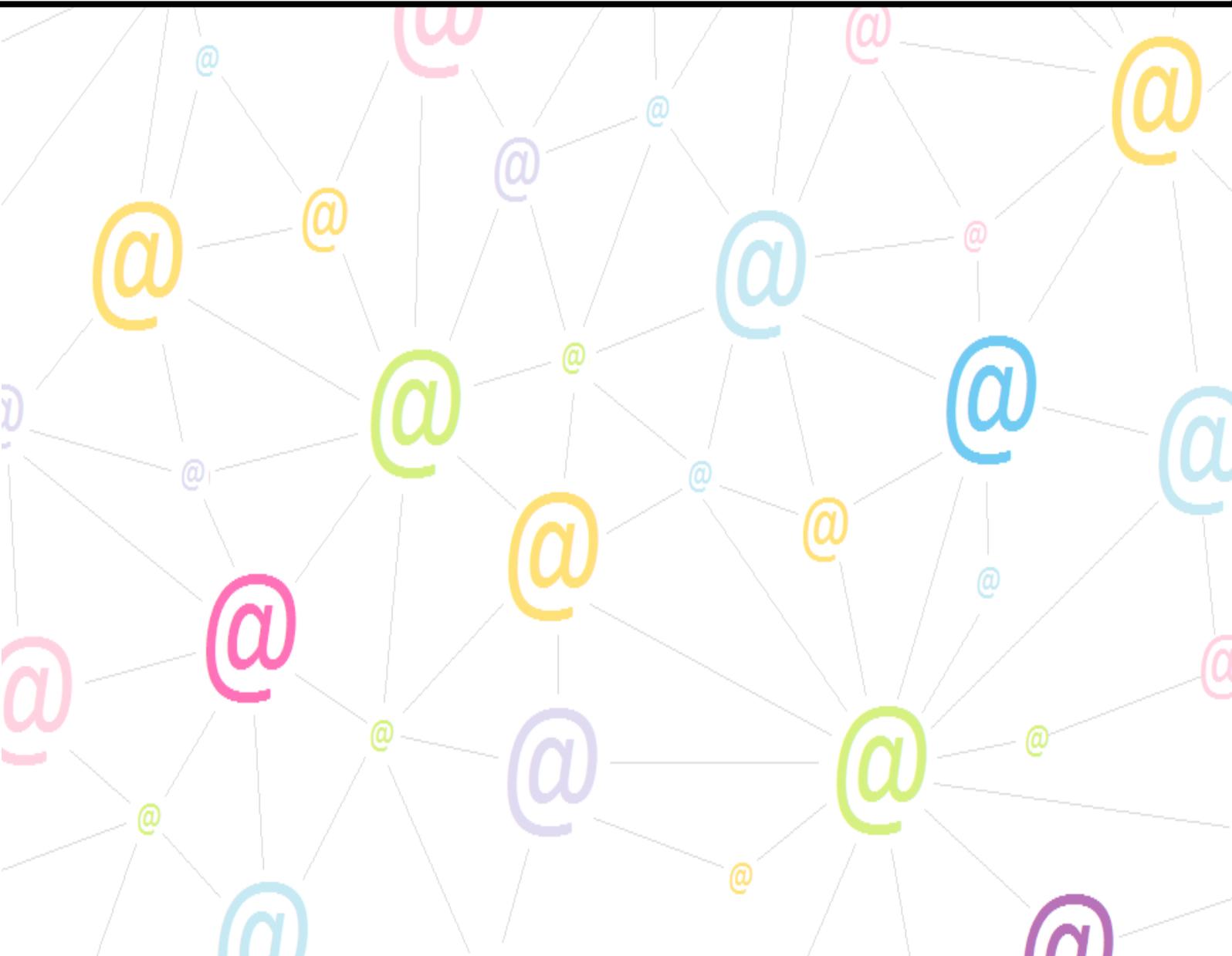




Meaningful eParticipation and Spatial Planning

Participatory Budgeting cases in Germany

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October 2013



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Foreword

This research report is the end result of my master study Real Estate. Prior to this master I finished my Bachelor on Social Geography and Planning. The knowledge I gained along this study path resulted in a special interest for the social aspect of the physical environment we live in. Thereby my interest for the subject e-participation emerged.

