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From Doorstep to City Hall and Back: Participatory practices in Bucharest, Eindhoven, Košice, and Ljubljana

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Abstract
In search of legitimacy, as Bishop and Davis (2002) recently argued, public participation has become an attractive strategy targeted not only at improving the policy-making process, but also, at inducing "frustrated" citizens a certain feeling of trust in authorities and their consequent activities. This paper however goes beyond the general argument of legitimizing public action by nurturing or consolidating public participation, as it explores the role of participatory democracy in building democratic capacity in several European local self-governments.

In doing so, it employs the current literature on participatory democracy (Edelenbos and Klijn 2005; Held 2002; Hendriks 2006; Saward 2003) and applies it to the case of four European municipalities (Bucharest, Eindhoven, Košice, and Ljubljana) as to answer the questions of: "what is the state of participatory democracy in the cities under investigation" and "how does it contribute to the building of their democratic capacity?". The larger scope of the research is to bring together different experiences of participatory practices and to reflect upon the arguments provided for by the relevant literature. The paper will make use of both quantitative and qualitative instruments as it grounds its findings on the data provided by investigating the existent participatory projects and surveying the latter's participants in the four, above mentioned municipalities.

Keywords: participatory democracy, local democratic capacity, participatory policymaking, Bucharest, Eindhoven, Košice, and Ljubljana.

1. What is the problem with democracy?

'If democracy were a building, the "under construction" sign would never be removed,' (Saward, 2003:I). Democracy is one of the oldest and most comprehensively discussed political concepts. Politicians, citizens and political scientists all have their own perceptions and opinions on what democracy is or should be. It is a contested concept, because it is used and experienced differently in various contexts (Held, 2002:XI, Hendriks, 2006:29). In daily practice they all, at least in modern societies, play their own role in democracy and experience it individually. Although fundamental and philosophical questions regarding democracy are relevant and important, this paper will strongly focus on the empirical part of democracy. Hence, this paper will only reflect on the academic debate with regard to participatory democracy and democratic capacity on the local level. For public administration as a field as well as a discipline it is highly relevant to 'measure' how a local democracy functions and how it is experienced. We will concentrate on four cities where we did extensive research on participatory democracy.

In this paper we address the following question: what is the state of participatory democracy in Bucharest, Eindhoven, Košice, and Ljubljana and how does it contribute to democratic capacity?
The analysis will be based on both quantitative and qualitative data collected for the four municipalities, namely Bucharest, Eindhoven, Košice, and Ljubljana.

After reflecting upon the academic debates with regard to participatory democracy on local level (section 2) a general description of the cities of our enquiry and the main, selected results on participatory democracy and democratic capacity will follow (in section 3, respectively, section 4). The methods employed in the actual research are to be described in the Appendix. The concluding section aims at providing a possible

answer to our central question, by focusing on the comparative analysis of the four cities. Further topics of discussion in regard to the subject the interest close our paper.

2. Participatory democracy

Political scientists highly discussed the concept of participatory democracy in the 1960s and 1970s (Macpherson, 1977, Milbrath, 1966, Pateman, 1970). It is a relatively modern notion of democracy, but it is based on classic democratic principles (Held, 2002: 263-273). Currently, participatory democracy is still under discussion (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2005, Held, 2002, Hendriks 2006, Saward, 2003). Saward (2003: 149) describes participatory democracy as 'any form of democracy which emphasizes or enables extensive participation in decision-making by members of the whole group concerned.' Hendriks (2006:124) simply states that participatory democracy is ´bottom up democracy. The democratic process is driven by participants from the public domain. It is a process of social interaction´. Held (2002:5) based his 'model of participatory democracy' on Macpherson (1977) and Pateman (1970) and argues that participatory democracy is linked with the more classical model of direct democracy and that it is pluralistic.

Although national referendums are often labelled as the most common form of participatory democracy, it more 'often refers to enhanced forms of participation in local communities, the workplace, and within political parties and pressure groups' (Saward, 2003:149). Lowndes (1995:165) also stresses the local practise of participatory democracy, 'participation is most likely to take place at the local level where people live and work and socialize, raise their families, and draw upon the services and benefits of the state.' It often depends on the receptiveness of the local government how participatory democracy is institutionalised in its daily practise.

2.1. The democratic paradox of participation

In general, the principles of liberal representative democracy are often the basis to structure modern societies. 'Representative democracy is a modern and contemporary conception which (...) highlights decision-making by the elected representatives of the people' (Saward, 2003:150). Although political participation is an important key feature 'through the vote, extensive participation in local government, public debate and jury service' it also creates problems (Held, 2002:116). Participatory democracy is often seen as only a supplement to representative democracy (Klijn and Koppenjan, 1998). Politicians who are representatives do not always accept the output of participatory processes. But at the opposite, participatory processes are often far from representative (Berveling, 1998). In this respect The Dutch Council for Public Administration (ROB, 2004) warns for the danger of the participation paradox, which means that ´many are participating very little, but only a few are participating very much´. Berveling (1998) concludes that ´especially a specific group of highly educated, skilled citizens are participating´. Elements of representative and participatory democracy are competing and can have opposite effects. Participatory democracy as a supplement to representative democracy creates the danger of selectivity.

3. What is democratic capacity?

Democratic capacity highly relates to legitimacy. It is the capacity of a (local) government to get policies and decisions legitimised. Schmitter (2001) defined legitimacy 'as a shared expectation among actors in n arrangement of asymmetric power, such that the actions of those who rule are accepted voluntarily by those who are ruled because the latter are convinced that the actions of the former conform to pre/established norms. Put simply, legitimacy converts power into authority and, thereby, establishes simultaneously an obligation to obey and a right to rule.´
Legitimacy consists of an organisational part which is highly related to effectiveness and efficiency as the three core governmental purposes. Legitimacy, effectiveness and efficiency are highly related with one another. In this manner democratic capacity relates to managerial and organisational debates about the support and acceptance of governmental outcome. It is the way how a governmental organisation uses democracy in daily practise and how it performs.

On the other hand it consists of an intrinsic part, which is based on democratic values and principles. This part stresses the importance of democracy in decision-making and policymaking which requires a political vision for instance policymaking.

Although democratic capacity has clear relations with concepts such as legitimacy, it is a concept that is rarely debated academically, yet. Democratic capacity requires a governmental organisation to be aware of its democratic maintenance in daily practise. Thus, it directly affect the civil servants work. This paper wants to apply democratic capacity to empirical research.

4. Local government in Bucharest, Eindhoven, Košice, and Ljubljana

Why do we look at participation on the local level? The ubiquity of local political issues provides the most obvious testimony to its importance in the processes of governing the state. With a few exceptions, all countries have a system of local government (or designated agencies such as local public utilities) through which those functions of government that need to be locally delivered can be structured (Paddison 2004: 19). It is associated with the fact that local governments are created to render services in defined geographical areas, primarily because of the inability of central governments to attend to all the detailed aspects of government (Reddy 1999: 10). Local governments have essential roles to perform in providing urban public goods (streets and walkways, storm drainage, public green spaces, etc.), in facilitating efficient use of and equitable access to urban land, in ensuring coordination through planning and policy correlations, if needed, do account for positive and negative spill over effects of private activities (such as pollution), and in protecting public safety (Cities in Transition… 2000: 7). Moreover, the relationships between communities and their inhabitants are according Bogumil (1999) diversified. They often do not play a role of "citizens" but rather some other roles like "applicants of building permissions", "taxpayers", "investors", "receivers of some allowances", "actors of road traffic accidents", or "applicants of residence registration". Besides that, local governments in the democratic countries usually employ notable number of overall labour forces. It comes to this, that local authorities' staff involves many different professions – from accountants and architects, through dustmen and gardeners, to solicitors and teachers. By means of Jackson's words, it involves everybody who is essential to the efficient provision of local authority services (Jackson 1976: 125).

