Janez Nared
David Bole *Editors*

Participatory Research and Planning in Practice

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Preface

The vision of this book is to provide evidence on how participatory planning and participatory research can bring about positive social, environmental, or economic change in the local communities. There are some other books covering the same topic, but our aspiration is to go beyond only collecting individual experiences. Our aim is to present the experiences, knowledge, and concrete practices of participatory planning and research to further the development of these fields by respecting the following four guiding principles:

- Every chapter has a clear connection with the contemporary literature on participatory research and planning debates (participatory action research, community-based research, citizen science, co-creation, etc.) with results that are usable for planning or application purposes.
- Every chapter has a strong trans-territorial dimension, meaning that a clear emphasis is placed on the methods or practical implications of participatory research and planning that are overarching across specific case study sites (mostly at transnational level).
- Every chapter debates the concrete impacts and benefits of conducting this type of research and planning for the academic and non-academic audiences and thus offers knowledge exchange between them.
- The authors debate the possible traps of conducting a participatory research and planning and additionally indicate how these fields can be improved in future to avoid the traditional (positivist) and modern (post-structural) critique of participatory planning and research.

The authors followed all of these suggestions, thus providing a scientific robustness of their contributions, yet they address practical problems and challenges well known to everyone dealing with planning and governing processes in the field. We believe that this is important, because the book incorporates real-life experiences from practitioners and researchers from various disciplines and viewing points. It contributes to the field by increasing methodological pluralism and by

adding scientific vigour, which were often criticisms of participatory-based plan-
ning and research. However, at the heart of all contributions lies the respect for the
needs of local communities where participatory planning and research activities are
practiced.

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Chapter 1
Co-production and Resilient Cities to Climate Change

Isabel Ruiz-Mallén

Abstract Through a review of the scholarly literature and policy documents that have simultaneously treated participatory governance, resilience and/or adaptive management in urban contexts, with an emphasis on current framings and application of the concept and practice of co-creation or co-production, this chapter critically explores how citizens' participation is being discursively used and applied in urban resilience and climate change adaptation planning. It also examines how power dynamics within co-production processes for climate change adaptation planning already implemented in four European cities shape resulting resilience and adaptation measures.

Keywords Climate change · Urban resilience · Co-production · Adaptation planning · European cities

1.1 Introduction

In the current context of rapid and profound social and environmental changes, including the crisis and the emergent uncertainty and risks of climate change for urban settings, sustainability debates are increasingly focusing on the relationship between democracy, development and innovation. Within these debates, the approach of "co-creation" is becoming a key concept at the European policy level since it involves participatory governance and bottom-up innovation for development. Co-creation mainly refers to the active engagement of citizens with other societal actors (i.e., public and private sectors) in sharing information, knowledge, ideas and experiences to collaboratively construct and transform sustainable settings. It is an approach to participatory action research, having its origin in co-inquiry, in which researchers are facilitators of the participatory process rather than intellectual leaders of the research (Heron and Reason 1997). By relying on such active engagement approach when designing and planning urban spaces and communities to face climate change

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challenges, it is expected to build more democratic, inclusive and resilient cities (Lemos and Morehouse 2005; Revi et al. 2014).

Interestingly, in the adaptation literature, the concept of "co-production" has become more popular than the term "co-creation" (Wamsler 2016). Both concepts refer to participatory or collaborative governance, but differ in its origins and in the nature of the actors involved. Different from co-creation that comes from business science and involves public–private partnership, co-production has its origins in the literature on urban planning, sustainability and science and technology studies. Moreover, co-production basically refers to government, researchers and community actors, although market and third sector actors might also be engaged since this approach recognizes the relevance of having a diversity of societal actors involved in the planning and decision-making process (Van Kerkhoff and Lebel 2015; Wamsler 2016, 2017; Muñoz-Erickson et al. 2017). Since the focus of this chapter is climate change adaptation planning and urban resilience, I use the term co-production from now on although some evidence and arguments presented can also be applied to co-creation processes broadly understood.

This chapter critically explores how citizens' participation is being discursively used and applied in urban resilience and planning for climate change adaptation. It also reflects on how power dynamics can shape resilience and adaptation measures in urban settings, which is critical to provide a nuanced understanding of the potential and limitations of citizens' engagement in climate change adaptation planning and management.

1.2   From Consultation to Co-production

The need for entailing participatory approaches when planning for coping and adapting to climatic changes is not anymore a new trend in research and practice in the field of climate change. Since the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) first report in the 1990s, community participation in adaptation decision-making has been highlighted as a way to ensure legitimacy and local compliance with the measures planned by policy-makers to deal with climatic stresses (Bernthal 1990). Consultation was by that time the main mechanism promoted to achieve the goal of participation in order to guarantee the representation of different interests when defining risks and/or adaptation strategies, including the interests of those more vulnerable and powerless (Watson et al. 1995). However, climate change researchers and policy-makers realized a few years later that a consultation mechanism cannot guarantee by itself that all voices are considered or even heard. As anticipated by the author of the seminal paper "A ladder of citizen participation" (Arnstein 1969, p. 216): "there is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process."

Also, people's interests and preferences are not stable, and these can shift depending on the changing social-ecological conditions (Nelson 2013), a dynamism that can be difficult to capture by using a single consultation strategy.

Conceived to address these challenges, the co-production approach has gained ground in the last years as a participatory process supporting stakeholders' engagement in climate change adaptation planning and management decision-making. This implies the recognition by climate change experts and decision-makers of the crucial role that local knowledge, expertise and preferences have for developing innovative and successful adaptation strategies and preventing from maladaptation practices (Ruiz-Mallén and Corbera 2013; IPCC 2014; Wamsler 2017). Also, it requires moving from knowledge transfer to knowledge sharing, which in turn demands participants' early engagement in a process of "negotiation of meaning" among them, that is, between the scientific experts and the local people (Roux et al. 2006).

The approach of co-production encompasses transdisciplinarity since diverse capabilities and knowledge are combined through the participation of different actors and networks in generating relevant knowledge and putting it into action (Muñoz-Erickson et al. 2017). Co-production is thus expected to entail a certain degree of citizens' power through establishing a "partnership" between laypeople and traditional decision-makers (i.e., government), enabling non-expert citizens to engage in decision-making through contributing their knowledge and capacities (Arnstein 1969). It also relates to Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) in the sense that it can support those more disempowered in being able to identify and analyze the risks they face and the opportunities they can have, to become agents of change for improving their reality. In this regard, evidence from including stakeholders' responses in climate change scenario planning through a co-production approach shows how these stakeholders become more aware of the need for long-term planning, which in turn can also potentially increase the legitimacy and acceptance of the resultant management and policy options (Oteros-Rozas et al. 2015).

In practice, co-production is understood in the climate change literature in two different but connected ways (Van Kerkhoff and Lebel 2015). On the one hand, this notion contains a normative and instrumental connotation when it is approached as an agenda of actions supporting community participation for enriching the scientific basis of decision-making in projects or programs. Therefore, it is assumed that co-production is relevant to rethink and improve the interconnectedness between science, policy and society and build effective pathways to deal with climate changes (ibid.). On the other hand, co-production is viewed as a descriptive concept when it is approached from an analytical focus that highlights and reflects on the lack of neutrality in science and policy due to the influence that social and cultural norms—at different scales and contexts—have on the production of both scientific knowledge and planning decisions (Jasanoff 2004). It also grasps the nature of power relationships and dynamics around climate change research and policy at multiple scales. Both ways of approaching this notion are complementary because the first one can lead to concrete actions to improve climate change adaptation planning and decision-making, whereas the second one provides critical analysis and reflection on how such generation of knowledge is leading to more inclusive and democratic outcomes than those achieved through conventional approaches (Van Kerkhoff and Lebel 2015). In this last regard, it is relevant to consider that pushing forward inclusive co-production processes for climate change adaptation planning entails challenges related to the

behavioral and structural conditions driving heterogeneity and social differentiation in people's access to assets. For instance, those citizens or members of a community who have more opportunities and resources to invest time in attending municipal or community meetings, or a greater ability to engage in organizations or rely on social networks than their peers, can also have more opportunities to become involved in planning and management processes and bring their ideas and claims for adaptation. This may exacerbate inequalities and reduce the capacity for adaptation of those more vulnerable and powerless actors whose voices have not been incorporated (Ruiz-Mallén et al. 2017).

In this call for more participatory and inclusive governance in adaptation planning for dealing with climatic changes, local governments and authorities are requested to be able to engage the community in public policy and decision processes (Wamsler 2017). Vulnerability and risks assessments, for example, can benefit from establishing governance structures and tools at the local level that include communities' voices, together with those of private and third sectors. Such mechanisms can facilitate a set of iterations between these actors to learn collectively about risks, think about options, evaluate them, make decisions, and critically reflect about outcomes. Resulting collective learning, as discussed in the following section, is key to support urban resilience, or "the ability of urban centers (and their populations, enterprises, and governments) and the systems on which they depend to anticipate, reduce, accommodate, or recover from the effects of a hazardous event in a timely and efficient manner" (Revi et al. 2014, p. 547).

1.3 Participatory Planning and Urban Resilience

In recent years, the literature on urban planning has paid increasing attention to the resilience thinking, previously developed in the fields of psychology and ecology, as an alternative approach for planning (Eraydin 2013). Different from other metaphors used in urban planning, such as the "beautiful city" that emphasizes aesthetics aspects and the dominance over nature, or the "garden city" that proposes green spaces isolated from other zones and relies on the separation between nature and society, the metaphor of "cities of resilience" promotes the integration between ecological and social systems through a flexible design approach shaped by the dialogue between different stakeholders (Pickett et al. 2004). Establishing links between socioeconomic processes with ecological processes within and beyond the urban system provides evidence to understand how disturbances shape people's adaptive capacity and vulnerability as well as to identify those forms of change driving adaptive cycles and transformations. The analysis framed on the resilience approach is expected to define priorities in planning that guide adaptation to both slow changes and rapid and unexpected disturbances through a collective decision-making process (Eraydin 2013).

Despite the implicit role of co-production in the construction of the metaphor of "the city of resilience," such function is often neglected when looking at how the

resilience approach is currently shaping the planning of the city. Evans (2011) argues that the implementation of the resilience metaphor in cities has mainly adopted a conservative discourse that promotes adaptation actions at both individual and collective levels, which design relies on expert knowledge and focuses in restoring the equilibrium in the urban system through technological interventions. This discourse is based on the notion of nature stability and, consequently, the implicit desire of returning the system to its original state. Such dominant approach, however, has been highly criticized from a human development point of view (Evans 2011; Jabareen 2015; Sánchez et al. 2018). Part of these critiques highlight that the prior state to the disturbance can often perpetuate inequalities between social groups. Other critiques point out that such approach only provides emergency responses to crisis and questions if this is sustainable in the long term (Sánchez et al. 2018). Further, it is argued that this mainstream discourse provides adaptation responses resulting from top-down decision-making processes and, consequently, does not include the voices of those more vulnerable and marginalized (Jabareen 2015). For instance, measures to deal with sea level rise caused by climate change can easily affect low-income residents in coastal areas who can be forced to be displaced whereas those with higher income can be able to negotiate other measures (Vale 2014). The mainstream discourse leaves aside the human causes of social-ecological disturbances from urban planning to focus on the solutions, which can contribute its depoliticization: "by constraining governance within a technocratic mode that remains inured to the tropes of scientific legitimacy" (Evans 2011, p. 232).

An alternative resilience discourse that builds upon a social-ecological perspective advocates for managing urban systems from the understanding that cities are complex and nonlinear systems, which planning for dealing with uncertainty requires both expert and local knowledge (Evans 2011; Vale 2014). It is argued that local people's experience on similar previous disturbances can be a useful cognitive asset in urban planning and when discussed and merged with expert knowledge can lead to social and environmental innovations to deal with climate change impacts (Evans 2011; Goldstein et al. 2014). Such urban planning and management scheme are expected to support a diversity of cultures and profiles and their connection to their immediate environment and to embed key knowledge and experience that can foster social learning (Bendt et al. 2013). This alternative discourse also highlights the need to question whose resilience, that is, who takes part in the decision-making process because has the power to do it, including power issues among the members of a community, and who will be the winners and losers of the resulting adaptation measures and actions (Colding 2007). The implementation of such alternative approach to the conservative discourse, however, implies challenges related to overcoming existing top-down governance structures, building enough capacity for adaptation through learning or defining what is acceptable and for whom (Sánchez et al. 2018).

Indeed, scholars are engaged in ongoing discussions about the impacts, opportunities and challenges of these different discourses of resilience when applied in urban planning and design (Goldstein et al. 2014). In the current context of unprecedented changes, however, it is not possible to deny that climate change is questioning the effectiveness and suitability of conventional approaches

to planning, including the mainstream discourse of resilience, and that alternative paradigms that can guide urban policies to a more holistic management of urban resilience are needed (Jabareen 2015).

Addressing resilience to climate change impacts for cities under the alternative discourse is thus intimately linked to the capacity of local governance to open up communicative and deliberative spaces for co-production, in which those who are more resilient and those who lack resilience can be heard, hold discussions and build new knowledge to overcome vulnerabilities (Revi et al. 2014; Vale 2014). The next section reviews a set of experiences of co-production in designing climate change adaptation strategies recently driven by European municipalities and focuses on power dynamics to reflect on the potential and limitations of citizens' engagement in knowledge co-production for adaptive management planning.

1.4   Co-production Experiences in Adaptation Planning

Some cities around Europe have already worked in the production of participatory action plans for climate change adaptation through establishing partnerships with public and private sectors, civil society organizations and/or individual citizens. Actors' involvement in climate change adaptation planning is not standardized: It can be fostered by using a variety of tools and structures and can take place at different levels and in different stages of the adaptation planning process (e.g., initial phase, risk assessment, identification of options, selection or prioritization, evaluation of the final design). Because of adopting different approaches, co-production may easily lead to differentiated types and intensities of voices' representation and outcomes. The following four case studies are interesting examples of this variety of co-production processes shaped by power dynamics in which municipalities used different strategies for engagement, deliberation and decision-making (van der Ven et al. 2016; Wamsler 2017; Grau-Satorras et al. in prep). In each case, co-production is analyzed by examining two key aspects for the governance of urban resilience: inclusivity and equity (Jabareen 2015; Frantzeskaki and Kabisch 2016): Who did participate in decision-making and planning and how was involved? What were the structures or tools for exchanging knowledge and sharing planning and decision-making responsibilities?

Wamsler (2017) compared two pioneering experiences of participatory planning for adaptation to climatic changes in Munich (Germany) and Lomma (Sweden). In both cases, motivated civil servants in the corresponding municipalities initiated the co-production process. They involved stakeholders at local government by relying on existing institutional structures supporting cooperation between the different departments and sectors within the corresponding municipal governments. Due to the academic background of these civil servants and their previous collaboration in research projects, they also invited researchers to participate at an early stage of the process in both cities, a collaboration that continued during the whole design of the adaptation strategies. Similarly, their previous collaborations in projects or programs

with other municipalities and regional administrations, private actors and civil society organizations conditioned the selection of external stakeholders to be involved in co-production. Differences between both cities in previous relationships resulted in different external actors engaged. While in Lomma neighboring municipalities were contacted and asked for providing mapping data for risk assessment from a common cooperation program, in Munich neighboring municipalities were not involved because previous collaboration with the civil servant did not exist.

Further, in both municipalities, Wamsler (2017) reported low enthusiasm to involve citizens in the process because of civil servants' negative experiences with participatory planning in the past. Despite this common challenge, important differences existed between the two cities in the way citizens' involvement in the co-production process was planned and developed. In Sweden, Lomma municipality created a joint council to discuss with vulnerable groups of citizens their needs and interests in the use of the space, whereas the German municipality, Munich, deliberately excluded citizens from the process. Unfortunately, time constraints in the Lomma adaptation plan design reduced the capacity of the council for engaging citizens and their voices influenced the plan to a lesser degree than the one initially expected. In sum, and despite the highlighted differences between the two cases, Lomma and Munich municipalities' efforts to engage those who did not use to be involved in policy-making processes were characterized as "generally low" (Wamsler 2017, p. 153). Stakeholders' involvement was shaped by existing power dynamics between the civil servants leading the process and the rest of actors. The structures for participatory management only existed at local government level, and the engagement strategies followed, although more inclusive in Lomma, missed the opportunity of targeting unknown but relevant actors for adaptation policy co-production.

Two other recent co-production experiences in adaptation planning in Utrecht (the Netherlands) and Barcelona (Spain) combined the use of face-to-face workshops and virtual tools for supporting the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making.

In Utrecht, van der Ven et al. (2016) examined the implementation of a toolbox consisting of:

- a climate adaptation app that lists over 120 structural adaptation measures and ranks them according to their potential applicability in the local context;
- an adaptation support tool based on a platform that simulates the effectiveness and costs of selected measures in the local area.

These tools were used in two workshops in which representatives of different departments of Utrecht municipality and private stakeholders identified local climate change impacts and vulnerabilities, defined potential solutions and determined priorities. Because of combining different options through participants' discussions, three alternative scenarios were envisioned and evaluated to check if they met adaptation targets and to rethink urban development plans in the area (van der Ven et al. 2016). This case clearly shows how participants' needs and views were directly translated into outcomes.

In Barcelona, in turn, the municipality conducted a co-production process for producing the climate change adaptation and mitigation plan of the city through

the implementation of five workshops and the use of an open platform called "De-cidim" (Grau-Satorras et al. in prep.). Involved stakeholders included civil servants, private companies, civil society organizations and individual citizens. These actors actively participated in the two initial workshops and collectively reflected on climate change risks and vulnerabilities in the city, proposed and discussed coping and adaptation measures and established priorities, which were uploaded to the virtual platform. Other civil society organizations and individual citizens who did not attend these workshops also uploaded their proposals to the platform, being this tool an alternative way for stakeholders to get involved in the co-production process. In parallel, civil servants launched a call addressed to potentially interested stakeholders (e.g., private companies and civil society organizations) for organizing their own workshops, but only two workshops were self-organized due to the time constraints of the overall process and the summer period. In a final workshop, civil servants guided the discussion and reflection among participants to improve the definition of the proposed measures collected through the platform, to identify overlaps and to group them together if needed. Around 90% of the agreed measures were included in the Barcelona's climate change plan, which is, as in the case of Utrecht, an indicator highlighting the inclusivity of the co-production process. The main difference between both cases is that the tools used for supporting co-production in Utrecht entailed the definition of available adaptation options in advance by the experts, so other participants (e.g., individual citizens) were not able to propose other measures that might have resulted from knowledge sharing and deliberation during workshops. Excluding users' knowledge from the design of adaptation measures could constrain the potential of the co-production process for social innovation and the development of planning strategies that can effectively deal with the complexity and dynamism of cities (Muñoz-Erickson et al. 2017).

Another key question for co-production, as highlighted by van der Ven et al. (2016), is who is being and should be engaged in the participatory planning process. Unfortunately, in the Utrecht's case the authors did not provide enough details on the type of private and local stakeholders involved in the workshops, so it is not possible to discern who was involved: Were they representatives of private companies, members of civil society organizations, lay citizens, others? In the other reviewed cases, in which the public and private sectors were represented, individual citizens' participation was reported as low (i.e., Lomma and Barcelona) or was not considered (i.e., Munich). In Barcelona, despite the plurality of means and tools offered by the municipality for supporting actors' engagement, the involvement of individual citizens was limited, particularly in the case of the face-to-face workshops. Municipality's tight agenda and the absence of an information and communication campaign addressed to the broad society might explain low citizens' participation in the Barcelona case (Grau-Satorras et al. in prep.). As in the other cases, lacking an institutional tradition of participatory governance or using non-effective methods to support knowledge exchange and institutional learning in each particular context may also explain citizens' limited involvement (Glaas et al. 2010). Further, the different individual and collective capabilities and assets citizens' have to become part of the co-production processes also influence the achievement of genuine levels of participation, such

as socioeconomic background or social cohesion facilitating the organization of a representative group in the process (Arnstein 1969).

1.5   Final Remarks

The co-production approach in climate change adaptation planning has potential for building resilient and sustainable cities, but its effective implementation seems to require an institutional transformation to overcome resistance to power redistribution and to enhance the planning process in terms of inclusivity and equity.

Besides institutional willingness for promoting such change, a profound understanding of how cities work (i.e., governance and infrastructure) and think (i.e., expert and local knowledge) is also needed to effectively guide the design and implementation of co-production approaches linking knowledge and action for climate change adaptation planning in each particular context. It is thus necessary to identify those who are usually treated more as observers than actors in policy-making processes, to question why they are excluded from decision-making and giving them a voice by opening up spaces for participation and reflexivity: "what local people know about the city, how they know and experience the city, how they envision the city" (Muñoz-Erickson et al. 2017, p. 203).

Co-production also entails the challenge of being a time-consuming process. Short-term steps and deadlines in conventional planning practices should be balanced with longer periods for collective reflection and deliberation, which in turn is challenging in terms of resources as well as because people may not be available for long-term commitment.

There is not a blueprint solution for achieving effective and inclusive engagement. Mechanisms and structures for supporting inclusivity and equity are context-dependent and, therefore, should be addressed and developed considering local capacities and power dynamics in governance and knowledge production processes. Far from being an insurmountable challenge, this entails an opportunity for strengthening the research field of urban resilience toward contributing to the understanding and rethinking of the role of knowledge co-production in urban planning for climate change adaptation and inclusive societies.

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Chapter 2
Participatory Transport Planning: The Experience of Eight European Metropolitan Regions

Janez Nared

Abstract This chapter presents experience with participatory transport planning in eight European metropolitan regions: Ljubljana, Oslo, Gothenburg, Helsinki, Budapest, Rome, Porto and Barcelona. These metropolitan regions answered the questionnaire on strengths, weaknesses and needs and an in-depth questionnaire on participatory transport planning. The results were presented at a workshop, where representatives from these eight metropolitan regions shared their experience in two workshop sessions, one dealing with the key stakeholders in participatory transport planning and the other dealing with ways to get them involved. The findings show that stakeholder involvement differs between the local and regional levels. Participants' engagement is greater at the local level, where measures are more concrete and less abstract. The participatory planning process takes longer than the traditional planning processes, but it can ease the implementation of the project/measure to the extent that it justifies the additional resources and time. It is of crucial importance to include all the relevant stakeholders, to provide an experienced facilitator and, above all, to include the results in the final plans and policies. Although there are differences in the participatory planning culture between the countries and regions involved, the use of participatory methods in transport planning is becoming increasingly important.

Keywords Participatory planning · Transportation · Mobility · Metropolitan region · Planning system

2.1 Introduction

Since the 1960s, when the importance of citizen participation in planning decisions was highlighted by Jacob (1961) and Arnstein (1969), participation and participatory planning have been slowly but persistently gaining importance. These two concepts refer to the inclusion of the affected or interested population groups in forming joint decisions, in which the ones directly affected by a specific decision have the right

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to participate in the decision-making process. As such, resident participation and participatory planning are the vehicles for resident empowerment and are important elements of local democracy (Pacione 2014). Participation is considered to be very powerful in sustainable development, public support of decisions and behavioural change among the populace (Sagaris 2018), and it is thus important strategic planning instrument (Rahman 2016).

Integrating the public into planning procedures is still largely lacking (Sagaris 2014; Nared et al. 2015; Hong 2018; Bissonnette et al. 2018). As observed in the Planning Democracy report (2012), despite the recognized advantages of participation and its inclusion in the legislation, people still feel it is not satisfactorily implemented in practice. Sagaris (2018) argues that convincing the residents about a project's usefulness without first considering and including the people's needs and expectations in the project most likely leads to failures in both the participatory process and the project or plan itself.

As determined by Pacione (2014), resident participation depends on the local context. In terms of metropolitan regions, participation can be discussed within the context of their governance, whereby not only residents, but also various territorial levels, sectors, institutions, and associations must be involved in managing and preparing plans. This results from the division of competences among various administrative units and sectors that often neglect integrative planning because of their own interests and partial plans. Thus, a common learning process and participative planning are of crucial importance for achieving better governance of metropolitan regions and must be supported by active involvement of institutional and non-institutional actors from entire functional area (Nared 2016). A need for a good and well-coordinated management of metropolitan regions is clearly shown in transport, which both reacts to settlement, economic development and the development of technology and defines an individual's inclusion in the social life (e.g. Özkazanç and Sönmez 2017). Therefore, transport must be coordinated with various sectors, such as spatial and economic planning, various territorial units (the metropolis and its surrounding municipalities) and the residents using the transport system.

According to Sagaris (2018, p. 8), the key challenge in this remains:

> … the current lack of institutional arrangements that can consolidate these kinds of more deliberative, collaborative participatory processes, and make them a permanent part of everyday transport planning. This would simplify their implementation and generate more fundamental consensuses, based on shared visions and strong alliances of diverse, interdependent actors, in the public, citizen and private spheres.

In this regard, the role of public transport users is important because they do not always decide rationally, and so sometimes completely subjective decisions predominate. Therefore, it is vital to know their motives and patterns to improve their travelling experience as well as to direct the required transport infrastructure investment (Delclòs-Alió and Miralles-Guasch 2017). Nostikasari (2015) argues that it is important to explore how experience-based knowledge contributes to more inclusive transport planning processes.

In line with the needs discussed above, this study examines the current state of participatory transport planning in the following eight European metropolitan

regions: Ljubljana (Slovenia), Oslo (Norway), Gothenburg (Sweden), Helsinki (Finland), Budapest (Hungary), Rome (Italy), Porto (Portugal) and Barcelona (Spain) and the findings of planners, experts and public administration representatives regarding public participation and the implementation of participatory planning processes.

2.2 Methods

This study is based on several years of project cooperation between eight European metropolitan regions, which, in preparing the project concept, identified participatory transport planning as an important transport and mobility challenge. Participatory transport planning was highlighted because transport and mobility strongly influence an individual's everyday life. Therefore, the participation of individuals, especially the residents of a specific city and the commuters, is key because they have a lot of experience using the transport infrastructure and public transport. This means they are the ones that provide experience-based knowledge (Nostikasari 2015) and can thus propose effective solutions. Their participation is the more important because nearly all changes on the path to more sustainable mobility demand behavioural change (Nared 2019), which is a lengthy process and can only be carried out in cooperation with the residents. The exchange of experience between the regions included was also carried out in a participatory manner.

The methodology used in this chapter is based on the following steps:

1. Analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and needs related to transport planning in individual metropolitan regions. The prepared questionnaire was completed by the representatives of the metropolitan regions, largely from offices in charge of transport planning.
2. In-depth questionnaire on perceived challenges in participatory transport planning completed by experts from each metropolitan region, either the ones in charge of transport planning within an individual region or external experts that are well-acquainted with the situation.
3. International workshop attended by the representatives of the metropolitan regions, especially from the offices in charge of transport planning, and experts that are well-acquainted with the situation in a specific region.
4. Evaluation and discussion of the findings by the project leader.

The analysis of strengths, weaknesses and needs dealt with the broader topic of transport in metropolitan regions, whereas the in-depth questionnaire included only questions related to participatory transport planning. Using the model of Bickerstaff and Walker (2002, 2005), it was divided into the following four sections:

- Open questions on participatory transport planning,
- Quantitative and qualitative assessment of an existing local/regional transport plan,

- Good/bad practice presentation,
- Current experience—institutions' knowledge of participative processes and methods.

Because both questionnaires contained open questions, the answers provided were of varying scope and quality. In addition, due to various institutional frameworks and documents examined in detail by the representatives of individual metropolitan regions, a detailed comparison between the regions was not possible. Hence, the analysis focused on the most relevant common points that could be determined from the answers obtained.

The respondents (i.e. the representatives of the metropolitan regions) were also asked to suggest any burning issues that they might want to discuss at the workshop. These issues served as guidance for defining the intersecting topics or content discussed at the workshop.

The workshop on participatory transport planning was attended by over fifty planners, experts and public transport providers from all key metropolitan regions (Fig. 2.1). It focused on the two most relevant topics that emerged from the in-depth questionnaire on participatory transport planning:

- Whom to involve,
- How to involve them.

We dedicated one workshop session to each topic. The first part of the workshop session was a short introduction that provided some of the most relevant facts,

Fig. 2.1 Workshop participants with the European commissioner Mrs. Violeta Bulc. *Photograph* Marko Zaplatil, Archive ZRC SAZU

experience and questions indicated in the in-depth questionnaire, as well as short presentations on good and bad practices that illustrate the most relevant aspects of the topic discussed.

After the introduction, the participants were divided into four groups. Thematically, two groups discussed one set of questions and another two groups the second set of questions. After 30 min, the groups changed places and discussed the other set of questions. Each group was moderated by a moderator and keeper of the minutes.

During the workshop, session and afterwards the findings were summed up and presented at a plenary session by the moderator, who led the two groups' discussion. The presentation was continued by the next moderator, who discussed the same set of questions by another two groups. The findings were jointly compared and thoroughly discussed at a plenary session, where the main conclusions were drawn. The same was done with the findings for the second set of questions.

The workshop was followed by a detailed analysis of all the findings and a comparison of these with the findings of other authors.

2.3 Results

2.3.1 Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses and Needs

The analysis highlighted the importance of participatory transport planning, something all the metropolitan regions included are aware of. However, it turned out that the Scandinavian metropolitan regions had much greater experience in actually implementing the participatory process. All three Scandinavian metropolitan regions (i.e. Oslo, Gothenburg and Helsinki) have a longer participatory planning tradition and well-established mechanisms for including key stakeholders and target groups, which is reflected in a greater awareness of residents and institutional stakeholders, greater trust in open and accessible administration, and a greater objectivity of views on unresolved challenges because anyone interested in the matter is also acquainted with the opposing viewpoints.

A pro forma definition of participatory planning in the relevant legislation is typical of the other five metropolitan regions, where participatory planning usually appears in the form of public disclosures, specific online tools for obtaining resident or user opinion and including various stakeholders as part of individual projects and prior initiatives for greater participation in planning.

Regardless of their varied experience with participatory transport planning to date, what all metropolitan regions have in common is that participatory planning still has the potential to be used much more, but the responsible institutions rarely utilize it within a greater scope than that prescribed by law. It often occurs too late in the planning process and even then, it is used more to provide information than to actually involve the relevant public. This may be the result of highly centralized decision-making, which views numerous transport and spatial planning actors as

obstacles in making decisions, or overlapping areas of responsibility, which, due to the absence of a coordinator and ineffective cooperation between various sectors, the public and private spheres and with the wider population, institutions do not resolve together, preferring to focus on areas they are more familiar with and on legally defined responsibilities. Participatory planning is also hindered by a lack of data, unfamiliarity with appropriate communication tools and often fear that the participatory process will result in criticism of the current system rather than effective planning solutions.

According to the respondents, participation should be seen as a process that provides new insights, makes the plan more robust and brings better results. This demands consistent inclusion of participatory planning at all territorial levels (from the local to the state level) and in all thematic areas, and constructive cooperation between all responsible stakeholders (sectors, public and private sector, transport providers, residents, etc.). To enhance participatory planning, it is also necessary to prepare suitable communication platforms (including ICT, social media, interactive maps), train the facilitators and raise the awareness of the participatory planning modes and methods.

2.3.2 Regional Aspects of Participatory Transport Planning (In-Depth Questionnaire)

The partners also addressed in greater detail the questions from the analysis of strengths, weaknesses and needs with an in-depth analysis of participatory transport planning in the metropolitan regions.

In the regions included, the legislative requirement for public participation was most often identified in relation to spatial planning (planning, land-use, building acts and environmental impact assessment acts), whereas the situation in transport legislation varied by region. Thus, participation in standard transport planning is still very limited (e.g. in Slovenia), whereas the situation is much better in relation to sustainable urban mobility plans because it follows the Eltis guidelines (2014).

In identifying key transport planning stakeholders, the overlapping of institutions in charge of individual spatial planning segments is evident. Responsibilities are often divided among various administrative levels (e.g. the state is in charge of state roads and railway infrastructure, the region is responsible for regional roads and the municipalities are responsible for local roads) and various agencies and offices, and as a rule, there is also great variety among transport providers. Some regions highlight the management aspect of transport and focus on the areas of responsibility of an individual body, whereas others (e.g. Rome) focus on passengers, major employers and owners of transport operators (e.g. passengers or freight users seeking low prices/costs and reliable, safe, predictable journeys, operators minimizing costs and maximizing profits, owners (i.e. shareholders) seeking maximum profits, dividends and growth, etc.).

Each set of stakeholders depends on the specific regional governance structure and the planning level or goals, whereby, for instance, national projects have different stakeholders than local projects.

A decisive role in directing the participatory process is also played by stakeholders that can shape public opinion or acquire greater influence within the process. In most regions, the predominant influence is exerted by politicians (Gothenburg, Helsinki, Rome and Porto), transport operators and sectorial leaders that use extensive knowledge to gain benefits for their company or sector (Ljubljana, Budapest and partly Oslo). Other frequently listed influential actors include the media (Gothenburg, Helsinki and Barcelona) and transport-related NGOs (Oslo, Helsinki, Budapest and Barcelona).

In Scandinavian countries, the participation of NGOs takes place via established formal consultations during public disclosures; they also often participate at conferences and workshops (Ljubljana, Oslo, Budapest, Rome and Porto). In general, the metropolitan regions included in the project communicate with NGOs through the media, web pages, e-mail or face-to-face contacts. In Barcelona, NGOs participate in the mobility council, which includes all formal and informal stakeholders related to mobility in the Barcelona metropolitan area. The mobility council meets at least twice a year and presents various ways of working (sectoral working groups, seminars, conferences, etc.). This council includes the main actors of civil society (professional associations, social and environmental associations, universities, etc.).

Six of the eight metropolitan regions have direct participatory planning experience. Considering the project topic, it is understandable that the majority of partners used the participatory process in producing mobility plans, transport plans and strategies, documents closely related to this (e.g. strategic documents at the regional level, such as urban, development or spatial plans and land-use plans) or documents addressing climate change and air quality.

A broader work group was usually established to carry out the participatory process. Alongside the partners of the institutions included in the project, it also involved external experts, who often led the participation process.

The use of individual methods was always adapted to the relevant needs. The most frequently used method was workshops, followed by public meetings, online platforms for submitting opinions and various questionnaires, work groups and meetings. Great emphasis was also placed on communication with the residents because the respondents often highlighted the use and analysis of online social networks and communicating messages through the media, websites and newsletters.

Despite experience with carrying out participatory planning, there are still many open questions, such as how to tackle this type of planning and how to ensure its credibility and validity. Among these, the following should be highlighted:

- How can the opinions of various stakeholders be captured in long-term strategic planning, taking into account the number of stakeholders included and the variety of initiatives and expectations?
- How can the predominance of specific sectors or stronger/more active stakeholders be prevented?

- How can residents' expectations be included in the plans?
- How can the interest and participation of stakeholders be maintained in lengthy planning processes, accounting for the need for frequent stakeholder participation?
- How can credibility and legitimacy be maintained in cases when the plan cannot take into account the residents' wishes because of financial, technical or any other circumstances?
- How can more vulnerable groups be involved, especially if prior knowledge is required (e.g. the use of online tools by the elderly, children and financially weaker groups)?
- How can the participatory process address unattractive, but necessary measures?

These questions were partly answered at the workshop.

2.3.3 Workshop Results

As the analyses conducted before the workshop showed, all the metropolitan regions were aware of the importance of participatory transport planning, as well as its difficulty and challenges. These are connected with the planning level (local, regional or state), activity (strategic or implementing) and the number and nature of stakeholders that need to be included in the process. Regardless of whether the stakeholders involved in the process are institutional (e.g. representatives of sectors, decision-makers and politicians) or informal (e.g. residents and NGOs), it is necessary to comprehensively examine their role and the options for their inclusion. Stakeholders have different needs and special features, which is why the methods for obtaining their opinion must be sufficiently flexible.

The availability of stakeholders depends on the time the discussions are taking place (e.g. institutional stakeholders can attend the workshops during business hours, whereas residents can usually only attend them outside their work time) and the method of collecting information (workshops are more suitable for the elderly, whereas young people prefer to communicate through online surveys and social networks). Inappropriate times and methods may result in unbalanced answers and inappropriate measures.

An additional problem can also be caused by a large number of answers and especially their diversity. This can be prevented by starting the participatory process early, in which common goals and needs are first identified and the mechanisms for seeking common points are jointly agreed. It is necessary to very clearly define the goals and limitations of the participatory process to facilitate moderated discussion and limit the stakeholders' expectations. This makes it possible to build the required trust.

Because the areas and stakeholders differ from one another, the participatory process must always be adapted to the local context. The questions must also be selected well. The information provided must be clear and understandable to all participants. The selected space, time and method of inclusion must be adapted to

various groups, but because individual groups nonetheless do not respond they need to be approached personally, in their own environment.

It makes sense to start the participatory process on the broadest possible basis, by including as many residents/stakeholders as possible. By formulating or selecting goals, the number of participants gradually shrinks to the most relevant ones. Especially with larger groups, the number is reduced to the representatives of a particular group (e.g. a society or association) and the methodology changes as well (e.g. switching to focus groups).

The participation of certain key stakeholders, such as politicians, public administration, experts and planners, is taken for granted considering their roles in the planning process. These roles differ, but as key stakeholders they have to be informed of the entire process in a timely manner, so they can plan to take part. Because their roles overlap it is often difficult to establish who directs the participatory process, and therefore, the roles of every key stakeholder must be clearly defined. A gap often occurs between the politicians' desires and expectations on the one hand and the roles and expert expectations of planners and specialists on the other. The specialists' role is to propose feasible solutions that agree with the needs and laws, and rely on professional expertise, whereas the role of the politicians is to take responsibility and select the most suitable solution. Politicians play an especially vital role when it comes to demanding and sensitive measures when in addition to making decisions they are responsible for providing suitable information to the public about the decisions adopted. In turn, with minor technical measures, their role is smaller, and their involvement is often not even required. With demanding processes, politicians must be involved the entire time, so they have all the background information they need to make the final decision.

Key actors also include the media, which are not stakeholders per se, but represent the voice of the stakeholders. They can inform people of the participatory process and occasionally even stimulate it, whereas on the other hand, they also elucidate the topics addressed by the participatory process.

Especially great attention should be dedicated to those stakeholders that can articulate their expectations very clearly and thereby overshadow other stakeholders. In addition, it is necessary on the one hand to limit the influence of stakeholders that wish to promote only their narrow interests and, on the other, to enhance the role of reserved and less qualified stakeholders, especially those from vulnerable groups, so they can also be involved in the process and express their opinion. Vulnerable groups include the disabled, unemployed, children, older people, the financially challenged, immigrants and so on. Cooperation should be adapted to their capabilities and abilities, including by selecting appropriate methods. They can be involved through their representatives and suitably informed through various media.

In carrying out the participatory process, one should be aware that it usually takes a long time and that several planning processes take place in parallel where frequent stakeholder participation is expected. Consequently, all the steps must be well-thought-out because a broad inclusion of stakeholders does not always make sense, especially because the goal is to maintain the stakeholders' interest over a longer period of time.

Even though participatory planning can be a long and expensive process, it saves a lot of time and energy during implementation. If stakeholders are not suitably involved, they may raise their voice later on, slowing down or even stopping the implementation of the adopted decisions.

This can be prevented with a well-thought-out process of including various stakeholders, which requires highly qualified specialists and good command and development of various inclusion methods. Great emphasis must also be placed on informing the public and raising its awareness. The media play an especially important role in this.

It is understandable that due to financial limitations and incompatibility, not all stakeholder proposals can be adopted. Therefore, it is vital how various information is filtered and the final decision is adopted. Certain more demanding decisions are taken by qualified experts, whereas with others, in which the public is also involved, the process must be transparent throughout and the participants must be informed in a timely manner of their roles and the influence they will have on the final decision. A neutral group of experts can help in selecting the right proposals and reliable analyses of the current state can be of great help, but in any case, the initiators must be informed of the decisions as they are adopted.

Despite good intentions, the participatory process results cannot always be realized in practice. Sometimes, the delay in applying the adopted decisions is only temporary (e.g. because of insufficient funds), but because of the participatory process taking so long the circumstances influencing the beginning and management of the process in its early stage often change as well. A delay usually requires just a little patience, whereas not observing the measures adopted demands an explanation. Communication and information must be convincing and truthful, and they must convey realistic reasons for the situation because only this way the participants in the process can maintain their trust in the participatory process providers. To avoid major complications, this must already be drawn attention to during the implementation of the participatory process, and it is vital not promise too much, which is often the case when politicians are also involved in the process.

A similar problem occurs when the participatory process involves unattractive, but necessary measures. The success of communicating such measures depends on the trust in experts and planners, as well as on how they are presented. Attention must be brought to the basic goal that will be achieved through this measure and, most importantly, consent must be obtained from key stakeholders (e.g. experts and politicians). In addition, it is necessary to plan long-term and build on a group of several interrelated measures that lead to achieving a common goal. Although true, clear and objective information is the most important, it is also possible to come out first with an even less popular measure and then reach a mutually agreed solution as originally planned. Sometimes, it is important not to give an option of accepting or rejecting the measure but to only let the public select between variants of the same unpopular measure.

However, the public attitude towards the participatory process and the consequent inclusion in it depend not only on the subject addressed but also on the territorial level. The public feels closer to concrete, local projects, in which they are familiar

with the issue at hand, whereas they respond more poorly to more abstract strategic topics and documents that involve the regional or national level. In more complex matters, the public lacks the required expertise and thus it is also not capable of contributing to proposals. Therefore, in these cases participation focuses primarily on institutional stakeholders, experts that are familiar with the issue, and highly qualified representatives of various target groups (e.g. NGOs). At a higher territorial level, the number of potential stakeholders increases, and the methods must be adapted to this (e.g. online surveys instead of workshops for residents).

Because the implementation of the participatory process in different circumstances and at different territorial levels can vary in the degree of difficulty, substantial efforts should be directed to selecting qualified facilitators and proven and adjusted methods. The facilitators must be highly qualified, familiar with the conditions, communicative and socially sensitive. They must be trustworthy and neutral individuals that can listen to various arguments, seek common points and prevent conflicts. They must have a good command of various methods, which they must adapt to an individual process or an individual stakeholder group. Despite being highly qualified, they must adapt their manner of expression to the participants, so that everyone can understand them and can present their own opinion during the participation process. This makes participation a learning process that changes the mindsets of the public, politicians, planners and experts.

2.4 Discussion

This study comprehensively dealt with participatory transport planning in eight selected European metropolitan regions. It was based on the experience of experts that completed the questionnaires and shared their experience at a workshop. The focus was on the participatory process as such rather than its comparison between individual metropolitan regions or the special features of participatory transport planning.

As expected, a stronger participation culture can be ascribed to the Scandinavian metropolises, which is most likely the result of both external factors (legal framework, political readiness, governance structure and role of planners) and internal factors (public awareness, social capital, economic conditions; Swapan 2014). This can be linked to the power relationship between decision-makers, where the degree of involvement of others depends on an individual responsible person or institution (Arnstein 1969; Cleaver 1999; Pütz 2011; Pacione 2014) and to the level of democracy in a society (Cleaver 1999; Abels 2007; Pacione 2014). In contrast to southern European countries, the policy of Scandinavian countries tends to be more consensual. They have a longer tradition of inter-party cooperation and, according to the stakeholders attending the workshop, they also have a longer tradition of carrying out participatory processes, which is a prerequisite for acquiring suitable expertise, resources and learning abilities (Sarzynski 2015).

Like in the case of spatial planning in the Alpine countries (Nared et al. 2015), this study also shows that participation is incorporated into the legislation and planning systems (Pacione 2014), but it maintains a pro forma character (Nared et al. 2015). According to Hong (2018, p. 202), this type of participation is only a formality and it is basically not utilized to obtain the residents' opinion. In addition, Sagaris (2014) argues that despite its recognized benefits for transport planning, participation remains at a ritual level.

Higher expectations in incorporating participation into planning (using the case of green infrastructure) were also voiced by Bissonnette et al. (2018), who determined that participation is often narrowed down to paid professionals and focuses less on resident participation. Like here, they established that the sectors do not connect enough with one another (silo effect) and that they only focus on one sector instead of integral planning.

As a rule, the law limits participatory planning to formal comments and public disclosures, and planners often do not wish to engage in more than that because they perceive it as extra work (Swapan 2014). The stakeholders' arguments against extensive inclusion of the public are the long duration and high cost of the participatory process, but they agree with various authors (Sayce et al. 2013; Sagaris 2014) that including residents in planning, implementation and evaluation simplifies many processes. Such participation increases the legitimacy and quality of decisions and ownership; other positive effects include more sustainable and supportable decisions that reflect community values, agency credibility and faster implementation of plans and projects (Sagaris 2014). This way participation contributes to robust projects or, according to Hong (2018), the quality of projects is more important than their speed or cost.

Despite many identified advantages of participatory planning, Chatty et al. (2003) make the important point that the transformation from an authoritarian and technocratic style of management to participatory and inclusive approaches is a demanding task, in which the planners' reservation is not the result of a lack of willingness to carry out participatory processes, but a lack of qualification and a lack of or unfamiliarity with suitable methods. On the other hand, faster development hinders even relatively little interest from the residents (Swapan 2014).

A need for faster development of and better familiarity with participatory methods is also indicated by the findings of this study, in which stakeholders primarily identified the need for the development of ICT tools. According to Hong (2018), the selection of methods is key for reaching the widest possible range of residents, whereby the methods employed must be able to capture and promote the residents' knowledge and awareness (Sagaris 2014; Swapan 2014).

Information technology opens up numerous possibilities, from setting up the necessary communication channels (Nared and Visković 2012), remote access, online GIS, 3D models and so on (Hanzl 2007).

Even though all the stakeholders in the participatory process must strive for a strong sense of community (Hong 2018), it should be noted that every stakeholder group has its own tasks and expectations, which is why they never fully advocate shared interests, but seek to reach their own goals and convince others with their argu-

ments (Pütz 2011). The stakeholders included in this study were aware of this and hence they placed a greater emphasis on an individual stakeholder group and its role in the process, clearly highlighting the role of politicians, planners, public administration and residents. These stakeholders differ in terms of financial resources, available information and expertise, which are especially problematic because planning is very demanding and includes legal, administrative, technical, and political elements. Wealthier and well-connected investors and decision-makers may obtain expert opinions and exploit the governance structures to achieve their own interests, whereas the residents are left to their own knowledge and abilities (Pacione 2014; Sarzynski 2015). Similarly, Swapan (2014) argues that involvement in the participatory process is influenced by the economic condition, awareness of the planning process, effectiveness of communication strategies taken by the planning agency, trust in planning agency, sense of urgency and status of social capital.

Therefore, in addition to the role of politicians as key decision-makers, the role of planners is especially important. Their experience, expertise and good knowledge of laws and the field itself must build a bridge between various types of stakeholders. According to Nostikasari (2015, p. 107), planners can ensure "mutual learning between the expert-based knowledge and experience-based knowledge". They should provide expert knowledge to the public administration representatives and, together with them, also enhance the participation of organizations whose expertise can help the residents. They can also approach the residents directly, using communication to imprint a sense of ownership on them and help them develop the skills to engage in autonomous participation (Hong 2018).