I would like to thank Nora Mehnen and my sister Anneke van Kempen for always finding the time and effort to contemplate with me. I also want to thank my mentor Frans Sijtsma for keeping me focussed.

Josje van Kempen
October 2013

Summary

Citizen participation in policy issues has received great attention, especially in Europe, over the last several years because of the changed political context. Interaction between government and citizens (G2C) in democracy is believed to ameliorate the relationship between government and citizens and to produce more citizen-supported decision making on the part of administrators and a better appreciation of the larger community among the public. The incorporation of ICTs in citizen participation (e-participation) is held to have great potential because it provides the prospect to reach wide audiences in an accessible (at any time and from anyplace) format.

Many scholars, planners and politicians today agree that planning should be a process of facilitating community collaboration for consensus-building. Spatial planning on the local scale is portrayed as the most promising arena for meaningful citizen participation. However, to apply meaningful citizen participation it is needed to provide deeper insight in how meaningful participation is arrived at and secondly convert this in e-participation format. The two major purposes of this paper are: (1) contribute to the knowledge and understanding of ‘meaningful’ collaboration between government and citizens on spatial planning issues by means of e-participation, and (2) provide a deeper insight in the possibilities and delimitations of e-participation.

The wide scope of the subject and the explorative nature of this research made it necessary to make a number of demarcations. The most important demarcations are the nature of the case studies. The geographical focus is on the cities Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main which all apply Participatory Budgeting as a form of citizen participation. This is a process of democratic deliberation and decision-making on the allocation of a part of the municipal budget. These projects use e-participation and have the premise to enhance collaboration between citizens and government and of empowering citizens

Following research question was then formulated: ***How is e-participation meaningfully applied - with regard to spatial planning - and how is it implemented in Participatory Budgeting projects in Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main?***

Two important dimensions in the field of citizen participation were identified. These two dimensions- level of citizen power and the physical aspect of citizen participation- can be confronted with each other as shown in figure 1. This determines effectively which role citizen participation plays in a (spatial) planning process. Enhancing ‘possibilities for participation’ and interaction is considered desirable.

Traditional forms of citizen participation are mostly held in fixed places on fixed times, while e-participation gives the possibility of participating ‘anytime, anywhere’. The flexibility and possibilities determine how many barriers citizens experience for participating. This is reflected on the horizontal axe ‘possibilities for participation’.

Commitment is a very important aspect of citizen participation. This commitment is needed from as well politicians and municipal servants as citizens. However, the distribution of power remains a very difficult issue and in practice the level of e-participation is still determined by the elected representatives.

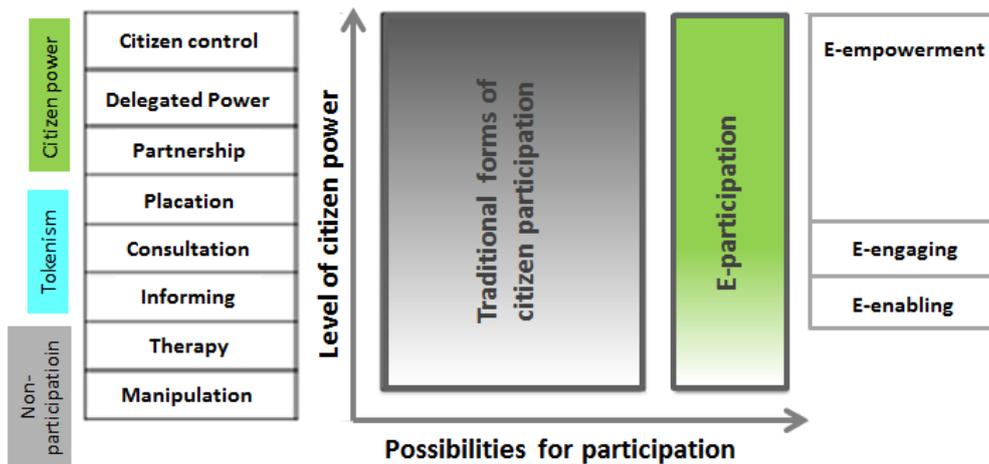


Figure 1. Two dimensions of citizen participation (Own figure, based on Arnsteins participation Ladder (1996) & Ladder of eParticipation by Macintosh (2008).

