which are the (aggregate) consequences of past actions. Structural conditioning has a causal influence on interaction by shaping action situations, and endowing different actors with different resources, vested interests etc.

Time 2 (T2): In time two, the level of social interaction, actors are either enabled or blocked by the structural conditioning. The key notion is not determinism but *reflexive remodelling*, either reproducing or transforming structural conditions: “People are not puppets of structures because they have their own emergent properties which mean they either reproduce or transform social structure, rather than creating it” (Archer, p. 71).

At T3, a directional influence on future structures results from social interaction. Structural conditioning implies *opportunity costs*: Structures are either frustrating or rewarding contexts for human agents, who either seek to reproduce or change settings depending upon the social positions they occupy. Structures set

a prize on acting and a premium on following them, a view that Archer bases upon the Weberian assumption that most of the time for most people there is a rough congruence between their interests, interpretations and actions (p. 90).

This view is similar to Alexander's remark that: "It is not that a worker *cannot* change his or her class position; the contingent nature of action means that he or she certainly has the freedom to do so. The problem is that the time and energy required to alter the work environment are so demanding that the probabilities of the worker changing it are very small. In this way the worker's economic environment becomes an "objective" condition" (Alexander 1987: 298)¹⁰.

T4: action might lead to structural elaboration i.e. a new structural setting, the result of unintended consequences caused by conflicts and unforeseen events (the non-predictability of open social systems) or the reproduction of T1. In Archers terms, the processes are either *morphogenetic* (structural elaboration as change of relations between parts, morphogenesis is defined as a "process which tend to elaborate or change a system's given form, structure or state" (Archer 1995: 75)) or

¹⁰ "objective premiums" have to be weighed subjectively, they do not imply rational man assumptions: "weighers cannot be pre-programmed by nature or nurture, otherwise weights and measures would be standard across society and constant for the individual - when manifestly they are not. Far from vested interests being compelling, this view of agency in no way precludes their sacrifice for altruistic reasons. Nevertheless, their recognition by promotive interest groups is what produces regularities in the action patterns of collectivities (which otherwise would remain puzzlingly coincidental), whilst the conscientious repudiation of vested interests generates deviations...Simultaneously, full allowance has to be made for group interaction which both manipulates knowledge and may lead to misrepresentation of interests. An unrecognized vested interest prompts no protective/promotive action: penalties accrue but the price is paid uncomprehendingly" (Archer 1995: 253-54).

morphostatic (reproduction of structure). T4 becomes T1 and a new morphogenetic circle ensues.

The three lines are continuous, and according to Archer, basically the analytical task is to break up the flow according to the problem in hand. The T1-T4 sequences accounts for the relationship between (stratified & conditioning) action environment - (reflexive & transformative/reproductive) social action - and (unintended/ unpredictable, contingent & conditioned) social change/status quo.

The underlying logic of the T1-T4 sequence is the process of *double morphogenesis*: as agency reshapes structure, it reshapes itself. "...it is precisely because such (structural) elaboration is co-determined by the conditional influence exerted by antecedent structures together with the autonomous causal powers of current agents, that society can develop in unpredictable ways. Unlike self-subsistent natural reality, it can be made to change shape through the reflexive actions of its thinking components (people), though not usually in anything like precise accordance with their intentions" (p. 75).

Following the Critical Realist line of argumentation, positions predate practices and can therefore analytically be seen as a constellation of structured interests, resources and constraints, embedded in each position in webs of relationships. Having mapped the networks, the task is then to *reconstruct* roles and positions in a retrospective analysis: Who articulated the endogenous perspective, and how to explain their 'definitorial power' (expertise) with reference to differences in (cognitive, social, material) resources?

An expert-position I perceive as a privileged place from which to articulate knowledge (most likely with a direct effect on collective understandings); and not only in terms of

decontextualised, impersonal or specialised knowledge¹¹. To explain how such privileged positions are established the role-concept is relevant. Like Archer, I understand roles in terms of obligations, sanctions and vested interests, roles are as systemic features (do's and don'ts), what Archer calls 'objective opportunity costs' either frustrating or rewarding beliefs and behaviour.

Individuals either reproduce or reflexively reformulate and remodel role expectations, involving learning processes, self-monitoring etc. Roles are changed and re-defined in the process of double morphogenesis: Roles are not 'fully scripted' but personified by different individuals, and properties pertaining to role changes emerge in the interplay between roles (as prior obligations, sanctions, vested interests) and the qualities that individual role occupants brings to the roles. The process of double morphogenesis points to the fact the properties of roles emerge as a consequence of this confrontation, as well as the individual characteristics of role occupants, resulting in personal development (Archer 1995: 187).

People re-mould roles, but they themselves change in the process, and these modified personal & role characteristics are emergent capacities, which can completely change the present role system or be carried on to other roles in other action contexts. A role can be more or less precisely defined, when no prior role definition or expectations exists people have space for reflexively developing these. From Archer's perspective,

¹¹ "In its modern guise at least, expertise is in principle devoid of local attachments. In an ideal-typical way, it could be said that all forms of 'local knowledge' under the rule of expertise become local recombinations of knowledge derived from elsewhere...expertise is disembedding because it is based upon impersonal principles, which can be set out and developed without regard to context" (Giddens 1994: 84/5).

political action is often about extending rules to interest-governed areas where no such rules apply. The fact that the social world is stratified implies that some people lack access to some roles, and the specification of such discrimination is an important dimension in the analysis. What conditions individual capacities to change and formulate roles? What conditions the powers of role incumbents to reflexively re-monitor their activities, and to what extent have roles and positions been changed as a consequence of this?

Agency in Archer's framework

Archer defines the notion of *agency* only in plural terms, as *collectivities that share the same life chances* (p. 256). Agents are characterised by having the same interests, which are external to roles but can be pursued through these. The stratification of social reality is integral to the notion of agency: "agency is also the mediating mechanism which accounts for who, out of the total population, acquires which role(s) within the total role array. For differential agential life chances give differential access to different parts of the array of roles available in society at any given time" (p. 256). Agency accounts for who occupies which roles, "and why they do what they do when the role does not require them to do it!" (p. 256).

A distinction between primary and corporate agents further qualifies the notion of agency. *Corporate agents* are those agents who engage in concerted action to either change or retain some structural features, recognising what their interests are and having some ideas about how to pursue those interests. Corporate agents like "self-conscious vested interest groups, promotive interest groups, social movements and defensive associations" (p. 258) all have two features in common: *articulation* and *organisation*. Because agents as collectivities do not necessarily have a strategic influence upon structural transformations (as showed in e.g. non-decision analysis of how

interests of some groups are ignored by decision making agenda) agents are never the less still agents in the sense that the collectivity has implications to the stability or change of the socio-cultural system.

Collectivities that do not exert transformational powers are described as *primary agents*, who are inarticulate in their demands and unorganised in their pursuit of interests. Primary agents, lacking objectives and strategic organisation, are by definition passive. They are not passive in the sense of being incapable of action, but in the sense that their potential agential powers are suspended. This suspension of agential powers is “on the part of those Corporate Agents whose interests it serves...passiveness can usually be understood in terms of the relations between collectivities” (p. 260).

It follows that the concept of collective strategy can be tied Archer’s definition of corporate agency. When synergy emerges between multiple individual actions and strategies it is signified by move from primary to corporate agency, a point which again allows for distinction between strategy formulations as ‘reflexive rhetoric’ and the development of corporate agency in terms of political power to affect structural change.

Reflexivity from the inside and from the outside

As Wallace (1993) points out, “constraints are continually changing, as are the perceptions of them” (p. 99). This apparently straightforward observation is a challenge to epistemology and method, and this chapter has been devoted to a discussion of epistemology and ontology in order to position the research strategy on relatively stable grounds.

Two basic points have been articulated in the previous. First, acknowledging that social reality is a human construct embedded in language and that knowledge of this reality is

relative to the situated context of the 'knower', any research strategy claiming to 'grasp how people grasp' their realities still has to take off from a double hermeneutic position necessarily blind to aspects outside of the pre-conceptualised framework. Defending this position, the argument was made that intersubjectivity is possible, allowing for agreement on criteria for evaluating conceptual categories as social constructs.

Second, social reality is stratified, social action is conditioned by differences in access patterns, group formations, resource distributions etc. as the outcome of past actions, and such stratification can be analysed retrospectively by showing how different positions are embedded within specific constellations of structured interests, resources and hierarchies of knowledge.

These two observations express the logic of the critical realist argument, which essentially is to understand and explain social action as a. narratives derived from agents' understandings of what they are doing (the inside view) and b. as the production or reproduction of social functions or roles and positions (the outside view).

As previously discussed, the relational nature of the reflexivity perspective poses a problem of relativity that surfaces in a number of ways: In order to pinpoint the process of reconceptualisation it is necessary to show gradual changes in understandings. But how to establish a base-line position from which to assess these changes when part of the reflexive process precisely is to question understandings and categories previously taken for granted?

Also, the systematic blindness of the hermeneutic approach is in itself a barrier to accessing conceptual changes not (initially) part of the observer's perspective. And the final blow: The self-reflexive question precisely is this - what do I consider

worthwhile changing? - and what people decide they cannot change they quite possibly “reflexively assimilate” into their world-views and positions instead.

Recognising that there are no clear-cut solutions to these epistemological and methodological problems, I have chosen a pragmatic strategy going around the problem in two ways.

1) To scrutinise how actors’ themselves articulate and question social and epistemological boundaries, how do they delimit shared understandings and the context of social relations they find themselves situated within, what I term the inside view. The key questions here are: How do understandings and world-views constitute the way that actors perceive formal and informal rules of interaction, and what are the shared understandings made subject to reflexive scrutiny and change? Exploring the inside view, methods have to be applied that allows for maximum hermeneutic sensitivity acknowledging the principally insurmountable barrier between observer and observed.

2) To step outside of this endogenous context by introducing a time dimension focusing upon changes in the relationship between understandings and modes of organisation over time. Is it possible retrospectively to step outside of the reflexive arena and show how competing world-views (cosmologies of individuals and communities) were supported by different roles and positions, which further explains why some of these world-views came to dominate?

The inside view

To recapitulate, the inside view I associate with a research approach drawing upon a basic hermeneutic openness to how actors construe meaning in order to delimit these understandings and world-views of actors without reproducing a closed substantial perspective in the analysis. From this

perspective, the challenge is to investigate how local frameworks of knowledge 'naturally' justify patterns of social organisation, that is, how shared understandings turn into organising principles.

The logic of the argument goes like this: "because the issues are framed in this way, we take-for-granted that our social relations should be construed along these lines." And the other way around, because the social order is like this, narratives are construed to support such a pattern of social positions and relationships.

Exploring this connection between worldviews and modes of social organisation narrative analysis plays a key role, describing how stories, narratives, metaphors etc. describe common understandings within the group. Metaphors mirror shared understandings and 'situated realities' revealing what is taken for granted, and reflexivity might include conscious questioning of metaphors in order to politicise such shared realities and worldviews.

The outside view

The TMSA combines a view on social reality as both situated practices and reproduction of roles and positions. Converted into Archer's approach the model allows for an retrospective analysis of this positional dimension, differentiating analytically between the interactive-situational dimension (the games being played) and the social functions, roles and positions being reproduced or changed as a consequence of these games.

Pursuing this outside view, the task is to show how roles and positions were embedded within specific constellations of structured interests, resources and hierarchies of knowledge, and to analyse how positions were established and defended by differently positioned agents? Developing the retrospective

analysis the time-dimension is crucial: How did the twin dimensions of 'local knowledge' and 'social relations' relate over time? To what extent did possible changes in this relationship cause (a conflict-laden) reconfiguration of the endogenous perspective, either reflexively remodelling or reproducing such shared understandings and stratified contexts of social relations?

4. Research strategy and method

In this chapter I present my research strategy and choice of method. The chapter is split into 3 sections. First, I go through the general arguments of the analytical perspective pursued in the dissertation, and present the substantial questions being posed. Second, I discuss the methodological links between theoretical concepts and empirical research, recapitulating the connection between ontological position and methodological choices. Third, I present the specific analytical strategies adopted going through the different steps of the research strategy, focusing upon collective and individual levels simultaneously.

From reflexive modernisation theory to empirical analysis

The purpose of the dissertation is twofold, to explore the reflexive dimension of specific individual and collective participation experiences, and to question the optimistic empowerment theme in the reflexive modernisation discourse acknowledging that reflexivity does not necessarily entail structural transformation (a point which necessitated a critical realist position). By suggesting the concept of re-embedding strategies, the point is to emphasise this dimension of reflexivity, and to work with the assumption that a core dimension of individual and collective participation experiences centre around such self-conscious questioning of basic modes of understanding and social organisation.

As Ulrich Beck kindly points out, the concept of 'reflexive modernization' no more has one single unambiguous empirical correlative than does the concept of 'fruit'. It is comparable to such key words as 'Dadaism' and 'Expressionism' in art, and it

is a concept that does not pin much down yet it does indicate a tendency and permit distinctions (Beck 1997: 4, 13). The reason why the reflexive modernization discourse is mounted upon such a shaky platform I believe has to do with reluctance on behalf of the authors to erect yet another modern truism, and one is left with the paradox of a zeit-diagnosis claiming that no universal zeit-diagnosis is possible. However, in this study (sic) I accept and work from the assumption that the general thrust of the diagnosis of reflexive modernisation has a lot of explanatory potential, and the general line of argument has inspired a number of questions in relation to the empirical research.

Research question and hypothesis

Beck synthesises the reflexive modernisation theme in the freizetsungs-thesis; the more societies are modernised, the more agents as subjects acquire the ability to reflect on the social conditions of their existence and to change them in that way (Beck 1994: 174). As discussed in chapter 2 the thesis is vulnerable to criticism; it is a generalisation and a contradiction in terms if one accepts the premises of Beck's own diagnosis of reflexive modernization as an ambivalent and risk-generating thus irrational development.

Still, developing the analysis the idea has been to explore and apply the reflexivity-perspective on specific participation experiences while acknowledging this ambivalence, analysing both *enabling* and *constraining* features of such individual and collective 're-embedding strategies' in concrete processes of participation. Thus, the structuring logic of my research strategy has been to connect individual reflexivity with a concept of social constraint, ontologically and in the methodological approach chosen.

The overall hypothesis explored in the dissertation is that participation as re-embedding can be analysed as a dialectic

process in which individuals and groups systematically reflect upon the social conditions of their existences in order to redefine and change these (note the distinction between redefine and change). This perspective was further specified with reference to Lash's distinction between self- and structural reflexivity; the former refers to agency's reflections upon itself and questions of identity and life planning, the latter to the process in which agents set free from the constraints of social structures reflects upon the rules and resources of these structures. With reference to this distinction, the concept of re-embedding strategy was defined as the *creative linking* of self- and structural reflexivity with the intentional aim of impacting the level of collective interaction.

Having suggested this conceptualisation of re-embedding with emphasis upon the individualist perspective, it was recognised that re-embedding does not take place in a social vacuum, it might be that each individual continuously struggle to "reinvent society," but they still do it together with other such individuals. Giddens' understands re-embedding as the temporary pinning down of social relations to local conditions of time and space. Disagreeing with this interpretation, the collective dimension of re-embedding was defined in terms of community formation, understood as the construction of a 'we' in the process of agreeing upon shared operative definitions of reality at the level of groups.

Arguing along these lines, the distinction between social and political becomes blurred, collective re-embedding of social relations as community building and construction of a 'we' has to do with the political process of self-questioning and dialectic re-framing of social conditions of every day life. To capture this analytically, the observation was made that the concept of reflexivity has an epistemological dimension; the questioning of basic assumptions and worldviews, and a sociological; the re-

embedding of social relations and the construction of a 'we,' and that the analytical focus in the research strategy should be on this intimate relationship between meaning and mode of social interaction.

To guide the empirical research, the main dimensions of the reflexivity perspective were synthesised in chapter 2, and a strategy to link reflexivity with a concept of social constraint was developed in chapter 3. The two chapters constitute the overall framework for the analysis of participation as individual and collective re-embedding strategies, and they convert the general research question as stated above into a number of more specific sub-questions.

I perceive of these questions as a heuristic framework with a double function: They narrow down the empirical focus by phrasing specific questions, and they reflect the theoretical perspective of reflexive modernisation theory to be applied in a re-interpretation of the outcome of the empirical research. As such, I do not approach this framework as a substantial hypoductive perspective to be empirically tested against 'empirical reality', but as a loosely structured set of key issues and analytical dimensions synthesised in order to direct and inspire the empirical analysis.

Reflections on method in relation to theoretical perspective

Pursuing the hypothesis stated above it was emphasised that the reflexivity perspective is relational, to be analysed as local reassessments of specific worldviews and social relations by specific social agents. It follows that reflexivity as a relational concept poses a relativist dilemma; how to access such local processes of re-conceptualisations from the outside, when any research strategy embedded within a specific epistemological position would ignore aspects of self-reflexive changes in

understandings and categories not addressed within the perspective?

Without basically solving the problem, a pragmatic response to the problem was proposed based on two parallel moves in which hermeneutic openness was combined with a retrospective analysis of social stratification, two approaches that I termed the inside and the outside views:

The inside view focuses on how actors' delimit shared understandings and the context of social relations in which they are embedded. The analytic questions from this perspective are: How do understandings and world-views constitute the way that actors perceive formal and informal rules of interaction, and what are the shared understandings made subject to reflexive scrutiny and change?

The outside view steps outside the reflexive arena focusing upon changes in the relationship between understandings and modes of organisation over time. Is it possible retrospectively to show how competing world-views were supported by different roles and positions, and to explain why some of these world-views came to dominate?

In the following, it is shown how the analytical framework developed in the chapters 2 and 3 are related to the empirical dimension, in the effort to construct a solid bridge between the theoretical perspectives outlined and the empirical studies of collective and individual participation experiences.

The level of empirical research

In order to apply the process perspective on reflexivity as elaborated in the previous to the empirical research, I basically contrast the two network studies with a number of individual participation narratives with people who have been part of one of the two processes while considering the guidelines laid out in chapter 2 and 3. To carry out this analysis jumping between the two levels, I go through a succession of stages the logic of which is explained in the following:

Step 1. The mapping of network interaction (inside view)

Each of the two network studies are accounted for from an open perspective; how did actors delimit shared understandings and social relations as the processes evolved over time, and how did local narratives relate to modes of organisation? In both studies, the basic challenge is to get access to the world-views and understandings of actors, and to describe the processes as close as possible to actor's experiences and accounts.

The social construction of categories of understanding is a political process in which actors conflict over and negotiate frameworks of understanding, and to capture this point this dimension of boundary setting cannot be fixed beforehand. What are the key narratives articulated by different participants in the process, and what is the nature of the political dimension addressed by group of participants as they define it?

Step 2. Evaluating the network study (outside view)

In step 2 the network is evaluated retrospectively from the perspective of the morphogenetic approach. Having mapped the process, is it then possible to break up the processes into phases as prescribed by Archer, in order to analyse the social stratification of the possible learning processes taking place?

How were collective understandings conditioned by differences in roles and positions? To what extent was this relationship between shared understandings and modes of organisation subject to change as a consequence of reflexive remodelling or reproduction of worldviews, roles and positions? In other words, whose accounts counted in the process of collective meaning creation looking back, and why?

Step 3. Individual participation narratives (inside view)

On the backdrop of the network analysis, a number of participants from each of the two processes under scrutiny have been asked to articulate their individual participation narratives reflecting back upon the process. The narratives exemplify specific, individual experiences, and as such they provide a qualitative insight into the subjectivist perspective in order to scrutinise further individual experiences with the creative linking of self- and structural reflexivity.

Is it with the narratives at hand possible to show how actors orient themselves towards identifiable projects or strategies framed in terms a re-assessment of specific phases of the personal life-context in relation to wider rule-changes at the collective level? What are the change-agendas expressed in individual narratives in terms of social analysis of perceived institutional prerequisites and barriers for their implementation, and how do the specific individuals assess the overall outcome?

Step 4. Relating the levels (outside view)

At this final step in the general discussion of the dialectics between the two levels the research question is finally answered; what were the enabling and constraining features of individual and collective 're-embedding strategies' in concrete processes of participation? Going through the 4 steps, a connection is made between the assumed existential necessity of actively shaping a personal life-context in relation to wider societal processes on

the one hand side, and the level of governance structure analysed from a network perspective on the other hand. Looking at the specific experiences, what were the reflexive aspects of individual strategies, and how to assess the outcome of individual efforts knowing what we know about collective outcomes at this stage? Does it make sense to describe the two studies as reflexive communities, and if yes, why?

For purposes of clarification the substantial issues explored in the dissertation are summarised in the table:

Substantial issues	Inside view	Outside view
Collective level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do actors delimit shared understandings and social relations, and how do local narratives relate to modes of organisation? • What is the nature of the political dimension articulated by group of participants? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose accounts counted in the process, and why? • Reflexive community?
Individual level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects or strategies in terms of reassessment of specific life-phase in relation to rule-change at collective level? • Specific change agenda and analysis of outcome? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome assessment: Structural impact? • Reflexive strategies considering outcome evaluations?

Ontology and method

In order to work with the reflexivity perspective it has been important to construe a relational approach by discussing the outcome of the assumed reflexive acts against a background analyses generated against the same actors' conceptualisations and meaning horizons. The point is that the reflexivity-perspective is relational, only to be analysed as 'local' (re-) assessments of specific social conditions as perceived by specific social agents. And further that those processes of re-embedding are conditioned by differences in social, cognitive and material resources.

In practical terms, I have started off from an empiricist (or actualist) position inspired by the hermeneutic circle and the belief that there are stories and experiences out there waiting to be induced and reported on. This logic of induction is tied to a deductive starting point, and the pre-propositions governing this open phase have been made explicit in both network studies, though I have employed different strategies of reporting in the Grantoften case and the EVE case (see below) and in the individual interviews.

The next move then is to step in and reinterpret the context, posing a number of questions derived from the reflexivity perspective as summarised in the figure above. To do this I have taken a critical realist step outside the context employing the logic of retrodiction (what has to be there though we can't see it for this to be possible?) focusing upon structuring tendencies and mechanisms conditioning the outcomes of the two processes.

Ontology and method	Inside view (induction)	Outside view (retrodiction)
Individual level	Participation narratives	Synthesis and analysis of 're-embedding strategies'
Collective level	Bottom-up approach Chronological story-telling	Retrospective analysis of stratification: Roles and positions in networks, mechanisms that condition outcome

Constructing the analytical and methodological distinction between an inside and an outside view is also the analytical grip that ties together the theoretical and the empirical sections of the dissertation. The relationship between the general perspective on reflexivity and re-embedding developed in the chapters 2 and 3, and the empirical studies in the chapters 5 to 8 is governed by an abductive kind of logic: Knowing this, how does the reflexivity perspective as a heuristic framework (loose structure of theoretical concepts and key questions) allow us to reinterpret the empirical context from the perspective of this framework?

Strategies of analysis going through the 4 steps

Working at both collective and individual levels of analysis requires different analytical strategies and methods. In this last section I account for the different analytical approaches adopted in the empirical chapters, following the 4 steps in order to implement the overall research strategy, a number of more specific methodological considerations have been made.

The original Grantoften-study (Engberg & Hulgaard 1996) has been rewritten according to the guidelines of the present research design and a supplementary study of the co-operative society EVE has been conducted. Further, 3 tenants from

Grantoften and three former members of EVE have been interviewed extensively about their individual participation experiences. First I go through the considerations made in relation to the analysis of the individual narratives in chapter 6 and 8, and thereafter I recapitulate the analytical strategies taking first an inside view then an outside view on the collective participation processes in the chapters 5 and 7.

Analysis at the level of individual narratives of participation

6 individual participants have been asked to account for their experiences taking part in one of the two processes in relation to Bydelstinget in Grantoften or the co-operative society EVE. Recording each individual narrative the analytical strategy has been to ask open-ended questions allowing participants to describe how they experienced the process, while also structuring the conversations according to an interview guide (appendix 1) synthesising the themes and questions put forward in chapter 2.

By presenting individual stories as 'life-political'¹², phases each participant gets to articulate the story in his or her own words while the reader gains access to the nuances and the complexity of each experience, and the stories can be interpreted from both an actor and a structure perspective. Though inspired by the life-historical interview tradition (Andersen & Elm 1989) (Fog 1979) and the bibliographic research done by Kupferberg (Kupferberg 1995, 1998) the interviews are not conceptualised

¹² Questions of identity and life-strategies are of a personal nature. The approach developed here does not aim to lay open very private experiences of participation but to establish a link between the personal and the social as accounted for by individual participants at a general level. Elaborating upon the theme of identity-formation would require a theoretical approach outside the confines of the dissertation, the defined purpose is to be able to induce some kind of pattern in the reflections and motivations of individual participants.

as bibliographical studies as such. Instead, they are precisely narratives, allowing insights into specific phases of participation in relation to the specifically identified contexts of the two processes. On the basis of the dialogues a synthesis is made as a representation of each individual participation strategy, and these narratives are then related to and discussed against the network analysis.

Kupferberg (1998) supports the individualisation thesis and argues that the bibliographic projects of individuals as media of social reproduction become increasingly subject to political decision making. By looking at how specific individuals have coped in their lives, the sociologist has access to a type of analysis that link subjectively experienced reality with a conceptual reconstruction of a "changing world as experience by actors" (1998: 245).

The methodological point is to assume homology between individual accounts and the social forces that shape individual lives: "individuals, when asked to recount their life histories, how they arrived in their present situations and what their plans are for the future (i.e. how their personal destinies have been shaped) tend to use rules of narrative which are homologous to the sociological forces, which, in reality have shaped their own personal destinies" (Kupferberg 1998: 244). To employ this method, it is crucial to distinguish between the explanations and interpretations of actors and those of the researcher, the former are of primary importance and the latter of secondary importance only.

The basic assumption of homology between individual narrative and sociological forces corresponds with the inside view-approach advocated above, and it points to an inside explanation of individual participation experiences in order to discern general sociological patterns on the basis hereof. Still, the

method does not solve the actor-structure problem, it only devices a pragmatic approach around it. To exemplify, Kupferberg seeks to challenge the sociological tradition of analysing social change as self-generating processes without subjects (1995: 54) and at the same time, he talks about sociological forces that in reality have shaped peoples destinies. Also, Kupferberg makes an empiricist distinction between account and interpretation while employing 4 cognitive figures inspired by Schütze when constructing the narratives (1998: 243) and the pragmatic dimension of the method chosen thus refers to an abductive logic much in line with the one advocated in this study.

Wallace poses a relevant question, when she asks whether "...individuals actually act in accordance with strategic plans or a strategy is something imputed to their actions by the sociologist?" (Knights and Morgan 1990: 476, in Wallace 1993: 102). By asking participants to look back upon previous experiences and actions in terms of strategic reflections, the sociologists encourage respondents to think of what they have done in terms of a strategy, which they might not have done otherwise. Or maybe they articulate a strategy that was perhaps implicit in their actions (Wallace 1993: 114). Further, posing the reflexivity thesis in terms of the connection between life-situation and participation (linking of self- and structural reflexivity in order to impact collective level) and asking respondents to reflect upon this relationship, the approach is pretty close to being a self-fulfilling prophecy?

Against these remarks three points can be made. First, I agree with Jeffrey Alexander when he posits that strategization and interpretation are dimensions of social action, and the issue is not so much to question this assertion as to scrutinise the specific individual experiences, focusing on the nature of individual impressions, choices and creative re-interpretations.

Second, providing a qualitative insight into 6 narratives is obviously not a basis for generalised conclusions either confirming or rejecting the reflexivity thesis as such. The thesis has inspired a number of structuring questions, and the narrative approach allows for a qualitative insight into the context of the specific individual perspectives. Third, the narratives are produced and analysed in relation to the case studies, and they are interpreted in the overall context of the research strategy approaching the processes at two different levels simultaneously.

The time-dimension conducting the individual interviews

Due to practical constraints each participant has only been interviewed once, obviously it would have been preferable to interview respondents before and after their participation experiences. However, the interviews are conducted retrospectively, and they are based on each person's recollection of the past.

Analysis at the level of network interaction

Two different strategies have been employed in mapping network-interaction in the two participation processes.

1. The study in Grantoften was carried out together with associate professor *Lars Hulgaard*, Roskilde University and reported independently in (Engberg & Hulgaard 1996) and Engberg (1998) while developing the theoretical framework in the dissertation. Inspired by Hjern & Hull's (Hjern & Hull 1987) distinction between descriptive and prescriptive network-relations we saw the council as a hypothesis, as a construction in the interface between individual perceptions, ideas, values and strategies, and patterns of collective interaction in networks.

Mapping these network relations we acknowledged Giddens' points on double hermeneutics, and developed the bottom-up

approach from a constructivist perspective combining deductive and inductive dimensions in the research design and strategy. How did the actors describe their reality as they saw it? What were the relations they identified as important, how did they conceptualise their positions within these relations? What did they think of others, and what did that make them think about themselves?

From this starting-point, a conceptual grid of dimensions or categories was developed as the process of interviewing progressed, a grid that was the filter through which we analysed the complexity and multidimensionality of the network relations. We interpreted our role as evaluators as neutral, we were not going to interfere with the processes we observed by putting forward proposals as to how the council should change its profile etc., our task was to 'mirror' the relational context of the council in a systematic way.

2. The study of the co-operative society EVE is primarily based on written sources produced by participants in the process. A substantial number of texts describing the process exist because authors were invited to present article-drafts at annual seminars for the members, and seminar debates were to some extent reflected in publications published after each seminar. Also a number of EVE-newsletters, newspaper articles, board correspondence and minutes from board meetings constitute sources of information.

The account is developed in a dialogue with *Kristen D. Nedergaard*, who was also a participant throughout the process, and the first part of the EVE chapter is a modified version of an unpublished working paper "Environmental sub-politics and the expert-lay divide – a roundtable dialogue between EVE and ADAM." We started off with a dialogue about our experiences, and wrote a draft as a brainstorm of various elements and

dimensions. On the basis hereof we decided that our main focus would be the ecology-economy debate though this focus would necessarily exclude other aspects. Finally, a number of participants have been interviewed to supplement the process description.

The time-dimension in the two network studies

The Grantofthen study is based upon two series of investigations. The first was carried out in the summer of 1995, and a second visit to Grantofthen took place in the summer of 1998, in which I conducted the in-depth interviews in chapter 6 as well as a number of supplementary interviews to catch up with the process. The approach we developed did not explicitly address the time-dimension, the network analysis was primarily synchronic. However, the historical dimension was present in all interviewee's accounts, and the diachronic analysis presented in chapter 5 is based on this first sets of interviews, the network analysis as well as a number of interviews carried out in 1998. The account of the EVE process in chapter 7 was written from a diachronic perspective in the first place.

Evaluating the networks

In chapter 1 the question was put forward: What are the collectively binding rules being addressed in the network of interaction, and how are the strategies for changing or reproducing these rules conditioned by differences in roles and positions of actors? I understand rules in a broad sense as collective understandings that organise social behaviour, and question is who defined the rules regulating collective behaviour in the network?

To answer this question, the analytical strategy as discussed above is to apply an outside view on the two processes after they have been described or mapped according to the guidelines set forward following the inside perspective. To do this, Archers

morphogenetic approach is employed as an analytical frame of reference evaluating each process retrospectively after they have been chronologically accounted for, following the guidelines put forward in chapter 3. By analytically separating the processes into time-phases, the questions of the possible reflexive remodelling or reproduction of roles, positions, and worldviews are discussed. Recapitulating the discussion in chapter 3 the analytical questions can be summarised as follows:

Time 1: Focusing upon *decisive moments of articulation* of collective understandings expert-positions are induced empirically. Who precisely articulated the endogenous perspective? Is it possible to induce *basic understandings* (worldviews) conditioning social interaction i.e. as collectively binding rules? How do we explain the identified expert-positions in terms of roles as systemic features and *differences in access-patterns* to the expert-position? And is it possible to explain such differences with reference to the distinction between primary and corporate agency?

Time 2: Having identified the initial social and cognitive stratification of the action-arena – what are the worldviews organising social interaction, and who occupies what positions constraining and enabling this social interaction and the articulation of collective understandings - the next step is to look at reflexive remodelling. To what extent are *frameworks renegotiated* or *made subject to conflicts* as the processes evolve? Is it possible to establish a *connection between discursive conflicts* and *relations between primary and corporate agency*, and to what extent do such relations enable or constrain the reflexive process?

Time 3: What is the result of the process in time 2? Does a re-grouping between collectivities take place with a directional influence on future structures? Do collective understandings

change, and to what extent are expert-positions and roles reproduced or changed in the process of social interaction?

Time 4: With reference to the notions of primary and corporate agency, the processes of double morphogenesis that underlie moves from primary to corporate agents can be analysed. Role-structures pre-determine 'access to choice' and reflexive resources, and the question is how differently positioned actors have struggled to impact key-points decisive to the exchanges and attributions of social meaning in the networks.

And employing Archers categories of primary and corporate agency, is it possible to link changes between these two categories (re-grouping) to changes in such privileged positions from which to influence the social construction of meaning over time? In Archers terms, there are only two options: either *morphostasis*: patterns of social interaction have no impact upon the stratification of group patterns (the pre-grouping is maintained) or *morphogenesis*, which is essentially re-grouping.

5. The community council Grantoften Bydelsting

In part 1 of this chapter a network analysis carried out in relation to Grantoften Community Council in Ballerup Municipality is presented. The analysis starts off with the constitution of the council in 1989, and ends with negotiations of the council statutes in the summer of 1998. In part 2, the process is evaluated along the guidelines discussed in the previous chapters, focusing upon collectively binding rules and how strategies for changing or reproducing these rules are conditioned by differences in roles and positions of actors in the network.