As already described at the beginning of this chapter, resident participation is vital especially because of their practical experience, because they recognize the needs of the local area (Hong 2018), and also because they can provide "alternative policy-oriented knowledge by not only considering rational behaviour patterns but also personal motives and reflections on key issues such as workplace or residence selection" (Delclòs-Alió and Miralles-Guasch 2017, p. 172). It is important to include all resident groups because every group has a different experience, and the exclusion of one from planning can lead to long-lasting neglect and the consequent long-term social exclusion of some residents (Nostikasari 2015). Workshop participants thus highlighted the necessity to include all vulnerable groups, either directly or through representatives. This is especially important in terms of public transport, which is often the only form of mobility among vulnerable groups and something that the level of an individual's social inclusion depends on (Nostikasari 2015; Özkazanç and Sönmez 2017).

Despite acknowledging the importance of including all stakeholders, especially residents, in contrast to Sagaris (2014), the workshop participants did not see residents in the role of planners, but more as a group whose knowledge can substantially contribute to the quality of the decisions and plans adopted.

Because of an increasing need for the participation of residents, whose time is usually limited, it is vital to approach it prudently in order not to burden residents too much and, most importantly, to present the advantages of participation to them.

According to Geoghegan et al. (2004), sometimes planners even deliberately overuse participation to make the residents inert or divert their attention from certain issues.

Sarzynski (2015) argues that the intensity of stakeholder participation is influenced by their satisfaction with the results achieved. In contrast, Hong (2018) believes that satisfaction results in more from the feeling of having influenced the decisions than reaching one's goals. The workshop participants went even a step further, establishing that trust in the planners or experts and the expectation that the results will in fact be included in the plan are crucial for resident participation and the resulting success of measures. This agrees with Swapan (2014), who argues that trust in planners is crucial for citizen participation and that a lack of it discourages residents from participating, adding that a lower degree of resident participation does not reflect the residents' ignorance, but their response to negative experience in the past.

This shows the need for well-qualified planners and facilitators that must be well-acquainted with the situation and well-versed in methods. To avoid a negative experience, planners must reflect on and prepare their interventions well before starting to work with stakeholders (Dionnet et al. 2013). Especially great emphasis should be placed on the selection of methods because the stakeholders' time is limited.

However, as indicated by the results of this study, in addition to the factors listed above, stakeholder inclusion in the participatory process depends strongly on the level at which an individual plan is being prepared. At the local level, the residents' experience-based knowledge may suffice for them to participate in the process (Bole et al. 2017), whereas with more complex plans or a higher territorial level, this is no longer the case; therefore, lower participation is understandable and tends to shift from an individual to the representatives of specific groups.

Even though the workshop with the representatives of the metropolitan regions was based on the practical experience of planners, experts and the representatives of public administration (i.e. regions) rather than scholarly discussions, the entire process yielded completely comparable findings. Moreover, individual authors focused only on specific aspects of participation and the participatory process, whereas the results achieved through participatory research provided a relatively comprehensive overview of the topics discussed in the articles. This again shows the importance of including relevant stakeholders as providers of experience-based knowledge, in which, compared to other studies, the workshop participants adopted a critical stance, even though they were actually evaluating their own work.

2.5   Conclusions

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of findings on the role of participation in transport planning in eight European metropolitan regions that were obtained through an analysis of a questionnaire on the strengths, weaknesses and needs identified in the metropolitan regions, an in-depth questionnaire on various aspects of participatory transport planning and an international workshop attended by over fifty experts, planners and public administration representatives.

It was determined that the culture of stakeholder participation in planning varies between the metropolitan regions, in which the Scandinavian metropolises stand out as the best. In general, what all the metropolitan regions have in common is that participatory planning remains an underused potential, which only rarely extends beyond the legally prescribed requirements.

Another important finding is that various types of stakeholders (politicians, planners, public administration and residents) play various roles in the participatory process and that they must know their role well, otherwise the interests of financially stronger stakeholders, who can obtain suitable expert opinions and expertise, predominate. Planners play the key role here: through their expertise and experience, they must ensure suitable participation of all groups and thus contribute to highlighting joint interests.

The inclusion of various stakeholders must be prudent, which requires highly qualified facilitators, a good command of the required methods and sufficient information and awareness raising.

At the very beginning of the process, it is vital to highlight its purpose and potential limitations and explain how the results will be included in the plans. This limits the (potentially too high) expectations of the participants and also provides some justification if the results of the participatory process cannot the fully enforced in the plan for financial or other reasons. In this case, it is necessary to honestly, truthfully and clearly present the reasons for the situation.

It is important to be aware that the involvement in the participatory process and the acceptability of the plan largely depend on the trust between the participants and the planner. This trust can be maintained by including the decisions adopted in the process into the plans, using well-thought-out participation methods, and through work that convinces participants that they can influence the decisions.

The participatory process must be tailored to the concrete conditions both in terms of the participating stakeholders, the methods used and the intensity of participation because sometimes more frequent stakeholder participation is required and sometimes none at all.

The differences in participation across various territorial levels are especially important in this regard. At the local level, the projects are usually concrete and easy to understand, resulting in high resident participation, whereas at higher territorial levels or in more complex projects, the participatory process is based primarily on highly qualified institutional stakeholders and the representatives of individual resident groups.

The key finding is that despite being time-consuming and financially demanding, the participatory process is an important planning tool, which, although it demands more energy during the preparation stage, enables easier and faster implementation because the measures are coordinated among the key stakeholders. The prerequisites for the effective implementation of participatory processes and participatory planning are suitably selected methods and highly qualified planners on the one hand, and the political will on the side of the decision-makers to actually allow stakeholders to influence decisions on the other.

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Chapter 3
Participatory Planning in a Post-socialist Urban Context: Experience from Five Cities in Central and Eastern Europe

Saša Poljak Istenič and Jani Kozina

Abstract The aim of the chapter is to assess how post-socialist cities and towns encourage the involvement of their citizens into decision-making outside electoral procedures. It presents an analysis of the structures, mechanisms, and specificities related to participatory planning in five municipalities of Central and Eastern Europe: Prague 9 (Czech Republic), Velenje (Slovenia), Székesfehérvár (Hungary), Blago-evgrad (Bulgaria), and Vaslui (Romania). It is based on the self-assessment of public administrators providing their identification and evaluation of the mechanisms as well as their subjective perception of participatory planning at the strategic and neighborhood level. The results revealed that participatory planning remains a great challenge in a post-socialist urban context. We conclude that it is important to work with both citizens and public officials if we want to enforce participatory planning as an efficient governance model.

Keywords Participatory planning · Citizen initiatives · Participatory mechanisms · Administrative qualifications · Post-socialist countries

3.1 Introduction

In 2009, the Slovenian government launched a website called "I Suggest to the Government" (predlagam.vladi.si) to open up a new communication channel between citizens and the state and among the citizens themselves. Its aim has been:

> To achieve greater participation of individuals and civil society in the forming of governmental policies and to strengthen the dialog between civil society and the state. (Vlada 2018)

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Five years later, the website had 12,891 registered users, who supported 1675 citizens' proposals, which received 1455 responses from the ministries and government services. However, only 25 proposals out of these 1455—or 1.7%—received a positive response and even fewer proposals were actually implemented (Kajtazović 2014).

The numbers illustrate the main problems with participation. First, the mechanisms that provide a possibility for citizens' engagement are neither sufficient to achieve greater participation nor address all citizens in the same way. Second, decision-makers are not necessarily motivated to accept participation as a method for better governance nor skillful enough to respond in an efficient way. Still, the political and professional public agree that the key global problems can only be solved with the active involvement of citizens or communities (Fakin Bajec and Poljak Istenič 2013). An increasing amount of time, efforts, and resources (Horizon 2020, Interreg programs, etc.) has been thus invested either into developing participatory methods and tools to achieve shared governance, into increasing the competences of public administrations to implement participatory decision-making, or into stimulating the passive, indifferent, disengaged but also marginalized citizens to communicate with the authorities and participate in public policy processes.

Democracy has been one of the crucial domains dealing with participation. The current debates took off in 1962 with the Port Huron Statement, a call (or manifesto) for participatory democracy in which individual citizens could help make decisions that affect their lives (see Hayden 2012). The central feature of participation in this line of studies is that it is political (White 1996; Legacy 2017); however, the scope of the politics cannot be confined only to the institutional politics. It has been broadened by interest groups, social movements, civil society, and activists, leading democratic theory to incorporate the analysis of their heterogeneous and multidirectional participatory practices to explore its dimensions (Carpentier 2011).

Participatory democracy has transformative potential, as it is believed that it can ensure a more egalitarian relationship between the state and society and that it can emancipate and empower citizens for dealing with political institutions, bureaucracy, work, school, family, or other spheres of their daily lives (Pateman 1970). But with a prevalence of the representative democracy, in which participation is limited to a selection of the elite through elections, participatory democracy is still believed to be in need of evolvement—a "political project" of sorts with the aim to "deepen democracy" (Fung and Wright 2001)—and has even been labeled a "political utopia" (Bherer et al. 2016, p. 228).

One of the actions toward "deeper" democracy has been participatory planning, an approach which emphasizes community involvement in the strategic and management processes of planning and makes use of its stakeholders' knowledge, resources, and commitment (McTague and Jakubowski 2013). Generally, the term participation in the planning or development domain is used to denote very diverse actions, from civil debate and communication, consultation and the delegation of activities, to partnerships, communal meetings, and political decentralization (Davidson et al. 2007). The prevailing goal is to reach a consensual decision, although allowing citizens to confront and challenge the project in question might prove as a more efficient plan-

ning strategy (Legacy 2017). Indeed, the people involved are not always allowed to be active participants; instead, they are often limited to a passive role of data providers or informants, sometimes even manipulated into taking part in order to legitimize a decision (Chouinard and Milley 2018). Participation can thus be twisted into a mere instrument for reinforcing domination and control (Gaventa 2004) and is, in its current forms, failing to neutralize and transform power relations (Purcell 2009). For participation to be more transformative, a shift is needed from a vision of inclusion that conceptualizes the participants as data sources, as "representation," to one that recognizes participants as equals in terms of power, resources, and voice (Chouinard and Milley 2018). Some even advocate participation through radical counterhegemonic mobilization, as participatory models based on consensus often silence a minority, especially less privileged groups (Purcell 2009), or a "democracy without participation" where a regime would satisfy the requirements of political equality in the absence of widespread citizens' engagement (Parvin 2018). Besides the power inequalities, participatory planning is also often criticized as insufficiently addressing institutional inertia as well as the complexity of the geographical scale, temporality, and political context (Legacy 2017).

To overcome these obstacles, the bulk of works, beginning with Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969), have discussed participatory methods, techniques, or models, explaining degrees, typologies, or approaches to this phenomenon and often outlined a toolbox for participatory planning or other actions. A study from 2012 focusing on youth outlining as many as 36 participation models (Creative Commons 2012), while a study from 2016 identified 18 new models developed after 2012, or 54 altogether (Hussey 2017), indicating an accelerated search for new mechanisms to encourage more active citizenship as well as a growing diversity of the forms of citizen participation.

However, the possibility of citizens' engagement cannot be taken as a given, even if the mechanisms are created (Gaventa 2004). To increase the use of participatory processes, it is not important to merely teach the initiators how to include people but also to inform practitioners about participatory methods and techniques (Nared et al. 2015). Some people find it easier, more beneficial, or habitual not to participate. Participation is thus often only nominal (on paper) or, at best, instrumental (not valued in itself but needed to achieve some goal, even forcedly) (White 1996). This is especially characteristic for post-socialist countries with a lack of democratic tradition (Bole et al. 2017; Poljak Istenič 2019). While it is a fact that old and young democracies both face a decline of conventional political participation (voting, contacting government officials, etc.)—and the latter also lack nonconventional (protest) political participation (demonstrations, signing of petitions, etc.)—, younger democracies (i.e., post-socialist countries) lag behind older ones with a substantially lower level of participation (in elections and other political processes including participatory planning) (Teorell et al. 2007). Besides the weak democratic consolidation in ex-socialist countries, the reason may also lie in socialization under socialism, which instilled a set of values in the population that was more concerned with social and economic equality than political freedom (Finkel et al. 2001; Neundorf 2010). The extent of weak participation or even "nonparticipation" (Greenberg 2010) is also positively

correlated with economic development, which is ordinarily lower in post-socialist countries (Hafner Fink 2012).

To assess how post-socialist cities and towns encourage the involvement of their citizens into decision-making outside electoral procedures, the chapter provides an analysis of the structures, mechanisms, and specificities related to participatory planning in five municipalities from Central and Eastern Europe: the municipal district Prague 9 (Czech Republic–CZ), the Municipality of Velenje (Slovenia–SI), the Municipality of Székesfehérvár (Hungary–HU), the Municipality of Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria–BG), and the Municipality of Vaslui (Romania–RO). It is based on the self-assessment of public administrators from selected municipalities providing their identification and evaluation of the mechanisms as well as their subjective perception of participatory planning at the strategic and neighborhood level. Having in mind the issues with participatory planning outlined above, we address the following research questions: Is participation in the selected municipalities generally a top-down or bottom-up initiative? Which mechanisms are used to allow citizen participation? Do the municipalities specifically address any marginalized groups that are generally excluded from decision-making processes? What is the experience of municipalities with any previous attempts of participatory planning? Are municipal officials sufficiently qualified to implement participation?

3.2   Research Design

The sample of the five listed municipalities was selected for their recent aspirations in improving participatory planning mechanisms through active involvement in the project *AgriGo4Cities: Urban Agriculture for Changing Cities*: *Governance Models for Better Institutional Capacities and Social Inclusion* (Danube Transnational Program, 2017–2019). In order to assess the municipalities' potentials to employ urban agriculture as a tool for citizen participation and the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, we prepared a questionnaire on the structures, mechanisms, and experience related to participatory planning. Generally, we distinguished between two levels of planning. Strategic planning is a broader category and simply encompasses designing strategic documents for an entire city/municipality (development strategies, action programs, etc.), while neighborhood planning deals with a level of planning greater than household size but smaller than that of a city/municipality (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Development 2014). The main set of questions was taken from our previous analyses of participatory planning when managing urban green spaces (*Urban Green Belts* project 2017) and transport in metropolitan regions (*Sustainable Measures for Achieving Resilient Transportation in Metropolitan Regions* project 2016).

Altogether, five questionnaires were sent to the selected municipalities in March 2017. They were filled out by the adequate public administrators and returned in May 2017. The results and conclusions were synthesized in a draft version in June 2017 and, after receiving comments and amendments from the administrators, in a

final version in July 2017 (see Kozina et al. 2017). In October 2018, the analysis was again discussed with the municipalities' representatives in order to clarify potential conflicting answers and address the missing gaps. This final checkup revealed that some municipalities have included additional tools for citizen participation at the strategic and/or neighborhood level in the course of the *AgriGo4Cities* project, so we also included these answers into our analysis.

To have a clearer contextual background and a deeper understanding of the structures, mechanisms, and experience related to participatory planning in the selected municipalities, their demographic and socio-economic characteristics were analyzed comparatively with the entire European Union (for details see Kozina et al. 2017). The data used in the analysis are part of the EUROSTAT database. Statistical data at the municipal level are rarely available in multinational statistical databases. The only exception is the change of the number of the total population between census years at the LAU 2 level. The analysis was further elaborated at the regional levels of NUTS 3 and NUTS 2 and shows the broader regional contexts of demographic and socio-economic development. Because all five municipalities are also important administrative, educational, and employment centers in their regions, we believe that the data can be informative and important for local levels as well.

3.3 The Demographic and Socio-economic Context of the Selected Municipalities

The analysis of the EUROSTAT's statistics revealed differences and similarities between the selected municipalities. In comparison to the European Union average, Prague exhibits positive demographic and socio-economic trajectories, whereas Vaslui represents its antipode. Velenje, Székesfehérvár, and Blagoevgrad reflect mixed results (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the selected municipalities in Central and Eastern Europe

Municipality	Population statistics	Educational and economic structure	Social exclusion and poverty
Prague (CZ)	Positive trends	Favorable conditions	Low risk
Velenje (SI)	Stagnating trends	Average conditions	Low risk
Székesfehérvár (HU)	Stagnating trends	Average conditions	Medium risk
Blagoevgrad (BG)	Stagnating trends	Favorable conditions	High risk
Vaslui (RO)	Stagnating to negative trends	Unfavorable conditions	High risk

Source Own elaboration based on the EUROSTAT database

The analyzed municipalities are diverse in number of inhabitants (LAU 2 level). While Prague stands out as the only large city, a capital city, and a core of the metropolitan area, the other towns are significantly smaller (Table 3.2). Velenje (sixth rank in Slovenia), Székesfehérvár (ninth rank in Hungary), and Blagoevgrad (fifteenth rank in Bulgaria) represent medium-sized towns within their national urban systems. However, they do not represent the most important regional centers but correspond more to third-tier towns. While Székesfehérvár exhibits a central location in the vicinity of Budapest, Velenje and Blagoevgrad classify into the inner periphery. Vaslui (fortieth rank in Romania) represents a small peripheral town. The total population growth shows two models of population development. Prague has had a permanent, but slow population growth in the entire period since 1961. The population growth was based mainly on positive net migration. The population in other municipalities kept growing steadily until 1991 and has remained relatively

Table 3.2 Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the selected municipalities and their wider regional settings (−below EU average, ○ EU average, + above EU average)

Municipality	Prague (CZ)[a]	Velenje (SI)	Székesfehérvár (HU)	Blagoevgrad (BG)	Vaslui (RO)
Population growth by municipalities, Census data from 1961 to 2011 (LAU 2 level)					
Number of inhabitants in 1961	1,133,000	13,000	59,000	28,000	18,000
Number of inhabitants in 1991	1,214,000	33,000	108,000	68,000	74,000
Number of inhabitants in 2011	1,233,000	33,000	101,000	70,000	70,000
Components of population growth—crude rates 2010/2015 (NUTS 3 level)					
Natural change of population	+	+	−	−	−
Net migration	+	−	○	−	−
Total population change	+	○	−	−	−
Total population aged 25–64 by educational attainment level in 2016 (NUTS 2 level)					
Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education	−	−	−	−	+
Upper secondary and post-secondary nontertiary education	+	+	+	+	+
Tertiary education	+	−	−	+	−
Population by current activity status, Population census round 2011 (NUTS 2 level)					

(continued)

Table 3.2 (continued)

Municipality	Prague (CZ)[a]	Velenje (SI)	Székesfehérvár (HU)	Blagoevgrad (BG)	Vaslui (RO)
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	−	○	○	○	+
Industry, mining, and construction	−	+	+	○	○
Services	+	−	−	○	−
Social exclusion and poverty in 2015 (NUTS 2 level)					
People at risk of poverty or social exclusion	−	−	○	+	+
Severe material deprivation rate	−	−	+	+	+
Deaths under the age of 65	○	○	−	−	−
Young people in education and employment in 2016 (NUTS 2 level)					
Young people (18–24 years) neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET)	−	−	−	−	+
Early leavers (18–24 years) from education and training	−	−	○	−	+

Source EUROSTAT; for details see Kozina et al. (2017)
[a]For illustration, Prague district 9, on which the following analysis is based, had 57,000 inhabitants in 2015

stable in the last two decades. However, most of the corresponding wider regions (NUTS 3 level) have experienced a significant drop in the population in recent years.

Educational attainment in wider regions (NUTS 2 level) shows the human capital to be the highest in Prague and Blagoevgrad, where over 40% of the middle-aged population (25–64) has completed a tertiary level of education. The reason for such a high percentage probably relates to the status of the capital city of Prague and the establishment of the American University in Bulgaria in Blagoevgrad in 1991. Velenje and Székesfehérvár exhibit a higher share of the population with secondary education, while Vaslui exceeds the EU average in the holding percentage of people with primary education.

The economic structure of the wider regions (NUTS 2 level) is closely related to their educational characteristics. The majority of the active population is employed in the service sector (>55%). However, Vaslui is an exception with a predominant

orientation in agriculture, forestry, and fishing (>40%). Velenje and Székesfehérvár also hold a strong industrial character (>35%), while Prague clearly reflects the post-industrial structural settings and orientation in services (>80%).

Social exclusion and poverty are more significant for the wider regions (NUTS 2 level) of Vaslui, Blagoevgrad, and Székesfehérvár. The situation is the direst in the Romanian region, where 46% of people live at the risk of poverty or/and social exclusion. This region is also more problematic than others from the aspect of the participation of young people in education and employment that may escalate social exclusion and poverty in the long-term.

3.4   Institutional Responses to Civil Initiatives

Despite the fact that—like in other countries burdened by past totalitarian regimes—an action is generally initiated by the municipalities, causing the decision-making process to have remained predominantly top-down, it is important to assess how the administrative personnel in charge of the communication with the citizens perceive, process, and encourage their participation in public affairs. As their aim is to gain knowledge from those who are affected by the issue being addressed and to directly involve citizens in the implementation of the measures, their stance toward more participatory approaches is generally positive. The municipality of Székesfehérvár has in certain cases already recognized the importance of grassroots initiatives, because they often promote and encourage changes, endorsed by the municipality. In Velenje, the main initiator of interventions is the municipality as well, but it was specifically mentioned that NGOs and experts dealing with landscape planning are significant actors in this process. None of the municipalities uses co-governance, in which local communities and the municipality act as equal partners. Székesfehérvár, however, regards two public gardens run by NGOs as examples of co-governance: municipality representatives search for and support grassroots local initiatives managing the gardens, while the NGOs communicate their ideas with the same local representatives at the local electorates or with the employees of the municipal administration.

When citizens do take an initiative and make a proposal to the municipality, municipal administrations have different procedures to respond to it. In Blagoevgrad, the municipality employs personal correspondence and meetings, aided by the NGOs dealing with the issue addressed by the citizens' initiative. In Székesfehérvár, the procedure depends heavily on the topic of the initiative; the respective municipal administrative unit or municipality-owned company from the field of the proposal first decides whether there is a need for their involvement or not. However, the procedure is very bureaucratic and complicated if the citizen who wants to submit a proposal does not have direct contact with an administration employee. In Vaslui, the procedure is highly formalized as well: the citizens' initiative can be brought to the attention of the city administration by a written request. The local authority analyzes the request and if it merits an objective justification, it is debated upon at the local council public meeting and voted for/against. However, the city also provides more

informal venues for citizen participation: an up-to-date website with all the relevant information on city matters, the green line (TelVerde, a free telephone service to solve issues informally and promptly), face-to-face meetings once a week with the mayor, and an e-mail address where the citizens can pose questions regarding what they are interested in. Similar communication tools are used in Prague 9, where the responses are provided via public and face-to-face meetings, open letters, bulletin boards or noticeboards, web articles, etc. In Velenje, the responses to citizens' initiatives are provided in several ways. People can communicate with the municipality through an e-mail address that involves the mayor, deputy mayor, the mayor's cabinet employees, and all department managers, who then respond to the initiator. The representatives of local communities or councilors can also be reached at the council sessions, which are livestreamed on the municipal website; the conclusions are then distributed via e-mails. Until 2018, the Urban Points mobile phone application (Urbane točke) allowed direct proposals for improvements by the citizens, which addressed predominantly local issues requiring minor (spatial or any other) interventions; in October 2018, the municipality set up its own internet portal for citizens to submit their initiatives (https://pobude.velenje.si/), which also requires the officials to provide a prompt response.

To sum up, all the municipalities have set up some venues to respond to citizens' initiatives. They do so either through online tools, other communication channels, or personal meetings, but they do not involve the citizens to the point where they could be designated as empowering participation, not to mention co-governance.

3.5 Tools for Citizen Participation in Strategic and Neighborhood Planning

Although citizen participation does not rely solely on the tools for their engagement, they are its precondition. This section thus contains a quantitative overview of the tools used by the municipalities. As already explained, we distinguish between strategic and neighborhood planning, where the first involves designing strategic documents for an entire city/municipality, while the latter applies to a smaller territory. Usually, neighborhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighborhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops, and offices to be built, have their say in what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they agree with being built. Neighborhood planning provides a set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community, where the ambition of the neighborhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Development 2014).

Based on the methodology for the local assessment and analysis of urban green spaces from the *Urban Green Belts* project (2017), the methods for citizen participation encompass stakeholder platforms (spaces of interaction among different stakeholders who share a common resource and interact to improve mutual understanding, create trust, define roles, and engage in joint action), workshops, living labs (a user-centered, open-innovation ecosystems, often operating in a territorial context—e.g., city, agglomeration, region—, integrating concurrent research and innovation processes within a public–private people partnership), face-to-face meetings, web platforms, social media, consultations and surveys, voting procedures, and awareness-raising campaigns. The municipalities were also called on to list any other tools they have used to achieve citizen participation. They pointed out round tables and public forums, while local media have been generally used to inform people about municipal affairs and to invite them to cooperate with the municipality.

All the selected municipalities except Prague 9 use at least five methods for public participation when designing their strategic documents (see Table 3.3). The nonusage of the tools in Prague 9 stems from the particular authority of Prague's districts, which are in charge only of the matters at the neighborhood (i.e., district) level, while the capital city deals with strategic matters. In Székesfehérvár, however, the methods are used only occasionally and not systematically. Workshops, face-to-face meetings, and web platforms are the most common tools (used in all four municipalities practicing strategic planning), followed by social media and consultation surveys (used in three municipalities). The most varied mix of methods is used in Blagoevgrad, where citizens have several options to get in touch with the municipality: they are involved through eight different tools, including living labs, which are not used in any of the other surveyed municipalities. These mechanisms help the municipalities to initiate a wide discussion of their strategic documents, which outline their visions and priorities, and to receive citizens' proposals on the matters. Some of them then get integrated into the strategies and plans before they are adopted by the municipal council.

The involvement of citizens in neighborhood planning is similar to their involvement at the municipal strategic level (see Table 3.3). The biggest number of involvement tools, seven, is again used in Blagoevgrad. The most commonly used tools are workshops and face-to-face meetings, carried out in all five municipalities. What should be noted is that some municipalities have exercised new ways to use these common tools for citizens' engagement. In Székesfehérvár, the municipality (e.g., the mayor and the local councilor) occasionally organizes public walks through a chosen neighborhood, to which citizens are invited to join and share their opinion (especially concerning development projects), suggest improvements or point out potential problems. The municipalities then take the citizens' ideas gathered through the mentioned tools into account and discuss them at the appropriate councils.

In comparison to the general population, marginalized groups such as the poor, unemployed, homeless, Roma communities, elderly, women, migrants, youth, and other people with special needs are involved in the planning to a lesser extent (see Table 3.4). Their inclusion in strategic planning was reported by Blagoevgrad, Velenje, Székesfehérvár, and Vaslui, while Prague 9 reported their participation solely

Table 3.3 Tools for citizen participation in strategic and neighborhood planning in the selected municipalities

Tools	Prague 9 (CZ)		Velenje (SI)		Székesfehérvár (HU)		Blagoevgrad (BG)		Vaslui (RO)	
	Strategic planning	Neighborhood planning	Strategic planning	Neighborhood planning	Strategic planning	Neighborhood planning	Strategic planning	Neighborhood planning	Strategic planning	Neighborhood planning
Stakeholder platforms		•	•		•					
Workshops		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Living labs							•	•		
Face-to-face meetings		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Web platforms			•	•	•		•	•	•	•
Social media			•	•	•		•	•		
Consultation exercises including surveys			•	•			•	•	•	•
Voting procedures							•		•	•
Awareness-raising campaigns			•	•			•	•		

Source own elaboration based on the methodology of the *Urban Green Belts* project (2017)

*The capital city of Prague, which deals with strategic matters, uses stakeholder platforms, workshops, face-to-face meetings, and consultation surveys

Table 3.4 Tools for marginalized groups' participation in strategic and neighborhood planning in the selected municipalities

Tools	Prague 9 (CZ)		Velenje (SI)		Székesfehérvár (HU)		Blagoevgrad (BG)		Vaslui (RO)	
	Strategic planning	Neighborhood planning	Strategic planning	Neighborhood planning	Strategic planning	Neighborhood planning	Strategic planning	Neighborhood planning	Strategic planning	Neighborhood planning
Stakeholder platforms		•	•				•			
Workshops		•	•	•	•		•			
Living labs							•			
Face-to-face meetings		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•
Web platforms			•	•					•	•
Social media			•	•				•		
Consultation exercises including surveys			•	•			•	•	•	•
Voting procedures							•		•	•
Awareness-raising campaigns			•	•	•		•	•	•	

Source Own elaboration based on the methodology of the *Urban Green Belts* project (2017)

at the neighborhood level (the capital city of Prague deals with strategic planning). However, marginalized groups are targeted (and defined) more specifically only in Blagoevgrad and in certain cases (e.g., youth issues) also in Velenje when applying strategic planning. In Blagoevgrad, a special workshop or living lab is organized for each group, to which its members are usually invited through written invitations put up at public places and in buildings or via social media channels. The municipalities of Blagoevgrad and Velenje also use the biggest variety of tools—seven—for including marginalized groups in strategic planning. In the other municipalities, marginalized groups are not explicitly excluded from participating, but they are also generally not entitled to special treatment and/or attention. As reported by Székesfehérvár, the municipality invites the representatives of NGOs dealing with vulnerable groups to workshops or other events along with the general public.

None of the surveyed municipalities reported a targeted approach for the involvement of marginalized groups at the neighborhood level. The most common tool for their involvement is a face-to-face meeting, which is used in all four municipalities that are applying a participatory approach at that level.

However, the priority of marginalized groups is not political participation, so municipalities make more efforts to improve their social inclusion in everyday life. When asked to specify successful examples of their endeavors, all the municipalities reported various cases of social inclusion. They have used a number of methods, but the prevailing are social help (in all five municipalities), the creation and development of social networks (in four municipalities), and formal or informal meetings (in four municipalities).

3.6 Experience with Previous Attempts of Participatory Planning

Four municipalities (except Székesfehérvár, which admits it is in the early stages of incorporating participatory approaches into planning due to the lack of democratic tradition) evaluated their experience with participatory planning. In two cases, they perceived it as positive, meaning that a municipality's aim was fulfilled, i.e., a plan improved, a strategy tested, or a project implemented. In Vaslui, it was found that participation in the development of different plans and strategies added a positive impact on the final proposals, as many inputs were submitted by the citizens. The participatory process was managed mainly by external experts, while the methodology depended on the legal requirements for each strategy or plan. Although participatory approaches are still in the initial phase of implementation, an important step has already been taken: increasing the confidence of the citizens and improving their awareness that their opinion can be an added value to the city's development. The municipality of Blagoevgrad, although admitting a lack of experience with participatory approaches on many levels, also feels that citizen participation has positively contributed to strategic documents, such as the municipal development plan

for 2014–2020. In such cases, the participation was initiated by the municipality through organizing a public forum where the documents were publicly discussed. Although such approaches have indeed rendered municipal documents or actions a better legitimation, both municipalities pointed out the value of the citizens' tacit knowledge of urban affairs when they initiated participatory planning.

However, not all the experiences have been perceived as positive nor all the practices successful. Sometimes, the process, which is supposed to facilitate an exchange of opinions and ideas, can escalate into unconstructive debates and is (ab)used for personal goals. On other occasions, it can fail to motivate citizens to take a more active role. Two such negatively perceived attempts of participatory planning were reported by Prague 9 and Velenje.

Public administrators from Prague 9 organized participatory sessions of councils or committees when they wanted to get more direct feedback from the citizens regarding specific issues. The citizens were invited "to voice their opinion," however, "no matter what the topic was, they saw [this as] a chance to be heard." On most occasions, the participatory sessions, therefore, turned out to be "only an opportunity for loud and dissatisfied citizens to communicate with the municipal representatives face-to-face," and "the debates quickly escalated into an off-topic mess." According to their explanation, the problem is rooted in the citizens' lack of knowledge about participatory planning and the Czech Republic's excessively bureaucratic system; on the other hand, they also did not seek support by external experts nor tried to acquire the proper qualifications to be able to direct a participatory process in a more constructive manner. Consequently, public administrators from Prague 9 avoided using the participatory approach in planning and have only started to explore and implement it again more systematically in 2017 in the framework of the *AgriGo4Cities* project.

Velenje reported another less successful example of participatory planning in the field of urban gardening. In 2014, the municipality initiated a setup of urban gardens between the apartment buildings in one of its neighborhoods. They carried out several workshops with residents who responded very positively and were eager to cooperate in the whole process. The municipality even engaged two local landscape architects to assist with their expert knowledge. Unfortunately, the idea stalled just before the pilot action was implemented, i.e., setting up new urban gardens, because the citizens lost interest in having a garden plot, mostly due to its time-consuming management. Despite the action fizzling out in the end, the municipality still evaluates the participatory experience as positive. This experience is in line with admonitions that participatory planning is not a universal solution for all local issues. It does not necessarily render fruitful outcomes, so decision-makers shall judge in which contexts to use it (Hickey and Mohan 2004; Hodgson 2005; Kelty 2017).

3.7 Qualification of Public Administrators to Facilitate Participatory Planning

When citizens contact the municipality to convey an initiative, the municipal administrations make an effort to respond, although in some cases, only if the proposal is evaluated as objectively justified. E-mails and telephone calls, noticeboards, local and social media, online applications, and open office hours of certain departments or public services serve as the main channels to respond. Some procedures are quite formalized, while some municipalities also communicate in a more informal manner. However, qualification training courses for the municipal administration to successfully implement participatory planning have so far been organized only in one surveyed municipality. In Blagoevgrad, the Institute for public administration offers training for state and municipal public officials twice a year. Education is organized into two programs. The first deals with public policies, where participants can learn about the development and application of public policies, acquire skills for joint monitoring and evaluation with NGOs, and learn how to organize public consultations and how to work with stakeholders. The second provides courses on regional and local governing with a focus on strategies and policies for local development and the monitoring of the implementation of local legislative acts. The Blagoevgrad municipal officers have had to successfully pass these courses in order to employ participatory planning in their municipality.

No programs, initiatives, or actions for training the staff or citizens on participatory planning were in progress in other municipalities at the time of the survey, leaving administrative staff having to learn from experience when they are called to instigate a participatory planning process. Furthermore, municipalities rarely employ external experts who would direct participatory actions and contribute to its efficiency and success. Two surveyed municipalities (Vaslui and Velenje) sought help from experts when implementing a participatory planning approach, but it was only done on one occasion in Velenje (when setting up gardens between apartment buildings, see above). In Vaslui, the experts were involved in determining the target group and relevant actors as well as for organizing the workshops. Furthermore, the municipality now implements integrated quality and performance management systems to optimize decision-making and developing the skills of its staff.

It is thus important to work on both sides of the participatory equation not only to increase the capacity of citizens to participate but also for public officials to properly conduct the process. As assessed by Gaventa (2004, p. 27):

> The way forward is found in a focus on both a more active and engaged civil society which can express demands of the citizenry, and a more responsive and effective state which can deliver needed public services.

3.8   Conclusions

Participatory governance mechanisms have been widely promoted in the EU (Commission of the European Communities 2001), especially in countries with previously highly centralized (more or less) totalitarian regimes and absent democratic traditions (Petrova 2011). Their introduction is believed not only to motivate active citizenship (also of the marginalized groups, which are generally the most passive in this regard) but also to bring about several public policy benefits, such as increased accountability, higher government responsiveness, and better public services (Speer 2012). However, making participatory governance mechanisms (or arrangements) work has proven to be a great challenge, as was revealed in the survey of five municipalities in Central and Eastern Europe: Municipal district Prague 9 (CZ), Velenje (SI), Székesfehérvár (HU), Blagoevgrad (BG), and Vaslui (RO).

Although the municipalities have different demographic and socio-economic characteristics (size, population, education, economy), the survey revealed that these did not affect participatory planning trajectories, such as the initiation of decision-making, participatory methods, experience with participatory planning, and the capacities of public officials to exercise it. Despite the fact that unconventional (bottom-up) political participation (perhaps with the exception of public demonstrations) in post-socialist countries is not as established and popular as in the countries with strong democratic traditions (Hafner Fink 2012), the absence of the correlations between participatory planning and the mentioned characteristics indicates that certain breakthroughs are possible at the local level. However, the decision-making process, as a rule, remains top-down. An action is generally initiated by municipalities with the aim to gain knowledge from those who are affected by the issue or to directly involve them in the implementation of the measures. However, civil society has already been recognized as an important collocutor in municipal planning and municipalities take notice of successful grassroots practices embodying decisions or affairs endorsed by political actors. Despite that positive turn, the question remains on what processes can truly be characterized as participatory governance.

Adopting different tools to allow citizen participation is generally the first (technical) step for their involvement in public policy processes. The methods used in the studied cities are multiple and diverse—although with great potential to increase and diversify—, thus addressing different population groups. The municipalities use at least five tools for strategic planning (except for Prague 9, which transfers strategic planning to the capital city of Prague) and two for planning at the neighborhood level, although not necessarily systematically. Different workshops and face-to-face meetings are the most common participatory methods used in all the surveyed municipalities on both levels. However, the merely occasional use of mechanisms employed in certain cities indicates relatively early stages of participatory governance. A greater number and variety would be the first step to improve the possibility for citizens to participate and to a certain extent limit social exclusion from procedures. However, as shown by some studies in nonwestern countries, mechanisms alone cannot ensure citizen participation (White 1996). The possibility of their engagement can-

not be taken as a given despite the established tools. Future research shall, therefore, focus less on the methods and more on the question of how municipalities engage to increase their citizens' agency to participate but also when (and if at all) to use the participatory approach for decision-making.

In theory, participatory governance better addresses marginalized groups than representative democracy (McTague and Jakubowski 2013). However, when analyzing the involvement of marginalized groups in decision-making processes in post-socialist urban settings, the picture is not optimistic. Marginalized groups are not explicitly excluded from participating, but they are ordinarily also not entitled to any special treatment, which they generally need to properly respond and cooperate. This results in fewer municipalities actually including marginalized groups in planning and the attempts have been more or less unsystematic. Their inclusion was reported by four municipalities at the strategic (all except Prague 9) and four at the neighborhood level (all but Székesfehérvár), but the targeted approach, which would be crucial for their involvement, was not implemented in any of them at the neighborhood level. However, it was reported by two municipalities (Blagoevgrad and Velenje) when exercising strategic planning, although the latter has only used it once so far, for preparing a strategy on the youth. The most common tool for the involvement of marginalized groups on both levels is a face-to-face meeting. On the other hand, all the municipalities reported a positive experience with social inclusion in everyday life and developed several methods to address marginalized groups. These can increase their motivation for political participation in the long run, as a better (and stable) socio-economic position allows people "to prioritize post-materialist values over materialist values" (Hafner Fink 2012, p. 561). With the help of NGOs specialized for social work with a certain population, it would be possible to introduce certain approaches to municipal governance as well. Despite the critique (mostly from anthropologists; Riley 2009) that NGOs—instead of municipalities themselves—serve as the purveyors of the participatory approach, they usually ensure more fruitful and sustainable results in cases when the civil society is not well developed, as is often the case in post-socialist countries (Poljak Istenič 2018, 2019).

Although one surveyed municipality (Székesfehérvár) refrained from the evaluation of participatory attempts, as the officials did not think they had the proper experience with such an approach, participatory techniques are generally evaluated as beneficial. Participation in the development of different plans and strategies reportedly adds a positive impact to the final proposals, as they are more attuned with the citizens' observations and needs. The biggest long-term achievements of participatory governance are probably the citizens' increased confidence in their knowledge, a stronger awareness that their opinion counts, and better trust in the authorities.

The results reveal that participatory governance in post-socialist countries (at least the ones surveyed) is still developing and its effective implementation will likely be challenging. However, the problem is not only untrained personnel in public administrations who have difficulty adapting to changed governance models (which is the case in all the municipalities except in Blagoevgrad), but also the citizens who are not used to participate in spatial planning and other governance activities and are not even motivated to participate in traditional forms of political engagement, such

as elections. It is thus important to work with both citizens and public officials if we want to enforce participatory planning as an efficient governance model. As assessed by Johanna Speer (2012), this also requires increasing the density of civil society and motivating central governments to actively support participatory governance. Instead of the tools for citizen participation, future studies shall therefore focus more on how the municipalities define participatory planning (or governance in general), how they increase the capacities of their staff as well as their citizens (or civil society) for participatory democratic engagement, how they can direct participatory planning, in which occasions they shall use it, and how to actually measure its success: by the number of citizens and/or marginalized groups involved, by the implementation of the planned action, or simply by gaining legitimacy for the municipal measures?

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Chapter 4
Governance and Management Systems in Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Biosphere Reserves

Loredana T. Alfarè, Engelbert Ruoss and Amina Boumaour

Abstract Recent studies in UNESCO World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves (BRs) identified gaps regarding the effectiveness of planning, governance, and management. The objective of a study carried out is to develop innovative approaches of evidence-based governance in UNESCO-designated marine protected areas in the Mediterranean Basin. Three different types of Biosphere Reserves have been selected for the present chapter: the Tuscan Islands Archipelago in Italy; the Terres de l'Ebre Delta in Spain; and the marine and coastal area of Gouraya in Algeria. Current and future evidence in the BRs differ and require actions related to the local realities and challenges. The Terres de l'Ebre BR is step by step implementing the new strategies and processes. The Tuscan Island BR has already prepared the frameworks and participatory instruments which await implementation. The Gouraya BR through the National Park established conservation and development functions, but for its realization it still seeks an increase of awareness and commitments of the authorities as well as management tools and funds. The "evidence-based governance and management system" is considered an integrated approach adequately involving the three dimensions top-down, bottom-up, and outside-in. It is an instrument to improve effectiveness of management and to involve the local communities and stakeholders in the decision processes in Biosphere Reserves.

Keywords Biosphere Reserves · Marine and coastal protected areas · Governance · Management · Planning · Participation · Evidence-based GMS · UNESCO/MaB roadmap

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4.1 Introduction

Protected area governance systems, whether state-run, private, or mixed, are dealing with "public goods" targeted to balance conservation and socioeconomic development. The governance models still show their roots in the traditional top-down approaches with governance and management systems (GMS) focused on coordination of conservation tasks without implementing integrated evidence-based approaches with inclusive participation and decision processes (Ruoss and Alfarè 2018, p. 263). The legal foundations or GMS is often insufficiently established and inefficient, and the political decision processes are lengthy and often delayed and do not respond to the increasing pressure (Eklund and Cabeza 2017). The main challenge of protected areas (PAs) today is to elaborate and share strategies improving efficiency and quality of governance, involving all relevant levels, public and stakeholders. Mobilizing the area's potential stimulates the local economy, knowledge development, and community interaction and achieves added value through generating innovation and contribute to smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth (Stoll-Kleemann et al. 2010; Ruoss 2013).

Recent studies (Ruoss 2017; Ruoss and Alfarè 2018) in UNESCO protected areas (PAs), World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves (BR), mainly in Europe identified gaps regarding the effectiveness of planning, governance, and management systems. In the EU Interreg project CHERPLAN (2011–2014), the planning and participation processes in heritage sites in South-Eastern Europe and the Alpine Space were studied, and solutions to overcome the gaps elaborated (ZRC SAZU 2014). To improve the balance between conservation and local development, recommendations have been elaborated, regarding the clarification of the strategic orientation, the holistic planning processes, the establishment of tools to measure the development, the involvement of local people and stakeholders in decision-making processes, and the fair sharing of benefits among all involved persons and institutions (Ruoss and Alfarè 2013).

The objective of the follow-up study is to develop innovative approaches of evidence-based governance in UNESCO-designated marine protected areas (MPAs). The study focuses on 20 Biosphere Reserves and 5 World Heritage sites, located within the Mediterranean Basin. This choice stems from the need to compare UNESCO protected areas that primarily concern natural and mixed sites and therefore have similar GMS systems. The selected sites are facing important challenges from the political point of view, especially those in North Africa. All of them are confronted with problems connected to climate change, pollution and marine litter, invasive alien species, financial constraints, pressure from tourism, and stakeholder involvement.

Multilateral environmental agreements (MEA) are agreements between states on specific environmental issues, and its implementation is delegated to the member states. UNESCO-designated sites follow such international frameworks and represent multilevel governance systems, from multilateral conventions and programs to

local realities. In addition, they are requested to establish management systems and plans, which are suitable pre-conditions to introduce and test new approaches.

The investigations in the MPAs are aimed at understanding the governance and management systems, as well as identifying prospects to improve or transform them. The scope of this analysis is to assess similarities and differences as well as participatory processes in the GMS encountered in three case studies with different geographic areas, dimension, and diverse levels of local public and stakeholders' involvement in planning, decision making, and implementation. The results of the study should give new inputs to existing GMS and its state of implementation and in addition, indicate opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the systems facing new challenges and strategic frameworks.

4.1.1 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves

The "Man and the Biosphere" Program—MaB—is an intergovernmental scientific program, launched by UNESCO in 1970 and endorsed by its Member States in 1972. Its core mission is to balance the responsibility to protect nature and conserve biodiversity with the human need to use natural resources for enhancing social and economic well-being of peoples. The BRs are considered as "priority sites or observatories for biodiversity conservation as well as ecosystems and climate change research, monitoring, education, mitigation and adaptation" (UNESCO/MaB 2017, p. 53). The authority and accountability are assigned to the Member States, who implement the national legislation and eventually delegate the implementation at the regional and local levels. Therefore, traditional governance systems of the Biosphere Reserves as defined in the initial intergovernmental program were top-down GMS mainly connected to the national conservation legislation laid. The different governance levels share the responsibilities and provide funding and human resources for an effective conservation or protection of the PAs (Stoll-Kleemann et al. 2010).

With the New Roadmap for the MaB Program and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves, comprising the MaB Strategy (2015–2025), Lima Action Plan (2016–2025) and the Lima Declaration, a new dimension to the status of designated sites has been introduced (UNESCO/MaB 2017). The Lima Declaration asks the Member States to:

> … develop and strengthen models of sustainable development; to communicate the experiences and lessons learned, facilitating the global diffusion and application of these models; to support evaluation and high-quality management, strategies and policies for sustainable development and planning, as well as accountable and resilient institutions ….

Accordingly, the Member States should establish effective governance and management structures and processes to the sustainable development functions. The Lima Action Plan explicitly aims at establishing "alliances at local, regional, international levels for biodiversity conservation and benefits to local people, taking into consideration the rights of indigenous people" (UNESCO/MaB 2017, p. 35, 52). Hence, the

new MaB Strategy points to a changed paradigm of natural and cultural resources as substantial drivers of sustainable local development, creating added values and benefits for local people (Ruoss and Alfarè 2018).

4.1.2 Participation in Evidence-Based Governance and Management Systems of Protected Areas

In many countries, the delegation of authority and accountability to lower governance levels is progressing. More and more regional and municipal government bodies are in charge of site governance and management (Ruoss 2013, 2016). In some cases, the state government retains ownership and/or control and oversight of protected areas, but delegates the daily management tasks to a local governmental level or to a non-governmental organization, private operator, or community. State-governed sites often lack the legal obligation to inform or consult stakeholders or to involve them in decision making prior to establish PAs, meanwhile local bodies automatically consider bottom-up approaches in their decision and implementation processes.