Why do we look at participation in Bucharest, Eindhoven, Košice, and Ljubljana? These cities have three things in common. First of all, each of these cities are large cities and are listed in the top five of their country. Secondly, all these cities have a democratic system which is mainly based on representative democracy. And thirdly, citizens in these cities are (formally) allowed to participate in policymaking or politics. Besides these similarities we assumed the four cities above to be as different as necessary to our argument. Size, ranking, administrative or political cultures for instance, are all valid variables in measuring and interpreting participatory democracy: however, in our sampling, similarities around these variables were not considered vital. Instead, differences caught our attention. Bucharest and Ljubljana share a similar status in administrative ranking (they both are capital of their country) but severely differ in terms of size and number of population; their administrative and political culture may have been fostered by totalitarian regimes, and may have shared the pressures and influence of the European Union's enlargement to the East, but do exhibit different notes in the normative discourses regarding decentralization and local democracy. On the other hand, Košice and Eindhoven share same size and reasonably enough a similar administrative status in their countries' administrative profile, but they are obviously different in regard to their political culture, and experiences in local democratic practices. Meeting the four different cases was a challenge in itself and was based on the principle 'diversity in unity'. However they all were facilitated by a similar and very general approach in researching participatory practices.

4.1. Meeting Bucharest[1]

Formally, public administration in Romania means: decentralization, local self-government and deconcentration of public services (Article 120 of the Romanian Constitution[2]). Structurally, it stands for:

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[1] This sections draws from the research analysis provided for by Iancu and Van Ostaaijen (2007).
[2] The Romanian Constitution of 1991 was amended and completed by Law no.429/2003 on the revision of the Romanian Constitution.

Government and deconcentrated bodies (at *state* level); 41 County Councils (at *county / judeţ* level) and 2948 Local Councils (at *town* and *commune* levels)[3,4]. Finally and from a political standpoint, public administration is made of a large number of appointees – ministries, state secretaries, etc. (at state level)[5] and directly elected officials – councilors and mayors (at county and local levels)[6].

Describing local levels in Romania may generate a 'lost in translation' situation: Law no.215/2001 (as revised) relevant to the infra-*state* tiers of government speaks of 'local public administration', whereas this paper dealt so far with 'local government'. In addition, the Romanian law makes notice of county councils with their subsequent presidents and local councils with their mayors as parts of the 'Local public administration'. International English may however prove rather difficult to interpret in Romanian (and vice-versa) giving that to the question of 'what is, after all, local?', the answer does not seem easy to give: 'the town (be it municipality or city) and commune level?"; or the town and commune level AND the county level?' The situation does not get any easier as, quoting the same text on local public administration in Romania, the Municipality of Bucharest does not have local councillors and mayor, but General Councillors and General Mayor, and although 'legally assimilated' to the county level, it follows the rules and regulations of town and communes. To cut the Gordian nod, our suggestion is that for the Romanian case as well, "local government'' is to stand for 'the closest to citizens level of administration'[7], namely town and commune level, and the reference to 'local public administration / local authorities' to include the county level, just as indicated by Law no. 215/2001.

Coming back to the substance of local government and that of Bucharest Municipality, the power within it is distributed among deliberative bodies (the General Council and the Local Councils of the six administrative subunits called *sectors*) and executive bodies (the General Mayor and the six sector mayors). Both types of authorities serve the interest of the state (by assuring the existence and functioning of the *état de droit*) and that of the community they represent[8]. Both are directly elected and are subject to the 'local self-government' principle. According to current legal framework, sector councils are given the right to set up their own organization, budget and commercial partnerships and public services (Article 81.2.h, Law no. 215/2001) as well as to cooperate and associate to/with social partners, non-governmental organisations and other local public authorities as to finance or deliver services or projects of local interest (Article 81.2.p,q). However, the acts of the Municipality (be it of deliberative or executive nature) are to be seen compulsory by the sectors (Article 85, Law no.215/2001). Provisions of the law on transparency of policy-making (Law no.52/2003) and that of allowing access to public information (Law no. 544/2001) however, give both the sector and the General councillors the possibility to formally interact with their constituency.

This is actually the case also for mayors of municipality and sectors. In addition, the latter lead the local public services, administer the Municipality/sectors' public and private estates and are main official persons handling the budgetary credits[9,10]. However, against the possible expectation that in line with the subsidiarity principle the sectors' mayors give voice to their community, local referendums are to be organized only by the General Mayor (Article 83.1, Law no.215/2001).

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[3] According to Romanian regulations, the '*town*' (*oraş*) can be either a synonym to 'city' (an administrative structure not heavily populated or economically developed), or a reference to a 'municipality' (*municipiu*) (an administrative structure highly populated and rather well developed, usually, a county capital). For further definitions, please Government Ordinance no.53/2002 on the Framework law of territorial-administrative units, as amended in 2003 (especially articles: 3-5) and Law no. 215/2001 on local public administration, as republished and further amended in 2007 and 2008 respectively (especially article 20).

[4] Data source: National Institute for Statistics, Romania, November 2004.

[5] Although, of course, one cannot exclude the existence of high civil servants such as prefects (heads of deconcentrated bodies), whose appointments are, according to the law, the direct result of merits proven in national entry contests.

[6] As of May 2007, the date of amending Law no. 67/2004 on electing local public authorities, mayors and local councillors as well as presidents of county councils and county councillors are directly elected (before 2007, county councillors used to elect one of them as president of the county council).

[7] As prescribed by the European Charter of Local Self-Government, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1985.

[8] In this regard, Law no.195/2006 on decentralization (articles 21 and 24) speak of local governments' *exclusive* competencies – given in the areas of urban planning, public illumination, local public transportation, sewerage and water supply; *divided* competencies (with the state level), recognized for: safety and public order, social security, prevention and management of local emergency situations, and *delegated* competencies, which appear in the case of allocation of revenues for children and adult with disabilities.

[9] This latter right of the mayor can be delegated to a public administrator, who acts on a contractual basis (Chapter VI of Law no. 215/2001 as amended).

[10] This enumeration as well as the ones that follow (in terms of local prerogatives) is not exclusive. Only relevant competencies to the issue of participatory democracy were selected.

Bucharest Municipality is not only about public authorities and their competencies. More quantitative than qualitative, Bucharest also means: 1,943,981 inhabitants (a little over 9% of the country's population); almost 1,000,000 active people[11]. Their interests and the municipal public interest is to be served by 55 General Councillors and one General mayor, representing the political will of the Democrat-Liberal Party – PDL (24 councillors) the Social Democrat Party – PSD (16 councillors), the National Liberal Party – PNL (8 councillors), the New Generation – Christian Democrat Party – PNG-CD (4 councillors) and the Great Romania Party – PRM (3 councillors)[12].

4.2. Meeting Eindhoven

The city of Eindhoven has 209.699 residents (in 2007) and is located in the south of The Netherlands. It is the fifth largest city of this country. It is also known as ´the Brainport´, because of the prestigious Technical University, the attendance of Royal Philips Electronics, and the several partnerships with regional cities and companies[13]. The city and its surroundings promote itself as the most innovative region of The Netherlands and was the ´Design Capital´ in 2006.