Part 1. The implementation of a community council in Grantoften

Grantoften is a neighbourhood in the city of Ballerup. A little more than 3000 people live in the housing estates, one tenth of Ballerup's total population. Most of these social housing estates were built from scratch in the late 60's and early 70's, reflecting the state of the art functionalist architecture, and three huge tower blocks dominate the impression you get when you enter the area. But soon you discover the shopping mall, the church, the school and the surrounding terrace houses. And if you really go for a walk, you find the playing grounds and soccer fields, and the little pond hidden away in the far corner.

Grantoften is designed as a 'collective city' (kollektiv-by). Inspired by Swedish experiences, the idea was to situate all necessary facilities in close proximity to the estates, allowing residents easy access to services and city functions like restaurants, a post office, public schools, day-care institutions

etc., as well as various social services. When the residents came home from work, the idea was that they would not have to leave the area to tend for their needs, all necessary city-functions would be integrated into a collectively organised community. Today, the situation is different, a relatively large number of tenants do not work, and Grantoften is a crowded place, at night as well as during the day.

Living in a social housing estate in Denmark implies a formal right to take part in the administration of the estate. The tenants elect a local housing committee and this committee is in charge of daily management and maintenance in co-operation with administrative staff employed by the housing association. The estate is financially semi-independent of the housing association, and through formal democratic procedures, the tenants approve of the budget, balancing the level of expenditures with the level of rents, which typically implies that a politics of 'keeping expenditures down' is fought for. As a democratic innovation, Grantoften Community Council (Bydelstinget) was set up to experiment with local self-governance, introducing a representative body into a neighbourhood already organised in lines with the Danish tradition of self-governance in social housing estates.

The constitution phase: negotiating the rules (-1989)

10 years ago, in 1989, the City Council of Ballerup decided on the mayor's initiative to set up a community council in Grantoften together with the local housing committee in the district. The council should represent the area as such, forming a partnership between the municipality, the local housing committee and the multiplicity of local, more or less organised actors and interest groups, as an experiment in democracy and self-governance. The initiative was made possible by the free commune programme enacted by the Danish Parliament in 1985 (for a discussion see Baldersheim & Ståhlberg 1994) and

inspired by other local councils set up to promote political and administrative decentralisation (Andersson, et.al 1989).

Prior to Bydelstinget's constitution, local co-operation was organised in an informal neighbourhood committee where representatives from the local housing committee, the public school, municipal representatives, the church, individual residents and others co-ordinated their activities to improve the living conditions of the area. An important part of this was the so-called SSP-initiative, in which the municipality, the police and the primary school targeted problems amongst the youth in Grantoften. On the mayors initiative, the suggestion was put forward by Ballerup City council to formalise the co-operation in the area by setting up a community council.

A working-group was established including the chairman of the local housing committee, the head teacher of the local school and some representatives from Ballerup Town Hall. The working-group formulated a proposal, and a Town Hall lawyer crafted a set of rules in accordance with legislative directions for decentralisation in the free commune initiative. This constitution was debated in the City council and in the local housing committee, and then presented at a public meeting in Grantoften where the people present supported the idea and *Grantoften Bydelsting* was established.

Organization: Formal competencies, tasks and funding

29 persons were given a seat in Bydelstinget. Bydelstinget was made to reflect the institutionalisation of every-day life in Grantoften, acknowledging specific stakeholders as users-, age groups or churchgoers, together with tenants representing the public interest. All visible interest groups and institutions of Grantoften were represented, resulting in a complex formal structure, the persons eligible for representation in the council were split up in the two categories of 'tenants' and 'public

employees'. The category of 'tenants' was divided into sub-categories: 1. Tenants as citizens, representing all citizens in Grantoften (8 members). 2. Tenants as particular interest groups; either organised in the local housing committee (5 members) or in the governing board of the tenants clubs (1 member), the parochial church council (1 member), or as clients-, users- or age-groups; the young (1 member), the elderly (2 members), the parents (2 members). The group of 'employees' represented the technical staff, the church, the day-care institutions, the primary school, and the municipal Information Shop.

The distinction between 'public employees' and 'tenants' was reflected in the way in which members were represented in the council: The public members were nominated by their institution, expected to represent the local institutions of the area. In contrast, the tenants were elected on semi-annual public meetings, reflecting different sections amongst the tenants (the young, the elderly, the parents) as well as the tenants' as such. However, the 5 tenants from the local housing committee were not elected but nominated by their organization, while also representing the 'tenants interests' in accordance with the democratic structure of social housing estates in Denmark.

According to the statutes, the economic and political competencies of Grantoften Bydelsting were to be passed on from the City Council and the local housing committee, and the council was entitled to "be informed about municipal affairs" and "to articulate its opinions with respect to municipal decision-making." The political and administrative levels of Ballerup municipality as well as the local housing committee could "potentially" delegate decision-making authority to the council, within specifically defined areas. As specific tasks, the constitution makes clear that the council should 1. Initiate and organise cultural, social and leisure activities, 2 Encourage co-operation between local institutions and 3. Take care of out-door

facilities and green areas of Grantofthen. The size of the council budget was approximately 1 mil. DKr, half of which was supplied by the local housing committee (rents) and half by the Community Council (taxes). Some of the money was earmarked for specific purposes, while the rest was a fund administered by the council, available for local groups and individuals that wanted to set up activities.

The vision of the local housing committee: A multilevel democratisation process

According to the then chairman of the local housing committee (1978-90), who was a dominant figure in the initial negotiation process, the local housing committee had a clear democratic vision with Bydelstinget: "To strengthen local democracy" by integrating more people into decision-making processes in the community. From the local-housing committees' perspective, there was too little co-ordination between the many different tenants clubs and associations with their own governing boards and the committee sought to influence and initiate more activities. "A lot of things needed to be done which we would like to influence, but we also wanted others than the local housing committee to make the decisions" (former chairman).

Equally important, the new body was a means of improving work-place democracy for the public employees in the area. The local housing committee insisted that they were given a vote in the council, to increase their say with respect to matters relating to their working conditions. As consequence, the idea was that the employees would potentially become more committed to the local context. Also, the role of the council would be to co-ordinate the new governing boards in areas of public schools and day care, preferably creating a synergetic effect and raise the level of co-operation in Grantofthen. No other democratic experiment in a Danish context had taken such a step to break away from the democratic chain of governance (Hansen, 1997:

279) with its ideal role division between the political and the administrative levels, allowing public employees to vote on the same terms as elected representatives.

The public vision: Social networking

From the municipal perspective, the council should continue in the path already laid down in the informal neighbourhood council, and facilitate social activism and co-operation amongst multiple actors on an ad hoc, voluntary basis. Grantoften was conceived as a 'problem area': "You had moved 1300 families out there over night, people had no social networks, all the things you need, and the result was high turnover rates" (Mayor). It had become obvious that intended target-population of middle- and high-income groups preferred private housing and the area had gained a negative reputation. Drug-abusers came in from Copenhagen, public drinking and problems with bikers were elements of this change, and Grantoften had lost some of its initial attraction.

From the Mayor's perspective, the objective of Bydelstinget was to decentralise decision-making power to people in Grantoften, increase their sense of ownership of local affairs and potentially support the social processes of networking, co-operation and integration. The same vision was put forward by administrative leaders in the municipality: the council should be 'a heart beating together with the local community', bringing people together across institutional borderlines and interests in the pursuit of collective gains. The administration sought to develop an urban regeneration strategy, and a municipal information office had been set up, from which some social workers took part of the social and political life of the area.

Bydelstinget and the Information Shop

As a front-door information and counselling office in Grantoften, the information shop was given a close connection

to Bydelstinget. The social workers in the shop were to assist the council on a daily basis, carrying out various administrative tasks and taking part in the activities of the working groups set up under the council. Bydelstinget was given the authority to 'instruct' the employees of the shop, and a steering committee with members of Bydelstinget was set-up to as the shop's governing body. Hence, the municipality employed the social workers in the Information Shop, while they were supposed to receive employment instructions from the council in which they had a voting right.

The council could expand its decision-making powers if desired, "in principle, if there was something they wanted and they hadn't asked for, they just had to do that, and both the local housing committee and Ballerup City council should comply"(former chairman of local housing committee). No specific mechanisms of political leverage were laid out in the articles, the process of delegation of decision-making power was based on voluntary compliance on behalf of the two 'mother' organisations, and the issue of how strong the Bydelsting would become was formally an open question.

Recapitulating this early constitution phase, it shows how the image of Grantoften as a problem-area was reflected in the way Bydelstinget was conceptualised. The politico-administrative rationale was to mobilise and integrate both public and private actors in a general social development strategy for the area, and the council was designed to reflect and represent the multiplicity of (institutionalised) categories of everyday life in Grantoften. Hence, the vision of a network strategy was turned into an organisational principle for Bydelstinget: The participants were expected to promote social cohesion on a voluntary basis. In this sense, the council was conceptualised in terms of consensus and co-operation, and with a potential right to greater political and administrative decision-making power laid down in the statutes.

Phase 2 – distributing the roles (1988 - 95)

In the period 1987-95 the members of the council became involved in a variety of projects and activities, some of which were already established, others initiated by the council. Meeting on a monthly basis, members volunteered for participation in working-groups, organising social and cultural activities. A fixed point on the council's agenda was reporting back from these working-groups, as such the council became a collective frame of reference for the individual members' participation in the social and cultural activities in Grantoften. The members took part in making summer activities for children, welcome-arrangements for new tenants, administering sports facilities etc. One member set up a self-help group and joined it. In addition, art-workshops were organised and several sculptures set up in front of the shopping mall.

When asked, most members pointed to the 'Open House' initiative as a cornerstone in the activities; a weekly event at the school, at which a group of volunteers was cooking for everybody in return for a small fee. In parallel to the public meals, tenants could attend various evening classes and hobby activities at the school. Project Open House was initiated by the school and financed by a national fund for social development (SUM). "The brilliant thing was, Open House should continue also when the SUM-period ended...When the project-management pulled out of the project, I suggested that the Information Shop should take over the management. Being a member of Bydelstinget, I knew that some members had paid an interest to the initiative over the years. What happened was that Bydelstinget discovered the advantage of adopting the project, including the financial aspect, today it is entirely run by Bydelstinget and it is going well" (Head teacher and former member of Bydelstinget).

Another initiative was to construct a shelter or club-facility for the local alcoholics drinking outside the shopping centre ('The Bum', 'Bumsen'). The council was represented in the steering committee of the project, as liaison between the alcoholics and the local community. In some instances, the council supported residents who lobbied the municipality to situate certain services in the area, like a local municipal contact-point, or the construction of sport-facilities. Also, the day-care group under Bydelstinget, a body representing all day-care institutions in Grantoften, initiated a long-term process of setting up a §70-institution, an institution entirely run by parents and employees. In general, a personal relation to the tenants in Grantoften was considered important, and the degree to which the council-members had a face-to-face interaction with the various target groups was perceived as a prime criterion for the council's success.

Exploring limits to decentralisation

Consolidating the work of Bydelstinget in the early 90s, the members explored various avenues of increasing the political and administrative competencies of the council. The council was involved in the decentralisation of a few municipal service functions to Grantoften, and it took over the administration of public sports centre. Apart from this, contact between the public administration and the council remained sparse, at the municipal level the attitude was that 'no news was good news'. Both politicians and administrators in Ballerup tended to regard the council as 'an administrative branch' of the municipality, with little political significance.

The political parties in the City council (with a tradition of a social democratic majority) all supported a strengthening of local self-governance in Grantoften, but no steps to start a dialogue between the two representative institutions were taken, and contact was sparse. When asked, some politicians referred

to the area of day-care as a potential area for political and administrative self-governance, but the general attitude amongst municipal politicians seemed to be that Bydelstinget's members had a potential right to lobby further influence if they wanted to do so. But since the council never really articulated such interests, the impression at the municipal level was that it lacked in capacity to increase its administrative and political powers.

'The public vote'

The council experienced various barriers to increased political autonomy, one of which manifested itself in the relationship between public employees within the council and the politico-administrative level in the municipality. Working groups under the council tried to negotiate an increase in funding for specific areas and institutions (day-care) with administrative leaders, who in turn replied that institutional expenses in Grantoften were equal to or larger compared to elsewhere in Ballerup, and no additional funds could be allocated. Negotiating this issue, both politicians and administrators reacted negatively to the role of the public employees, their participation in the council was used as an argument against further political and administrative delegation to the council.

As the Social Democratic Chairman of the City councils' Social Committee put it: "In general, when we meet up with people from the day-care institutions, we normally say that we do not want to see all those employees. I think the employees are too dominating when we have meetings with the parents. It's the parents that we want to communicate with, that we want to listen to, because they are the representatives of the governing-boards of schools, day-care institutions and so on. Of course we listen to the employees, but through the voices of the parents. I find it important to underline that the employees are employed by the municipality, and that it is the parents that we really want to listen to." As a reaction to this negative attitude, Bydelstinget

adopted an approach where the public employees did not take part in direct negotiations with the municipality. Not only were the public employees acting as both full-born members and administrative secretariat, they were also formally entitled to vote on matters debated in the council. Because of this experiment with the political aspect of the administrative role, debates in the council often touched upon the consequences of the 'public vote'.

Two fractions emerged on this issue, one formed by the members of the housing committee, who argued that the right should be abolished again. It caused confusion at a basic level, raising doubts with respect to accountability and legitimacy; the public employees were not elected and could therefore not be held accountable for their decisions. Also, the employees did personally not live in Grantoften, and they did therefore not have the right to speak on behalf of the tenants in the area. Since the employees as institutional stake-holders would exploit the council from their respective interests, the council as such should not try to take on more decision-making power, but stick to voluntary and what these members defined as non-political activities.

The other position was defended by the group of tenants not simultaneously members of the housing committee, but directly elected or representing other institutions, like the church or the school board. These members felt that the role of the public employees was decisive to debates and decision-making in the council; their contribution raised the level of general discourse and allowed for a specific insight into the daily operations and activities of the different institutions. Because the contribution by the employees was so important, it would not matter much whether they were formally entitled to vote or not, their impact upon lines of argumentation and specific decisions would be considerable in any case. And the members rarely did vote, but

tried to sort out differences and conflicting interests through dialogue.

The employees themselves felt ambiguous about their role. They argued that the well being of e.g. the children in day care depended upon the well being of their parents, and they saw a clear link between the specific service of providing care, and a broader engagement in the general social processes in Grantoften. Through their active involvement, they felt they could push forward the democratic process, and they saw their participation in the council as an interesting input into their everyday working life. At the same time, they felt the potential conflict of loyalty between the municipal and the local level, and they were more or less anxious to avoid the negative implications of a more explicit political role. Hence, in most cases a pragmatic approach was chosen, in which the public employees did not take part in direct negotiations, but assisted different working-groups in developing specific projects and activities.

In general, the members experienced Bydelstinget's status as an 'experiment' as a barrier to decentralisation. "They made us and they can shut us down." Some members expressed a feeling that the rule "party-politics is prohibited" was a mutual tacit understanding in the council, if Bydelstinget chose a confrontational strategy and "politicise too much" it would spark off a negative reaction from the City council, which in turn would close down the experiment again. Supporting this feeling was the problem that the council often experienced reoccurring problems with staffing, the municipality did not seem too keen to finance the Council's secretarial aid, and in some periods the council was without such secretarial assistance.

The Catch 22

Contact to the constituency of tenants in Grantoften remained weak, only few residents became involved in the council's work. Often the different activities were successful in the sense that large numbers of residents participated, but rarely did individual tenants inquire about the council itself, nor take part in the monthly meeting sessions. This relatively weak tie to the population of Grantoften was intensely debated, most found that the legitimacy of the council was at stake. Information campaigns, local television PR-spots etc. did not pay off, and often members questioned their authority to act on behalf of their fellow residents.

A large number of tenants took advantage of the various events and activities, but few knew about the existence of Bydelstinget. Judged by the degree of turnover at elections or nominations, many members felt that the council lacked in legitimacy. This sparked off a debate in the council, what were the tenants' preferences, and how far could the council "assert power" against the wishes of people with whom they had so have little contact? Debating this problem, two positions dominated: One fraction argued that the council had to develop a stronger political profile in order to have a greater say in local affairs, a position that was predominantly taken by some of the public employees.

A suggestion was put forward that the council instead of financing the usual activities should use the budget to implement a 'theme-year' strategy. Developing a policy in an area decided upon by the members would probably cause a riot amongst the many clubs and individuals who received funding from the council, but, as some argued, it would also result in a more powerful council and a more interesting political process. Another fraction shared the wish for a greater say in local affairs, but argued that if decisions went against local interests,

the remaining legitimacy would disappear. "It's undemocratic to go against the interests of the residents." Thus, the members found themselves in a dilemma: if they wanted to articulate the council as an active institution, they would be likely to attract criticism in a situation with relative scarce support from local residents, and if they did nothing, they would hardly generate more attention. In general, the result was a reluctance to take steps that might make the council "unpopular" amongst local residents, making it harder to attract people to the councils activities.

Fighting with the local housing committee

From peaceful cohabitation and mutual support, the relationship between Bydelstinget and the local housing committee evolved into a problematic conflict from 92'-93 on onwards, a conflict that came to dominate the working climate in Bydelstinget. The local housing committee had been the only democratic body in Grantoften for more than 20 years, and the process of developing two co-operating tenants' organisations proved very difficult. A shift had taken place, members of the housing committee now voiced a more or less overt critique: Why did Bydelstinget seek to take control over activities run by the housing committee?

By developing a social, activist-oriented profile, Bydelstinget now competed for the social prestige attached to the role of initiator and co-ordinator of larger projects of interest to the tenants. This competition soon materialised as a personal conflict inside Bydelstinget, between the tenants who were organised in the local housing committee, and those who were not. The latter group defined the primary objective of Bydelstinget as dealing with 'social issues' while the domain of the housing committee was be occupied with 'technical issues'. Disagreeing with this distinction, the members of the housing committee emphasised the activist profile of the committee

while Bydelstinget was described as a 'fund' passively distributing resources for social activities, a task previously carried out by the committee.

One of the major initiatives in Grantoften in the early 90s exemplified the conflict; a plan for a community house in the old district heating station. In 1990 the committee had put forward a proposal for a community house with a budget of DKr. 5,5 mill. financed out of rents, but the proposal was voted down by the tenants, considered too expensive. Some years later, the proposal was taken up by an environmental group under the housing committee, this time with a reduced budget. A working-group was set up, and the project agreed upon. Bydelstinget was represented in the working-group, but the 'committee-group' in Bydelstinget did not allow Bydelstinget's name to be mentioned in the minutes from these working group meetings. Obviously, the tenants in Bydelstinget who were not from the housing committee felt they were not welcome and in fact excluded from the process of debating the purpose and functioning of this new community house.

Another event worsened the relationship. In the fall of 1994, the council applied for additional funding from the local housing committee and the City council. The local housing committee replied that it would accept the application, but under the condition that the City council did likewise, suspecting that this was not going to be the case. When the City council refused to do so, Bydelstinget's application was rejected. The situation was that the local housing committee and the municipality fought over the burden of financing the council, Ballerup municipality had faced extensive cut-downs in activities and personnel, from 475 full-time employees in 1989 to 390 in 1994. From the local housing committee's perspective, the municipality had a strategic interest in making Grantoften's tenants pay for the council. The conflict made it clear that Bydelstinget depended

entirely upon the goodwill of the housing committee and the City Council, the members of Bydelstinget had no strategic means of increasing the budget. How to exert pressure on the local housing committee, when a core group of its members were also members of Bydelstinget? The committee members were present at meetings, but often without taking part in the debate, and the atmosphere was not always too friendly.

A policy initiative: debating the primary school

In the fall of 1994, Bydelstinget debated the profile of the council's activities in Grantoften. Some of the public employees argued that the council was too passive and the impact too modest. The council decided to make a 'theme-year' focusing upon a single issue, and the members arranged an evening-seminar debating potential policy-areas. The theme "relationships between children and parents in Grantoften" was suggested. Some members had learnt that many of the primary school pupils were sent to the school's psychologist, and they felt this could destroy the positive reputation of the school.

The members suggested that the council should start a debate about children's living conditions in Grantoften, and address some of the potential social problems amongst local youth. Agreement was reached, and the council set up a working-group to further elaborate upon the theme. A meeting with the school's governing body was arranged, and the schools representative in the council immediately passed on information about the initiative to the head teacher (who was a former member of Bydelstinget). The head of school contacted the council asking for permission to give a presentation on the perspectives of "a joint effort to improve the everyday life of local youth in the areas of after school-recreation and day-care."

At a following meeting in February 1995, the topic was on the agenda, and the head teacher gave a speech on the situation. He

stressed that in comparison with other schools in Ballerup, there was no reason to be concerned about the number of pupils visiting the school psychologist. The head teacher presented a number of over-heads all pointing to the fact, that the school was no different from other schools in Ballerup, and he urged the council to argue against any negative rumours, and encouraged it to act as a barrier against future misinformation. At the end of his presentation the head teacher invited the council to suggest what a well-functioning school should look like, and to put forward more specific suggestions for joint initiatives. In the subsequent debate, the council-members discussed how to approach the issue positively, and an agreement was reached to initiate an information campaign. Later, the working-group was invited to meet the governing body of the school once more, but this meeting was cancelled, since both parties found no reasons for continuing the debate.

Phase 3: transformation? (1995-)¹³

In 96, the council received our evaluation report, which was presented at meetings in Bydelstinget and at the Town Hall. The council members organised seminars discussing the report, a process that two years later terminated with the crafting of a new set of statutes. The report spelled out the problematic relationship between the housing committee and Bydelstinget, and in the aftermath it proved difficult for the members to use the evaluation to change this relationship. Also, it was difficult to find the time to go through all the aspects of the report at council meetings, where activities like reporting from working groups "made it difficult to plan how to initiate a change, there was very little time just to discuss the issues" (council-member).

¹³ From this point on, the account is no longer based upon the 95-96 analysis, but interviews carried out in the summer of 98.

The atmosphere in Bydelstinget was getting worse. From the outset in 1989, the right to 'instruct' the employees in the information shop had caused a lot of heated debate. With reference to this entitlement, the local housing committee representatives insisted upon a more detailed leadership-role vis-à-vis the employees in the shop much to their dismay. For instance, as a member remarked: "In the information shop, they were not allowed to show guests around in Grantoften, they had to ask the local housing committee for a permission before taking people for a tour, do you call that bureaucracy?"

The committee members came to the meetings, but interpreted their mandate as one of controlling that 'their' money was spent in a proper way, and they criticised the council of incompetence. A member explains how she experienced the conflict: "people communicated in a rather ugly manner. Three people from the committee were sitting there, as observers, but also articulating criticism. Instead of saying, "I am a full member of Bydelstinget", which was the case, they decided to say, "why have you not done this and this", as controllers, do they spend our money in the right way? This attitude made the others extremely touchy, and eventually our chairman and the co-chair resigned."

In 1997, the municipality carried out a survey of attitudes towards Bydelstinget amongst persons who dealt with the council one way or the other. The questions related to council activities and the activities of the Information Shop. 24 questionnaires were distributed and 20 persons responded to the questions. The result of the survey showed, that despite some critical remarks, "there is substantial satisfaction with Bydelstinget as a means of promoting the community dimension, democracy and activities. The satisfaction concerns the content of the work carried out, and the possibility of integrating the many tenants and interest groups. Also the

innovative aspect of the co-operation between the public organisations and the volunteers is considered valuable...The criticism is with respect to Bydelstinget and concerns structure and competencies, and in particular relations of co-operation” (Jørgensen & Østergaard 1997: 24).

At some stage, a person from the information shop asked for a job-transfer, an event that triggered a reaction from the Town Hall. Representatives from the two organisations were invited to a meeting at which the housing committee agreed to adapt a more positive approach to Bydelstinget. Some time after, the members of the council read in the call for a housing committee meeting that a proposal was put forward to shut down Bydelstinget. A member recollects this event: “We had just signed this plan for collective action, so we got a bit angry. We were not informed personally, and when we saw the proposal, it was war! The housing committee meeting lasted until 3 a.m.; it was rather dramatic. The chair of the housing committee, who had been a driving force behind the proposal, got a vote of no confidence, but kept her seat. Also, the City Council had a representative out to persuade the committee to withdraw the proposal, which they eventually did.”

After this event, a series of meetings began at which the statutes of Bydelstinget were re-negotiated between two members from the council (which were not also members of the housing committee) two members from this committee and two members from the municipality. First, the ‘public vote’ in the council was abolished. Though still members, the public employees were not longer entitled to a vote. Second, the housing committee reduced its number of seats in Bydelstinget from 5 to one. And third, a Town Hall representative joined the governing board of the information shop, to calm the disputes about how to interpret the councils mandate vis-à-vis the employees in the shop. Lastly, the objective of Bydelstinget was redefined: The council should

now initiate activities in the areas of social affairs; cultural, leisure and arts related activities. Still, the council was entitled to be informed about municipal affairs and to articulate its opinions with respect to municipal decision-making, but only with respect to the outdoor environment and housing facilities in Grantofthen.

In the summer of 98 the council celebrated its 10th anniversary and a lot of people showed up at the reception to congratulate the members on their effort. Yet, the future of the council hung in the balance, as a member of Bydelstinget recapitulates the situation: "We cannot work without the support of the local housing committee. If the war continues that will be the end of Bydelstinget. We have to make a specified division of labour. The committee established a group called 'Saturday Friends', a very good initiative. But it is like they want to show us; "look, we can do this and this without Bydelstinget." Instead of saying to the organised clubs "You have to use Bydelstinget actively", they say, "Ok, come back to us if you want to." It's like they are trying to take back everything they once delegated to us." "Why is this so?" "Their attitude is: there should be no Bydelsting. I have tried several times to ask, why? But I never got an answer." Likewise, a representative of the housing committee doubts whether Bydelstinget will continue to exist: "I don't think that Bydelstinget will survive. Bydelstinget can be a social and cultural institution, but not a political forum. The power comes from the procedure that the budget has to be adopted by the tenants, in the end it is the tenants who decide what the money are spent for, and not some arbitrary administrative person, to me that is crucial. It's a question of power, who have the power, who can decide, who are the real representatives of the tenants?"

Part 2. Evaluating the process

Having established an account of the process as presented above, the next step is to evaluate it retrospectively according to the guidelines put forward in the previous chapters. The substantial questions guiding the analysis are: What are the collectively binding rules being addressed in the collective of participants, and how are strategies for changing or reproducing these rules conditioned by differences in roles and positions of actors? And further, to what extent does it make sense to argue that group of tenants working with Grantofthen Bydelsting constitute a reflexive community along the lines suggested in chapter 2?

The analytical strategy is to scrutinise how basic (possibly competing) narratives conditioned modes of organisation and collective interaction, and to explain this in terms of social stratification exploring how the relationship between frames of collective meanings and mode of social organisation changed over time. As discussed in chapter 4, the assumption is that this dimension of social and cognitive stratification can be related to Archer's categories of primary and corporate agency: Focusing upon collective understandings, the question is who articulated these, and how such privileged positions from which to define collective understandings were established? What were the hierarchies of knowledge and differences in access to resources in the network, and how were they established and defended by differently positioned agents? How did individuals and groups struggle over time to impact key-points, controlling the exchanges and attributions of social meaning in the networks? And to what extent were mutual frameworks of understanding and key roles and positions in the network made subject to reflexive remodelling as the process evolved?

Laying down the rules of the game: Consensus and voluntarism (-1989)

Looking back on the 10 years of experience with developing a new democratic institution in Grantoften there are two main stories to be told. One is about how politics in a neighbourhood like Grantoften has to do with social networking, setting up projects and making initiatives for people to meet each other and take part in the social life of the community. The other story is about how the implementation of Bydelstinget changed from the initial plus-sum game to the present zero-sum game, the key players in this process being the members of the local housing committee and the public employees in the council. As a decentralisation initiative, the council was implemented by a handful of municipal representatives in co-operation with the chairman of the housing committee. At the time, Grantoften was considered a socially disadvantaged neighbourhood in Ballerup, and this image of Grantoften as a problem area was reflected in the working-group proposals for the set of rules regulating the councils work.

The political and administrative rationale with 'Bydelstinget' was to facilitate a social development strategy, according to a senior official the council was to be 'a heart beating with the local community'. In consequence hereof, the council was designed to reflect and represent the multiplicity of institutionalised categories of everyday life in Grantoften, together with elected tenants. As formally laid down in the statutes, these council-members were expected to engage in voluntary, social activities, trying to solve some of the visible social problems of the area and promote social interaction and networking amongst the residents.

Parallel to this vision of social integration, the housing committee articulated a democratic vision with 'Bydelstinget'. The committee wanted to expand its influence by setting up a

body that would attract municipal resources, and initiate activities in the area that the committee did not have the time or the personnel to do. Being represented in this new body, the committee would thus potentially expand its sphere of influence in Grantofthen, becoming involved in new projects and activities. The chairman of the committee expressed the vision that 'Bydelstinget' would allow more tenants to take part in local decision-making, and he saw the council as a means for developing workplace democracy in that the public employees working in Grantofthen were given a vote thus a formal democratic role in the council.

Narratives/metaphors	Modes of organisation
Disintegration and social problems	Institutionalised spheres all represented in Council
Heart of local community	Consensus and voluntarism as organising principles
Social networking and integration	Public employees entitled to vote on local matters
Institutional co-operation	
Workplace democracy	

Exploring the mandate (1989 - '95)

What came out of this initial compromise between the municipal narrative of Bydelstinget as a forum for social work and the democratic aspirations of the housing committee was a set of complex rules, first of all causing some confusion amongst the members of the council. But also, a tension between consensus and conflict dimensions in the council's procedures was incorporated. The council was conceptualised in terms of consensus and co-operation much in line with a consensus-perspective on governance (March & Olsen 1995: 34-35) according to which political activity is based on shared values

and meaning. Because of this rationale, no rules to deal with conflict-situations were formulated when interests or values departed. The consequence was that members were free to exercise gate keeping and defend their personal or institutional interests in case of conflicts. If decisions went against their interests, they could withdraw from or try to block the debate, effectively leaving the Council little chance of developing a more united or targeted political profile.

From the outset the council was conceptualised as a framework for the public support and facilitation of a voluntarist social strategy in Grantoften. Bydelstinget was designed to reflect the institutionalisation of everyday life in Grantoften in order to constitute a co-operative forum across all areas. The paradoxical outcome was that this organising narrative in fact resulted in an organisational form that made it difficult for the council-members to criticise these institutions. In the few instances when some members decided to systematically go after particular issues they were easily blocked, the most telling example being when the head-teacher successfully screened off the municipal school from closer scrutiny by the council, and encouraged the members to defend the schools positive image.

Three groups of players dominated Bydelstinget; the 'lay' tenants who were not organised in the housing committee, the tenants with a seat in both representative bodies, and the public employees in the council. The overall outcome of the process was conditioned by the relative positions of these groups reflecting different systemic interests and consequent different approaches to developing the collective context of the council.

Exploring the role of the public employees

Because the professional members could vote on the same terms as the lay members, in principle they broke away with the democratic chain of governance thus accentuating the traditional

problem of defining the limits to the discretionary powers of civil servants (Hernes 1978). On the one hand, the public employees in the council were to act according to the political guidelines set out by the City Council, respect the principle of legality and acknowledge the rules and procedures of the public administration. On the other hand, they were in principle encouraged to experiment with political and administrative guidelines in a co-operation with local interest groups. Potentially, this would result in a criticism of the level and quality of public services in the area and a conflict of interest between their local identification and their employment relationship to the municipality.

Politicians and administrators in Ballerup municipality acknowledged the ambiguous position of the public employees in the council, but did little in terms of initiating a dialogue about tensions and dilemmas within this framework. In practice, a defensive strategy was chosen at the municipal level, the politico-administrative system continued as if 'nothing has happened'. When it came to concrete requests or negotiations between council members and the public administration, the role of the employees was used to question the legitimacy of the council, a political strategy known from other decentralisation initiatives, e.g. Prior et al. 1995.

The right winged parties in the City council argued that Bydelstinget only did what other voluntary associations were doing in other neighbourhoods, so why the extra resources? Despite a process of municipal cut-downs in the period funding for the council continued; yet Bydelstinget as an experiment did not impact the municipal level, and the municipality only interfered directly when conflicts were too difficult to bypass.

Initially, the professional members attempted to redefine their role accepting a formal right to vote on local issues in the

council, and they were actively involved in specific projects and working groups. However, experiencing the negative attitudes towards their participation, they withdrew from meetings with the municipal administration, the opportunity costs associated with redefining their role were too high, and they chose a strategy of pragmatic adaptation to existing power-relations. Thus, a stalemate was established, in which the professional members kept a low profile avoiding sanctions and shying away from conflicts and a potentially more systematic exploration of their mandate.¹⁴ As a result, the traditional legitimacy/accountability issue associated with the political dimension of the administrative role (as discussed e.g. in community work literature) was incorporated into the structure of the council effectively constituting a barrier for development of political autonomy in the council.

Who governs Grantoften?

The relationship between the tenants not organised in the housing committee and the ones who were constituted a second defining feature of the game being played. The former group consisted mostly of tenants who wished to explore the empowering aspects of the council in a dialog with the professional members (as when some members set up a self-help group and joined it). In the period from '91-'92 onwards the question of 'who governs Grantoften?' became an issue, turning the intended plus-sum game into a zero-sum game in which the two groups fought each other. From supporting the idea as a democratic innovation in Grantoften, the local housing committee now signalled that it wanted to stay in charge of the role as innovator and organiser of social and cultural projects in

¹⁴ As Lundquist remarks "in the modern society, the lack of a democratic norm integrating the administration into the democratic institutions is rather annoying (ytterst besværende) (Lundquist 1991: 14, in Jensen 1997: 517)" (translation LE).