A basic distinction among governance types can be based on who holds authority, responsibility, and accountability for key relevant decisions regarding a protected area. Accordingly, four main protected areas governance "types" were identified: government, shared or private governance, and local community governance (Jentoft et al. 2007; Borrini-Feyerabend 2013).

The evidence-based governance relates to local realities such as natural and cultural resources as well as local communities. Territories rich in diversity are characterized by varied social, economic, and physical features, and issues like ecological fragility, economic development challenges, and exposure to natural hazards are rarely reflected in mainstream datasets. PA policies need to build adaptive capacities by responding to local and regional specificities and by encouraging a diversity of strategies (Gløersen et al. 2016). An evidence-based and holistic governance depends on processes of deliberative democracy or deliberative decision making (Bessette 1980). Deliberative approaches adopt consensus decision making as well as majority regulations and therefore represent both representative and direct democracy.

The New Roadmap for the MaB Program asks for a holistic GMS approach based on the territorial evidences. The BRs should be "characterized by a wider and more active role of local communities in developing and deciding actions" at local level establishing new partnerships between scientists and decisionmakers, interlinking national and local governance, public and private sector actors, decision-making institutions, as well as citizens, in particular indigenous people (UNESCO/MaB 2017, p. 53). Also for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the participatory decision-making and planning processes are key to the success of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) management. "Local people must be deeply involved from the earliest possible stage in any MPA that is to succeed. This involvement

should extend to them receiving clearly identifiable benefits from the MPA" (Kelleher 1999, p. xiii).

4.1.3 Governance of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas

The term marine protected area (MPA) applies to many types of marine parks and reserves including the coastal area with different levels of protection and a wide range of activities allowed or prohibited within their boundaries. Marine Protected Areas include a supplementary level of complexity and are therefore challenging regarding the establishment of effective governance and management systems. According to the European Commission, coastal areas face increasing impacts from human activities (e.g., shipping, transport, energy production, trade, fishing, port activities, tourism). When the carrying capacity is exceeding, due to the development of the coastal zone, marine and coastal ecosystems, this creates instability. Human activities are creating a decline of fish stocks; reduced water quality due to exceeding supply or insufficient waste water treatment capacity; sediment contamination from inland or marine pollution; and harming of coastal ecosystems especially coastal wetlands.

> Coastal regions are also increasingly vulnerable to impacts of climate change, such as coastal flooding from rising sea levels; coastal erosion; water scarcity and droughts; saltwater infiltration of aquifers; habitat destruction; or loss of biodiversity. These negative environmental impacts usually lead to threats to key economic activities such as sustainable energy, tourism and trade, and social issues, including unemployment and social instability, loss of development, destruction of heritage and competition for resources. (EC 2012, p. 3)

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982) is widely recognized as the overarching framework for marine governance. In most countries, coastal waters and their resources are considered "commons," which means not owned by any person or agency but are common property available equally to all citizens, with the government as "trustee." A primary aim of coastal conservation is to provide for sustainable use of the resources of the commons, a responsibility that should be shared by all people and all levels of government. As "trustee," the government is empowered to make rules for the commons that all must obey for the public good (Salm et al. 2000, p. 4).

The main differences of MPAs versus terrestrial PAs are the multi-dimensionality and connectivity, the "open systems, the currents and tides, the uncertainty and the higher complexity, as well as different property rights, enforcement and management" (Korting 2015). The Governance and Management Systems (GMS) of MPAs need therefore special attention since the "commons" are public goods with a high degree of delegation of authority and accountability to national governments and open for use to high numbers of stakeholders and people. Furthermore, the multiple interactions between the marine and the terrestrial part of the PAs request special attention regarding negative impacts and the need of targeted research and assessment of changes.

4.1.4   Maritime Spatial Planning

Ecosystem-based approaches within the frameworks of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) ensure a sustainable use of the resources:

> MSP is a key tool in articulating policies that balance conflicting sector-based interests competing over the use of sea-space, a competition that is likely to intensify in the future. Examples include the conflicts between traditional users (shipping, oil exploration, and fishing) and emerging activities (tourism and recreational, aquaculture, or offshore renewable energy), and between both types of users and marine protection, specifically in MPAs. (Blue World Institute 2018)

MSP provides a process for a strategic and integrated plan-based approach to marine management that makes it possible to look at the "bigger picture" and to identify and manage current and potential conflicting uses, as well as the cumulative effects of human activities. It provides contextual information for the planning and management of MPAs. Processes become more transparent, and it provides greater certainty in planning and allocation processes for both developers and environmental managers (IUCN WCPA 2018). UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and the Man and the Biosphere Program (MaB) have been working on moving MSP beyond the conceptual level. Several projects have been carried out applying MSP worldwide. In the Mediterranean area, the project ADRIPLAN focused on the Adriatic–Ionian Macroregion, zooming into two focus areas, one in the Northern Adriatic Sea and the other in Southern Adriatic (Adriplan 2015).

4.1.5   Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean Basin

The Mediterranean protected area Network (MedPAN 2018) listed 1231 MPAs and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean covering 179,798 km^2, which places a surface of 7.14% under a legal designation. For most sites, little is known about the management measures in place, and if they are effective at maintaining or restoring the biodiversity, they aim to protect (Ameer et al. 2008, p. 156). In the National Parks located in the Mediterranean Basin, four different governance types with different level of involvement of local people and actors have been described (Amine 2010):

- Centralized management by the state: Albania, Cyprus, and Morocco.
- Centralized management by the state with consultation of local actors and population: Algeria, Jordan, Montenegro, Turkey, and Tunisia.
- Management with participation of local actors in decision making: Croatia and Greece.
- Management with participation of local actors and consultation with local population: Spain, Italy, France, and Slovenia.

4.2 Methods

The study carried out on 25 UNESCO designated MPAs has examined legislative and administrative documents at national/local level, management plans, projects, studies, scientific papers, Internet and gray literature. For each PA selected, a general description of the area (location, size, year of establishment, legal foundations, funding, zoning, governance and management systems, involved bodies, etc.) has been taken from existing sources. Regarding strategic governance and management issues, the updated data were missing (e.g., current number of staff, current budget, decision processes, updated strategies, and management plans). In 2018, missing information has been obtained through 13 interviews conducted by phone or e-mail with representatives of the PAs. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner based on a trace aimed at investigating the actual management systems, the tools employed for engaging stakeholders, and the challenges faced by the BRs. The interviews were based on a standard question list so to allow a comparison between the different interviewers. For the present chapter, three different types of BRs have been selected: an archipelago "Tuscan Islands Biosphere Reserve" in Italy; a delta, the "Terres de l'Ebre Biosphere Reserve" in Spain, and a site with substantial marine and coastal zones "Gouraya Biosphere Reserve" in Algeria. The study sites permit a comparison of different legal foundations, governance systems, management of the sites, participatory processes as well as local realities.

4.3 Results

A preliminary analysis of all the 20 investigated BRs shows that the major part of the Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves overlap with other PA categories and have adopted the existing GMS of the respective National or Regional Parks. In the recent years, all Mediterranean countries with Biosphere Reserves have elaborated National Biodiversity Strategies and Sustainable Development Strategies. They are not yet implemented at PA level, and most sites still lack strategies, adapted management plans and funding to fulfill their supplementary tasks. It will take some time to translate them into concrete actions and adapt them to the Biosphere Reserve standards. The new strategies will help to further reduce impacts on cultural and natural heritage and fostering local development.

Different PA categories are frequently overlapping in such a way that the BRs are managed by National or Regional Park authorities and are based on PA management plans. Spain is the only Mediterranean country that through the Law 42/2007 on natural heritage and biodiversity integrates norms regarding protected areas established in international contexts such as UNESCO BRs (Spain 2007). The Italian Biosphere Reserves have no specific legal status, some of them partially or completely overlap protected areas recognized by national or regional laws. This corresponds to the Algerian BRs, which have a legal status as National Park. In this way, the develop-

ment functions are still not or only partially introduced, and the GMS is following legislation for National and Regional Parks.

4.3.1 Tuscan Islands Biosphere Reserve

The boundaries of the Tuscan Islands Biosphere Reserve, defined in 2003 and extended in 2015, follow mostly those of the Tuscan Archipelago National Park established in 1996, with 79,160 ha the largest marine park in Europe (Fig. 4.1). The protection of its core areas is guaranteed by the National Park. The BR covers an area of 1,079,540 ha, composed of seven main islands, and is characterized by its high natural value, as well as by an intensive tourism activity, the most significant economic sector. The small dimensions of the various marine and terrestrial ecosystems also make the area extremely sensitive to climatic variations in the Mediterranean Basin. Therefore, it is an ideal place to observe and monitor the vulnerability in the face of climatic forcing (PNAT 2015).

The Tuscan Archipelago belongs administratively to the provinces of Livorno and Grosseto with a population of about 34,000 inhabitants, climbing up to 200,000 during summer. The recent increase of tourism has generated enormous pressure on the natural environment, for instance, on the Elba Island where there are 20,000 permanent residents which increases up to 200,000 people on a typical summer day (Casier 2011).

The main future challenges to be faced in the protected areas are related to climate change, especially sea level rise, sustainable tourism, fires and invasive alien species (IAS).

The Italian "Framework Law on Protected Natural Areas" no. 394/1991 (Italy 1991) outlines the fundamental principles for the establishment and management of protected areas regarding their mission, classification, and governance. It also defines the legislation for national and regional protected natural areas. The Law 426/1998 (Italy 1998) establishes the public-law personality of the park authority, legal and administrative offices in the territory and is subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Environment and Protection of the Land and Sea (MATTM). With regard to Regional Parks, the Law 394/1991 establishes fundamental principles through framework rules for the regions, attributing to local authorities' relevant roles and functions, such as the participation of Provinces, Mountain Communities, and Municipalities to the procedures for the establishment of protected areas.

The park bodies are: the President, the Governing Council, the Executive Committee, the Board of Auditors, and the Park Community. The President is the legal representative of the entity for five years and is appointed by decree by the Minister in charge of environment, in agreement with the President of the Tuscany region. The Governing Council and its President decide on all general matters and the budget. Its Executive Committee makes proposals to the Governing Council. The Director is responsible for the management of the park and consequently for the BR. The
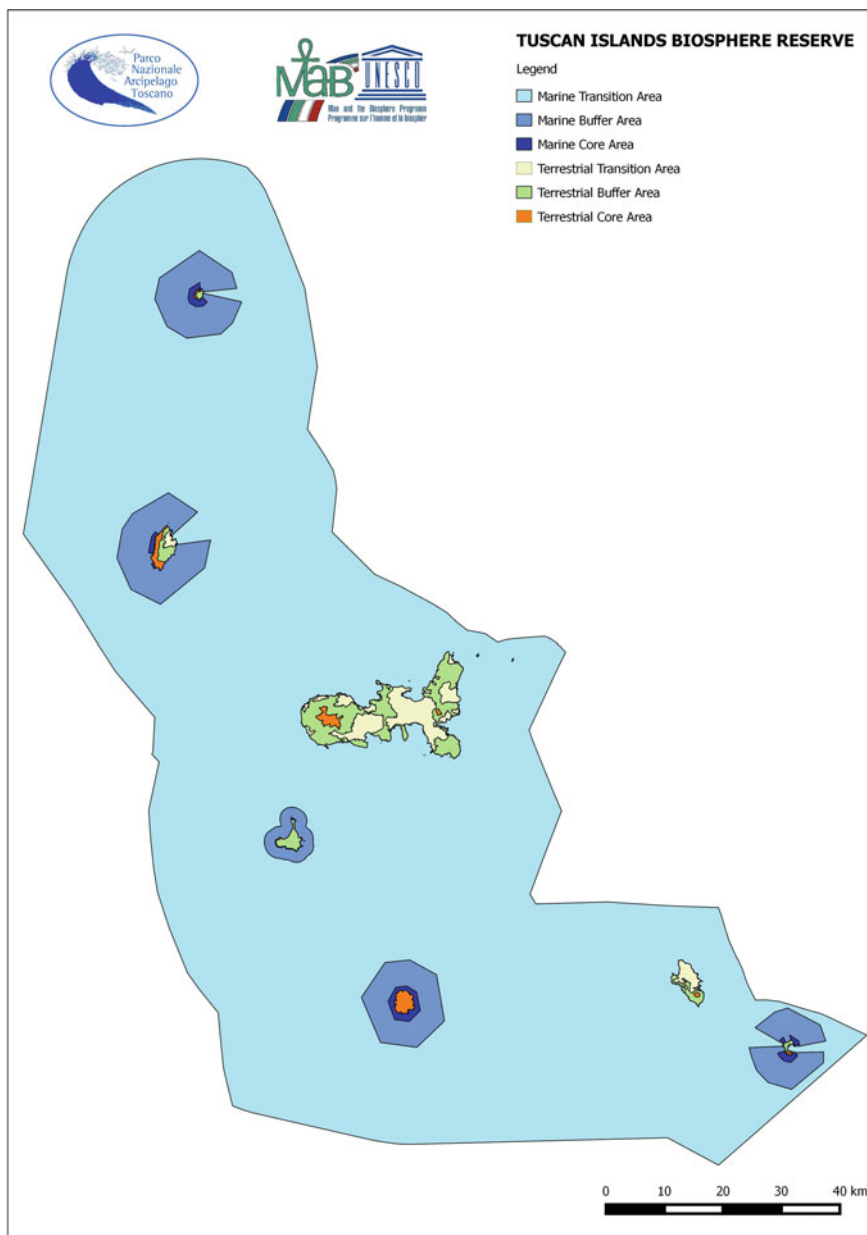
Fig. 4.1 Zonation of the marine and terrestrial zones of the Tuscan Islands Biosphere Reserve (*Source* PNAT 2015)

Board of Auditors has the task to control the administrative and accounting of the institution.

The Park Community is an advisory body constituting the interface with the local communities and includes the President of the Tuscan region, the chairmen of the provinces of Livorno and Grosseto and the mayors of the 11 municipalities of the park. It articulates its opinion on the fundamental acts of the park plan, the regulations, and the budgets. The participation process is required by the mentioned Framework Law and is ensured by the Park Community, but there are no legal provisions for direct citizen involvement because the members of the Park Community are representatives of the local bodies and not citizens. A study of the Italian legal framework shows that it is very specific and rigid regarding who can legally participate (Buono et al. 2012).

The park plan was issued in 2009 with a long process of analysis and comparison, and enhancing the involvement of local communities. The final documentation was sent to the authorities with environmental competences and made available for 80 days for public consultation. According to the "Plan of Performance," issued every three years, the participation process has been accelerated in the last years through meetings with the representatives of various economic sectors. Operational inputs have been received also from educational institutions, volunteers, public and private institutions. According to the Sustainability Report of the Park (PNAT 2017), protocols have been endorsed with several institutions for the implementation of the planning strategies. The involvement of local actors in evaluating the effects produced by the park's activities, the engagement of municipal, provincial, and regional councils with the necessary elements of knowledge to set up and verify the policies of protection and development of the territory and a structured dialogue with economic operators for co-design of itineraries and tourist packages are examples of the participatory process applied by the park. Thanks to the participation to EU projects (e.g., Life Montecristo, Resto con Life, Life ASAP) a real involvement of citizens has been promoted through workshops and working groups.

The BR budget is part of the park budget, which is financed mainly by the MATTM. In 2015, the park budget was 4.9 million Euros (state 94%, region and other public bodies 0.19%, own revenue 4.6%, and other funds 1.2%) (PNAT 2017).

A management plan for the BR was elaborated in 2015, but it has not yet been approved. According to this document, the GMS will include: (i) Coordinator (President of the park), (ii) Management Committee composed by representatives of research institutions, associations, and other authorities; (iii) MaB Office composed by personnel of the park and professionals, organizing the MaB participatory workshops aimed at enhancing the participation of local communities in the BR management; (iv) Permanent Consultative Assembly composed by the President of the Park, the representatives of the 11 municipalities, the State Forestry Corps and Port authorities which has to ensure the participation and involvement of local authorities, and approve and monitor the effectiveness of the program management.

4.3.2   Terres de l'Ebre Biosphere Reserve

The Terres de l'Ebre Biosphere Reserve (RdBTE) endorsed in 2013 covers an area of 367,729 ha and has a population of 182,521 inhabitants, distributed in 45 municipalities. The BR is located in North-Eastern Spain and encompasses the three counties (comarques)—Baix Ebre, Montsià, and Terra Alta. The RdBTE includes a wide range of ecosystems with outstanding biodiversity. Its landscapes are heterogeneous, due to the geomorphology and human activities. The evolution of the Delta del Ebro is an exceptional example of the ongoing natural landscape and human dynamics. The diverse mosaic of ecological systems existing in the lands of the Ebro is represented by the four sectors of the core of the Biosphere Reserve (RERB 2013) : the Delta, Els Ports massif, the Sierra de Cardó, and the maritime centers (Fig. 4.2).

The national law 33/2015 revises and amends the Law 42/2007 (Spain 2015, 2007), improving certain aspects of its applicability such as the management of environmentally protected areas, the incorporation into the Spanish legal system of obligations derived from EU legislation and international protocols recently ratified by Spain. It also aims to allocate competences between the central and the regional governments in marine environment-related matters. At state level, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment is the main regulatory body. The local autonomous regions (Comunida des Autónomas) develop and enforce their own environmental legislation, and local authorities have as well environmental protection powers. Accordingly, enforcement of environmental law is carried out at state, regional, and local authority levels (Lavilla et al. 2016).

The regional government (Generalitat de Cataluña) is the responsible body that has delegated to COPATE (Consorzi de Politiques Ambientals a les Terres de l'Ebre—Terres de l'Ebre Environmental Policies Consortium) for the RdBTE's management. The Executive Committee is the decision body, which has its own and exclusive regulation within COPATE and has the function of developing, evaluating, and establishing mechanisms to execute the decisions in the territory of the BR. The organization system foresees the support of an Advisory Council providing guidelines for the designing of territorial development policies and coordinates the thematic working groups and the Socio-Environmental Observatory that is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the management plan. The Brand Appraiser Committee is responsible for drafting the regulations connected to the use of the brand "Terres de l'Ebre Reserva de la Biosfera." The average annual budget is around 100,000 €. Funding is provided mostly by EU projects (50%), region (20%), and own funds (30%).

The RdBTE has fostered a continuing debate and coordination with the local and territorial administrations, competent with the social and economic agents of the area; exerting, if necessary, the role of mediator and moderator of various interests, sectors, and visions existing in the lands of the Ebro in order to help articulate a common project of the territory the broadest possible (COPATE 2017a).

The BR has always involved the citizens in the discussion and the management of the territory, establishing a participatory governance model, setting up meeting
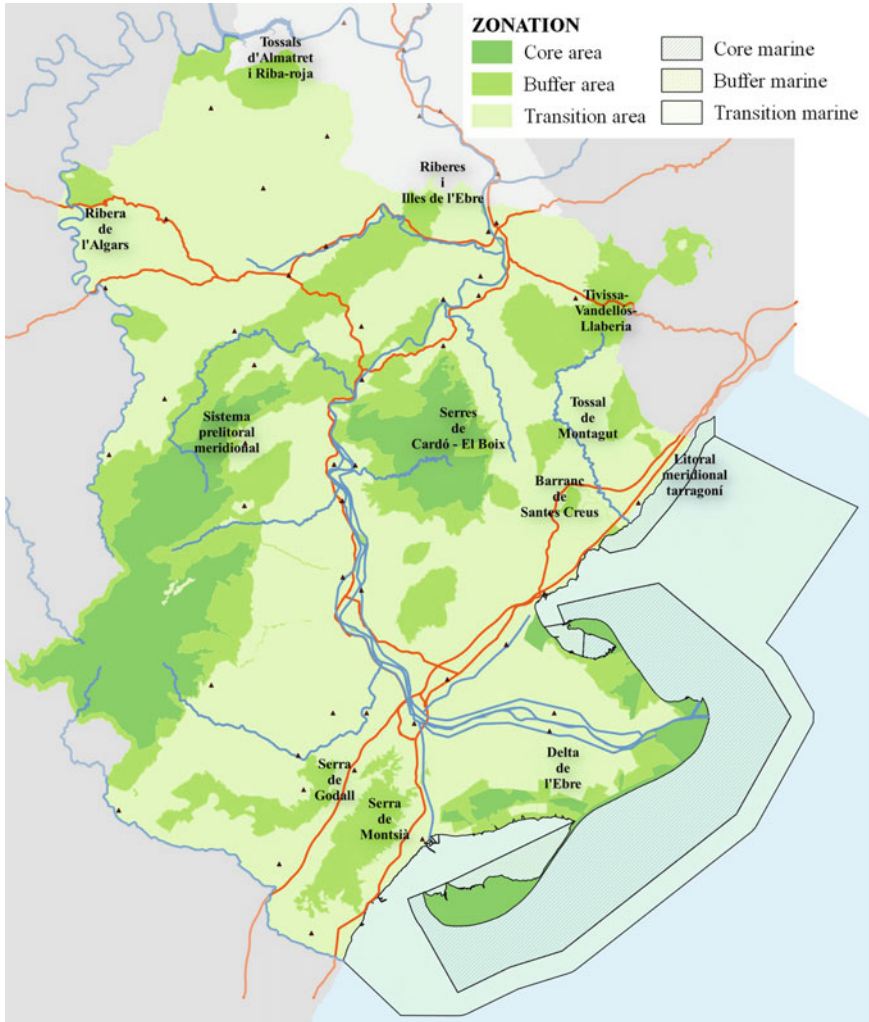
Fig. 4.2 Localization and zonation of the Terres de l'Ebre Biosphere Reserve (*Source* COPATE 2017b, adapted by COPATE in 2019)

spaces that encourage the critical debate and the strategic consensus of the different territorial actors. The RdBTE promotes a proactive participation of the main players and of society in general, through the establishment of thematic working groups or commissions (permanent or temporary). Their constitution and operation are tailored to the suitable needs at the moment and the addressed goals. In this way, it will create spaces or points of regular meetings for the exchange of information, to generate knowledge, evaluate strategies and objectives. The actions related to the management plan and participatory process are addressed in several projects funded by the EU

(e.g., Life Ebro-Admiclim, Life Clinomics, Destimed) providing concrete solutions and a real benefit for the fragile ecosystem of the area and for the community.

The RdBTE is facing difficult challenges connected to loss of wetlands and rice fields due to coastal regression caused by lack of input of fluvial sediments, regression of the coast (10 m per year at the river mouth), reduction of the average elevation of the Delta due to sea level rise and subsidence. All these aspects have been taken into consideration in the management plan as well as the impacts of climate change and invasive alien species invasion (COPATE 2017b: MP Line of action 2.5.2 and 1.2.3). The actions foreseen include climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, multi-functionality of agriculture, promotion of the green and circular economy, promotion of research, innovation, transfer of knowledge, improvement of the communication, dissemination and education.

4.3.3 Gouraya Biosphere Reserve

The National Park of Gouraya (NPG) was created in 1984 and has been classified as a Biosphere Reserve since 2004. It is located east of Algiers in the heart of the Wilaya (Province) of Bejaïa.

The site, considered the smallest in term of surface at the national level, is composed of three areas: a terrestrial one with an area of 2080 ha including a coast of 11.5 km, the lacustrine of 2.5 ha, and the planned extension of a marine area of 7842 ha (Fig. 4.3). The BR is characterized by a considerable geomorphological and ecological diversity within a very confined space. It is a "hot spot" and one of the high-endemic areas of the Mediterranean Basin with high heritage value species threatened or endangered. The site has also a cultural value owing to the presence of numerous historic sites among which several are classified (GFD 2006).

The unique location of the Gouraya BR makes it subject to intense human pressures caused by its proximity to the city of Bejaïa, which represents only 3.72% of the total area of the Wilaya with about 21% of total population of the latter (~187.000 inhabitants) (DPSB 2015). Added to that, the vicinity of the harbor complex (ranked first in the country), as well as the important socioeconomic development, the industrial area of Bejaïa being classified among the most important industrial clusters of the country.

The BR encompasses 12 villages, home to nearly 2000 inhabitants. The location of the site upstream of Bejaïa city has conferred it an urban character. Consequently, the presence of local visitors and tourists (exceeding annually 500,000 arrivals) in the protected area increased especially during the weekends and the summer season (DPSB 2015). The advantage of this location in terms of management is that the park managers have only the Wilaya and the Municipality of Bejaïa as interlocutors.

In order to protect the environment from the pressures undergone, a legislative framework was established; i.e., Law n° 02–02 on the protection and the promotion of the coastline and Law n° 03–10 on the protection of the environment in a context of sustainable development (Algeria 2002, 2003). Furthermore, the National Commis-
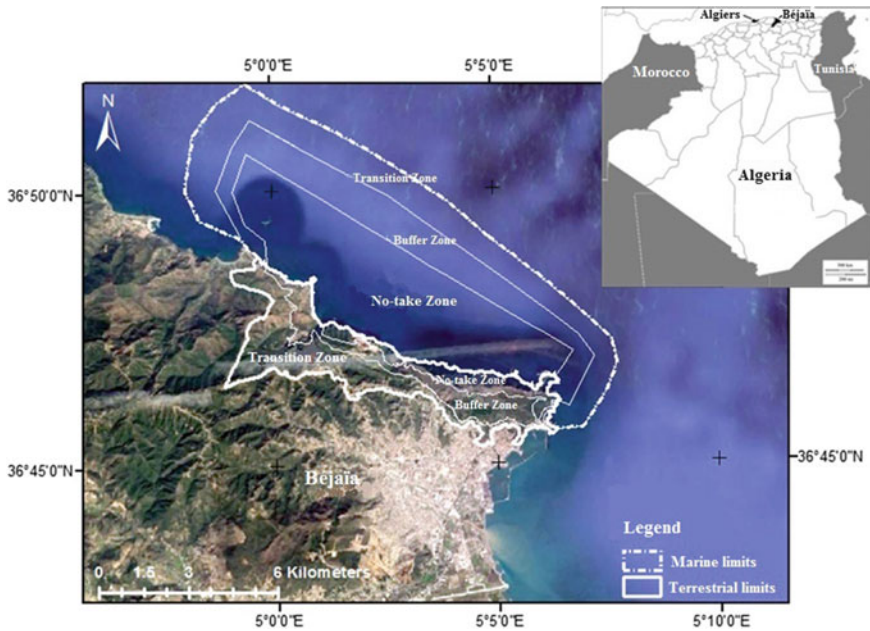
Fig. 4.3 Localization and zonation of the Gouraya Biosphere Reserve and the planned extension of marine zones

sion of the Littoral was created in 2004 to ensure the implementation of the national policy for the protection and development of the coastline and the coastal zone. Protected areas in Algeria are created and managed by the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture (Forests Directorate). The Law n° 11–02 on protected areas in the context of sustainable development has provided dispositions for the successful process of classification and management of protected areas (Algeria 2011). These areas are entrusted to a public administrative institution including a Scientific Council and a Guidance Council. This latter is composed of representatives of different ministries, local elected representatives, scientists, and an environmental protection association. It is responsible for deliberating on the development and implementation of the park management plan, and the activities carried out in matters related to the missions, organization, and operation of the National Parks.

Today, the BR is founded on the national legislation of protected areas and managed by the National Park, according its fourth Management Plan adopted in 2015. It determined, as main orientations and objectives, the protection of biodiversity, the capacity building and the collaboration with scientific researchers and associations for knowledge acquisition, the awareness rising, as well as the development of sustainable activities.

The park was created without consulting the local community and provoked consequently a strong opposition. The managers, therefore, had to deploy tremendous efforts to integrate the population through communication and awareness rising and

by visiting even at home to explain the missions and objectives of the park, as well as through eco-development actions.

Some actors are directly involved in the BR management through the Guidance and Scientific Councils. They are considered as platforms for the integration and the participation of stakeholders. Decisionmakers participate in the management through awareness raising, protection, and conservation activities, as well as conducting studies and implementing projects. Scientists implement research programs, and the associations are involved in different projects as they organize voluntary actions and visits to raise awareness among citizens; they are also invited by managers and other partners to participate in the celebration of various national and international events. The involvement of the local population is mainly achieved through eco-development actions for the benefit of the inhabitants of the park (Boumaour et al. 2018).

The project of the marine area classification was initiated by the managers of the park in the early 2000s and a participatory process involving the users of the future MPA has been launched, aimed at ensuring the support of all stakeholders to the project. A steering committee was set up including the representatives of the different sectors, local authorities, fishermen associations, and scientists.

A project launched in 2014 in cooperation with the MedPAN (2016) enabled the creation of a participation platform involving various stakeholders: fishermen's organizations (small-scale and industrial), environmental NGOs, diving clubs, scientists, and local authorities. This led to the co-construction and adoption by the actors of the charter of good practices for a sustainable fishing in the Gouraya MPA. The project has allowed to change the perceptions of some participants toward the MPA, particularly the small-scale fishermen associations that defended the MPA project and sensitized the audience to its importance. This reflects their awareness of the stakes and their ownership of the project.

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Comparison of Participation in Governance and Management in Selected Biosphere Reserves in the Mediterranean Area

Terres de l'Ebre BR is the only site with proper institutional and organizational identity. Its governance and management is delegated to COPATE, including regional and local authorities, which also provides funding, guidance, and monitoring. Its participatory governance model is based on a continuous and proactive involvement of local population and stakeholders in decision making and implementation of actions regarding the priorities defined in the Management Plan. Thematic working groups and permanent or temporary commissions are constituted, and their operation tailored to the previously defined goals and needs. Points of regular meetings for the

exchange of information, to generate knowledge, evaluate strategies and objectives are established to guarantee the open debate in all the phases. In a series of projects, they are dealing with the promotion of the BR brand as well as future challenges, e.g., impacts of climate change, alien species invasion or threats to local agriculture.

The Tuscan Island BR and the Gouraya BR are following the legislation established for the National Parks and do not have yet implemented specific BR Governance and Management Systems. Due to their legal status, their decision processes are still top-down, and the budget is generated mainly through contributions by the state authorities (Table 4.1).

The Tuscan Island BR realized a considerable enlargement in 2015 as well as a draft Management Plan. Hence, the Governance and Management System and its bodies, status, mandate, and participatory processes defined for the National Park are still in place. The new BR strategies for conservation and sustainable development as well as an overarching BR governance and management system, responsible for the core, transition, and development zones, including the vast marine area are not yet approved. The Tuscan Island BR will be a pioneer for a new generation of Marine and Coastal BRs, extending the limits beyond territorial waters to adequately guarantee all the future objectives of the Reserve (e.g., the Sanctuary for Mediterranean Marine Mammals).

Consequently, the delegation of authority and accountability will have to be redefined. The participation of the public in planning, decision making, and implementation of the targets, especially in the marine part of the BR, will ask for new deliberative democratic models.

> In the past, the sea was considered an essentially free space by Italian regulations, as an inexhaustible natural resource available to everyone. Therefore, the general consensus was that the sea cannot be considered as a "good" in the true sense of the term and was not open to becoming the object of property rights, be them private or public. It was subject only to individual freedoms, and the police powers of the state. In recent times, the possibility for economic and industrial exploitation of the sea and the increased variety in its potential uses, together with the increasing need to protect it against pollution and manage its relative resources, now mean that this traditional attitude toward its use is undergoing revision …. The sea, according to recent interpretations, is now being considered a good that needs to be subject to land management policies and entrusted to authorities with administrative functions. (Management Plan 2015 Appendix 1).

The Gouraya National Park has already adopted the BR concept and established its functions. The bottom-up processes in decision making are not yet established, and the share of duties and benefits with local communities and stakeholders is not defined. Since communication and conflict resolution had been a major challenge of the park management at the beginning, it introduced in practice an enhanced delegation of duties at the local level and the involvement of local stakeholders. The stakeholder participation in the decision-making process was established with the creation of the Guidance Council and Scientific Council in 2013 and 2014, respectively. Pressure from increasing urbanization, resource use and tourism reveal the limits of the park authorities, which lack personnel, infrastructure, and delegated authority regarding the development functions of the BR. The National Strategies

Table 4.1 Comparison of the selected Biosphere Reserves in the Mediterranean Area

Biosphere Reserve	Tuscan Islands	Terres de l'Ebre	Gouraya
Endorsement	2003, extended 2015	2013	2004
Legal foundations	National law regarding National Park	National law for natural heritage and biodiversity, amended in 2015 for international obligations derived from EU legislation and international protocols	National laws regarding protected areas and National Park
Territory	BR covers 1,079,540 ha, including National Park of 79.160 ha	BR covers 367,729 ha including several protected areas	BR corresponds to National Park with 2080 ha extension with marine zones planned
Municipalities and population in the Biosphere Reserve	11 municipalities; 34,000 inhabitants, 200,000 in summer	45 municipalities; 182,521 inhabitants	1 municipality; 2000 inhabitants inside the BR
Governance and management system	National Park with national governance, but with involvement of regional and local authorities and the community. The BR GMS not implemented	National government delegates governance to the Catalonia region, who appointed COPATE for the BR management	Nomination and Management by Ministry of agriculture (forests directorate)
Management bodies	Park GMS: President, Executive Committee, Board of Directors, Board of Auditors, Park Community	COPATE: Executive Committee, Advisory Council, Work groups, Socio-Environmental Observatory and Brand Committee	Park GMS: Guidance Council, Scientific Council
Planning tools	BR Management Plan elaborated in 2015, not yet approved	BR Management Plan issued in 2017, adapted permanently through participatory processes	4th Management Plan of the National Park issued in 2015

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Biosphere Reserve	Tuscan Islands	Terres de l'Ebre	Gouraya
Participation of local population and stakeholders	National Park Community composed by representatives of local authorities. Local people are involved through projects and initiatives	BR participatory governance model with proactive participation of local population in thematic groups and commissions	Participatory processes not defined in the legislation. Management plan 2015: local stakeholders are members of the Guidance and Scientific Councils established in 2013/2014. Locals are active in eco-development actions
Budget	National Park budget	Biosphere Reserve budget	National Park budget
Funding	National funding (ca. 94% in 2017), other sources (6%)	Regional funding (20%), EU projects (50%), COPATE (30%)	National funding

and Action Plans for the Environment and Sustainable Development (2002) and the Biodiversity (2016) are coherent with the new BR Roadmap (UNESCO/MAB 2017, para 23, p. 54), but are slowly being translated in the local context mainly due to reduced budgets. They should be better reflected in the future Management Plans of the National Park and BR. The state of the art of the Gouraya BR mirrors well the general situation of the Maghreb countries. During the IUCN—Atelier Régional sur: "La Gouvernance des Réserves de Biosphère au Maghreb: état et perspectives" in Tanger, Maroc (IUCN 2012), the PA managers discussed the problems and challenges of the North African sites. The participants concluded that the main problems of PAs relate to inappropriate legal frameworks and the lack of management structures dedicated to BRs like coordination, awareness, and communication programs, with little participation of the population. BR Management Plans and budget include insufficient public funds, which are mainly foreseen for the protected areas.

4.4.2 Integrated GMS Approaches Related to Protected Areas

The exceptional assets and high community-development potential of UNESCO sites requires innovative deliberative "evidence-based governance" which are transborder, multilevel, pluralistic, dynamic, respecting ecological and social limits, adaptive and open to changing constraints. Integrated governance and management approaches of protected areas should aim at knowledge-based development involving local society, adapted to available resources and area's social, cultural, and environmental specificities. Regarding MPAs, IUCN has concluded (IUCN 2018, p. 2):

> Building effective partnerships between the management authority and communities remains a major challenge. It is of the utmost importance that communities be motivated toward active involvement in all stages of MPA planning and operation. During the last two decades, the number of communities effectively participating in MPA affairs through collaborative management (or co-management), approaches has increased greatly.

Innovative governance and management frameworks and methodologies such as the Outcome-Oriented Public Management (Schedler and Proeller 2010), the Social-Ecological Systems (SES) (McGinnis and Ostrom 2014), SDI method (Ruoss 2007), NEXUS methodology or the Sustainability Profile Matrix (Gløersen et al. 2016), have paved the way to adopt new integrated territorial governance and management approaches in Biosphere Reserves and areas with focus on rich natural and cultural heritage.

The "evidence-based GMS" (Ruoss and Alfarè 2018) is an integrated approach characterized by the adequate involvement of the three dimensions: top-down, bottom-up, and outside-in. International and national bodies define the overarching standards, norms and legal frameworks and financial contributions, and delegate authority and accountability to the local, operative level. Bottom-up processes define strategies and objectives based on local place-based evidences such as resources, needs, and challenges. The local population will, as defined in the new BR Roadmap

(UNESCO/MaB 2017), not only actively participate, they will also profit from benefit and added values as a return of their investments and partnership. Public and private institutions have a key role in the outside-in processes, providing knowledge, funding, networking, and facilitate research, innovation, and communication.

4.5 Conclusions

The selected case studies are representative for the Mediterranean BRs; they have sound strategic frameworks in place and are advancing in the transformation of their past and present to the new paradigms. The considerable challenges expected in the near future will harm especially the coastal area and the local economy. The target of protecting the natural and cultural resources and the endangered ecosystems require adequate instruments to adapt to the potential impacts. Commitment of the authorities, clear purpose and priorities, coordination of the transformation processes, awareness of the vulnerable natural and socioeconomic equilibrium as well as open and transparent communication will be needed on the way forward.

The present and future evidences in the three selected BRs are completely different and require solutions, which correspond to the local realities and obstacles. The Terres de l'Ebre BR is implementing step by step the new strategies and processes. The Tuscan Island BR has already prepared the frameworks and participative instruments that await implementation. The Gouraya BR has already established conservation and development functions through the National Park but still needs an increase of awareness and commitments of the authorities as well as the tools and funds to fully define and implement the new BR strategy.

The evidence-based GMS with a holistic three-dimensional approach could be a way forward to improve or establish effective tools and to involve the local communities, especially the multiple stakeholders, in the decision processes. It will not be enough to delegate authority and accountability to the local level. People and stakeholders have to develop an ownership for the future conservation and development of the sites and will need knowledge, information, funding as well as decision and monitoring tools to act accordingly.

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Chapter 5
Promises and Limits of Participatory Urban Greens Development: Experience from Maribor, Budapest, and Krakow

Martin Pogačar, Jasna Fakin Bajec, Katarina Polajnar Horvat, Aleš Smrekar and Jernej Tiran

Abstract The chapter discusses the integration of civil society into planning, development, and governance of urban green spaces (UGS). The principles of participatory democracy and sustainable development inevitably require a more integrated approach to collaboration and networking among different sectors and actors. Until recently, the citizens/communities were only sporadically involved in decision-making and planning processes of UGS, which led to practices of urban development that failed to account for their needs. The crucial question is: What are the potentials and limits of engaging and involving people and communities in planning and playing an active part in the development of UGS? Specifically, the chapter discusses how theoretical concepts that often work well in strategies or development programs are only slowly implemented in practice. This raises the question of the obstacles and benefits faced by municipalities when trying to involve local communities in planning activities. First, the authors discuss the theory and practice of participation and community involvement in urban planning and management. Second, they present an overview of the local cases of UGS development in three Central and Eastern European cities (Maribor, Krakow, and Budapest), and thirdly, linking practice and theory, they discuss the intrinsic issues with community formation and sustainability.

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5.1 Introduction

It is no longer a groundbreaking statement that urban green spaces (UGS) can improve people's well-being (Kothencz et al. 2017) and public health (Richardson et al. 2013), enhance social interaction, and provide the space for leisure or recreational activities (see Akpinar and Cankurt 2017). In densely populated areas, UGS can reduce air pollution and improve climate, contribute to keeping ecological balance, promote biodiversity, reduce noise, and improve urban economy (Kothencz et al. 2017; Lee and Maheswaran 2011). Moreover, UGS can foster cohesion between cities and countryside, and strengthen territorial cohesion (Toledo Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development Declaration 2010).

The development of UGS plays a central part in sustainable urban development, as does wider societal awareness about the importance of greens. If the UGS are poorly planned and used, they can easily turn into a burden and a constant "battlefield" between inhabitants and responsible authorities (Anguelovski et al. 2018). Successful sustainable and inclusive development, as well as management of UGS, thus inevitably require integrated or collaborative planning and maintenance, i.e., the involvement of decision-making bodies, experts, property owners, and civil society.

Until recently, civil society (e.g., residents) has often been insufficiently involved in the development of UGS. This led to unbalanced urban development, notably in post-socialist settings: during the post–socialist transformation, the history of participatory practices has been downplayed or actively forgotten, if to different extents in different countries (Simoneti 2016). The main consequences have been poor identification of relevant actors, exclusion of various marginal communities (Anguelovski et al. 2017) from the UGS development, as well as power imbalance in the investor–authority–expert–citizen relations (Kucina 2016; Diener and Hagen 2013). The situation was exacerbated by the recent economic crisis that necessitated the dampening of collaborative approaches (Davies and Pill 2012; Durose and Rees 2012). In this light, the United Nations (UN) and its New Urban Agenda emphasize the importance of citizen and civil society participation in shaping public interest, as well as promote social inclusion in urban management (see UN 2017). Consequently, a number of bottom-up practices emerged, actively seeking and testing approaches to engaging with urban greens. Aiming at bypassing the slow implementation of participatory practices on policy levels, civil pressure exposed systemic inertia, as well as the wider political and economic motives behind the development of urban greens. Community voices emphasized the issues of why (not) to engage citizens and how (not) to do so, forcing communities to seek sustainability and durability in action and enticing the authorities to respond to such initiatives and engage in cooperative relationship (see Javaid and Habeeb 2018).

This chapter departs from the understanding that the public has the right to know about what is happening in their surrounding green spaces and should be encouraged to take an active part in activities which affect them in the places where they live and work (Bahrain Shuib et al. 2015). For example, dialog between managers or planners and representatives from various community groups helps detect their needs and ideas. Simultaneously, the community needs to analyze their own issues and voice their thoughts and solutions (Bahrain Shuib et al. 2015), while the authorities need to recognize their own responsibility as facilitators and partners in integrative urban development.

The chapter, therefore, asks: What are the potentials and limits of engaging and involving people and communities in planning and playing an active part in the development of UGS? The discussion is based on the outcomes of the "Urban Green Belts" project (Interreg Central Europe, 2016–2019), specifically on the pilot actions carried out in Maribor (Slovenia), Budapest (Hungary), and Krakow (Poland), and the adjoining FUA (Functional Urban Area, densely inhabited city and a less densely populated commuting zone whose labor market is highly integrated with the city; Eurostat 2018). Specifically, the authors address the phenomenon of theoretical concepts that often work well in strategies or development programs (e.g., INTERREG programs), but are only sporadically and slowly implemented in practice, particularly in specific urban areas marked by different past and present experiences, historical backgrounds, and contemporary geopolitics that also influence the community reasoning, etc. In other words, it asks about the obstacles and benefits faced by municipalities when trying to involve local communities in planning activities. In the Urban Green Belts project (UGB), the authors participated in the capacity of knowledge providers, selecting a number methods and tools to facilitate community identification and mobilization and to promote active involvement of communities (e.g., citizens and other stakeholders) as users and creators of UGS. Some of the methods and tools were tested by other project partners in three pilot areas, which provided data for the assessment of the participatory approaches in practice. The pilot action reports and interviews with partners were qualitatively analyzed against a theoretical background on participation approaches. The chapter first discusses the theoretical considerations on why and how to think community involvement and then proceeds to discuss the findings of the pilot actions. On this basis, the authors reflect on the limits and obstacles of participation between theory and practice.

5.2 Participation in Urban Planning and Management

One of the project's viewpoints was that empowered and active citizens more easily articulate their problems and opinions, and contribute to elaborating solutions and implementing plans for urban greens. As elsewhere in public matters, empowerment here also rests on structuring the space for participation and inclusion (Cerar 2015). This enables the detection and channeling of the attitudes of people toward UGS, as well as the potential of collaboration between various actors involved in the devel-

opment of UGS (urbanists, architects, and decision-making bodies). The potential of participatory approaches to urban planning is their ability to provide not only the structure for involving communities in decision-making processes but also the opportunity for a hands-on informal education in active citizenship and transfer of knowledge (Ličen et al. 2017). Moreover, the focus on the integration of stakeholders, especially vulnerable and marginalized groups, can also enhance social inclusion and equality of various groups focused on their needs, demands, and expectations, regardless of attributes such as income, gender, age, ethnicity, or disability (Sarmiento and Beard 2013). Power (im)balances are critical in any discussion about or practice of participation, Mansuri and Rao note (2013, p. 77):

> Understanding local structures of inequality and local social and political relationships insulates against the naïve and potentially disempowering belief that participation will necessarily benefit the poor. Explicitly recognizing structures of power and dominance could result in designs to address such inequalities with affirmative action programs, such as the mandated inclusion of women and minorities in village councils, the adoption of programs that exclusively target certain groups, or the use of monitoring and audit systems to reduce the prevalence of capture.

First ideas about a more participatory governance date back to the 1930s, when Kurt Lewin and his students ran tests to "demonstrate the greater gains in productivity and in law and order through democratic participation rather than autocratic coercion" (Adelman 1993, p. 7). They not only showed that "there was an effective alternative to Taylor's 'scientific management' but through his action research provided the details of how to develop social relationships of groups and between groups to sustain communication and co-operation" (ibid.). However, more extensive practices and definitions of participatory democracy—the backbone of participatory approaches to urban greens development—emerged in the 1950s as a response to the criticism of the political system deemed disconnected from the citizens. However, the trend of implementing participatory approaches in governance has been fluctuating, "losing attention in some periods but then reliably reemerging as an apparent panacea to the shortcomings of top-down approaches" (de Gramont 2013). Participatory democracy requires that people be given a chance to take an active part in decision-making processes by using different participatory paths. In this view, normative participation is understood as "taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies" (Parry et al. 1992, p. 16; cf. Müller and Stotten 2011, p. 5). In theory, participation is thus understood as an improvement and expansion of democratic decision-making process.

Stöger (2010) understands participation through two broad approaches: as a means and as a goal. The former includes a process by which development can be more effectively implemented, progress can be supported, and successful outcomes can be ensured. Different participation methods and techniques can be used to incorporate people's ideas in the development plans (strategic visions) and activities. The latter, however, focuses on empowering people through acquiring skills, knowledge, and experience, and builds confidence to take greater responsibility for their development and self-reliance (Stöger 2010).

Crucial elements of participatory approach relevant for this discussion are adequately subsumed by Fisher (2001, p. 9; see also Gilbert 2015, p. 4):

> Participation is a set of principles and an ethics, rather than an ideology or a model. It moreover entails learning not only to acknowledge but also to listen to opinions, ideas, and knowledge of those who in the past have been "targeted" (informed about adopted plan). It requires high levels of transparency, favors decentralization and delegation, and rests on responsibility.