Eindhoven has a City Council with 45 members. Councilors are elected once every four years. Day-to-day management is by the Board of the Mayor and Aldermen. The mayor is appointed for a term of six years by the crown. He is chairman of both the City Council and the Board. Aldermen are appointed by the members of the City Council for a term of four years (website Eindhoven city, 2008). Since the start of Eindhoven's current City Council in 2006, citizens participation has a high priority. There is even one Alderman who has it as explicit political task. Similar to other Dutch cities, Eindhoven has a tradition with participatory policymaking processes which is characterized by a geographical focus on the district level. One of the seven departments within the local government is specialised in so called ´integral policy approach´ for these districts.

Eindhoven local government aims to enhance citizens participation through participatory policymaking and asked us, as researchers, to investigate the experiences of the participants. This research is relevant for the debate because it gives insight in perspectives of participants and analyses democracy in daily live. For future comparative research it is necessary that similar other cities are analysed as well.

4.3. Meeting Košice

After Bratislava, Košice is the second biggest Slovak community and, under the rule of the Act No. 401/1990 Coll. of the Slovak Republic City of Košice as amended, uses the so called two-tier local self-government model. One tier is created by city en bloc and its self-government bodies. The second one involves city parts (see below) and their self-government bodies. Košice uses it on the ground of rule, which connects any city with population of more than 200 thousand inhabitants with two-tier local self-government model (obviously, besides Bratislava, Košice is the only such city in Slovakia).

Although Košice has approximately 235 thousand inhabitants, it is divided into 22 city parts, which is both unusual and inefficient. If we compare those city parts, we can find huge heterogeneity. They are very fragmented; the biggest one, in terms of population, is called Košice-Západ which has almost 40 thousand inhabitants, and the smallest one, which is called "Košice-Lorinčík", has less than 400 inhabitants (in other words, in 14 smallest city parts live only a bit more than 13 % of entire Košice population). Furthermore, the structure of the city parts of Košice involves both urban parts and rural parts. The last but not least differentiation is linked to a fact that different city parts saturate very different functions, i.e. some of them are dedicated for living, some of them create a suitable space for industrial activities, and some of them are associated mainly with business or entertaining activities of both city citizens and city visitors.

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[11] According to the 2008 census, as quoted on the official site of Bucharest Municipality: www.pmb.ro (last access: 18.03.2009).
[12] The General Mayor (Sorin Oprescu) run independently and is in office as of November 2008.
[13] www.Philips.com shows more information about this multinational. Philips is specialised in the production of lighting, consumers lifestyle and healthcare products. It has 133,000 employees in 60 countries and has an annual sale of 27 billion Euros. For information on Brainport, see: www.Brainport.nl.

Under the rule Act No. 369/1990 Coll. on Communal Establishment as amended, the basic bodies of Slovak municipalities are both the communal boards (municipal councils) and the mayors. The communal board is the representative, collective, and highest decision-making body of a community. It consists of the communal deputies who are directly elected for a four-year term by the community inhabitants under equal, universal, and secret suffrage. Their numbers relate to the number of community inhabitants.

Košice parts have the own communal boards (the numbers of communal deputies depend on city parts' populations) and city en bloc has also own city board with 50 city deputies. Moreover, city of Košice has also city council. Its chair is mayor of Košice, and it has also 11 other members (10 of them are from the group of city deputies, and one of them is chair of the Council of mayors of Košice city parts).

The status of communal deputy is incompatible with the status of mayor. The communal board is especially concerned with the field of husbandry of the municipal estate, the municipal budget, the municipal urban plan, the creation or abolishment of municipal taxes and fees, the municipal acts, etc.

The mayor is the second basic communal body. He/she is the highest executive communal body and is also directly elected for a four-year term by the community inhabitants under equal, universal, and secret suffrage. As for his/her duties, he/she organizes and leads meetings of the communal board, executes the communal administration (both self-government and the delegated state service), represents the community and acts as referee in every affair not restricted to the communal board.

A very important point in the relationship between the mayor and the communal board is the fact that the mayor can stop the execution of the communal board's decision if he/she decides that such a decision is not under the rule of law or if such a decision is recognizably disadvantageous for the community. If that situation happens the communal board can approve its previous decision again but only by a three-fifth majority of all its members. If the communal board is not able to approve its previous decision again within two months, the decision loses its validity. If the communal board approves its previous decision again, the mayor cannot stop its execution. On the other hand, the communal board has the right to indirectly dismiss the mayor by a vote of the community inhabitants. The communal board may start the process to dismiss the mayor if he/she is not able to execute his/her function for more than six months because of absence or incompetence. The communal board has to start the process to dismiss the mayor if at least 30% of the communal electorate are in favour of. Moreover, the communal board has to start the process if he/she grossly or repeatedly neglects his/her duties or if he/she contravenes a law. During short absences by the mayor, he/she is deputized by the deputy mayor who is elected (after being proposed by the mayor) by the members of the communal board from their own number.

The inhabitant of some community is a person who has his/her regular residence in it. The community inhabitants have several important rights but the most important is the right to participate in local self-government. It means that they have the right to:
- elect the local political authorities,
- become a candidate and be elected to the local political authorities,
- vote on important questions regarding the life and development of the community via local referendum,
- participate in public gatherings and also in the communal board's meetings,
- ask for the local political authorities' help and co-operation, etc.

As for the community inhabitants' duties, they have to protect the communal estate and environment, to not disturb the other community inhabitants, and to provide their personal help in case of a crisis disaster. On the other hand, the community has to provide its inhabitants with some necessary and immediate help if they have a material need.

The right to participate in local self-government belongs especially to the community inhabitants but they are not the only persons to have such a right. This right also belongs to other persons who:
- have some real estate in the community or pay some communal tax or fee,
- have in the community some provisional or long-range residences,
- have some honorary community citizenships.

4.4. Meeting Ljubljana

Ljubljana is capital of Republic of Slovenia with central geographical position and approximately 268.000 inhabitants. After local self-government reform in 1993, Ljubljana became one municipality with special status of so called city municipality[14]. Ljubljana is led by major and up to four vice-majors, who represent executive branch of local government. Next to daily routine of running the municipality and municipal administration, main role of mayor is in preparing and submitting the budget to the municipal council. Slovenian municipalities have municipal councils (in case of city municipalities called city councils). Number of councillors varies from 7 up to 45 in correlation with municipal population. Ljubljana has 45 city councillors representing different political parties or civil interest associations (e.g. initiative for clean water). City council is legislative of City municipality of Ljubljana, taking all binding decisions from development plan of area of municipality to the yearly budget.

Burdened with changes in national political arena and opportunity offered by first general election may of previous managers decided to enter the politics at the local levels as well as other independent candidates. But surprising thing was change in trend of electorate that under the uncertainty at the national level elected much higher proportion of independent candidates (or those who were not explicitly supported by any of major national political parties). De-politization of local politics brought new way of running municipalities with stronger impact of "managerialism" compared to previous political interest struggle. We can say famous story is connected to the Ljubljana municipality that should be observed of model case in change that is certainly important for other municipalities Pinterič, 2008: 58-59).