Grantoften. The conflict was reflected in the articulation of two competing narratives, the first group of tenants argued that the role of Bydelstinget was to "deal with people" while the housing committee should occupy itself with technical aspects of everyday life in Grantoften. The housing committee members were obviously not satisfied with a role defined in terms of practical and administrative routines, and they described the role of Bydelstinget as that of a local fund financing tenants activities. Obviously it was not a politically smart move by the 'lay tenants' in Bydelstinget to employ this differentiation, and the members of Bydelstinget neglected to articulate a vision in which both democratic bodies were given a meaningful role in the democratic structure of Grantoften.

In the case of setting up a community house, the more hostile attitudes became visible. The housing committee used its role as initiator of the project to manifest a superior position vis-à-vis Bydelstinget by excluding it from the process of debating the initiative, and by prohibiting that Bydelstinget's name was mentioned in working-group minutes. In 1994, the council's application for an increase in funding was let down, and refusing to increase Bydelstinget's part of rent-money spent for cultural and social activities the housing committee safeguarded its superior position as the local tenants' association.

In order to shift the power-balance back to the housing committee, one of the strategies to undermine the legitimacy of Bydelstinget was to criticise the public employees. From the point of view of the housing committee, it was a democratically elected body constituted by tenants only, whereas Bydelstinget emerged into an institution 'run by the public employees.' As a member of the committee argued, the legitimacy of the democratic process comes from the fact that tenants decide upon the running posts of the estates budget, and decisions with respect to rent money should not be carried out by some

'arbitrary' public employees in Bydelstinget. Underlining the differences in the perceived legitimacy of the two institutions, a typical argument from the housing committee members was that "the public employees should have no right to decide upon anything because they do not live in the area. The leave at 16.00, so why should they be seen as legitimate political actors"? Especially in relation to the Information Shop the conflict was visible, the housing committee wanted to control the activities of the employees (who were also members of the council).

Reflexive remodelling of rules of local decision making?

As a democratic experiment, Grantoften Bydelsting was intended to strengthen local democracy and self-governance in Grantoften. However, the council never developed an explicit strategy in order to influence political decision making at the municipal level or the rules and procedures of the political game being played in Grantoften, challenging the central role of the housing committee as the dominant organisation. Instead, the council as a collective body reproduced existing vertical and horizontal power-relations. Bydelstinget was a reflexive community, but in a negative sense: The members continuously questioned the legitimacy of the council, feeling caught up in a number of democratic dilemmas of whether to pursue a strategy of co-operation or to confront vested interests in order to develop a say in local affairs. The members saw the initial setting as a given, they did not seek to re-frame roles and positions in relation to political decision making locally or in relation to the municipality of Ballerup.

A combination of several factors may explain this outcome. First of all, the zero-sum game that emerged in the relationship between the council and the housing committee was played out as an internal conflict within the council. With 5 seats the housing committee had no difficulty subjecting the council to a strategy of domination, effectively preventing any concerted

actions or the development of unified positions in the council. Second, Bydelstinget's status as an experiment caused some members to argue that it easily could be closed down again in case of conflicts with the municipality. Thus, the rule "do not seek confrontation or they will shut us down" was more or less explicitly influencing the member's activities as a dimension of self-imposed dis-empowerment. Third, the basic organising principle of the council – consensus – did effectively block specific attempts to develop corporate agency (co-ordinated, strategic action, policy-articulations etc.) by vetoes and gate keeping.

The public vote illustrates how the tension between the representative and participatory dimensions in Bydelstinget in fact turned into a dis-empowering mechanism blocking the development of corporate agency. Bydelstinget was conceptualised as a representative body in Grantoften, but within a consensus framework integrating all institutional interests in the district. This framework could only function to the extent that the representative model (with its power-orientation and conflict-mediation through procedures of formal voting) was temporarily suspended, and the result was that the participatory model based on the consensus principle made it very difficult for the members to go against or change existing power-relations. With no obvious individuals or groups to take on and develop a leadership-role in Bydelstinget, combining internal co-ordination with external considerations of strategic actions towards political-institutional environment, the result was that it never evolved into a corporate agent with a capacity for policy articulation and strategic organisation in the pursuit of decision making power, and no political platform from which to impact the municipality and the housing committee was developed, an outcome much in the interests of these two institutions.

At the level of specific activities, the co-operation between some of the elected tenants and the professional members continued to form the backbone of the social activist strategy, resulting in the wide array of projects. Most of the tenants felt that participation by the public employees was important to the day-to-day activities of the council, and their involvement in specific working-group activities guaranteed the continuity of the processes when lay members lost interest and dropped out of the council. The emphasis upon self-help and empowerment was much in the interests of individual tenants, seeking to develop their social roles in the community before engaging upon the political role of strategic interest mediation and confrontation.

Renegotiating the statutes (1995 – '98)

The continuing confrontation between the housing committee and Bydelstinget evolved into a frustrating conflict at council meetings. Committee members expressed their lack of respect for the way in which Bydelstinget was conducting its affairs, and interpreted their role as one of supervising and controlling what was going on.

In the spring of 1998, the housing committee successfully pushed for a number of changes in the statutes. Instead of renegotiating the framework as such and discuss how to combine representative and participatory ideals in a more workable form, the public vote was abolished and the formal competencies of the council narrowed down to “the outdoor environment” and “housing facilities in Grantoften.” Thus, the council became on paper what it already was in the social reality of the tenants’ democracy in Grantoften, a voluntary association with no political prerogatives in relation to the municipality or the housing committee, but with a handful of people dedicated to the social and cultural renewal of the area.

6. The participation narratives of Susanne, Maria and Ole

Why do citizens participate, and how do they perceive the political nature and the possible impact of their engagement? Below, the three individual narratives of Susanne, Maria and Ole are presented. They have all been involved in negotiating the new set of statues for Bydelstinget in the period 1996-1998, Susanne has been a member since the beginning, Maria has been a member since 1995, and Ole has been a member of the tenants association for some years. On the basis of each narrative I construct a synthesis, and relate this to the analysis put forward in the previous chapter in order to discuss the enabling and constraining features of the individual participation process.

The interview guide (appendix 1) sets up a frame for the conversation, but it was crucial to have an open dialogue. Ideally our conversations should touch upon all of themes of the guide, but priority was given to the flow and spontaneity of the conversations. I started each interview briefly mentioning my interest in the connection between participation and the quality of life from a day-to-day perspective. Each interviewee was told that the interviews would be reproduced as individual stories of participation, with only the name changed.

Susanne

Susanne has lived in Grantofthen for 23 years, 14 years in the terrace houses, and when her 2 girls left home she moved to one of the Tower Blocks. Susanne is a long-term member of the parochial church council, she works as a substitute for the parish clerk, and she has been a member of Bydelstinget for 10 years. She is an educated lithographic artist, currently unemployed and "an invalidity pensioner with a remaining 50% working capacity." Susanne's membership of the parochial church council is the frame of reference for her

participation in Bydelstinget, she identifies a close connection between her engagement in the two councils: "an important perspective is that we are so close to each other in Grantofte, the church, day-care institutions and so on. To me the primary perspective is to improve the quality of life in the area through social activities, cultural events, like discussing the quality of life of youth in Grantofte, setting up a recycle-shop, sorting garbage etc. That's my perspective on Bydelstinget. I try not to be too pushy, it's not quite legitimate to be religious, and I just inform about church activities. The co-operation is a success in my mind, the council members don't find it strange to use the church as a facility. Often people don't think they can have their problems solved, and then I tell them, go there and there, it's not so difficult to change things."

Problem analysis in terms of social disintegration

A problem analysis in terms of social disintegration guides her involvement. Social integration is no longer a given, the family structure has changed and people find their social networks in neighbours, friends and colleagues. As a result of these changes, people risk ending up being isolated from social contact, a contact that can be difficult to establish again. Susanne is confirmed in this impression when she meets people at other hours during the day, who face the transition period from work-life to a life outside the labour market. It is a personal experience that she has gained from living in the row houses where the social context was automatically there (being automatically member of the oldest existing 'yard-club' ('gårdklub'), a social club between tenants who have a front door to the same yard, she now lives in the block where she does not know people on the other floors. "We have people who do not 'suffer from employment' ('arbejdsramt') and we need to give them tools to change their every-day life. People have been busy working, and then they become less busy, maybe because they have become sick, and then you get to talk to them at other hours, during the day. Instead of sitting at home, we want to create activities that allow people to meet up with others. Today,

the family structure has changed, many live as single-parents, the networks you have are not family but friends, neighbours and colleagues. You don't knock on the next door saying hello my name is Susanne, you have a shyness about you. You can't remove this, but you can make it less insurmountable if you meet others in the same situation."

Life-politics is about pragmatic resource management

Framing the essence of her engagement as "how to give people the tools to change their every-day life?" Susanne's strategy is to be part of a process, in which people become more realistic about their resources. Instead of dreaming of the great lotto-price, the challenge is to accept ones situation, and to manage it from the point of view of a realistic assessment of personal and financial resources. "Was this focus the starting point for your engagement in Bydelstinget, or did it evolve over time?" "It was something I learnt over time. I have tried to earn a lot of money as a lithographic artist and I have tried to receive social assistance. To me the perfect financial state of affairs would be to pay everyone his due and be able to go to the cinema, the restaurant etc. once in a while. The council obviously cannot improve peoples financial situation, but if we can help people during periods where they react negatively having become unemployed, or sick etc., they will get resources to move on, re-train themselves."

"What do you think of the notion 'life-politics'? "That's closer to the truth!" "How do you define it?" "Life-politics, or life-quality, is about what you get out of every-day life. How best to manage the resources you have. It's almost religious, that you go to bed happy, and look forward to the next day. That you are satisfied with your existence without building castles in Spain that you cannot live by. "If only I won a million." But the chance of winning is extremely small, and it makes more sense to be involved in making this place more interesting. The essence is; you need a context for your every-day life, which matches your personal and financial resources. It's nice to have

money, but it's not everything. If your are at peace with yourself, and with the area in which you live...maybe you have few resources, but then it's a matter of getting together with people in the same situation, to get a push."

Trust is a key issue in the learning process

Susanne has an optimistic belief in the impact of personal involvement, with reference to her own personal experience, she encourages others to take responsibility for their life (without being "too pushy, it's not quite legitimate to be religious"). Being active herself, she can tell and show to others that it's not so difficult to change things. The learning-dimension of the process has to do with getting more self-confidence, using Bydelstinget as familiar setting for exchange of experiences, the process of doing can be extended to wider circles. From her point of view, tenants' politics ('beboer-politik') differs from party-politics, in that resources are "in the shape of people" who commit themselves to the community and the creation of social networks, sharing the experience that engagement comes from creating something new.

"Do you find that being a member of the council involves a learning process?" "Yes, when I became a member 10 years ago I dared not to open my mouth. Now I have the courage to express my views publicly." "How did you learn that?" "The council is a reassuring framework for participation, the members are elected for 2 years, but when you discover that people are re-elected it becomes safe. And when you feel safe you dare to speak up. At the 10 years jubilee, I was asked to tell about the history of the council, earlier, I would never had dared that, I would have said no. This feeling of being reassured I cannot bring to the tenants association, I know people, it's always the same, but I don't have the courage to speak in to the mike." "Do you share this experience with your colleagues?" "We are all different, but yes, we have very good debates." "Is this element of trust in the council crucial to willingness to participate and the way the council functions?" "Mutual trust in the council is

important, but we have elections soon, and I would not mind participating in a totally renewed council.”

The power-issue is secondary to a voluntarist social strategy

Our conversation touches upon the relationship between the housing committee and Bydelstinget, and the process of negotiating a new set of statutes. From Susanne’s point of view, the conflicts relate to the fact that Bydelstinget is financially dependent upon both the committee and the City council. A situation where Bydelstinget refuses to let the housing committee and the City council decide the basic terms of co-operation is not feasible, despite the conflicts, the committee has to support Bydelstinget. She feels that it is a two-way process in which both agencies have to give and take a little: “It’s not important which side gets the victory, Grantoften does, if a co-operation is established. But the point is, we meet once a month and share our experiences and that does not give power neither to the tenants’ association nor to the City council. It doesn’t influence what we have of ideas for things to do.”

“Is the social dimension in conflict with the power dimension in the sense that good relationships have priority to strategies, conflicts etc.?” “People find the source of their engagement in the possibility of creating something new, we still don’t have a computer-workshop in Grantoften. Hypothetically, if all council members were new-elected it would take time before it would be capable of functioning, but we could do that, and learn from it.” “Why use the word politics at all? “Few people characterise the activities of the council as politics, we are not elected as representatives of platforms, and it’s about individuals who ask themselves: “Do we really want to do this?” Democracy in the council is about collectively pulling or pushing decisions that relate to the every-day life of each citizen into the hands of the citizen, instead of taking them in the town hall. The opportunity to use X DKK differently knowing that the overall amount does not increase. But often it is not a question of having enough money, but of Y resources in the shape of people who want to

commit themselves on a voluntary basis because they think that co-operation and social networks can be improved. For instance, we emphasise that all activities are open and accessible to all, we don't make membership criteria."

Participation as social 're-embedding'

Susanne's story exemplifies quite well the assumed relationship between active choice of life-strategy and political engagement as discussed in chapter 2. From her perspective, access to a social community in Grantofthen has primarily been through her membership of the parochial church council and Bydelstinget. Especially after she moved from the row-houses into the tower block, and her children moved away from home, she had time available for becoming more involved in community affairs. "The row-houses are in clusters with the entrances in groups of 4 or 6, and people tend to socialise with their immediate neighbours. In the 12½ years I lived there, we were part of the oldest existing yard-club with good social relations, we made a lot of activities. Now I don't socialise with the people of the tower block. A bit of small-talk, but we don't visit each other for a cup of coffee. The people I see the most are the other tenants in the Council, and the parochial church council. "Is the social aspect of the council more important than doing politics? "Yes it is, you have need for exchanging your thoughts and experiences with other people, you live in the same area, but you don't experience things the same way, it depends on your personality and your background. Bydelstinget is a fascinating forum for exchanging thoughts and ideas. People have such different perspectives on things, you go there and you always risk a change in your attitudes and opinions, not completely, but you get to consider things you have never thought of before."

"Do you see yourself as a politician?" "Yes, but what is politics? The council has nothing to do with party-politics, we are not divided according to political groups. We are engaged in tenants' politics, which is about making the area into a better

place to live. Grantoften is a nice place, but it can always be a better place, it's a continuous process, because if we say "the area is ok" things stall. Grantoften is 30 years old, and housing has developed over that period, how do we make these buildings ready for a new millennium? Democracy is about implementing the right and the obligation to take part in decision-making, but people don't always have the energy and time to be active. I have had my two girls to take care of. I lived here for many years before becoming involved."

Maria

Maria is 40 years old and she has lived 4 years in Grantoften with her family. She works as a china painter, and she is elected as a parental representative for the day-care institutions in Bydelstinget. Maria argues much in the lines of Susanne. She works hard to make Bydelstinget function, because she sees it as potential for stimulating social activities and co-operation, a task that the housing committee in her opinion is too busy to perform.

Perspective: working for the children

Maria's perspective is the quality of life of day-care children in Grantoften, and in a voluntary group of parents with children in day-care institutions – the 'day-care group' - she discusses good ideas for new activities. Parallel to this, for 3 years she has been involved in a project about setting up a §70-institution, a day-care institution run by employees and parents. Maria's problem-analysis differs slightly from Susanne's in that she starts off with the democratic issue: "What motivated you to run for Bydelstinget?" "I was encouraged to, I have always enjoyed taking part in associative activities, I am active in the union and has always been, I have also been a member of a party. You know that if somebody takes charge things happen, if they don't, nothing happens, you get influence if you become involved. I am not the type that volunteers to do things better, if somebody does it all right I do not sign up for the task. I want to influence things. But it eats away your time."

“I like that activities are made for all the tenants, my approach is the children’s perspective, I am elected to the board of the after school service in Grantoften, and we also have the day-care group from which I have been elected to Bydelstinget. My perspective is to do something for the children. The day-care group has some projects, some of them are innovative, some of a more ordinary nature. One of the innovative things was a Middle Age City, and a Viking City, then you have the sports-festival, and the Klinteborg Summer-camp for children beginning in primary school and their parents, that’s a magnificent weekend. A project that Bydelstinget has been involved in is the creation of a §70 institution, a day-care institution entirely run by board of parents, who also have the economic competence. A member of Bydelstinget and a member of the housing committee will also be elected to the board.”

To Maria, the political aspect involves a strategic consideration vis-à-vis the municipality, currently there is a political pressure for allowing more children into day nurseries and kindergartens. So the question is, if the parents accept that the municipality increases the number of children in each institution what does the municipality give in return? “How would you define what you do, is it politics?” “Everything is politics, it’s at the social level, everybody appreciates it when you carry out something. In the area of day care it’s rather political, you try to impact the staffing and discuss what the pedagogical approach should be. Are you for or against increasing the number of children in each institution, I don’t like that they put too many children into the institutions. I understand that there is a problem with lack of vacancies and then we negotiate, ok, if more children are allowed, what do they give in return? The municipality has then assisted us in making the §70 institution, so that’s when you become flexible.”

Strategy aspect as ‘appropriate democratic procedures’

“Do you have a more or less conscious strategy that guides your involvement? “What do you mean by strategy? I do the things I

find is appropriate, I am very much into democracy, and if something is not done democratically, I get rather peeved. Everybody needs a certain amount of influence.” “Can you give an example of when it is not democratic?” “Sometimes people misses the point. Like when a member of our group disliked what we had decided about the drawings for the institution at a meeting where she was not there, an architect from the Housing Company didn’t like it either. Then the phone rang one night and I was asked for my views on a completely new proposal, nobody had discussed it. My response was, let’s have another meeting. At this meeting two people didn’t show up. We were two against the proposal and she was for it. We could have outvoted her, but we said, ”Let’s see if we can get people together for this Saturday.” Then she got together with the two who weren’t there the first time, and made them support her proposal, so they voted us down (laughs). I can’t have that, so I had to protest (‘nedlægge en protestant’). And they do it without reflecting too much about it, everybody is very enthusiastic about their projects.”

Learning relates to conflict mediation

From Maria’s perspective, the learning aspect has to do with facilitating co-operation between conflicting partners. According to Bydelstinget’s statutes, the Chairman has to be elected from the group of tenants directly elected for the council. For some time, the informal chairperson was Susanne, but the housing committee filed a complaint to the municipality and another person was formally elected for the position, a move Maria uses to illustrate the point. Also, she identifies a need for improving the meeting culture in Bydelstinget, meetings are often not constructive and the conflicts in general makes it difficult to work, draining the energy away from innovative thinking.

“Do you see your participation as a learning process?” “Yes, obviously. I have become better at discussing issues and received more responsibility than I imagined initially, that I have learned from.” “What are some of the difficulties of this?”

“To co-operate, to make different actors co-operate, that is an almost insurmountable task. There are few people left in the council to carry out a proper piece of work, we fight just to survive, it has been very, very tough on us. At some meetings I have to be moderator and cut through the debates, people do not listen to each other and they just keep talking no matter what. That’s difficult. Take our present chairman, she takes no initiatives what so ever, and Susanne is pulling the strings but she was not eligible for the position. In a period she acted as chairman, but then the municipality came with the whip, she was not allowed to do that.”

“Why did the municipality interfere?” “The tenants association had brought up the question, we had just interpreted the statutes a bit differently.” (laughs) “But the statutes is made for Bydelstinget?” “Yes, but it was one of the points the housing committee could use against us, we had this meeting where they criticised us big time (‘spanking-møde’) bringing up all these issues, we had also had an election not entirely according to the rules. We wanted to change the statutes, but the committee did not want to sign the changes. It is still unclear whether we will continue to exist, but we should be given the opportunity to prove ourselves.”

The power struggle between Bydelstinget and the housing committee has a personal dimension, a barrier that has to be overcome: “When I walk the street today and meet the chairman of the housing committee she does not greet me. I am in the environmental committee representing Bydelstinget, there we talk all right, but the moment we go out of the door we don’t talk.” “Do you loose your motivation to be a member?” “Well, I have to say that...I am a fighter, sometimes I say to my self, now you’re out, but then I say, it has to go on, I think it’s a good idea with the council.” “Why?” “It initiates something out here, and connects people, there is a lot of focus on activities, which would not be

the case if it was only the housing committee with that task. They are so booked up by meetings already, just to find a date for the next meeting is difficult.”

Expertise through involvement

Maria experiences a distinction between experts and lay people, the former are people very active in associative relations, including the public employees, the work of whom she is very appreciative. In her view, Bydelstinget would have fallen apart without their input. The rule is; the more active you are the more specific knowledge you get, and the more authority you have in relation to decision-making. The public employees have an advantage here because often matters relate to the institutions they represent, but also some of the tenants are very active hence influential. Amongst the tenants, you become a sort of expert if you represent a working group, as a person that possesses the knowledge relevant to whatever issue the working group addresses. “In the processes that you are involved in here in Grantoften, do you find that there is a division between experts and non-experts?” “You can identify them. Those with a breadth of outlook, those who are very much involved in associative activities. And of course the public employees. I don’t experience it negatively, we could not live without them. Now there has been a great debate whether they should keep their vote in the council, and I find it heart-breaking that it was been taken away. They themselves said it was ok, but I would have preferred it differently. They do an incredible piece of work, and without the public employees in Bydelstinget things would have fallen apart and people would have run away screaming.”

“How do you approach the co-operation with the people that you identify as experts?” “I listen to them, to assess whether I have the same opinion, which is the case most times. When we discuss at the meetings, it’s my impression that people are not afraid of voicing their opinions, they are not dominating the debates. But of course they speak with a certain authority, and often they get their way. They have a greater knowledge, and if

you are very active in the area, you have more perspectives on what is being discussed. You are not an expert on all areas, it depends what you occupy yourself with. The experts are the people who carry out the decisions, hence they have another insight into the problems. In Bydelstinget, we have numerous working-groups, and we also listen to the people who report back from these groups, its like you are categorised as an expert when you have an area. You can get different roles.” “So there is access to the expert-role if you become involved in the different areas?” “Yes, the more you are in the groups, the more you make yourself noticed.”

Political participation as a strategy to meet people

Maria's strategy was clear when she moved to Grantofthen, she was elected for a board almost one of the first days, and she is well aware of the fact that participation is an access gate to the social community as a newcomer to Grantofthen. “How important is your social relationship to people related to Bydelstinget?” “We are somewhat alike, in the area as such we are a mixed group, there are bums, it is the strong who join up to do something, that's very clear, but it is the only way” “Did you use Bydelstinget to make social relations to people?” “That's obvious, when I moved out here I knew that if you enter associative work you meet people, but it is also my interest. I have lived 7 years in a small society in north west of Zealand, I am not very sporty, and sports was the only thing there, I tell you, it was difficult to mix with people there. I realised that you have to do something for it yourself. But I like associative work, I was voted into a board almost the first day I moved in here (laughs).”

“I think it is interesting how it is difficult to distinguish between political participation and social relations?” “Do you mean that I intentionally wanted to move here to become like the others? Because that is not the case, I arrived here by accident, it was just because I could not get another place to live.” “I was

thinking that you can be active in associative activities and thus get to know people, and that the political aspect is also an occasion to meet people.” “It’s obvious, its like in a party, the only people I got to know living up north were my fellow-partisans, and they were scattered in a 20 kilometre radius! (laughs)”

“What did you mean by saying before that you did not want to be like people living here?” “I thought you had said that I had chosen to live in public housing like this, because I wanted to belong to the group of people living here, but that’s not the way it is, it was just an accident. I would have preferred to stay in Copenhagen. But it was a positive experience to move into this ‘collective town’ (‘kollektivby’) as they call it.”

If you stop taking part in democracy it ceases to exist

“What do you think of the notion of life-politics?” “What do you mean by that?” “How do you see the relationship between your personal involvement and the things you do in Bydelstinget?” “It is democratic, you have to seek influence, if you stop taking part in democracy it ceases to exist, that is the terrible part, so few people participate. It is like that, always a handful of people who decide, in the unions, in the parties, in the day care institutions. On the other hand, if you look at all the different boards and committees you can become a member of, the parental school boards, party committees, courtyard committees, playground committees, Bydelstinget, and so on. The strategy in Grantofthen is that you should pay as little as possible in rents, what you do should cost nothing, that gives us very little to space to do things.”

“What is the best part of being active?” “When you cause a change, when people come up and say “that was really good what you did there” “And the worst?” “When the co-operation does not work. It is an art form to make people work together.

This area is socially disadvantaged in some respects. The fact that people get some kind of influence, no matter how small it is, maybe give them enough self-confidence to move on to something else. I think it has an educational effect to be a member of Bydelstinget.”

Ole

Ole lives with his family in Grantoften, he is 38 years old and has been involved in tenants' politics for 10 years, 9 years in Albertslund and a year in Grantoften, where he has been a member of the tenants association.

Change-perspective: social dedication amongst people

“I am interested in knowing why you participate?” “Because I want to influence my everyday life. I think you can do that by becoming active where you live. I could run for the City council, or Parliament, maybe, but that would concern the general issues. In my everyday life and in my approach to other people I think I can influence things better here. I have influence on the budget, what the area looks like, upon attitudes in the estate. How we shall try to impact attitudes amongst public officials, the municipality, ministries, the Government, I have tried to exert an influence at all three levels”

“What kind of change is it that you want to initiate?” “I want social dedication, that people get together. It implies that people feel something for one another and that they do things together. I have decided to live in social housing, but it doesn't mean that I cannot go and fix the flowerbed in front of the estate, to get the satisfaction of knowing that this I have made the way I want it. Also I like activities for everybody, dance, banquets or bingo or what ever, I like to involve myself where nobody else does it.”

...and rule-flexibility in the social housing sector

To implement this perspective, Ole works to implement a higher degree of self-organisation and more flexible rules in the social

housing sector, compared to private housing, the social housing sector needs to get rid of some of the limitations and barriers to tenants' needs and interests. For example, according to Ole it has negative social consequences if for instance single fathers have no spare room for their children when they come and visit them. And it is impractical, when young families have to move to a new apartment each they get a new child because of housing rules.

“Maybe I am more political than most living here, I want to influence the political top so tenants are not put in an inferior position. I am elected for the housing committee, I go to meetings with the Ministry of Housing and so on, the Mayor, civil servants whenever we have some good ideas or things we want to focus on. It is about autonomy and freedom of movement in the social housing movement. People in private housing have degrees of freedom that tenants' haven't got traditionally. Tenants' have been treated as if they were unable to do anything, protected against influence so to speak, which is foolish, I have chosen to be a tenant with the advantages this have, and I want to minimise the disadvantages too.”

“Do you work according to a conscious strategy?” “I have not written it down on paper, but I know what I want.” “And that is?” “I want to remove all the boundaries and restrictions for tenants, it has to be as easy and simple as private housing. The present rule-set only put up restrictions, it doesn't identify possibilities” “If you see this objective as a political strategy, is it like having a political platform to work from, or is it political at all?” “It is clearly political, I see myself as a politician, I am a member of a political party, but my area is housing policy, that's where my engagement is, that is what I am good at.” “What do you understand by politics?” “To have a self-awareness and an awareness of the surroundings, and more or less targeted impact the surroundings to make them adapt to what you want the ideal to be like”

People employ different strategies for maximising their influence, in Ole's experience a straightforward and open approach voicing his positions is more feasible than a covert and lobby-oriented approach working "behind the frontiers." Those who never voice their opinions at meetings but lobby afterwards are less successful, because people loose faith in their credibility. "What kind of qualifications are required?" "To have an opinion on what you want, and then be able to listen to others, and then make your conclusions" "Do you experience a division between experts and non-experts?" "It's always like that. Those who are perceived as experts are the ones who argue well. Sometimes they argue so that they get their way without being right, while others say nothing. I believe that you have to articulate your views and get the beatings once in a while."

"Do you see it as a learning process?" "You have to adapt to the surroundings and the people around you; the question is 'how do we go about this so that everybody can participate?' It matures you. Also in relation to my job I get another feeling of well-being and independence."

Barrier: The bingo-mentality

A barrier to the social change that Ole works towards is what he calls the "bingo-mentality" in Grantofthen. As a newcomer he has felt a high degree of rule-conformity - "we have tried it and it doesn't work" - and he was annoyed to feel too tight codes of membership like "these seats are private" when he joined social activities. Also, he even had to apologise if once in a while he did not show up for social events. Too much of the social interaction is conceptualised in terms of fixed positions, rules, keys and opening hours.

"If you were to identify a social development strategy for Grantofthen, what would it be to you?" "To make events where people can come and go as they like. Unfortunately, when you are a newcomer its hard to get in. You have to adapt to certain norms, you have to be there at specific hours and leave at

specific hours, people have their private seats and often you have to explain and to apologise that you didn't show up the last time. Why explain? Like Open House, three times I had to go home again, the seats were reserved, and I got negative. And I am a strong person, less resourceful persons experience that once, and leave not to show up again. It's a bingo-mentality: "I sit on my usual spot." We need places where people can drop in and read the newspaper, and have a coffee. There is the Information-shop, but the opening hours are not so good, and after all it is people from the municipality sitting there. Then there is the 'Bumsen', but if you dislike beers and drugs, then... There is a tremendous numbers of clubs, but it is all in fixed frameworks, rules, keys, hours."

"I have this dream about a café, were people just pup in, a bit a food, cheap, easy and approachable. Open, so that everybody feels welcome, nobody should feel the opposite, but I think that many people do that." "Is there an element of social control in this?" "It's difficult to explain, you know who lives where, but you are rather isolated from each other. The estate is big, unless you have lived here for years you are a bit lost. When people really drop out you can do very little, you see it and think about it, but I have experienced that people have to hurt themselves before the social authorities will interfere, even if you offer to go in and do something. Once a man had a broken window for 4 months, we were willing to go in and fix it but we were not allowed. The man was really far out, but you are not allowed to interfere, there has to be a damage first, it shocks me, somebody is manic-depressive but nothing happens, until the day he runs around with a toy-pistol, then the police is there." We have hotlines to social and medical authorities, but even though we can't do anything, that makes me deeply frustrated."

"How would you help?" "Visit the person, contact the social authorities, if somebody is manic-depressive he is known in the

system somewhere. You have to cry out to get the rules changed.”

Social housing activities a life-style choice

Living in social housing and being active in associative activities of the neighbourhood is a life-style choice. Ole's friends he has met through these activities, and he is aware that it is a priority that excludes other aspects of life. A basic dimension of his participation is to create opportunities for engagement as such. But you cannot force people to participate, and the challenge is one of striking the right balance between individual enthusiasm and some kind of collective regulations allowing access for everybody, to anchor the social and cultural activities in the community.

“How important are the housing activities, is it a way to make friends, and to get a social identity in the area?” “Yes, 70 percent of my friends I have from involvement in housing issues. Then you meet people incidentally, if there is a grill-party, and you get to talk to people. That's how I meet people, but I have also by and large chosen not to choose anything else, I have chosen this, I find it is a good way to live my life.”

“Are there some drawbacks?” “In Albertslund, I am not so known here yet, your conversations with people centre around housing issues. I have had to say “tonight I am off, I don't want to discuss this.” Also, people drink too much, and say things that you have to ignore about others. And if you have to investigate it, you have to do it covertly, later, because it's all rumours. Unfortunately, many elected representatives in the tenants associations are not capable of shutting this out. I have been at many meetings where people were discussing such issues, and that is not too good.”

“What kind of day to day experience is it that inspire you in relation to the associative activities?” “Things that I experience on my own body, when things are complicated, not easy-going

enough. I experience that activities stop because it becomes too much focused on the needs of single persons, they relate to the people behind more than to the intended target-groups. The initiators are behind the activity because it gives you a kind of name, but they are not targeted to the intended people but to the needs of the people behind. When tenants say, lets change this and this, the people behind opt out and the projects die out. I have done it myself, a project about aerobics, I had to close it, we were 20 in the beginning and ended up being 3.”

“So it’s a balance between being dedicated to something and flexible to other inputs?” “Yes” “So a part of it is to influence attitude’s towards greater flexibility?” “No, you rarely influence the attitude of people behind activities, it’s hard to get anything done, and if they do, it has to be on their terms, and if not, they stop. The problem is to anchor the initiatives. It can never be the objective that all tenants are activated. The objective is to activate the people who want it, who have the need for it. And simultaneously to do it in a manner in which you attract the highest number possible, it is a bloody difficult process.”

On the connection between life-style and governance structure

In chapter 1 the question was put forward: What are the ‘enabling and constraining’ features of individual and collective re-embedding strategies in concrete processes of participation? Above, the experiences of Susanne, Maria and Ole exemplify such individual participation strategies, and in the following I relate their narratives to the analysis put forward in the previous chapter. To do this, first I recapitulate the basic points made in the evaluation of the process. Thereafter a synthesis of each of the three narratives is suggested and discussed in relation to the process-analysis.

Recapitulation of the Grantoften process

Prior to 1989 co-operation in Grantoften was anchored in an informal neighbourhood council in which a number of public and private actors co-ordinated their activities in area. On the mayor's initiative, the co-operation was formalised in Grantoften Bydelsting, a community council in which all interest groups and institutions of Grantoften were represented. The statutes defining the operations of the council were formulated by the then chairman of the housing committee, the head teacher and a legal expert from the municipality, and when sanctioned by the city council they were presented at a public meeting in Grantoften and approved by the people present.

Especially two ideas influenced the formal setting of the council: first, the council should support the ongoing voluntary co-ordination of activities in order to improve the social environment in Grantoften, a view emphasised by the municipality. Second, the public employees were given a formal right to vote on council matters in order to commit them on community affairs and to promote work place democracy, a view defended by the housing committee.