Such practices require moving beyond internalized hierarchical structures, negotiating various motives and agendas, as well as power relations, and they take time. Therefore, the conceptualization of participation in terms of collaborative governance although "challenged not only by austerity politics but also by alternative, innovative and/or insurgent forms of political participation" (Citizen participation in urban green spaces, 2017, p. 6), nevertheless seems useful in its emphasis not only on the responsibility and agency of the community but on other stakeholders as well.

In addition to necessity to encourage and enable citizen engagement, participatory approaches and methods also have limits. Overall, the most obvious one is the discrepancy between various stakeholder positions/powers, meaning that the weakest (financial or social capital) are often sidetracked (usually the community), while important decisions are made among the stronger players (owners, investors, and political decisionmakers). On the other hand, it is not unusual for a group of residents formed around a specific problem to gain enough power to influence the decision-making. While this is desirable, it has to be adequately managed (both from the municipality and the community side) so as to evade the clash between often locally based desires that may not see the wider picture, and the more top-down, systemic view that takes into account the wider effects of decisions but lacks local insights. For example, in Maribor, Slovenia, local initiative succeeded in pedestrianizing a street, but failed to comprehend the effects of traffic spilling over smaller streets and parking lots, exposing a discrepancy between systemic and particular approaches.

In this light, Mansuri and Rao (2013) emphasize two aspects: the discrepancy between organic and induced participation and the failures of civil society. Organic participation will often go against authorities/power, while induced participation has to mimic the organic to, paradoxically, encourage citizens to stand up against authorities/power. The latter is often overlooked, but the issues with collective action and capacity deficits (see de Gramont 2013) have also become clear in the UGB pilot actions activities. In this light, the central issue with participation is related to implementation-related difficulties and to sustainability of such participation, which may pose significant problems in longer-term perspective, particularly in urban areas (sizeable fluctuations of inhabitants).

To sum up, participatory approach gained impetus in the context of theory and practice of empowerment and sustainability, where—in addition to the environment and the economy—special emphasis is placed on societal development (global, national, or local), predicated on transparent, accountable, responsive, equitable, and inclusive decision-making processes (Müller and Stotten 2011). However, while the problems related to participatory approaches can enhance the rigid and inert gov-

ernance structures, they also present an opportunity to find unexpected solutions arising from putting together realistic, flexible, and implementable action plans.

5.3   Presentation of Pilot Actions

This chapter builds on the findings of the UGB project thematic group focusing on community involvement. The project teams in Maribor (Slovenia), Krakow (Poland), and Budapest (Hungary) identified in their respective locales-specific case studies to find a solution to involving communities in green space development.

Maribor
Maribor Development Agency (MRA) has undertaken a project to regenerate the area around the Karantena building, the former Prison Maribor—built before 1900. The pilot area, including the facility and its immediate surroundings, is classified as cultural heritage of local importance and is divided into several plots of land with different owners or co-owners—private and public (e.g., MRA, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation) and users. For several years, the area around the building has been used as an illegal parking lot for FUA commuters and citizens. The challenge was to set up a feasible and transferable concept of community-led planning in the process of regenerating the degraded green space, characterized by mixed ownership, public users, and low involvement of some private owners. MRA tested consultative and self-mobilized participation of the local stakeholders. To achieve successful impacts, online survey, face-to-face interviews, online campaign, green festivals, and workshops were implemented.

Krakow
The Krakow municipal green space authority in cooperation with the Małopolska region undertook a pilot project Witkowice Green Living Lab in the Witkowice forest on the outskirts of Krakow. The pilot included the revitalization and transformation of existing recreation infrastructure, the regulation of existing green spaces, and the implementation of innovative practices of green education (information boards, and multimedia application). The goal was to involve the surrounding local communities (school, NGOs) into the whole development procedure based on consultation process and participation of other stakeholders. Moreover, the aim was also to involve the neighboring municipality and institutions at the regional level, also showing the possibility of cooperation on the FUA level. Several participatory methods and tools were tested through the pilot actions (art contest, picnic, running events, educational workshops, etc.). Krakow Municipal Green Space Authority, therefore, devel-

oped measures to increase people's awareness of the benefits of green spaces, in order to speak out and become part of the decision-making process.

Budapest

The central challenge of the 12th district, Hegyvidék Municipality team was to find a way to use UGS as a tool to change residents' mind-sets about the importance of green spaces, as well as about the crucial contribution that the communities can make to their planning and maintenance. The pilot action aimed at creating a community of volunteers through a newly initiated stewardship program, thus also promoting pro-environmental attitudes. The main stakeholders were the stewards and the wider community. Stewards were fine-tuning and partly implementing pilot activities (workshops, social events, thematic sessions, and communication campaigns) to build up trust and community spirit. In addition, stewards would give feedback to the municipality regarding the pilot and share ideas related to the planned activities.

Before the start of the project, the three pilots emphasized several crucial elements of sustainable greens development: community, participation, and cooperation between the authorities (given their FUA level focus), residents, experts and private owners, which proved difficult to implement. Below, we discuss in more detail the concept of community and related issues in the context of the three pilot actions.

5.4 Involving the Community

Decisionmakers are often reluctant to involve communities or are simply lacking the necessary expertise, skills, and know-how to approach this important path. Often, participation is understood as a means rather than an end, blurring the distinction between organic and induced participation (see Mansuri and Rao 2013), thus positing participation both as a want and an obstacle, an ideal and a funding requirement (e.g., projects or strategies). This is one of the aspects detectable and, to some extent, implicitly reported by the municipalities or regional development agencies in authority–community relations during the course of the UGB project. This leads to a three-fold problem: (1) the issue with involving (detecting and mobilizing) a community; (2) the issue of management and flexibility of community, and the related question of sustainability and durability of such actions, particularly where longer-term cooperation is essential for the maintenance of UGS; and (3) the issues arising from the project funding requirements and the applicability of such project work, including the very practical issue of adapting participatory methods to various transnational locales, i.e., adjusting approaches to specific (legal, social, and historical) situations (which is only addressed marginally).

5.4.1 Detecting and Mobilizing the Community

When working with citizens or communities engaged in participatory approaches, the starting question is: Who (or what) is a community? According to the UGB pilot actions findings, a community in UGS management can be a heterogenous and ad hoc group. It implies more longevity than a civil initiative, which forms primarily around short-term goals. A community can be a group of people—of local or non-local residents, FUA commuters, but also visitors, the elderly, property owners or investors, depending on the context and situation—potentially (but not necessarily) bound by shared interests, motives, and values, who come together around a specific problem or project for longer periods of time. At the same time, factors such as income, gender, cultural and social capital, individual traits, etc., also expose the inherent differences/incompatibilities in the community that may lead to internal power disbalance and informal hierarchies. This plays out most clearly in involving vulnerable groups/individuals, often failing to improve their position but rather reinforcing and replicating existing societal hierarchies:

> Greater inequality contributes greatly to asymmetric information; richer and more powerful people are likely to have better-connected networks, better access to powerful people in government, more education (and therefore, greater awareness), and greater capacity to influence decision-making. (Mansuri and Rao 2013, p. 79)

A community may already have a legal status within a municipality (e.g., NGOs, institutes), while in some cases, such status still needs to be obtained. For example, in the case of FUA, there is usually no immediate ("organic") community. This may pose problems in planning and management, particularly from the perspective of taking care of infrastructure, as was the case in Krakow where they were having difficulties in finding/organizing people to take on the responsibility of the infrastructure; or in areas where there are no nearby residents with vested interest to improve the area, as was the case in Maribor, where the immediate potential community is property owners and users of the illegal parking lot, with no explicit interest in ending the status quo. Or, in the case of Budapest, where the community (e.g., group of volunteers from different neighborhoods) was formed using a top-down approach: the idea and its implementation were conceived by the Green Office of the 12th district, Hegyvidék Municipality (local authorities) and then delegated to stewards. All three cases fall in the category of induced participation, which is understandable given the specific characteristics of each pilot action.

Krakow faced the problem of geo-administrative configuration of the pilot action. Stretching across municipality borders, Witkowice project had difficulties in finding a community willing to take on maintenance. Three potential caretakers were identified (e.g., runners, visitors, and nearby youth correction school), but the sporadic nature of their engagement could not guarantee a longer-term commitment. The team had no problems in attracting visitors to the forest; they organized a free bus service from the city and back, picnics, running events, and arts competitions. Reportedly, the turnout was satisfactory, but mobilizing users/visitors as caretakers remained unrealized. Clearly, the configuration hardly made things easier: distance is a factor

(see Akpinar and Cankurt 2017). One promising option was the involvement of the nearby school: the inclusion of vulnerable young population could have a positive social effect by delegating teenagers' responsibility to take care of their immediate surroundings and to (re)connect to the wider social space. The teachers from the school showed interest to participate, but failed to engage the pupils, so the task of maintaining the forest path intact now lies with the Municipal Green Space Authority.

In this respect, we would like to reiterate the potential of semiformalization of communities, to which the Maribor team came closest: they adapted and tested the Community Consultative Assembly (CCA), a semi-formal entity that can participate in UGS planning and management. To test the CCA in practice, MRA organized a Wellness Festival, a thematic social event dealing with green issues, where they were able to detect, define, and map the interested community. While the Krakow team attempted a similar approach, it didn't work due to the administrative configuration and possibly the specific nature of the school (delinquent youth). In Maribor, on the other hand, the CCA facilitated the conditions where student projects—visualizations of improvement of the existing situation that followed the needs and wishes of the ever-broader group of people involved—were commissioned and put up for voting.

> Thus, it was possible to reach consensus and provide suggestions for areas of direct interest for each groups (for example, the general community of the city district was only involved with the overall arrangements of the pilot area, while the owners and users of the cultural hub were involved in the overall and specific area of the joint parking). The owners and users were involved in public consultations, while indirect users were invited to provide their own ideas; they were given an opportunity to submit their ideas through the suggestion box and online survey. (Pilot Action Report from UGB project 2018, p. 3)

The Maribor situation, however, lacked an organic community. In comparison to Krakow and Budapest, it lacked "motivational content" to address and engage people in the process. If Krakow had a sort of organically convincing and motivating content (the forest path), and Budapest small plots of land to be used as gardens, the Maribor team wanted to regenerate an illegal parking lot (effectively eliminating the free parking option for FUA commuters) and transform it into a useful and safe public space. As various plots around the building are publicly or privately owned, this added an element of negotiating public and private interests. So, when it came to a community that could or would take part in the planning of regeneration actions, the potential community of owners and users only shared disinterest or at least ambiguity about what to do with the pilot area. Given the often unstable nature and potentially low levels of interaction and interests in such communities, it is often difficult to detect or mobilize one. This may pose a problem both for the authorities and for interested members of a community, particularly when the proposed plans or changes do not affect them immediately.

5.4.2   Managing and Sustaining a Community

The already formed community, or one in the making, should reasonably expect that their involvement will not only be acknowledged, but that the necessary legal mechanisms be put in place and integrated into a dynamic process of finding a consensual solution. It is therefore crucial to facilitate empowering by providing a legal frame and appointing competent interlocutors: "Local development moves from being 'participatory' to 'empowered' when decisions made by ordinary people through deliberation are tied to policy decisions and actions" (Mansuri and Rao 2013, p. 87), which ideally should lead to participatory governance (Fung and Wright 2003). Although several studies have shown that the best way for a successful urban greens participatory process is to link top-down and bottom-up approaches, i.e., negotiate between the systemic and the particular, this is difficult to translate into practice for various reasons. For example, one of the challenges faced by Maribor's MRA was to find the suitable time to ensure all relevant stakeholders could attend meeting or workshop:

> /…/If an event is organized in the morning, people are at work and it is very difficult to get anybody who is not present as part of their working obligations. In the afternoon, people who would come as part of their working obligations do not attend as they have other private obligations … Also, the interested public has very varied obligations and is difficult to find a suitable date. As it was organized on Saturday morning, the interested and general public were present, but no public officials attended. (3rd Stakeholder meeting report 2017, p. 5)

However, as one of the partners from Maribor's MRA concluded their partner's report.

> Including stakeholders in the process instead of just consulting them to confirm a proposed solution has proven to be a good strategy to gain consensus for what has to be achieved. (Pilot Action Report from UGB project 2018, p. 8)

For better stakeholder interaction, the emphasis should be on "soft" methods for facilitating and enhancing participation connected to informal ways of community building (Ličen et al. 2017). Soft methods make use of specific locally recognized locations and venues (schools, religious centers, open-air locations, i.e., parks, botanical gardens, and municipal woods) and adequately conceptualized and localized content (e.g., thematic walks, community picnics, sport events, art workshops, etc.). Venue plays an important role in structuring the event as it can contribute to deformalizing the space of interaction, opening ways to a more relaxed environment. The Budapest partner organized several social events in their green areas and pointed out that:

> Celebrating [e.g., a community picnic] is a core part of community building. Celebration is a big part of common culture that creates an opportunity for bonding and trust building. Celebration and connection are key. Community actions linked to UGS might be a very important step for the involved municipalities and communities to rethink not only UGS but also our joint role in the maintenance and improvement of local ecosystems. (Hamza et al. 2018, p. 10)

This, in the end, can result in an ad hoc space of interaction where the hierarchies and power play can be readily monitored and, if necessary, neutralized. Structuring the environment so that various stakeholders can "meet softly" may thus lead to relaxed conversations, generation of ideas, while solution building processes can in fact become more open and flexible (not forgetting the internal power imbalances). Importantly, not only will ideas proliferate in such an environment but also trust will be built and the community will flourish, having realized its power to improve their greens. Or will it?

This is not an easy question and certainly a multilayered one. Our experience shows that FUA-related disinterest and issues of timing are, in addition to the missing organic participation element, among the main reasons impeding convergence around a specific cause, let alone the development of a community. These uneasy conditions may lead the initiator (e.g., the municipality) to disregard or exclude the community for very practical reasons. At the same time, it is critical not to see the community as a passive actor that has yet to be found and externally empowered; instead, in order to connect various ideas and points of view, it is crucial for the authorities to understand the systemic inertia and inherent community drawbacks (see Sect. 2) and use this understanding to provide the necessary legal provisions, competent personnel, and the environment for a community to grow as organically as possible.

During the systematization of the pilot reports, several other topics relevant for this discussion emerged: the role and relevance of socialist history and transition and practical issues regarding the involvement of communities. The former issue was most explicitly emphasized by the Budapest team, who has located the absence of pro-environmental collective action in the legacies of communism:

> [Community involvement in UGS] is a very ambitious goal in a post-socialist country where self-organizing was blocked for decades, since community development takes time and changing mind-sets needs even more time. (Hamza et al. 2018, p. 2)

Krakow and Maribor, however, did not attach much importance to it. While this may be the consequence of different experiences under various modalities of socialism and of contemporary politics of memory, it is also related to the characteristics and contexts of the specific pilot actions. It was the Budapest team who had applied the most decidedly top-down approach to the implementation of their planned stewardship program. When discussing these issues with the partners, it was clear that they did not at all refuse to use participatory approaches in practice. Yet, there was a clear expectation that the situation might slip out of control when not in a tight grip. In the case of Budapest, the team genuinely attempted to involve the residents of the 12th district in stewardship of the designated area. At the beginning of the pilot action, the Hegyvidék Green Office tried to define appropriate "greening spots," to advertise the opportunity locally by putting up information signs, to find stewards, and to establish a communication channel with them. It soon became clear that people are not necessarily skilled enough to select adequate plants, so the team organized several workshops with a horticulturalist who was then tasked with drawing up a planting plan. The Green Office organized several awareness-raising events for different generations. In their report, they highlighted:

Generally speaking, stewards were satisfied with the program, but they need more "freedom" and ownership. On the other hand, Green Office emphasized difficulties mediating between the stewards and the gardening company, as well as regarding the maintenance levels of some stewarded spots. They conducted in-depth interviews that revealed their satisfaction with the spots, which showed different expectations. The interviewees also emphasized the importance of having a contact with a professional gardener, noting that contact with her was only possible through the Green Office. This proved inefficient and generated unnecessary work for the office. Therefore, less control from the municipality would be beneficial for both parties. They would welcome more thematic workshops to improve their knowledge. (Hamza et al. 2018, p. 5)

This suggests that the Budapest partner actively sought contact with residents. Crucial in this context is the realization that some form of management is necessary, while too heavily induced participation may fail: less top-down control would give stewards more autonomy. However, people expressed the need for specialist guidance, which corroborates the above argument that it is essential to negotiate not only between the stakeholders but also between various internal community dynamics.

Having acknowledged the issues with top-down approach and having taken action to alleviate its effects, the Green Office of Municipality Hegyvidék introduced major changes to the structure of the program. Two are particularly relevant for this discussion: (1) stewards can propose places themselves, which may lead to more motivated, if perhaps fewer stewards and (2) stewards will have to sign a document—a legal provision that fosters participation and regulates inactivity (no penalization). This suggests a certain need for and usefulness of community formalization (e.g., NGO, association) in order to ensure accountability and contribute to sustainability. The Budapest case made clear the importance of sharing responsibilities and ownership, especially within the stewardship program, where the limited formalization would facilitate the negotiation between the fluidity of community and the rigidity of the system.

5.5   Conclusion

The UGB project was an opportunity to see how the promises and limits of community participation play out in practice. The studied pilot cases reveal that public spaces "remodeled" through participatory planning and management initiatives are seen as an opportunity to cocreate or at least contribute to creating livable spaces and responsible citizens. However, the case studies also demonstrated that when subjected to strict deadlines and project requirements, certain activities which appear to work in theory demand much more time than three years in practice (typical duration of such projects). This brings us back to the discrepancy between induced and organic participation: to expect that a community will form "organically on demand" is illusory and misleading. It can potentially be "induced on demand" but in such cases, it is questionable whether such a community has any relevance outside the immediate instrumentalization of residents/communities for short-term purposes.

Communities should act as equal partners in the process, which cannot be realized when overambitious goals are set for short periods of time. This simply does not allow enough time for comprehensive community transformative processes to take place. Any work with humans takes time and patience, and "soft" methods can stimulate, encourage, and raise awareness in citizens, which can—in due time—support community building, sustainability, and participation in urban green development. Time and "organics" proved to be the biggest obstacle to participation, often steering the authorities to return to rather top-down, nonparticipatory, but in the short-term more pragmatic approaches. Finally, this confirms the importance of continually assessing both top-down (induced participation) and bottom-up (organic growth vs. potential failure) approaches as a basis for future action. Importantly, it takes into account the continually shifting and changing societal, cultural, political, and economic conditions and environments. What is more, a thorough assessment of participatory democracy in practice is also essential for problematizing over-bureaucratization of project funding bodies and schemes that latch on promoting a certain approach or concept (e.g., smart, intelligent, participation, community, etc.). It is at the same time easy to forget that empty concepts obscure the nature of the problem and its solution. What is worse, sometimes similar, if differently named, practices of participation may already be in place, but are either neglected or forgotten through such schemes (as, for example, the legacies of socialist workers' actions, self-management, etc.). In such cases, top-down imposition masks considerable political, social, and historical diversities with a false aim to ensure a sort of conceptual commonality across the EU as the basis for building a more commonly accepted and recognizable union. In reality, things are not so easy; in addition to the emphasis on sufficient time for social changes, such projects also hardly make room for organic innovation and the localization/applicability of the project results.

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Chapter 6
Review of the Participatory and Community-Based Approach in the Housing Cooperative Sector

Danaja Visković Rojs, Maša Hawlina, Brigita Gračner and Rok Ramšak

Abstract The chapter presents a theoretical overview of the participatory practice within non-profit rental housing cooperatives and the basic operational principles behind them. It stresses the importance of the societal perspective of such practice, with regard to individual benefits of the residents as well as the potential for a fairer and sustainable urban development on a broader scale beyond the provision of housing. Housing cooperatives form an integral part of housing provision systems in various parts of the world. While their organisational models may vary considerably, all generally abide to the organisational and normative principles of cooperatives, which entail the basics of participatory practices on more than just one level. They promote active citizenship through direct democratic principles in housing provision and the formation of housing policies. Furthermore, cooperatives promote member participation through all stages: planning, construction and later in management of the residents. Such organisational model stresses the importance of good communication skills that allow cooperation and consequently give rise to social capital and trust among members.

Keywords Cooperative · Housing · Participation · Community · Barcelona · Zurich

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6.1   Institutional Framework of the Housing Question—The Right to Housing or Housing as a Commodity?

The rise of alternative housing models should primarily be understood as a response to "historically and institutionally concrete situations of need satisfaction in a certain territory" (Moulaert and Nussbaumer in Lang and Roessl 2011, p. 8). In other words, alternative housing models emerged from the active response to growing issues of the housing market speculations on one hand and the possibility of active citizenship practices on the other. It has become evident that most of the market-oriented mechanisms could not meet the citizens' demand for housing around the globe. In opposition to the individualistically oriented solutions of the housing problem, we are now facing the emergence and revival of the so-called alternative initiatives and community-based approaches to housing provision. Examples of such models are housing cooperatives, co-housing, self-development, grouped housing, etc. (Zimmermann 2014), which are usually related and are present in various forms. They all nevertheless stress the importance on the empowerment of individuals through participation in autonomous yet collective activity.

Community-based and participatory rental housing, organised in cooperative manner, does not merely bring new legal and economic frames of housing provision. It thrives on democratic principles based on inclusive participation of all stakeholders it concerns. Such principles reflect a step beyond mere housing provision and represent a new lifestyle with socially oriented normative frames.

(Future) residents and members of cooperatives are ideally included in all stages of the housing provision: designing, building, managing and cohabiting. Community-oriented cooperatives also provide social security by developing a sense of belonging to a certain group or place. Postmodern cooperative models stress the importance of everyday encounters and reciprocity among members, thus augmenting social cohesion. They "often explicitly include weaker social groups and have inter-cooperative resources" (Droste 2015, p. 11).

Community-based models provide a form of economic and social stability that is based on reciprocity and strong community bonds. They come in many forms, for the form is subjected to the members' needs and preferences. They bring an alternative perspective to the understanding of housing as a basic human right. Community-oriented housing models redefine the understanding of the housing question and enable empowerment through uniting individuals with similar ideals and interests.

6.2   The Rise of Participatory Approaches in Housing: Impact on Citizenship Empowerment, Social Capital and Social Cohesion

According to Shills (Iglič 2004), empowerment and civic engagement are measured through the quality of network relationships and the citizens' attitudes regarding

the idea of a functional society. The possibility of individuals' civic engagement allows their integration into a common moral and normative frame, thus adding to social integration and consequently a stable democratic governance with participatory potential. Participation in the public sphere ideally seeks the involvement of all stakeholders and other civic organisations according to the principles of consensus. It is an integral part of the concept of governance that OECD (in Garcia 2006, p. 750) describes as "the process by which citizens collectively solve their problems and meet society's needs", using institutional tools as an instrument for achieving common goals.

Participatory approaches to housing enable residents to integrate their own needs, preferences and values into their future living environment. Moreover, it sets grounds for empowerment and reflection of active citizenship by including all residents in the later processes of building management and strengthening of direct neighbour interactions without intermediaries. Direct resident participation in day-to-day practices represents the bottom-up culture of governance, which depends upon strong community bonds that enable collective action (Garcia 2006).

Community-oriented participatory housing usually involves sharing space and living costs of its residents while also offering public space and activities to broader community on a neighbourhood level. It brings a shift from an individualistic, core family-oriented model of housing provision to higher sociability on all levels. By turning individuals into active members of society, participatory-based planning not only facilitates internal processes of housing management and relations, but also contributes to strengthening the sense of community and responsibility for its well-being (Droste 2015). The feeling of belonging to a certain community triggers reflexive and considerate behaviour towards other members (Phillips and Filipovič 2007). It also raises social capital of individuals and their trust levels—the two main features of civic engagement and efficient planning policy.

According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital can be defined as an aggregate of actual and potential assets of a certain social network that individual is a part of. The networks depend on the maintenance of acquaintanceships on different institutional levels, reciprocity of connections and a certain level of solidarity among members. Similarly, Coleman (1988) defines social capital as a type of a resource, available to individuals through network connections. Furthermore, he describes social capital as a productive capital that enables achievement of certain goals that could not be reached without the use of common network resources. Therefore, social capital can be defined through social networks, reciprocity and trust among members. It is usually measured through active membership in various voluntary associations, religious institutions, political parties and the level of trust (Schuller 2001). "Social capital enhances the benefits of investment in physical and human capital" (Putnam in Kearns and Forrest 2001, p. 2137). It refers to features of social organisation such as networks, norms and trust. All of these features facilitate coordination and cooperation of members for their mutual benefit.

Social capital offers the potential of mutual benefit that comes from the "culture of trust", which reduces individuals' inclination towards egoistic opportunism. The greater the feeling of belonging to a certain community, the higher is the moral obliga-

tion to conform to the normative rules. The obligation derives from the mutual belief that other members do not want to endanger the relationship and long-term benefit potential for the sake of the short-term individual benefit. "Community cooperatives do not only focus on a member's advantage, but act on behalf of some collective identity" (Lang and Roessl 2011, p. 1).

Community-oriented housing initiatives' impact on the strength of individuals' social bonds could also be described through basic community versus society (*gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*) dichotomy that was first introduced by Tonnies more than a century ago. The theory explains the importance of common commodities that are shared by the members of a community and the higher level of interdependence they bring. Smaller social structures with a higher level of interdependence and consequently stronger social bonds show a higher level of social cohesion, which manifests on daily basis in day-to-day encounters and activities. Members of a community—in contrary to the members of a broad notion of society—share direct ownership of basic goods. Shared ownership of the latter seems to be a crucial factor for better cooperation and successful goal achievement (Filipovič 2007). The community-oriented rental housing cooperative is a fine example of shared ownership since the members of the cooperative never own their apartment as a whole, but they own their share of the cooperative as a whole. Such an organisational structure demands certain participatory and democratic approaches to building management (in all stages), which maintains a higher level of social capital of its members. It opens a window for a direct civic engagement in participatory processes that are otherwise limited by neoliberal, top-down models of governance and housing provision in particular. Participatory housing practices in their various forms always involve the "inhabitants in the production or co-production of their living environment and in the day-to-day, routine management of the property they occupy" (D'Orazio and Zimmermann 2014, p. 1).

However, a set of clear and universal guidelines of participatory processes within the community need to be defined in order to grasp the participative management potential of community-oriented housing cooperatives. According to Williams (2006), a full and direct resident involvement in decision-making process does not always appear to be as productive as the theories of participatory decision-making policies may suggest. Case-to-case-based decision-making processes almost inevitably raise conflict of interest, no matter the common normative frame of the community members. As the study has shown (Williams 2006), the conflicts within the community may arise from as mundane questions as one of the furniture designs in the common area, resulting in resident's complete withdrawal from decision-making process or even the community as a whole. The functional community therefore needs to set rules on what, how and where certain decisions are made, without tiring residents with never-ending meetings on the one hand or excluding them from relevant decision-making process on the other. In other words, even participative decision-making processes and community management have certain disadvantages. Participative management should therefore be carefully planned, which may sometimes be easier said than done. However, the potential for productive social interactions usually rises with organisational maturity and higher trust level, thus through gaining direct experience from a long-term participatory practice.

6.3 Rental Housing Cooperative Model

Cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. Co-operatives are businesses owned and run by and for their members. Whether the members are the customers, employees or residents they have an equal say in what the business does and a share in the profits. (International Co-operative Alliance 2018)

A cooperative is an institutional form that connects individuals with certain needs into a community with shared values. It is essentially a member-owned and democratically controlled enterprise that prioritises members' needs over the mere business profit of the organisation. As such, cooperatives are an important bearer of community-oriented values originating in direct democratic participation, solidarity and principles of self-help and self-responsibility. There are numerous forms of cooperative enterprises and communities around the globe, differentiated according to members' specific interests and the sociopolitical milieu.

Regardless of structural and operational diversity, all cooperatives should follow seven basic principles that frame cooperative values into practical guidelines. As it will be seen, the principles advocate direct democracy and constant active member participation. They furthermore encourage cooperation and integration of other non-members. According to the International Cooperative Alliance (2018), the principles are as follows:

1. Voluntary and open membership:

Cooperatives are voluntary organisations, open to all individuals that are willing to accept the membership responsibilities, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic member control:

Cooperatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in decision and policy-making by the one member—one vote principle. Members also elect representatives who are accountable to other members.

3. Member economic participation:

Members contribute equitably to the cooperative capital that is controlled democratically. Surpluses are allocated into further cooperative development, support of other member approved activities or social justice among members.

4. Autonomy and independence:

Cooperatives are autonomous and self-help organisations, internally controlled by members. When entering into agreements with external actors, cooperatives act in terms that ensure democratic member control and other basic cooperative principles.

5. Education, training and information:

Cooperatives invest in further member education in order to ensure self-responsible organisation activity. Knowledge transfer is considered as a safeguard of a future cooperative development.

6. Cooperation among cooperatives:

By forming cooperative alliances, a certain support network is established. Alliances strengthen cooperative movement and provide grounds for autonomous development on local, national and regional level.

7. Concern for community:

Cooperatives should never operate in exclusive manners. Spreading cooperative values, cooperatives should aspire sustainable development of the whole community, leaving a positive impact on a broader scale. They should never exist solely for the benefit of their members but should seek ways of collaborating with other sectors.

Housing cooperative models are just one of the cooperative forms with the specific goal of housing provision for its members. Just as any other form of a cooperative, a housing cooperative is a communally oriented way of problem solving. As such, it has been used for more than a century around different parts of the world. Nonetheless, it has regained popularity in recent decades as a response to the growing housing issues that emerge from market speculations on the one hand and weak welfare state policies on the other. The primary goal of housing cooperatives is generally the provision of affordable housing and not making profit through the commodification of dwellings. Considering this, housing cooperatives are crucial to the public interest and thus present a more sustainable model of housing provision. According to Somerville (2007), they are considered an important part of the so-called third sector, which represents a sphere in between the private and the public. Following the basic cooperative values and norms, housing cooperatives operate on a community level—surpassing mere housing provision, bridging the capitals of the member residents and encouraging participatory principles of building and cohabiting.

Residents of a rental housing cooperative are primarily members of a cooperative, contrary to being an individual housing owners. Such model stimulates participatory approaches—not solely to planning, but also later in management of the building.

> Direct resident participation in the planning and management of a neighbourhood can be seen as a fundamental principle of cooperative housing organisations, which distinguishes them from the other housing providers. It is a consequence or the multiple roles of a cooperative member as owner, manager and a client of the housing organisation. The relationship between executive board member and ordinary member is non-hierarchical and personalised, as they are immediate neighbours in the same housing estate. (Lang and Novy 2014, p. 1754)

6.3.1 La Borda—Introducing a Housing Cooperative Model in Barcelona, Spain

Since the global financial crisis and the burst of the Spanish housing bubble, Spanish economy and particularly its housing sector have been suffering grave consequences, such as increasing pressure on households and impact on the financial, labour and housing markets. But the crisis in 2008 also created opportunities in the housing market for alternative housing schemes. That was also the starting point for the birth of the housing cooperative La Borda in district Can Batlló in Barcelona in 2012. It developed without the support of the city, although in 2015, La Borda did sign a contract with the city of Barcelona for the lease of land. In parallel with the housing crisis, there was an emergence of a strong social economy, particularly a cooperative movement, and the resurgence of a strong neighbourhood movement, which aimed to develop an alternative model that did not rely on the traditional market-driven housing agents (Cabré and Andrés 2017). Two years after the cooperative began to operate, it already presented drawings, a model, a preliminary study of the building and a draft of the statutes for a future cooperative to the community. The project was open to anyone willing to participate (Garcia 2015).

The reference model for La Borda is the Danish model, also known as the Andel Model, which is based on a private initiative of non-profit cooperatives that develop and manage housing for their members who pay the returnable entry fee. The members of the cooperative participate in all decision-making processes through an assembly. One of the more important characteristics of the model is its non-speculative nature that considers housing as a basic right rather than a commodity (Cabré and Andrés 2017).

Though the mentioned features already imply the participatory- and community-based approach of La Borda, there are several components that are derived from these features. Since La Borda is a non-profit housing cooperative, autonomous and democratic, all its members govern the cooperative, define strategies, as well as approve and monitor the projects related to the development process according to their needs. Participation has been organised through various work groups, workshops and discussions at the General Assembly. La Borda also has a technical support group for proposals (Cabré and Andrés 2017).

In addition to its self-management, La Borda also relies on its members as volunteers for the construction of the building, which reduces the cost of building and enables a higher control of the project. All these features strengthen community life (Cabré and Andrés 2017).

Furthermore, La Borda encourages community life through its communal living model, which includes shared common facilities and spaces that encourage interaction between residents. These spaces are laundry, kitchen, living room, guest flat, multipurpose room, health and care, bicycle parking, storage, shared objects and tools and a co-working space. The first common and most important space discussed was the laundry service room. Its planning consisted of three phases: (1) presenting the service, (2) encountering the service, (3) selecting a scenario (Garcia 2015).

Only to line up three scenarios took them half a year of discussions in assemblies and commissions, and a few more to choose which scenario to pilot. They took into account the results of the questionnaire of the future inhabitants and two types of management—self-managed or externalised and ecological view, etc. (Garcia 2015).

Common spaces are meant to serve as meeting rooms for Con Batlló's neighbourhood movement, which involves concern for and participation of community itself. Another characteristic of the cooperative is the focus on sustainability in both low environmental impact of the construction project and the sustainable usage of the building. Both promote sustainable development and reduce the potential damage for the residents and wider community. La Borda is also based on member economic participation, specifically social and cooperative economy (Cabré and Andrés 2017).

6.3.2 Mehr Als Wohnen—A Broad Community-Oriented Project in a Strong Housing Cooperative Network and Supportive Environment of the Zurich Municipality, Switzerland

While La Borda is a younger cooperative and its single building will presumably be built 2018, *Mehr als wohnen* (Eng. More than Housing; hereinafter MAW) is a much more extensive project situated in Hunziger, north of Zurich. The project began in 2007, when the City of Zurich and its housing cooperatives celebrated the centenary of government support for cooperative housing construction using the slogan "100 years of more than housing". Intensive discussions about the future of housing that followed the festivities led to the founding of the building cooperative MAW, which involved the financial participation of 55 Zurich housing cooperatives and the City of Zurich itself (Borowski 2016). Its nature of establishment therefore already foresaw the legacy of democratic membership, environmental care, community building, etc.

MAW is an example of an open development process that includes collaboration between professionals from different backgrounds by engaging the public, private and educational sector with additional involvement of the end-users. The latter assures that the project corresponds to the citizens' needs and new ideas. The project development took into account the benefits of early participation processes which enable better commitment to the project and a higher content of the actual users (Purtik et al. 2016).

The project development was based on a working group's model that favours an inclusive participative and democratic decision-making process. Four working groups were established as follows:

1. Thematic groups for utilisation of the neighbourhood, economy, ecology and technology, which had monthly meetings that involved 50 members of the founding cooperatives and MAW staff;

2. so-called echo rooms which happened twice a year were open to the public, had an external moderator and discussed sustainable construction, building technologies and energy, use of ground floors and volunteering;
3. volunteers of informal working groups and collaborative partners working on complementary currency, contract farming, sustainability in Hunziker Areal, regional sourcing, urban farming and living with the elderly;
4. neighbourhood groups which met monthly and worked on complementary currency, public library, outdoor areas, swap area, regional vegetable sourcing (Purtik et al. 2016). In addition to the working groups, regular public forums were also held. This so-called echo rooms initiated dialogue with the broader public and invited external actors, such as universities, schools and foundations (Purtik et al. 2016).

Today, the cooperative is comprised of 13 buildings with 395 residential units and additional various non-residential premises, community rooms and green spaces (Purtik et al. 2016). There are 35 retail spaces and shared care and community facilities. MAW is a home for around 1200 residents and 150 employees that live and work across the precinct (McMaster 2016):

> A series of subsidies are offered to low-income earners, and 10% of the apartments are allocated to charities and not-for-profits, including an orphanage. The result is a development that includes a mixture of people, ranging from recently settled refugees to middle income professionals.

6.4 Effects of the Participatory Cooperative Housing Model on Neighbourhoods, States and Societies

6.4.1 Cooperative Schools of Democracy

The essence of a cooperative is to fulfil the needs and wishes of its members. In order to achieve this goal, each member has to continually reaffirm his or her wishes through the process of participatory democracy. Participation in decisions which impact one's life through their housing brings more satisfaction with the created living environment and more security with the knowledge that nothing can be decided outside this process. The principle of participatory democracy is or at least should be included in every housing cooperative, and therefore, cooperatives can be seen as schools of democracy and active citizenship with the crucial emphasis on solidarity and acting for the good of the whole community, not just for the benefits of an individual (Sørvoll and Bengtsson 2018). The cooperative principle "one member—one vote" can therefore be seen as a process of reviving the education and socialisation in political engagement.

Members and neighbourhood residents gain more political power when they are connected to a housing cooperative. Cooperatives encourage citizen participation,

which empowers people who otherwise would not be the decision-makers, by Arnstein's definition: "it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society" (1969, p. 216). In further promoting their chances of becoming involved in decision-making and influencing their neighbourhood and their cities, cooperatives can play an important role. "Participation in housing projects has also been found to play an important role in empowering beneficiaries or community members to become part of the general political process and to have a voice in decisions that shape the community" (Davidson et al. 2007, p. 102). They can significantly change the position of an individual by backing them with their social capital and influence in the local community and its institutions. It can provide the much-needed access to powerful actors and government bodies. Moreover, if the residents do not want to get directly involved or do not have the means to, housing cooperatives have been noted to take the position of intermediaries between residents and decision-making institutions or actors. Lang and Novy (2014, p. 1745) point to the case of Vienna and argue that the connection with the cooperative in the position of intermediary allows "residents to obtain social capital which links them to decisive resources and decision-making".

6.4.2   Replacing Public Institutions?

As already mentioned, contemporary alternative housing models were developed mostly because the market failed to provide enough adequate housing, and also as an answer to the rise of housing speculations. In many ways, cooperatives can be seen as acting against the market logic and speculation, with their main aim of fulfilling members' needs rather than accumulating capital, and with the specific form of collective ownership and management. They have been known to provide much-needed apartments (especially to low- or middle-income households) when the market and the state failed to do so. That is why many of the contemporary housing cooperatives developed in a time of crisis of the housing market, as we saw in the case of La Borda. However, the spread of cooperative housing can be seen in a negative context: as outsourcing the duties and responsibilities that traditionally belonged under the auspices of the government of cities and states.

Lang and Novy (2014, p. 1744) observed that cooperative housing often tries "to fill the gap left by the withdrawal of the state in providing affordable housing". Therefore, low-income cooperative housing projects can be seen as substituting social housing, within the frame of the neoliberal shrinking of the state and favouring the capital's needs over the needs of the people. These projects, which are said to fill in the resources previously provided by public institutions, often involve some level of civic participation and voluntarism and "can also have the potential to serve as a resource for cushioning the outsourcing of former (local) state responsibilities in neo-liberalising cities" (Rosol 2016, p. 86).

This political strategy has been marked with the name "roll-back neoliberalism". Its main aim was to lessen the extent and influence of the state and its institutions

in order to make way for the spread of private enterprise and competitive logic even in providing for the most essential human needs. In the field of the housing sector, this is escorted by the privatisation of public housing and land, deregulation, and supporting private real-estate developers and their profits (Peck and Tickel 2007). All of which tend to make housing less affordable.

In times when welfare states are shrinking and the position of the most vulnerable parts of the population is worsening, the role of the voluntary sector increases. The voluntary sector tries to fill in the withdrawal of resources and services and replace them, which is also attractive to politicians who are facing budgetary cuts. Although this may be seen as a good thing—offering services to people in need—it is also legitimising the shrinking of public institutions and budgetary cuts. In these circumstances "community participation in the public service provision is not necessarily an emancipatory claiming of rights by citizens anymore or only but can instead be understood as part of a distinct political rationality that aims at passing state responsibilities on to civil society" (Rosol 2016, pp. 86–87). In this regard, housing cooperatives can be seen to lessen the hits of neoliberalism on the welfare state and therefore on public housing by considering the needs of a community, participating with its members and providing much-needed affordable apartments, all of which used to be the work of governmental institutions.

But neoliberalism does not focus solely on shrinking of the state, it is more accurate to describe it as a transformation of the state and its functions. "New state forms, new models of regulation, new regimes of governance, with the aim of consolidating and managing both marketization and its consequences" (Peck and Tickel 2007, p. 33) are what most characterises the process of roll-out neoliberalism. In circumstances where the former institutions and structures pull back, new structures emerge. As a part of the new forms of governance developed the so-called community governance, which is best described as a hybrid between the neoliberal characteristic of self-reasonability and active citizenship. Community is seen as the ideal instrument for serving the needs of local residents because of the shared value system of its members, which also implies the trust of every member that his contributions to the community will benefit every member individually as well as the community as a whole. Therefore, it is believed that community governance does not only reduce the costs for the public institutions, but also provide a better and more accepted policy (Adams and Hess 2001). In this form of governance, "communities are then expected to look to their own means of governance to be able to survive" (O'Toole and Burdess 2004, p. 434).

Another way in which governmental bodies try to outsource their services is through public–private partnership schemes. Mehr Als Wohnen is a project that grows on the basis of private–public partnership, as are many other housing cooperatives. In order to provide affordable and quality apartments, it is in some cases necessary to gain some kind of support from the state. In the case of Mehr Als Wohnen, public support takes the form of a renting lease for the land with a symbolic rent, property rights, subsidies and public guarantees. As Barcelona or Spain do not yet have a system in place to help develop housing cooperatives, La Borda had to find significant other sources that were prepared to support the project. For this, they relied

on cooperation with cooperative for financial services Coop57 and on the solidarity, social finance and social impact founding.

Housing cooperatives fit very well in the scheme of neoliberalism. Although their intention is to fulfil the needs of its members and encourage a sense of belonging through community building, the negative side effect is that they can also be seen as an instrument for the "outsourcing of former local state responsibilities for public services and urban infrastructure" (Rosol 2016, p. 85). In this context, they help legitimise the cuts to the welfare state by encouraging voluntarism, active participation and community building. However, there still seems to be some potential for cooperatives to grow out of this context if citizen participation in housing cooperative leads to a redistribution of power, not just on the level of the community, but broader—on the level of the city or the state.

Real citizen participation is characterised by a redistribution of power, which can bring citizens who were previously excluded from the political sphere into positions of power. In order to achieve this, housing cooperatives need to "delegate power to residents and, at the very top, give them control of the decision-making process and the distribution of resources, such as participatory budgeting efforts today" (Smith 2016, p. 31). If they succeed, they can help shift the neoliberal agenda and have an influence on the political content (Elwood 2002). But if housing cooperatives do not focus on their members, the danger is that they become much more oriented simply towards management and can start to resemble corporate establishments, as has happened to some housing cooperatives in Vienna (Lang and Novy 2014).

6.4.3   Housing Cooperatives as Gentrifiers or Regulators of the Rental Housing Market

Housing cooperatives, as previously established, focus on fulfilling their members' needs. However, based on the seventh cooperative principle, the concern for well-being and satisfaction is not limited just to the narrow community of the cooperative's members, but also on the broader local community. One of the goals of housing cooperatives is therefore improving the living conditions of all the residents in the neighbourhood where the housing cooperative is located. This is to be achieved through participation on the neighbourhood level, which provides information about the potential future projects that could improve the residents' everyday lives. La Borda, actually deriving from the Can Batlló neighbourhood movement, is a good example of a cooperative directly addressing the needs of its immediate surroundings and the broader neighbourhood as the local community was involved in the design process from the very beginning and certain spaces within the building will be available for direct use of that same community.

Housing cooperatives can play a substantial role in regulating the renting housing market as a part of the non-profit housing sector. If the non-profit sector becomes big enough—has a similar presence in the share of the market and "in the mar-

ket segments where profit providers operate" (Kemeny et al. 2005, p. 858)—that it can compete with the private, profit-seeking housing sector, the former becomes a sort of regulator of the market. Non-profit housing strives for quality apartments at affordable prices—the rent is usually set to cover the costs and any surplus is then reinvested in either sustaining the dwellings as they are (mainly repairs) or in improving them. By forgoing profits and therefore offering cheaper housing, the non-profit owners attract more renters. If the profit housing providers want to compete with the non-profit providers, they also have to lower their rents. Furthermore, "the non-profit sector may also offer better quality dwellings and greater security of tenure, which could force the profit sector to match the offer, thereby reducing the need for regulation" (Kemeny et al. 2005, p. 858). In most places where cooperatives work, the presence of non-profit providers is not strong enough to really have a regulatory influence. The two examples (where the cooperative housing is also very strong) might be found in Zurich and Vienna, where the profit providers have to match the offers of the non-profit providers in order to be competitive. But this may quickly spread to other places. The cooperative housings are rising in many European states are just now, and once the models are established, the housing cooperative sector can grow rapidly. La Borda is a pilot project in Barcelona, but even before the end of the construction phase, new housing cooperative projects are already in the making.

Housing cooperatives and similar participatory projects can have a great influence on the neighbourhood through various community-lead participatory projects, but that can also come with a downside—if the living standards in the neighbourhood substantially improve, it will not be long before the real-estate market prices rise and the process of gentrification takes place. The people who contributed to improving the neighbourhood are consequently often forced to leave their homes for the benefit of making profits by others. As Rosol puts it (2016, p. 90):

> … if strategies to improve living conditions in a neighbourhood are not combined with mechanisms that prevent displacement of residents and keep housing affordable, even the most well-meaning projects can become the engine of gentrification.

6.5 Conclusion

Mehr als Wohnen, which would be roughly translated to more than housing, seems to be the perfect name for a cooperative housing establishment; not just for the housing and work complex in Zurich, but for every rental housing cooperative that abides by the seven cooperative principles. This distinct form of housing provision becomes more than a residence precisely because it entails participation on every stage of development and use. It is the participation of residents in ownership and democratic management of the cooperative that makes them more economically and socially secure regarding their dwelling. Participatory approach to developing and managing enables residents to integrate their needs, wishes and preferences into their dwellings and common spaces. However, participation in housing cooperatives most

often surpasses the mere essentials of housing and is encouraged in other aspects of living.

Through participation, housing cooperatives encourage the development of a community that connects its members, but also neighbourhood residents. Housing cooperatives often offer public spaces, services and activities to non-residents, which can substantially improve neighbourhood life and encourage sociability on all levels. By developing a sense of belonging to a certain community, people become more responsible for their well-being. Through the process, they gain more social capital, build on trust and therefore feel more socially secure. Participation on the level of the cooperative can also encourage them to get involved in participatory projects and decision-making on the level of the neighbourhood or even the city. In summary, living in a democratic participatory housing project can simulate further citizen activity.

Even though participatory practice appears to be beneficial for social interactions, a question of successful and adequate housing management should not be neglected. Participatory approaches to building and community design or management do not always meet the variety of resident preferences per se. Consequently, a high level of frustration might appear, resulting in members' withdrawal from communal social interaction. Although community-oriented ways of living may bring a significant potential for one's social reflexivity, they can also be tiresome and time consuming. This leads to the conclusion that participatory processes need to be carefully planned and managed, even though they may seem to be the single most spontaneous practice within equitable communities.