Zoran Janković was appointed manager (state had strong stock share in this company) of Mercator system in late 1990s, and made an international "imperia" from small weak system of local grocery stores. After 2004 change of ruling coalition on national level he was dismissed, despite there was no business reason. In late 2005 he announced to enter politics and run for the local election in 2006. He established political group 'List of Zoran Janković' and started with defining crucial problems of Ljubljana municipality and its inhabitants. List of '22 things to be changed or done' become his political program when he started campaign for the mayor position. His personality created in era of Mercator manager position was unbeatable. People (in Slovenia in general) loved him, they knew that he is employing thousands of employees or students. His economic success was combined with constant smile on his face and personal touch with all employees (also shop clerks). On the day of the local election in 2006 he was absolute winner, gaining 62,99% of votes, beating 15 other candidates. List of Zoran Jankovič won 41,37% of votes and 23 out of 45 seats in municipal council. He got mandate of absolute ruler. He kept his first promise and block his mayor salary for one year (whit his other resources it was easy to do so) and decided to get paid on the basis of his success in first year of his mandate measured with support of citizens to his activities. His popularity was growing because Ljubljana started to regain its capital nature that was almost abandoned in previous mandates due to political disputes and inactivity. Janković restructured municipal administration, finances and life in the city. His list of 22 things to be done is becoming more and more checked as fulfilled and even expensive and unrealistic projects as new football stadium (that is certainly necessary but expensive investment) are becoming reality (Stadium is under construction in second year of Jankovićs' mandate, after mandate or two of thinking what to do). He is breaking all the public administration procedures and rules. Strongly supported by his list in municipal council, and his managerial ability enables him to change the system as well as Šrot in Celje municipality and Popović in Koper municipality did it already before and endangered Ljubljana position of central city (for some time before 2006 election there was some whispering that some of central institution could move out form Ljubljana).

If other municipalities with weak political arena and strong managerial leaders will follow his example we can expect change in local governance principles that will brought potential to influence also national level of public administration and state institutions or they will more and more ignore state level and organize development independent form state development strategies Pinterič, 2008: 59-60).

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[14] Due the fact that Slovenia does not have regional level of governance (so far), there are two different types of municipalities; ordinary municipalities and city municipalities. City municipalities are usually regional centres with important role in development, employment, education etc,.

5. Democratic capacity and participatory projects in Eindhoven, Košice, Ljubljana and Bucharest

This section presents the results of our research on democratic capacity and participatory democracy in the four cities. In appendix one we take account for our methods.

5.1. Results from Bucharest

The results from Bucharest are analysed according to issues A-E in the appendix.

Issue A: 'To what extent the freedom of expression is being exercised by citizens and associations at the level of Bucharest Municipality?'

Legally speaking, Romania has a brief, but rather condensed history of public participation: since 2003 it has acknowledged the obligation of central and local public authorities, elected or appointed, as well as of public institutions using public money, to ensure the transparency of policy-making in their relations to citizens or the latter's legally established associations (Article 1, Law no.52/2003 on transparency of policy-making). "The obligation of transparency is the obligation of public administration authorities to inform and allow public debate on draft laws, grant access to administrative policy-making and to public memorandum" (article 3.e, Law no.52/2003). In addition, "any person may ask and receive from the relevant public authority public information" (article 6.1, Law no.544/2001). Translating this legal imperative into the theoretical framework of qualitative democracy (as provided by Dahl, 1947 [2001]; 1971; 2000), we would assume that exercising the freedom of expression would be a consequence of the presence of several institutional facilitators (such as: public debating, online petitioning, online access to draft decisions of the Bucharest Municipality etc.).

The main findings of the documentary analysis showed that:
1) Typical public inputs belong to citizens (and not associations) and deal with the use of public money and the implementation of law on the legal status of estates abusively undertaken between 06.03.1945 – 22.12.1989 (Law no.10/2001).
In 2007, according to an Assessment report of Bucharest Municipality focused on the implementation of Law no.544/2001, almost half of the written requests for public information (200 out of 462) dealt with the use of public money in procurements, investments and expenditures, whereas 70 were directly relevant to the abusive expropriations during the communist period; the situation does not change drastically in 2008: out of 386 total requests, 130 focused on public money use and 70 were notifications on Law no.10/2001. There was no substantive data for considering whether online petitioning is preferred to paper based petitioning (in both 2007 and 2008 the ratio was close to 50% / 50%).
2) Interest of citizens and associations in asking information on public Municipal projects is low.
An assessment report of Bucharest Municipality focused on the implementation of Law no.52/2003 shows that in 2007, 176 projects were publicly announced (using the official website, media and posters at the Municipality headquarters) and only two requests of information were being made (one by a citizen and one by an association). In 2008, for the 206 projects made public, nine requests of information were formulated (two by citizens and seven by associations) and four meetings were organized on the express requests of the associations.
In addition, studying the online centre for public issues and draft decisions to be discussed by the Bucharest Municipality[15], we noticed that from 135 draft projects and strategies opened to debate in 2008, only seven online comments were registered (there were no data available for 2007)[16].
3) Interest of citizens and associations in participating to public meetings of Bucharest Municipality is fairly low.

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[15] On the official website of Bucharest Municipality: www.pmb.ro (last access: 18.03.2009).
[16] During the interview trials with civil servants, there was a special reference to the Data Room case. The Data Room initiative of the Bucharest Municipality envisions creating an interface between local government and private investors interested in developing projects within the boundaries of Bucharest. A Pilot Centre Data Room was created in November 2008 and it presently facilitates access to potential investors in building parking facilities in Bucharest. According to the comments of the Data Room representative, the interest shown by potential investors was considered "good to very good". Due to the specific nature of the information provided, Data Room's so far experience remains a successful, but not quite relevant case for the public participation issue.

Same assessment report of Bucharest Municipality quoted earlier shows that to those 17 public meetings organized by the General Council, 50 persons (outside the Municipality staff) participated (strangely enough) both in 2007 and in 2008.

4) The present legal framework for public participation allows fair public participation to local policy-making.

Comparative analysis of the date provided by several studies developed by highly representative associations such as CeRe (Centre of Resources for Public Participation) or Pro Democrația (Pro-Democracy)[17], as well the Regular Reports of the European Commission on Romania's progress towards accession to the European Union (1998-2004)[18] confirm the rather well structured legal base of the participatory practices in local government in Romania.

Issue B: 'To what extent Bucharest Municipality is opened and transparent in terms of its policy-making processes to the actors identified above (citizens and associations)?'

5) Romanian local government generally serves the public interest, but needs to improve its transparency' practices.

39.7% of the civil servants questioned in February 2007 on their perception on local government's mission in Romania agreed on considering the latter serves the public interest to a high and very high degree (67.1% however assumed the assertion to be relevant to the case of Europe of 15). 76.2% did not see at the time the system to be transparent, and place the blame on the highly complex set of existent administrative procedures (58.2%). When asked to confirm if the local government system may be considered opaque, 24.1% agreed to the assertion. A rather similar conclusion was drawn from the interviews made with civil servants in March 2009 and with associations and citizens in January – February 2009.

Same can be argued by reading the Regular Reports of the European Commission in regard to the overall evaluation of the Romanian local governments' practical transparency: In the reading of the 1998 Report, the Romanian administrative system is characterized by "administrative weakness, secrecy to the access too public information and deterioration of equitable application of law" (RP 1998, p.9). However, the adoption of the National Strategy for E-Administration and rapid implementation of the informational society (in February 1998) appears as a possible step towards the increase of accessibility and efficiency of public administration (1998, p.26). In 1999, the Commission appreciates the regulation of freedom of expression in Romania, but draws attention towards the necessity of eliminating its limits (1999, p.17; 2000, p.21). In regard to the issue of transparency as a principle applicable to the level of local government, the Commission enumerates it amongst the pre-conditions of an efficiency exercise of financial management (RP 2000, pp.16-17,30). Same thing was reiterated in the Commission's Report of 2004 (2004, p.39). With a direct link towards local policy-making (2000, p.31) and privatization of public enterprises (2000, p.49), the principle of transparency is again considered absent. Still in the 2000 Report (2000, p.16), the free access to judicial documentation is considered limited (an aspect to be noticed in 1999 as well – 1999, p.13). The appearance of e-administration regulations in 2001 are seen as positive indicators for the administrative system in the sense of openness and transparency (2001, p.19); however, the absence of a norm for implementing the constitutional right to information is considered a week point of the Romanian administrative system (2001, p.22), as is the lack of regulations concerning the transparency of fiscal policies at local level (2001, p.35). In 2002, the transparency of elaborating public policies and in general, of the administrative system as a whole was considered in need for consolidation (2002, p.22), although significant progress had been achieved once the free access to public information was granted (2002, p.23,27,32; 2003, p.26).