For a number of reasons it proved difficult for Bydelstinget as a collective body to develop the council's horizontal and vertical influence. Because the rules of interaction were conceptualised in terms of co-operation and networking no rules of conflict mediation were implemented. Members were free to defend their individual or institutional interests, opt out or block debates and initiatives, making it difficult for the council to unite in a pursuit of specific policy objectives.

From the perspective of the municipality, the political role played by the public employees served to de-legitimise the council, when politicians or administrators negotiated issues like day-care they "only wished to talk to the parents," and the

public employees were encouraged to refrain from taking on a political role. At the horizontal level, the housing committee blocked Bydelstinget in its efforts to impact local decision-making processes. From an initial support of the council the committee turned around and pursued a strategy of re-delegation while trying to control the activities of the council, criticising the public employees of disqualification and the lay members of incompetence.

The result was a combination of high turnover rates in the council, and a strategy of accepting existing power-relations on behalf of the public employees, who were faced with too high opportunity costs developing the political dimension of their role. Thus, in their practice they re-negotiated this role into one of *indirect* participation, supporting and facilitating tenants' initiatives, parents' involvement, etc., but without mobilising, politicising or taking part in negotiations with the municipality.

The administrative involvement in the local democracy of Grantoften was experienced as ambiguous: "Do the social workers approach us as 'citizens' or 'clients', and what is their legitimate right to engage in local decision-making?" Yet, at the level of specific activities, tenants and professionals pursued a social activist strategy, most tenants felt that participation by the public employees was important to the day-to-day activities of the council, and the employees' involvement in specific working-group activities guaranteed the continuity of the processes when lay members lost interest and dropped out of the council. Also, the emphasis upon self-help and empowerment was much in the interests of individual tenants, who developed their social roles in the community before engaging upon the political role of strategic interest mediation and confrontation.

Susanne: Pragmatic resource management

Susanne presents a problem analysis very much in line with points put forward in chapter 2 on the consequences of individualisation. From personal experience, she underlines the potential risk of being removed from the social context of the job, the family or the social networks of the neighbourhood, and she turns this risk-experience into an explicit participation strategy. Her prime objective is to be part of and to construe a social context (with a base in Bydelstinget and the parochial church council) that allows people with similar kind of experiences to reassess their situation, and to build social relations with people of their neighbourhood.

This transition process she calls pragmatic resource management, and the point is that people are very much in need of positive social relationships, in order not to react negatively to this transition and as a frame of reference in the process of reassessing and coming to terms with their situation. From her perspective, the conflicts and the power-games between the housing committee and Bydelstinget are secondary issues considering the fact that people show up once a month to share their experiences and develop "new ideas of things to do." A key to access this process is the push you get, when you discover you have the self-confidence to voice opinions in the group, a learning process facilitated by the mutual trust that evolves over time.

Thus, the 'strategic' dimension of Susanne's narrative relates to a process perspective, its not so much what is done but the process of doing, to be part of a community that allows for the exchange of ideas and experiences as such. Focusing upon the need for helping others, creating possibilities for 'pragmatic' resource management and social integration, she turns a problem situation into the justification per se for being active. This ethical dimension of her 're-embedding' strategy is thus to

transform the negative aspects of dis-embedding (loneliness, unemployment, 'negative reactions') to a positive outcome of social re-embedding by establishing an everyday life context that matches peoples personal and financial resources.

At the individual level, this requires a personal reassessment of the life-context that is facilitated by establishing a framework at the collective level, which she identifies in relation to Bydelstinget. The council in time grew to be a familiar setting allowing her to develop enough self-confidence to express her views publicly, an opening she appreciates. Comparing Bydelstinget and the housing committee, the latter does not have the same quality for her, its difficult to mobilise the courage to 'speak in the mike' at committee meetings.

Interaction in the council provides a legitimate framework and support for self-help activities, and she emphasises that questions of lobbying for more resources are less relevant in times of financial constraints in the municipality. Over time she has experienced how the council developed as a collective forum in which a basic level of trust was established, facilitating the learning associated with developing the social and political skills needed to take part in council activities.

From her perspective, the barriers to the development of negotiation power and autonomy in the council are of secondary importance to the development of the self-help strategy. In her analysis, the whole point of local democracy in Grantofte is to get access to a reassessment of ones situation, "we meet once a month and share our experiences, that does not give power neither to the tenants' association nor to the City council." Yet, despite her 10 years of membership and her informal role as chairperson she is still reluctant to voice her opinions at housing committee meetings. In fact, the zero-sum game that emerged between the housing committee and Bydelstinget constitutes a

barrier to the empowering potentials of taking part in the council as well as the further development of her prime objective, the anchoring of a self-help strategy in Grantoften.

Maria: The children's perspective

Maria advocates the children's perspective, and through personal involvement she has access to influencing their quality of life in the day care institutions and in the locality as such. She pursues two strategies, one is to encourage specific activities for the children, and another is to seek influence upon the children's policy at the municipal level. In this respect, her problem-analysis touches upon the empowerment aspect of participation: Becoming active is about getting access to the expert role and the social identity that follows from involvement in specific issues.

In relation to Bydelstinget, this process is anchored in the working-groups. The crucial mechanism is the positive circle between involvement; knowledge; expertise and decision-making power, a potential benefit of being active. This empowerment aspect she sees in the interaction between the public employees and the tenants, and to her it is "heart-breaking" that the professional members no longer have a vote in the council, signifying the respect for their active and political contribution to the lay members' learning process.

Politics for Maria is also a question of pursuing specific strategies over time and she is frustrated with the barriers she experiences in the context of Bydelstinget, it is very hard to "do a proper piece of work." Personal conflicts dominate the working climate, and there is very little space for creative thinking. Grantoften is a socially disadvantaged area in some aspects, and people need access to the learning that potentially takes place in Bydelstinget.

This systematic frustration of the learning process is counterproductive from the perspective of individual empowerment and a barrier to influencing the municipality from her perspective. Yet she does not opt for the housing committee, but underlines the link between activity, social identity, knowledge and decision-making power. Because political participation is a key access channel to social identity in the neighbourhood, there are both democratic and social arguments why more points of access to this role should be established. Also, she has the incentive that she as a member of the day care group co-operates with the leaders of the day care institutions in the context of the council.

Maria, much like Susanne, does not involve herself in the pursuit of a specific narrowly defined strategy, participation to her has an ethical core rather than a calculation of pros and cons, and the basic point is to play by democratic rules and procedures. Maria appreciates the empowerment circle that potentially occurs in relation to the council, but she is frustrated with the aggregated effects at the collective level. From her perspective, it is unsatisfactory that Bydelstinget with its unique public-private composition has not developed into a corporate agent. Participatory democracy is difficult and sometimes impossible to implement, there are always a handful of people who decide. But having a say is a relative notion, the democratic process has to be viewed against the relative social disadvantage of the area and Maria works to implement specific activities for children in network relations of her own.

Ole: Rule-flexibility and social development

In short, Ole works to make social housing rules reflect the needs and life-patterns of tenants. There is a need for a shift in the culture of social housing estates and modes of organisation, away from a traditional hierarchical system of top-down service delivery within a negatively defined rule-framework, to a more

flexible mode of regulation responsive to the social needs of the residents. Living in social housing is to a large extent a life-style choice that involves a community dimension. And the sense of community and the social dedication amongst people is closely associated with democracy; people take part in the management of the housing estate when they feel it is theirs to influence.

Ole defines politics much in line with the notion of reflexivity, as awareness of the self and of the surroundings, in order to impact these according to ones ideals and aspirations. So from his perspective, it is a political action when you do not accept rules and regulations as granted, but try to define these according to social needs. Therefore, too much rule-conformity is both a social and a political problem, and he is frustrated with the 'bingo-mentality' of people in Grantofthen. But he explains it with the relative social disadvantage of the area, when people get "too squeezed by their life-circumstances" they tend to become less flexible and open. The rule-conformity and lack of tolerance is a democratic problem when people are discouraged from participating in the social life of the area, and Ole pictures setting a café that is open and approachable to everyone.

Sometimes people living in Grantofthen experience serious social or psychological problems and to Ole it is frustrating that the public authorities only interfere when problems get out of hand. In his effort to create opportunities for engagement the point is that people cannot be forced to participate, and the challenge is to strike the right balance between individual initiatives and some kind of collective support and regulation of these. As a rule, most people hesitate to become involved, and when they do they want to carry out the activities on their own terms, otherwise they opt out again. Therefore, the question is how more people are integrated in the cultural and social life of the area acknowledging the individualised nature of their engagements?

Conclusion: On the connection between life-style and governance structure

The three accounts all confirm the hypothesis that reflexivity is a phenomenon at the core of individual participation strategies. Participation is about getting access to a creative, self-reflexive process as an opportunity structure that allows for both a cognitive re-conceptualisation and a social re-construction of the context of the life-situation in relation to wider political goals and objectives.

The social or collective dimension of this process is crucial because the articulation of personal aspirations and needs is facilitated by taking part in a group-context. Susanne expresses it as a need for reassessment of ones life-circumstances provoked by the negative consequences of disembedding, and she underlines the need for a collective sphere to articulate everyday life experiences and develop self-confidence. Ole defines politics as awareness of the self and of the surroundings, in order to impact these in line with ones ideals and aspirations, while Maria recognises the positive empowerment circle of expert-lay interaction, underlining how lay persons benefit from interaction with professionals.

In all three narratives, emphasis is upon the mechanism by which people in Grantoften get access to processes in which they reflect upon their social conditions of existence and collectively organise to change these. Susanne emphasises the self-help aspect and personal change needed to cope with crisis, Maria the mechanism of empowerment through participation while Ole expresses the need for rule-flexibility in the social housing sector reflecting social needs, and he advocates mutual tolerance tenants in between.

In their practice they do not distinguish between 'self-' and 'structural' reflexivity, neither of the three defends a sharp

distinction between the private and the public, and being part of local decision making processes is a lifestyle. Through their participation they combine a personal aspect of getting friends in the locality with an orientation towards collective decision-making according to their respective agendas.

As Susanne argues, Bydelstinget provides the "opportunity to consider what one has not thought off before", and to act collectively on some of these aspirations. The co-operation in the network associated with the council creates a public sphere in which the social life of the area is debated, and it functions as a framework for the individual's "insertion into society." The council is an opportunity structure for meeting people, getting friends, giving voice to personal experiences or becoming involved in a self-help group.

Also, it functions as an opening towards the expert role. For a decade, the agenda of council meetings has been reporting back from working groups and the members who actively use the council each become 'experts' or representatives of specific issues or projects, collectively sanctioned and supported by the members.

The core of this process of 're-embedding' is the articulation of emergent situational meanings based on interpersonal proximity and trust, a process that is conditioned by the resources and skills that people bring to the dialogue. In Grantoften many live as single parents, some have become unemployed or otherwise placed in a situation in which they have to rethink the basic dimensions of their everyday life. One way to break the potential isolation or solitude is to get together with people who share similar experiences in order to come to terms with ones situation, and gradually build the self-confidence required to take part in the public life and democratic processes of the housing estate.

Does it follow that this voluntarism as the rule of the game is in conflict with the development of political competencies? From one perspective the members of the council did not pursue traditional emancipatory politics focusing upon life-chances, like creating local access-points to the labour market, getting people off social benefits etc., accepting the tacit understanding that traditional party-politics is 'prohibited' for the voluntarist strategy to succeed.

On the other hand the members got access to knowledge of institutional practices and activities, and as an 'opportunity structure', the council (and especially the public employees in the council) facilitated individual tenants' access to the role of activist, and hereby the basic empowerment mechanism of activity/involvement – generation of specific knowledge – development of a social role in community & political authority with respect to decision making.

But the individualised social network dimension of the council was a barrier to the development of corporate agency, as illustrated each time the members collectively sought to pursue a policy issue. As such, the processes of social interaction in relation to Bydelstinget mirror the ambiguous relationship between the fragmenting character of individualisation processes and the development of a collective capacity for political action (Andersen 1997: 103).

Conceptualised in terms of voluntarism and self-help the council constituted a framework supportive of individual projects and initiatives, while collective efforts to impact decision-making processes horizontally in Grantofte and vertically in Ballerup municipality were hampered as analysed above. As an institution based on voluntarism the exit option was available in case of conflict or diverging interests, and individual

representatives were free to opt out of debates, collective initiatives or the council as such if they desired to do so. In the case of the primary school the head teacher had an easy job of showing a number of overheads stating there were no problems compared to other schools, and no counter-arguments were put forward by tenants or by the public employees.

The three participants have in various ways been frustrated with the fact that Bydelstinget has been subject to conflicts and domination by the housing committee. At the same time, all three have continued their memberships of Bydelstinget and focused upon the positive aspects.

Maria finds the relative political weakness of Bydelstinget frustrating, but she appreciates the relativity of peoples' experiences and emphasises the personal empowerment aspect in relation to the interaction between public employees and tenants. Susanne could not be formally elected as chairperson in Bydelstinget because of the housing committees opposition to this, the committee referred to the council's constitutes stating that the chairperson had to be directly elected and tenants who were also representing 'institutional interests' - as in Susanne's the parochial church council - were not eligible for the position. The housing committee members used the rule to have their own nominee elected, arguing that the committee would have to sanction any rule changes made in the statutes.

Developing a meta-perspective upon the evaluation in Engberg & Hulgård 1996, Bogason (Bogason & Kensen 1998) argues that there should be put an end to Bydelstinget as an experiment, and its tasks should be transferred to the housing committee. This could be done by setting up an administrative branch under the committee relating to the public institutions in Grantoften, and ask this sub-committee to strengthen its social activity profile. The only other alternative would be to change the

powers of Bydelstinget in order to make it a 'true' neighbourhood council. In this case, the members would be appointed by the Town Hall reflecting the political composition of the Municipal Council. But this solution would change the legitimacy of the council when the members were no longer directly elected by local tenants, and Bogason prefers the first solution.

There is a fourth alternative to shutting down Bydelstinget, converting it into an appointed council or turning it into a sub-committee under the housing committee: To continue doing business as usual, recognising the ambiguous and complex game being played by the actors in the context of the council. Being a combination of a self-help group and a representative institution, the council supplements the existing democratic structure. The lay aspect in the council appears to be a barrier, but in fact it functions as an institutionalised opening towards the expert role, allowing participants to gradually develop a social membership of the community.

For a number of reasons the tenants in Bydelstinget were constrained in the potential effort to exert their political autonomy as a group in relation to the housing committee. But as shown it was a political game being played in Grantoften, and though sometimes frustrating it was quite educational. Probably, the zero-sum game that emerged out of Grantoften's democratic experiment reflected the democratic attitudes of the tenants living there, and maybe the housing committee members persist in their analysis that Grantoften is too small a place to have two representative bodies.

But that's a secondary issue, as Susanne remarks: "I live in a social housing environment, how do we want this to be and what does it take to make it better?" In the end, the tenants of Grantoften will have to debate how they define self-governance,

and whether they see political autonomy as a necessary prerequisite for a happy life or as an unnecessarily complicated end in itself?

7. The co-operative society EVE

In the following the case study of the co-operative society EVE ('Andelsselskabet EVA') is presented. Recognising how expert discourse influenced political priorities EVE initiated a round-table process from the late 80's and onwards, urging economists and ecologists to challenge conventional economic thinking from an environmentalist perspective. In the first part of the chapter the story of EVE is recapitulated, with a specific focus on how the economy-ecology theme was debated at seminars and in the 4 books published by the co-operative. In part 2, the process is evaluated according to the guidelines laid out in the previous chapters, with a focus on how collective understandings of the eco-eco theme were conditioned by roles and positions in the network interaction over time.

Part 1. Initiating a round-table dialogue on the eco-eco theme

The co-operative society EVE ('Andelsselskabet EVA') originated from the annual Grundtvig seminar (1979 - 1997) at Vestjyllands Højskole¹⁵. The objective of the society was to

¹⁵ In Scandinavia and in Denmark in particular, "Højskolebevægelsen" has been of importance to the democratic traditions and civic mentality of people. Initially, the co-operative movement was an organisational form of business activities in the agricultural sector, based upon principles of risk sharing, reciprocity and mutual learning. Along with business co-operatives that created and formed the backbone of the agro-industrial economy, an extensive pattern of so-called 'folkehøjskoler' spread throughout the country from mid 19th century. At first as a cultural defence against German influence, later as an educational alternative to the so-called "Black School." Inspired by the Danish priest, philosopher and politician N.F.S. Grundtvig, the folkehøjskole tradition emphasises dialogue, freedom of expression and individual diversity as the philosophy guiding the educational programs offered.

debate and inform about the relationship between economy and ecology. For this end, EVE initiated and organised a dialogue-process from the late 80's and onwards, urging economists and ecologists to challenge conventional economic thinking from an environmentalist perspective.

As a co-operative society, EVE criticised the hegemony of national economic institutions, arguing that the economic disciplines exercised by these institutions only inadequately addressed the environmental issue. The results of this dialogue were published to a wider public, whereby the co-operative society managed to attract professional and political attention in the Danish context, especially around 1990.

The constitution phase: creating the vision (1988-1989)

Debating the teachings and life of Grundtvig, the Grundtvig seminar combined lectures, discussions, story telling, theatre, dance and music. The lecturers that organised the seminar included storytellers, authors and public debaters, and most participants had grown to know each other, taking part in the seminar over the years. In the summer of '88 one of the course participants mounted the speaker's chair and accused her parents' generation of apathy: Knowing about the environmental problems, it expected that the younger generation should clean up after it. The speech touched a nerve in the crowd, and later that day two of the lecturers went to the local pub to discuss how to respond to this challenge.

What they came up with was a proposal to constitute a co-operative society. The society should take up the environmental challenge, and provoke a debate about the relationship between ecology and economy in order to raise the public awareness of what they saw as an urgent issue. Debating the idea with the seminar-participants, the two initiators argued that the co-operative society should enter a dialogue with the political

establishment to bring about a change in its course of action! This could be done by publishing an ecological-economic 'Wise Men's Report' as an alternative to the semi-annual status reports published by the economic 'Wise Men' of the Danish Economic Council. They pointed out, that the dominant economic paradigm was too narrow in its focus, ignoring the environmental issue, and they identified a general need for integrating environmental aspects into economic reasoning and planning. They proclaimed, that the first General Assembly of this co-operative society would take place at the following years Grundtvig seminar at 'Vestjyllands Højskole.'

ADAM and EVE

A working-group was established (which later became the first executive board of the co-operative) and the group set itself two objectives: To formulate a proposal for the co-op statutes and to start the editorial process of the first publication. The idea was to publish a critical report on economy-ecology a few days before the Danish Economic Council's 'Wise Men's Report' to attract media attention and provoke a debate on the issue.

The members of the working contacted economists, ecologists and other relevant professional groups, and invited them to take part in a dialogue about the relationship between economy and ecology. Inspired by 'ADAM' (Annual Danish Aggregated Model - a macro-economic computer model situated in Statistics Denmark), a member of the working group suggested they should name the co-op EVE, associating a paradigmatic alternative to existing economic thinking and with a reference to "the mother of all living."

EVE set as its task to "expose the coalition between experts and growth-oriented politicians" (EVAs årsrapport 1990: 8). The identity of EVE originated in an early critique of ADAM as a specific macro-economic computer model, and as a metaphor

for neo-liberal economics as such. As a metaphor for the neo-liberal paradigm ADAM represented the counter-image of EVE: An optimistic belief in rationality, objectivity, planning and technology, and a fundamental orientation towards the market and linear growth, rejecting alternative value-orientations in conflict with a market logic.

Macro-economic computer models were seen as the embodiment of the very essence of economic rationality, claiming to give the most accurate picture of the national economy, and even to have a capacity to forecast future economic development trends, just like modern versions of the Oracle of Delphi, a metaphor that was used in the first publication (Andelsselskabet EVA 1990). The small expert-elite developing the models was criticised of having too much discretionary power and (consequently) political influence.

The main task of the co-op should be to politicise the economy, to lay open the normative foundation of economics (Andelsselskabet EVA 1990) and to show how traditional economic discourse constitutes a barrier to the environmentalist perspective: That a sustainable environment is a fundamental precondition for all human activity, and as such should be recognised and integrated into economic reasoning at the local, national and international policy making levels.

July 1989 the co-operative society EVE was founded. The working group presented a proposal for a statute that was accepted by the General Assembly (approximately 60 people): "The purpose of EVE will be to embark upon public education. The central theme is economics, understood as proper housekeeping at the global, national, local and individual level, a housekeeping that acknowledges the ecological challenge" (§2, statutes).

Members of the working group recapitulated the basic ideas: The objective was to establish a multidimensional dialogue in order to (a). Facilitate the dialogue and confrontation between expert cultures represented by economists and ecologists thus bringing scientific paradigmatic conflicts and debates into the open. (b). As a co-op society to be part of this dialogue by asking the 'stupid questions' as non-experts and as a stake-holders in the environmentalist paradigm, and (c). On the basis of this process to develop and explore alternatives to the inadequate 'wisdom' of economic rationality and its proponents from an environmentalist perspective (Board-minutes).

The round-table discussions initiated by the working-group had already resulted in a number of articles, and it was decided that the EVE should publish a report about economy-ecology every year, and arrange annual seminars to allow a discussion between the authors and the members of the co-operative. A board was elected, the members of which were to edit and publish the anthologies and arrange the seminars. Approximately 80 persons bought a share of DKr. 500 to gain membership of EVE, thus creating a fund to finance the first publication and the various activities of the co-operative society.

EVE goes public

EVE released the first anthology 'Pengene og Livet'¹⁶ in the spring of 1990. The anthology was made in the image of the Danish Economic Council's semi-annual report, containing three sections on international, national and case-issues. The points put forward in the anthology received widespread

¹⁶ The society published 4 four books: 'Pengene og Livet', 'Det Rene Svineri', 'Danser på Herrens Mark' og 'Hvor Går Grænsen?' and the titles cannot be properly translated. However, to indicate the word games and underlying connotations a word-to-world translation would be 'Money and Life', 'The Pure Filth', 'Dancing on the Field of His Lord' (to be left high and dry) and 'Where is the Limit?'

attention, particularly the ones dealing with green economics. The economists basically advocated a synthesis of economy and ecology under the heading of a green economy. In appendix 2 the main ideas put forward in 'Pengene og Livet' are summarised.

Departing from 'the internalisation of externalities' approach, the argument was that consumers and polluters should pay the real environmental costs through economic measures (various means of taxation) in accordance with the market mechanism. EVE proposed that the traditional GDP was made 'green', by means of a qualitative change in existing accounts and models, in order to turn these into actual welfare indicators, suggesting that an ethical national account could be constructed (Jespersen, Jesper 1990: 40-42).

The argument was that by integrating environmental and social factors with economic balance sheets in the national account, a more comprehensive the state-of-the assessment of the economy would be possible. Each output should be evaluated against some calculated targets for the society in general; a 'sustainable GDP' necessarily includes all factors with an impact upon future living conditions. Changing the nature of the GDP in this direction compromises the models' quest for objectivity: "Any attempt to subtract environmental and health costs will give access to an abundance of arbitrary and political judgements into the theory of National economic surveys. This will not cause the theory to differ from other economic theories. On the contrary, the political element becomes more visible if the "Mr. Clean-Hand' attitude is abolished", and it is to be preferred from a democratic point of view" (p. 40).

In logical extension of the two first points, the economists advocated the notion of a green economy. Production and consumption patterns causing unacceptable harm to the

environment should be discouraged by means of 'the polluter-pays' principle. Governance instruments should exploit the market mechanism rather than be based on regulation only. Prices should be corrected so as to ensure that feasible economic decisions were made through various measures and incentive instruments, like taxation, subsidies, fees or tradable emission permits (Mortensen, Jørgen Birk 1990: 64-72). Basically, emphasis was upon changing the institutional settings of the markets in accordance with some overall environmental goals.

The initiative was considered a success, and with the first publication 'Pengene og Livet' the concept of a green economy became very much a public issue. According to one of the participating economists, the idea of green taxes had been promoted for years without a public breakthrough due to an alliance between the agricultural and industrial sectors and the green movements (EVE-economist, interview). The business sectors were in opposition being potential subjects to taxation; the green movements were hostile towards economic instruments in environmental policy because the approach was seen as unethical (introducing the logic that polluters pay to pollute). "The discourse of the green movements clearly was that environmental regulation should be governed by administrative means, while we as economists felt it was important to convince them of the potential benefits of environmental taxation. EVE helped spark off the debate" (ibid.)

EVE's publication gave rise to widespread attention in the public, in various professional and political environments and amongst grass roots. As a PR-strategy, the board had arranged for reviews in national and local newspapers. One of the persons asked to comment upon the report was the then Minister of the Environment Mrs. Dybkjær, who found the initiative "an extremely worthy contribution to the debate deserving all possible recognition. My contribution to the process which is

now initiated shall be an invitation to an economic roundtable discussion with the authors" (Politiken 16.02.90).

A double interview with one of the authors and an economist from the Danish Economic Council sparked off the debate on a green GDP and the question was taken up in Parliament, where The Socialist Peoples Party asked the Minister of Economics, Mr. Petersen what he would do about the fact that "The economic analyses of the Economic Council appear to be increasingly insufficient and inadequate, because the ecological aspects are not included?" (Information 02.19.90).

On the back of 'Pengene & Livet' the subtitle was 'an ecological counsel' ('Et Økologisk Råd') and the idea of a National Ecological Council as a counterpart for the Danish Economic Council came up in the debate. Some debaters thought EVE claimed to be a self-appointed ecological council, but this was not the case, the editors had deliberately written 'an ecological counsel' on the back of the anthology. EVE received a cultural award from national television (DRage Prisen) and various grass-root organisations and individuals approached EVE with suggestions of co-operation, co-optation etc. The Nordic Council invited EVE to comment upon a proposal to develop a green GDP-model integrating environmental considerations into economic policy, emphasising a total view of the human impact upon the nature (Letter, Nordisk Råd).

Also the EVE metaphor caught on in the media and inspired many interpretations, as illustrated by a newspaper review of 'Pengene og Livet': "EVE has come to being now, as then in Paradise, to remedy ADAM's solitary ways. Congratulations, EVE, with your Second Coming, although this time it was not to the Paradise' garden of innocence. You are imperfect and open to conversation as you must and should be. You contribute to showing the post-industrial breed of ADAM a more complex

world - all us who sees so easily what is materially close to us, but only weakly senses the hidden blind alleys laying in front of our busy feet" (Fyns Stiftstidende, May 1990).

The ideal positions of 'EVE' and 'ADAM' as two opposed world-views or paradigms are presented in the table below (inspired by Pruzan 1995: 8). The table is only indicative, the people involved in EVE did not share a precise programme or platform; one of the few points they agreed to was the diversity and complexity of the issues at hand.

Table 4. A Comparison of ADAM and EVE

ADAM	EVE
* economy-ecology	* ecology-economy
* commodification/externalities	* limits to growth
* instrumental rationality	* dialogue
* utilitarian rationale	* the nature (a value in itself)
* one success-criteria: growth	* multi-criteria model
* quantitative epistemology	* qualitative epistemology
* short term perspective	* long term perspective
* individual consumption	* the common good
* efficiency	* quality of life
* independent actors	* interdependent systems
* competition	* co-operation
* material welfare	* well-being

The governmental apparatus takes up the challenge

Mrs. Dybkjær invited the authors and the board members to take part in an economic round-table meeting with her and senior officials from the Ministries of Finance, Economy and Environment (Politiken 16.02.90). At the meeting, the minister informed the group that she was investigating the possibilities of formally establishing an Ecological Council, and a discussion on the relationship between ecology and economy took place. The discussion dealt with the difficulties and frustrations related to reaching an agreement between experts about what was the

generally accepted state of affairs in the environmental field, and with the problems of how to convert these data into criteria which economists could use in their models (interview, EVA Nyhedsbrev 1990).

In a later newsletter to the members of EVE, the Board reflected upon the meeting: "It was a very constructive dialogue, free from prejudices between the group of authors and the bureaucrats, which left the impression that the issues raised by EVE had been taken seriously. They had actually read the book, and it was seriously debated how to make a green GNP, or at least the possibilities of integrating ecological issues into future economic surveys...We actually feel that the meeting with the Minister of Environment has justified our purposes" (EVA Nyhedsbrev, oktober 1990).

The Zeuthen-Committee

A few weeks after the meeting with Ms. Dybkjær, the national Committee for Environment and Development appointed The Zeuthen-committee with participants from the same ministries. The committee was headed by Mr. Zeuthen, chairman of Statistics Denmark, the national bureau of statistics. The committee's task was to illuminate and evaluate the integration of environmental criteria into national accounting systems (Zeuthen 1990).

The Committee published a report 'Economy & Environment', in which it basically refused the idea of integrating such ecological considerations into the national economic accounts. The argument was, that the "ecologicalisation (of accounting systems) conflicts with the fundamental preconditions for the national account as a closed system, describing the actual functional mode of the market economy" (Zeuthen 1990:11). Many of the environmental factors are not exchanged across the market interface and therefore do not carry any price tags. To

create a green GDP, it would therefore be necessary to translate these factors into a format compatible with the existing models.

According to the committee, this translation would be arbitrary, in that it had to be based on projections of market-determined prices, applying either a 'willingness-to-pay-principle' (how much will people pay in order not to lose or gain more of a specific good/asset?) or 'the principle of opportunity-cost' (what is the price of avoiding a specific deterioration of the environment?). The Committee, however, wrote: "...when the content of imputed values becomes dominating, the results become strongly dependent of the chosen principles of value assessment, and it is in general difficult to say how such results should be interpreted..." (Zeuthen 1990: 53). Introducing a green perspective would redesign GDP in a normative direction, changing the national income to become partly a welfare indicator, partly a traditional measure for production and income. The Committee recommended instead the elaboration of satellite accounts linked to the ADAM model, in order to illuminate partial relations between economic activities and environmental factors.

The Ministry of Environment

Some months later, the Ministry of Environment released an independent report: 'Environment & Economy' (The responsible editor was one of the economists writing for EVE) representing the opposite position: The national accounts should be redesigned such that both environmental and economic factors co-vary. "The macro-economic models are to a still larger extent used as a basis for the political debate on the formulation and implementation of economic policy. Therefore it should be an ambition that the economic models in time are extended such that they can account for the interplay between economic development and the environment" (Miljøministeriet 1990: 59). The Ministry suggested that macro-economic models

could be used for material flow analyses as well as accounts of the quantitative and qualitative changes in the state of the resource capital stocks (traded as well as non-traded resources) with the aim of coupling flows and resource use to economic changes. In the long perspective, valuation of resources and environmental factors should be elaborated "to the extent possible and reasonable."

The argument was that the environmental aspect should come before the economic: Multipliers for prioritised factors could be calculated, analogous to the existing multipliers on economic and energy variables to enable a quantification of the environmental load of a given economic activity (sector, manufacturing processes or consumption) or policy proposal (p. 77). The combined use of economic and environmental variables could thus expose potential conflicts between economic and environmental goals. The models to be developed could calculate different scenarios relevant for a given policy area, or investigate the necessary changes in the economic factors in order to obtain certain environmental goals.

EVE celebrates, and starts to reflect upon the vision (1990-)

The positive reactions to 'Penge og Livet' were considered a huge success by the members of EVE. The environmental issue was definitively on the political agenda, and the economy-ecology connection at the centre of the debate. At the seminar in the summer of 1990, the members and the authors recapitulated the pros and cons of a strategy seeking to combine economy and ecology¹⁷.

¹⁷ Former Vicepresident of the Social Democratic Party Mr. Poul Nyrup Rasmussen became a member of EVE, and he was invited to comment upon the green GDP-debate. However, he chose to give a speech on the subject "Education/labour market - Investments/Ecology."

Basically, the focus upon economic steering-mechanisms like green taxes was supported, as a progressive contribution to economic thinking. Only a few critical voices were raised, one member remarked that “the market mechanism eliminates the moral aspect of the relationship between man and nature” (EVA Nyhedsbrev, oktober 1990) causing a problem if the illusion is created that financial means deliberates man from depending upon nature.

During the media debate of the summer 1990, one of the authors had voiced the idea of “putting a price on lark song” in a national newspaper, as a necessary consequence of pursuing the ecological perspective from an economic viewpoint. Framing the economy-ecology agenda as a question of quantifying qualities had provoked a debate in the press, which also took place at the EVE-seminar (Andelsselskabet EVA 1991).

The ecology-economy theme was debated in terms of the measurability of environmental aspects, and arguments were put forward as to the limits of this approach, and some argued prizing lark song as an absurd exercise. Accepting this framing of the debate the views articulated at the seminar were ambiguous: from pragmatist optimism on behalf of potential structural changes via the market, to idealist refusals of an ecology-economy synthesis as a question of calculating and internalising the environmental issue.

At the last day of the seminar, one of the participants summed up the debates (Røpke 1991: 148-151). In her opinion, the traditional perceptions of what were the political issues should be redefined from the perspective of the qualities of every-day life. And she listed some of these, as she had interpreted the seminar-debate: the qualities of emphasising the spiritual dimension and being present in the situation, instead of thinking too much ahead. To strengthen quality of the every-day life of families by

reducing conflicts. To value a closer contact with nature on a day-to-day basis, which implies that the pace of living should be slowed down, and to emphasise sense-impressions and meditation.

Together with this perspective, she argued that “on the one hand you can develop these qualities within the framework of the different forms of every-day life that we presently have, and its important to do so. On the other hand, the present structures of every-day life set limits to the extent to which we can develop these qualities, and it is important to create new structures that allow for this development” (p. 149). As a strategy she advised one of “small steps”, like creating meeting places for tenants, ecological projects etc. Through incremental changes the outcome will eventually appear as a radical change involving “a strengthening of local communities, a reduction of the division of labour and new life-forms based upon a reduction of material consumption”, a scenario in radical contrast to dominating development trends (p. 150).