The negative aspects that can emerge with participatory housing provision on a systemic level have also been discussed. First, renting housing cooperatives are more often than not based on voluntary work from organisers and its residents and are generally subject to the public–private partnerships. Therefore, it seems that they fit into the neoliberal strategy of privatisation of traditionally public domains, cutting public funding, shrinking the state and externalising public services. This forces people and their communities to become self-reliable and can leave them without the needed services and support. Second, by improving the neighbourhoods in which the cooperatives are embedded, they can contribute to the process of gentrification, which threatens the local population.

When talking about the beneficial effects of a housing cooperative sector, we also should not disregard the importance of the rental status of the housing units. By keeping all of the housing units in the permanent ownership of a cooperative, the future market speculations of separate dwellings may be prevented and sustainably regulated through not-for-profit (where rents are based on costs) rent. Only as such, housing cooperatives can be a part of the non-profit housing sector, influence rental housing market regulation and by doing that, providing the possibility for affordable housing alternative with the participatory potential.

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Chapter 7
Participatory Research on Heritage- and Culture-Based Development: A Perspective from South-East Europe

Janez Nared and David Bole

Abstract The objective of the chapter is to highlight the relevance and implementation of culture- and heritage-led regional and local development in South-East Europe. By implementing the participatory research methodology at two major events in Europe, we analysed the practitioners' views on the topics of culture- and heritage-led development. Our results showed that culture and heritage are characteristic and unique and could provide a distinctive added value for regional development as a branding tool, a factor of motivation, community empowerment and a strong element of local identity. Although protection is an important issue in cultural heritage, it should be complemented by education, identification, tourism and development, especially by fostering the economic potentials reflected in increased tourism flows and resulting multiplier effects. Culture and heritage are deeply embedded in a local context, so local communities must be closely involved in the management structures and their views and requirements must be considered. Participatory planning of such sites is welcomed since it includes "negotiating" solutions horizontally and vertically with the main planning goal of making positive changes in local communities and integrating both perspectives (conservation and development) to achieve sustainable futures.

Keywords Culture · Heritage · Development · Economic potentials · Participatory research · Sustainable development

7.1   Introduction

South-East Europe is rich in cultural heritage, and its varied culture is still struggling with its own development path and transition to a post-socialist and post-war economic era. To tackle this problem, the European Commission launched the

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South-East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme that addressed culture as an important part of the sustainable development of the entire region (Nared et al. 2014).

Culture and cultural heritage can be seen as a development factor, as they can be used in various ways to contribute to the quality of life in individual communities. Their economic potential is reflected in increased tourism flows and resulting multiplier effects, in regional marketing and branding, as well as having an important role in education, identification and image (Nared et al. 2013). As said by Graham (2001, p. 1006), cultural heritage

> … is an economic resource; one exploited everywhere as a primary component of strategies to promote tourism, economic development and rural and urban regeneration. But heritage is also a knowledge, a cultural product and a political resource and thus possesses a crucial socio-political function.

In a wider context, local culture is an important component of regional development, and its protection and development must be closely integrated with planning and developing the entire region. The initial development resource represented by local culture must be evaluated and a great deal of knowledge, creativity and innovation must be invested into it in order to gain the developmental benefits for the community. Culture-based development relies on local actors and their relations and is an intricate combination of a primary source (local culture) together with the human and social capital of the region or the local community (Bole et al. 2013). As other authors have determined (Bigaran et al. 2013; Šmid Hribar and Ledinek Lozej 2013), culture can only be an initial development resource if it is suitably evaluated, negotiated and implemented by a myriad of different stakeholders.

According to the recommendations set out in the Convention (1972), heritage, similarly to culture, should be included in the community life. However, it is important not to exceed the carrying capacities or threaten the authenticity of the area or monument (Ringbeck 2008; Ruoss and Alfarè 2013; Iliopoulou-Georgudaki and Alfarè 2014) and to ensure that the measures do not reduce the exceptional universal values of a specific protected monument. In this way, managing cultural and heritage sites combines both protection and development, each having its own specificities, which calls for integral planning of the cultural heritage sites. This requires constant interactions among the involved stakeholders, which demonstrates that the participation process is of utmost importance (Nared et al. 2013, p. 359). Foremost, the participatory process should be a bottom-up process taking place in real planning areas and solving real issues (e.g. Alfarè and Nared 2014; Nared 2014), whereas it might be supplemented by a participatory research that binds experts and practitioners in searching for more general and strategic solutions.

Our initiatives supported the development process in South-East Europe by tackling both issues mentioned above. We studied the relevance and implementation of culture and cultural heritage in regional and local development, and we were involved in the participatory planning at the broader scale. The latter meant carrying out participatory research for guiding development models, strategies and recommendations in the entire South-East Europe. Since the local cases are often very specific and thus

difficult to transfer to other areas, participatory research-driven results that involve stakeholders and experts from the entire South-East Europe and beyond could be more useful and internationally relevant. To this end, we present the results achieved within two participatory processes, the first taking place in Cetinje, Montenegro and the other in Heraklion, Greece. Both considered the local culture and cultural heritage as factors of local and regional development. In addition to presenting the outcomes of this research, we wish to reflect on the positive and negative aspects of carrying out participatory research with experts and practitioners. We believe this will be beneficial not only to those interested in culture- and heritage-based development, but also any other researchers who are enquiring into a participatory or any other kind of action research.

There are many studies focusing specifically on the role of cultural heritage in economic development (the latest being Dümcke and Gnedovsky 2013; Tudorache 2016; Kouřilová and Pělucha 2017). The European Commission (2014) followed suit, establishing that cultural heritage and cultural activities are seen as having significant economic and social impacts, not just through cultural tourism, but also through fostering cultural and creative industries. Culture-based development has become a buzzword in many cities, towns and regions where new development strategies and new growth are sought (Tubadji 2012). Large flagship culture and cultural heritage projects are often central to this kind of development with museums, exhibitions, festivals and similar activities, all falling under the scope of cultural tourism. Yet some studies show that large-scale cultural projects do little for new development if they are not positioned into the existing local context and supported by the local practitioners and community (Grodach 2008, 2010). Sacco et al. (2013) provided a critique of culture- and heritage-led development initiatives and of researchers taking an either overly instrumental, over-engineered or parochial attitude towards it. In contrast, they propose that culture-led development should be based on negotiating the economic and social conditions that enable the culture to be performed and executed through the proper strategic coordination with the local economy and community (2013). We consider participatory research to be a way to facilitate this coordination, mainly because the final objective of a participatory research is not only to gain new knowledge but also to facilitate the local communities and practitioners with open debates about developmental, societal and other issues (Bole et al. 2017).

However, up to now, these open debates have been underrepresented and rarely used for policy advice and policy recommendations. The chapter tries to fill this gap and provides the explanation on how a participatory research can lead to coordinated and consented solutions in the field of culture- and cultural heritage-led development.

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the practitioners' views on the topics of culture- and heritage-led development. To this end, we have formed the following research questions tackled by the participatory research:

1. What is the role of culture and cultural heritage in sustainable development?
2. How to reflect the uniqueness and non-renewable character of cultural heritage?
3. Which are the economic potentials of cultural heritage and culture in general?

4. What is the proper territorial setting for fostering cultural heritage and culture?
5. Which are the lessons learned from the South-East Europe Programme perspective?

7.2 Method

The research was conducted in the area covered by the former transnational cooperation programme South-East Europe with two transnational cooperation projects (CHERPLAN and SY_CULTour), which dealt with the planning of cultural heritage sites and the development of cultural tourism in rural areas.

The participatory research took place in the scope of two international conferences, one taking place in Cetinje, Montenegro (Fig. 7.1), attended by 31 experts from nine countries, and the other in Heraklion, Greece, attended by 137 experts from 11 countries. In this type of research, the methodological question arises as to which groups of persons should or must be involved, especially in view of the fact that different groups have developed different knowledge in the area under study (Bergold and Thomas 2012). We identified three types of participants:

Fig. 7.1 Workshop is Cetinje, Montenegro. *Photograph* Janez Nared

- The first type was the participants whose involvement was pivotal and were invited directly because the participatory process would not be sensible without their knowledge. These were mainly professionals and practitioners in culture-led and heritage-led development, its management and planning. They included also policymakers, representatives of responsible agencies and organisations (UNESCO, responsible ministries of national states, planning authorities, etc.).
- The second participant type was those who expressed an interest in cooperating themselves since they have been involved or are interested in this kind of development. The sessions were open to the public and those participants applied to be part of this research. They were mostly members of certain NGOs (culture, heritage, tourism), representatives of territorial authorities (regions, local communities).
- The third type was researchers and academics. They were either steering the process as facilitators and were involved from the beginning or were invited to the interactive sessions because they were experts in certain fields.

Overall, we believe that the participant selection adhered to the fundamental principles of conducting this kind of research (Bergold and Thomas 2012): we achieved a balanced mix of researchers and practitioners (co-researchers); and second, by having an open-door policy and enabling participants to "register" to the events, we did not exclude anyone or any kind of knowledge (in the case of the Cetinje conference, a number of external was rather limited).

From the methodological side, we decided to carry out the research with a smaller interactive session with all the participants (workshop). In both cases, the participants participated in the interactive sessions led by the preselected facilitators. The participants at each conference were divided into groups and each designated facilitator spent half an hour with each group covering a specific topic. After half an hour, the facilitators switched, so that each group had a chance to provide their opinions and policy recommendations for each of the topics. In this way, we ensured that each individual or group had a voice and a chance to express their knowledge in a comfortable setting. In the end, the facilitators consolidated the answers and presented them in the plenary session, which also provided room for corrections if anyone felt they had been misunderstood. In addition, presenting the results of all the groups enabled us to draw some conclusions and identify how the discussed fields interlinked together. This is very important because the research process has to be self-reflective and different perceptions of the new knowledge should be negotiated among the participants (Bergold and Thomas 2012).

The research design proved useful, as it enables everyone to have a voice on the issue; furthermore, as the same questions were repeated from group to group, the facilitator is able to augment the questions according to how the discussion develops and to verify the gained results in the following group. The main prerequisites for this kind of research are suitable spaces for the group discussion and that facilitators understand the aim of the research and raise the right questions. It is also desirable that they have sufficient expertise in the field they are discussing. As shown by the results, some facilitators reoriented the questions in a way that suited their mindset

or past research experience, which did not always contribute to the coherence of the process.

Despite these limitations, the performed research provided well-calibrated results that support the analytical part of the research, as well as provide important inputs into policy-oriented recommendations.

7.3 Results and Discussion

The following section presents the final results as discovered and "negotiated" by the participants at the two conferences. First, we present their answers to the five research questions; second, we discuss the wider implications of the participatory research and policy approaches in culture- and heritage-led development.

7.3.1 The Role of Cultural Heritage in Sustainable Development

When dealing with cultural heritage and sustainability, several issues arise, like defining a development path and related problems, as well as defining the objectives, the drivers of development and the specific territorial level at which the problem should be addressed. As confirmed by the participants, a partnership among all the relevant actors is of crucial importance and must be understood as an approach or methodology and not as a solution. It can be designed in an objective way and measured by indicators. Furthermore, an important factor in providing sustainable development using cultural heritage is the definition of the problem and the objectives. The various actors that make up the partnership namely have different expectations, knowledge, interests and capacities, which might result in completely different goals and definitions of the problem.

Although they may have all the competencies to steer the development, various territorial levels differ in jurisdiction over the related matter and there may also be discrepancies between their development visions and the visions of the inhabitants and the private sector. It is also necessary to make a decision regarding the concreteness of the strategies and plans as well as their time span. In general, national and regional authorities should take responsibility for the long-term strategic planning, and however, this should be closely coordinated with the aspirations of the local communities that strive for short-term results and solutions that lead to a higher quality of life for the inhabitants. This should help define a long-term path that can be applied in small and short-term steps, guaranteeing constant and visible progress. This finding can be correlated to Kotter's eight steps for institutional change that among others clearly underline the short- and long-term wins that each activity/process should try to achieve (Kotter 1996). The planning should be integrative, so as not to raise con-

flicts and to respect the needs of all the sectors and all the social groups. Networking and the participative process are of crucial importance here to focus the views and to define an acceptable and adequate development vision; they also enable overcoming the deficiencies of each individual group (for more detailed positive effects of the participatory process, see Nared et al. 2015).

7.3.2 The Uniqueness and Non-renewable Character of Cultural Heritage

The main characteristics of cultural heritage are integrity and authenticity, both indicating the unique character of cultural heritage sites as well as other intangible forms of culture. Therefore, when applying development measures, one of the first steps is determining what we would like to protect and how flexible we are at taking these measures. As explained by the participating experts, there are numerous classifications of cultural heritage, but are often incomplete, and there is a constant fear of losing important heritage with its increasing commercialisation and commodification (Bunten 2008). Another threat to cultural heritage is a lack of the financial assets needed to preserve it and the interest of the owners to use their properties according to their aspirations. To enable both protection and development, context-dependent solutions must be developed that reflect the characteristics of each specific area, its heritage and possible development paths. Limits have to be found that ensure the proper maintenance of cultural heritage and that are also flexible enough to enable development where it does not contradict the most unique elements of the heritage.

7.3.3 The Economic Potentials of Cultural Heritage

Even though the aim was to explore the economic potentials of cultural heritage beyond tourism, the experts were continuously eliciting tourism as the most obvious and most effective economic use of cultural heritage. The central focus is on the cultural heritage's embeddedness in a specific territory that cannot be reproduced. It is not transferable elsewhere and it thus guarantees a rare economic asset. On the other side, the demand is almost unlimited, as the tourism sector and the number of tourists constantly grow.

The wider benefit of tourism is also the multiplier it creates for a local economy by boosting production and new jobs in the local food and handicraft sectors, the revitalisation of areas and other connected activities. It also broadens the group of people benefiting from the visitors, which is especially important for people who had not been involved before. At the same time, the efficient management of cultural heritage sites must be ensured so as not to exceed the carrying capacity of an area or a monument and particularly not to stimulate hit-and-run tourism that might have

negative consequences in the longer term. To prevent hit-and-run tourism, cultural heritage sites should strive to balance tourism and heritage conservation, clearly defining the limits and possible solutions and thus avoiding unfavourable impacts on cultural heritage (Ruoss and Alfarè 2013).

However, as observed in Idrija (Slovenia), cultural heritage does not only influence tourism, but can stimulate economic relations through the values and intrinsic culture not only for the cultural sector, but well beyond through openness, creativity, export-orientedness, etc. (Urbanc et al. 2012; Nared et al. 2013; Nared et al. 2014; Zorn et al. 2015).

An additional asset that cultural heritage and culture offer is that the recognition of an area or a specific cultural heritage object enables branding. Uniqueness is economically attractive, meaning private investors can use cultural heritage for branding, and however, the community must control the use of the brand to prevent its inappropriate use. Not only brands for marketable products are based on cultural heritage, but also those for regions, cities and other locations (Nypan 2008). The local economy can also be boosted through a reinforced connection of the products to places, which fosters identification with the product. A particular label can be used to ensure quality control and the origin. Some revenue might also return to a community to be invested into protection and conservation, e.g. the case of Saaremaa vodka using typical windmills from Saaremaa Island (Estonia) as the company's brand and investing some of the revenue into the renovation of the windmills (Eppich et al. 2013).

7.3.4 The Territorial Setting for Fostering Cultural Heritage and Cultural Values

Despite the fact that the importance of individual territorial levels differs from country to country, the participants agreed that there is a huge divide among the needs at the local level and the regulation and funding mechanisms at the level of the European Union.

The local level is the one that could ensure bottom-up processes, and the local leaders could make a difference if they were able to acquire sufficient legal and financial power. The voluntary sector and local activists can also be an important driver of development at the local level, often successful without the need to raise funds. Compared to other territorial levels, the local level can be effective in networking, creating local partnerships and engaging the volunteers. Local initiatives include local knowledge and human potential. This result is in accordance with similar research, where it was found that certain social groups, such as the elderly, see small-scale heritage-led tourism as a tool for the community building and strengthening social ties within the area (Bole et al. 2017). Similarly, Scheyvens (1999) observed positive impacts on the social and personal empowerment of tourism in local communities, which reaffirms the need to involve the voluntary sector and local initiatives in heritage- and culture-based development.

Higher territorial levels frequently hold a decisive power in both legal and financial terms, but are often detached from the local needs. Bureaucracy and abstractedness at the European and also national level often hinder local projects. Thus, some more power should be devolved to local levels; the national and regional strategies must fully support the local level as well.

The mismatch between the functional and administrative region can also be an additional hindrance to the effective implementation of projects and would require effective territorial governance by interlinking various territorial levels and a greater flexibility in the decisions.

7.3.5 Lessons Learned: A Perspective from South-East Europe

Culture and cultural heritage are important assets that provide income and jobs by fostering tourism and related activities, although they are often neglected by the central governments. This result is also in accordance with other research, where culture was found to improve social cohesion and renew interest in the preservation, interpretation and knowledge of the local culture and cultural heritage (Richards 2007). This calls for an optimisation of the resources and the human and social capital, which can be achieved with a capitalisation and transfer of successfully implemented projects and methodologies, a better communication and presentation of the positive results, as well as with the engagement of volunteers (e.g. elderly, youth), which ensures their social inclusion and at the same time decreases the cost of the projects.

In territorial terms, better cooperation must be ensured among all the territorial levels. It is also crucial to educate the decision-makers about the effects and the role of culture and cultural heritage in the development of an area.

7.3.6 A Reflection and the Wider Implications of This Research on Future Heritage- and Culture-Based Development

We believe that this research puts forward at least two major considerations. The first one is connected to the object of the research. The results reiterate the notion that heritage- and culture-led development should be positioned in a local or regional context and encompass a diverse range of stakeholders. These not only include cultural workers, heritage conservation-related experts or development and tourism experts, but also the local community, specific social groups within it and the NGO sector. This diverse set of stakeholders is necessary to create a framework where preservation and development go hand in hand, just as in the case of ecotourism development

(Scheyvens 1999). This diversity of the involved stakeholders is extremely important to ensure that the "developmental aspect" respects the local culture and preserves the cultural heritage. Vice versa, as shown in some other examples, reviving certain activities for economic gain can also revive certain old knowledge and heritage. There is a good example from Slovenia, where the community of Črni Vrh has revived flax production as a tourist product, sparking renewed interest in the younger population to learn about this almost forgotten and disappearing form of cultural heritage (Bole et al. 2017). Additionally, the results showed that practitioners do not instrumentalise culture and heritage in local development initiatives, which was the criticism of certain initiatives by Sacco et al. (2013). Instrumentalisation, which considers culture and heritage statically as "something out there" to be used to solve a certain problem (Ilmonen 2015) is overly simplistic. It seems that the method used in this research, where the results were negotiated through a series of workshops, enabled the participants to go further and recognise not just the material, but also the non-material developmental capital of culture and heritage (social cohesion, community empowerment, intergenerational dialogue, etc.).

The second reflection concerns the method and its possible use in culture- and heritage-led development. Although the aim of our study was more academic in nature, we believe that participatory methods are very suitable for the future planning of this kind of development. As already explained above, culture- and heritage-led development is much too complex and transdisciplinary to be carried out with traditional planning methods. In our case, the participants came from various backgrounds and this participatory method enabled them to discover the broader framework of culture- and heritage-led development. This meant that they were challenged to negotiate rather than "defend" certain notions and thus avoid the traditional conflict between the ideas of conservation on one side and development on the other. Second, participatory planning inherently engages the local community from the very start of the process, meaning that development is more in-tune with its expectations (Mahjabeen et al. 2009). Moreover, it is not possible to plan sustainable development without taking into consideration the cultural processes at the everyday, micro-level (Ilmonen 2015).

Our results partially confirm Nasser's four objectives of the synergy between heritage and development (2003, p. 477):

- The need for long-term planning (the participants in our research corroborated that long-terms goals should be set, but with short-term steps at the local level);
- The need to protect heritage, since it will be degraded if over-exploited (the participants corroborated this statement);
- Change and development are necessary (the participants see culture and heritage as a possible tool for this change);
- Equitable access to heritage and culture resources by the local community and visitors (the participants especially emphasised the role of local communities and vulnerable groups within it).

Our research did have certain limitations, which we have to acknowledge. Our experience was that the process should be moderated in an unbiased manner, or to put

it simply, the workshop moderators should be listeners and not speakers. This is an unusual position for researchers, because of their traditional role as "wise outsiders". Additionally, this is a long-term process that cannot yield instant results. Getting the right mix of participants is crucial and it can take months to ensure the heterogeneity of the participants. For instance, in Heraklion, we had enough time to invite the interested public and NGOs, while in Cetinje, the selection was more limited. The human input in the organisational matters is also substantial, making this approach quite time-consuming.

7.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to analyse the practitioners' views on the topics of culture- and heritage-led development and to provide an explanation of how a participatory research can lead to coordinated and consented solutions in this field. The participants of this research both in Heraklion and in Cetinje came to similar conclusions that development and heritage can be complementary. The negotiated results from the workshops showed that long-term strategies of culture- and heritage-led development at the policy level should be implemented by short-term concrete implementations with participation from the local communities (not forgetting the disadvantaged groups). They also recognised the economic and non-economic benefits of this synergy and the uniqueness of each heritage site and each local culture, rendering uniform and all-embracing plans impossible. They concluded that this kind of development is not possible without respecting the needs and capacities of the local communities and reconfirming that not just economic, but also social and human capital are needed to make and realise the plans of culture- and heritage-based development.

They also pointed out certain shortcomings regarding current heritage- and culture-based development. First is the lack of cooperation between the territorial levels and the national and supra-national levels, which are often detached from the needs of the regional and local levels. Second, if local communities and their cultural specificities are not involved, the threat of commodification and further damage to heritage sites due to a lack of protection or overuse is real.

A participatory planning of such sites is therefore welcomed, since it includes "negotiating" the solutions horizontally (between different participants, those interested in preservation, development or something else) and vertically (between the national, regional or local level of representation). The main planning goal should focus on making positive changes in the local communities by integrating both perspectives (conservation and development) to achieve sustainable futures.

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Chapter 8
Collaborative Inventory—A Participatory Approach to Cultural Heritage Collections

Špela Ledinek Lozej

Abstract The chapter presents creation of a collaborative inventory and a cross-border network of collections in the framework of the cross-border project that linked different stakeholders (collectors, local communities and experts from the field of museology, ethnology and digital humanities) with the aim of valuation—i.e. identification, register, arrangement, presentation and promotion—of cultural heritage collections. It discusses impacts, issues and pitfalls of the participatory approach by pointing out (1) the nature of participatory approach, (2) participation in relation to the materiality of collections and virtuality of a database and (3) advantages of a participatory approach for involved actors.

Keywords Participation · Heritage · Inventory · Borderland · Cross-border cooperation · Heritage database · Participatory archive

8.1 Introduction

Over the course of the past decades, the concept of participation has profoundly modified—it is not just the discourse and practice of international and national policy-making and implementation in areas of urban planning and community development (Arnstein 1969; Cornwall 2008), but has entered also heritage discourses and practices of heritage-making. Participation within the heritage arena is not considered just as a governance instrument, but also and more as a general involvement of stakeholders within a range of heritage processes and projects (Neal 2015). Moreover, by including a variety of stakeholders—especially those groups in need to have their voices added to official records (Iacovino 2012)—is possible to provide alternative narratives and more inclusive heritage-making. Amongst such marginalised groups are communities in remote rural border areas. Despite or because of remoteness these areas might be reached in cultural assets, which have been acknowledged as (cultural) heritage and (endogenous) development potential (Šmid and Ledinek 2013;

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Šmid Hribar et al. 2015). Digital domain and tools are convenient for the community groups to participate at heritage-making and at the same time allow institutions to move beyond the production of authoritative and hegemonic (heritage) narratives and to deploy sensibility of reflexivity, critique, revision, affect, polysemy, relationality and imagination (Cameron 2011). Involvement of remote communities and individuals of the cross-border area in the heritage-making via digital tools seems a plausible solution. Actually, in the case of ZBORZBIRK project—Cultural Heritage between the Alps and the Karst (CBC Slovenia–Italy 2007–2013, http://zborzbirk.zrc-sazu.si), participatory approach evolved already in the phase of project generation and only continued in the phase of implementation. Besides collaborative inventory, the project aims were also arrangement and equipment, presentation and promotion of local heritage collections in the northern Italian—Slovenian cross-border region. Based on the experiences at ZBORZBIRK project, the chapter discusses impacts, issues and pitfalls of the participatory approach at the collaborative inventory and mentions some improvements and references needed for the eventual transferability and/or scaling up of the network of cultural heritage collections by pointing out:

- the nature of participatory approach at the project,
- participation in relation to the materiality of collections and virtuality of the database, and
- advantages of a participatory approach for all involved actors.

By doing that it tries to contribute to the broader discussion of possibilities and weaknesses of participation within heritage-making processes.

8.2 Citizens Collecting Practices and Co-creative, Collaborative and Contributory Inventory

The ZBORZBIRK project was initiated on the basis of the long-term regional ethnographic research of several experts (ethnologists, anthropologists, folklorists and linguists) that were joined in the co-design process by representatives of the partners' institutions—one cultural-educational institution, two museums and six local communities (Fig. 8.1) (Ledinek Lozej 2014; Ledinek Lozej and Ravnik 2016; Ravnik 2012).

The preliminary list of collections was based on the evidences of private collections of different research and/or heritage institutions and associations, yet the final list was elaborated in collaboration with partners and owners of the collections. Some of the invited collectors refused to participate in the project due to various reasons (e.g. disagreement with the partner's institution or other collectors, fear of inventarisation, general lack of interest), the others joined (or wanted to join) in the course of initial activities, predominately because of the possibility of investments in the equipment and promotion through different media (websites with the browser, guide book, publications and other promotional activities). At the final stage, the project involved thirty-four cultural heritage collections; fifteen from the Slovenian
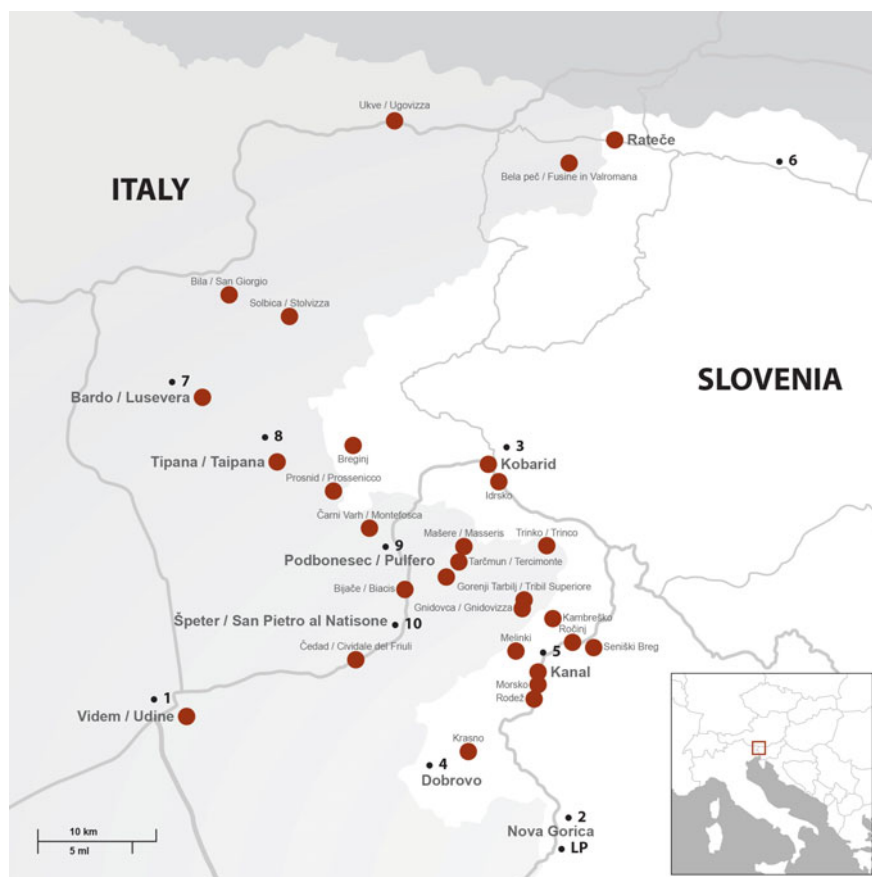
Fig. 8.1 Map of the ZBORZBIRK project area (Authors: Jernej Kropej and Špela Ledinek Lozej. ©ZBORZBIRK). Red dots indicate cultural heritage collections, black dots project partners: LP–Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1—University of Udine, 2—The Goriška Museum, 3—Municipality of Kobarid, 4—Municipality of Goriška Brda, 5—Municipality of Kanal ob Soči, 6—Jesenice Upper Sava Museum, 7—Municipality of Lusevera/Bardo, 8—Municipality of Taipana/Tipana, 9—Municipality of Pulfero/Podbonesec, 10—Institute for Slovenian Culture Špeter/San Pietro al Natisone

side of the border and nineteen from the Italian side. Most of them (twenty-one) are private-owned, eight are in property of associations, four of local communities and one is a museum branch. Only four collections are regularly on view to the public, six of them are inaccessible, while the rest can be viewed by prior arrangement with the owner or the guardian of the collection. They also differ according to typology and content (Ravnik 2012; Ledinek Lozej 2017).

In rethinking project's participatory approach, we follow the models for public participation in scientific research, identified by Center for Advancement of Informal Science (Bonney 2009) and further elaborated for the field of museology by

Simon (2010). They defined three broad categories of public participation—contribution, collaboration and co-creation. In contributory projects, participants provide limited and specific objects, actions or ideas to an institutionally controlled process. In collaborative projects, citizens are invited to serve as active partners in the creation of institutional projects that are originated and ultimately controlled by the institutions. In co-creative projects, community members work together with institutional staff members from the beginning to define the project's goals. Differences amongst participatory projects are highly correlated with the amount of ownership, control of process and creative output given to (core) institutional project partners and participants (Simon 2010). Backward-looking, we esteem that ZBORZBIRK project incorporated some elements from each model, as there were several levels of participation:

1. co-creation of project goals, activities and outputs amongst project partners: needs, goals, working styles and benefits of all involved partners were supported as the majority of partners (but not all of them) were engaged and dedicated to the project;
2. collaboration at setting up the network of thirty-four collections amongst (some) project partners and owners/managers of collections (which were in majority cases identical): only target collections were included in the network; the networking process was controlled by core partnership following the initial plan and concept; the majority of the collectors came with the explicit intention to participate; the rules of engagement were based on the goals and capacity of the core partnership consortia that curated, designed and delivered completed outputs;
3. content contribution of collectors to the digital inventory: construction of a central database, using the client–server model with computer database and application on the server of the lead partner instead of use of a local database (that would keep the primary metadata collections at the places of owners/collectors, increase their sense of ownership and, at the same time, make maintenance and administration more difficult); the metadata on the collections' objects were inserted into modelled computer database by registrars and administrators, trained at the workshops and controlled by editors, language and photograph editors, responsible for content, linguistic and photographs supervision; the whole inventory procedure, as well as communication between registrars, editors, a database scheme designer and a programmer, was coordinated and monitored by editor-in-chief, assigned by lead partner (Ledinek Lozej et al. 2015).

The ZBORZBIRK catalogue only partially complies with the "archive 2.0" or "participatory archive", as it was set by Huvila (2008) and has the following characteristics: decentralised curation (i.e. sharing of curatorial responsibilities between archivists and participants), radical user orientation (i.e. priority of usability over preservation) and contextualisation of both records and the entire archival process. Even though a participatory archive is often about crowdsourcing, it might, as in our case, focus on deeper involvement and more complex semantics (Huvila 2008). However, our project was consistent with the understanding of the archives as "an organization, site or collection in which people other than the archives professionals con-

tribute knowledge or resources resulting in increased understanding about archival materials, usually in an online environment" (Theimer 2014, para 37). Besides identifying the participatory approach at collaborative/contributory inventory, we have to take into consideration also participatory aspects of the cross-border network of collections, a network, that might be—referring to Bauman (2000) and following Cameron (2015)—described as "a liquid museum", a heterogeneous assemblage of (mobile, coherent, (de)territorialized and dispersed) material and expressive forms enmeshed in diverse collectives. The relation between unified digital repository and dispersed material collection will be questioned in the next chapter.

8.3 Materiality of Collections Versus Virtuality of the Inventory Database

The central activity of the project was the creation of a digital inventory of thirty-four cultural heritage collections that differed regarding the ownership, accessibility to public, typology and content. Collections particularities, differences in the interests of collectors and in competences of registrars influenced physical, informational and procedural scopes of the registration process. For the purpose of the inventory, a metadata scheme and an application for entering the data of the inventoried objects were established, based on past experiences in museology, collections management standards and recommendations, former and existing museum applications, open-source platforms and frameworks and particularly on the information projects in the field of ethnology that had dealt with similar circumstances and encountered similar problems. One of the main challenges of the project was to define a metadata scheme and a registration procedure that would be sufficiently flexible not to discourage the owners and the registrars from a thorough and comprehensive registration of objects. A unified repository, that aggregate metadata of material objects (items) from the collections as well as digital photographs and scans of images and textual objects was established. In total, there are 5355 items and 9334 digital objects (digital photographs or scans) in the repository at the moment. Not all collectors that joined the network, were favourable to digitalisation, and especially to online publishing of the inventory. On the contrary, the majority understood digitalisation as a valuation tool or process, and however, some of them were also very keen on online publishing as a media of their promotion (Ledinek Lozej and Peče 2014; Ledinek Lozej et al. 2015; Ledinek Lozej 2017). Therefore, some of the collectors estimated that their "real" objects were under threat by the reproducibility of the "immaterial" nature of digital objects, and on the other hand, the others saw that "immaterial" reproductability as an opportunity of enhancing the value of their "real" artefacts. This issue triggered the revealing of the relationship between "real" collections and their digital inventories and between the physical act of collecting and the digital sphere of creating an entry into the database.

Collection is objects' sets, lifted out of the common purpose of daily life and invested—utmost by collectors, but also by visitors—with thoughts, feelings, time, troubles and resources (Pearce 1995). Due to that, they are invested with social meaning and have the character of something extraordinary, special and capable of generating reverence (Belk 1988). The imaginative link that unites the collected objects/artefacts may be purely personal or may engage the wider world (Pearce 1995). In the ZBORZBIRK case, it ranged from very personal collections of irons and holy cards, found remnants of the WWI, inherited carpentry and blacksmith workshop, to collections of a great variety of rakes, manufactured by the local artisans, to the larger and more systematic collections of the local crafts, clothing or carnival characters. Regardless of all mentioned content differences, all collections have in common that the materiality of its artefacts was really appreciated by the collectors and guardians. Because of the fact, that collections were a result of invested time, efforts and resources, some owners were afraid of losing control and of the devaluation of their investments and collection's integrity by digitalising. Following Cameron (2007) this apocalyptic view of the real–virtual relationship is based on a fear that "real" collections might become obsolete as virtual simulations became more convincing. On the other hand, knowing that reproductions had a significant role in the formation of cultural capital (Bourdieu and Darbel 1991), we know that digital objects bring the "real" object into the presence of the viewer. Collectors' and registrars' decisions on what to include into the inventory were an active process of value and meaning-making, equal to the ascription of social meanings to their physical counterparts. It enacted the curatorial process of selection of what was significant, what should be remembered and forgotten and what categories of meaning such as classification, cultural values or aesthetic attributes were given pre-eminence. The value of "real" objects and collections increased when they were digitized, by enhancing their social, historical and aesthetic importance, owing to the resources required in the compilation of digital rendering, distribution and dissemination. Within this context, the "real" object was not under threat but acted as an alibi for the virtual (Cameron 2007).

Despite that ability, catalogued objects remain rooted in the specific sense of a place and connected to personal/family/local versions of the past (King 2016). Therefore, we assume that tangibility is still fundamental to the way that collectors relate to the environment and act in the world. We suppose that gathered objects and sets of artefacts do not simply reflect the (past and present) lives of collectors in a passive manner, but are a fundamental medium for their action in the world (e.g. communication of cultural difference), as much constituting as constituted (Tilley 2007). Hereby, we can—following Cameron (2007)—assume that the project was still bounded by an object-centred museum culture and material culture paradigms, integrated in the broader heritage complex of an institutionalized culture of discourses, practices and ideas, that make digital objects just a "replicant" with constraint value, meaning and imaginative uses.

8.4 Borderlands and Their Empowerment

The northern Slovenian–Italian border region—i.e. the north-eastern mountain part of the ex-province of Udine in Italy and the northern part of the Goriška region and western part of the Gorenjska region in Slovenia—is a remote area, which is, especially on the Italian side, in comparison with the regional urban and tourist centres, underdeveloped in terms of economy. Due to the remoteness of the area and a consecutive delay in socio-economic structural changes on both sides of the border, some elements of past material culture remained well preserved in situ. The other reason that encouraged collecting practices was an abundance of fund remnants from the nearby WW1 Soča/Isonzo River Front. And the third reason that supported the collecting practices was the fact that the territory on the Italian side of the border was annexed to the Italy in 1866, and hence, the Slovenian-speaking inhabitants were separated and forced to assimilation, and due to the suppressing Italian policies (they were officially recognized as a linguistic minority only in 2001), they find their way of expression of cultural difference via collecting (Ravnik 2017). That resulted in vigorous collecting practices and numerous culturale heritage collections. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, especially after the entry of Slovenia into the EU (2004) and the Schengen area (2007), and disbanding of borders different attempts to reconnect the territory emerged. And our project also joined these attempts with the aim to link borderland cultural heritage collections. For that purpose, we organized besides collaborative inventory also several other events (a workshop, trainings, presentations of collections, openings of info-points) and implemented several investments that supported the participation of stakeholders and enabled a creation and reinforcement of a cross-border network of experts (museologists, ethnologists, cultural anthropologists, linguists, folklorists, historians, photographers, information specialists), project managers and official representatives of local municipalities, owners and guardians of collections and individuals, engaged in developing their own knowledge about preservation and management of museum objects and about information technologies and standards. The network enabled the exchange of information and became a "vessel of significance"—a vessel as the building block for theorizing meaning in heritage (Labrador and Chilton 2009, p. 7). Within this framework, the values of heritage remain individualized, but the need and quest for valuing are understood as shared (Labrador and Chilton 2009). Collectors, registrars, representatives of local communities, museum and several experts, all found common ground not in (specific personal or collective) objects and with them related narratives but in the shared process of creating and marking them. More important than the project concrete results and outputs was the process of co-creation of a project, repository and a network and the actual and potential benefits arising from the experiences of engagement.

Bennett in his book The Birth of the Museum (1995) showed how the early modern state of the nineteenth century saw the museum as a part of an ensemble of governmental agencies such as schools, a police and prisons. Similarly, Ricouer wrote that archives are collections of documented testimonies, "silent orphans", separated from

their authors and settled in the space of authoritative observations of the past and production of historical knowledge (Ricoeur 2004, p. 166). Museums and heritage institutions have institutionalized authority to act as custodians of the past (Cameron and Kenderdine 2007). That institutional authoritativeness might be counterbalanced by employing participatory approach and/or digital domain. Therefore, the value of the participatory approach in collaborative inventory is not related just to participatory archive (Huvila 2008; Theimer 2014) and liquid museum (Cameron 2015), but also to broader questions about public history, history from below (Samuel 1994; Kean and Ashton 2009; King 2016) and citizen science (Eitzel 2017). The possibility to include contents that are not valuable from the perspective of the archivist, curator or researcher, but also from the view of wider publics, offers the potential to restructure (institutional) authority and to empower participants (King 2016); hence, the possibility for a more democratic and pluralistic engagement with heritage.

The fact that experts no longer deliver content and meaning exclusively, but serve as facilitators, intermediaries, curators, editors and registrars, changed also the role of institutions as contents authorities. It is threatening to the power of the heritage and research institutions (Simon 2010) and has political implications. It works towards recognition and empowerment of collectors and their practices in local communities, as well as towards recognition of the remote cross-border rural areas.

8.5 Concluding Discussion on Shortcomings and Impacts of Participatory Approach

Participation is a buzzword and, as pointed out by Hertz (2015, p. 25), "at the centre of a semantic field filled with familiar if vague notions of 'engagement', 'ownership', 'empowerment'". The overuse and blur in the field of administration, political processes and research, called for as transparent assessment of the advantages and shortcomings (and their overcoming) of participation at our undertaking.

The advantages of participatory approach, as presented and discussed above are:

1. co-creation of a participatory archive of digital objects, characterised by decentralised curation, user orientation and contextualised archival process (beside records);
2. setting up a cross-border network of collections, experts, representatives of local communities and other actors in the field of heritage with benefits for all involved actors;
3. empowerment of non-authorised/institutional heritage actors in borderlands.

They extend over two strands (Eitzel 2017) of citizen science: in the contribution of non-experts to the expert enterprise (a method or form of collaboration) and at the same time, they addressed the responsibility of science to society (i.e. democratization of heritage-making). Hence, they comply fully to the principles of citizen science, developed by the European Citizen Science Association (ECSA 2015).

Our presumption that a digital repository and creation, interpretation and presentation of data using digital technologies would automatically support participation of collectors at entering information into the database was only partially correct. The reasons lie in:

- collectors' limited skills and willingness,
- in their attachment and closeness to the material aspects of objects and general mistrust to virtuality;
- in the fact that the software was a compromise between expectations and needs of all involved stakeholders (including the administrative expectation of co-financing programme), and hence, it did not meet all the needs of all involved users appropriately. For the time being of the project, that issue was resolved by administrators, registrars and professionals that gathered narratives on the objects and collections and facilitated the participatory process, but it was not a sustainable solution.

The greatest deficiency of the project is its sustainability. After the end of the project's founding, there were no resources for the continuation of activities. Being aware of that already in the phase of creating a metadata scheme our aim was to maximize interoperability (e.g. a basic Dublin Core metadata structure), which could facilitate a possible unification of metadata with other already existing or potential inventories. Having in mind that some of the collections might come to belong to public museum institutions in the future, it might be reasonable to design the archival application according to the tools that are generally used in museums. This was impossible since there were different archival applications used on either side of the border. Hence, a new application was developed that tried to respond to the different needs of the partners and owners and guardians of collections. Adjustments were mostly necessary for the field of linguistics due to the bilingual demands of the project administration and multilingual character of the area.

The most essential question regarding a participatory archive is whether it works or not: whether the users contribute to an archive and whether the contributions create added value. According to Huvila (2008), the functional sustainability of a repository is highly dependent on the activity of archive users and the emergence of a culture of collaboration, integration into daily practices and a critical mass to sustain the necessary level of contributions, which obliges others to contribute (Huivila 2008). Despite the fact that the ZBORZBIRK database is not updated constantly since the closure of the project its content seems to be still significant to some of the users as they are reconfiguring it into new networks (e.g. the integration of the project result into the tourist offer).

The ZBORZBIRK collaborators are generally satisfied with the experiences gained and lessons learned. The time seems mature for eventual follow-ups, reconfigurations, transfers, and/or scaling ups. There are still valuable lessons to be learned from engaging with practical and theoretical considerations of what the participatory approach may offer and how it can enhance the value of heritage experiences. In a world where rigid, fixed and obsolete institutional structures and forms of analysis are increasingly problematic, new ontologies and knowledge practices are required

that more clearly match the heritage experience of contemporary circumstances (Cameron 2015).

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Chapter 9
Introduced Conservation Agriculture Programs in Samoa: The Role of Participatory Action Research

Stephanie Ramona O'Connor Sulifoa and Linda J. Cox

Abstract Millions of dollars have been invested in programs to encourage the adoption of sustainable farming practices associated with conservation agriculture (CA), including programs aimed at Samoan farmers. However, many smallholder farmers, including those in Samoa did not adopt the recommended practices. CA programs aimed at Samoan farmers were investigated, and participatory action research about the most recent program was conducted. Eight key informant interviews, 107 semi-structured interviews, a ranking exercise involving farmers and extension officers and participant observations were completed during 2016–2017. The results provide a description of agricultural farming practices across Samoan villages; details about the role of agriculture in these villages and information on the differences between various stakeholders. Samoan farmers use CA practices and all previous CA programs prescribed practices that were not consistent with their current practices or goals. Donors, national policy makers and researchers drive top-down programs with limited term projects that focus on outputs or short-term outcomes. To alter a country's agricultural sector, particularly one dominated by smallholder farmers, it requires investment in long-term outcomes supported by a participatory action research process that ensures co-creation activities, reflexive feedback loops and cooperative buy-in approaches be given top priority.

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9.1 The Use of Participatory Research to Ensure Smallholder Farmers' Sustainability

Achieving the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development (UNDP 2018) hinges upon making progress in rural areas, where most of the poor and hungry live, with an agro-industrial development strategy that involves increasing the productivity and incomes of smallholder farmers and expanding the opportunities for off-farm employment in industries that are found clustered in agro-industrial sectors. Past transformations from agricultural-based economies to industry and service-based economics resulted in urbanization and higher incomes for urban consumers, which increased the demand for high-valued products such as fruit and vegetables, meat, fish and dairy. However, this brings a major array of challenges to improve the production and market conditions for small-scale farming, in addition to unprecedented natural resource constraints and global climate change. Productive and sustainable farming systems are needed in order to assure that communities across the globe can thrive in the future (FAO 2017).

Of the 570 million farms worldwide today, the 12% of farms are smallholder, producing 50% of the human food supply (ETC Group 2009), and along with family farms accounting for 75% of the world's agricultural land (Lowder et al. 2016). Agriculturists have long been interested in adapting farm management economics originating in Europe and North American to meet the needs of small farmers, particularly those in the tropics. Work done in India (Mellor 1966) and Africa (Norman et al. 1982; Collinson 1983) examined approaches that accommodated the characteristics of smallholder farmers. The characteristics that define smallholders are:

1. They are poor and have almost no cash reserves.
2. Loans are usually unavailable or/and expensive.
3. They know they face many risks due to the uncertain environment, lack of cash and family responsibilities, which makes them risk averse.
4. Cyclical labor shortage affects farm management, and under-employment is common in rural areas.
5. Off-farm employment may be available.
6. They are rational though are not necessarily maximizing profits, due to family and community situations that affect their utility; social infrastructure that results in markets, supplies and communications being unreliable; and their social norms clearly define what is socially acceptable and what is not (Collinson 1983).

Sustainable agriculture requires more information and is more management-intensive than more conventional, large holder agriculture (Simmonds 1985). At the same time, the characteristics and situations faced of smallholders make them more vulnerable to change. In the 1960s, Francis and Hildebrand (1989) developed a participatory approach to technological improvement called farming systems research and extension (FSR/E) in response to a growing interest in fostering sustainable agriculture among smallholders. The guiding principle of FSR/E is that new technologies must conform to the environments where they will be used because farmers

are unable to modify their environments to meet the needs of new technologies. The overall goal of FSR/E is for farmers to participate in developing and testing technologies to ensure that their criteria, rather than the narrower focus used by researchers, are used to guide decisions about efficient and effective technology development. Smallholder farmers often have a variety of economic, environmental and social goals to consider, which resulted in the holistic and interdisciplinary focus of FSR/E (Francis and Hildebrand 1989).