6) Public participation to local policy-making may slow down the process of serving the public good, yet it proves to be in the best interest of overall administrative outputs.

Asked to give their opinion on whether they consider citizens' participation to decision making generates problems in the public administration being operative, 31.7% of the civil servants questioned in February 2007 answered they agree in a very high and high degree. However 31% of them see the public

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[17] *Inter alia*, *Există participare publică în România? Participarea publică între legislație și eficiență* (Is there Public Participation in Romania? Public Participation between legislation and efficiency) (CeRe, 2006 and 2007), *Buna guvernare la români: Principii, metodologie și studii de caz* (Good Governance to Romanians: Principles, Methodology and case studies) (Pro Democrația, Asociația de Monitorizare a Presei and CeRe, 2007).

[18] These Reports are the result of the cooperation of European, International and national authorities and are seen relevant as they support an alternative perspective on Romania's legal framework for participatory democracy.

participation as a good and a very good thing. Same results are described by CeRe in their 2007 study (p.41 et seq.) and confirmed by the interviews taken with civil servants and representatives of the associations.

Issue C: 'To what extent Bucharest Municipality is accountable during its policy-making processes to the actors identified above (citizens and associations)?'
  7) Local government and State government are equally accountable for the eventual misuse of power during policy-making processes.
This finding was suggested by both the interviews and the questionnaires addressed to civil servants and to a rather striking similarity, citizens, associations and civil servants suggested that as long as the local government has a dual function in applying the law at local level and elaborate local policies, accountability should be shared.
The documentary analysis of the European Regular Reports on Romania deals with the accountability issue in terms of human resources involved in the public administration system and makes the assumption that "the free access to public information increases the level of public accountability" (2004, p.26).

Issue D: 'To what extent Bucharest Municipality allows partnership and cooperation with the actors identified above (citizens and associations) during its policy-making processes?'
To some extent, this research question finds its answers in previous comments: granting access to citizens and associations in the policy-making processes directly reflects upon the local government's view of partnership and cooperation with possible stakeholders. However, the documentary analysis of the relevant literature on participation suggests that:
  8) Participation of citizens and associations to local policy-making is more a problem of procedure and less one of real partnership.
To quote once more CeRe's study on public participation (2007, p.28 et seq.), associations and citizens all together consider most of the administrative stimuli for real partnership to be formal and quantitative, rather than qualitative. If access to information is granted easily and consultation is rigorously suggested by the law, real partnership as envisaged by the actual participation is hard to find[19]. A similar optic was shared by two of the citizens interviewed and all the representatives of the associations.

Issue E: 'Is there a gap between the declared and the experienced openness and transparency of policy-making processes at the level of Bucharest Municipality?'
To answer this final question surely requires a further investigation. With the limited amount of data available for this research it is however possible to agree on the fact that formally, Bucharest Municipality does have a solid legal framework which encourages the consolidation of democratic practices in local policy-making. Findings presented so far suggest however that applying the actual regulations on public participation is often restricted to "play by the book" attitude. This surely generates frustrations from both the stakeholders' viewpoint and that of the civil servants. Furthermore, it generates reasons to believe that democratic capacity in Bucharest is under construction.

What does these results say about the democratic capacity and the state of participatory policymaking in Bucharest? Overall, Bucharest scores highly in terms of allowing public participation, yet produces low results in terms of actual participation. Our suggestions for improvements are more openness on the adding value of stakeholders' participation (coming from the local authorities), more civic engagement (a political culture perspective would be appropriate).

5.2. Results from Eindhoven

This section presents the results from Eindhoven and will analyse it. There are 7 main results based on the quantitative research (see the section on method in Appendix 1):

Result 1: Participants are highly educated men with an average age of 52.

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[19] It is however compulsory in the cases of strategies and programmes when stakeholders may involve in the actual analysis of problems and setting of the objectives. Still, if to look at the Bucharest case, the most recent debate on the Parking Strategy attracted only 33 online comments from 2008 till present (interesting however, a draft decision dealing with the control of cats and dogs reproduction got 484 online comments).

72 percent of the participants is male, 28 percent is female. The average age is 52 years+ the youngest participant was 22, the oldest 85. Almost 70 percent of the participants was highly educated. Participants in the analysed participatory projects are not very representative for the city's population.

Result 2: Participants are positive about the participative projects
Respondents (76 percent) have the feeling to be taken seriously by Eindhoven local government. 54 percent of the respondents is satisfied with the results of the project (see figure 1), but there is a considerable difference between the satisfaction of citizens and civil servants.

Figure 1: *Satisfaction about the results of the participative projects according to different categories of respondents*

	Citizens	Civil servants	Social organisations	Companies	Average
Satisfaction about the results of the project	44% is satisfied	69% is satisfied	59% is satisfied	64% is satisfied	54% is satisfied

52 percent says that the results are in accordance with their expectations. 55 percent of the respondents say that they surely will participate again when there is a next time.

Result 3: The average report mark for Eindhoven's role in participatory projects is a 6.5
This is an average. Civil servants value Eindhoven's role higher than the average (7.0), while citizens and companies value it lower (both a 6.3). Social organisations value it with a 6.6.

Result 4: According to the respondents, civil servants take the most important decisions.
Results from the questionnaire show that 'civil servants' (43 percent) and 'organised citizens' (22 percent) are taking the most important decisions according to the respondents. From a democratic perspective, this is dubious, while democratic theory is based on the voice of citizen instead of civil servants. Obviously, civil servants have great influence on this kind of processes (see figure 2 on the next page).

Result 5: According to all respondents, Citizens play an important role in participatory democracy in Eindhoven.
Generally, among respondents citizens have an positive image. Figure 2 shows how different categories of participants judge the (specific) role citizens play in participatory projects. Especially question A and F show a wide variety in the results.

Figure 2: Participants response to posed questions about citizens (percentages)

Posed Question	Citizens	Civil servants	Social Organisations	Companies	Total score (weighted)
A. Citizens are creating speed in the process	Agree: 39,5 Neutral: 32,4 Disagree: 26,7	Agree: 51,0 Neutral: 23,3 Disagree: 6,7	Agree: 32,0 Neutral: 28,0 Disagree: 40,0	Agree: 27,3 Neutral: 18,2 Disagree: 54,6	Disagree: **36,5** Neutral: 28,5 Agree: **34,3**
B. Citizens deliver essential information	Agree: 91,6	Agree: 63,3	Agree: 80,0	Agree: 54,6	Agree: 86,2
C. Citizens only play a symbolic role	Disagree: 81,7	Disagree: 83,3	Disagree: 80,0	Disagree: 72,7	Disagree: 81,0
D. Citizens participate for their self-interest	Agree: 52,1	Agree: 70,0	Agree: 52,0	Agree: 81,9	Agree: 58,4
E. Citizens don´t have the required skills	Disagree: 74,7	Disagree: 66,7	Disagree: 68,0	Disagree: 36,4	Disagree: 68,6
F. Citizens are often initiators / leaders	Agree: 5,6 Neutral: 32,4 Disagree: 60,5	Agree: 10,0 Neutral: 6,7 Disagree: 66,7	Agree: 28,0 Neutral: 44,0 Disagree: 28,0	Agree: 45,5 Neutral: 27,3 Disagree: 27,3	Agree: **45,2** Neutral: **35,0** Disagree: **19,0**

Result 6: It is not clear for participants what Eindhoven local government do with the input from participants.
Only 48 percent of the respondents know what Eindhoven local government will do with the output of the project. This percentages includes the civil servants. Alderman and city councillors are only minimally involved (they do not show up often). 59 percent of the respondents show that there was no councillor or alderman involved in the project. They appear to be not (very) visible. However, whenever there was an alderman or councillor involved 70 percent (N=56) valued this positively for the results of the project.