EVE evaluates the process

In 1991 EVE published a second anthology ‘Det Rene Svineri’, in which the 1990-process was evaluated: “no economic experts in governmental institutions dared to articulate the demand that all social and economic planning initiatives should be assessed from an ecological perspective. To even consider ecological aspects in the national accounting system was considered lunacy!” (Andelsselskabet EVA 1991: 6). References are made to the publications of the Zeuthen-committee and the Ministry of Environment, and the report of the Zeuthen-committee is referred to account for the practical and principal problems associated with statistical information about environmental costs, thus implicitly confirming the theme of measurability. In the reference to Environment and Economy, it is underlined that the publication points to the need for further quantification

(construction of numbers) of the resource and pollution problem, the publication emphasises various economic steering-mechanisms and expresses a certain optimism on behalf of the market-mechanism.

The two reports are taken to signify the victory of the EVE-initiative; "Even though the ministerial white papers in some aspects are not far reaching enough, it is important to the political debate that we from now on can refer to official documents basically acknowledging the main points forwarded by EVE" (Andelsselskabet EVA 1991: 7). Members of the cooperative and various readers criticised the first report of being elitist, and the board of EVE responded that "EVE has tried to frame the articulation of view-points in a language that would allow access to government offices" (p. 8) but accepts the critique, and therefore the second publication will be "broader in its perspective" with more variety amongst the contributions, "a price we have to pay." The overall ambition of 'Det Rene Svineri' is to qualify the debate about a sustainable development as defined in the Brundtland Report, and the notion of sustainability is explored from a multidisciplinary perspective.

The second publication introduces a broader interpretation of the economy-ecology theme, as a matter of life style and the everyday life context of the environmental issue (economy as "sound housekeeping"). Following up on the discussion on the first seminar, a number of articles address the question of how individual citizens empower themselves in relation to the ecological challenge: How to surmount the structural barriers to a sustainable life-pattern that become more and more visible in everyday-life experiences? Structural barriers are identified in different areas (transport, consumption, employment etc.) and EVE expands the overall project to include "the mobilisation of local responsibility and engagement in creating new modes of

interaction in the local communities, between generations, provide more space for “sources of joy”“(p. 9).

Another change had taken place comparing the second anthology to the first, the media-attention was no longer there. Approximately 1000 copies were sold, a relatively huge edition compared to Danish standards, but the attention was limited to a few newspaper reviews, and the board promoted the anthology as a text book of relevance to educational and various professional institutions. At this stage, the debate on green accounting systems was no longer ‘new’. The seminar of 1991 was another success, EVE had now approximately 150 members and about 100 participants joined the seminar. One of the speakers, the new Minister of Environment Svend Auken, expressed his sympathies towards EVE and the participants got a chance to enter a debate with him.

Frustration sets in

From 1991-92 and onwards, the enthusiasm in the board and amongst the members gradually decreased. In 1992 the editors of the EVE-Newsletter wrote: “The idea that the newsletter should facilitate a dialogue amongst the members of EVE has not been fruitful, nobody uses it as a potential discussion forum and we have no contributions to edit! We suppose we are members of EVE because we think that an annual ecological report as a counterpart to economic rationality is such a brilliant idea that we want to support it. And besides that, each of us is properly active on an individual basis in our local communities, where the real fight for a shift in attitudes towards the environment takes place. EVE is a source of inspiration, but the environmental problems have their origin in the way we have chosen to live our lives, its about morals and ethics. Therefore, the purpose of the Newsletter will be to report from the annual seminars, and to give publicity to future publications” (EVA Nyhedsbrev 1992).

The board published a third anthology 'Danser på Herrens Mark' in 1992, but the emerging frustration began to appear at seminars and at board-meetings. The feeling that EVE had been so victorious meant that the co-operative in a sense had lost its legitimacy. The economy-ecology theme was adopted by various expert-institutions, and the market for publications about economy and ecology was literally flooded (still, the third anthology sold approximately 700 copies). A Danish Ecological Council was established in 1992, and it seemed that the level of information in the public debate was adequate, if environmental progress was too slow, it was not due to a lack of information or good ideas, but to a lack of political will amongst decision-makers.

Meeting with Statistics Denmark

Towards the end of 1993, EVE and ADAM (finally) met in person. The board of EVE and a few of the authors were invited to a meeting at Statistics Denmark, chaired by the head of Statistics Denmark Mr. Zeuthen (EVA Nyhedsbrev 1994). The agenda of the meeting was the notion of a green GDP, and EVE opened the debate by asking whether the system of national accounting was compatible with a specific interpretation of the notion of a sustainable development? As a response, Mr. Zeuthen gave the EVE representatives a lecture similar to the one he had just delivered to the Environmental and Regional Planning Committee in National Parliament. In his speech, Zeuthen emphasised that the national accounting system is a measure of market activity, non-commodified qualitative aspects outside the market are not registered, and attempts to measure and integrate a qualitative dimension should be rejected.

To exemplify, Zeuthen used the weight of a child: This weight is an objective number, and if one was to modify the number in order to make it signify the well-being of the child, how then to

quantify “red chins and a child’s laughter?” According to Zeuthen, the same problem goes for developing welfare indicators in relation to the environment, which would entail the absurd exercise of quantifying qualities. Furthermore, Zeuthen accused the idea of a green GDP as being undemocratic: An accounting system that results in “a final green number” showing the necessary priority between ecology and economy, ignores the political responsibility of making this assessment, thus rendering the politicians superfluous, “do we wish to escape the responsibility of discussing the environmental state of affairs when we keep dreaming of a green accounting system that shows how we ought to prioritise?” (EVA Nyhedsbrev 1994).

The ensuing debate was somewhat frustrating to the board members. Zeuthen’s lecture confirmed the often debated distinction between the market and the quantifiable on the one hand side, and the qualitative ‘rest’ on the other. Towards the end of the meeting, the EVE-representatives were handed a working paper describing how Statistics Denmark approached the issue. In the aftermath of the meeting, a debate evolved in the EVE-newsletter: The supposedly undemocratic nature of a green GDP was questioned, and instead it was argued that efforts to construct a green GDP would serve to expose conflicts between economy and ecology, not in conflict with, but as a fundamental prerequisite for political decision-making.

In the beginning of 1994, the board decided to act upon the sense of frustration, and it asked the members whether the society should put an end to its existence or continue its efforts (letter to the members). At the following summer-seminar the members decided not to abolish the co-operative, and they urged the board to edit another anthology. In 1996 EVE published ‘Hvor Går Grænsen?’ the idea of which was to take stock of the situation: What happened to EVE’s initial ambition of exploring

the relationship between economy and ecology? In the foreword, the board recapitulates the ever-present questions: Is economic science capable of incorporating the notion of 'basic limits' to economic activity? What are the problems associated with converting environmental criteria into calculable units? What is our ethical and moral response to the way the ecological problems challenge our way of life?

After many years of debate at seminars, round-table meetings and in the media, and 4 publications with contributions from more than 35 different 'experts' from different professional environments, the board (in the true spirit of EVE) still exposed a basic ambiguity with respect to the ecology-economy theme: "Do we have to establish alternative economic systems where the ecological perspective is the fundamental starting-point, or is it possible to incorporate the environmental costs in the existing economy?" (Andelsselskabet EVA 1995: 10).

Also, the editors reflected upon EVE's apparent success advocating green taxes and green economics as such: "the attempt to establish an objective price on pollution suppresses individual responsibility, to the extent the market forces choose for us, no explicit political choices have to be made about the kind of environment we want to pass on to future generations" (p. 14). The introduction refers to alternative schools of economic thinking, in which nature imposes absolute limits to economic activity - 'ecological economy' - but the anthology has no articles on the subject. Since the release of the 4th book, the co-operative society is inactive. A seminar arranged for the summer of 1997 had to be cancelled due to a lack of interest, and the present board has plans to call for a general assembly with a single topic on the agenda: The final shut down of EVE as a co-operative society.

Part 2. Evaluating the process

In the following, the EVE-process is evaluated according to the guidelines developed in the chapters 2 to 4. What were the collectively binding rules being addressed in the collective of participants, and how were strategies for changing or reproducing these rules conditioned by differences in roles and positions of actors? And further, to what extent does it make sense to argue that EVE constitute a reflexive community along the lines suggested in chapter 2?

As previously argued, the analytical strategy is to look at how basic (possibly competing) narratives conditioned the modes of organisation and collective interaction in the process, and to possibly explain this in terms of social stratification. The assumption is that this dimension of social and cognitive stratification can be related to Archer's categories of primary and corporate agency: What were the hierarchies of knowledge and differences in access to resources in the network, and how were they established and defended by differently positioned agents? How did individuals and groups struggle over time to impact key-points, controlling the exchanges and attributions of social meaning in the networks? And to what extent were mutual frameworks of understanding and key roles and positions in the network made subject to reflexive remodelling as the process evolved?

Articulating the ecological modernization discourse (1988-90)

EVE struck at the heart of a fundamental schism in modern societies: The conflict between the rationality of the industrial order (linear economic progress and abstraction of ecological threats) and the gradual realisation of the unintended, undesired and uncontrollable side effects produced by industrial society (Beck 1992, 1994) (Giddens 1994).

Initially, EVE pursued a pragmatic strategy of promoting the notion of a green economy, which assumes 'a happy marriage' between ecology and economy. From this perspective, a synthesis is both possible and feasible through a reform of existing institutions, particularly the market, by means of various new economic steering instruments. At the same time, the members and the board of EVE were continuously occupied with the fundamental tension between ecology and economy. With its market-orientation, the medicine prescribed by the economists was perhaps not the cure but part of the disease?

Though EVE defined economy in everyday terms of housekeeping, the ambition put forward was to systematically challenge neo-liberal economic thinking from the environmentalist perspective. Therefore, the board and the members of EVE saw their task as one of facilitating a dialogue between experts, who were expected to bridge their different positions.

In the early phase from '88 to '90, this idea of a synthesis between economy and ecology was reflected in the social organisation of EVE, experts were invited to discuss and write, and EVE would facilitate the dialogue, edit and publish the output. In line with Grundtvigian ideas, the board members saw a challenge in catalysing a debate in the academic community, while "decoding" and informing about this debate to a broader public. The strategy was clear, to publish reports looking like the semi-annual economic reports of the Danish National Economic Council maximising the impact upon the public debate following the Wise Men's publications. The board members of EVE initiated a series of meetings between economists and ecologists, and encouraged them to develop an alternative approach, discussing and writing about how the ecological challenge could be integrated in economic discourse.

At the core of the EVE-process was a critique of assumptions made in relation to the formal, institutionalised approach to economic governance, represented by the ADAM model. The ADAM model was interpreted as a concrete example as well as a metaphor for neo-liberal economics, based on a way of thinking that did not acknowledge the full implications of the environmentalist agenda.

As a paradigm underlying political discourse, ADAM was seen as having considerable political impact, and the strategy was to put forward a critique and an alternative vision without rejecting the neo-liberal epistemology as a starting-point, in order to 'get access to the offices of government.' By constructing the EVE metaphor, ADAM was automatically also turned into a metaphor - a social construction - thus underlining the political message that the ADAM epistemology was based on normative economic reasoning. To get the message through, the economists working with the computer model were compared to the Oracle of Delphi.

Narratives and metaphors

Modes of organisation

EVE a critique of ADAM	Round-table dialogue
EVE: Economics as proper housekeeping	Role division between economic and ecological experts and EVE members as lay group "posing the stupid questions"
ADAM: Oracle of Delphi Green GDP	Ecological dimension incorporated in economic modelling of expert-environments
Alternative Wise Men's Report	

The core political dimension in EVE was to modernise or change the epistemology of ADAM from an environmentalist perspective. This goal was to be achieved through the staging of a learning-process in which experts were mobilised in order to

articulate a new ecological perspective, changing and reforming existing economic routines and world-views.

This process of *re-conceptualising ADAM* was basically perceived in terms of an expert-dialogue, in the initial process it was considered crucial that EVE was accepted at the level of technocratic expertise and political-administrative decision-making to get an impact. Therefore, a role-division between the EVE-members as an (informed) lay-public and in particular the economists but also other professional groups was established. The two groups formed a reciprocal alliance in which EVE would facilitate the dialogue between the critical experts while these explored the possible syntheses between the different positions and world-views.

Questioning ecological modernisation (1990 an onwards)

Defining economy as 'house-keeping that takes into consideration the ecological challenge at the international, national, local and individual level,' the co-operative society associated a common sense attitude with a concept of a sustainable economy. Individual and collective responsibility for the environment should be rooted in the context of the day-to day decisions of the household, and in EVE's vocabulary, ecological sustainability was a starting point as well as a precondition for economic activity.

While this objective reflected an important self-understanding amongst the members of the co-operative, the discussions on green economics voiced by the EVE-experts set the public agenda. No matter the pros and cons of various valuation methods, the valuation theme had become the dominant discursive setting of the ecology-economy debate in EVE. This perspective Hajer (1995) refers to as the discourse of ecological modernisation: "the discourse that recognizes the structural character of the environmental problematique but none the less

assumes that existing political, economic, and social institutions can internalize the care for the environment. For this purpose ecological modernization, first and foremost, introduces concepts that make issues of environmental degradation calculable" (p. 25-26).

In the response to the 90'-process, the board members interpreted the official publications of the Zeuthen-Committee and the Ministry of Environment as authoritative references. In the reference to *Environment and Economy*, the board stated that the publication pointed to the need for further quantification of the resource and pollution problem, and expressed "a certain optimism" on behalf of the market-mechanism. Commenting upon the Zeuthen-Committees' publication *Economy and Environment*, the board remarked that the committee outlined "practical and principal" problems in relation to a green GDP and environmental economics, "even though the ministerial white papers in some aspects do not reach far enough" (Andelsselskabet EVA 1991).

This interpretation of the two publications was paradoxical because the Zeuthen-Committee affirmed the epistemology of 'ADAM' that EVE sought to challenge. The committee underlined the distinction between the domains of economic science and politics maintaining a separation between the objective and the normative. Also, the committee argued that external factors like hypothetically fixed prices could not be correctly modelled because of their arbitrary nature, environmental aspects were excluded with reference to the systemic boundaries of an economic discipline only capable of modelling market-assessed values.

Obviously, some EVE-debaters disagreed with the Zeuthen-Committees' position in relation to the potentials of quantifying environmental qualities. But ironically, EVE basically

confirmed the committees' position. During the green GDP-debate at the first seminar in 1990, the members of EVE were reluctant to 'put a price on lark-song' as suggested by one of the economists, refusing the exercise not from a strict methodological but from an ethical perspective. Some years later, the EVE-representatives had to agree when Head of Statistics Denmark Mr. Zeuthen referred to the basic difference between qualitative and quantitative data (how do you quantify "red chins and a child's laughter?") as the discursive framing of the debate.

Ecological modernisation	Internal EVE process
Green economy	Ethical conflict
Internalisation of externalities	Schizophrenia
Price on Lark Song	Focus on non-economic approaches to issue of sustainability
Weight of a Child	

The validation-agenda had resulted in considerable attention, and the legitimacy of the discussion gave an impetus to the society, a sense of being part of a far-reaching political process. At the same time, accepting this economic agenda with its (narrow) economic definition of rationality, the challenge of reformulating the relationship between ecology and economy was phrased in terms of specialised knowledge and technical problems of valuation. Because of this, the EVE members felt disqualified lacking the required technical expert knowledge, and some refused to accept the agenda as such.

By framing the problem in expert terms, in a sense EVE became excluded from the process. As 'competent lay-people' the members felt a legitimate need to become involved in the shaping of economic wisdom, expanding it to encapsulate their alternative conceptions of the social purposes of public

knowledge (Wynne 1996: 61). But at the same time EVE got caught in its strategy of mobilising the expert-level exposing itself to the ambiguity of the validation-agenda.

Already at the first seminar the ambiguity of the economist agenda was debated, 'do we believe in a green economy project?' The notion of a green GDP was discussed, but focus had already moved on to what could be done individually and collectively from a life-world perspective to change the world in a more sustainable direction.

In a plethora of discussions in subsequent seminars and publications, the co-operative society explored moral and ethical aspects of the environmentalist agenda. The turn away from a narrow internalisation agenda to this broader perspective also became visible with the second publication, the idea of keeping to the style of the economic wise-men's reports is abandoned, and a colourful pig looks at the reader from the front page (Andelsselskabet EVA 1991).

Turner (1991: 212-222) provides a categorisation of different approaches to the relationship between ecology and economy, describing four radically different world-views. The categorisation is interesting, in that it suggests a framework for understanding the different positions in the ecology-economy debate illustrated in the table below:

Table 5. Ecology-economy: four world-views

<p>The exploitationist world-view (conventional cost-benefit approach): Conventional cost-benefit analysis as a narrow measure of economic efficiency of alternative courses of action. The environment is of instrumental value to humans, and viewed as a collection of goods and services that can be measured in terms of preferences (e.g. for conservation of natural assets)</p>
<p>The conservationist world-view (modified CBA approach): The utilitarian CBA is "relaxed" to allow for intergenerational equity, defining "sustainable development" as the passing on of a constant (natural) capital to future generations no smaller than the stock available to present generations (Hick's definition of income)</p>
<p>The moderate preservationist world-view: Economic analysis is subsumed pre-emptive, non-economic environmental standards, and employed to the extent it illuminates cost-effective measures to achieve these standards. To economic analysis, the use of non-economic criteria poses a problem of developing quantifiable models.</p>
<p>The extreme preservationist world-view: Rejecting CBA and the instrumental/utilitarian perspective, the "extreme preservationist" position ascribes nature intrinsic value. Because nature is valuable in itself, it should be protected (what Turner refers to as the deep ecology or bio-ethics paradigm).</p>

Source: Turner, R. Kerry (1991): "Environment, Economics and Ethics", p. 212-222, in Pearce, David (ed.) (1991): "Blueprint 2. Greening the World Economy", Earthscan Publications Ltd., London.

EVE's proposals for a green economy touched upon positions 1, 2 and 3, while the proposals of the Ministry of Environment was close to a moderate preservationist world-view. In the last EVE-anthology, a more radical approach to the ecology-economy theme was mentioned ("do we have to establish alternative economic systems where the ecological perspective is the fundamental starting point?") but the anthology as such did not explore this avenue. The co-operative did not pursue the

theoretical, social and political consequences of positions 3 and 4 above, despite the ambitious starting-point.

The political strategy pursued by EVE was to try to manage a process of knowledge-creation, potentially changing the way that economists working with ADAM perceived the relationship between economy and ecology. The invitation for a dialogue confirmed a role-division between the co-operative society as a lay public and economic expert-environments, and the latter took over the task of exploring the synthesis between economy and ecology.

Despite its sophistication, this strategy to some extent worked against the intentions of the society. When the outcome of the roundtable dialogue was defined in terms of an anti-ethical position - How do you calculate the price of lark song or estimate the life-quality of a child by looking at its weight? - the society was in no strong position to reformulate this unacceptable paradigm, having passed on the task of exploring the eco-eco synthesis to the experts.

The paradox was also embedded in the name: As a metaphor, EVE emphasised the inseparability of the economic and the environmental dimension, while maintaining their separation as two distinctly different perspectives. This ambiguity has much in common with a dialectic contradiction (Bhaskar 1993: 58); entities or aspects of a totality that are distinct but inseparable, being internally related but having one or more aspects that negate the other in a 'tendentially mutually exclusive' relationship. Despite launching a substantial critique of the ADAM-epistemology, EVE signalled acceptance, if ADAM would agree to expand the economic perspective and include the proper parameters. Thus, EVE ended up in a situation where it presupposed what it denied.

The co-operative society EVE was a temporary social community organised around a metaphor (!) and the community dissolved itself when the members felt the process had run its course and the political potential had been realised. In a sense, EVE represents a case of a “hermeneutics of retrieval” (Lash 1994: 117), which Lash refers to as the “hermeneutic dismantling of the subject-object thinking of expert-systems in order to be able to show their foundations in forms of being, in ways of life.” Mirroring itself in ADAM, the vision articulated by EVE was precisely to expose the reifying quality of economic modelling from a life-world perspective, anchoring the concept of sustainability in praxis and locality, approaching economy as proper housekeeping.

Yet because the ecology-economy dialogue was framed in terms of an expert-lay distinction and the objective was to decode from former to the latter, EVE implicitly accepted the underlying expert-rationality. When the members of EVE in the following debates emphasised a re-coding of practical knowledge as a starting point for wider societal changes, this everyday life perspective was matched by a feeling of schizophrenia. The EVE-metaphor was brilliant at the outset because it pretended a synthesis, but it also underlined the ever-present fear that economics and ecology are basically antithetical principles (Foster & Mellor 1997: 12): The one concerned with unlimited growth; the other with natural limits to growth.

8. The participation narratives of Helle, Anne and Erik

In this chapter, the narratives of Helle, Anne and Erik are presented. Helle is presently a member of the EVE-board, Anne was a lecturer at the Grundtvig seminar, a member of the EVE-board and part of the process from the beginning, while Erik attended a number of seminars. The conversation with each participant is structured along the lines of the interview guide in appendix 1, but priority has been given to the flow and spontaneity of the dialogues. After each narrative I suggest a synthesis of the participation experience, and evaluate this against the analysis of the EVE process put forward in the previous chapter. Having presented and evaluated each narrative, the chapter ends up with a discussion of the concept of re-embedding strategies seen from the perspective of the specific experiences of the three participants.

Helle

Helle is 40 years old, she has three children, she is a gardener and an economist. Since 1981 she has worked on her organic farm and she currently works for the Danish Association for Organic Farming. Also, in the summer of '98 she is a member of the board of EVE. "How did you get into contact with EVE?" "I was a member of a group in the Danish Association for Organic Farming that worked with a plan for the transition towards organic farming, and I got into contact with the two first books 'Pengene og Livet', og 'Det Rene Svineri'. It was an eye-opener to me: to link economy with the political level through the debate on environmental economics. In 1991 the Ministry of Agriculture made a plan for a sustainable agricultural sector, and we made an alternative plan with more emphasis on specific measures to facilitate the transition towards organic farming. It was the possibility as such to combine the two dimensions, when I look

back, EVE was one of the sources of inspiration to me becoming an economist (laughs).”

Change perspective: to link the personal with the social

Being an organic farmer with an interest in economics, Helle became a member of EVE in order to explore alternative understandings of economics. Her basic position is that “you should do what you preach”, societal change takes place through multiple individual actions, and to her EVE bridged the link between the personal and the social perspective. More specifically, she was attracted to the mix of professional and lay elements in the debates about green economics, the seminars allowed people normally working with neo-liberal economics to explore alternative and more critical angles.

“To me the point is that if you are involved at the individual level, feeling that the way you live should reflect some of the visions of the ‘good society’, then at some stage you end up in a conflict between what you can do as an individual, and the things that needs to be done for society to move towards this direction. If you are personally involved you end up in these kinds of dilemmas, and I could use EVE to link the societal aspect with the personal. And not only from the perspective of party-politics, its broader, politics is a discussion about the good society, how do we move towards it? One of the new things is that you feel a personal responsibility towards the big issues, if you have ideas about the good society you need to change yourself as well. Sometimes it’s too difficult to do so if society does not change simultaneously. This link between the individual and the collective I found in EVE. Which is also the link between traditional economics that is very decisive to how society is developing, and (the question of) how to influence it from the perspective of individual responsibility.”

“How did you approach this issue in EVE?” “I knew what to do individually, but I got some words to express this, of course it’s an academic discussion. But I got so inspired by our plan for

sustainable farming in Denmark and by EVE, working together with people who had some tools I didn't possess, so that I began to study economics." "What was your initial experience of EVE?" "I read the books, began my study, and the seminars became very important to me. You had a forum where traditional neo-liberal economics was criticised, but you also accepted the importance of this position. It's a hen-and-egg question, is it because you traditionally think economics this way, or is it because people are brought up with utilitarianism, individualism and economic thinking? But studying and trying to keep my head cool asking the critical questions, it was really nice to experience at the seminars, that some participants from the academic world could use that language and think differently. That was the interesting part of EVE, the combination of lay people and academia. And that turned out to be the problem, some of this approach was lost, its hard to put words on this."

Just saying the words " internalize externalities" was so nice!

Developing a concern for environmental aspects within the basic neo-liberal framework is Helle's primary perspective. If professional economists take up these broader aspects of their discipline, it will have considerable impact upon the political agenda. Working within 'the established order' of market-oriented economic thinking is from her position the only feasible strategy, the alternative is that people stick to talking about whether they eat organic carrots or not, which is to dis-empower oneself in her point of view. "One year I got really angry, a presenter was giving a speech on environmental economics. He was going to talk about internalisation of externalities, and he didn't like to say it, it was no-good economists' talk. Then he started to babble, and I got so annoyed. Because I think that there are so many situations in which you can express your individualistic beliefs about how to be active, how can I contribute to a better life, like the green network, meeting places for people who are active. And here I

experienced that economics was not taken seriously, more people said, "We also need to know about this and that." "To me, just to be able to say, "internalise externalities" was so lovely! And thus EVE started to loose some if it's attraction to me. To me the function of EVE was to get a degree and then go out and bring some of EVE's ideas with me. It was my impression that a lot of the people who attended the seminars where employed in places where they had to think in traditional terms. If you are a civil servant, something I also see clearly know in my professional life, it is very restricted what you are allowed to think."

"How do you feel about the presenters reluctance today?"
"EVE's strength was to pursue a dialogue and ask questions in a sphere where many decisions in our society are taken. To me I still want to pursue this discussion as an economist, this line of reasoning is not irrelevant in relation to solving some of our societal problems. Economics as a discipline has a potential, if there is no professional discussion accepting this agenda you end up with a debate where its a question whether you eat organic carrots or not. Which is important, but it's the combination of what you can do at the personal level and how you can carry this engagement into the established structures. And here EVE lost its grip."

"Why do you think this was so?" "It's obvious that you loose your grip when you criticise what you hold on to, it's a necessity to criticise, but how to put forward constructive proposals? There are so many critical and self-conscious people who simply distance themselves from the market economy, but hereby you dis-empower yourself, the balance act is to stay within the existing reality and work from there on. And I think you could achieve more if space is allowed for people who work within that reality to develop alternative thoughts. Maybe no solutions are put forward about e.g. how to price lark song, but just to

discuss how difficult it is, and that people from traditional settings take part in the discussion, the interdisciplinary aspect. If you take organic farming, the first people to engage in organic farming did not know anything, they just had a critique of the way things were. It was only when the farmers as such took on the idea that things began to happen, that it could be carried as far as it has been carried today. The core of EVE should be to inspire people at key-positions to think alternatively, debates moving from green taxes to steady state economics could have been very enriching for people who work within the neo-liberal paradigm on a daily basis, by steady state economics I think of Herman Daly's approach to economics in terms of resources and energy." "Do you find that the latter vision is accepted on the political agenda?" "It's peculiar because in a sense it is, but in its radical form it is not. You adopt some of the elements, and leave others behind. There are some limits you have to draw, when you do that you go in that direction. But if you argue the steady state thoughts seriously, you are quickly considered to be a fundamentalist, then it becomes very alternative."

Politics is at the level of self-reflective choice

"Do you find that there is a schism between economics and ecology?" "Yes, obviously" "How do you approach it?" "To me, the question is, how can I, in my personal and professional life, join processes where the environment is seen as an important part of the good society, the market paradigm that says "more is better" is in crisis, it has outlived itself, and I think this recognition has reached political and administrative elites. But there is inertia, from words to action there is a long distance. But I am an optimist." "Do you involve yourself according to an explicit strategy?" "Yes, you might say so, and then again, I am not that important (laughs), but it is important to me to feel that I influence the processes, I would never feel at home if I could not influence what is going on in a positive direction. I need to be faithful to my beliefs in some way, without being fanatic about

it, to work for a community-dimension. I have some ideas, but they are not necessarily the "best", what is the best is the outcome you end up with when having a discussion.

"What is politics to you?" "It's very broad, but I have joined a political party 4 years ago, you need to seek influence through the established channels. For many years I found it difficult to accept a political programme. Maybe you do not always agree with what your party does in Parliament, but it's important to join the internal process in your party. Politics is to engage yourself in your local community, I have been involved in sports etc. and its politics whatever you do when you involve yourself." "Why?" "Each time you make a choice you influence society, at least if you think a little bit about why you do it." "Can you expand upon that?" "There is a lot of talk about the political consumer, that's important, but not everything is done through that channel, but it has an immense impact upon the institutionalised structures, suddenly you risk that massive consumer changes occur. It's the potential risk that many consumers act in the same way, its part of a general change of consciousness."

A laymans rebellion

Helle sees the EVE board as a small network with personal contacts to different political, scientific and administrative milieus, and once the old members of the board were no longer took part in organising seminars and publishing books, some of the energy left the co-operative. It was a double expert-network; the board invited other "experts" to give lectures at the seminars, but some were also publicly known debaters etc., and Helle did not feel a close relationship to this group, it differed from a "network" meeting for practitioners. But an expert approach was crucial, and helped kick off a development in which different groups began to address the issues. "It takes a specialised knowledge to push forward solutions. That's where I get angry, experts change their positions and beliefs all the time, if you as an expert do not change your

position once in a while you are a lousy expert. We need someone to push the experts forward, and they should not think they have the solutions to everything, but they do have a specific knowledge of some issues, which is important to recognise. EVE's function was to be the inspiration that took the laymans rebellion into professional circles, and to give the people working with ADAM something relating to the level of everyday experiences, traditional grass-roots' understanding of the economic structures in society. It's a difficult balance act to make it interesting to experts and not too difficult to people with a particular interest in the issues."

Individualization and the creation of a personal social space

"If you were to make another EVE-seminar, what should it be about?" "We made it, but only 3 people signed up! (laughs). I think it is important to ask "What does it mean that we are so individualised when we keep talking about common beliefs and values all the time?" "We become more and more individualised, we do not accept authorities to come and tell us what to do, and at the same time it is expected from us to take on a social responsibility in everything we do, e.g. the debates on the political consumer." "What do you understand by individualization?" "That the individual person has more opportunities of choice, that it is less and less an obligation to choose within predetermined parameters, at the back of our mind we know that not all opportunities are there, but it is acceptable whatever you choose. Of course you will tend to choose something that is accepted by the group to which you wish to belong, we are not completely free, its not like ontological individualism, we need to mirror ourselves in others. Before the social role was given to a much greater extent."

"In the more traditional society, the individual role was given. You have the opportunity to choose, and accept of alternative choices. If you choose differently, you substitute parts of your

social networks, we are mobile and our local networks become less important.” “If you were to apply this diagnosis to your own life-situation, e.g. in the period you have been involved in EVE, what kind of experiences have you made, and how have you coped with this problematic?” “I have had opportunities to make very individual choices, I chose to take care of my children at home when they were small, and I chose to become an economist. That was one of the hardest choices, because I departed from the social networks I normally related to, my social space.” “What do you understand by social space?” “If you accept that we as individuals have multiple opportunities of choice, we still create our social spaces, friends, the family-contact we choose to have, local contacts, the social community I associate with.” “How did EVE affect your social space?” “In the sense that some of the aspects I had difficulties with mirroring in my then social space, people thought pretty much along the same lines of being self-supporting, living in the country side etc., I could find in EVE, EVE was my access to the little less alternative (laughs). Also EVE was a kind of survival mechanism, when I entered the study-environment which was very little alternative, very traditional, EVE bridged the different worlds in which I was moving, I think that’s a fairly adequate description.”

Life-politics: the old feminist slogan of “the private is political”

”What do think of the notion of life-politics, have you heard of it before?” “Yes, it captures the aspects of politics not traditionally associated with the political system.” “How would you define it?” “It is to believe that the things that you do have importance beyond yourself, that’s rather interesting. Like the old feminist slogan, the private is political, that’s the core. The realisation that individual actions makes a difference, that is a radical difference from being a part of a system that defines your interests, it has immense importance. Individuals take part in all

processes in society, with respect to the personal, your family, the locality, your job. The traditional attitude that you do what the system tells you is changing. Research shows that the behavioural changes in private enterprises towards green accounting systems and implementation of environmental standards do not come from consumer-demands but internal pressures from employees, I find that very interesting. Its each individual that says "I do not want to be employed by a firm that does not adhere to green standards", you want to take full responsibility for what you do. People start to talk about common rules and the collective sphere because they as individuals are confronted with choices, they do not want to subject themselves to the community uncritically, but they themselves have to decide upon what they mean."

"So what I would call a re-embedding strategy would relate to this necessity of actively making these choices, and as an indirect consequence have the community dimension, not as a unambiguous moral obligation but as a possibility, a starting point for a dialogue about common meaning?" "Yes, if you are to create "the good person" as an individual, and if I am free to create my own person, I have to ask myself "What does that mean?" And because I am free to do so the answer is not a given, there are many morals, many forms of ethical answers. It's interesting and positive that you confront things, it disaffirms that individualism is a ride straight into laissez-faire and narcissism." (laughs) "Yes, it's an interesting point. My project is actually about this, you are sort of obliged to choose, and you do it in a social context that is not completely free; there are some limitations to the choices you make. I try to shed light on this point, arguing that the individualization process results in a disembedding that people relate to from their positions, using whatever tools they have. What's interesting to me is how people cope with and take advantage of the opportunities of the situation, how they for example interpret the possibilities of a

community council in relation to their life-situation?" "What's difficult then is, how free are we to choose? I feel the liberty, but it's within some frames, to give you an example I chose a party that was not acceptable in my network. There is some inertia, and probably it depends upon how strong a person you are."

Anne

Anne was one of the lecturers at the Grundtvig seminar, she is a social worker in a labour union and elected for local government. To explain her motives for taking part in EVE and as a general back-ground against which to understand her engagement, she starts off by pointing to the connection between autonomy, creativity and industrial innovation, all features pointing to a network-strategy.