FSR/E applies diffusion theory developed by Rogers (1962) as the theoretical basis for this type of participatory research. Rogers (1962) concluded that the characteristics of the innovation, the social system, communication channels for reaching the end user and time devoted to extending an innovation to end users will impact the adoption of the innovation. Stakeholders including farmers, scientists and change agents responsible for outreach have differing opinions, perceptions and beliefs (Rogers 2003), and the heterotrophic nature of stakeholders may result in the use of top-down approaches (Dalton et al. 2014), rather than participatory planning approaches. The human dimensions associated with adoption decisions by farmers differ across regions (Knowler and Bradshaw 2007), also making place-based adaption necessary.

While FSR/E called for an interdisciplinary, holistic approach for many years, the FAO (2017) concluded that smallholder farmers face challenges today in identifying and adopting the technologies that can make them more productive. Agricultural growth, if broadly shared, appears to have the most positive impact on non-farm income and employment (Tsakok 2011). Economic transformations that significantly reduced a countries' poverty rate were nearly always accompanied by sustained growth in agricultural productivity (Timmer 2014). This supports the conclusion that researchers should engage with managers across all scales to reflexively explore "how things work" in the managers' organizational context to ensure that individual and collective learning occurs (Ripamonti et al. 2016). The main objective of this chapter is to investigate approaches being used to increase the adoption of CA practices by smallholder farmers in Samoa and demonstrate that a more interdisciplinary, and holistic approach is needed if agricultural growth is an overall goal in developing countries.

9.2 Sustaining Smallholder Farmers in Samoa

The economies in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are becoming increasingly dependent on tourism and remittances (FAO 2012), and information about the current state of smallholder farmers in PICs is sparse. Reddy (2007) indicated that only a few sectors show promise for economic growth in PICs, where many live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, while the overall population is growing rapidly. Unfortunately, agricultural efficiency in Samoa, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga did not increase from 1961 to 2004 (Reddy 2007), which indicates that the agricultural sector in these countries experiences the same challenges that

smallholder farmers face globally. PIC farmers will be challenged to increase crop production on the limited land area with low soil fertility (Barrow 2013).

Samoa is a small PIC located south of the equator between Hawaii and New Zealand, with a total land area of 2842 km^2 on the main islands of Upolu, Savaii and six smaller islands. About three-quarters of Samoa's population are involved in village agriculture, farming predominately at the subsistence and semi-subsistence level under a customary land tenure system and with household labor (Paulson and Rogers 1997; Ward and Ashcroft 1998). Wild species and traditional crops have been widely replaced by modern farming systems (Tikai and Kama 2004).

Today, Samoa's economy is dependent on foreign aid, remittances and tourism (Central Bank of Samoa 2011–2012; Connell 2015), though in the 1980s, agriculture contributed 50% of Samoa's gross domestic product (GDP). Figure 9.1 shows a decline in the contribution of agriculture to the overall GDP relative to the overall growth of the economy. The reduction in village agriculture has been attributed to a set of complex factors. For many years, various institutions have focused on soil health's contribution to the decrease in agricultural production (Mercer and Scott 1958; Blakemore 1973; Guinto et al. 2015; Anand 2016).

Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) is the main staple and primary cash crop with an estimated 12,938 acres under cultivation and 17,733 farming households growing taro (Agriculture Census 2015). Taro holds cultural, monetary and dietary significance in Samoa, and the arrival of the taro leaf blight (TLB) caused by the fungus *Phytophthora colocasiae* in 1993 reduced production significantly. Taro yields were declining before 1993 due to intensified taro cultivation achieved by incorporating herbicide and shortening fallow periods (Ofori n.d.). TLB-resistant varieties have resulted in recent production increases with TLB-resistant taro varieties being exported to New
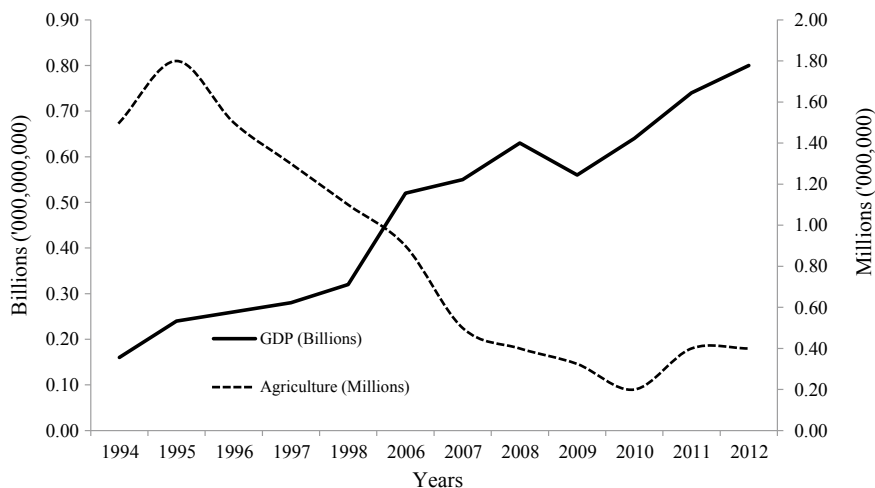
Fig. 9.1 Annual value of Samoa's total gross domestic product (GDP) and the agricultural sector in constant dollars from 1994 to 2012. *Source* Central Bank of Samoa 2011–2012

Zealand starting in 2010 (Radio New Zealand October 1 2010). Local, regional and international institutions are concerned that increasing taro production will reduce soil health (ACIAR 2009; Agriculture Sector Plan 2010–2015).

9.3 Extending Conservation Agricultural Practices to Smallholder Farmers

Conservation agriculture (CA) is used to combat declining soil health. CA encompasses the use of three key farming practices:

1. minimal mechanical soil disturbance (i.e., zero-tillage and direct seeding);
2. maintenance of carbon-rich organic matter covering or mulch to feed the soil; and
3. rotations or sequences of crops including trees, which could include nitrogen-fixing legumes (FAO 2012).

Government institutions, donor agency and non-government organizations used the logic model or theory of change to provide a framework for extending CA programs (Framst 1995; McCawley 2004) to change farmer behavior and increase sustainability (Pannell et al. 2014).

The diffusion of CA practices across agrarian societies is of interest worldwide particularly in areas where per acre productivity is declining. Although CA practices appear to offer long-term benefits, farmers, particularly those in the developing countries have not readily adopted them (Corbeels et al. 2014; Dalton et al. 2014, Pannell et al. 2014; Umar et al. 2011). Smallholder farmers in Africa were very slow to adopt CA practices because the initial setup of the system is labor intensive (Rola et al. 2009). Yield improvement from using CA practices is not immediate, and seven years may be required to realize maximum benefits, which slow the adoption for small holders (Jat et al. 2014; Paudel et al. 2014). Adoption has also been slow due to the farmers' lack of access to the appropriate equipment (Hobbs 2007). Intercropping was challenging for European farmers because they lacked the information to select compatible cash crops (Shaxson 2006). Fourteen to 20 years may be required from the time that farmers became aware of a practice until its adoption (Corbeels et al. 2014).

9.3.1 CA Programs in Samoa

The earliest CA work in Samoa undertaken by Reynolds (1970) and the most recent program were conducted by the Australian Center for International Agriculture Research (ACIAR) Soil Health Program from 2010 to 2015. Most of this work involved inputs from various institutions/agencies/organizations outside of Samoa

and the Samoan government, with little input from farmers. The output was generally focused on extending scientific evidence generated to researchers and the government. Very few outreach outputs were generated, although ACIAR (2015) constructed demonstration plots, provided limited training and involved farmer opinion leaders in on-farm trials.

The ACIAR Soil Health Program identified mucuna (Mucuna pruriens) as a cover crop because Samoa's Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) concluded that it would reduce the use of costly herbicide for taro production by local farmers and improve soil health (T.T. personal communication December 16 2016). Mucuna was introduced into six villages on the island of Upolu and Savaii with on-farm trials in the villages of Safaatoa, Salani, Aopo and Siufaga. The trials lasted for nine months, which correspond to the taro production cycle. In the villages of Savaia, Siufaga and Sapapalii, MAF set up demonstration plots with mucuna planted as a fallow crop and mixed cropped with taro on land belonging to lead farmers and chiefs. Most of the lead farmers are semi-subsistent producers, though in the village of Savaia, they were more likely to be commercial and the village council actively involving other village farmers in the training sessions. The only training provided was on the use of mucuna. Yield data was recorded at the harvest, and farmers saw all yield differences.

9.3.2   Evaluation of the ACIAR Program in Samoa

From December 2016 to July 2017, in-depth interviews in the villages of Siufaga and Savaia and from Sapapalii, Aopo, Safaatoa and Salani where mucuna was also introduced were conducted with farmers that the village mayor and the high chief in the area recommended. In addition, focus groups in Siufaga, Savaia and Sapapalii were conducted, along with key informant interviews with consultants, village opinion leaders, extension officers and scientists involved with CA work in Samoa.

The interview and focus group participants indicated that tilling is not used in village level agriculture in Samoa; farmers cannot afford to own or hire a plow to till; and farmers have no knowledge of tilling and its potential negative impact on soil health. The majority of farmers do use herbicide to clear land for cultivation, though manual clearing does occur, depending on the land area that requires clearing and amount of available labor. Taro mulching was common, though vegetable mulching was not because it attracts the Giant African Snail (Achtatina fulica) and results in extensive vegetable losses. The primary crop rotation practice is fallowing between six months and two years to allow natural regrowth. Some farmers plant vegetables in their taro as a cover crop that provides food and additional income. The majority of farmers did intercrop their taro with dadap (Erythrina variegate) or Gliricidia (Gliricidia sepium) to provide nitrogen for the taro. No farmers used mucuna and the few that did try it reported that it grew too fast and was not an effective cover crop.

Village farmers in Samoa now employ all of the desirable CA practices, which participatory research such as FSR/E conducted a priori would have identified. Tikai

and Kama (2004) concluded that understanding indigenous knowledge and engaging in more interactive technology development would produce a more efficient and cost-effective path to sustainability in the agricultural sector. Top-down decision making by foreign aid organizations, researchers and high-level government officials who appear to have concluded that Samoan farmers were not using CA practices might have produced positive outcomes for the agricultural sector had a more reflexive approach been used, and indigenous knowledge was investigated.

Programs aimed at changing the behavior of farmers generally involve inputs involving extension or outreach personnel and outputs in the form of extension or outreach outputs (Rogers 1962). The process of communicating with farmers generally involves a variety of methods and differing content in order to address their concerns or lack of information or knowledge about the characteristics of the innovation, to provide feedback aimed at clarifying policies in order to further behavioral change by farmers and to facilitate on-farm research to foster farmer-to-farmer learning and farmer feedback loops to researchers and institutions in order to increase their effectiveness (Rogers 2003). Extension personnel play a key role (Vanclay 2004; Anaeto et al. 2012) in FSR/E because of the holistic link they provide between research inputs, output and behavioral change at the community level. Social scientists, who should also be included on the interdisciplinary FSR/E team, play an important role in understanding the socioeconomic, environmental and social goals of farmers (Shaner et al. 1982).

9.4 The Value of Samoa's Extension Service in Participatory Research

Samoa's extension service is in the MAF under the crops division, which has three main sections including research, development and advisory. In 2017, 33 extension officers were employed with 14 on the island of Upolu and 19 on the island of Savaii. MAF also has agricultural research stations located on the island of Upolu in Aleisa, Savaia and Poutasi Falealili with a main office in Nuu, while on the island of Savaii, stations are located in Salailua and Asau with the MAF headquarters in Salelologa. Tunnel houses, shade houses and demonstration plots are at each station, since in Samoa, extension officers implement village programs (Agriculture Sector Plan 2016–2020; Tuilaepa 2006).

In order to determine how participatory research might be better structured in the future, farmers from Siufaga and Savaia along with five extension officers completed a rating exercise designed to investigate their perceptions about the impact of mucuna for weed control. The ratings were analyzed using the analytical hierarchy process (AHP) developed by Saaty (2004) to estimate trade-offs in multi-criteria decision making. Figure 9.2 presents the general categories and specific components that were developed based on the interviews and focus group results about why farmers decided not to adopt mucuna.
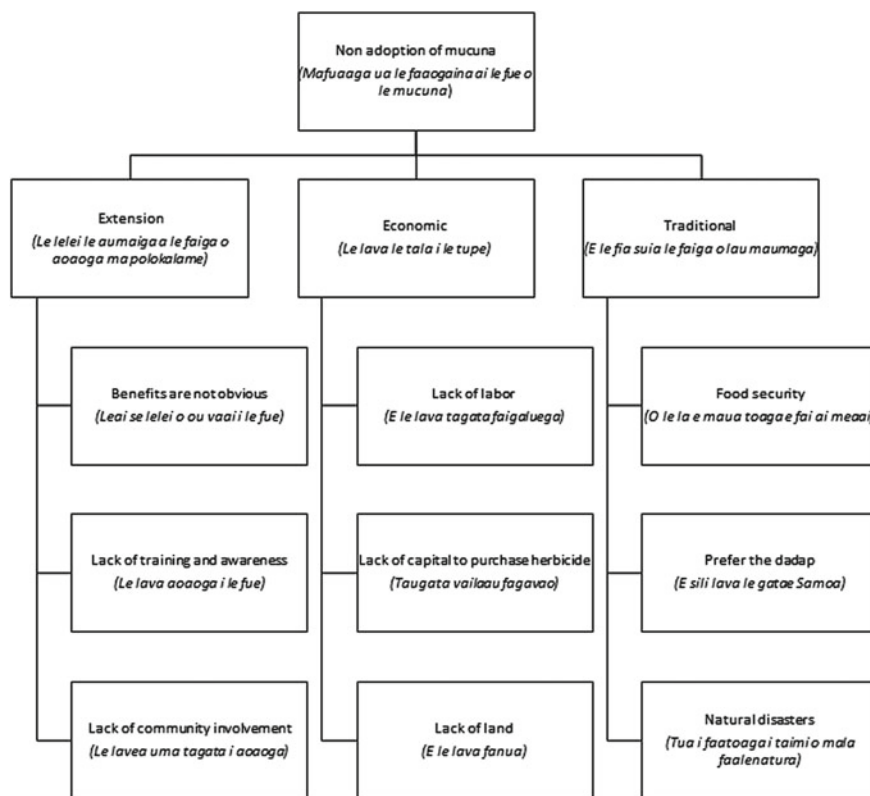
Fig. 9.2 General categories and specific components for farmers' decision not to adopt mucuna in AHP-rating exercise

The relative weights across the three general categories and each of the three specific components sets were collected using proportional piling. Proportional piling has been used as a participatory rural appraisal tool in Samoa (Le De et al. 2014). The geometric mean for each group of pairwise comparisons was entered in the SuperDecisions software using the direct entry method after normalization (Creative Decisions Foundation 2017). Spearman rank correlation, a nonparametric measure of the correlation between two ranked variables, was used to investigate differences in the relative weights between the normalized weights across various farmer groups and the extension professionals.

Table 9.1 summarizes the factors that were ranked among the top three for non-adoption of mucuna by farmers and extension officers in both villages. The ranking results across the groups were not significantly different ($p \geq 0.05$); however, some correlation did exist between the ranks of farmers and the extension officers, i.e., Siufaga at ($rs = 0.35$, $n = 9$, $p = 0.356$) and Savaia, ($rs = 0.57$, $n = 9$, $p = 0.112$). Food security and dadap as the preferred cover crop were the top two reasons for non-adoption for famers and extension officers in Savaia. Natural disasters were also

Table 9.1 Top three reasons for non-adoption of mucuna for farmers and extension officers in the villages of Siufaga and Savaia

Rank	Siufaga farmers	Savaia farmers	Siufaga extension officers	Savaia extension officers
First	Community involvement lacking	Food security	Dadap preferred	Dadap preferred
Second	Herbicide cost	Dadap preferred	Community involvement lacking	Food security
Third	Limited land area	Natural disasters	Food security	Herbicide cost

a concern for Savaia farmers indicating farmers' awareness of their vulnerability and the risks associated with a conversion to a new farming system that is not well understood. Since the farmers in Savaia were more likely to be commercial and the Savaia council actively involved farmers in training sessions, the factors identified by farmers are more similar to the factors identified by extension officers. Lack of community involvement appeared to be of concern only in Siufaga. In order for farmers in Siufaga to become more commercial, community involvement is likely needed since due to a lack of labor, which results in more herbicide use, and access to land would have to be addressed locally.

The extension officers and one group of farmers understood that dadap was the preferred cover crop and could have provided this information before mucuna was selected as a cover crop. Including farmers and extension officers, who also are more likely to be aware of indigenous knowledge, in the decision-making process about increasing the sustainability of Samoa's agricultural sector would have produced a more holistic program. Further discussion into how to increase community involvement, how to mitigate the risks associated with natural disaster and declining food security and the economics associated with various production inputs including herbicide would provide much insight. The socioeconomic situation in various communities could also have been investigated a priori to better understand the effect of labor shortages, high input costs and the role of farming in order to ensure that the entire effort is more successful. In situations in which commercial producers do not account for the majority of farmers, the holistic and interdisciplinary nature of FSR/E becomes a key to success and can accommodate placed-based adaptations.

9.5 Lessons Learned

A bottom-up, holistic approach that involves participatory research such as FSR/E is likely to require much longer planning and implementation horizons. As suggested by Ranga and Etzkowitz (2013), the relationships between the components of the innovation system are the key in resolving the flaws in previous innovation system's approaches that have a strong focus on institutions and bias toward more intensive research and development. Knowledge flows within the system that include indi-

viduals such as extension officers and farmers, who have indigenous knowledge, will strengthen the capacity to produce integrated development strategies. Studies have shown that a combination of indigenous knowledge and science can improve development and living standards and conserve resources to ensure sustainability is achieved (Berkes et al. 2000; Tikai and Kama 2004). This knowledge has been developed through community experience over time to ensure sustainable use of resources and should not be discounted (Tikai and Kama 2004). International aid agencies, foreign, regional and national universities and national governments will be continually challenged to develop the agricultural sector in places with many smallholder farmers.

International aid agencies often speak of a "burn rate" that accounts for how fast project funds are spent to address a problem. It also implies that the agencies can determine the best solution quickly based on the opinions of the experts involved in the project. As this case study illustrates, devoting resources to the process of understanding exactly what the problem is and what solutions might be most effective could play a much larger role in making a difference than how quickly a solution suggested by experts is implemented. This result is not a novel conclusion, and the resources must be invested in the diffusion process to achieve sustainable place-based outcomes. Investigating indigenous knowledge requires a thorough place-based effort. At the same time, the actual contribution of indigenous knowledge may not be obvious immediately, and a sorting process is likely needed to maximize it. Co-investigation and co-learning that involve farmers, extension staff and other members of the community along with other experts will facilitate a process that outlines information about indigenous knowledge, the local socioeconomic system and the proposed innovation in a more usable format. For example, traditional indigenous knowledge that supports farming practices in order to help ensure long-term environmental health could be identified in order to determine the compatibility of innovations suggested by outside experts and the risks/local challenges associated with them. Understanding the local socio-ecological system and the associated indigenous knowledge would aid in the development of a communication plan and an action plan with the appropriate inputs and outputs to support diffusion.

Transdisciplinarity and reflexivity are needed to ensure that co-learning occurs across all scales. Including social scientists, extension professionals and community members on the planning team may present challenges to physical and biological researchers and high-level policymakers. Indigenous knowledge and the socioeconomic situation facing farmers require significant amounts of time to investigate and incorporate, while academics have a tendency to reward a narrow disciplinary focus (Henry 2005; Pfirman et al. 2008), and the big picture lens of policymakers challenge those involved in such efforts. Additional research into the design of a more standardized participatory process that ensures local stakeholders have been considered is needed. This will also result in more effective and meaningful policies to be developed at the community level. Participatory modeling using fuzzy-logic cognitive mapping has been shown to further social learning across individual to institutional scales (Henley-Shepard et al. 2015). Various approaches and tools to facilitate the process, such as the Mental Modeler software (Henley-Shepard et al. 2015), need to

be investigated. Achieving genuine collaboration will require much more dedication to achieving long-term success defined across institutions and individuals at a variety of scales, from smallholder farmers, their families and their village to national policymakers, international researchers and aid agencies working across the globe.

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Chapter 10
Public Participation in Earthquake Recovery in the Border Region Between Italy and Slovenia

Primož Pipan and Matija Zorn

Abstract The chapter deals with public participation in recovery after earthquakes in the border region of Friuli (NE Italy) and the Upper Soča Valley (NW Slovenia) in 1976 (magnitude 6.4, 6 May; magnitude 6.1, 15 September—the Friuli earthquakes), 1998 (magnitude 6.0, 12 April), and 2004 (magnitude 4.9, 7 July). It highlights the differences in the concepts of the post-earthquake recovery, taking into consideration the different political systems between the two countries (capitalist Italy vs. communist Slovenia in 1976) and changes in recovery after the change of political system in Slovenia (communist Slovenia in 1976 versus capitalist Slovenia in 1998 and 2004). The research is based on a qualitative case study carried out through interviews and comparative analysis in selected settlements. From the strategy of recovery, Italy was characterized by a bottom-up and Slovenia by a top-down approach. According to Arnstein's ladder, the citizen participation in Italy was at the highest stage of citizen power—citizen control, while Slovenia was characterized by non-participation, tokenism, and was thus at a much lower stage of citizen power, regardless of the political system.

Keywords Natural disaster · Cultural heritage · Participatory planning · Earthquake reconstruction · Friuli earthquake

10.1 Introduction

The wider area along the border between Friuli, Italy, and the Upper Soča Valley, Slovenia, is known for earthquakes with a magnitude exceeding 5.0: These include a 5.3 magnitude earthquake in 1279, 6.5 in 1348, 7.0–7.2 in 1511, 6.2 in 1690, 5.6 in 1788, and 5.4 in 1857 (Vidrih 2008). This chapter discusses the most recent major earthquakes in this area.

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The 1976 earthquakes with magnitudes of 6.4 (6 May) and 6.1 (15 September), or an intensity between IX and X and between VIII and IX on the European macroseismic scale (EMS-98), with an epicenter in the Venzone area in Italy claimed 990 lives (Lessi 2016; Pellizzari 2016), and 157,000 people lost their homes (Geipel 1982). There were no deaths in Slovenia, but 12,000 buildings were damaged and 13,000 people were left homeless (Orožen Adamič 1980).

The 1998 earthquake (12 April, the "Easter Earthquake") with an epicenter in the Krn Mountains in Slovenia had a magnitude of 6 and an intensity between VII and VIII (Gosar et al. 1999; Ušeničnik 1999). Approximately, 4000 buildings were damaged in Slovenia.

The last earthquake that caused damage occurred in 2004 (12 July). It had a magnitude of 4.9 and an intensity between VI and VII. Again, its epicenter was in the Krn Mountains. Nearly, 2000 buildings were damaged in Slovenia (Vidrih 2008; Zorn and Komac 2011) among others also buildings that had already been renovated after the 1998 earthquake.

This chapter highlights the public participation in post-earthquake recovery in various political systems (capitalist Italy vs. communist Slovenia in 1976) and within the same country (Slovenia) after the changes to its political system (communist Slovenia in 1976 vs. capitalist Slovenia in 1998 and 2004).

According to Gamper (2008, p. 240), public participation in issues and decisions connected with natural disasters "could be beneficial; both for experts, to gain in acceptance and divide the share of responsibility … and the public, for integrating their local knowledge … as well as preferences in the decision process." If allowed, the public can participate in various stages of natural disaster management (Pearce 2003; Kuhlicke et al. 2011) and various types of natural disasters such as mass movements (Mikoš 2011), earthquakes (Omidvar et al. 2010, 2011; Pipan 2011a, b), and floods (Lara et al. 2010; Meyer et al. 2012). Concerning foods, the EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) even "recognizes the necessity of public participation in the making of public policy concerning floods" (Lara et al. 2010, p. 2083).

10.2 Methodology

This study is based on a qualitative case study carried out through interviews and comparative analysis in selected settlements (Pipan 2011a). The basic method used was interviews (a similar method was also used in a similar study in Iran after the 2003 earthquake in Bam; Omidvar et al. 2011), which provided firsthand information from the eyewitnesses to the recovery and individuals that participated in it. More than thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted between October 2007 and July 2009. The informants were the former and actual representatives of local and regional administration, inhabitants, experts in construction, and experts in the protection of cultural heritage.

Six cases of settlement renovation are presented. They were ranked on the Arnstein scale (Arnstein 1969) based on public participation in decision-making pro-

cesses (Thomas 1995). Arnstein (1969) understands citizen participation in decision-making as a categorical factor supporting citizen power provided that all the stakeholders or interested parties participate in the decision-making process. Her citizen participation ladder includes eight rungs (Fig. 10.10): from non-participation (manipulation and therapy) at the very bottom of the ladder, through the levels of "tokenism" that allow the have-nots to hear and to have a voice (informing, consultation, and placation), to various levels of citizen power (partnership, delegated power, and citizen control), which enable citizens to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders and can even allow them to obtain full managerial power (Arnstein 1969; Mušič 1999).

The following three settlements, which were included in the recovery after the 1976 earthquake, were studied in Friuli (Fig. 10.1): Venzone, Portis, and Oseacco. In the Upper Soča Valley, the settlements studied include Breginj (connected with the 1976 earthquake), Drežniške Ravne (connected with the 1998 earthquake), and Čezsoča (in relation to the 1998 and 2004 earthquakes) (Table 10.1).
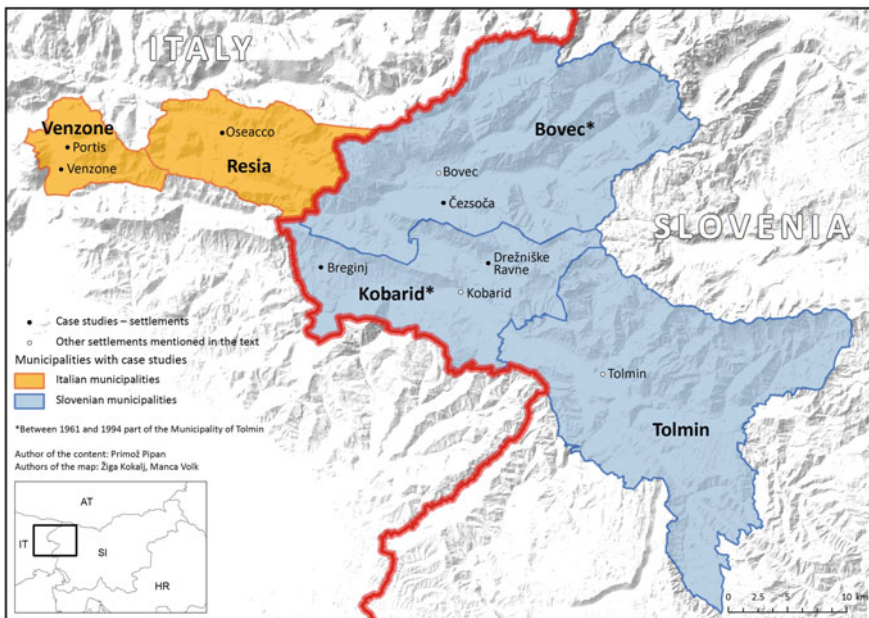
Fig. 10.1 Study area with selected settlements

Table 10.1 Description of selected cases

Case study (settlement)	Country	Year of earthquake	Population (year)[a]	Political system	Basic features of recovery
Venzone	Italy	1976	1805 (1971)	Capitalism	A low-lying settlement along the main road affected in the 1976 earthquakes. As a cultural monument of national importance, the historical center inside the city walls was renovated as a model example of cultural heritage protection. It is the seat of the Municipality of Venzone
Portis	Italy	1976	269 (1971)	Capitalism	A small low-lying settlement along the main road in the Municipality of Venzone affected in the 1976 earthquakes. Due to the risk posed by rockfalls triggered by the earthquakes, the settlement was rebuilt at another location
Oseacco	Italy	1976	409 (1971)	Capitalism	A settlement in the remote hilly border Municipality of Resia with a Slovenian ethnic minority. It was the most severely affected settlement in this municipality in the 1976 earthquakes. In terms of the post-earthquake recovery approach, its recovery differs from that in other settlements in the municipality
Breginj	Yugoslavia	1976	304 (1971)	Communism	A remote, hilly border settlement that was so severely damaged in the 1976 earthquakes that it was rebuilt at a new location. Through this, valuable architectural cultural heritage was destroyed

(continued)

Table 10.1 (continued)

Case study (settlement)	Country	Year of earth-quake	Population (year)[a]	Political system	Basic features of recovery
Drežniške Ravne	Slovenia	1998	164 (1991), 153 (2002)	Capitalism	A small remote hilly settlement in the Municipality of Kobarid, in which nearly all the buildings were damaged in the 1998 earthquake. The Municipality of Kobarid adopted a special regulatory plan that envisaged the comprehensive renovation of the settlement
Čežsoča	Slovenia	2004	317 (2002)	Capitalism	A small settlement in an alpine basin in the Municipality of Bovec. The considerably weaker 2004 earthquake damaged buildings that had been renovated after a stronger 1998 earthquake, which revealed irregularities in post-earthquake construction

Adapted after Pipan (2011a)

[a]*Sources* 11° censimento … (1973), Orožen Adamič et al. (1995), Statistični urad Republike Slovenije (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia) (2019)

10.3   Concepts of Recovery After the 1976, 1998, and 2004 Earthquakes

With the legislation that was adopted for recovery after the 1976 earthquakes, the region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Italy) transferred the responsibility for post-earthquake recovery to municipalities as the smallest units of local government. The municipalities obtained professional assistance from the earthquake office, but the responsibility for the recovery lay solely with the individual municipalities and their mayors, who represented both the region and the central government in Rome during the post-earthquake recovery. The central government allocated recovery funds to the region, and this, in turn, allocated it to individual municipalities or mayors because they had the best overview of what was happening in the field. During the recovery, there were only two cases of irregularities or misused funds discovered in the entire region; in one (the Municipality of Resia) irregularities only occurred due to a lack of necessary knowledge (Pipan 2011a).

In Slovenia, as in Italy, the responsibility for recovery after the 1976 earthquakes was assumed by the municipalities, which relied on local communities (smaller administrative units within a municipality). The communal assemblies of the municipalities of Tolmin, Nova Gorica, and Idrija established an inter-municipal board that coordinated post-earthquake recovery across the entire Soča Valley (Ladava 1980). The Municipality of Tolmin was most affected; however, because it did not have a majority on the inter-municipal board, its needs may have been overruled by the other two municipalities, which had not been as badly affected and were also more economically developed at the time. The responsibility that the Municipality of Tolmin had did not include sufficient funding for spending on the entire public infrastructure needed, and especially the renovation of cultural heritage, which was shown in the case of Breginj (Sect. 10.4.4).

Selective allocation of recovery funding was also typical at the municipal administrative level. With an area of 939 km^2, the Municipality of Tolmin was the largest in Slovenia, which is why there was a clear gap in economic development between the municipal center and its periphery. Spending as part of post-earthquake recovery was thus directed to the central area of the municipality (i.e., Tolmin), followed by the areas of Bovec and Kobarid, where recovery was underway in Breginj (Sect. 10.4.4; Pipan 2011a). The disparity between the periphery and the center was also reflected in the Kobarid area, where the local communities of Breginj and Borjana—that is, distinctly peripheral settlements compared to the center of Kobarid—were most affected. Thus, one could talk about a periphery at four levels (Fig. 10.2): (1) state: the Municipality of Tolmin from the perspective of Slovenia (or at that time Yugoslavia), (2) regional: the Municipality of Tolmin from the perspective of all affected municipalities, (3) municipal: the Kobarid area from the perspective of the Municipality of Tolmin, and (4) local: the local community of Breginj from the perspective of the Kobarid area. Thus, for example, in the local community of Breginj the planned post-earthquake recovery was not fully implemented because of the allocation of funds at the municipal level.
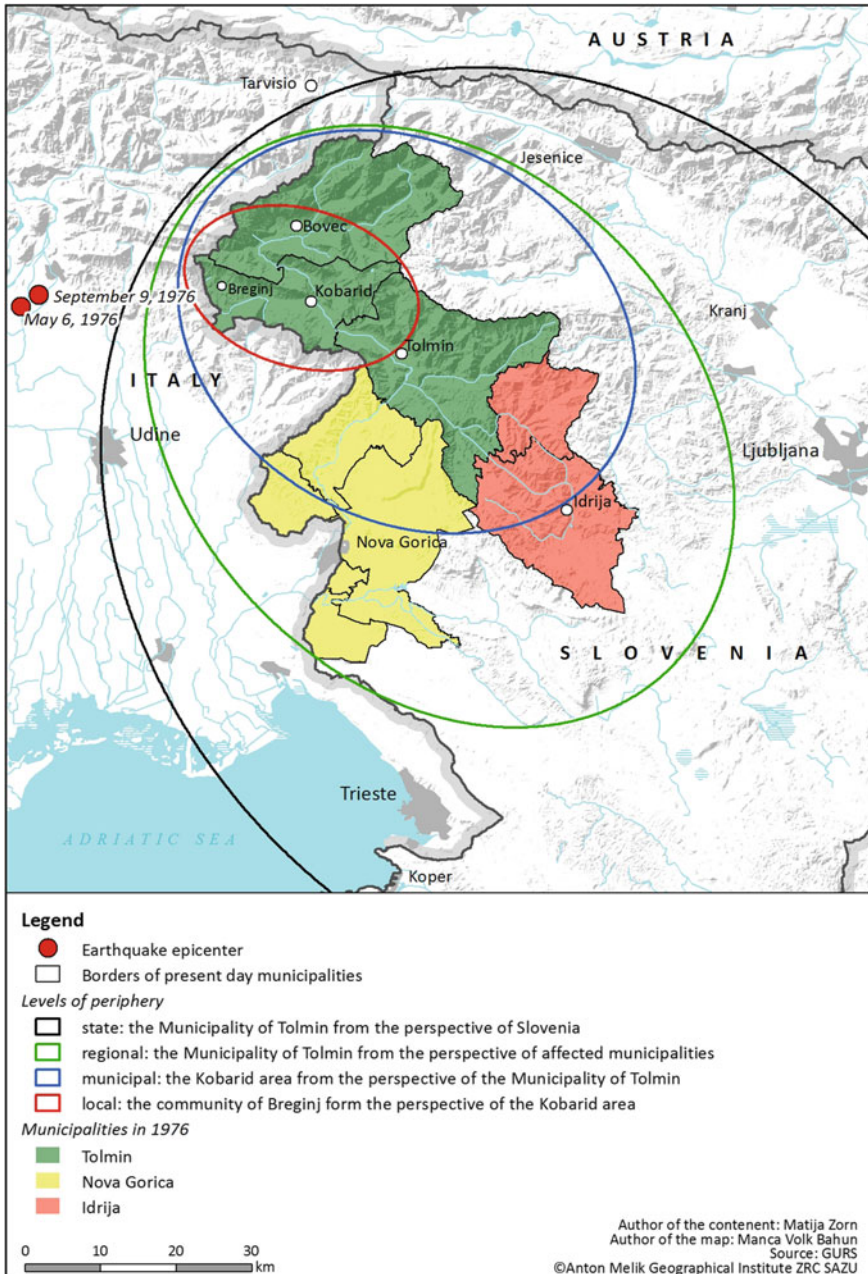
Fig. 10.2 Four levels of periphery of the settlement of Breginj (NW Slovenia) with regard to post-earthquake recovery after 1976 earthquakes (Pipan 2011a; Zorn 2018)

After the 1998 earthquake, the central government supervised the recovery in Slovenia. Thus, a shift in responsibility from the local (municipal) level to the state level is evident after the change of the political system. To this end, the Slovenian government established the National Technical Office in the affected area as a temporary body with regional branches in the municipal seats of Tolmin, Kobarid, and Bovec (during the 1990s, the large Municipality of Tolmin, which supervised the recovery in 1976, was divided into three municipalities; Janežič et al. 2003). In order to avoid a repetition of the concept of recovery in the Breginj area in 1976, during which entire settlements were relocated, the law prioritized recovery at the same location. In order to protect cultural heritage, the recovery of damaged buildings had priority over new construction. The law simplified the administrative procedures connected with building construction as part of the post-earthquake recovery and combined them under the jurisdiction of the National Technical Office, which provided assistance to those affected in handling the required documentation. Before individual projects started being implemented, all of the administrative procedures needed to be completed because the goal was to not repeat the story from 1976, when buildings were renovated or new ones were built, but not entered in the land register for another three decades after the recovery was completed.

10.4 Case Studies

10.4.1 Venzone

Venzone stands out in Italy as an exemplary case of post-earthquake recovery. In order to protect cultural heritage, the entire historical center inside the city walls was proclaimed a cultural monument of national importance in 1965 (Bellina et al. 2006). Post-earthquake recovery was carried out based on two different legal bases. Procedures envisaged in post-earthquake legislation applied to the entire area in Friuli-Venezia Giulia that was affected by the earthquake, whereas in Venzone they only applied to the area outside the city walls. Recovery of the historical center inside the city walls as protected cultural heritage thus took place with an emphasis on preserving architectural cultural heritage (Fig. 10.3).

On the Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, Venzone is ranked under "citizen control" (Fig. 10.10); this applied to both the areas within and outside the culturally protected historical center. Its residents successfully resisted the manipulation attempts by the municipal authorities, which planned to raze buildings that had not been damaged in the earthquake in order to make space for building a new sports center as part of post-earthquake recovery. Inside the city walls, residents prevented some of their fellow residents from purposely razing some of the buildings that had been damaged in the first earthquake. They reacted the same way a year later, when a series of old damaged houses were razed by an order of the municipal administration. The residents established a special committee, which issued a weekly publication

Fig. 10.3 Markings based on which buildings were reconstructed after the 1976 earthquakes are still visible on many buildings in the old town of Venzone. *Photograph* Primož Pipan

titled "Cjase Nestre" (in Friulian "Our Home"). This publication, which all the residents of the Municipality of Venzone received free, critically evaluated even the smallest step of both the municipal and the regional authorities (Bellina et al. 2006). With a very active and effective bottom-up organization, the residents of Venzone provided support to the Regional Cultural Heritage Office in the critical times of post-earthquake recovery. Venzone, whose renovation was exemplary, is now visited by more than 200,000 tourists a year (Cargnelutti 2018).

10.4.2 Portis

Portis lies on the left bank of the Tagliamento River in the Municipality of Venzone, just three kilometers from the municipal seat. The settlement's official name is Portis, but because of the 1976 earthquake, the residents distinguish between the old Portis (Portis vecchio) and the new Portis (Portis nuova). The old Portis lies right along the Tagliamento River, whereas the new Portis, which was built after the 1976 earthquakes, lies 1.5 km further north. Due to the risk of rockfalls after the 1976 earthquakes (Fig. 10.4), the authorities decided to relocate the settlement (Fig. 10.5) over the objection of a considerable number of residents. In line with the post-earthquake act, the residents provided the impetus for establishing the new Portis cooperative (La Cooperativa Nuova Portis) for building the settlement at a new location. Through the cooperative, the residents successfully implemented post-earthquake recovery at the lowest, local decision-making level and were the first in Friuli-Venezia Giulia to complete the majority of the recovery work (in 1981). Portis is a good example of how the residents took responsibility for the post-earthquake recovery into their own hands and showed that this was the right choice after the authorities had ordered them to move to a new location (Storia di un paese ricostruito 1992; Pipan 2011a; Cozzi 2017). Due to its relocation, Portis is ranked under "informing" on the Arnstein citi-
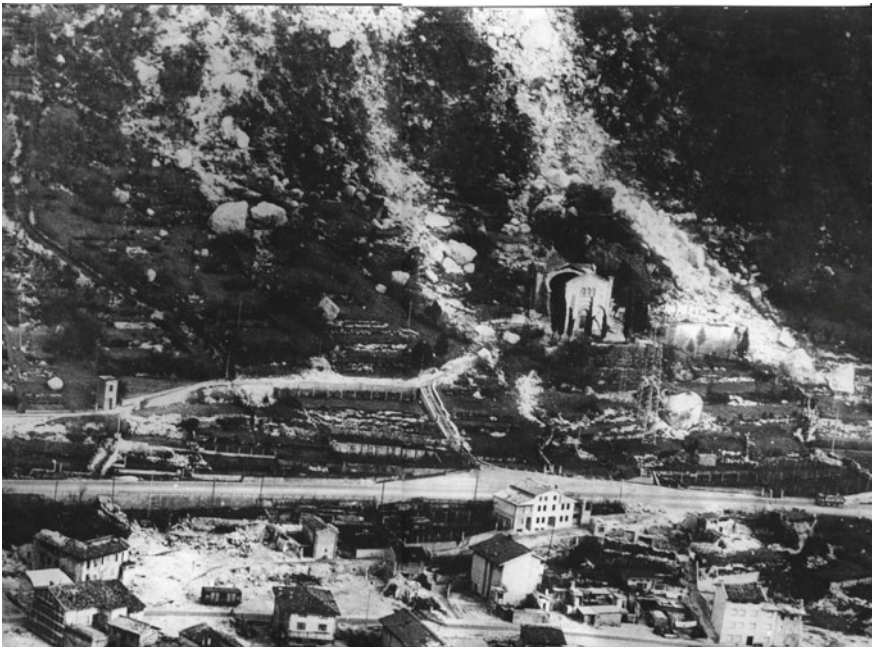
Fig. 10.4 Portis after the September 1976 earthquake. Rockfalls, which were the main reason for relocating the settlement, can be seen in the background (archive of Ezio Gollino)

Fig. 10.5 Relocation of Portis following the 1976 earthquakes

zen participation ladder, but its later recovery can be ranked under the highest level: citizen control (Fig. 10.10).

10.4.3 Oseacco

In terms of the Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, the Municipality of Resia is negatively classified under "citizen control" (Fig. 10.10), thus meaning that the highest citizen participation is not necessary the most suitable solution for earthquake recovery. Even though the new settlement named Lario with prefabricated houses as the most damaged part of Oseacco was already completed in the fall of 1976, recovery in Resia took a very long time. The law assigned responsibility for the recovery to the municipality, but this was too much for the weak local community to handle. The reason for this was a combination of unfavorable circumstances such as a large extent of damage, the peripheral location of the municipality in the mountains, and ineffective management of the recovery, which resulted from overly frequent replacements of ineffective mayors. Thirteen years were lost because of this. The renovation work only resumed in 1990 and ended in 1996, which was twenty years after the earthquake (Madotto 1998). In addition to the problems connected with electing an effective mayor, the negotiations between individual settlements also proved extremely difficult. The settlements that had suffered less damage were suitably renovated, but in Oseacco, which had had the most picturesque architectural heritage in the valley before the earthquake, everyone renovated their houses as they pleased. Thus, an eyesore that mars the overall image of the settlement is what has remained of the settlement formerly styled as "Little Venice."

10.4.4 Breginj

The situation in the old Breginj was complicated even before the earthquake. Despite the efforts made by the Municipality of Tolmin and the Cultural Monument Protection Institute to preserve the architectural heritage, the local community was divided. After the 1976 earthquakes, the authorities ordered that the residents had to be in new houses by winter. Thus, from the "informing" through the "consultation" levels on the Arnstein's ladder (Fig. 10.10), an agreement was reached to preserve and renovate only a very small part of the old Breginj (Fig. 10.6). However, due to the lack of funds, this renovation was not carried out until 2004. Based on the public discussion on renovating Breginj that was aired on national television "TV Ljubljana" (nowadays TV Slovenija) in 1983, this example of post-earthquake recovery can be classified under "manipulation" because the program that presented this discussion was censored and, in fact, canceled (Pipan 2011a).

After the 1976 earthquakes, the government did not act as it should have with regard to architectural heritage because it did not have suitable mechanisms in place

1	Preserved and renovated (very small) part of the architectural cultural heritage of old Breginj
2	New Breginj - permanent prefabricated housing
4	Individual post-earthquake housing on the location of old Breginj

Fig. 10.6 Old and new Breginj. Only a tiny part of the former architectural heritage has been preserved in the old Breginj. It is surrounded by individual houses that were built after the earthquake. Cookie-cutter prefabricated houses are typical of the new Breginj

and sufficient financial resources to protect and renovate cultural heritage of national importance. The local authorities had power only on paper, and their responsibility was too great given the financial resources available.

10.4.5 *Drežniške Ravne*

Drežniške Ravne was badly damaged in the 1998 earthquake (Fig. 10.7), and the mayor saw a good opportunity to renovate the settlements as part of a comprehensive regulatory plan. The stage in which the plan was being drafted is an example of successful cooperation between the affected residents, the municipality, and the state. On the Arnstein's ladder, this could be classified under "partnership" (Fig. 10.10). However, in the case of Drežniške Ravne, problems started with the implementation stage of the regulatory plan because there was not sufficient funding available. In addition, residents and the authorities understood the plan differently. Despite the fact that the renovation was successfully completed, it could have been better, taking into account the original plan.

Fig. 10.7 Damage to buildings in Drežniške Ravne after the 1998 earthquake. *Photograph* Matija Zorn

10.4.6 *Čezsoča*

In Čezsoča (Figs. 10.8 and 10.9), the 2004 earthquake also damaged buildings that had already been renovated after the 1998 earthquake. Čezsoča is an example of a settlement in which the general public started doubting the operation of professional institutions despite its lack of knowledge of earthquake-safe construction. Recovery after the 1998 earthquake was based on the assumption that those affected in the earthquake could not be trusted and that the state had to direct and supervise the renovation in the form of a National Technical Office. The damage to all houses in the village in 1998 amounted to almost one-third of the overall market value (28%) of all real estate in the village (Komac et al. 2011). The 2004 earthquake revealed that a great deal of the construction work that had already been paid and documented as finished had not been carried out at all. This undermined people's trust in the operation of the recovery system. Čezsoča can be classified under "informing" and partly also under "therapy" on the Arnstein's ladder citizen participation (Fig. 10.10).