Currently electronic methods of involving the public in the planning process are often limited in effect and extent by the organisational structures within planning authority. These structures have to change to a more facilitating role in order to create collaboration between municipals and their citizens. To implement these objectives, planners have to acquire not only new skills and professional roles but also develop more usable and effective participation methods, as well as a deeper understanding of the knowledge hidden in the experiences of the participants.

The state of play in Participatory Budgeting projects (in Berlin-Lichtenberg, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main) is that they are currently used for consultation and thus a high level of citizen power is not arrived at. Power distribution to citizens by means of e-participation remains a difficult aspect.

An important aspect of citizen participation is not only the interaction between government and citizens, but also between citizens. Reaching depth in an online discussion to arrive at considered judgement is held to be impossible online. Therefore it is likely that at this point the offline component will remain in some form.

In the literature review a number aspects for meaningful e-participation were identified and this resulted in the following recommendations for municipalities for implementing meaningful e-participation:

- *Commitment to the concept of e-participation and willingness to listen to citizens input.*
- *Inclusion: informing citizens about the possibilities of participating.*
- *Provide Interaction possibilities. This is needed for using and creating social capital and for arriving at contemplated decision making.*
- *Avoiding 'the blackbox'. Provide feedback on citizen's proposals: be transparent and organize the back office.*
- *Avoid a 'voice without influence'. This can be accomplished by distributing some amount of power/influence to citizens in the decision making process. By for example setting a budget.*

Although citizen involvement is becoming more and more common they have not become the 'norm'.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Motivation

The European Commission (2008) stated that many people are losing interest and confidence in the way their countries are governed. Issues of trust, openness and transparency are frequently discussed by scholars and politicians as the public manifests lack of confidence in public servants and politicians (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012).

Public apathy is also evident through decreasing turnout rates at elections, which results in representatives being elected by a minority of the electorate (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012, Parent, Vandebeek, & Gemino, 2005).

Although this also can be explained by concluding that the overall feeling of satisfaction dominates and thus there is a lack of 'necessity' to take the effort of voting and participating, this does not seem to be the case. In contrary, a trend of genuine concern among European citizens about the workings of democracy in their home countries and on the continent is growing (European Commission, 2008; Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012).

It seems that the classical state establishments, political structures and the representative democracy are limited in their capacity to accommodate the growing range of interests, beliefs, problems and solutions that come with the existing differentiated societies as currently existing. This leads to a growing gap between politicians and citizens (Parent, Vandebeek, & Gemino, 2005).

Actively involving citizens by means of citizen participation is considered as a way to tackle these problems of trust, openness and transparency. It is argued that citizen involvement in decision making strengthens public support for policy initiatives (European Commission, 2008; Healey, 1992) and results in better quality and sustainability of policy because it is believed to identify previously unforeseen concerns and to recognize potential conflicts in an early stage (Healey, 1992; OECD, 2001; Potapchuk, 1996).

The incorporation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in citizen participation (called Electronic Participation) represents an area of great promise (European Commission, 2008) in which better relationships between governments and their citizenry can be built. Electronic Participation (e-participation) provides the opportunity to reach wide audiences in an accessible, at any time and from anyplace, format (Macintosh, 2004), as well as in a way that is fast and efficient (Milakovich & Gordon, 2009). Several scholars emphasize that government effort to provide more opportunities for citizen participation and input in policy decision-making is an important strategy for regaining and improving trust in governments (Kweit & Kweit, 2007).

The political locus where citizens are likely to be more directly affected by decisions taken- and hence more inclined to participate- is the immediate local context. Spatial planning has been portrayed as a particular promising arena to enhance participation. This is what citizens understand best, what affects them most, and with which they are most likely to engage in (Boer, 2010; Leidelmeijer, 2009; OECD, 2001; Panopoulou et al., 2009).

Moreover, because spatial planning affects the living conditions of its inhabitants, most countries, at least western democracies, require some kind of citizen participation by law as inter alia stipulated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in 1992 in the Treaty of Aarhus.

According to the European Commission (2008), over the last five years numerous e-participation trials and programmes have been run at national and local levels across Europe- especially in The United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany- gaining thus much experience in the field.