"When I visit working places as a social worker employed by a labour union, I am impressed when I see employees with a genuine influence on how their working life is organised. When employees are set free to really govern the working process it results in a special kind of creativity. When you involve yourself, when people dedicate themselves to the process, to practical matters, they have a capacity for seeing things in a different and more creative light. It is the same energy or force as the one coming from the grand narratives. When you are allowed to set your creativity free, you return with a lot of answers. Today's modes of production require new talents and new modes of organization, which opens up an opportunity for workers to become more involved on own terms and conditions. In the institutions of industrialism everything is square, the factories are square, the workforce with the broad shoulders is square, life is monotonous, and the public institutions are also square. And today its different, flexibility and a capacity for change and innovation are some of the qualifications needed, and from this an organisational form can be deduced which is much more flexible and adaptable, with the character of a network."

Grundtvig and political participation

A basic idea in the Grundtvig seminar was to explore the Grundtvigian tradition in the context of present day challenges, and the environmental theme was part of this critical reflection on how the heritage of Grundtvig was related to contemporary social and political issues. The environmental issue was an obvious agenda, the timing was good and it was clear to everyone that something needed to be done at the level of government, there was a need for political acknowledgement of alternative ways of thinking about economy and ecology. "What did Grundtvig have to do with EVE?" "With respect to attitudes and political engagement, but also with respect to how the process was organised, there was a close link between how EVE became organised and the values we brought with us from the Grundtvigian camp in a modern version." "And what were those values?" "The outspokenness, the feeling that you have the right to constitute a circle (kreds) or co-operative society, that is unique. As the Swedish researcher Margaretha Balle-Petersen remarks, having become familiar with these values, it is quite unique to live in a country where you have the right to say: "We constitute a circle", we are EVE, we articulate opinions, we demand, we invite, we insist. I don't know if it is particularly Danish, but it is remarkable nevertheless, that we live in a country with a strong tradition of associative activities. The Grundtvigian notion of democracy comes closer to a participatory than a formal representative approach, people should get together and organise around a cause. And this cause has two aspects, a spiritual dimension, and a practical dimension of change, two aspects which are mutually supportive of one another."

"Going back to the start, what was your role?" "I remember I advocated action, we could not continue just talking about things, we had to manifest our concerns in a political and popular involvement. Obviously the environmental issue was important, something we always touched upon in the lectures, so the time was ripe for some action. When we constituted EVE,

the starting point was to articulate a criticism of the traditional concept of growth and of the way in which assets are valued in economic thinking. I proposed the name Eve, associating both the visual, religious aspect, a name that is approachable with a nice feeling to it, and also EVE was a critical, constructive counterpart to ADAM, the complicated economic model of the GDP in the Ministry of Economics. The three layers I indicate here sums up quite well the values we adhered to and what I found interesting was that we moved away from the 'højskole' and back into everyday life, and that we did this together."

From green to social and ethical accounts

"So the question was, "What were the consequences in environmental terms of economic activity?" We needed an alternative accounting system, I don't know if we thought we could integrate the two systems into one, but we needed a green accounting system, like the ones we now have in private enterprises. First we had the economic accounting systems, then the environmental systems, now we discuss ethical and social accounts. And looking back, it has proved easier to talk about environmental than human costs. Everybody is exposed to environmental externalities, whereas social costs are unequally distributed, and people who are socially disadvantaged and without political influence are obviously the ones more exposed to this kind of risk. It was a political initiative, in that we demanded alternative statistics, alternative accounting systems and an alternative understanding of the growth concept. To me it was also the connection between the environmental and the social, if you do not take care of the environment you are not prone to take care of the human nature either. And that there are ways of organising to the detriment of both."

An open and well-organised dialogue is essential

Creating the debate forum, the executive board functioned as an editorial group, organising 2 or 3 sessions with the writers in the

process of putting together a publication. Most meetings took place in Anne's living room during a nice lunch. "We had a clear feeling that we should invite people in a way so that they felt they could benefit from the initiative, it should be a reciprocal relationship. We did not just order articles to be delivered on dead-line, it was crucial that each participant should feel part of a mutual process, I remember that we had some very nice lunches, debating the issues without a clear-cut agenda at the outset, except the common theme. Also the books had to be nice to look at, it was important for us to signify a collective vision. The interesting part was that we allowed ourselves to publicise the fact that we had constituted EVE, and that we represented a critique of the ruling social order, self-understanding and frames of validation, and the incredible thing was that a lot of us were part of the political establishment. People knew us in advance, it was not a grassroots initiative, some had contacts to ministers and so on, and we took advantage of that. But I feel the initiative was respected because the cause was good, what we said was not unique in any way, but maybe a few years earlier than elsewhere."

Personal contacts to the experts throughout the process

The role-division between experts and non-experts was not so visible in the editorial board. Some wrote articles and some conducted interviews 'as representatives of the people' with decision-makers, researchers, authors and so on exploring the themes pursued in the publications. The larger group of writers was invited as experts to represent the most qualified opinions on the themes being debated, and in Anne's opinion they were all very tuned to the way that the dialogue was organised. "The approach was to tap into an expert-environment so to speak; to get the message through it was necessary to use some experts?" "Yes, because neither in the board or nor amongst the members there were any who could...what we felt was that it was important to get some respected persons to write." "Was it a barrier to the message that this form was chosen?" "Anything could be done better, and

don't get this wrong, we addressed the decision-makers, and the best part of the press used our materials to confront politicians and institutions. In reality, we went for the usual arena where these issues are debated, using the roads we all knew. All of our contacts were important, we never invited anybody without having some kind of personal relationship to this person." "Was the competence to formulate EVE's message then placed in the hands of experts, resulting in a dependency on the answers that came out of this as a result? What I mean is, it was the barriers to putting a price on the environment that became the main theme, and this validation discourse was an economic approach, the point being that other approaches could have been developed?" "I agree that validation very much became the theme, but I think that we managed to ridicule it completely, take the example of putting a price on Mols Bakker. We saw it as absurd and ridiculous."

The spiritual and religious aspect

"If that was one synthesis, what was the other, the alternative?" "The respect for things as they are, take the 'Rene Svineri', the happiness connected to bringing up pigs in a way so that they get a curl on their tail. To see how elegant, how horny, clever and charming pigs are, to view pigs as something else than units of production, to see the peculiarity of things, and of pigs." "Will you expand upon this point?" "It was in the religious aspect of creation, gratitude and humility, we should not be the masters of something of which we were a part of, though different from, and that is why we made the book 'På Herrens Mark'. The first book, 'Pengene og Livet' was the more narrow economic criticism, the second 'Det Rene Svineri' had the respect for nature, underlining the uniqueness of animals and the environment. And the more philosophical book 'Danser på Herrens Mark', which underlines that we are a part of nature and in religious terms, the Creation. Our deeds have consequences, and at the end nature is there, without people. It was also a

critique of the fact that people get less and less out of the industrial surplus made possible by technology, people work more and more without benefiting from the increase in productivity. Today, we have a societal structure and an economy that eats away the soul of people.”

“Looking at the process, what did you learn? “We discussed it a lot in the editorial group, it was sometimes a very tiresome process but normally we reached some kind of consensus. I would never do it again, it took a lot of effort. We could not have done it much differently though, it was the nature of the task that very much defined what we did. What was important was the reciprocity of the process, we invited and took care of people, and in return we got a lot of good articles, the debates at the seminars, and the nation wide effect whatever it was, everybody got something in return. I think everybody agrees that it was a very rewarding experience. The interesting part was the mix of components, there was the co-operative association, however brief it was, we published books, arranged seminars etc. EVE should be seen in relation to the Grundtvig seminar, it was the moral obligation that had made itself manifest which in some way sparked off the whole thing. I say this because it is important that you find the source of inspiration from something that is larger than yourself, and that your cause is larger than yourself, we had this power-source from the many years together making the seminar. I think that that is the way democracy will renew itself, it’s a physical and structural trend in the economy: demands for renewals that will open up new possibilities and also create new problems.”

Networking as strategy

In her political work, Anne pursues a partnership strategy bringing partners to push forward solutions that each partner cannot provide individually. Pursuing such a network strategy, the challenge is then to identify process criteria that will facilitate the approach. “Whether you call it a partnership approach, a roundtable model

or networking, two things are important: that you respect and underline that we have to do with different interests, if not it turns into "the corporate hook" where a few in power decide. And secondly, that you create a democratic dialogue on the basis hereof. How to become better at this? Well, by making the process interesting to everyone, as we tried to do in EVE. Interesting topics, well prepared agendas, good lectures and an atmosphere of responsiveness and respect for differences. Capabilities to learn from each other, people have to like to spend time together. To be able to make decisions with respect to the outcome of the dialogue, and to spend time enough to reach a consensus of high quality. And, this is crucial, if no consensus is reached that there is deep-felt respect for the lack of agreement, defining the space where we can meet and the limit to where we can't agree anymore. You see this pattern in modern management, and in democratic life, the old hierarchical modes of governance of representative democracy do not work anymore, they are anachronisms be it at the local level or the national level." "Do you see this as a kind of ad hoc-ocrati?" "Yes, definitively, the era of institutions is over in the sense that they have to get out there, in the reality where people interact, where their everyday life takes place. Take my own world, the office of a social worker contains no solutions, the client is made dependent and the social worker is worn out because the place of interaction is wrong."

"What was the best part of EVE?" "The output and the high moods." "What was the worst?" "When people did not show up, did not respect agreements and so on. Because it is voluntary work, it has to be its own reward, and if somebody takes away your good mood they take away the pleasure of voluntary work, you get more annoyed than otherwise. The practical aspect is important, there has to be a person to secure the continuity and follow up on the details. You feel like this: "I have not been paid to do this together with you, and it is therefore a serious thing if

you waste my time.” I think we talk about three levels, there is professional, paid work, then there is voluntary work assisted by professionals, and then there is entirely voluntary work, like Eve.” “To me, it was a very important experience to be part of the Eve-process, with the link between the personal and the societal; with the focus on politics not in terms of dogmatic agendas but as having to do with knowledge and economic thinking. How did it impact upon your life, how would you assess the experience?” “Well, to me it was not so different from what I normally do. Maybe because you are younger, it was not so different from how I normally work. I got wiser, but I have been political all my life, and I attach more significance to the Grundtvig seminars than to Eve. Also because we lived under the same roof, and that’s the most dramatic thing there is!”

Erik

Erik is educated as a teacher at The Free Teachers College in Ollerup and he likes to work with the soil. In 90 he formed a group at the college working with ecology, and in 1993 he was part of a group that set up the Network for Organic General Education and Practice, today he works with this network as a full-time occupation.

From organic demonstration garden to network

“Our group invited lecturers to our seminar, and in 1991 I heard that the best lecturer in Denmark would be in Vester Skjerninge. I went there and I met Ejvind Larsen, a meeting that had a great impact upon me. Afterwards I went up speaking to him, and I invited him to our seminar. When he came to give his lecture, he used the EVE-book ‘Danser på Herrens Mark’, which in turn inspired me to attend the EVE-seminars. The seminars inspired the activities at the college, the ecology-group met some opposition because it wanted to address the daily running of the school, which implied some changes that the schools administrative leaders were against. If you want to work with ecology, we think it is better to make a green school than

training courses in ecology. We saw the heritage from Grundtvig upside down; today, the farmers should be taken back to the countryside to face the structural change that I find has been devastating to this country. I live in a small village, and the only farm is hermetically closed, I have never seen a pig there."

"How did EVE inspire you in all this?" "In the summer of 93 I got the idea to create the network, it is an image of how theory and practice is interrelated. I was shovelling manure on to a horse pram when I got the idea to create a public demonstration garden at the seminar. The idea was to make a huge garden based on ecological principles in which people could get a hands-on experience with ecology. We contacted the EVE-people and they helped us when we set up the network and opened our garden. We didn't know whether it was a good idea, we didn't even call it a network. How to arrange a seminar, make a dialogue? We copied the way the EVE seminars were arranged. Actually, the network has precisely the same statues as EVE, modified of course. Gradually I discovered that my role could be to collect information, modify and publish it, the job of a journalist. The first time I was at the seminar in 92, I said at the final evaluation that the course had been great but that the food did not match the debates we had had. That is what we did at the college, and we got a lot of beatings for that. So did I, this big fellow came over, "how dare you criticise this?" The year after the food was organic. It's like setting the agenda."

Asking critical questions

One approach is to confront decision-makers with possible discrepancies between declared policies and institutional practices: "I can give you an example. This spring I was at a seminar arranged by the Danish Society for the Conservation of Nature and the General Workers Union in Denmark (SID) about green jobs in the European Community and the food was so miserable. At some stage, a SID-representative suggests the chairman of

the National Association for Local Authorities in Denmark that maybe the two organisations could work more closely together, allowing SID to assist the association in developing a green purchasing policy. Then I asked an executive committee member from SID why the union did not pursue the same policy in their own cantina? To which he answered "We have discussed the issue, but the executive committee is against it." As background material for the seminar a very impressive work had been carried out about how to make the agricultural sector more sustainable, but there was no coherence between the debates and the purchasing policy of SID. The point about green jobs is that people should be retrained if they cannot comply with the environmental standards and criteria. This is the root of the problem: Everywhere there is a leader with a responsibility. At our seminar the leader said that it's the task of the catering officer, and she said that it was his task. I also attended a seminar on organic food, the Minister was there, and a person from Practical Ecology stood up and asked: "Is it true that the Ministry of Food does not serve organic food in its cantina? The minister got very angry, and replied that he had never said he would dictate anything. And I thought, he does not have to dictate anything, just put forward some standards and make people find out how to comply."

Making networks

When asked whether he has worked according to a strategy, Erik refers to his experience with the teachers and colleagues at the college, who were unaware of the different green associations and grassroots movements. Therefore, he decided upon the strategy that he would inform about "who is out there" and seek to establish a dialogue between the 'Højskolebevægelse' and the different grassroots organisations and initiatives. The cornerstone in this effort was a newsletter, which today is distributed in more than 6000 copies. Erik summarises his approach as one of a weaver of networks ('netværksfletter'), publishing information and arranging seminars is a political act in that it opens up new perspectives and activities.

“Looking back, what did this process mean to you personally?”
“The price has been quite substantial on the personal side! I had got children at the same time, and my wife said; “What happened to you is like what happens to a lot of men, the moment they get children they start to work 10 times more than normal.” That’s the negative side. The other side is, we took the opportunity to create the youngest adult education association in Denmark.” “Can you identify the kind of political influence you think you have achieved?” “I have been a member of a political party, I think that our task to pose the questions I feel its more fun to be a journalist without a party membership, the task must be to mediate between different groups.”

“What is politics to you?” “I have registered as many others...I clearly remember Ebbe Kløvedal Reich, who described how the political parties and the role of politics had been reduced to the pure exercise of power. I have never been attracted to professional politics in that sense, but to exercise politics by being a bit rebellious, to ask the critical questions. I think that it is about placing a responsibility that needs to be placed.” “How have you done that?” “I haven’t, I have helped people to get to know each other, some got married, it’s nice to be a creator of networks. In the information society there is a need for genuine meeting places, some structures that allows you to find the people you need to know. And when 200 people show up to our last seminar, and (there is) a participants list which says who you are, where you live etc., then people get the tool, if they want to do something, then it’s there.” “You call yourself a “netværksfletter?” “We always say to ourselves: “We make networks”, the latest innovation is our English version of the network on the Internet. We construe some rather simple databases on the net with simple search criteria, where we gather everything there is on organised information about ecology. If you e.g. search for urban ecology you can get all the people working with that area, addresses etc.”

“Going back to EVE, did you experience a division between experts on the one hand and lay people on the other?” “I think it is fine that a group of people make a co-operative society and invites other to join, and then it works at that level. The problem in my eyes was that nobody in the ‘Højskolebevægelse’ supported the initiative, nobody showed up or bought any shares. They have a problem.” “If you think back, did you take part in the economy-debate in EVE?” “No, I didn’t, I only flipped through the reports, but I enjoyed the lectures. I feel that we know what is wrong, but nobody does anything about it.”

To be able to see connections in practice

Basically, the task is not to produce more knowledge about problems and how to solve these, specialisation means that different expert environments have generated enough knowledge of complex connections to act upon it. It is a matter of acting upon this knowledge, and being able to bridge or combine expert knowledge with the practice-situation. “The question is; are you capable of seeing the connections and links in practice?” “When you say that the knowledge of the problems is there, does that imply that you find yourself in a strong position vis-à-vis the experts that claim to pin-point the problems, that it is more a question of taking the lead and initiate change?” “Read the Kolding Manifest, the subtitle is “Do the fools have to save the world?”” “Or take the Ecological Council, EVE inspired the constitution of the council, today they publish articles that are similar to what EVE said. Take the windmill example, or organic farming, nobody believed in these ‘experiments.’ Our next project is to create a Permanent Assembly, to identify: Where are the openings that allow for the simple objectives of the manifest to be implemented?”

“The first objective is to propose the creation of 60,000 small holders in Denmark. Resettle the countryside! Imagine if the small holders, constructed from clay etc. were so cheap that you

live off the land! The key issue is not to run into debts. Whether you are a journalist from Information or a garbage collector, our problem is the same, it's about bridging the differences." "Can you describe the learning process involved in this participation process that you describe?" "Yes, I can, it's a matter of daring to use information technology, and to be engaged despite that people see you as a fanatic. The learning process is going from being emotional, to feel bad about the fact that your neighbour spray his crops, to a phase where you ask: "What is possible?" There is no right answer, we see that when we meet up 100 people at a seminar, nobody agrees about anything, there is only dialogue and action."

"The solution to some of the environmental problems lie in a structural change, otherwise we will get an ecological upper-class, a practical, intellectual elite that has dealt with all the problems, its not good enough. In America you have 'down-shifters', deep ecology etc. that does not interest me, it's not about making movements. But a basic change is needed, to introduce a bit more healthy approaches, to simplify things, to cut one's coat according to one's cloth, to be somewhat humble on the financial aspect. To have a litre of orange-juice stand on your table it costs 21 litre of oil, I don't know how much water etc. if we were to pay the real costs we would not buy the products." "Summarising our conversation, what do you find was the most important experience in relation to EVE?" "The blue-eyed belief in the effects of what you do. You make some books, the people who joined liked the written word, and they felt it would be great if they could place the books on the Ministers table and get a reply. "Great man, we have not lived in vain" that was the point, and once that happened you close down again."

On the connection between life-style and governance structure

In chapter 1 the question was put forward: What are the enabling and constraining features of individual and collective re-embedding strategies in concrete processes of participation? The experiences of Helle, Anne and Erik exemplify such individual participation strategies, and in the following I relate their narratives to the analysis put forward in the previous chapter. To do this, first I recapitulate the basic points made in the evaluation of the EVE-process. Thereafter a synthesis of each of the three narratives is suggested and discussed in relation to the process-analysis.

Recapitulation of the EVE-process

From the outset, the objective of EVE was clear: To criticise economics from an environmental perspective and articulate an alternative vision of a sustainable synthesis between economy and ecology. The co-operative initiated a series of meetings between university researchers, in particular economists and ecologists, and persons otherwise engaged in addressing the environmental agenda. The outcome of this initial process was a number of articles in the publication 'Pengene og Livet' published by EVE in 1990, in which the topic of green economics is explored from a number of perspectives (see appendix 2).

The basic challenge is perceived as changing the institutional setting of the market in order to make economic activities sustainable in a long-term perspective. Some of the mechanisms suggested are *green taxes*; making prices reflect the costs of obtaining a wanted future supply and quality of natural resources, and a *green GDP*; a national accounting system that includes social, ethical and ecological balance sheets. Also, the theme of risk assessment is touched upon in 'Pengene og Livet';

how do we assess the environmental risks associated with various development paths in order to decide which scenario to choose?

Members of the EVE-board and some of the writers were invited to a meeting with the Minister of the Environment Mrs. Dybkjær. On the meeting agenda was the development of methods to account for changes in specific social and environmental qualities: How do we convert environmental data into criteria that can be modelled by the economists? Because the initiative was received with a lot of attention there was a feeling that EVE had fulfilled its purpose among the board members.

It was obvious that the topic of green economy was entering political, administrative and scientific agendas, and the collective experience of the members as reflected in ensuing publications, newsletters and seminar minutes evolved around a key question: Is a synthesis between economics and ecology feasible, and acceptable? Different views were articulated. Pragmatists argued that EVE should let go of the issue since it was already on the public agenda, it was a job for experts to further qualify the technical and methodological challenges of developing a green economy and a political issue whether to benefit from this or not. Idealists emphasised the unethical dimension of the economic validation approach, refusing to accept the exercise of quantifying the qualitative aspects of human interaction with the environment.

With the first publication the co-operative gave voice to the ecological modernisation discourse, but was soon to engage in a critique of this validation-agenda. In a sense EVE got stuck in the middle of a moderate preservationist world-view in which 'ADAM' is subsumed 'EVE.' The necessity of introducing non-economic environmental standards in economic modelling was

emphasised in publications and at seminar debates, but the quantification and validation issues were considered a barrier to further exploring this perspective.

As a consequence, the members of the society partly left what they considered a too narrow agenda in order to expand upon numerous other perspectives on the environmental issue. From a focus on the relationship between economics and ecology at the level of economic modelling the theme was now the economy 'seen from below', how do individual citizens empower themselves in relation to the ecological challenge? How to surmount the structural barriers to a sustainable life-pattern that become more and more visible in everyday-life experiences? As a member wrote in a 1992-newsletter: "each of us is properly active on an individual basis in our local communities, where the real fight for a shift in attitudes takes place. EVE is a source of inspiration, but the environmental problems have their origin in the way we have chosen to live our lives."

The name EVE underlined a basic recognition of the epistemological dimension of politics, and the explicit political strategy was to expose the normative foundation of ADAM in the search for an alternative worldview of economics based on 'proper housekeeping' that would integrate the environmental aspect. Ironically, the specific constellation of 'experts' (economists) invited to join the initial process was decisive to the outcome of the collective search process. Because the feasible synthesis between ADAM and EVE was proposed in terms of the validation agenda the society did not systematically pursue worldviews that moved further than this in the attempt to measure physical aspects of economic activity and define absolute limits to sustainable activity.¹⁸

¹⁸ In other contexts, such frameworks have been articulated under the headings of 'ecological footprints' (Rees & Wackernagel 1994) or 'environmental space' (NOAH 1996, 1997).

Helle: Green economics and a laymans rebellion

Helle's basic perspective is based on an ethical reflection on the individual-society relationship. She believes that 'you should do as you preach', your life-style should reflect your ideas about the good society. This position logically points to a personal reflection on the dialectic relationship between changes at the individual level and changes at the collective level: "...if you have ideas about the good society you need to change yourself...(but) sometimes it is too difficult to do this if society does not change simultaneously." To her, participating in EVE established the link between the individual and the collective in several ways. Studying economics she felt that the discipline was too narrow to encompass a vision of a sustainable society, but also that some economists actually did seek to expand the epistemological frontiers to include the environmental issue.

Helle's approach is reformist – "to say within the existing reality and work from thereon" - and much inspired by the agenda pursued in EVE. It is necessary to accept that the neo-liberal economic regime as a societal mode of regulation is the social and political reality, but it needs to be expanded from 'within' in order to incorporate a notion of sustainability. As a consequence Helle has a pragmatic approach to expertise, she emphasises its political dimension but argues that some kind of constructive co-operation and strategic influence upon expert systems is required. From her perspective its critical to maintain an expert-lay dialogue in relation to the environmental issue, experts by definition possess specialised knowledge necessary to push forward specialised solutions to complex problems.

Therefore, it was a disappointment when debates in EVE moved on to criticise the internalisation issue, and the forum lost some of its critical perspective. Because the primary perspective was "to give the people working with ADAM something relating to the level of every-day experiences" it was frustrating when EVE

lost sight of its mission to carry the 'layman's rebellion' into professional circles. Helle did not want to deny the legitimacy of a market oriented approach, and it was a barrier to the learning process that EVE in a sense did not transcend what was experienced as a dichotomy between economics and ecology. From her perspective, the outcome of the EVE process as discussed above inspired her own professional ideas and interests, and despite the frustrations the key issue still was to take part in a deliberative process, exploring new ideas to push forward a development towards a better society.

Helle's story illustrates how she reflects upon the relationship between politics and life-style choices becoming a 'green' economist. A part of this project is to identify a satisfying epistemological platform from which both to develop her professional career and work to implement the changes she identifies as necessary. She is aware that some 'epistemological communities' are better facilitators of this process than others, and she used her participation in EVE to access a community which would allow her to bridge the apparently conflicting worlds of organic farming and working as an economist. The combination of critical economists and lay input in EVE created a learning environment allowing her to search for the economic instruments that would satisfy her environmental beliefs, "to me, just to be able to say internalise externalities was so nice!"

With reference to her concept of a 'personal social space', Helle underlines the point that she does not take her social relations for granted, they should be seen in the light of the personal and social commitments she has chosen to work for. She experiences individualisation both as an opportunity for individual freedom and as a paradox. Because the social role of the individual is not a given there is less of an obligation to choose within predetermined parameters, a social condition which makes the obligation to choose for oneself acute. Exploring the roles of an

academic, economist and organic farmer, this freedom entails a basic existential reflection. In her own words, "...if you are free to create the 'good person' as an individual and, I am free to create my own person I have to ask myself: "What does that imply?" And because I am free the answer is not given, there are many morals, many forms of ethical answers."

Anne: Networking and dialogue

Anne's starting point is a general analysis of how changes in the means of production result in a demand for a flexible and innovative workforce. Such qualifications emerge when workers become more autonomous in governing the work process, participation and involvement provokes creativity and the ability to come up with new answers to complex problems. She sees a clear parallel between flexibility and networking. As a mode of organising co-operation between multiple and potentially opposed agents, networking allows for innovative and flexible co-operation, and on the basis of this analysis she adopts this network perspective as an approach in her political work.

Anne's involvement was inspired by the Grundtvig seminar and the exploration of the Grundtvigian tradition in the context of present day challenges, the key issue being exploring an alternative growth concept in economic reasoning. The co-operative combined dimensions of participatory democracy, public education, religion and philosophy, all themes that were synthesised when she suggested the name EVE.

Anne argues that the traditional hierarchical mode of governance of representative is an anachronism and through her own personal involvement in politics she exemplifies an alternative, pursuing a network or partnership strategy that facilitates a dialogue across individual and institutional boundaries. Her philosophy of networking is based on the principle of mutual reciprocity; all participants must benefit for

the dialogue to be constructive. The process has to be interesting to all participants who must be able to learn from each other and like to spend time together. Also, decisions have to respect the outcome of the dialogue, if no agreement is reached this should be respected by the participants. In her professional life she takes part in the political process at local and national levels, and the approach developed by the EVE-board was much a continuation of her normal ways of working. To her EVE was not a grass-roots initiative, the members of the EVE board were using 'familiar roads' seeking to draw the attention of the political establishment, and it was crucial to invite authors who would be perceived as experts by political and administrative decision-makers. All of the invited experts were in some way or the other familiar to members of the EVE-board, which facilitated the staging of the roundtable process.

Anne's story exemplifies the general shift of focus in the EVE-process away from the narrow agenda of green economics to an exploration of the ethic, religious and spiritual dimensions of the environmentalist agenda: "...if you do care about the environment you are not prone to care about of the human nature either". In contrast to Helle she did not experience the critique of the validation agenda frustrating but important, "I think we managed to ridicule it completely, take the example of putting a price on Mols Bakker, we saw it as absurd and ridiculous." The theme of environmental risks and green accounts issue was relatively successful because it quickly entered the national political agenda. A likely reason is that everyone is exposed to environmental risk, while social risks are unequally distributed, and later Anne has found that it was much harder to promote ideas of social risks and social accounts.

Erik: Connecting people with information technology

From Erik's point of view enough knowledge exists about the environmental problem, and to him the political objective is to

implement specific changes in the context of everyday life. To pursue this objective, his strategy is to focus on discrepancies between intentions and actual practice and criticise these. Specialisation and expertise does not necessarily entail better and more sustainable approaches to everyday life, the challenge is to focus on the practice situation and believe in the impact of such an approach. Therefore it was a political initiative to set up an ecological demonstration garden allowing people to get a hands on experience with ecology. Getting to know about EVE inspired him to arrange seminars and make a newsletter together with fellow student teachers at the teacher's seminar. Gradually, the initiative emerged into an adult education association, the Network for Organic General Education and Practice, which disseminates information about ecology in pamphlets and through the Internet.

Erik describes his approach as a network-creator ('netværksfletter') and he uses information technology to create virtual and physical meeting places. Facilitating a dialogue between different social groups and individuals about ecology new ideas and concrete activities are created. In his experience, the learning process has a personal dimension, moving from an emotional frustration about environmental degradation to a more pragmatic effort to develop a sustainable life-style, ignoring when people approach you as "a grumbler or a fanatic."

There is a clear connection between political involvement and career-strategy in Erik's story, taking part in EVE opened up the perspective of developing an adult education association and work with it on a professional basis. The experiences relating to the ecology-economy issue as analysed in the previous chapter have only indirectly influenced the way that Erik has pursued his participation strategy. He enjoyed the theoretical discussions but only flipped through the reports, and to him the perspective on the debate as such was that enough knowledge exists about

the environmental challenge, it is a matter of political will and concrete activities to change society in the desired direction.

Conclusion: On the connection between life-style and governance structure

All three narratives illustrate how reflections on life style are closely associated with a broader focus on governance structures, Helle expresses it most clearly when she states that “your life style should reflect your ideas of the good society”. To all three participants, taking part in the EVE-process allowed for an exploration of this relationship from an environmentalist perspective.

In Helle’s case, she made the connection between her experiences as an organic farmer and the need for a reform of the market in order to incorporate the environmental issue. To achieve this a basic re-conceptualisation of the boundaries between market and nature was needed, a new understanding she was glad to discover with the ideas of green economics and the ‘internalisation of externalities’-argument. As one of the initiators of EVE, Anne pursued a vision of economics in terms of ‘proper housekeeping that acknowledges the ecological challenge’ and worked to articulate this at the national level of political and administrative decision-making. Inspired by the EVE-seminars Erik developed the ‘hands on’ ecological garden initiative into a green network arranging seminars and publishing a newsletter.

Contrasting the process description with the three narratives it is obvious how each participant have interpreted the context differently according to their individual beliefs and motivations. Helle and Anne both underline the epistemological aspect of their political strategies; in order to push forward the desired changes towards a sustainable society the political system had to

be attacked through a critique of ADAM representing a specific world-view with comprehensive political implications.

As a knowledge monopoly ADAM could be challenged by mobilising alternative expertise, a process which could be strategically organised by non-experts. The key aspect of this approach was to articulate an alternative vision - EVE - signifying a qualitatively different position than that of ADAM, rooted in the wisdom of everyday life and to facilitate an interdisciplinary dialogue between representatives of each of the two world-views.

Paradoxically the outcome of this dialogue did not challenge ADAM as a knowledge monopoly, and EVE did not produce an environmental discourse moving beyond the market perspective addressing the fundamental risks and uncertainties associated with socio-economic action. Instead, the outcome of the dialogue was conceptualised in terms of green economics and the 'internalisation of externalities'-perspective, promoting a belief in the controllability of side effects.

From Helle's position this outcome was very useful in that it allowed her to bridge a market-oriented approach with the environmental issue, and she was frustrated with the 'idealistic and activist turn' of the co-operative when the validation agenda was criticised. She recognises Herman Daly's steady state economics as a position that contain more radical ideas but she believes in a pragmatic approach of adopting some of the alternative elements in the process of expanding the paradigm 'from within.' Anne appreciated the public focus on alternative accounting systems and the relative success of the co-operative, but she disapproved of the validation theme that she saw as absurd and ridiculous. Erik was inspired by the EVE seminars and duplicated the concept in relation to the Network for Organic General Education and Practice.

All three participants emphasise a participatory ethics sharing the experience that personal involvement is the key to political influence. Helle underlines the belief that the things you do have importance beyond yourself, Anne that personal creativity comes from self-governance and autonomy and Erik sums up the perspective when he says that EVE was about the blue-eyed trust in the effects of what you do. Looking back, all three acknowledge the ad hoc character of the process. The important thing was to be part of the collective synergy that emerged for a period, but when the context changed and the issues were taken up by other actors and institutions the justification of EVE disappeared. Still, the question is whether the EVE metaphor contained a more radical synthesis between economics and ecology than the one offered by the invited experts, which could have been articulated had the members of EVE not thought of themselves as a lay public challenging ADAM as an expert system.

9. Conclusion and perspectives

Inspired and provoked by the hypothesis that the more societies are modernised, the more agents as subjects acquire the ability to reflect on the social conditions of their existence and to change them in that way (Beck 1994: 174) the dissertation set out to analyse the enabling and constraining features of individual and collective 're-embedding strategies' in concrete processes of participation. More than providing a substantial theoretical focus, the term re-embedding embodied a sociological curiosity; assuming that fundamental social and political forms and relations are continuously questioned and re-constructed in processes of reflexive re-embedding, what is then the specific nature of this creative re-invention?

To capture this perspective, the reflexivity perspective was adopted as the guiding analytical framework, pointing to a specific choice of method as well as a number of substantial questions to be scrutinised in relation to the empirical findings. Going through the various stages of the research strategy, focus was on the relational nature of specific experiences and the question was asked whether these experiences were characterised by re-embedding understood in terms of such constitutional questioning of basic worldviews and modes of organisation?

In this final chapter, the specific and the general findings of the dissertation are summarised and discussed, and a number of perspectives for future research are outlined. First I go through the specific conclusions to the questions posed and analysed in the previous chapters. On the basis of this analysis I then move on to suggest a general conclusion, and towards the end of the chapter I finally elaborate upon a number of perspectives for future research, that has emerged as a result of the study.