Result 7: A ladder of participation: citizens are consulted, while social organisations and companies are co-producers
The amount of influence of professional stakeholders is higher than the influence of (individual) citizens. In general, citizens were asked or consulted about their opinion, while social organisations and companies were (equal) ´partners´ in the project, they were co-producers. There is even a moderately strong correlation between ´the participants influence on the result´ and ´participants satisfaction about the results´ (Pearson´s r = 0,43)[20].

From the qualitative data we found three results in Eindhoven (results 8 - 10).

Results 8: Interviewees are determined when they say that there is a lack of personnel continuity.
There are many personnel changes within Eindhoven local government, but also within social originations such as welfare and housing organisations. Personnel works for only 1.5 to 2 years on a position, before they change. One interviewee said: ´projects memory disappears. Nobody knows what was agreed three years ago. Citizens are getting more and more despaired about it.´ It is also striking that professionals admit that a good handing over is the exception to the rules. These matters have a negative influence on the (continuity of the) participatory projects.

Result 9: Eindhoven local government is often typified as unreliable.
In the interviews, the local government was often called unreliable, not in the sense of cheating or lying, but in the sense that 'you cannot rely on them'. This is not an individual feature, but more a feature of the participatory process. Often, there is a sudden radio silence for half a year. Interviewees gave many examples, but also analysed the causes: compartmentalization and competition between different departments, personal relations, being swayed by the political issues of the day, (non)intervening alderman. Eindhoven government is accused of not having the courage to take a decision.

Result 10: There is a lack of vision on participatory policymaking
Participatory policymaking is becoming a matter of course in the policy process. For Eindhoven, it is more normal to involve stakeholders to jointly discuss and create policy. Although a clear vision on participatory policymaking is lacking, it is used on an ad hoc basis.

What does these 10 results say about the democratic capacity and the state of participatory policymaking in Eindhoven? The quantitative data show that several things are positively evaluated by the respondents. However, it also shows a dominant ´civil servant logic´ in participatory projects in Eindhoven. Such logic has been criticized, especially by citizens. It also confirms that only a selective population is participating in these kinds of projects (highly educated, older men). Referring to Sawards´ definition of participatory democracy the studied participatory projects indeed enables extensive participation in decision-making. However, it concerns only a selective amount of members of the whole group. This confirms Berveling´s argument that participatory processes are often far from representative (Berveling, 1998). It also shows that representatives at the city council are minimally involved. This means that the democratic capacity of Eindhoven has not reached its optimum yet.

In Eindhoven, participatory democracy is used in a mere instrumental and organisational way. It seems as if the discussion about the relation between representative and participatory democracy has not been started yet. Eindhoven local government has an internal orientation when they operate in (mutual) relationships, for instance the lack of responsiveness. This may be typical for (large) institutions, but it is something on

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[20] The Pearson's r correlation was measured at a significant level of 99.0%.

which this city should elaborate. There is cry among the interviewees for more empathy. This is required to make participatory democracy process better and more successful.

5.3. Results from Košice

The information distributed through official communal panels, 54 % of all respondents declared that they used to (often or always) receive information in this way. The differences between size categories were not significant, and therefore it was concluded that official communal panels could be defined as important information tool.

The communal newspaper as information tool is very popular. Almost 87 % of all respondents declared that they used to (often or always) receive information through some local or regional newspaper regardless of a fact whether they come from smaller city parts or bigger ones.

The communal broadcast is not according the results of this survey very useful and popular in the biggest city parts. As it was declared by the respondents, only 11 % of the respondents coming from such city parts declared that they used to (often or always) receive information through the communal broadcast. On contrary, 69 % of respondents coming from the smallest city parts used to utilize this information tool always or often at least.

The communal telecast is not very popular information tool. Only 24 % of all respondents used to receive some relevant information through it (again, city size was not significant, in terms of differences between size groups of city parts).

Very surprising results are linked to utilization of official communal web-site. As it was declared by the respondents, only 13 % of them receive some relevant information through this information tool regularly (i.e. often or always). On contrary, almost 60 % of all respondents did not use this possibility (it should be mentioned here, that only 18 % of all respondents were older than 60, what means that utilization of new technologies is not associated only with age).

An experience of participation in some communal board's meeting declared less than 12 % of all respondents and regular participation (i.e. often or always) in such meetings declared only 2 % of all respondents.

Receiving the relevant information through meetings with local political representatives declared especially those respondents coming from the smallest city parts. Approximately 42 % of them declared that they used to (often or always) receive some information during the meetings with their political representatives. On contrary, only 5 % of the respondents coming from the biggest city parts declared the same fact. As for the respondents coming from the city parts with population of 2,000 – 10,000 inhabitants, 9 % of them declared that they used to (often or always) receive some relevant information directly from their political representatives.

Conclusively, the case of the city of Košice shows us that participation is used as a tool to keep citizens informed.

5.4. Results from Ljubljana

Research and results on participatory democracy in the case of Slovenia are mainly normative oriented, as it was mentioned before. Normative pillars of participatory democracy in Slovenia are referenda, petition, initiative and council of municipal citizens. Referenda initiative in Ljubljana needs to collect 11.000 signatures in 40 days before decision on carrying out referenda. In the beginning of 2009 group of city councillors opposed to the accepted plan to build Muslim sacral object in Ljubljana (initiative to build such object is 30 years old). They started collecting 11.000 signatures and in the case of their success, mayor still has the possibility to send referenda initiative to the constitutional court. In this sense we can understand referenda possibility as very limited one due to different conditions.

Petition is the legally un-binding document demanding some action, signed by higher number of people. Any petition should be discussed in City council but there is no obligation to take decision on any activity based on petition. Initiative is understood as any individual written demand from citizen(s) that should be

addressed. In general individual initiatives are dismissed with short answer to the sender or even forgotten. Council of municipal citizens can be called in order to discuss important questions of development directions but it was never called so far in the Ljubljana.

Additional option that emerged as practice that could be understood as form of participative democracy or better democratic mask for bureaucratic government is mayor's official hours when citizens can meet the mayor and ask him questions, but it usually has no significant influence on policy-making processes in municipality.

On the base of interview with mayors of some other municipalities in Slovenia we can understand the potential of participatory democracy. On the question why there is no e-forum on the municipal website he replied that he does not need it, because there is no use that he will be working while his opponents will abuse the form forum politically motivated assaults that could harm his work. We can add, also his re-election. Mayor of Ljubljana, Zoran Janković, due to his great election result, however uses a questionnaire poll each year on anniversary of his election in order to check support to his work. In the beginning of the mandate he bound his salary to the results of polls, meaning that he gets salary on the basis of the result of the poll (on his own initiative with no legislative basis).