Fig. 10.8   Damage to buildings in Čezsoča after the 2004 earthquake. *Photograph* Matija Zorn

Fig. 10.9   New house built in Čezsoča after the 2004 earthquake. *Photograph* Primož Pipan
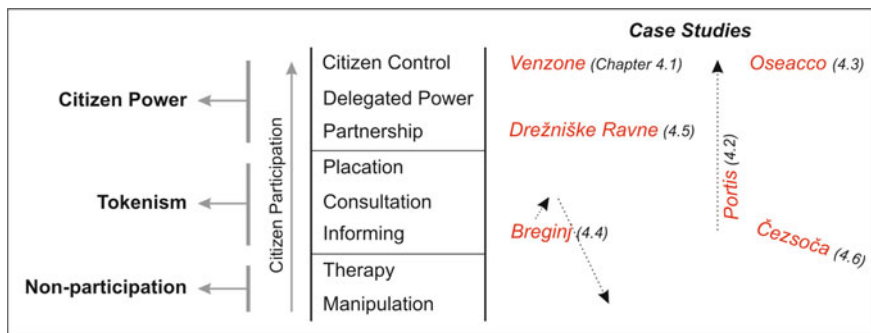
Fig. 10.10 Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein 1969, 2004) and the ranking of the settlement recovery studied

10.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Each case is a story in itself, but the cases described here show that several factors affect the success of post-earthquake recovery. In addition to various political and legislative–administrative contexts, responsible citizens also play an important role. In the case of Venzone, the majority of residents and stakeholders had a positive influence on the preservation of cultural heritage because they reduced the negative impacts of individuals and were successful in resisting the municipal authorities' desire for a quick post-earthquake recovery, as had occurred in Breginj on the other side of the border. Portis is a good example of how the local community successfully agreed on how to renovate its settlement and also carried out the renovation entirely on its own. The responsibility for carrying out the post-earthquake recovery proved to be too much for the weak local community in the Municipality of Resia. Due to a large amount of damage and ineffective management of the renovation, recovery was only completed after two decades. The case of preserving the architectural heritage of Breginj involved a divided local community, and the municipality's responsibility for carrying out the recovery was not supported with sufficient government funds. The unwillingness of the authorities to critically evaluate the renovation also stands out in this case because they even censored the television program featuring this issue. Drežniške Ravne is an example of good negotiations with the locals in drafting the regulatory plan for renovating the settlement affected in the earthquake. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funds, the government did not fully implement what was originally a very good regulatory plan. In the case of Čezsoča, the residents' warnings and discomfort regarding irregularities in the recovery after the 1998 earthquake were only confirmed by the 2004 earthquake.

From the strategy of recovery, the case studies from Italy show a bottom-up approach (Table 10.2), which is based on the tradition of democratic decision-making processes. According to Arnstein's ladder, the citizen participation is always at the highest stage—citizen control. However, the case study of Oseacco shows that the

Table 10.2 Comparison of selected cases

Case study (settlement; year of the earthquake)	Political system	Recovery responsibility	Periphery in regard to the state/region	Periphery within the municipality	Strategy of recovery	Citizen Participation (according to Arnstein)	Time of post-earthquake recovery	Type of post-earthquake recovery	Preserving cultural heritage
Venzone, Italy (1976)	Capitalism	Municipality	Yes	No	Bottom-up	Citizen control	7 years: outside the city walls (1983); 14 years: inside the city walls (1990)	Rebuilding on the same location	Yes
Portis, Italy (1976)	Capitalism	Municipality	Yes	No	Bottom-up	Citizen control	5 years (1981)	Settlement relocation (rockfall risk)	No
Oseacco, Italy (1976)	Capitalism	Municipality	Yes	No	Bottom-up	Citizen control (negatively)	20 years (1996)	Rebuilding on the same location	No
Breginj, Yugoslavia (1976)	Communism	Municipality (declarative)	Yes	Yes	Top-down	Manipulation	<1 year	Settlement relocation	No

(continued)

Table 10.2 (continued)

Case study (settlement; year of the earthquake)	Political system	Recovery responsibility	Periphery in regard to the state/region	Periphery within the municipality	Strategy of recovery	Citizen Participation (according to Arnstein)	Time of post-earthquake recovery	Type of post-earthquake recovery	Preserving cultural heritage
Drežniške Ravne, Slovenia (1998)	Capitalism	State	Yes	Yes	Top-down	Partnership	<5 years (2002)	Rebuilding on the same location	Yes
Čezžsoča, Slovenia (2004)	Capitalism	State	Yes	No	Top-down	Informing and therapy	5 years (2009)	Rebuilding on the same location	Yes

bottom-up approach and the citizen control stage may not necessarily be a success story—also from the point of preserving the cultural heritage.

In Slovenia, the top-down approach was in effect regardless of the political system. The change of the political system only slightly affected the citizen participation—from manipulation under communism to informing, therapy, and partnership in democratic Slovenia. The change of the political system was, however, reflected in better preserving the cultural heritage (Table 10.2).

In Italy, the residents themselves issued a weekly publication "Cjase Nestre" about the earthquake recovery while contrary in Slovenia more than two decades later the information bulletin about the earthquake recovery was issued by the National Technical Office.

However, the successful "Friuli model" of public participation in earthquake recovery was in Italy not repeated, e.g., Irpinia earthquake in 1980 (Geipel 1982) and Abruzzo earthquake in 2009 (Cozzi 2017). The considerable differences in public participation in earthquake recovery in Italy are the result of cultural differences within the country.

According to Franceschino Barazzutti (Pipan 2011a), at the time the president of the association of municipalities affected by earthquakes and the mayors of earthquake recovery in Friuli (Associazione dei comuni terremotati e dei sindaci della ricostruzione del Friuli) the successful public participation in earthquake recovery in Friuli could today not be repeated. Namely, the region and the state would not be prepared to transfer its powers to municipalities for the bottom-up approach. Even if this would be the case, there is the question if the municipalities with a new generation of politicians with different values than the ones in 1976 would be capable to react and perform in a similar manner.

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Chapter 11
Stakeholder Analysis for (Mediterranean) Wetland Governance: The Case of Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park, Slovenia

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Abstract Wetlands in Europe are vulnerable interconnected environments, significantly contributing to biodiversity. They are often challenged by the overlapping of different levels of spatial planning and authorities in charge of their preservation and management, by the lack of coordination and incapacity of administrative authorities to handle complex territorial dynamics. In this study, we present the methodology used to engage relevant stakeholders in wetland governance in Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park, located in the southern part of the Ljubljana Basin, Slovenia. The main focus of this chapter is the detailed explanation of the implementation of effective governance for the Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park, acting through a participatory process in which users, private and public entities are committed to mainstreaming wetlands preservation into their ordinary activities. The Wetland Contract is a document signed by different stakeholders, aiming at the active participation of stakeholders in solving a selected problem in a wetland. Its implementation and the use of selected cooperative participatory techniques assure greater coordination among stakeholders and decision-makers in order to limit and absorb conflicts among different issues, primarily between preservation issues and economic activities, but also those opposing cultural heritage valorisation to the protection of natural values.

Keywords Environmental decision-making · Stakeholder mapping · Effective governance · Mediterranean wetlands · Wetland contract

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11.1 Introduction

According to the Ramsar Convention (1971) for the protection of wetlands (articles 1.1 and 2.1), wetlands are defined as:

> … areas of marsh, fen, peat land or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres […] and may incorporate riparian and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands, and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six metres at low tide lying within the wetlands.

Wetlands in Europe are vulnerable interconnected environments, significantly contributing to biodiversity. Their protection intertwines environmental aspects and governance concerns. The project "WETNET—Coordinated management and networking of Mediterranean wetlands" was developed in order to tackle the issue of implementing multilevel governance for Mediterranean wetlands to achieve overall and network effects on wetlands ecosystems as well as on connected local systems. The research generated aims at ensuring higher coordination between different levels of spatial planning and authorities in charge of wetland management, whilst limiting conflicts between preservation issues and economic activities (WETNET Application Form 2014). Based on River Contracts—an innovative methodology for water management based on the active participation of local actors, the research seeks to test and transfer Wetland Contracts, acting through broad participatory processes where users, private and public entities are committed to mainstreaming wetlands preservation into their ordinary activities. Wetland Contracts promote consultation processes between various key actors and active participation from a range of stakeholders. Therefore, Wetland Contracts are voluntary agreements to foster a dialogue and shared responsibility among actors. The Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park was selected as a pilot area. After 150 years of human intervention in this marsh landscape, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the first realizations emerged regarding the need to protect it. Efforts to protect the Ljubljansko Barje intensified during the 1980s, until the marsh was protected as a Nature Park in 2008 in order to protect the natural values, preserve the biodiversity and maintain and enhance the landscape diversity. Despite being protected, the Park continues to face many pressures and threats that may endanger its future sustainable development.

In order to develop and implement the Wetland Contract in the pilot area, a stakeholder's analysis should first be undertaken. With the aim of guaranteeing proper governance of the Wetland Contract implementation, the contract should be designed by stakeholders comprising representatives from (1) public authorities, (2) knowledge providers, (3) civil society and (4) the economic sector. This structure ensures that the principles of territorial consultation are respected during each stage and through the final agreement, including the definition of objectives, content and the rationale for its actions (Bravard 2016).

In this study, we present the methodology used to identify and engage relevant stakeholders; i.e. all people, groups and institutions, willing to embark on the process of improving the governance of Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park.

11.1.1 Theoretical Framework

The various functions of wetlands give them unique importance for both plants and animals but also for humanity. Wetlands are important for the people who live around them but also for the global freshwater supply. The overuse of finite freshwater resources which constitute 2.5% of the total water volume of our planet and the projected future increased use of freshwater paint a bleak picture for wetlands, and thus for humans. Water shortage is already evident in many parts of the world, and according to FAO (2019) by 2025 two-thirds of the world's population could be under water stress conditions. Lack of freshwater and increased population growth present a real threat to humanity. However, the solution to this problem cannot be found in a single response. Considering that wetlands store and purify water and replenish underground water sources, their conservation is vital for our future. Wetlands are also important as part of cultural heritage. Their ecological functions have overshadowed this aspect of their importance, but it is now getting increasingly more attention. Wetlands are inextricably linked with the cultural heritage of humanity and are a cradle for local knowledge and tradition, religious beliefs and aesthetic values. Effectively, the conservation of wetlands contributes to the conservation of human tradition (Medwet 2017).

Specific characteristics of the climate and the long history of human presence make the Mediterranean a unique region. For thousands of years, the wetlands around the Mediterranean Basin have provided people not only with essential services like water, food, materials and transport, but have also played a major part in their social and cultural activities. Major civilizations were established in association with and dependent on wetlands for resources like water. Major cities have been built in or very close to wetlands (e.g. Venice), where significant archaeological remains can be found. In the twentieth century, with the advent of industrialization, intensive agriculture, urbanization, population pressures and legitimate health considerations, the bond between man and wetland was broken and hence many wetlands were destroyed. Wetlands were perceived as dangerous places filled with dangerous animals, evil spirits and disease-carrying insects that needed to be "sanitized" or seen as unimportant, fallow land to be drained and converted to other uses (Medwet 2017).

Three specific features are especially characteristic for the Mediterranean wetlands (Papayannis and Salathé 1998):

1. Mediterranean wetlands are very diverse, a result of the climatic variability of the region. In the North, the wetlands are large river deltas and lagoons, and in the South they are sabkhas and marshes that are seasonal and may appear every few years. Also, artificial wetlands range from oases and salt pans to contemporary reservoirs created by hydroelectric and irrigation dams.

2. There are strong ties between local inhabitants and wetlands. These ties are evident from the fact that Mediterranean people not only used them but lived and still live in or near them, as demonstrated by ancient Greek trading posts such as Empurias (Catalonia, Spain) and Narona (Croatia). Venice and Tunis, two large Mediterranean cities, are built-in wetlands (Matvejević 1990). These choices in

settlement demonstrate how local communities in the Mediterranean Basin have developed strong cultural bonds with wetland sites.

3. Mediterranean wetlands are in a degraded condition and under threat. The last century has seen the loss of more than half the wetlands, which has resulted in a dramatic degradation of their functions and loss of their values (Finlayson et al. 1992). Even though many attempts have been made to counteract this trend, degradation and loss have not yet been stopped or reversed (Papayannis 2002).

In order to protect wetlands from these threats, it is important to involve stakeholders in all levels of governance and change the destructive practices that have been implemented until now. Wetland loss to a large extent is due to ignorance and misunderstanding of their role, so an important step in effective wetland conservation is informing public policy officials, decision-makers and the general public about the true values and functions of wetlands (Medwet 2017). The sustainable management of wetlands cannot be achieved without the active participation of all stakeholders. For this purpose, a stakeholder analysis is a prerequisite for any development of or intervention into wetland management, as emphasized by the Ramsar Convention.

In the Mediterranean countries in general, wetlands are not high priorities on the political and strategic development and conservation agendas. This derives from a series of factors (MED-survey 2011):

- The main development and conservation policies and agenda as well as public institutional set-up are not based on specific ecosystems but on economic, social and environmental considerations;
- Economic and social development is the driving agenda of most Mediterranean countries, with economic growth, employment, food security, poverty reduction and national security being the priorities;
- Wetlands represent less than 3% of the entire terrestrial surface of the Mediterranean Basin, which is a very small part in terms of land use and planning for decision-makers;
- In most non-EU countries, wetland protection and sustainable use are still often understood as a Ramsar process for protected areas only, and not known outside the conservation network and in non-Ramsar sites;
- Nature is still considered, especially in southern countries, as free capital in development options, and the water component of wetlands captures interest for purposes of irrigation, water supply, tourism, industry, etc.;
- Ramsar focal points are not always visible, not institutionally strong, or they may be less involved in decision-making than EU and OECD focal points. However, considering the small percentage (less than 3%) of the Mediterranean areas covered by wetlands cumulated efforts since 1971 have been bearing fruit. These results are recognized by most wetlands-related stakeholders involved at the policy level: improved awareness; continuous increase of protected wetlands sites and areas; updates and improvements of policy and strategic documents related to wetlands and increased capacity and participation of civil society in wetlands protection.

River Contracts (the basis for the Wetland Contracts) were revealed as innovations in policy, replacing the partial and/or sector-driven sector policies, with the practice

of stipulating contracts between partners on a local scale. These agreements strive to reconcile economic development, social uses and values and the ecological quality of the environment. In France, River Contracts provided the possibility to implement concrete management practices based on integrated management, showing that it is possible and desirable to deeply involve different stakeholders in the design process and in political and management decisions (Bravard 2016).

Therefore, for the purpose of providing a robust, inclusive and credible approach to assessing and strengthening wetland governance, at multiple levels and in diverse contexts, the engagement and involvement of stakeholders are of crucial importance.

11.1.2 Engaging and Involving Stakeholders in Wetland Governance

Public participation and stakeholders' involvement in environmental decision-making have become an increasingly important aspect over the past few decades (Richardson and Razzaque 2006). The principle of public participation enables the public to be heard and to affect decisions (Kiss and Shelton 2004). One of the first international instruments that proclaimed this principle was the World Charter for Nature, adopted in 1982 (UN 1982). Public participation distinctly gained importance in the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro (UNCED 1992). Its principle 10 establishes that:

> Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.

Later, the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters—the Aarhus Convention—underscored this development (UNECE 1998). The Aarhus Convention is actually the only instrument dedicated exclusively to participation. The Convention is a significant example of the legal consolidation of measures to enhance public participation in relation to decision-making (article 6), availability of information (Article 4) and access to justice (Article 9). The negotiating sessions involved an unprecedented level of participation on the part of NGOs, among them a coalition of environmental citizens' organizations established especially for the drafting sessions. The Aarhus Convention signalled the conclusion of public participation reforms made since the 1970s. Significantly, all Member States of the European Union have either signed or ratified the Aarhus Convention (Pimbert and Wakeford 2001).

Several factors have encouraged the increase of participatory processes in decision-making (Richardson and Razzaque 2006), such as (1) increased public

awareness and concern about the relationships between ecological health and human well-being (Barton 2002); (2) the growth of human rights in legal and political systems has elevated people's expectations regarding access to participation in policy-making (Barton 2002); (3) the current concerns of the international community for "good governance' and the empowerment of civil society have also contributed to increasing interest in the participatory processes (Pimbert and Wakeford 2001); and (4) weaknesses in the legitimacy of the state and the lack of trust in government institutions have fed popular demands for more fundamental and direct involvement in decisions (Pimbert and Wakeford 2001).

The consequences of wetland management and mismanagement affect all sectors of society; however, the values which people attribute to wetlands and the impacts of wetland management decisions are sometimes not adequately considered in decision-making processes. Different stakeholders derive different benefits from and attribute different values to wetlands. Therefore, it is critical to explicitly and transparently recognize, assess and integrate these multiple perspectives in policy -making (Kumar et al. 2017).

The improving management of wetlands to assure higher coordination among stakeholders and decision-makers in order to limit and absorb conflicts among different issues—primarily between preservation issues and economic activities, but including preventing the false opposition of cultural heritage valorisation to the protection of natural values—is a huge endeavour that cannot be accomplished without the involvement of relevant stakeholders. Therefore, it is important to conduct a stakeholder mapping to understand who might be impacted, who should be involved, and what concerns they bring to wetland governance. The identification of these viewpoints and interests is essential to creating a fully participatory process

11.2 Stakeholder Analysis

"Stakeholder analysis is the identification of individuals, groups or organisations that have a specific interest in the wetland and are likely to affect or be affected by proposed interventions in the wetland" (Gevers and Koopmanschap 2012, p. 35). It is an important step to identify the key stakeholders, where they come from, and what they are looking for in a relationship to the planning process (Morris and Baddache 2012). It is a useful approach to assess the stakes of interested participants in a system in more detail (Grimble et al. 1995; Grimble and Wellard 1997). This type of analysis has become increasingly popular in various academic fields such as environmental protection, management and governance, and it is used by policymakers and academics (Friedman and Miles 2006). Its roots are in management theory and in political science, where it has developed into a systematic tool with clearly defined applications and methods (Brugha and Varvasovszky 2000; Raum 2018). Within this research, we have developed a framework for stakeholder mapping in the field of wetlands governance, which includes the following steps: identification of relevant

stakeholders, reaching them out, analysing them with interest-influence matrix and assigning them the roles in a process.

11.2.1 Identification of the Relevant Stakeholders

Stakeholder identification is the process used to identify relevant stakeholders and assess their interests in the process (Grimble et al. 1995). A careful identification is essential because it is the basis for all further steps, as the chosen stakeholders will be implementing the Wetland Contract idea (Grimble and Wellard 1997). There are many principles involved in identifying stakeholders for the process, which has to be done in a methodical and logical way to ensure that stakeholders are not omitted. This may be done by looking at stakeholders organizationally, geographically or through involvement with various process phases or outcomes (Piscopo 2018). It is important to understand that not all stakeholders have the same influence or are equally affected by or during the process. On the one hand, there are stakeholders who may be directly impacted positively or negatively by the process and on the other hand those who may be indirectly affected by the outcomes of a proposed intervention (Mayers 2005). Examples of directly impacted stakeholders are the project team members or a customer who the process or project is being done for. Those indirectly affected may include an adjacent organization or members of the local community. Directly affected stakeholders usually have greater influence and impact than those indirectly affected (Piscopo 2018).

The identification of stakeholders for developing and implementing a Wetland Contract for Ljubljansko Barje was done through (Bole et al. 2017):

- brainstorming process between project partners,
- studying documents, initiatives and expertise related to wetlands,
- conversations with individuals and representatives of various organizations,
- browsing websites connected to the pilot area and
- field work (questionnaires).

The identification criteria of stakeholders for the Wetland Contract must answer five questions:

1. Who are the public authorities/knowledge institutions/those within the civil society/businesses that are interested in the management of Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park?
2. What is their role (policy provider, knowledge provider, direct consumer, indirect consumer …) in the process?
3. Who are the potential beneficiaries?
4. Who might be adversely impacted or has constraints regarding the process?
5. Who may impact the process or has influential power?

We have developed a stakeholder list with their characteristics, such as: geographical scope, sector of activity/field of intervention, institution, stakeholder classification, contact person and role. We identified 150 potential stakeholders, which

could be relevant for the development and implementation of a Wetland Contract at Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park. According to the levels of influence, 10.6% of them are working at the national level, 8.0% on the regional level and 81.4% on the local level. 6.0% of the potential stakeholders are also working on the international level. In order to involve a much broader group of stakeholders, we had to assign and formalize a precise role for each stakeholder. For this, we chose the Quadruple Helix approach, which is grounded in the idea that innovation is the outcome of an interactive process involving different stakeholders, each contributing according to its "institutional" function in society (Cavallini et al. 2016). "The Quadruple Helix contextualizes the Triple Helix (public authorities, knowledge providers, economic sector) by adding as the fourth helix "civil society" and the "media-and culture-based public" (Woo Park 2014, p. 14).

"This is the understanding that additional perspectives must be added to comprehend innovation in the unfolding twenty-first century. In fact, democracy frames and changes our conditions of innovation" (Woo Park 2014, p. 204). The Quadruple Helix approach focuses on innovation generated by citizens. Social inclusion, user-centrality and creativity have been encompassed in the knowledge production process as essential elements, and civil society has been added as a fourth helix of the innovation system (Cavallini et al. 2016). 50.6% of the potential stakeholders are public authorities, 6.7% are knowledge providers, 20.7% are civil society, and 22.0% are from the economic sector.

11.2.2　Reaching the Potential Stakeholders

When the stakeholder identification process was finished, we had a comprehensive list of groups of all the potential stakeholders. Now, we had to reach them. One way to reach them was through online and offline social and professional networks, which enable us to find stakeholders with common or relevant interests. Mapping these relationships and content online helps to identify creative ways to reach stakeholders and earn trust and referral. It can also help to understand social influence, political context and potential risks (Plan your online engagement 2017).

We sent an e-mail to the potential stakeholders introducing the research and explaining the purpose of cooperation. When necessary we phoned them and invited them to take part in the governance process. When possible, we involved leadership (dean/director of the institution) as a co-organizer of the working groups (employees are more inclined to participate when asked by higher management).

In order to gain participants' interest, the participation process should be facilitated and specifically designed according to the theme, situation or problem. Therefore, raising the right questions and issues could provide manifold results, a common learning process and innovative ideas arising from a collection of ideas. Powerful questions invite inquiry and new potential stakeholders: questions aimed at getting as much information about their connections to the topic are needed (Alfarè and Nared 2014).

After we contacted the potential stakeholders, we sent them a questionnaire in order to obtain key information for further in-depth analysis of the relevant ones. Based on the questionnaire, we developed a stakeholder list with their characteristics, such as

- type of stakeholder;
- field of activity;
- area of activity;
- main objectives of the organization for the Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park;
- confidence and experience in inclusive governance processes;
- confidence and experience in Wetland Contract processes;
- what aspects of the pilot area management are of interest to the stakeholder;
- interest of engagement in the Wetland Contract process;
- influence of the stakeholder on the Wetland Contract process.

We received 53 responses to the questionnaire. Forty-four of were fully completed and further analysed. From these, we have received 56.8% responses from public authorities, 6.8% responses from knowledge providers, 20.4% responses from civil society and 16.0% from economic entities.

11.2.3 Analysing the Stakeholders

We grouped the relevant stakeholders for the pilot area based on the interest-influence matrix. This matrix considers the relative interest of the stakeholder in the management of the wetland versus their level of influence, in order to create a stakeholder map (Dearden et al. 2003; Hunjan and Pettit 2011; Maguire et al. 2012). Using this approach, we assessed the stakeholders by taking into account their power and their interest, and we placed them in four quadrants and stakeholder groups: key players, subjects, context setters and the crowd. This approach shows in an understandable way which stakeholder categories demand priority attention. According to the Programme Manual (2017), there should be between five and ten individuals in each quadrant. Each stakeholder group on the matrix (Fig. 11.1) requires a different engagement form. We focused on the stakeholders located in the upper-right quadrant that represents the key players, i.e. stakeholders with high interest and high influence/power. They are the ones that will be involved and consulted regularly. Subjects are stakeholders with high interest but low power. They are affected by the wetland and are keen to influence the process but they do not have power to change decisions. We kept them engaged and involved them on a regular basis. Context setters are stakeholders with low interest but high power. They affect the wetland but they had little interest; therefore, they are informed via general communications, and we try to increase their level of interest. The crowd represents the stakeholders with low interest and low power. They are not very interested in the pilot area and do not have the power to influence decisions—we keep them informed about the development of the Wetland Contract.
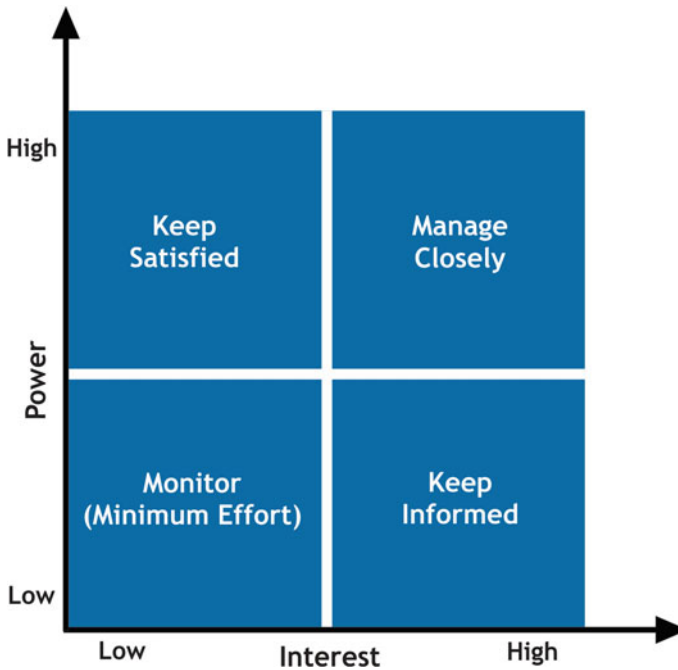
Fig. 11.1 Interest-influence matrix used to identify stakeholders with differing levels of interest and influence over the project

One of the important steps was to discover which stakeholders might help to develop the process and how, to detect their needs and aims and mark the already existing cooperation or networks among them. It is important to mention that the stakeholder list needs to be constantly updated during further steps.

Considering only the stakeholders with both higher interest and influence/power in Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park (Fig. 11.2), we obtained 34.0% of all completed responses to the questionnaire. From these, the majority of the stakeholders (66.7%) are public authorities, 13.3% are knowledge providers, 13.3% correspond to civil society and only 6.7% of the stakeholders come from the economic entities.

11.2.4 Assigning Stakeholders' Roles

Following the Quadruple Helix approach, four helices are included in the process of stakeholder mapping for Wetland Contract implementation:

- Public Authorities: public authorities with competences or territorial jurisdiction or sectoral jurisdiction in the Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park, local authorities, municipalities, government level institutions;
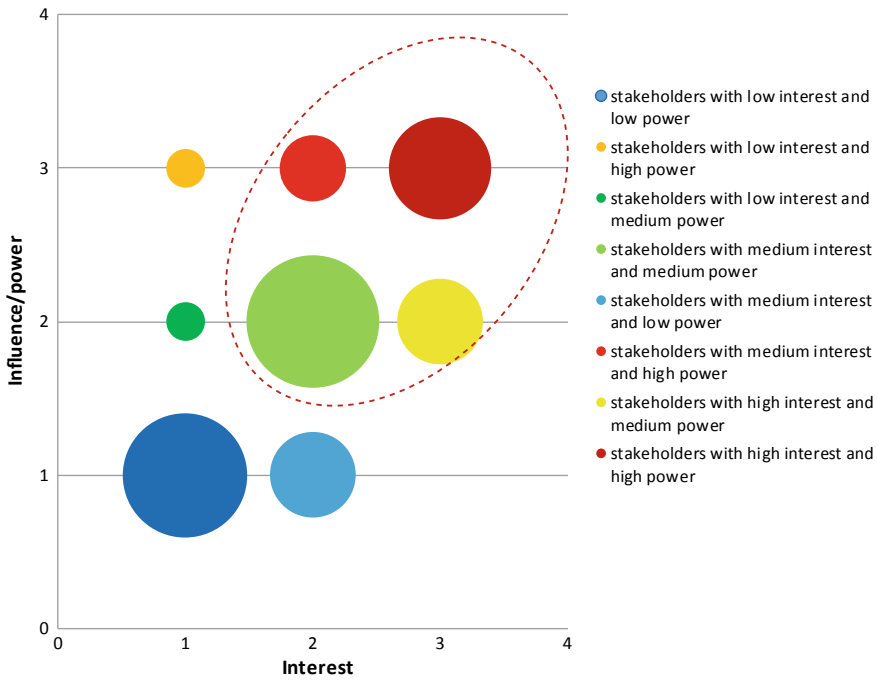
Fig. 11.2 Stakeholders with both higher interest and influence/power in the pilot area

- Knowledge Providers: experts and professionals from universities, research or development centres;
- Civil Society: associations and representative bodies representing the interests of citizens and civil society organizations, individuals, rights-holders;
- Economic Sector: individual or collective private entities of the main activities of the economic sector present in the surrounds of the Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park.

In terms of stakeholders' heterogeneity, the result is not very satisfying, since only one stakeholder is representative of the economic sector.

In order to reach the most interested stakeholders possible, and indeed a heterogeneous group, to further include them into the participatory processes such as workshops and implementation of the Wetland Contract, we included those with a medium interest and influence/power in the process (Fig. 11.3): 27.3% of the stakeholders. From these, 50.0% are from the public authority, 8.4% are from the knowledge providers, 25.0% are from the civil society, and 16.6% are from the economic sector.

From all the responses which were received and fully completed, 61.4% stakeholders were included in the further process of development and implementation of the Wetland Contract; 38.6% of those who completed the questionnaire are not interested in participating further in the process. Among those participating, 59.2%
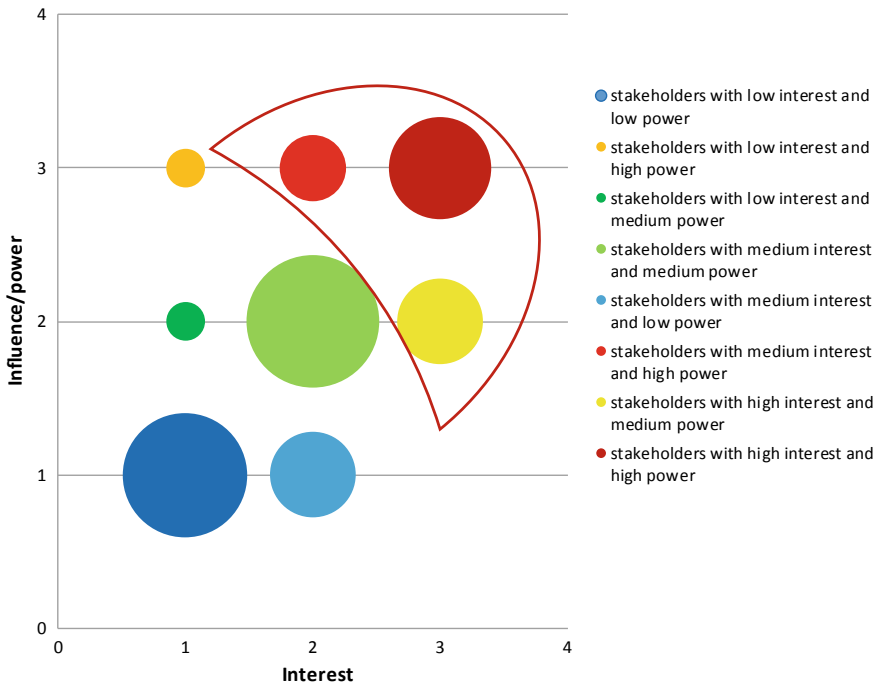
Fig. 11.3 Stakeholders showing both medium and high interest and influence/power in the pilot area

represent the public authorities, 11.1% represent knowledge providers, 18.6% represent civil society, and 11.1% represent the economic entities (Fig. 11.4).

After grouping the stakeholders, the following reflections helped to validate the findings and to prevent forgetting some of the important ones (ODA 1995):

- Have all relevant stakeholders been listed?
- Have all potential supporters and opponents of the project been identified?
- Have the interests of vulnerable groups been identified?
- Are there any new stakeholders likely to emerge as a result of the project?

The final step of the stakeholder mapping is the preparation of the final register of stakeholders. An outcome of this mapping process is the stakeholder register with an emphasis on the interested and influential ones. This is a necessary tool for the development and implementation of the Wetland Contract and provides significant value for the project team to communicate with stakeholders in an organized manner (Piscopo 2018).

Later on, all the stakeholders who were included in the further process of implementation of wetland governance are invited to workshops. The workshops focus on the characteristics and challenges that the pilot area is facing, the opportunities and threats, as well as the role of each stakeholder. The workshops contribute to
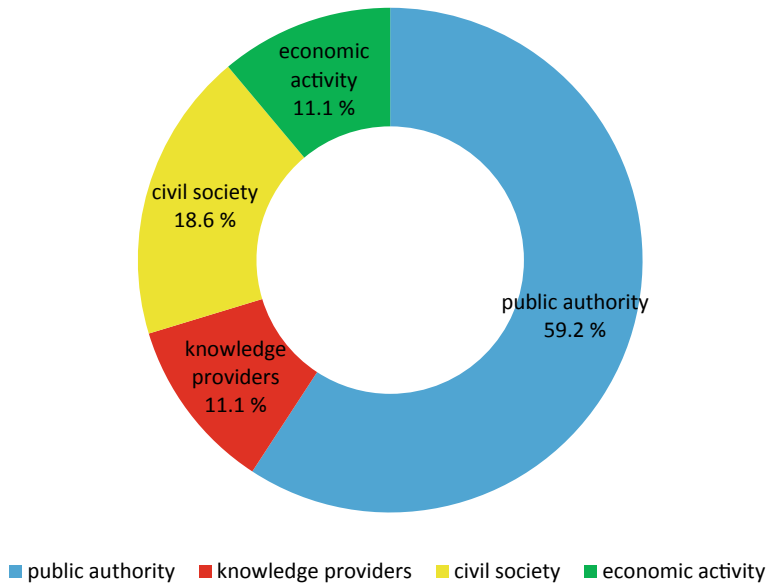
Fig. 11.4 Type of stakeholder, according to the four helices, included in further process of wetland governance

the understanding of different interests involved and to the evaluation of the potential involvement of the main stakeholders. All the organized workshops were very well attended and the participants were very interested in the topic and actively collaborated in the process. One of the reasons for such well-attended and successful workshops was the assiduous following of all the steps in stakeholder mapping process, especially the analysis according to the interest-influence matrix. As we have contacted and included the stakeholders with higher interest and influence, we have brought in those willing to participate. One of the strengths of applying all the aforementioned steps of stakeholder mapping is the retention of most of the interested ones until the end of the process.

11.3 Conclusion

Irrespective of the scope and nature of the process, the narrower specialized expert groups are no longer sufficient to develop and formulate final decisions. Even if they are highly qualified professionals, the profession itself has a limited view and range. A participatory communication is necessary, and communication is as important as obtaining information (Cornish and Dunn 2009). The final users, such as civil society, are those who can tell how the process and the final output will prove to be experienced in practice. Too often, it turns out, practice diverges from theory. Different stakeholders look at the process from different perspectives and present

their aspects and variants that responsible partners may overlook. By considering these, the process has wider support and can, in practice, endure. Of course, not everyone will be satisfied with the final decision, but with some effort and mediation we should gain the trust of all participants and prevent differences from interfering with the progress of the process.

Wetlands are important for the people who live around them; thus the values which people attribute to wetlands and the impacts of wetland management strategies are critical for their effective governance. Therefore, it is crucial to include all the relevant stakeholders and to assess all activities that are ongoing at the wetlands and find ways to meet their needs or at least to mediate them. Thus, multi-stakeholder processes represent forms of cross-sector collaboration, which have become common practice over the last decade in the management of wetlands, one of the most vulnerable environments in Europe.

In our study, we found that stakeholder mapping in the involvement process must be prepared exclusively for a specific process, carefully planned, but nevertheless capable of adapting to new situations. We need to know clearly what we want to achieve through the integration process of implementing the Wetland Contract and how it will be managed. Moreover, the invited stakeholders also need to be appropriately pre-informed about the Ljubljansko Barje Nature Park and the development of the Wetland Contract in its regard. The workshops that will follow the stakeholder mapping must be carefully prepared to be effective, but at the same time not overloaded with content. It will be necessary to ensure equal representation and involvement of all relevant stakeholders—all of them should have the opportunity to express their opinions, each opinion is counted, and we all listen to one another.

We played the role of the entity in charge relying on technical and scientific support, particularly while mapping the stakeholders, and knowledge bases, necessary to define actions and interventions to be included in the Wetland Contract. The role of stakeholders of different sectors varies widely; they have very diverse interests and in many cases their stakes are very high. In our study, we found that there is a limited number of stakeholders who have both high power and interest at the same time. An additional challenge is that those are quite homogeneous and do not represent all the relevant stakeholders that are crucial to the process. By including those who have medium interest or power, we included those who are not at first glance the most important stakeholders, yet are necessary for attaining successful management and implementation of the Wetland Contract. With this step, we obtained additional relevant stakeholders that were under-represented, especially knowledge providers who will provide expert opinions and be available for consultancy; civil society, directly or indirectly affected by the process, should be heard and to some extent taken into account, and the economic sector is often economically dependent on the ongoing process in the pilot area.

It is encouraging that actions towards the fundamental principles of stakeholder mapping and their participation are increasingly being enforced. However, in spite of several good practices, this approach is not always used. These actions are mainly used when the stakeholder rejects involvement in the process due to lack of appropriate involvement in the beginning of the process. In order to avoid bad practices,

the necessary involvement of the all four stakeholders pillars in the governance of wetlands is of crucial importance.

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Chapter 12
Planning Major Transport Infrastructure: Benefits and Limitations of the Participatory Decision-Making Processes

Maruša Goluža

Abstract Although stakeholder participation has been considered an ideal approach in spatial planning theory since the 1980s, decision-making processes are not always so inclusive in practice. Planning major transport infrastructure is usually a very contentious, time-consuming, and extremely demanding task due to a myriad of stakeholder interests and power relations that accompany decision-making processes. In order to determine the benefits and limitations of stakeholder participation when planning major transport infrastructure, this study analyzes and compares the planning processes of two freeway sections in Slovenia. It applies a qualitative document analysis method to reveal the background and developments of Slovenian infrastructure planning through history. The results show that both decision-making processes analyzed indicate a democratic deficit, which is a consequence of unfavorable institutional arrangements and legislation, and tokenistic planning tradition. The openness of decision-making processes has remained dependent on decisionmakers' (usually national institutions') preferences. Both of the decision-making processes studied also lack legitimacy and are biased by the power relations among stakeholders. The main contribution of this chapter is a more thorough understanding of the benefits and limitations that accompany stakeholder participation in planning major infrastructure, which may enhance the efficiency of future decision-making processes.

Keywords Infrastructure development · Conflicts of interest · Deliberative democracy · Communicative planning · Power relations

12.1 Introduction

Planning major infrastructure is usually a time-consuming and challenging task because these projects are generally large-scale and financially demanding, with long-term and irreversible consequences. Consequently, infrastructure planning concerns a large number of stakeholders, whose stakes in planning and policy-making are

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usually very high. They range from national, regional, and local economic interests and conservationist interests (e.g., nature, cultural heritage, and agriculture) to very individual existential interests (usually expressed as opposition to noise, pollution, or even loss of a home). There is a strong connection between road construction and spatial and regional development, which raises the stakes in infrastructure planning. One of the main underlying goals behind infrastructure construction is usually tackling uneven spatial and economic development (e.g., Committee on Spatial Development 1999; Dühr, Colomb and Nadin 2010; European Commission 2011). According to Peters (2003), investments in various transport options are always also investments in different spatial development futures. Infrastructure is commonly presented as a generator of economic growth, as well as economic and social cohesion, which is why infrastructure holds an important position in strategic documents connected with spatial development, both supranational (e.g., Committee on Spatial Development 1999) and national, such as the Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia (2004). This developmental role has remained the main rationale behind infrastructure planning in the European Union and worldwide, even though it has been proven that many such projects have strikingly poor performance records in terms of the economy, the environment, and public support (Flyvbjerg et al. 2003; Crescenzi and Rodrigues-Posé 2012). Transport infrastructure as longitudinal projects also cuts across various administrative layers (i.e., national, regional, and local), different land uses under the domain of different sectoral policies, and, last but not least, individuals' private property. Harmonizing, the entire range of interests in infrastructure planning is thus inevitably a strikingly demanding task for spatial planners.

Due to such a variety of stakeholders that are affected by infrastructure projects, conflicts are usually an integral part of planning procedures. Peters (2003, p. 317) illustrated the conflict-prone character of infrastructure planning with a European Commission statement from 1994 that says: "transport is many things to all people." At first glance, this rather ambiguous statement quite clearly points out the main challenge in decision-making procedures in infrastructure planning. Stakeholders perceive infrastructure differently and thus do not have the same views on what the right decision is. The great variety of stakeholders' perceptions and distinctively high stakes makes decision-making in infrastructure planning highly contentious. Conflicts as an integral part of infrastructure planning make stakeholder participation an indispensable part of every legitimate decision-making processes.

This chapter reveals the main characteristics of stakeholder participation in infrastructure planning, set in the context of specific sociopolitical changes that Slovenia faced after gaining independence in 1991. It analyzes the benefits and limitations of stakeholder participation through the lens of contentious situations that generally accompany decision-making procedures in the transport sector. The freeway project that started while Slovenia was still part of Yugoslavia is one of the largest infrastructure projects in Slovenia, and it played a strong integrating and state-formation role. Public support for this project was relatively high in the initial stages of carrying out the project, but through the course of its realization, it became increasingly conflict-laden. After independence, the Slovenian spatial planning system and infrastructure planning in particular struggled with several challenges: the growing number

of municipalities, privatization, greater interest of residents in participating in decisions on public matters, the ineffectiveness (or even the absence) of harmonization measures (such as public hearings), and the absence of a regional administrative level as an intermediate between local and national interests. Several researchers have questioned the quality of democracy and the process of Europeanization in post-communist countries (for a more thorough literature review, see Coman and Tomini 2014). They argue that post-communist countries lag behind their western European counterparts in terms of participation (Coman and Tomini 2014) and that their communist history has had a major influence on the understanding of and trust in democracy. This study analyzes two case studies from Slovenia whose time span stretches through most of the history of Slovenian infrastructure planning. It contrasts spatial planning legislation and participatory planning practice from the transitional times of the 1990s to today when Slovenia is presumed to have adopted western norms. The two case studies reveal what the role of stakeholder participation has been in infrastructure planning in Slovenia after the transition and how it fits into broadly accepted standards of good participatory decision-making processes.

12.2 Slovenian Infrastructure Planning Before Independence

This study is set in a Slovenian context, characterized by the transition from the communist era to democracy after independence in 1991. Transition is primarily a political process (Offe 1997) that is accompanied by the democratization of civil and political society, the state's legal order, the institutional apparatus, and the economy (Thomas 1998). Each country's path of transition may differ and is influenced by the past (i.e., it is path-dependent; Thomas 1998). After the Second World War, the Yugoslav constitutional monarchy was succeeded by a communist regime with central command planning that underpinned socioeconomic development (Vujošević and Nedović-Budić 2006). At that time, collective interests gained power, and spatial resources (except rural properties smaller than ten hectares) became state property (Perić 2016). Until 1967, spatial planning as a profession in Slovenia was mostly oriented toward urbanism rather than spatial planning in general (Ravbar 2007).

In 1967, Slovenia adopted its first law on regional and spatial development. Regional and spatial planning became part of social planning and was harmonized with economic planning and projections. The law was quite advanced, even in a wider European context, in a sense that it introduced democratic principles in decision-making procedures (Saje 1967). Planning processes were consensus-based and opened not only to sectoral interests, professionals' knowledge, and representatives of local politics, but also to public stakeholders (Saje 1967). Nevertheless, this collaborative principle faced several obstacles in practice. First, the law lacked a clear methodology for realizing stakeholder participation (Pogačnik 2005), and, second, politics significantly influenced decisions. The Communist Party, at that

time, the only political party in the state, controlled all associations (professional and civil), which is why hardly any decision was made without its involvement and prior consent (Perić 2016).

Infrastructure planning in Yugoslavia played an important role in economic and social development from 1960 onward. In 1970, Slovenia finally adopted its first regional spatial plan, which emphasized the importance of infrastructure for anticipated economic development and the emerging model of the polycentric settlement system. The rationale behind infrastructure planning in Slovenia was to provide citizens with equal opportunities to choose a place of residence, work, shopping, and recreation (Regional spatial plan … 1970). These trends of decentralization, growth of new industrial urban centers, and the goal of equal accessibility to various services can be understood in the light of territorial justice, which resonated well with the dominant social ideology of egalitarianism that was prominent in Yugoslavia (Luthar and Pušnik 2017).

The first 32 km of freeways were built in 1972. Even though Yugoslavia mostly encouraged infrastructure connections within its federal borders, Slovenia considered and planned infrastructure that would also make possible connections with more developed countries of western and central Europe. The freeway project, the largest infrastructure project in Slovenia's history, had a strong state-forming role, which contributed to high public support for the project (Kos 2003). Notwithstanding this public acceptance, however, Slovenian freeways were not built without conflicts. The conflicts were more latent because the political system did not allow overt opposition, especially among the public.

12.3 Slovenian Infrastructure Planning After Independence

After independence in 1991, Slovenia continued its freeway project. The majority of freeways were built based on the National Freeway Construction Program (1995), in a new post-communist context. Key challenges that Slovenian spatial planning faced after the transition to democracy were, as already stated, the local government reform followed by the growing number of municipalities, privatization, broader public engagement in planning procedures and the expansion of initiatives, the ineffectiveness (or even absence) of harmonization measures (such as public hearings), and the absence of a regional administrative level as an intermediate between local and national interests. The local government reform in 1994 gave municipalities autonomy for spatial planning in their territory, and it gave residents of Slovenia the right to participate in public matters (Vlaj 1998). The subsequent legislation in local self-government permitted the fragmentation of the existing system, which resulted in a growing number of new municipalities (from 147 in 1994 to 212 in 2017). This significantly affected planning procedures not only due to the increased number of (local) interests that needed to be harmonized, but also due to the prevailing

tendency of many municipalities to pursue local competitiveness goals instead of carrying out projects in the national interest (such as freeways; Kos 2002; Ravbar 2016). Major infrastructure projects are, nevertheless, still primarily in the domain of the state. Vertical differentiation (Bartos and Wehr 2002) between the national and local administrative levels is often the fundamental source for conflict in infrastructure planning. In relation to this national versus local divide, the absence of a regional administrative level in Slovenia encumbers the harmonization of interests. Another challenge for planning procedures in the newly established country was the privatization and general higher engagement of individuals in decision-making procedures. This strengthened the dynamics of civil initiative formation and encouraged individuals to more explicitly demand the right to participate in decision-making processes and influence final decisions. The absence of sufficient measures for harmonizing interests in the Slovenian spatial planning system, limited to public hearings and public displays, exacerbated the legitimacy crisis in spatial planning and clearly showed the need for more context-sensitive planning practices.

Until 2002, Slovenia had only provisional interim spatial planning legislation that served for the realization of sectoral plans such was the freeway project (Nared et al. 2019). The first Slovenian law on spatial planning was the Spatial Management Act (2002), which implemented the public hearing as an instrument to harmonize various stakeholder interests in the decision-making process. The law provided the public hearing as an instrument to harmonize interests among national institutions, local authorities, interest groups, and economic entities. The general public in a broader sense had the right to criticize and react to national spatial plans already made by government agencies at public displays in the later stages of decision-making procedures. Although the public hearing was a promising step forward in terms of stakeholder inclusion in planning procedures, such a measure still corresponds to a degree of tokenism on Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein 1969). The decisions are still mainly in the hands of more influential, powerful stakeholders, and participatory procedures are limited to informing the public, consultation, and placation (Arnstein 1969). However, with the Spatial Planning Act adopted in 2007, the public hearing was removed from planning legislation as an obligatory part of the decision-making process. The main intent of this step was to accelerate planning procedures, but with no success. This measure even strengthened the domination of national institutions in spatial planning in general and, consequently, in infrastructure planning as well. The participation of sectoral ministries was reduced to providing an expert background for preparing the national development plan and limitations regarding the planned structure. Each ministry provided materials for its own professional field, with no formal instrument in the procedure allowing the harmonization of incompatibilities among them. Other stakeholders and the public were given an opportunity to object, criticize, or support national development plans no sooner than at public displays, when the national development plan had already been made.