Rule-altering politics?

The research questions to be analysed in relation to the network studies were the following: What is the nature of the political dimension articulated by the group of participants? Understanding rule-change in broader terms as a change in collective understandings, what were the understandings made subject to potential reflexive contestation and reformulation in the process? And lastly, whose accounts counted, how was the process conditioned by systemic roles and positions being reproduced by the actors? Below, these questions are discussed in relation to the two studies of Grantoften Bydelsting and the co-operative society EVE.

Grantoften Bydelsting

As a municipal decentralisation initiative, a few municipal representatives and the chairman of the housing committee decided upon the institutional setting of Grantoften Bydelsting. Grantoften was considered a socially disadvantaged neighbourhood in Ballerup, and this image as a problem area was reflected in the regulative framework of the council, which was set up to institutionalise a social development strategy as a 'heart beating with the local community.' The council was designed to reflect and represent the multiplicity of institutionalised categories of everyday life in Grantoften, and it was therefore composed by institutional representatives as well as tenants elected to represent different age groups. As formally laid down in the statutes, these council-members were expected to engage in voluntary, social activities, trying to solve some of the visible social problems of the area and promote social interaction and networking amongst the residents.

Parallel to this vision of social integration the housing committee articulated a democratic vision with Bydelstinget, the committee sought to expand its influence by setting up a body

that would attract municipal resources and initiate activities which the committee did not have the time nor the personnel to do. Setting up a new democratic body would imply that more residents would take part in local decision-making, and with a number of seats in this new body the committee would potentially expand its sphere of influence in Grantoften and become involved in new projects and activities. Also the new community council was pictured improving enhanced workplace democracy in Grantoften in that the public employees working in the district were given a vote and a formal representative role in the council.

The Grantoften case is an illustration of re-embedding much in line with Giddens definition as the pinning down of social relations in a local context of time and space. The deliberative process emerging was based on the exchange of everyday life experiences when tenants reported about their current activities and public employees about institutional matters and events. Bydelstinget was set up to institutionalise a policy of social integration in the neighbourhood, and the substantial political dimension pursued in the context of the council was conceptualised in terms of the creation of social networks in the locality.

As analysed, the initial structuring narrative had a decisive impact upon outcome by institutionalising an ambivalent mix of social and political dimensions of the council. The (institutionalised) expectation that the council would generate trust and mutual reciprocity in turn created inherent tensions when it proved difficult to combine rationales of individual self-help, institutional co-ordination and strategies to develop political autonomy.

The experiences made in relation to developing Grantoften Bydelsting can be evaluated as a reflexive process of

questioning basic democratic forms, but reflexive in a negative sense. The council-members found themselves caught up in a frustrating multiplicity of democratic dilemmas without agreeing upon whether to pursue a strategy of co-operation or to confront vested interests in order to develop a substantial say in local affairs. Intentionally or not, the members saw the initial setting as a given and they did not seek to re-frame roles and positions in relation to political decision making locally or in relation to the municipality of Ballerup.

Several factors combined explain this outcome: First of all, the public employees in the council did not publicly question the practical and democratic implications of experimenting with their role in the council, and their participation turned into a barrier to the development of political autonomy of the council. Second, a zero-sum game emerged in the relationship between the council and the housing committee that was played out as an internal conflict within the council. Third, Bydelstinget's status as an experiment caused some members to adapt an attitude of self-censorship unwilling to 'politicise too much in case they shut us down.' And finally, the basic organising principle of the council – consensus – effectively blocked specific attempts to develop corporate agency (co-ordinated, strategic action, policy-articulations etc.) by facilitating mechanisms of vetoing and institutional gate keeping.

The public vote illustrates how the tension between the representative and participatory dimensions in Bydelstinget in fact turned into a dis-empowering mechanism blocking the development of corporate agency. Bydelstinget was conceptualised as a representative body but within an integrative consensus framework that could only function to the extent that the representative model was temporarily suspended. The result was that the participatory model based on the consensus-

principle made it very difficult for the members to go against or change existing power-relations.

Yet, at the level of specific activities the co-operation between some of the elected tenants and the professional members continued to form the backbone of the social activist strategy, resulting in the wide array of projects. Most tenants felt that participation by the public employees was crucial to the day-to-day activities in the council, guaranteeing the continuity of the processes when lay members lost interest and dropped out of the council. Despite the obvious barriers to the development of political agency, the emphasis upon self-help and empowerment was much in the interests of individual tenants who focused on self-help and social roles in the community before engaging in the political role of strategic interest mediation and confrontation.

Narratives/ metaphors	Modes of organisation	Conditioning of outcome
Disintegration and social problems	Institutionalised spheres all represented in Council	Zero-sum game between housing committee and council manifested as internal conflict
Heart of local community	Consensus and voluntarism as organising principles	Too high costs (too much visibility) of exploring political role of civil servants
Social networking and integration	Public employees entitled to vote on local matters	Participatory context and consensus-principle resulted in vetoes and gate- keeping
Institutional co-operation Workplace democracy		Individual empowerment

In the network study it was shown how the dilemmas associated with the democratic chain of governance were incorporated into Bydelstinget with consequences to the development of the council's political autonomy. The result was that Grantoften Bydelsting never seriously challenged rules and procedures of political decision making in Grantoften or at the level of the municipality, as a collective body the council reproduced existing vertical and horizontal power-relations. However, though experiencing these barriers to political autonomy the public and private members of the council continued to focus on individual empowerment and the development of social and cultural activities in Grantoften.

The co-operative society EVE

The co-operative society EVE set forth to articulate a critique of the assumptions made in relation to the formal, institutionalised approach to economic governance represented by the ADAM model. ADAM was interpreted as an example as well as a metaphor for neo-liberal economic thinking not acknowledging the full implications of the environmentalist agenda. As a paradigm underlying political discourse ADAM had to be re-conceptualised from the perspective of sustainability, hence the EVE metaphor envisioning an alternative paradigm while underlining the political message that the ADAM epistemology was based on normative economic reasoning and thus could be questioned.

The EVE case clearly illustrates how the strategy of the co-operative society was reflexive in that it sought to question and change ADAM as a dominant worldview having fundamental political implications. EVE defined economy in terms of 'house-keeping that takes into consideration the ecological challenge at the international, national, local and individual level' thus associating a common sense attitude of everyday life with a concept of a sustainable economy. Re-conceptualising the

relationship between economy and ecology from an every day life perspective, individual and collective responsibilities for the environment were to be rooted in the context of the logic of day-to day decisions of the household.

Thus, from the perspective of re-embedding, the process can be analysed as one of a hermeneutics of retrieval (Lash); the society sought to dismantle the subject-object thinking of ADAM and as an expert system and embed it within the everyday forms of (sustainable) life. As such, the re-embedding project articulated by the members was to re-construct an abstract or systemic type of trust in ADAM as an expert system of economic modelling through dialogical methods. However, as shown above the EVE process had a number of paradoxical outcomes:

The co-operative society did not fundamentally challenge the validation-perspective of economic modelling exploring the radical perspective of the EVE metaphor. The outcome of the roundtable dialogue was an ecological modernisation agenda with its discrepancies between quality and quantity, posing the anti-ethical question - How do you calculate the price of lark song, or estimate the life-quality of a child by looking at its weight?

As a metaphor EVE underlined the inseparability of the economic and environmental dimensions while maintaining their separation as two distinctly different perspectives. This dialectic contradiction in the internally related but tendentially mutually exclusive relationship between the worldviews of ADAM and EVE, in effect meant that the society presupposed what it denied, an ambiguity which was institutionalised in the social organisation of the society:

Emphasising the dialogical approach, the political strategy of impacting ADAM was conceptualised as an expert-lay dialogue in which the EVE participants acted on the assumption that it requires expert knowledge to understand and challenge the propositions of an expert system. However, the outcome turned out to be lacking an ethically persuasive ecology-economy synthesis. When the roundtable dialogue made this discrepancy manifest some of the EVE participants experienced it as a crisis symptom, but having passed on the task of exploring the eco-eco synthesis to the experts they were in no favourable position to re-conceptualise the outcome.

Narratives/metaphors Modes of organisation Conditioning of outcome

EVE metaphor as critique of ADAM	Round-table dialogue	Ecological modernisation agenda impacted internal EVE process
Sustainable economics as proper housekeeping	Role division between economic and ecological experts and EVE members as lay group "posing the stupid questions"	Professionalisation of dialogue
ADAM: Oracle of Delphi		Confirmation of expert-lay divide
Alternative Wise Men's Report	Ecological dimension incorporated in economic modelling of expert-environments	Ethical conflict and epistemological schizophrenia
Green economy, Green GDP		Thus focus on non-economic issues of sustainability
Internalisation of externalities		
Price on Lark Song		
Weight of a Child		

The EVE process was conditioned by the emerging schism between the ecological modernisation discourse and the more radical vision articulated in the EVE metaphor, and the strategy of staging an expert-discourse 'backfired' reproducing the internalisation paradigm. Though the EVE metaphor envisioned a broader understanding of the relationship between economics and economy, the outcome of the expert-dialogue was a validation-agenda that effectively put a halt to the ambition of making a synthesis or pursuing the radical implications of the EVE metaphor in relation to economics.

De-monopolisation of knowledge?

Experts are constituted by the knowledge systems they represent and have therefore little incentive to dissolve or radically criticise these. As Lash argues, it is an open question whether there is a move towards a transformation of expert systems into "democratically dialogical and political public spheres" (Lash 1994: 203) or whether the accelerating specialisation even further consolidates knowledge monopolies outside the reach of public scrutiny. From this perspective, it is worthwhile considering whether the two case studies represent processes of de-monopolisation of expertise and a democratisation at the level of knowledge production?

The process of articulating personal or alternative knowledge into a collective sphere was *the* critical perspective in relation to both Bydelstinget and EVE as frameworks allowing participants to question and transform the dominant codes of everyday life (Keane 1998: 172). In the process of translating this alternative or 'local' knowledge into social issues the social positions of actors was crucial with respect to how they perceived their role vis-à-vis the collective learning process.

As a representative body Bydelstinget's main objective was to enter a dialogue with its constituency about local affairs, and a

direct contact with users as well as personal involvement in day-to-day activities was considered a prime source of legitimacy by tenants and employees both. Thus, the knowledge input in the process was in the hands of council members who did not question their right and qualifications to 're-code' or interpret the relevance of such day to day issues, living in Grantoften automatically qualified for an expert position. In EVE, the members of the co-operative envisioned an alternative platform to ADAM by putting forward the EVE metaphor, and they saw their role as one of *decoding* the ADAM position informing about and criticising this to a broader public.

Thus, in both cases participants conceptualised a key issue of their activities as one of questioning and democratising institutional knowledge. However, in both studies limits to such relative de-monopolisation of institutional knowledge were made manifest by the social organisation of the processes as analysed above.

In the context of Bydelstinget, tenants were faced with hard time politicising institutional issues, as illustrated with the case of the local school the initiative was buried by the head teacher and no counter-arguments were put forward, by tenants or by employees in the council. In the EVE-case, paradoxically, the task of re-coding was passed on to experts with specific knowledge of economic modelling with the consequence that the outcome of the process was less radical than envisioned by the EVE metaphor and the approach to economics defined in terms of sustainable housekeeping. Instead of a discussion of how 'local' experiences of sustainable life forms could be translated into economic modelling at the macro-level, the outcome was a schizophrenic choice between an ethically problematic validation discourse and an indefinable qualitative 'rest'.

Individual re-embedding strategies

In order to address the individualist perspective on political participation I conceptualised re-embedding at the level of subjectivist experience as the creative linking of self- and structural reflexivity with the intentional aim of impacting the level of collective interaction.

The research questions to be analysed were the following: 1) To what extent did actors orient themselves towards identifiable projects or strategies framed in terms a re-assessment of specific phases of the personal life-context in relation to wider rule-changes at the collective level? 2) What are the change-agendas expressed in these narratives, i.e. the underlying social analysis in terms of perceived institutional prerequisites and barriers for their implementation, and how do actors assess the overall outcome? 3) How to assess the outcome of the individual strategies knowing what we know about the outcome of the collective processes?

1. Each one of the participation narratives in fact illustrates such creative linking as a core dimension of the individual strategies: In each narrative there is an intimate connection between individual choices relating to the personal life situation and the governance-aspect of taking part in processes of change at the collective level. This relationship between life-politics and governance structure is visible in the way that actor's 'political projects' were inspired by their personal history and experiences:

From being an organic farmer Helle educated herself as an economist and then a green economist, a development which was mirrored in and facilitated by the EVE process. Also, Helle used the notion of a personal social space underlining how her political involvement had implications to her social relations. Susanne moved to the tower blocks and was motivated to

reconstruct her social networks through her involvement in the democratic process in Bydelstinget, thus mirroring her personal situation in the collective context of the council. Ole and Maria considered how participation in the tenants' democracy of the housing estate was a life style choice and an access channel to a social network, Ole estimated that 70 percent of his friends he had from his involvement in housing issues. Erik worked to push forward concrete changes towards a sustainable life form and he turned his political strategy of facilitating a dialogue into a professional career. Anne used her involvement in the Grundtvig seminar as a source of inspiration in the EVE process, and used her experiences with political work to assist in the process of organising the dialogue.

In short, across all narratives the specific attitude that 'you should do as you preach' was discernible, working in continuation of their individual perspectives a primary source of inspiration was the connection between personal experiences and strategies to impact the level of collective interaction. Helle phrased it explicitly when she stated that 'politics is at level of self-reflective choice' while Maria argued that if 'you stop taking part in democracy it ceases to exist.'

The key to connect or bridge the two levels was the learning process associated with being active. To the interviewees a core dimension of their political involvement was a strategic search for the epistemological and social communities that would facilitate a reflection upon personal experiences, as well as collective framework to act upon these. The focus on self-monitoring and self-reflection allowing for a rational reassessment of ones personal conduct and life-situation was the explicit key mechanism in Susanne's approach, and she sought to access a forum in which to "consider what one has not thought of before," but it was also a feature surfacing in the other narratives.

2. Though interesting, the fact that the narratives all reflect such bridging of individual beliefs with political activity is maybe not so surprising. All persons interviewed have for longer periods of time been actively involved in two political processes, either working with democratisation and self-governance in a neighbourhood district or with the big questions of sustainability and market reform. However, the research design has been developed in order to discuss (if not disprove) the core hypothesis in the reflexive modernisation perspective as synthesised by Beck.

Therefore, it is interesting to reflect on the difference between the individual empowerment-aspect of the participation experiences and the outcome in terms of structural transformation. Looking at these examples of democratic and environmental modernisation, is there anything in the studies to support the optimistic assertion made by Beck when he connects "acquire the ability to reflect upon the social conditions of existence" with the phrase "and to change them in that way"?

As it has been shown above, the outcome of the collective processes did not result in structural transformations to the extent directly and indirectly envisioned by the participants, in both processes, feelings of dis-empowerment and frustration emerged. In Grantoften the council members had to accept the lack of relative political power, and they did not challenge the rules and procedures of decision making in the locality. In EVE, after the initial success with advocating the concept of a green economy, members of the society felt a deep frustration with respect to the possibility of affecting the necessary structural changes in a market-governed society.

There is no one to one mode of systematic comparison between individual experiences and collective outcomes, but it is

interesting to notice how each individual pursues a perspective that represents a creative interpretation of the possible and desired outcome of being part of the process having recognised its shortcomings:

Susanne pursued a strategy of 'pragmatic resource management' in the context of Bydelstinget and the parochial church council. To her the key issue was to establish a collective context in which people experiencing negative effects of unemployment or solitude could come to terms with their situation and recreate a context for their every-day life that matched their personal and financial resources. Thus, from her perspective voluntarism as the rule of the political game being played was much in accordance with her strategy.

Maria worked to implement a children's policy in Grantoften, her main objective was to improve the social activities available to local children and to set up a self-governing day care institution in a co-operation with parents and staff of the local day care centres. She perceived the interaction between public employees and tenants in Bydelstinget as an empowerment mechanism, and therefore she was frustrated that the contribution of the public representatives was not recognised as such by the housing committee and the municipality. Also, it was a constraining feature to her strategy that Bydelstinget never evolved into a corporate actor but in her day to day activities she pursued other channels of access to the level of municipal decision making.

Ole was clear about his primary objective, to make social housing rules reflect the needs and life-patterns of tenants. His success-criteria was that if tenants feel they influence their housing environment they automatically dedicate themselves to the physical renewal and social life of the estate. From this position, he worked to stimulate tenants activities and facilitate

processes in which individual initiatives were encouraged but in ways that allowed access to these for everybody. As a newcomer to Grantoften Ole disliked what he saw as a rule-conformity (bingo-mentality) of people, and the café he pictures represents an open and approachable alternative to the social activities he had experienced.

To both Susanne and Maria, the zero-sum game that emerged between Bydelstinget and the housing committee was a constraining feature of their participation strategies. The conflicts made a number of active tenants chose to opt out of Bydelstinget, and by undermining the development of mutual trust in the council they effectively constrained the empowerment process and made it difficult for the members to continue developing social and cultural activities in Grantoften. As a representative from the housing committee Ole took part in the re-negotiation of Bydelstinget's statutes narrowing down the formal competencies of the council. But following his own perspective on the relationship between social development and political participation it would be paradoxical if he chooses to support a committee decision to put an end to Bydelstinget as a democratic experiment.

However, the horizontal and vertical barriers to developing the council's political autonomy as a collective body did not hinder the development of political competencies at the level of individual participants. At one stage Maria was in a position to decide upon a major decision in relation to the self-governing day-care institution she was involved in setting up, but agreed to postpone the decision until a later meeting at which she was outvoted. From her perspective the collective process should be organised according to 'appropriate democratic procedures' but reflections upon these are provoked by the opposite, and to her the point is that dedication and enthusiasm comes first. To Maria political participation is a strategic game as well as a life-style

choice, containing elements of personal projects and collective organisation, and her narrative is a fine illustration of a 're-embedding strategy' defined as the individual effort to reflect and act upon the relationship between self- and structural reflexivity.

As an organic farmer *Helle* was occupied with the concept of a green economy, exploring how the environmental issue could be incorporated into mainstream economics. Thus, educating herself as a 'green economist' she combined her career strategy and life-style choices with her ideas about the good life. Participating in the EVE seminars she discovered the ecological modernisation discourse and was encouraged to pursue the internalisation issue in her own studies. Therefore it was a frustration to her when the members of EVE no longer systematically pursued this perspective, but it did not ruin the main issue of being part of a deliberative forum exploring the economics-ecology theme.

From *Anne's* perspective political participation is about facilitating interdisciplinary dialogues and network cooperation, a strategy she pursued as a member of the editorial group in EVE. As a lecturer at the Grundtvig seminar she was one of the founding members of EVE, and inspired by the Grundtvigian ideas of participatory democracy she was part of a 'circle' or group of people that sparked off a Danish debate on green economics. Though supporting the concept of green accounts she experienced the validation agenda as too narrow, and through her involvement in the editorial process she pursued wider religious and spiritual aspects of the environmental agenda.

Erik transcended the expert-lay dichotomy in his approach underlining the need for concrete actions and critique in the practice situation, from his perspective there is already enough

knowledge to act upon in the effort to implement sustainable patterns of everyday life. To Erik the EVE process underlined dialogue and networking, and he was inspired to develop the ecological demonstration garden into a wider network of grassroots and green reformers, especially nursing the dialogue between the 'højskole movement' and environmental grassroots organisations.

Each narrative shows how the outcome of the EVE-dialogue in terms of the ecological modernisation agenda is differently assessed by the participants: Helle pursues a strategy of reforming the established economic order from a green economics perspective, and she expresses optimism on behalf of this perspective. Though following a somewhat similar strategy, inviting economists and other experts who would not be perceived as grassroots by the political establishment, Anne differs in her outcome evaluation, and dissatisfied with this epistemological horizon she pursued other non-economic aspects of the environmental agenda. From his concern with day to day patterns of life, Erik focused more on incremental changes towards sustainable patterns of behaviour than on the structural change possible at the level of economic reform. Thus, while each of the individual experiences were directly and indirectly conditioned by the outcome of the EVE process, each participant pursued a strategy of involvement interpreting the potential outcome along the lines of their individual perspectives.

Comparing the two network studies it is clear how the emergent synergies and tensions between the individual and the collective dimensions differed with the subject matter. In Grantoften, focus was on individual situations and opportunities for empowerment in the face of unemployment and its consequences, the life as a single etc. In EVE, the members focused on the macro-issue of

sustainability and market reform, but also on the barriers to a sustainable everyday life.

The social organisation pursued by the collectives of participants reflected their beliefs and understandings, there was a clear logic between choice of organisational form and definition of collective purposes (the endogenous perspective). Interestingly, with varying degrees of intensity, this endogenous perspective emerged into a *discrepancy between deliberative process and mode of organisation*. At some stage of the process, tensions emerged between procedure and substance as perceived by the participants, in Grantoften as a realisation that 'Bydelstinget' had no real political influence, and that there were almost too many barriers to a public-private empowerment strategy. In EVE, the lack of an ethically persuasive ecology-economy synthesis and consequent failure of the roundtable dialogue made the discrepancy manifest, and especially in EVE the participants to some extent experienced this emerging tension as a crisis symptom.

As analysed above the logic of these outcomes can be located in the paradoxical tensions emerging between the substantial endogenous perspectives and their institutional embodiments in both case studies. Being conceptualised in terms of a forum supposed to generate the development of mutual trust and reciprocity, Bydelstinget embodied a dimension of institutionalised distrust in its organisational setting. For the model to function, one democratic body in Grantoften had to pass on power to another democratic body, civil servants were expected to vote on local affairs, different institutional interests were supposed to subject themselves to critical scrutiny etc. Thus, especially the group of tenants not organised in the housing committee experienced the tensions between individual and collective empowerment and they continue in the face of (disrespectful) opposition from the housing committee. In EVE,

the paradoxical outcome of the structuring narrative was in the shape of the ecological modernisation discourse, but EVE did invite male economists to her table, so maybe this outcome was not so paradoxical after all.

Throughout the dissertation it has been shown how political participation has centred around developing the reflexive ability to reflect upon the social conditions of existence, and it has been analysed how these reflexive competencies did not necessarily result in radical changes of these. Yet, in all individual and collective cases the social and epistemological perspectives on these conditions of existence differed relative to the observer or the observers. And from actors' assessments of 'objective opportunity costs' associated with different courses of action, strategies emerged which were in fact creative re-interpretations of both available means and desired ends.

In Grantoften, the relative penalties of exploring the political dimension of the public employees' role were too high compared to working with the voluntary framework as it evolved, but the public-private co-operation between the council members persisted for a decade around specific projects and activities. Considering the somewhat discouraging outcome of the EVE-dialogue, the role-division between the members and the invited experts in EVE still was a strategic choice made in order to achieve maximum political impact. And the society managed to create a successful link between academia, public discourse and national political decision making, supporting the continuous search for a possible synthesis between ecology and economy.

General conclusion

Having thus recapitulated the specific conclusions to each of the research questions above, the analysis points to a general conclusion which can be phrased as follows: The enabling and constraining dimensions of individual and collective re-embedding strategies are related to the social context of political activity as strategic learning. And as analysed throughout the dissertation, such strategic learning in which the social realities of actors are questioned and re-conceptualised, structuring narratives and political metaphors play a key role.

Structuring narratives and political metaphors

In the two studies it has been shown how configurations of associated narratives and metaphors constituted collective frames of references to participants. These *structuring narratives* pointed to natural or taken-for-granted modes of organisation and role-divisions that conditioned outcomes of collective interaction processes over time. In the Grantoften case the structuring narrative was this: Problem Area - Democratic Modernisation as Social Integration, and the result was a number of paradoxes and barriers to political autonomy embedded within Bydelstinget as a democratic body. In the EVE study, the narrative was Roundtable Dialogue - Synthesis of Economy and Ecology, resulting in an articulation of the ecological modernisation discourse.

If the EVE-members in accordance with their initial idea had re-conceptualised their position as one of experts challenging economists who were per se lay people from EVE's perspective, maybe the outcome of the process had moved beyond the ecological modernisation discourse? If the public employees and tenants had envisioned the institutional setting of the council

along the lines of a procedural understanding of politics, setting up procedures for conflict-confrontation and –mediation, provoked a public debate of the ‘public vote’ outside Bydelstinget etc, maybe the council would have developed more political autonomy?

The analysis also points to the key role of what can be termed *political metaphors*, metaphors which re-conceptualise issues and invite for reclassification by integrating different and competing world-views while signifying or symbolising a radical alternative. The mechanism of metaphors precisely is to bridge apparently contrasting positions by understanding one thing in terms of another. The interesting point however is to note the political importance of key metaphors in the reflexive syntheses of personal experiences, social analysis and specific participation strategies. This was expressed most clearly with the EVE metaphor, but also in the metaphors like Lay Mans rebellion, Green economics, Castles in Spain versus Pragmatic Resource Management as well as others recorded, these qualities were present.

Political metaphors both embody disruptions of classifications and potential qualitative changes in understandings and worldviews. At the same time it has been shown how the strategic use of metaphors as part of political strategies is ambivalent; mobilising the vision does not necessarily entail structural transformation: How to transform the EVE metaphor into an analogy? As a metaphor, EVE had strong mobilising qualities because it visualised an alternative understanding of the relationship between economy and ecology without suggesting a substantial synthesis, it was an open invitation for a collective exploration of the possible syntheses and re-conceptualisations.

Ironically, in the process of exploring the possible analogies to be developed from this perspective, EVE was countered in her own backyard when an EVE-economist offered the metaphor of Prizing Lark Song as a headline in the debate. This image constituted the validation-agenda as the epistemological perspective, and with a single blow dismissed the potentially more radical message in the EVE metaphor. When Zeuthen at a later stage used the image of the Weight of a Child as a qualitative indicator on its health, EVE was long since defeated.

Reflections on method and perspectives for future research

The methodological ambition pursued above was to bridge a constructivist and a critical realist approach, I saw it as crucial to work without substantial evaluation criteria in the analysis and yet to analyse the stratified nature of the reflexive process. Pursuing this agenda a number of observations can be made on the feasibility of seeking to bridge such different positions, the question being whether the approach allow me to capture the (complex and sophisticated) reflexive remodelling of concepts and experiences from a feasible operationalisation of the actor-structure problematic?

1. The effort to analyse 'reflexive remodelling' of categories and understandings was inspired by the anti-foundational rhetoric, but it did not face the radical implications of the position. In Fox and Miller's anti-foundationalist approach to the 'politics of epistemology' they locate the construction of categories between 'a pre-categorical life-world' and 'intentionality' as 'the act of consciousness by which the phenomenon is made to be,' and the approach adopted here did in fact not operationalise the radical perspective in this perspective. To accept the implications of such an anti-foundational approach, subjectivity needs to be conceptualised between 'situations' and 'intentionalities', and

the researcher needs to squeeze in between a pre-categorical life-world and the process of articulation and categorisation. Getting access to subjective understandings and categories is a challenge in itself, how does one access the *pre-categorical* life-world of the actors subject to the study from a social science perspective?

It is clear, that the approach chosen, i.e. the inside view as suggested with its focus on 'endogenous' conceptualisations pinpointed systematically through a focus on narratives and metaphors is in fact an outside view, in the sense that it does not capture the pre-categorical sphere of "taken-for-granted-ness." Part of the problem lies in the circularity of the reflexivity argument as discussed in chapter 3 and the problems of separating reflexivity from the social context in which it occurs. However, the analysis could have been developed further through a more systematic focus on theories of learning and explanations of processes in which language is used to articulate and express pre-categorical experience.

2. I perceived the analytical task as one of constructing a platform from which to map the world-views of actors (the inside view) as a basis for a retrospective conceptual critique inspired by critical realism and Archer's methodology (the outside view). However, carrying out the retrospective analysis, it proved difficult to apply the time-dimension analytically as prescribed by Archer when evaluating the processes, by and large the initial periodisation of the processes was repeated in the retroductive analysis. A part of the explanation is that the first open-ended accounts of the processes were in fact based on a process of interpretation, establishing a structuring logic focusing upon decisive events and moments. Thus, carrying out the retrospective analysis, the periodical structure was already there. Further, the morphogenetic approach as such was only extensively pursued in the analysis, and it is clear that the points

developed by Archer deserves more systematic attention when applied in a research design.

Reflexivity winners and reflexivity losers

In the thesis the empirical approach to 'participation' meant a focus on actors and groups of actors who intentionally had participated in a number of social activities over time. The (somewhat implicit) argument was that such activists were a potential source of information with respect to experiences of how to deal with the complexities and ambiguities of life in late modernity. However, by choosing people who had a history of activism I created a strong case to support Giddens' hypothesis that people are knowledgeable of the social conditions that influence them. And probably I went from the assumption that the participation process should be understood from the perspective of (self-) reflexivity to the assumption that reflexivity per se is a positive phenomenon.

The obvious limitation of this approach is that the fundamental question of social inactivity has not been addressed: What about the persons with negative experiences of participation, what are their strategies of 're-embedding'? The optimistic vision expressed in the reflexive modernisation discourse is that there is a general mobilisation at the level of everyday life when the supposed self-evident certainties of life in late modernity begin to crumble. But as Beck argues, disembedding implies a fundamental insecurity, and he poses a key question when he asks whether the "self-politization of the private sphere is conceptualized as a positive or negative phenomenon? Is it a loss or breakdown, or a beginning?" (Beck 1997: 41). The general theme is one of 'reflexivity winners' versus 'reflexivity losers' (Lash 1994), a distinction which needs to be developed more systematically with a focus on how individual and collective transitions from one category to the other are respectively enabled or blocked.

Reflexive learning as political activity

As it has been discussed throughout the dissertation, the process of meaning construction is at the core of the political processes and the articulation, questioning and re-conceptualisation of tacit understandings and worldviews a key dimension in all of the experienced analysed. This articulation and questioning was not a random process but took place in a context conditioned by specific meaning frameworks, hierarchies of knowledge and stratified distribution of reflexive resources. In order to further explore the role of 'political metaphors' and 'structuring narratives' it is necessary more systematically to develop a sociological theory of learning that allows for an analysis of how individual and collective learning processes are socially conditioned.

An interesting starting point is identified by Nonaka (1994) in his theory of organisational learning, when he suggests that tacit and explicit knowledge are complementary forms of knowledge that are potentially expanding in processes of dialogue (p. 15-17). Tacit knowledge is defined by its personal quality, and because it is deeply rooted in action it is hard to formalise and communicate. However, the creation of mutual trust allows for the emergence of implicit perspectives shared by participants (the tacit knowledge of situated experience) and these perspectives are converted into explicit knowledge (concepts) in a process of dialogue amongst the participants.

Two important "heuristic" or linguistic tools aid in the transformation of tacit to explicit knowledge (Nonaka p. 20-21): The recognition of contradictions through metaphor, and the resolution of contradictions through analogy. A metaphor allows one to experience one thing in terms of another (by way of images and intuition) it is therefore a method of converting tacit into explicit knowledge, a metaphor can be defined as "two contradicting concepts incorporated in one word" (p. 21). By

associating (a network of) concepts, the metaphor aids in the process of exploring similarities and inconsistencies between concepts thus pointing to new meanings. An analogy points to similarities between different things, hereby reducing ambiguity. The association of similarities by way of analogy is a motor in rational thinking, "allowing the functional operation of new concepts or systems to be explored by reference to things that are already understood. In this sense, an analogy - that enables us to know the future through the present - assumes an intermediate role in bridging the gap between image and logic"...It follows from the preceding discussion that tacit knowledge may be transformed into explicit knowledge by (1) recognizing contradictions through metaphor, and (2) resolving them through analogy" (p. 21).

To further explore the 'politics of epistemology' as strategic knowledge production with basis in everyday life experiences it would be interesting to explore whether an elaborated synthesis of Nonaka's theory of organisational learning and Archer's morphogenetic approach is feasible. In the affirmative, a more systematic framework could potentially be developed, as a basis for an exploration of the dialectic changes in situated practices and role-positions from the perspective of learning as an emergent phenomenon.

The 'everyday maker'

In an interesting analysis of participation "from below", Bang and Sørensen (1997) suggest the concept of the "everyday-maker" ('hverdagsmageren') describing a perspective upon participation in the late 90s much in line with the points pursued under the heading of life-politics. They tentatively define life-politics ('hverdagsmageri') as "a contextual orientation towards everyday life in which one seeks to impact and shape institutions and social communities that one is a part of and feel

committed towards through ad hoc decision making and social interaction.” (p. 30, translation LE).

The motives for the ‘everyday maker’s’ participation transcend the traditional left-right dichotomy, and a primary participatory criterion is that of being part of the process. Further, life-politics should be conceptualised from the perspective of a dualistic perception of politics based on a distinction between expert-politics and the politics of everyday life (p. 27). The everyday-maker seeks to influence the immediate institutional context of her life, and does not focus on abstract macro-issues of e.g. economic development and social equality, to the everyday maker, politics is not a matter of impacting “big politics” (p. 34).

Suggesting the metaphor ‘everyday maker’ in the analysis of participation from below, Bang and Sørensen underline the apparent logic of appropriateness employed by active lay actors who recognise the ambivalence and complexity of social life. In contrast to traditional grassroots activities the modern activist adopt a more amateur-like and impressionistic approach (p. 41), recognising for instance the need for collective organisation as well as the inadequacies of traditional organisation modes of interest articulation. Employing a open-ended and diverse political strategy, the every-day maker still seeks to impact decision making at the level of expert-systems, and a key issue in the analysis of Bang and Sørensen is the process of mediation and dialogue between expert systems and participation in an everyday life context. Therefore, if such channels and mechanisms by which experts and lay persons enter a dialogue based on mutual respect and reciprocity are lacking it poses a fundamental democratic problem.