What do these results say about the democratic capacity and the state of participatory policymaking in Ljubljana? Participatory democracy is theoretical question of sovereignty of people and consequently problem of the people. However this question has, on the basis of presented results, at least two important dimensions. First it is the problem of citizens understanding of their power. This part can be divided into two categories. First there is overall apathy of society, with lack of common responsibility as a consequence of growing individualism and lack of political awareness. Despite we are facing developing potential of internet for coordination of joint activities we can see general decline of citizens' political participation after the end of "anti-globalist" movement at the turn of the millennia. Next to the apathy there is problem of economic burden that is increasing with turbo-capitalist neo-liberalism and additionally also with current economic crisis. The fact is that, political activity is ranking lower below economic survival and consequently not everybody has the opportunity to participate in democratic processes, even if they are open to general population. Second dimension of the participatory democracy problem is systemic trap of representative democracy where participation is only indirect via regular election. Despite it is understandable that all citizens have no possibility to participate directly in policy-making processes, due to the number limit. However, political and economic elites were keen to limit possibility of participation and to channelize them into appropriate forms that can be legally abandoned without any serious consequences.

The case of Ljubljana shows well how participation democracy has no place in practice and even not in academic research so far. Citizens' participation is channelized in different legal procedures that can be abandoned with some *pro forma* reply while municipality is run by managerial approach of mayor[21] and political interests of city council. Questionary poll was added by current mayor as indicator of legitimacy of his work.

5.5. At the crossroad: Comparing results

Each city uses a different approach to participatory democracy. Bucharest had more input from civil servants in terms of quantity, none coming from business, but qualitatively, NGOs provided a good overall feedback. Documentary analysis was mainly the strength of the Bucharest approach. Eindhoven on the other hand had a very broad and representative sample possible to generalize for the type of participatory practices (the four categories relevant in the research and the data collected are proof to that). Kosice focused on citizens' views as well as on the analysis of the legal texts applicable to the participatory democracy. Ljubljana had an approach focusing on leadership as part of the participatory practices. These variety of approaches and the richness of the data provide different perspectives on the same concepts (participatory democracy and democratic capacity). We think that this is the strength of this paper.

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[21] However, current mayor is at least capable of running municipality as company with higher level of effectiveness and development, while previous ones lacked of this ability too.

What differences do we observe comparing the results? Bucharest, Košice, and Ljubljana are part of a republic, as a political system, while Eindhoven is part of a kingdom. Although the three republics are in democratic transition since the 1990s, there is a long democratic practice in The Netherlands.. We strongly doubt that the kingdom can be seen as the main reason. So two differences stays. First, the capitals Bucharest and Ljubljana are less participatory oriented. Second, undemocratic regimes before 1990 can be the reason for lack of real possibilities and interest for political participation. This is probably not only the case on the local level but also on the national level. With regard to the democratic transition on political participation – at least for Bucharest, Košice, and Ljubljana – we could argue that there is still a long way to go to be on the level of Eindhoven. This does not mean that Eindhoven is democratically better (in a normative sense) than the other three cities, because several critics about the democratic quality of Eindhoven are raised (the problem of selective participation, unclearness about expectations and roles etc.). Apparently, the representative democracy cannot exist without participatory projects.

How can we explain the differences? The main difference between Eindhoven and the other three cities should be searched in the (lack of) democratic tradition. Due to the differences in participatory practices in a long-time democracy and those from post-totalitarian democracies, we think that political culture may be an issue of further investigation. Although we have theoretical hunches about what is democratically best, this research did not offer the scale for measuring "good" versus "bad" democratic capacity. Moreover, it would be theoretical and empirical relevant to build such a measure in the future. It would be nice to elaborate on the idea that there could be something as a "democratic career", in which some cities (in countries) are more developed than others, but this does probably not mean that this is better for the quality of democracy.

6. Conclusion and discussion

This paper discussed and analysed the following question: what is the state of participatory democracy in Bucharest, Eindhoven, Košice and Ljubljana and how and how does it contribute to democratic capacity?

The research showed tow things. First, there are differences between the four cities, which are largely based on the democratic tradition and the legal possibilities to organise and apply forms of participatory democracy. Public participation is, to some extent, considered a formal requirement in Bucharest, Košice, and Ljubljana, yet not an added value to the local government's activities (views are mostly coming from the civil servants). In daily practise it is not regularly used (yet). Few additional changes may be brought to the present legislative framework regarding the participation of different stakeholders to policymaking in Bucharest, Košice and Ljubljana. Secondly, participatory policymaking does contribute to Eindhoven's democratic capacity. Based on the survey more than 50 percent of the participants is quiet positive and satisfied about the way this city deals with participatory democracy projects. However, there are still problems to be solved and participants are critical as well. Improvement is required through perhaps democratic innovations (Saward, 2000), organisational and culture change within the local government and within social organisations.

Making democracy work is surely not an one actor show: the four cases of participatory practices show that civil servants, citizens and associations play their distinctive role in tuning the quality of democracy: local governments with no regulations for openness and transparency and an overall culture of administrative secret give no use to citizens and associations willing to express their preferences in policy-making. For Bucharest, a well structured legal framework for information, consultation and participation is not a panacea for a passive civic culture. Both for Bucharest and the other cities active stakeholders getting no official feedback on their preferences and expectations are not likely to consolidate democracy on their own. In depth analysis of the relationship developed between local government – citizens – associations and company owners seems to be an appropriate next step; as it does balancing the research target groups. Experiences from research in other cities to these aspects would be helpful. Refining the "gap" between the declared and experienced openness and transparency of local policy-making in cities by adding answers to "why-s" is however most likely the research direction to be taken next.

We want to round off with a hopeful quote from (Saward, 2003: 143) 'The job of building democracy is never done'.

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Appendix 1

Method

Doing research in Bucharest

To paraphrase one of the studies coordinated by CeRe – Centre of Resources for Public Participation (Bucharest), "Is there public participation in Bucharest Municipality?" This was the main question that triggered the present research. The actual content of the research derived however from the "quality of democracy" argument as presented in the first section, and aimed at providing possible answers to the following subsequent inquiries:

A. "To what extent the freedom of expression is being exercised by citizens, company owners, and associations at the level of Bucharest Municipality?"
B. "To what extent Bucharest Municipality is opened and transparent in terms of its policy-making processes to the actors identified above (citizens, company owners and associations)?"
C. "To what extent Bucharest Municipality is accountable during its policy-making processes to the actors identified above (citizens, company owners and associations)?"
D. "To what extent Bucharest Municipality allows partnership and cooperation with the actors identified above (citizens, company owners and associations) during its policy-making processes?"
E. "Is there a gap between the declared and the experienced openness and transparency of policy-making processes at the level of Bucharest Municipality?"

As previously described, the theory supporting the progress in the quality of democracy was provided by R. Dahl's interpretation of democracy and consolidation of democracy. To that end, democracy was understood as a representative system holding six (minimal) institutional guarantees: officials elected (1) in free, correct and regular elections (2), by people endowed with inclusive citizenship (3), who enjoy the freedom of expression and associative autonomy (4, 5), and benefit from alternative sources of information (6)[22]. Any progress of one or some of the institutional guarantees would have marked the presence of the consolidation of democracy.

In order to apply this definition to the organization and functioning of the local public administration in Romania and then focus on the case of Bucharest Municipality, the following assumptions were made:

If public administration is to be viewed as an ensemble of bodies and activities regulating and delivering services and implementing legislative, executive and judiciary mandates and should the context for this ensemble of bodies and activities be provided for by democracy, one could argue[23] that the former need to obey democratic procedures. This leads us into saying that in a democratic society, the public administration should be organized and function in such way as to offer its public the possibility to freely and regularly formulate and receive impartial and non-discriminatory answers to its official requests.

For our assumption to move one step further, refinement was necessary: "what was democratic organization and functioning of a public administration?"