In 2010, this less-than-beneficial move, the removal of the public hearing, was partially corrected with the adoption of another law, the Siting of Spatial Arrangements of National Importance Act (2010), which only addressed planning of structures of national interest, including infrastructure projects. The public hearing

again became obligatory, but only to harmonize the interests of national institutions (e.g., ministries), not the other stakeholders and the general public. Objection and appeal procedures for other stakeholders and the general public retained their position in public displays at the end of decision-making procedures. According to Nared et al. (2015), such provisions provide a false impression that every planning decision is made with public consent. In practice, the public is deprived of the opportunity to contribute to plans and decisions about its own future and living environment (Nared et al. 2015).

Major transport infrastructure is an immense intervention in a natural environment. Commonly, these are financially and technically very demanding projects that cause permanent loss of land. Although transport infrastructure brings several advantages to wider society, it may also be very disturbing, especially for local communities (e.g., worsened quality of life, change of residence, demolition of homes, noise, etc.; Škarabot 2002). Decisions about future transport infrastructure are thus highly complex and cannot be legitimate without opening decision-making procedures to a wider circle of stakeholders and the public. In contrast to this stance, the common reaction of national authorities to the complexity of major infrastructure planning is usually the simplification of planning procedures (Salet et al. 2012). An example of such simplification in Slovenia was the Spatial Planning Act (2007), which attempted to lower the number of stakeholders included in decision-making procedures, but with quite the opposite effect. Such measures may cause vigorous reactions of excluded stakeholders (e.g., the NIMBY effect), obstruct a constructive dialog among stakeholders, and hinder finding an appropriate solution of the conflict. As a consequence, the mere decision-making procedure may thus be prolonged, become more expensive or even be impossible to complete (Škarabot 2002; Salet et al. 2012).

In 2018, Slovenia adopted its latest spatial planning legislation, which again promotes earlier inclusion of relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process (Spatial Planning Act 2 2017). It also provides the legal basis for preparing inter-municipal spatial plans. However, participatory approaches to planning processes as well as inter-municipal collaborations are not legally binding. Instead, they are more or less voluntary optional choices.

12.4 Methods and Materials

This study analyzed decision-making procedures in infrastructure planning in Slovenia in order to define the advantages and obstacles that accompany stakeholder participation in infrastructure planning. The choice of case studies (Fig. 12.1) was chronologically driven because the goal was to cover as much as possible during the time span of Slovenian infrastructure planning. The reason behind this decision stems from the fact that Slovenian spatial planning had to operate in different sociopolitical contexts. As already described in the previous section, changing sociopolitical contexts in the history of Slovenian spatial planning conditioned the changing role
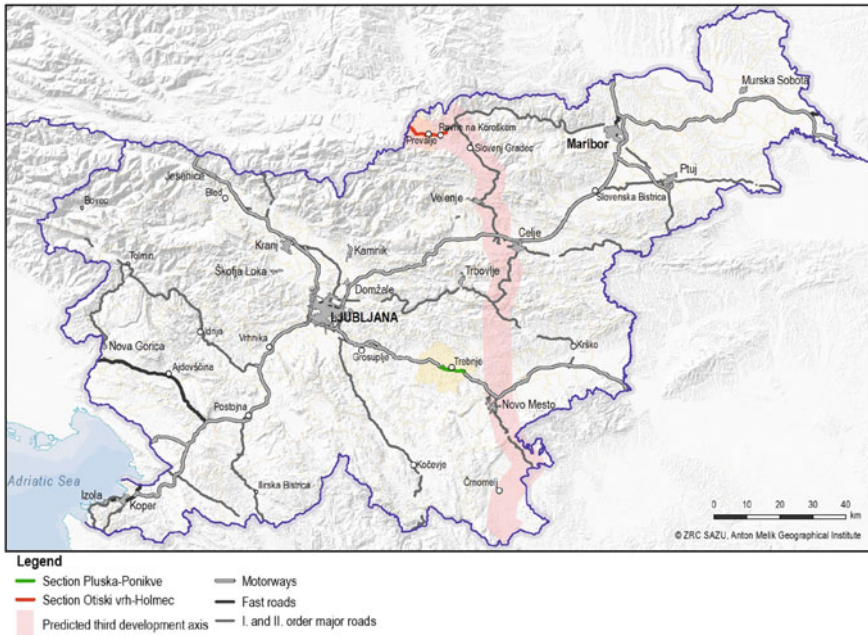
Fig. 12.1 The Slovenian road network with the two case studies

of stakeholders and revealed some advantages and limitations that accompany their participation. The first case study therefore is the Slovenian freeway section from Pluska to Ponikve, which was started in the 1960s. The decision about the future route was made in 2006 under pressure from more powerful stakeholders. The section was built in 2010. The decision-making procedure for the second case study, the section from Otiški Vrh to Holmec on the third development axis, started in 2002. Due to the opposition of local communities to the proposed route, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning decided to open the decision-making process to the general public. This was in some way a precedent in Slovenia in terms of stakeholder inclusion in the decision-making procedure. Despite the willingness of the ministry to attain a consensual decision that would be accepted in the local environment, the procedure was postponed due to unresolvable differences among the locals and national institutions.

The first case study is the Slovenian freeway section from Pluska to Ponikve. The first plans for Slovenian freeways were created in the 1960s, but the decision-making process for the section from Pluska to Ponikve actually started in 1995 and was finished in 2010. The second case study is more recent planning of the third development axis. The study analyzed its northern part, the section from Otiški Vrh to Holmec. The third development axis was first mentioned in the long-term plan for 1986 to 2000, published in 1986. The decision-making process actually started much later, in 2004, and has not yet been realized.

To define the advantages and possible obstacles that supplement stakeholder participation throughout decision-making processes, a document analysis method was applied, which is useful in cases when there is interest in a historical context or when the goal is to provide a background and track the changes to or development of some phenomena (Bowen 2009). Because both case studies were quite contentious and notorious, it was decided to use only documents that are kept by the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, such as studies of variants, minutes from meetings with stakeholders, the results of inquiries (if carried out), and so on. The documents from the ministry for both case studies are consistent and relatively comparable. They are also relatively neutral in comparison to newspaper articles or other references from the media. All materials were obtained at the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning in spring 2017. For a better understanding of both case studies, Slovenian spatial development legislation was also analyzed as a legal basis that defines the outline of decision-making procedures and determines the role of stakeholders. There are, however, also some limitations to the research method chosen. The main concern of the document analysis is the issue of bias, which can be twofold: first, the documents can be influenced by the "writer's" viewpoints and positions, and, second, the researcher's assumptions, values, and interests may influence the research process (Karppinen and Moe 2014).

The information that was sought in documents was which stakeholders participated in the planning procedure (or were able to participate), key events that changed stakeholders' positions, and how decisions were made and by whom. This information is presented in Tables 12.1 and 12.2, which also indicate which planning law was in force at that time (in different colors).

12.5   Results

The main characteristics of the planning processes in both case studies are chronologically presented in Tables 12.1 and 12.2. Each table shows the main events in both decision-making processes and its short description with an emphasis on relations among (conflicting) stakeholders.

12.5.1   First Case Study: The Freeway Section from Pluska to Ponikve

The first case study, the freeway section from Pluska to Ponikve, is one of the latest freeway sections in Slovenia. The major challenge in the planning procedure was selecting the final route among three different options, named after their location:

- The route alongside Trebnje, a route that was supposed to replace the existing regional road passing Trebnje;

Table 12.1 The section from Pluska to Ponikve; the chronology of the decision-making process

Year	Law in force	Decision/document/event	Description	Chronology of conflict
1969	Regional and Spatial Planning Act (1967)	Study on infrastructure network and freeways in Slovenia: development plan	The first plans for Slovenian freeways were created in the 1960s	
1995	Spatial Planning Act in Transition (1990)	National freeway construction program	First national plan for the construction of motorways after independenc	
1995		First evaluation of the three variants	Construction, technical evaluation, and economic evaluation in favor of the route alongside Trebnje; Spatial evaluation in favor of the Bukovje route; The route behind Trebnje Castle scored the lowest; No decision accepted	Conflict became evident. The ministries involved in the procedure, DARS, and the municipality could not reach a consensus on which variant for the section was the most appropriate
1998		Second evaluation of the three variants	The reason for a second evaluation was the deviation in predicted investment costs; No consensus reached: oppositions between the municipal authorities, ministries, local stakeholders, etc.	The conflict among stakeholders intensified

(continued)

Table 12.1 (continued)

Year	Law in force	Decision/document/event	Description	Chronology of conflict
2000		Third evaluation of the three variants	Inter-sectoral/ministerial meeting; The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and the Ministry of Infrastructure agreed that the Bukovje route was the least appropriate due to numerous negative impacts (low transport efficiency, more expensive, etc.); Only two routes (alongside Trebnje and behind Trebnje Castle) were evaluated further in the procedure; The route alongside Trebnje was evaluated as better; The Municipality of Trebnje and the civic initiative for the Bukovje route objected to the elimination of the Bukovje route from the evaluation process	Conflict between the national and local administrative level, and the two initiatives that each preferred one option). The civic initiative that was in favor of the Bukovje route and the Municipality of Trebnje opposed the decision of the ministry
2004	Spatial Management Act (2002)		DARS arbitrarily prepared a leaflet to inform local residents about the two variants and carried out a survey on the public acceptance of both variants; DARS lobbied for the route alongside Trebnje allegedly due to financial revenues from tolls	A civic initiative that lobbied for the Bukovje route labeled DARS's moves as biased and misleading; A civic initiative of various local enterprises that supported the route alongside Trebnje was less active in the conflict

Table 12.1 (continued)

Year	Law in force	Decision/document/event	Description	Chronology of conflict
2004		Public hearing held in Trebnje	Ministries (infrastructure, spatial planning), representatives of municipalities and local communities, civic initiatives, experts, DARS and local residents discussed the suggested routes	Attendees of the public hearing demanded the resignation of DARS executives; Attendees agreed that the Bukovje route was more appropriate for the further development of Trebnje; They highlighted the importance of public hearings and verifications of public acceptance of projects in decision-making procedures
2004		Fourth evaluation of the routes alongside Trebnje and Bukovje	A governmental working group was established to evaluate the two variants of the section from Pluska to Ponikve; both routes scored the same	Even though both routes scored the same at the evaluation, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning decided on the Bukovje route because it was less contentious, it was more quickly realizable, and it left more options for spatial and economic development of the Municipality of Trebnje
2006		Decree on the national location plan	The national location plan was prepared for the Bukovje route	
2010	Siting of Spatial Arrangements of National Importance Act (2010)	Completed	The section from Pluska to Ponikve was finally built	

Table 12.2 The section from Otiški Vrh to Holmec; the chronology of the decision-making process

Year	Law in force	Decision/document/event	Description	Chronology of conflict
1986	Spatial Management Act (1984)	Long-term plan of Socialist Republic of Slovenia from 1986 to 2000	The third development axis predicted in a long-term development plan	
2004	Spatial Management Act (2002)	Spatial development strategy of Slovenia	The third development axis predicted in a spatial development strategy of Slovenia	
2004		First initiative for preparing the national spatial plan for the section; First study of variants	The Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning started preparing the national location plan	
2007	Spatial Planning Act (2007)	Each sectoral ministry provided its own guidelines regarding the planned road;	Informal consultation among the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, and representatives from the municipalities and civic initiatives was held with a goal to achieve consensus on a local scale before preparing the national spatial plan	Local stakeholders (municipalities, local residents, and civic initiatives) and national institutions (the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning) could not reach consensus on the route of the section
		Evaluation of variants	None of the best-rated variants was acceptable for the local communities of Prevalje and Ravne na Koroškem	The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning made a decision that thenceforth in the procedure the collaboration among stakeholders should (and would) be closer from the beginning of preparing the national development plan.

(continued)

Table 12.2 (continued)

Year	Law in force	Decision/document/event	Description	Chronology of conflict
2008		The Ministry of Infrastructure suggested dividing the route into four subsections	No consensus reached between the national institutions and local stakeholders because none of the proposed variants had been acceptable for local stakeholders	Ongoing conflict among local stakeholders and national institutions
		Preparation of the national spatial plan was temporarily postponed		
2009		The first regional public consultation	The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning held the first regional conference; it was attended by representatives of local communities, civic initiatives, NGOs, and local enterprises	Regional public consultation offered participants an opportunity to express their suggestions. These were then integrated into the preparation of further variants
2010	Siting of Spatial Arrangements of National Importance Act (2010)	The second regional public consultation: presentation of new variants	New variants were optimized and discussed in local workshops	No consensus reached
		Evaluation of variants for all four subsections	The four subsections were evaluated from the spatial, environmental, technical, and financial points of view (a total of nineteen different variants)	The best-rated variant significantly exceeded the expected costs; Less expensive variants were not acceptable for the local communities.

Table 12.2 (continued)

Year	Law in force	Decision/document/event	Description	Chronology of conflict
2013		Preparation of the national spatial plan for the section from Otiški Vrh to Holmec stopped		Incompatible goals between local stakeholders and national institutions remained unbridgeable
2017		Protocol on the course of planning and building the third development axis (for sections from Šentrupert to Dravograd via Velenje and Slovenj Gradec, and from Otiški Vrh to Holmec)	Signed by the Ministry of Infrastructure, the regional council of the Carinthia region, and the council of mayors from the Savinja–Šalek region; A decision that construction will be finished in 2023	The final route of the section from Otiški Vrh to Holmec has remained undecided

- The Bukovje route, which runs over the hill south of Trebnje, and
- The route behind Trebnje castle, as a middle route between the other two variants.

Key stakeholders involved in the decision-making process were:

- Two civic initiatives, each with a different preference (a group of mainly entrepreneurs from Trebnje that preferred the route alongside Trebnje, and a group of local influential people and experts that preferred the Bukovje route);
- The mayor of Trebnje, who preferred the route alongside Trebnje;
- The municipal council, which preferred the Bukovje route;
- Sectoral ministries; and
- The national freeway company (hereinafter DARS), as the investor, which defended the route alongside Trebnje.

12.5.2 Second Case Study: The Section from Otiški Vrh to Holmec (the Third Development Axis)

The second case study is the unfinished process of planning the northern part of the third development axis; namely, the section from Otiški Vrh to Holmec. This decision-making process was a precedent in Slovenia regarding the inclusion of stakeholders in the decision-making process. Due to several conflicts accompanying the decision-making procedures and the anti-inclusionary spatial planning legislation, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning made an important step forward toward more participative, inclusionary planning practice. They decided to hold three regional conferences during the preparation of the national spatial plan where the public was able to participate, influence the final decision, and thus contribute to more a democratic and more legitimate decision-making process and final decision.

Key stakeholders:

- Municipalities;
- Ministries;
- Representatives of enterprises;
- Representatives of local communities;
- Several civic initiatives; and
- Local residents.

12.5.3 Case Studies' Comparison

The two case studies of infrastructure planning in Slovenia show how approaches to stakeholder inclusion in decision-making procedures changed over time. Most

of the first case study planned before the public hearing was legally an obligatory part of the planning process (only after 2002). Technically, this process shows only the vague outline of participatory practice. Even though the planning procedure was clearly organized top-down, there was cooperation between the national (ministries, DARS) and local administrative levels (the municipality), and the two civic initiatives that emerged during the planning procedure. Local stakeholders that were somehow neglected in the initial stages of the decision-making procedure publicly demanded more inclusionary procedures in the future. One of the most influential stakeholder groups was a civic initiative that preferred the Bukovje route, which significantly influenced the final decision. The civic initiative remained active throughout most of the preparation of the national development plan. Its members responded to (often arbitrary) decisions made by national institutions and successfully articulated their interests. This case study is an example of how even a small group of people, a minority (e.g., a civic initiative), can be influential and can oppose more influential governmental institutions at a national and local level, and even the majority of municipal residents, according to DARS's inquiry. Today, it is meaningless to argue which option for the section from Pluska to Ponikve was better for the Municipality of Trebnje, but the fact is that the final decision was somehow imposed by a minority, the civic initiative. Larger infrastructure projects are always imbued with such power relations that can significantly influence final decisions. The state (the responsible national institutions), however, still bears the responsibility to make decisions that are the most appropriate, even if consensus is not possible. The final decision was made based on the principle of the "lesser evil." Both options had their supporters and opponents, as well as advantages and disadvantages. The decision was the result of pressures made by the civic initiative on the one hand and the result of searching for a less contentious option that would be more easily realized on the other. The fact that this section was one of the last sections of the Slovenian freeways built, and that it needed to be resolved as soon as possible, simply facilitated the decision that would be able to be easier to implement.

The majority of the second case study was planned at a time when the public hearing was removed from planning legislation (after 2007), and it continued after it was obligatory for planning objects of national interest (after 2010). Despite unfavorable legal conditions for stakeholder participation, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning decided on more inclusionary practice and encouraged stakeholder participation earlier in the decision-making process for the section from Otiški Vrh to Holmec. For this purpose, they pledged to hold several regional conferences on a local scale throughout the decision-making process with an attempt to reach a more locally accepted and legitimate final decision. Despite good intentions, the decision-making process still does not have an epilogue. Regional conferences, which were held with the goal of reaching consensus in the local environment, have not yet resulted in a consensual decision. The variant that is acceptable for local residents is economically unfeasible, and the best-evaluated variant was not approved by local communities. The future route of this section thus still remains uncertain.

As both case studies reveal, infrastructure planning is time-consuming and is an ideologically, politically, and financially biased task that demands much cooperation

and active participation of stakeholders. Undoubtedly, participation in infrastructure planning brings many advantages, but it can be accompanied by several obstacles that make participative processes demanding to carry out.

There are many well-known advantages to participatory planning that make participation of stakeholders a compulsory part of each legitimate infrastructure planning procedure. First, the participation of stakeholders is practically the only possible way that makes it possible for stakeholders to discuss their ideas, viewpoints, demands, and priorities. Deliberation among stakeholders makes space for new (sometimes better) suggestions and exchange of opinions, and it is the only way to better mutual understanding. Second, as the two case studies revealed, the level of participation throughout the planning procedure partly depends on legislation, which sets certain demands regarding stakeholder inclusion. It is largely contingent on stakeholders' commitment to participate on the one hand and to allow participation on the other. Even the absence of regulations that demand or limit stakeholder participation does not necessarily mean that the decision-making process will be arbitrary or enforced by national institutions. The second case study shows that the incentive for participation can originate from a need, from experiences that prove that participation is necessary in order to make decisions that are better accepted in public, especially in the local environment, among people that are or will be most affected by the newly planned (or built) infrastructure.

What the two case studies also show are some hindrances that accompany participatory decision-making procedures in infrastructure planning. There are three main obstacles that hinder stakeholder participation in infrastructure planning in Slovenia: (1) spatial legislation, (2) a lack of criteria to restrain power, and (3) the absence of a regional administrative level. First, Slovenian spatial legislation has been distinctively unfavorable for stakeholder participation, especially after 2007, when the public hearing was no longer a compulsory part of the decision-making process. The main reason for this was an attempt to accelerate planning procedures, but in practice, this measure was far from realizing its purpose. Even the reintroduction of the public hearing for projects in the national interest in 2010 proved that it is not an entirely sufficient measure. The participation of the general public is still made possible too late in the planning procedure. This can trigger opposition in the local environment because municipalities and other stakeholders at the local level do not have a voice in the initial stages of planning procedures. Second, major infrastructure projects are usually politically biased and demand great financial resources. There are generally a large number of stakeholders differing significantly in terms of power (political, economic, financial, informational, etc.) and preferences (which can be very personal or collective), making harmonizing interests extremely demanding. The state has a twofold role in the decision-making procedure. It functions as a stakeholder (representing national interests) on the one hand, and as an "ombudsman" that must provide equal rights of stakeholders to participate in planning procedures on the other. As such, it has no clear criteria for sorting out interests (e.g., public support), which leads to the risk of illegitimate decisions biased by political and elites' interests on the one hand or leads to conflict and deadlock on the other. The third obstacle, which is especially problematic for infrastructure planning, is the absence of a regional

level in the spatial planning system. Major transport infrastructure not only affects the local environment and community that live in the very vicinity of the planned new route, but is also an inter-municipal and national matter. The regional public consultations that were held in the second case study are evident proof that such consultations are necessary, but they were clearly held too late in the decision-making process (after the variants were already created) and thus ineffective. Despite the fact that the Spatial Planning Act 2 (2017) again introduced a legal basis for preparing regional plans, it is still not an obligatory document. For now, it is also still uncertain how detailed regional plans will be regarding the route itself as well as the expert study on the feasibility of various options.

12.6   Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter examined infrastructure planning with conflict and its resolution process (which is more or less participative). Conflicts as an integral part of infrastructure planning demand the participation of stakeholders in order to reach legitimate decisions. The two case studies reflect approaches to infrastructure planning in Slovenia that adapted to the planning legislation in force, and also to national institutions' interest in including stakeholders in decision-making processes. Infrastructure planning in Slovenia can be seen through the lens of path dependency. Slovenian spatial planning legislation and the national institutions involved in infrastructure planning show that the spirit of tokenistic participation from the past political regime has survived the transition from communism. Slovenian planning legislation has been distinctively unfavorable to participation. It has not only neglected the existence of different interests but has also underestimated the importance of stakeholder participation in decision-making processes. The exclusion of the public hearing for the sake of faster decision-making was a clear sign of ignoring the plurality of (conflicting) interests, which Hillier (2003) termed "agonistic pluralism." Conflict is often interpreted as the consequence of a democratic deficit, but some researchers in agonistic planning theory even acknowledge conflict as a prerequisite for democracy (e.g., Marres 2005, 2007; Metzger and Oosterlynck 2015). Instead of acknowledging the agonistic pluralism of interests and properly incorporating and managing them within the planning procedure as an inevitable and essential part of infrastructure planning, conflict is somehow construed as undesirable, something that should be avoided. Although the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning has made some promising steps toward more inclusive decision-making processes in recent years, some stakeholders are still included in the planning procedure too late, when their power to influence the final decision is already limited to few variants prepared in advance.

This chapter discussed the benefits and limitations that have accompanied infrastructure planning in Slovenia. The analysis of two case studies showed that institutions involved in infrastructure planning are making some progress toward more inclusionary practices, but spatial planning legislation does not provide adequate

support for infrastructure planning regarding stakeholder participation. There is certainly some room for more in-depth qualitative research on the highly versatile power relations that are impossible to neutralize in infrastructure planning and on how to manage such asymmetric interests within the decision-making processes. There is also the problem of exclusion. Spatial planning can never be fully inclusive, and some reduction of interests is needed in order to reach a decision (i.e., the first case study) or the decision-making process cannot be completed (i.e., the second case study). There is always a gap between many desirable solutions and a few possible solutions. Moreover, there will always be some values or views that will be repressed or excluded. As Hillier (2003) stated, any decision requires some form of sorting values. More in-depth research could also provide a better understanding of how to manage highly versatile power relations and interests within decision-making and policy-making procedures and the extent to which stakeholder participation should be prescribed by law. The two case studies and some other experiences from Slovenia and abroad (e.g., spatial development strategies of the Municipality of Idrija, the Austrian regions of Vorarlberg and Tyrol, informal initiatives in Switzerland that assist in participatory policy-making at the national and regional levels, and congestion taxes in Oslo and Gothenburg; Nared et al. 2015; Nared 2019) prove that participation is an integral part of each decision-making and policy-making process. A lack of communication and participatory processes is not solely a problem of post-communist countries, but can be found anywhere, even in countries with a long democratic history, such as Sweden. Implementing congestion tax, consensually accepted in Oslo, Norway, failed in Gothenburg, Sweden, mainly due to the meager inclusion of civil society in the decision-making process. As practices in Slovenia and abroad show, participation is interest-driven to a large degree, even if it is not legally binding.

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Chapter 13
Focus Groups as a Tool for Conducting Participatory Research: A Case Study of Small-Scale Forest Management in Slovenia

Peter Kumer and Mimi Urbanc

Abstract Focus group discussion is a participatory research method that has been effectively utilized in numerous social science disciplines either as a standalone method or more often alongside other methods. The research presented in this chapter used focus groups as the final tool in an extensive study of small-scale forest owners' management practices, examining driving and hindering factors. This issue stems from dispersed and fragmented private ownership with many owners, 89% of whose properties are smaller than 5 ha and are divided into three plots on average. This has posed a considerable challenge to Slovenia's forestry sector. Focus groups sought to obtain stakeholders' reflections on findings from previous research as well as new insights. To this end, nine focus groups scattered around the country were conducted at the local level following the same format. The National Forestry Service's district foresters contributed greatly to recruiting participants and carrying out the discussions. Important outcomes were owners' perspectives on detached owners and their lack of management, as well as new topics that were not identified in previous stages. Despite some limitations—in our case, the inability to attract detached owners and overcome some power-related tensions between owners and the district forester—the focus groups proved to be not only efficient and informative for researchers, but above all supportive of state forest policy being implemented at the local level and greater stakeholder participation in it.

Keywords Forest management · Action research · Research triangulation · Stakeholder participation · Hierarchical spatial organization

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13.1 Introduction

The focus group is a qualitative method of data collection that has been widely used in the social sciences for several decades (Parker and Jonathan 2006). Its origins go back to Columbia University in the late 1940s. The first topics studied were attitudes toward radio soap operas and responses to the government's own wartime radio propaganda programs (Bloor et al. 2001). From a prevailing data collection method in both public and private organizations, it has become a valuable research method in recent decades. Focus groups are commonly used to explore and construct knowledge about a particular phenomenon in small groups (Kitzinger 1995; Liamputtong 2011; Krueger and Casey 2015) or to aid interpretation, critical appraisal, or feedback for survey findings (Bloor et al. 2001). For a researcher, focus groups offer invaluable breadth of learning, and the participants' thoughts complement the originality of researcher's own thinking (Bloor et al. 2001). Moreover, participants have the capacity to identify various (hidden) dimensions of a topic (Longhurst 2010). Because the method is very resourceful and adaptive, and it perfectly complements other research methods such as surveys, questionnaires, and individual interviews (Longhurst 2010). In addition, its time efficiency and low cost have promoted its widespread adoption.

A further reason for the wide use of the focus group method is its inherent participatory nature based on group processes (Chiu 2003), making it an excellent participatory approach. This is additionally strengthened by the fact that focus groups normally address average people, who are assumed to be "ingenuous participants" (Farinosi et al. 2019). Accordingly, the focus group is one of the most dynamic research methods (Farinosi et al. 2019); its group dynamics help researchers to obtain richer and more detailed data (Lune and Berg 2017), making it stand out from other qualitative research methods. Whereas the scholarly benefits of the researcher–participant relationship have been clearly identified, participant benefits have received less attention. However, we believe there are some. The most tangible is in planning procedures by incorporating peoples' needs and expectations. When a focus group discussion is driven by pure curiosity, participants' benefits are confined to new insights and a wider perspective on the issues shared within a group more generally such as empowerment, inclusion, and community building.

The basic element of this method is the participatory aspect, which stimulates dynamic discussion among participants guided by a moderator in such a way that all group members are engaged and active. The discussion is normally semi-structured because the topics are well defined prior to carrying out a focus group (Miller and Scoptur 2016). Usually, a focus group cycle consists of two to ten discussions, but the number varies and depends on the research goals, number of topics, and time and budget availability. The number of participants for each individual focus group discussion varies from an optimal six to eight, to real-life practical modifications ranging from three to fourteen participants. The group size reflects the characteristics of participants as well as the topics being discussed (Bloor et al. 2001).

Although the focus group method is primarily used in the social sciences, its usability nevertheless applies to other disciplines if the research necessitates a human or social aspect. The method has, therefore, also gained popularity in natural resource management. Not only are natural resources generally very complex, but they also touch upon various sectoral policies, which makes them challenging to manage. Forests and their future development are no exception, especially in connection with climate change discourse and accessibility and social equity concerns, among other things.

The usefulness of focus groups in forest management practices and options is widely addressed in the literature. Attention is given to the following aspects: how the management process is developed and steered (Corral and Hernandez 2017), what is considered or neglected in forest management (Mountjoy et al. 2014; Heltorp et al. 2018), whether and how stakeholders are included (Wilkes-Allemann et al. 2015; Awung and Marchant 2018; Ward et al. 2018), what stakeholders' expectations and values are (Bernués et al. 2014; Andrejczyk et al. 2016; Ordóñez et al. 2017; Takala et al. 2017a, b; Soto et al. 2018; Sutherland et al. 2018), which forest interventions are socially acceptable (Miller et al. 2014; Vaidya and Mayer 2016; Kelly et al. 2016), and what the benefits are for people involved in the management process (Egunyu et al. 2016).

Encouraged by the popularity of qualitative research methods for understanding the link between forests and society, and following the latest trends in forest management research (i.e., analytical approaches and methods; Leipold 2014), we used the focus group method to explore the characteristics of small-scale forest management in Slovenia. The purpose of conducting focus groups was to assemble diverse stakeholders that were engaged in forest management and to use moderated discussion to collect their often opposing views of and opinions about selected topics (Nyumba et al. 2018). Therefore, this chapter shows how the focus group method was used in the final phase for studying the management of pocket-sized private forest properties as an efficient complement to other methods. Specifically, focus groups were used to obtain stakeholders' reflections on findings from previous research stages as well as new insights.

13.2 Background

Slovenia is one of the most forested countries in Europe, and forests hold a prominent role in Slovenians' mindset based on the wide variety of services they provide: from economic and environmental to recreational and social. Most of the country's forests (76% of 1.2 million ha) are owned by approximately half a million private forest owners (PFOs), which is a large group within a country of only two million (Medved et al. 2010; Kumer and Potočnik Slavič 2016). Given the high number of forest owners in comparison to the total population, it is not surprising that private forest properties are small (89% of them are smaller than 5 ha). Moreover, private forest properties are also considerably fragmented with one owner having three parcels

on average (Fig. 13.1). The small sizes of forest properties and their parcelization and fragmentation is a result of socioeconomic changes that occurred in the decades after the Second World War. The owners have started to migrate from rural areas to towns, and they lost interest in their forest property. The changes occurred when planned inheritance practices (e.g., by favoring one heir among the children) changed into unplanned practices. Inherited forest properties were divided among children, spouses, and siblings, each receiving an equal but small share. The same thing happened with restitution (denationalization), in which properties were assigned to all of the legal heirs of a single owner that lost land nationalized after the Second World War (Kumer 2019). On top of that, traditional inheritance practices in the past were different among regions. For example, due to Hungarian inheritance law (and despite planned inheritance), the land was broken up into small parcels in the eastern part of the country long before the aforementioned social changes. This has led to a situation in which forest properties in eastern Slovenia are even more fragmented than elsewhere. In addition to all of these forest-related aspects and challenges, there is another one worth mentioning: Slovenian law requires forests to be publicly accessible, permitting not only walking and relaxation, but also collecting berries, nuts, and mushrooms for personal consumption. This fact that Slovenians are very proud of can conversely lead to conflicts between land owners and users (Kumer et al. 2018).
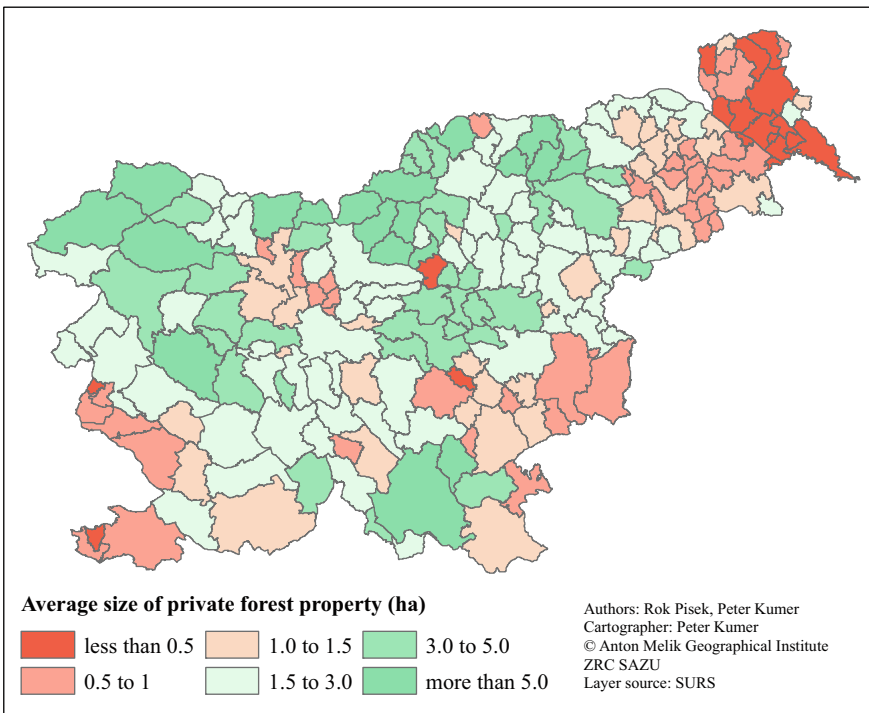
Fig. 13.1 Map showing the ownership fragmentation of forest land

In Slovenia, forest-related challenges have only been subject to quantitative research, and they have predominantly been discussed within the context of production-oriented forestry policy, which has aimed to engage owners in management of their economically underutilized forests. To our knowledge, no qualitative research has been conducted on the attitudes of forest owners, their socioeconomic background, and their understanding of forest values beyond mere timber production. Therefore, focus groups to complement prior surveys, interviews (Kumer and Potočnik Slavič 2016), owner type analysis (Kumer and Štrumbelj 2017), and multi-criteria decision analysis (Kumer and Pezdevšek Malovrh 2018) appeared to be an ideal method to bridge this research gap. The focus groups are an ideal tool when trying to access local knowledge and also detailed and hidden information (i.e., interpersonal interactions and nonverbal communication).

In order to approach forestry stakeholders in an effective and communicative manner, we worked closely with the Slovenian Forest Service. This public institution, whose task it to outline and steer forest management planning in all forests, irrespective of ownership, is hierarchically organized with a central unit in Ljubljana and 396 forest districts around the country. District foresters are forestry experts that transmit national forest-related policy to the local level. They provide education and training for forest owners, cooperate with rural communities, and foster awareness about forests and nature preservation. Due to their embeddedness in the local situation, they were our key figures for approaching forest owners.

13.3 Implementing the Method

13.3.1 Designing the Focus Groups

The essential part of the preparatory phase was developing an implementation guide, as suggested by Crabtree and Miller (1999). Building on the research question, a list of semi-structured questions was prepared based on prior research steps; specifically, on the results of a mixed-mode survey, in-depth interviews, and multi-criteria research analysis for evaluating stakeholders' perceptions.

The questions included in the guide covered the following topics: agricultural affiliation, inheritance practices, gender differences in management, interpersonal relations with co-owners and neighbors, managerial practices, distant management, taxes, and future forestry regulation.

In order for the process to run smoothly and to help the moderator to conduct the discussion efficiently, a series of questions and a strict timeline were outlined. The general outline for the entire cycle was set between March and June 2016. The entire time span allowed flexibility in carrying out individual focus groups.

The focus groups required technical equipment for audio and video recording. Video recording was needed for analysis of interpersonal interactions and nonverbal communication.

13.3.2 Selecting and Recruiting Participants

The quality of the data collected was greatly dependent on the participants, and so the group composition was of high importance. We paid particular attention to participants' heterogeneity and diversity (Table 13.1), which were both acknowledged in the literature (Bole et al. 2017). The internal variety also considered gender and age balance. The common denominator of our stakeholder groups is embeddedness in forest management at the local level. More specifically, partakers were individual small-scale private forest owners (SPFO), members of PFO associations, and members of machinery circles. A top-down legal and decision-making perspective was added by including district foresters, other employees of the public forestry service, and representatives of Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry.

The group composition created a challenge, which is referred to as "power imposition" (Cooke and Kothari 2001). Numerous SPFOs considered themselves less knowledgeable about forestry than the forestry sector professionals and employees. To overcome SPFOs' self-perceived inferior position and subsequent impediment, we emphasized that our goal was only to collect personal attitudes, experiences, and reflections. This proved to be effective and encouraging enough for SPFOs to take part.

The success of the recruitment process, however, depended greatly on the local district forester and his or her credibility, moral authority within the forest owners' community, and other stakeholder communities. It was the district forester, therefore, that functioned as a communication channel. We also reached nonowners through academic contacts, e-mail, and phone invitations. In addition, attendants were further encouraged by simple incentives. These included practical gifts, such as recyclable shopping bags, notebooks, and umbrellas. Professionals were provided with confirmation of their participation, allowing them to integrate attendance into their daily work and have travel costs reimbursed.

13.3.3 Location, Date, and Size

Given the general forest ownership and forest property situation in Slovenia and regionally specific inheritance practices, we paid special attention to the locations of focus groups. Nine focus groups were spatially dispersed and conducted in selected local units of the Slovenian Forestry Service. Nationwide coverage was in line with one of the aims of the research: to obtain a geographical aspect, including understanding regional differences.

The first group—a pilot or preparatory focus group for testing the questions' clarity—was carried out in downtown Ljubljana. The venue was a modern, state of the art focus group facility, which offered a quiet, private, and comfortable environment for participants and an observation cabin with a one-way mirror and audio, visual, and other technical support for the moderator and his supervisors. Despite this excellent

Table 13.1 Date, location, and participants at focus groups

Date	Location	Number of participants	Type of participants	Age	Gender ratio (F/M)
24 March 2016	Ljubljana	6	SPFO (2), public forestry service, Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry, PFO association, district forester	Around 40	2/4
12 April 2016	Bohinj	7	SPFO (3), machinery circles, large property owner, sawmill owner, district forester	42–60	0/7
13 April 2016	Bukovica pri Vodicah	8	SPFO (7), district forester	43–78	1/7
18 April 2016	Počakovo	8	SPFO (6), district forester, local development agency	20–66	2/6
20 April 2016	Velesovo	7	SPFO (6), district forester	42–78	3/3
17 May 2016	Tišina	13	SPFO (7), district forester (4), public forestry service, PFO association	40–65	2/11
1 June 2016	Kozina	8	SPFO (4), district forester (2), public forestry service, agrarian community	52–76	0/8

Table 13.1 (continued)

Date	Location	Number of participants	Type of participants	Age	Gender ratio (F/M)
14 June 2016	Velike Lašče	8	SPFO (4), large property owner, Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry, district forester, public forestry service	51–76	0/8
28 June 2016	Nazarje	7	SPFO (4), district forester (2), public forestry service	47–69	2/5

technical arrangement, its distance from forest owners' home locations dissuaded us from using this venue for follow-up focus groups.

Based on practical and logistical reasons, the locations for the main part of the focus groups were selected close to participants. Consequently, we had to adapt to the availabilities and capacities of the local facilities. These focus groups, therefore, did not necessarily meet the technical standards of the first one. The chosen venues were different: from local inns to the local branch office of the Slovenian Forestry Service. The local branch offices proved to be a comfortable place to meet and discuss matters due to the participants' familiarity with them. Organizing a group at the local level substantially reduced the overall cost: the participants traveled shorter distances on average.

13.3.4 The Moderator, Key Person, and Group Dynamics

The role of a moderator is to introduce the aim of the focus group and to guide the conversation. Introducing the aim is done with a broad, open-ended question in order to define the scope of the discussion and pitch the topic. In our case, the introductory question was "What does a forest mean to you?" For guiding the subsequent conversation, a moderator should only use the guide to negotiate the group and to create a structured way of collecting responses. However, the discussion might raise unpredictable and unexpected thoughts, and a moderator should, therefore, remain open-minded and receptive, and be able to react appropriately. A moderator can use probes to prompt participants to explain further.

Negotiating between allowing a natural flow of the interaction among participants on the one hand and a focus group guide with a timeline on the other is a considerable

Fig. 13.2 Snapshot from a focus group in Velesovo. *Photograph* Peter Kumer

challenge. The group structure plays a role in this respect. Well-structured groups tend to answer a research question in a straightforward way, whereas less structured ones help reveal the perspectives of the group participants and may assist in the discovery of new ideas and insights (Morgan 1988). In our case, the moderator fostered spontaneous and free-flowing conversation, thereby allowing relatively unstructured discussions (Fig. 13.2).

The role of district foresters was an important one not only in the recruiting process, but also in the implementation phase, but in the latter case, their inactivity was appreciated. They understood that their viewpoints could influence the participants' train of thoughts. Therefore, they refrained from talking, especially from giving informed opinions; however, they helped the moderator to put the attendees' personal attitudes and experiences into a policy context and they brought in the absentee owners' perspectives.

13.3.5 Analysis

We transcribed audio recordings in their entirety and then performed a computer-assisted grounded theory analysis. The theoretical background was based on Friese's (2016) adaptation of a constructivist approach to grounded theory (Charmaz 2006), which foregrounds researchers' interpretations and their "immersion" in the data in a way that embeds the narrative of the participants in the final research findings.

The ATLAS.ti program was used in the coding process, which is the core of the analytical stage. It included theoretical sampling; initial, focused, and axial coding; and building the category system. The focus groups were analyzed after each session.

13.4 Results

The focus group discussion provided down to earth interpretation of and reflection on findings from previous research stages as well as completely new and unexpected standpoints. By bringing in their personal and family experiences, participants enhanced the grass roots aspect of small-scale forest property management. To a researcher, they provided an in-depth understanding of small-scale forest ownership.

First, the discussion on cluster analysis results yielded two SPFO types—those that are engaged and those that are detached (Kumer and Štrumbelj 2017)—and it revealed other potential owner types in Slovenia. In addition, the notion of detached (absentee) SPFOs that live away from their properties and are not engaged in management gave rise to a broad and lively discussion mostly focusing on the reasons for their disengagement. Among these, the participants singled out past migrations, especially from rural to urban areas or from Slovenia abroad (mostly to western European countries or overseas), changes of permanent residence, and co-ownership, which hinders efficient management.

On the other hand, the important focus group outcomes were emerging topics that appeared relevant for the research but were not identified in the previous stages. One such example is the climate of mistrust among forest owners, which negatively affects their willingness to cooperate. A second circumstance was the landowner versus visitor conflict, which is especially evident near urban centers. Unlimited access to forests as a popular recreational space and a resource of non-wood forest products (such as mushrooms, nuts, herbs, etc.) can result in a collision of different (and often conflicting) ideas among diverse user groups about how to use the forest. This challenge is more severe due to inadequate consideration and a subsequent lack of appropriate monitoring and governance measures.

The participants also benefited from the focus groups by hearing the viewpoints of various stakeholders, and they were informed about the findings of previous research phases, which helped them to learn more about the topic. They could see a complex picture of different interests in the forest.

13.5 Reflection on the Method Used

In our broader research, in which we examined the managerial issues of small-scale forest properties, the focus groups were a final but valuable data resource and interpretation vehicle at the same time. They were therefore planned to be conducted during the last phase in order to allow the juxtaposition of results from previous research phases and *ex post* reflection on them. Surprisingly, new topics emerged. Taking all of this into account, focus groups proved to ideally complement than other methods, especially for issues in which the human aspect is of major relevance. Our

case is closely in line with extensive literature addressing the usefulness of focus groups.

Although the entire endeavor was started and carried out exclusively for research purposes, the process and its activities were also advantageous for stakeholders, especially for district foresters. By participating in the process, they were able to realize some of their general tasks: training and educating owners, disseminating information on forest management, and raising forest-related issues among the public. Moreover, they were given the opportunity to obtain structured and evidence-based insight into current forestry policy from the perspective of owners and other stakeholders.

Nonetheless, some limitations were obvious. A critical limitation is connected with the selection of focus group participants. Despite the valuable assistance of district foresters in recruiting local forest owners and forestry-related stakeholders, the pool of participants did not represent the entire owner population. Detached owners were missing for the most part; absenteeism is inherent in their *modus operandi* in forest-related issues. This gap was partially filled by district foresters, who functioned as a proxy for absentee owners, whose perspective was thereby indirectly considered.

Even though the district foresters were crucial in the process, they were unable to mitigate the uneasiness of participants that were not entirely comfortable in expressing their views openly. District foresters were perceived as officials that supervise activities in private forests. Upon reflection, excluding foresters from the discussion would probably help overcome this gap.

Not only top-down power pressure emerged, but also a powerless feeling in the professional community in charge of implementing state policy at the local level, which revealed certain power relations within the forestry sector. Some foresters refused to participate because they thought their influence on owners was insignificant or that all owners in their district were inactive. It is somewhat surprising that intangible power and the informal position of foresters emerged as a decisive factor for (dis)engaged private small-scale forest management.

Organizing focus groups at the local level proved to be successful due to the familiar environment and participants. There was no need for an icebreaker to start the discussion. The district foresters functioned as a communication channel between the focus group moderator and participants. They often summarized the conversation and put it into the context of modern forestry challenges. Giving priority to local venues with basic technical equipment over a centrally located specialized focus group facility proved fortuitous in many respects.

Moreover, integrating the focus group into the research was generally economically and academically justified, providing abundant knowledge and information for modest financial input. However, the rich material obtained required substantial staff effort for subsequent qualitative analyzes. Focus groups made it possible for new topics to surface (new, subtle topics were identified) and discussions of aspects beyond the topics planned. These aspects were relevant to our research focus. For example, topics such as trust, cooperation, cultural influence, tradition, and globalized individualism proved to be an important managerial factor.

Management of a resource as important as a forest definitely cannot be devoid of public participation, especially management of private forests and particularly in countries with short democratic tradition. Focus groups are a vehicle for extending public participation. They should be further developed by the Slovenian Forestry Service and considered as a format for regular meetings at the local level to promote cooperation and information transfer, thereby positively influencing forest management.

The following conclusions can be drawn from this study. The method would be less appropriate if the topics discussed were personal and the participants did not know one another. Focus groups are also inappropriate if the problem is individualized and does not require previous interactions. This is not the case in forest management because it typically requires aspects of various stakeholders.

Focus groups are appropriate for identifying unknown or suspected and subtle issues as well as for stakeholders' reflection on aspects already identified and research findings. Inclusion of a spatially well-organized hierarchical institution (e.g., the Slovenian Forestry Service) into the research can raise certain power-relation tensions, yet the advantages considerably surpass possible disadvantages, not only by providing communication channels, but also by including experts' opinions and informed experience. Because the issues related to forest management are uniform across the country, the spatial dispersion of focus groups helped us with generalization. Focus groups perfectly connect research, public service, and individual social groups.

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