From the line of argumentation pursued throughout the dissertation there should be no doubt that I agree with Bang and

Sørensen's basic analytical focus on the link between individual context, life planning, everyday environments and 'politics'. However, I disagree with their distinction between expert politics and the politics of everyday life as the defining feature of 'everyday makers.' Hereby they invent a political metaphor in which the dichotomy between experts and lay people is reproduced in contradiction with their own emphasis upon the political nature of knowledge-production, and in contrast to the empirical experiences explored in the context of this dissertation, exemplifying how people precisely challenge such a dualistic perception of politics as a key dimension of their strategies in their effort to impact 'big politics.'

As argued above, re-embedding per se is a relative and socially constructed phenomenon, and the boundary setting between expert and lay positions reflect (changes in) the social stratification of society. Political involvement is qualified and reflexive (though individual intentions are not always reflected in collective changes) and specific modes of interaction are conditioned by stratified constellations of resources in network relations (in the urban environment, voluntary organisations, public-private partnerships etc.). Expertise is a privileged position from which to define (inter-subjective) reality but it is also an *attitude*. And the hypothesis is that more and more people recognise the relativity of expertise, as argued by Helle when she refers to the metaphor of a 'laymans rebellion'. Her point is that individual actions do change society (but in unpredictable and unforeseeable ways) and the democratic perspective is that more and more individuals realise this. Thus, the question is what it takes for people to realise that they have a say whether they acknowledge it, and especially, whether they act upon this realisation or not?

Re-embedding and the restless activity of democratic reform

“The diversification of cultural perceptions and the connections people have to make for themselves eat away the very foundations on which value communities can feed and constantly renew themselves...highly individualized societies can only be bound together - if at all - first, through a clear understanding of precisely this situation; and secondly, if people can be successfully mobilized and motivated for the challenges present at the centre of their lives (unemployment, destruction of nature etc.). Where the old sociality is ‘evaporating’, society must be re-invented. Integration therefore becomes possible if no attempt is made to arrest and push back the breakout of individuals. It can happen if we make conscious use of this situation, and try to forge new, politically open, creative forms of bond and alliance. The question of whether we still have the strength, the imagination - and the time - for this ‘invention of the political’ is, to be sure, a matter of life and death” (Beck 1993: 44-45).

In the previous chapters, it is illustrated how communities of people get together and organise a collective process in order to discuss and reconsider issues, that they identify as important to their lives and their communities. What is social integration in an urban setting and how to improve quality of life in the neighbourhood? What does a sustainable economy look like? People participate in low profile networks embedded in small groups, organisations or friendship relations on a part-time basis that allows them to combine dimensions of solidarity and individual needs (Keane 1998). These networks are the laboratories of everyday life in which experiences are invented and made public, they function as “public spaces in which the elements of everyday life are mixed, remixed, developed and tested....(the) public spheres as the discussion circle, the publishing house, the church, the clinic and a political chat over a drink with friends or acquaintances are the sites in which citizens question the pseudo-imperatives of reality and counter

them with alternative experiences of time, space and interpersonal relations” (p. 172).

I believe it is a fruitful exercise to approach political participation from the viewpoint of reflexive modernization theory with its emphasis on the social and epistemological ‘flux’ of late modernity. Modernisation processes imply that routines and norms of everyday life are continuously disembedded, compelling citizens to scrutinise and re-invent basic social and democratic norms of collective behaviour. The ‘breakout of individuals’ is a theoretical and political challenge, but as shown throughout the dissertation these individuals in their practice and cognitive orientations transcend the apparent dichotomy between individualism and collectivism in their search for ways of satisfying their specific individual beliefs and aspirations at the level of collective organisation.

The optimistic sociological point is that this creative reinvention of society does not require expert qualifications, it is a democratic issue in the hands of a citizenry that has left behind the belief that governance systems structure the democratic dialogue and sorts out problems within predefined parameters. As reform strategy the democratic experiment no longer illustrates possible alternatives to existing norms and procedures of decision making, it has become the norm itself. The result is a political culture of restless self-questioning, characterised by interacting individuals who are compelled to ‘reflect upon the game while playing’ and who gradually discovers that they are part of a political culture in which the rules and procedures of political decision making cannot be defined a priori.

Resumé: Refleksivitet og politisk deltagelse

Afhandlingen "Refleksivitet og Politisk Deltagelse. Et studie af indlejningsstrategier" er en analyse af politisk deltagelse set fra neden, en eksplorativ undersøgelse af 2 borgerdeltagelsesprocesser set fra de deltagende aktørers perspektiv. Ved at eksponere sammenhængen mellem aktørernes personlige livskontekst og tilværelsesstrategier og deres engagement i bredere politiske processer, vises det hvordan den enkelte borgers deltagelse involverer en kreativ fortolkning af hverdagslivets konkrete erfaringer i forsøget på at påvirke politiske processer på det kollektive niveau. For at eksponere denne sammenhæng mellem livsform og styreform søges inspiration i teorierne om refleksiv modernisering og i den provokerende hypotese at et gennemgående træk ved det senmoderne samfund er en åbning af aktør-struktur dikotomien til fordel for aktør-perspektivet: antagelsen er at "jo mere samfund moderniseres, i jo højere grad tilegner aktører (subjekter) sig evnen til at reflektere over eksistensens/tilværelsens sociale vilkår og derved forandre disse" (Beck 1994: 174).

Inspireret af Becks og Giddens diskussion af refleksivitets-temaet udvikles i afhandlingen et perspektiv på politisk deltagelse som refleksiv indlejring, en individuel og kollektiv proces der involverer en systematisk ophævelse, revurdering og genetablering af givne handlingspræmisser og forestillinger. Hypotesen er at en sådan systematisk sætten spørgsmålstejn ved samfundsmæssige former er en hverdagsforeteelse, og pointen operationaliseres via begrebet indlejningsstrategier (re-embedding strategies); en metafor for sammenhængen mellem individers selv-refleksive (re-) integration og samtidige forhandling af fælles mening via deltagelse i politiske forandringsprocesser på det kollektive niveau. Derfor arbejdes

der i afhandlingen ud fra den hypotese, at den enkeltes deltagelsesstrategi er et refleksivt forsøg på at koble mellem en personlig eksistentiel overvejelse over livskontekst og valg af livsstil, og det strategiske forsøg på at påvirke kollektive beslutningsprocesser for at afspejle denne proces på det samfundsmæssige niveau. Dette forhold mellem det individuelle og det kollektive niveau udtrykkes i to perspektiver der søges koblet i operationaliseringen af den empiriske analyse:

Et subjektivistisk perspektiv på politisk deltagelse. Politik i det senmoderne samfund indeholder en subjektiv kvalitet hvor personlige erfaringer og spørgsmål om identitet og tilværelsesstrategier er et væsentligt udgangspunkt for politisk engagement og deltagelse. Til forskel fra tidligere er den enkelte aktørs politiske identitet i mindre grad defineret af gruppe- eller klassetilhørsforhold til fordel for elementer og positioner sammensat på tværs af det politiske spektrum.

Et netværksperspektiv på styrings- og beslutningsprocesser; hverken formen på eller indholdet af den politiske arena kan på forhånd afgrænses; politikkenes felt er i princippet åbent og både enkeltpersoner og konkurrerende netværkskonfigurationer strides om at sætte dagsordenen og definere spillereglerne for den politiske proces.

Det følger af refleksivitets-perspektivet at politik-begrebet ikke kan afgrænses til det formelle repræsentative system men skal lokaliseres på det diskursive niveau som et spørgsmål om kollektiv meningsdannelse, og politik defineres som forhandling af kollektivt bindende regler hvor regler også referer til fælles mening, dvs. meningskategorier der regulerer den kollektive adfærd. I analysen af netværksperspektivet er spørgsmålet derfor hvilke aktører og aktør-konstellationer der besidder de definatoriske ressourcer i den fælles meningsdannelsesproces, og hvordan sådanne privilegerede positioner konstitueres med

reference til forskelle i roller, positioner og ressourcer i netværket?

Med udgangspunkt i to case-studier af borgerdeltagelsesprocesser er afhandlingens formål således at eksponere den dialektiske relation mellem enkeltaktørers konkrete deltagelseserfaringer og kollektive netværksprocesser over tid, og undersøgelsen fokuserer derfor på følgende spørgsmål:

Hvordan hæmmes henholdsvis faciliteres individuelle og kollektive indlejningsstrategier i konkrete netværksprocesser? Herunder;

- På det kollektive niveau: hvilke kollektivt bindende regler gøres til genstand for forhandling i netværket og hvordan påvirkes denne forhandlingsproces af forskelle i aktørernes roller og positioner?

- På det individuelle niveau; hvilke motiver har borgerne for at deltage, hvordan definerer de det politiske indhold i deres deltagelse, og hvordan vurderer de resultatet af deres indsats?

Et hovedtema i undersøgelsen er således at undersøge hvordan lokale forestillinger i netværket udvikles og præges af konkrete aktørers reflektive deltagelsesstrategier, og den styrende antagelse er at deltagelsesprocessen kan anskues som en indlejningsproces, dvs. som en reflektiv proces i hvilken givne præmisser for individuelle og kollektive forestillinger og handlingsparametre gøres til genstand for refleksion og revurdering. Perspektivet indeholder en metodisk og videnskabsteoretisk udfordring: en deduktiv fremgangsmåde vil på forhånd udelukke adgang til sådanne lokale bevægelser i aktørers meningshorisont over tid, og refleksivitets-antagelsen stiller krav til begrebsmæssig åbenhed og metodisk indlevelsesevne;

Hvordan etablere en videnskabsteoretisk og metodisk position fra hvilken man både kan anlægge et exogent perspektiv på netværksanalysen med fokus på forhandlingen af kollektivt bindende regler og forestillinger og samtidig opnå en maksimal åbenhed over for aktørernes opfattelser af den proces de er involverede i?

I kapitel 2 diskuteres hovedtemaerne i teorierne om refleksiv modernisering med henblik på at udfolde refleksivitets-begrebet noget mere og relatere dette til analyser af politisk deltagelse. Begrebet refleksiv modernisering tillægges forskellig betydning af forskellige forfattere og kapitlet lægger sig op af specielt Ulrich Becks og Anthony Giddens' argumentation. En hovedpointe i Becks analyse af refleksive moderniseringsprocesser er hans risikosamfunds-tese: den senmoderne industrielle samfundsformation medfører en systematisk produktion af risici der grundlæggende underminerer traditionelle fornufts- og rationalitetsforestillinger indlejret i samfundets institutioner og kulturelle mønstre. Denne rationalitetskrise er samtidig drivkraften i en refleksiv moderniseringsproces på det institutionelle og på det individuelle niveau i hvilken tilsyneladende etablerede samfundsformer og -forestillinger løsrives, vurderes og genforhandles i en refleksiv "indlejringsproces." I Becks version rummer refleksivitets-begrebet en dobbelt betydning af både krise-provokeret selvkonfrontation og intentionel refleksion over grundlaget for individuelle og kollektive forestillinger og handlingsrationaler.

Inspirationen til den empiriske analyse af deltagelse tager afsæt i den ambivalente individualiseringstese og en optimistisk fortolkning af sammenhængen mellem kulturel frisætning og politisk deltagelse: på den ene side medfører den kulturelle frisætning en grundlæggende (valg-) frihed i det omfang individuelle livsmønstre og sociale positioner i mindre grad

bestemmes af social stratifikation og i højere grad af individuelle valg og livsstrategier. På den anden side rummer frisættelsen en orienteringskrise (en slags epistemologisk usikkerhed) der manifesterer sig i en afhængighedsrelation til eksperterne, dvs. de enkeltpersoner og grupper der tilskrives autoritet som vidensproducenter i diverse sociale sammenhænge.

Diskussionen syntetiseres i en definition af indlejring som individers kreative kobling mellem selv- og strukturel refleksivitet med henblik på at opnå politisk indflydelse, dvs. at påvirke regler for kollektiv adfærd. I forlængelse heraf formuleres en række spørgsmål der sammenfatter refleksivitetsperspektivet og som styrer den empiriske analyse på det individuelle og det kollektive niveau i undersøgelsen. Afhandlingens styrende idé er at gøre den påståede ambivalens til omdrejningsakse og etablere en kobling mellem teori og empiri ved systematisk at forfølge og søge at påvise denne tvetydighed i udformningen af den empiriske analyse. Strategien hertil er todelt: 1. For det første fastholdes en optimistisk fortolkning af den observerede sammenhæng mellem livsform og styreform i case-studierne der antages at være "refleksive fællesskaber" kendetegnet ved kompetente, eksistentielt motiverede aktørers forsøg på i fællesskab at organisere den kollektive styreform så den afspejler individualiteten og giver mening for den enkelte. 2. For det andet antages det at processen er påvirket af magt-relationer mellem aktørerne der bl.a. kommer til udtryk i en socialt betinget rollefordeling med hensyn til aktørernes positionering i forhold til ekspert/lægmands kategorierne, en social stratifikation der vil begrænse de enkelte aktørers (valg-) frihed og deltagelsesstrategier.

Refleksivitets-problematikken indeholder en sociologisk dimension der refererer til spørgsmålet om social organisering

og en epistemologisk/kognitiv dimension der understreger det lokale eller nominelle perspektiv på den fælles begrebsdannelse der ikke a priori kan bestemmes substantielt men vil afspejle en konkret fortolkningsproces, og en pointe er at der vil være en intim sammenhæng mellem diskursive ændringer og ændringer i den sociale organisering. Distinktionen optræder også i forbindelse med den anvendte definition af et netværk som henholdsvis en relationel sammenhæng imellem aktører der er med til at forme identiteter og præferencer og en relation der distribuerer aktørernes adgang til materielle og sociale ressourcer. For at afklare og operationalisere de metodiske og videnskabsteoretiske spørgsmål i relation til denne forskel mellem sociale relationer og mening introduceres Gepharts begrebspar endogen og radikal refleksivitet som en strukturerende logik i afhandlingen. Det endogene perspektiv fokuserer ifølge Gephart på hvordan lokale narrativer legitimerer den lokale sociale orden, mens det radikale eller eksogene perspektiv fastholder muligheden for at træde ud af den lokale meningssammenhæng i bestræbelsen på at eksponere grænserne for den refleksive proces.

I kapitel 3 redegøres for afhandlingens videnskabsteoretiske og metodiske fundament, og hovedbestræbelsen er at etablere en position imellem det konstruktivistiske argument at 'virkeligheden' afhænger af iagttagelsesposition og iagttagerens forestillinger, og det realistiske argument at verden er objektivt eksisterende. Første del af kapitlet berører den epistemologiske debat om social konstruktivisme/relativisme, og der peges på behovet for en åben og hermeneutisk inspireret tilgang til studiet af den sociale praksis og måden hvorpå aktører definerer og begrebsliggør deres erfaringsverden. Som pragmatisk svar på relativisme-problemet introduceres Alexanders diskussion af det epistemologiske dilemma, og der argumenteres for at historisk udviklede fælles diskursive normer og betydningskategorier muliggør kriterier for inter-subjektivitet.

I anden del af kapitlet skitseres Bhaskars kritisk realistiske ontologi med det formål at etablere en position der så at sige gør det muligt at træde ud af diskursen og anlægge et analyseperspektiv med vægt på begreberne social stratifikation og (tendenciel) kausalitet. Med reference til Bhaskars relationelle aktør-struktur model er det muligt at introducere et struktur-begreb der på den ene side udledes af aktørernes begrebsverden og på den anden side muliggør en efterrationalisering i forsøget på at vurdere magt-relationer og generere en forklaring af hvorfor nogle historier eller "virkelighedsdefinitioner" konstitueredes som bestemmende for aktørernes fælles meningsunivers. For at gøre Bhaskars model mere praktisk anvendelig introduceres Archers begreb om "dobbel morfogenese," en analytisk operationalisering af aktør-struktur relationen baseret på tidsdimensionen. Archer tilbyder en relationel opfattelse af roller og positioner baseret på den antagelse at der på ethvert givet tidspunkt vil der være et sæt af positioner og roller der analytisk kan opfattes som en konstellation af aktør-relationer, interesser, ressourcer og barrierer der repræsenterer en (systemisk) logik som motiverer rolleindehaveren til en bestemt adfærd. Pointen er at sådanne relationelle positioner enten reproduceres eller udvikles over tid, og ved at følge forandringer i disse er det muligt efterfølgende at give en forklaring på spørgsmålet om "whose accounts counts" i netværksanalysen.

I kapitel 4 sammenfattes afhandlingens forskningsstrategi. Med reference til en kritisk realistisk ontologi vises det hvordan der er etableret en videnskabsteoretisk og metodisk sammenhæng mellem hypoteser og forskningsstrategi i koblingen mellem teori og metode, og forskningsstrategien sammenfattes i en 4-trinsmodel:

Trin 1. Et bottom-up perspektiv på analysen af interaktion i netværket over tid: Hvordan opfatter og beskriver aktører i

netværket deres indbyrdes relationer og de spil der foregår imellem dem; hvilke roller og gensidige forestillinger konstrueres i den sociale interaktion og hvordan afgrænses/forhandles disse over tid?

Trin 2: Efter induktivt at have kortlagt udviklingen i netværksrelationerne evalueres disse ud fra magt-perspektivet. Først rekapituleres politik-dimensionen i processen; hvilke kollektivt bindende regler i bred forstand (adfærdsregulerende forestillinger) blev gjort til genstand for forhandling og konflikt i processen? Dernæst undersøges det hvilke aktører der havde afgørende indflydelse på indholdsbestemmelsen af disse forestillinger, og det vurderes hvordan denne indflydelse var relateret til forskelle i ekspertroller og -positioner i netværket.

Trin 3: Med netværksanalyserne som generel kontekst præsenteres en række personers konkrete erfaringer med at deltage i en af de to processer med det formål at udforske det subjektivistiske udgangspunkt og via personlige historier at genfortælle processen som den blev oplevet indefra af de involverede deltagere. I forbindelse med hvert case studium præsenteres tre delvist strukturerede samtaler med aktivister der er interviewet omkring 1) personlige overvejelser i relation til livskontekst og 2) forandringsstrategier og mål/middel overvejelser i forhold til forandringer på det kollektive niveau.

Trin 4: For at relatere den enkeltes erfaringer til den strukturelle kontekst som den er analyseret i trin 1 og 2 sammenfattes hver fortælling i en syntese der relateres til udfaldet af netværksanalysen.

I anden del af kapitel 4 gennemgås de fire trin med henblik på at kvalificere analyse-strategierne på det individuelle og kollektive niveau i afhandlingen, og det diskuteres hvordan niveauerne indbyrdes relateres i tilrettelæggelsen af den empiriske analyse.

I kapitel 5 introduceres det første case-studie i afhandlingen, en analyse af samarbejdet omkring Grantoftens Bydelsting i Ballerup kommune. Grantoftens Bydelsting ligger i "Kollektivbyen Grantoftens," et boligområde i Ballerup hvor der bor ca. 3200 mennesker. Området er præget af 3 højhusblokke og 380 rækkehuse i 70'ers funktionalistisk stil; en stor, grå og åben bebyggelse med en række fælles faciliteter. Grantoftens Bydelsting blev etableret i 1989 på borgmesterens initiativ og repræsenterede et forsøg på at lægge de eksisterende lokale samarbejdsrelationer i mere faste rammer og give området en større grad af selvstyre. Spillet omkring implementeringen af Bydelstinget beskrives i tre faser. I den indledende konstitueringsfase (1988-89) blev de grundlæggende spilleregler forhandlet og formuleret af en arbejdsgruppe primært bestående af kommunale embedsmænd og repræsentanter for det lokale beboerdemokrati. I den efterfølgende implementerings- og udviklingsfase blev rollefordeling og kompetencer afprøvet, og Bydelstingets medlemmer stødte på en række horisontale og vertikale barrierer i forhold til at udvikle tingets magt, i praksis udviklede det sig til en slags forum for koordinering af det frivillige sociale arbejde i Grantoftens. I den tredje genforhandlingsfase (1996-98) indsnævredes Bydelstingets kompetencer efter pres fra Grantoftens afdelingsbestyrelse og medlemmerne accepterede en rollefordeling der konfirmerede afdelingsbestyrelsens magtposition i Grantoftens.

I processen med at fastlægge spillereglerne for Bydelstinget var der specielt to forestillinger der prægede organiseringen af tinget og aktørernes opfattelse af de fælles spilleregler; tinget skulle være "et hjerte der banker i takt med lokalområdet" og styrke de sociale og kulturelle aktiviteter i Grantoftens, og samtidig et demokratisk forum for de offentligt ansatte i området, der derfor fik stemmeret på lige fod med beboerne. Resultatet var at et frivillighedsprincip blev styrende for tingets funktionsmåde, Bydelstinget blev et samarbejdsorgan baseret på en idé om

social samhørighed (et konsensus-perspektiv), i det omfang medlemmerne ønskede at være med i processer og aktiviteter havde de med Bydelstinget en ramme for deres deltagelse. Dette betød samtidig at der ikke blev formuleret regler for hvordan medlemmerne skulle håndtere konflikter, og i de tilfælde hvor der var divergerende interesser skiltes parterne.

På det horisontale niveau udviklede der sig et lokalt samarbejde i den udstrækning der var en gensidig fælles interesse for dette, mens de medlemmer der forsøgte at rejse debatter og politisere spørgsmål omkring lokale institutionsforhold nemt blev blokeret af institutionsrepræsentanter der trak sig ud af samarbejdet eller blokerede for fælles strategibestræbelser. Samtidig udviklede der sig et nul-sumsspil mellem Bydelstinget og afdelingsbestyrelsen der fra at støtte tinget som ide og medvirke til dets oprettelse endte med at modarbejde det i forsøget på at fastholde og udvikle sin position som initiativtager til sociale og kulturelle aktiviteter. På det vertikale niveau foregik der en forhandling af de offentligt ansattes rolle præget af det politisk-administrative niveaus kritiske indstilling til de ansattes medvirken, og fra en offensivt formuleret rolle valgte de offentligt ansatte en mere tilbagetrukket og indirekte deltagelse i det lokale demokrati med vægt på at støtte beboernes initiativer og aktiviteter.

I kapitel 6 præsenteres tre personers beretning om deres engagement i det lokale beboerdemokrati i Grantoftens, "Susanne" og "Maria" er medlemmer af Grantoftens Bydelsting og "Ole" er medlem af Grantoftens afdelingsbestyrelse. På hver deres måde illustrerer de tre fortællinger sammenhængen mellem refleksivitet og deltagelse, og med aktørernes egne ord beskrives på forskellig vis hvordan deltagelse i Grantoftens beboerdemokratiske styreform opfattes som et livsstilsvalg der kombinerer sociale og demokratiske aspekter for den enkelte. Susanne forfølger med udgangspunkt i egne erfaringer en strategi der kan beskrives som "pragmatisk ressource

management" der kobler selvhjælp, personlig udvikling og læring på den ene side og politisk deltagelse på den anden. Maria arbejder for at styrke børns vilkår og udvikle den lokale selvbestemmelse efter demokratiske principper, mens Oles strategi er at styrke sammenhængen mellem regelfleksibilitet og demokratisk deltagelse i den almene boligsektor og beboernes lyst til at engagere sig i det sociale liv; fra hans synsvinkel skal den almene boligform i videst muligt omfang afspejle beboernes behov og præferencer. I anden del af kapitlet syntetiseres de tre fortællinger og diskuteres enkeltvis i relation til analysen i kapitel 4, og det vises hvordan udfaldet af spillet omkring implementeringen af Grantofte Bydelsting har forskellig betydning for de tre aktørers respektive deltagelsesstrategier.

I kapitel 7 fortælles historien om hvordan Andelsselskabet EVA i starten af 90'erne publicerede en række antologier om økonomi og økologi og bidrog til den danske debat om grøn økonomi og et grønt BNP. Andelsselskabet blev stiftet på Vestjyllands Højskole i 1988 af en gruppe foredragsholdere og deltagere på det årlige Grundtvigseminar, og formålet med EVA var at bedrive folkeoplysende virksomhed omkring temaet økonomi forstået som god husholdning på det globale, nationale, lokale og personlige niveau. Ideen var at udgive en årlig "økologisk vismandsrapport" som pendant til det Økonomiske Råds halvårslige vismandsrapporter, og EVA inviterede økonomier, økologer og personer fra andre faggrupper med interesse i miljøspørgsmål til at deltage i en "rundbordssamtale" med henblik på at diskutere forholdet mellem økonomi og miljø fra forskellige perspektiver. EVAs bestyrelse fungerede som redaktionsgruppe og arrangerede årlige seminarer for de ca. 150 medlemmer hvor forfatterne præsenterede deres ideer og artikeludkast og diskuterede disse med deltagerne.

Som metafor for andelsselskabets formål udtrykte navnet "EVA" en kritik og et alternativ til Budgetdepartementets makro-økonomiske beregningsmodel "ADAM" (Annual Danish Aggregated Model) der af EVAs medlemmer blev opfattet som eksponent for en udemokratisk teknokratisering af den politiske debat og dagsorden mens "EVA" repræsenterede værdier og spørgsmål bl.a. i relation til miljøet der var uden for ADAMs epistemologiske horisont. I 1990-91 udgav selskabet bogen "Pengene og Livet" der under overskriften grøn økonomi blandt andet diskuterede grønne afgifter og et grønt BNP. Et hovedsynspunkt i antologien var at relationen mellem økologi og økonomi kunne anskues som en validerings-/internaliseringsproblematik og at miljøspørgsmålet kunne rummes inden for rammerne af den økonomiske disciplin. Bogen fik en vis opmærksomhed i den offentlige debat og EVAs forfattere blev inviteret til et møde med den daværende miljøminister Lone Dybkjær. I de følgende måneder blev økonomi-økologi temaet taget op og vurderet af henholdsvis Zeuthen-udvalget og Miljøministeriet. Zeuthen-udvalget fastslog økonomiens primat over økologien og diskuterede en række tekniske muligheder og barrierer i forbindelse med spørgsmålet om at prissætte eksternaliteter, mens Miljøministeriet i en rapport skitserede en række scenarier hvor miljøaspektet blev diskuteret som den uafhængige variabel.

Debatten blandt andelsselskabets medlemmer blev præget af prisfastsættelsesproblematikken der blev set som et afgørende perspektiv på en mulig økologi-økonomi syntese. Resultatet var en spaltning af diskussionen i positioner for og imod det "at sætte pris på lærkesang" med det paradoksale resultat at det potentielt radikale budskab i EVA-metaforen blev fortolket inden for rammerne af diskursen om økologisk modernisering, dvs. den forestilling at miljøproblemet kan rummes inden for og håndteres af samfundets eksisterende økonomiske, politiske og sociale institutioner. Fordi andelsselskabets bestræbelse på at

artikulere en alternativ opfattelse af relationen mellem miljø og økonomi blev reflekteret i måden hvorpå processen blev organiseret, fik rollefordelingen mellem de inviterede eksperter på den ene side og EVA som lægmandsrepræsentant på den anden den konsekvens at EVAs første talsmænd (!) etablerede valideringsdiskussionen som bestemmende dagsorden for den videre proces med det resultat at andelsselskabet undlod at forfølge et perspektiv på økonomi-økologi relationen ud fra hvilket de økonomiske analyser blev underordnet ikke-økonomiske kriterier.

I kapitel 8 fortæller "Helle," "Anne" og "Erik" om deres erfaringer med at deltage i EVA-processen og om hvordan deltagelsen bl.a. handlede om at kombinere personlige projekter og livsanskuelser med en målrettet indsats for at påvirke den politiske dagsorden og den offentlige diskurs omkring sammenhængen mellem miljø og økonomi. Som økologisk landmand ønskede Helle at deltage i diskussion af hvordan miljøspørgsmålet integreres i den økonomiske tænkning og EVA etablerede en forbindelse mellem ellers adskilte politiske og faglige miljøer, en proces hun samtidig så afspejlet i sin uddannelse til miljøøkonom. Anne var med i gruppen der oprettede EVA og inspireret af Grundvigsseminaret forfulgte hun en netværksstrategi hvor hun kombinerede en kontakt til politiske og faglige miljøer med det praktiske arbejde det var at formidle den tværfaglige dialog. Erik sammenfatter sit syn på hans eget engagement som en "netværksfletter," hans strategi er at bruge informationsteknologien til at formidle personlige kontakter og skabe dialog om miljøtemaet, fra hans perspektiv er konkrete forandringer og kritik af praksis nøglen til politisk indflydelse. På baggrund af en syntese af hver fortælling diskuteres det hvordan udfaldet af EVA-processen på forskellig vis påvirkede de tre aktørers deltagelseserfaringer.

I kapitel 9 sammenfattes de specifikke og generelle konklusioner. Formålet med afhandlingens eksplorative studie var at hypereksponere konkrete erfaringer med udgangspunkt i den (generaliserede) påstand at stadigt flere individer frisættes og derfor tvinges til at forholde sig refleksivt til regelgrundlaget for deres egen og kollektivets adfærd og basale fornufts-kategorier, og samtidig vise hvordan denne proces indvirkede på det politiske spil i konkrete netværksprocesser. Oprulningen af de to netværksprocesser og de personlige beretninger bekræftede dette refleksivitetsperspektiv; deltagelsesstrategierne formede sig omkring den kreative proces det var at formulere og debattere adfældsregulerende regler med udgangspunkt i umiddelbare livserfaringer og udbrede disse i et forsøg på at etablere en meningsfuld relation mellem livskontekst og kollektiv reguleringsform, indlejningsstrategierne var kendetegnet ved refleksive forsøg på at etablere en etisk funderet sammenhæng mellem livsform og styreform.

I kapitlet sammenfattes magtanalyserne i de to netværksstudier, og den analytiske relevans af begreberne 'strukturende fortælling' og 'politisk metafor' understreges. Strukturende fortællinger refererer til sammenhængen mellem den narrative dimension, valg af organiseringsform og den afledte strukturering af den kollektive interaktionsproces, mens politiske metaforer fungerer som sproglige vinduer igennem hvilke individer knytter forbindelsen mellem individuelle erfaringer, refleksive analyser og konkrete deltagelsesstrategier.

Appendix 1. Interview-guide

Motivation and problem-identification

- Looking back, why did you become involved in X?
- What kind of personal experience motivated your participation, and what were the key issues of your concern?
- What kind of change did you want to initiate?

Strategies

- Did you have a strategy to inspire your participation? Why/why not?
- How do you perceive the political nature of your engagement?
- In your opinion; was the outcome political influence?
- How? Why? Why not?

Expert-lay distinction

- Do you find the distinction expert-lay person relevant to your participation experience? Why/why not?
- Did you experience a division of labour with respect to who identified means and ends in the process?
- If yes, did this division of labour facilitate your aims? Pose a barrier to what you wanted?
- Can you exemplify?

Social interaction

- In your opinion, what was the collective experience of X?
- What were some of the conflicts?
- How important was the social aspect to you personally?
- What was the relationship between the way the p-process was organised and the goals you were after?

Learning

- Do you find that participation involves a learning dimension? How would you identify this?
- What did you learn?
- Was part of the process to articulate tacit personal knowledge?
- What facilitated your learning experience? What were some of the barriers?

Life-politics and assessment

- Life-politics, what do you think of that term?
- If you should assess the impact of your p-experience; how important was it to you?
- What were the best parts? And what were the worst?

Appendix 2. Green economy in 'Pengene og Livet'

Main Idea	Goal	Means	Preconditions
Ecological taxes	To make the prices of products reflect the costs of obtaining a wanted future supply and quality of natural resources	Economic instruments like taxes, subsidies, fees or tradable permits. Emphasis is upon changing the institutional settings of the market	Clear political targets for specific, quantifiable environmental qualities Costs and benefits of environmental qualities can be traded
Scenarios & Risk Evaluation	Assessment of the environmental risks associated with various development paths, and political decisions as to which scenario should be targeted for	Ecological tax levels should be fixed taking into account the uncertainty and risks associated with various potential development paths	Clear political goals as to the future quality of our natural resources - their supply and use Calculation of scenarios of degradation of certain resources, and related to consumption (and production) of specific products
A green GDP/ Ethical Accounts	To make national accounts better indicators of the general state of, or the value of the economic activities to our society economically, socially and environmentally	The creation of ethical accounts relating to social and environmental issues in order to weigh these against the political goals set. The balance sheets must thus include non-traded variables and relations	The development of methods to account for changes in specific social and environmental qualities The ADAM economists must include non-market values in their accounts and models, and expose the normative foundation of their calculations - the market is not an objective valuation mechanism

Appendix 3. Interviewees

Grantofthen Bydelsting

Tom Beck
Ruth Bergqvist
Poul Boysen
Benny Bregendahl
Hans Christensen
Ove E. Dalsgaard
Jørgen Dehn
Kirsten Dyregaard
Kirsten Fridahl
Jytte Haare
Jan Leo Hansen
Ebbe Henriksen
Birgit Jensen
Finn Jensen
Hanne Jespersen
Preben Johansen
Per Jørgensen
Tine Jørgensen
Birte Kramhøft
Dan V. Kjølsten
Ole Kjær
Gunnar Larsen
Gunvor Laursen
Jan Møller
Karen Nielsen
Erik Nielsen
Helle Nielsen
Bjarne Nissen
Kaj Nørsø
Jørgen Olsen
Jørgen Ostekrüger

Lolan Ottesen
Birte Passer
Bjarne Petersen
Leif Petersen
Ley Plum
Kurt Søgaaard
Kirsten Østergaard

Andelsselskabet Eva

Gunvor Auken
Lone Dybkjær
Uffe Geertsen
Jesper Jespersen
Ejvind Larsen
Mette Melgaard
Lars Myrthu
Jørgen Birk Mortensen
Niels Jørgen Nedergaard

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