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[22] The term used by R. Dahl for such a system is poliarchy [R. Dahl and C. Lindblom (1953) Politics, Economics and Welfare (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)]. However, introducing this concept here would have suggested that a large part of the pluralist school had became the bone structure of our argument; this actually is beyond our present intentions, and as such, when discussing R. Dahl's definition of democracy, we will solely refer to it as the modern, representative system as described above, in the body text.
[23] Following Dahl's already quoted work and H. Simon's approach to the matter ([1945] 2004:23).

Table 3 answers that question:

In a country-sized unit, for the opportunity of the public to […]:	The following institutional guarantees are necessary […]:	And can be translated in the following principles of functioning and organization of the public administration […]:
I. Formulate their preferences	1. Freedom of association	
	2. Freedom of expression	
	3. Right to vote and be elected	
	4. Alternative sources of information	- local self-government and decentralization
II. Make their preferences public	1. Freedom of association	
	2. Freedom of expression	
	3. Right to elect and be elected	- openness and transparency
	4. Free and correct elections	
	5. Alternative sources of information	- partnership and cooperation
III. Let their Government answer to the preferences, in an impartially and non-discriminatory manner	1. Freedom of association	
	2. Freedom of expression	- non-discrimination
	3. Right to elect and be elected	
	4. Free and correct elections	- accountability
	5. Alternative sources of information	
	* Rule of law (as a guarantee for the governmental dependency on votes and other forms of preferences' manifestation)	- rule of law

To resume our argument: In a democratic state, the public administration holds the levers for managing and implementing the executive, legislative or judiciary mandates. Its democratic organization and functioning (as defined with R. Dahl's assistance) relies upon several principles, amongst which six broad categories seemed relevant, namely: local self-government and decentralization, openness and transparency, partnership and cooperation, non-discrimination, accountability and rule of law. It goes then than a variance of one of those principles holds an impact upon the quality of democracy (and hence its progress towards consolidation). Given the interest on participatory democracy, the research focused on the degree of openness and transparency, accountability and cooperative, partnership based approach of public administration, and more specifically of the Bucharest Municipality (General Councilors and General Mayor level) in relation to citizens, company owners, association and civil servants.

The research in Bucharest had two distinct approaches:
1. Documentary analysis of:
    a. Romanian legal texts relevant to the public administration organization and functioning under the democratic requirements (timeframe covered: 1998 – 2009)
    b. Relevant studies covering empirical findings on public participation to policy-making processes in Romania (timeframe covered: 1998 – 2009)
    c. Strategic Reports and Documents issued by the European Commission during Romania's accession to the European Union (timeframe covered: 1998 – 2006)
    d. Reports and studies issued by Bucharest Municipality, relevant to the public participation subject (timeframe covered: 2007 – 2009)
    e. Legal acts of Bucharest Municipality (Decisions of the General Council of Bucharest Municipality), subject to public participation (timeframe covered: 2007 – 2009)
2. Empirical investigation of the public participation in Bucharest Municipality, consisting of:
    a. Nine semi-structured interviews (January – March 2009: 3 with citizens of Bucharest Municipality, 3 with representatives of non-governmental organizations active in the area of promoting democracy at local level and 3 with civil servants active in Bucharest Municipality, in projects related to promoting public participation and private – public partnerships). Participants were asked to describe their opinion on the relationship developed with the Bucharest Municipality and their role in the policy-making process, and to identify (if any) obstacles encountered during their initiatives to participate into

policy-making. Several unsuccessful attempts of contacting three different company owners currently involved in public services delivery were made.

    b.   A quantitative analysis of the views expressed on public participation to policy making. The research was undertaken in February 2007 on 725 persons active in the public administration system; only 101 subjects are relevant however to the case of public participation (based on the items relevant to the participatory practices of local government in Romania)[24]. The questionnaire had a total number of 28 questions, of which relevant to the public participation area were 18; Likert scale was mostly used and participants were generally asked their perception on whether the administrative system is opened, transparent, citizens' friendly, accountable and non-discriminatory in official responses (items of the questionnaire are available).

Due to the different times of analysis applied during the present research, we agreed to present solely the data relevant to the time framework January 2007 – March 2009. In giving notice of the presence of the formal framework for openness, transparency, accountability, partnership and cooperation as guiding principles for the local governments (and Bucharest Municipality implicitly), findings of 2006 were also considered pertinent.

Doing research in Eindhoven

The research aims to list participants´ experiences of participatory projects in Eindhoven, Košice, Ljubljana and Bucharest. The participants were divided into four categories: individual citizens, company owners, professionals of social organisations, civil servants. The research has been organised in an quantitative and qualitative part. The quantitative research consists of an internet survey among 286 respondents, which were participants of participatory projects in 2006 in Eindhoven. The net response was 49 percent (N=133) which is fairly high for this kind of survey[25]. The questionnaire had 36 questions, mostly with Likert scale answers, and consisted of a general part and question which were specific for a category (citizen, employee of social organisation, company, civil servant)[26]. Each category got the same questions, but were asked from their perspective towards the participatory project and their opinion about the roles and performances of other participants. This created the possibility to analyse a general perspective and a specific participant´ perspective.

A qualitative part was added to go in depth for a small selection of participatory projects. We did 8 in-depth interviews among the four categories and investigated the ´stories behind the quantitative data´. We also analysed relevant documents (from Eindhoven government, but also from social organisations and citizens organisations) and analysed literature for the research topic and the research design.

The combination of the quantitative and qualitative design gained a broad and rich picture of participants´ experiences in participatory projects in Eindhoven.

Doing research in Košice

Research on public participation which is presented in this paper was linked only to the first kind of Gramberger's (2001) relationships. The questionnaires involved, besides general questions, a set of 45

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[24] The study consisting in applying the questionnaire was conducted by the Faculty of Public Administration of the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, under the supervision of Professor Lucica Matei in 2007. The subjects of public participation, accountability of public administration, openness and transparency and partnership and cooperation were part of the main deliverables of the study, which aimed at measuring the social perception of the European administrative principles on the public administration system in Romania.

[25] We had 286 e-mail addresses that we collected ourselves and were gathered at Eindhoven local government at social organisations and via our own network in Eindhoven. From 15 respondents we have received a mail delivery failure, so in total 271 respondents have been approached. 173 of these respondents opened the internet survey which means a response of 63,1 percent. However, only 133 persons fully filled it in. This means 133/271 = 49% response. The N consisted of 70 citizens, 29 civil servants, 26 social organisations and 9 companies.

[26] The questionnaire was in Dutch, and is available.

questions, mostly with Likert scale answers. For purpose of this paper, we do present some results which were associated with the following questions:

- Do you use official communal panel in order to receive relevant information?

- Do you use communal newspaper in order to receive relevant information?

- Do you use communal broadcast in order to receive relevant information?

- Do you use communal telecast in order to receive relevant information?

- Do you use official communal web-site in order to receive relevant information?

- Do you take part in the communal board's meetings in order to receive some information?

- Do you meet with your local political representatives in order to receive some information?

The research consists of questionnaires survey among 628 respondents, which come from all city parts of Košice. For purpose of data processing, all those parts were divided into three groups: group of city part with population of less than 2,000 inhabitants (8 city parts); group of city parts with population of 2,000 – 10,000 inhabitants (6 city parts); and group of city parts with population of more than 10,000 inhabitants (8 city parts).

Doing research in Ljubljana

In the case of Slovenia there is systematic lack of any significant research on participative democracy on local (as well as on national) level. Most of the research is normative oriented or is trying to connect participation via institutionalized channels as participation of inhabitants in institutions such as municipal councils and on the lower level in municipal quarters or community councils (formal political bodies on sub-municipal level). In this sense we can mostly talk about institutional- elitist approach to the democracy in Slovenia with only occasionally attempts to understand concepts of participatory and deliberative democracy.