Although e-participation research projects and their results have been previously documented and published (DEMO-net, 2008), there is still insufficient analysis of what meaningful citizen participation entails. It appears collaborative policy-formation, for example in the form of citizen participation, is more frequently used as another tool in the field of process management rather than it is a goal in and of itself for the improvement of democracy (Arend, 2007). Hence, at this point, it is important to gain a comprehensive view on this subject by learning from past knowledge and experience and yet then successfully transfer these findings into good practice.

1.2 Research objective

In western democracy the perception on how to include citizens in the democratic process is changed. ICTs and the internet are playing an increasingly important role for building and improving the relationship between governments and its citizens. The question is which role the Internet and ICTs can play in the context of political, social and cultural change (Albrecht et al. 2008). Governments are using these technologies, but they lack a clear strategy, which can cause results that are not as expected (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2011) and consequently meaningful collaboration is not arrived at.

The overall opinion among many government entities and researchers is that only providing the technological tools for interaction between citizens and their governments through a website constitutes the finishing line in e-participation, yet “simply building a website does not equate to online engagement” (Ferguson, 2006).

An important factor for increasing engagement by means of e-participation is exploring which format works best for both government and citizen. In previously conducted scientific research the focus was on the end product of e-participation. The two major purposes of this paper are: (1) contribute to the knowledge and understanding of ‘meaningful’ collaboration between government and citizens on spatial planning issues by means of e-participation, and (2) provide a deeper insight in the possibilities and delimitations of e-participation.

1.3 Demarcations of the research environment

The wide scope of the subject and the explorative nature of this research make it necessary to make a number of demarcations.

- The first demarcation regards which actors will be studied with respect to the research subject. The concept of e-participation can include citizens, businesses/organizations, and other government entities. In this research the focus is pinpointed on interaction between government and citizens (G2C).
- The second demarcation regards the government level, respectively the municipal level. Numerous reasons underlie this demarcation. First, as mentioned in paragraph 1.1, citizens feel more involved on the local level and are hence more inclined to participate. Second, due to growing decentralization of administrative authority in Western Europe, local governments get more and more responsibilities and control over the policies regarding their own living environment. The impetus for decentralization are enshrined in international treaties (Treaty of Lisbon, Treaty of Nice & Treaty of Amsterdam) where is stated that to

improve democracy it is important to enhance participation by inhabitants regarding decision making. Thirdly, the local level has also been identified as a good developing arena for ICT usage. Due to matters of general costs, innovative approaches are more likely to take place at the local level as it is depicted as a more socially and politically controllable sphere where the costs of implementation- and potential failure- are significantly lower (Karakaya et al., 2003). For these reasons it is assumed e-participation can find a high impact area in which to evolve in and hence the municipal level is most likely to provide interesting cases for the case studies.

- The third demarcation regards the focus on spatial planning. The Council of Europe (2012) defines this as follows: *"Regional spatial planning gives geographical expression to the economic, social, cultural and ecological policies of society. It is at the same time a scientific discipline, an administrative technique and a policy developed as an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach directed towards a balanced regional development and the physical organisation of space according to an overall strategy"*.
The European Regional Spatial Planning Charter (1983) adopted by the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning identified among key objectives and activities, the promotion of public participation. In Appendix number 4, Recommendation No. R (84) 2 is named: *"Any regional/spatial planning policy, at whatever level, must be based on active citizen participation. It is essential that the citizen be informed clearly and in a comprehensive way at all stages of the planning process and in the framework of institutional structures and procedures"*.
The local level (municipal level) is the tier of public administration holding most of the legal competences to act in the spatial planning domain (Concilio & Molinari, 2011).
- The fourth demarcation concerns the geographical location of the case studies. In Western Europe one of the leading countries in the field of citizen participation is Germany and thus this research will focus on municipalities in this country.
The research of Conroy & Evans-Cowley (2005) suggests a positive correlation between the size of a population of a city and the availability of online tools for citizen participation. The five biggest cities in Germany are Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne and Frankfurt am Main. It was not possible to get in contact with a representative of the city of Munich. Therefore the other four cities will be object of study. In figure 2 they are displayed (see arrows, Koln is German for Cologne).

1.4 Research question

The introduction and demarcations lead to the following central research question:

How is e-participation meaningfully applied - with regard to spatial planning - and how is it implemented in Participatory Budgeting projects in Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main?

Following sub-questions support the central research question:

1. *What is meaningful citizen participation with regard to spatial planning?*
2. *What is e-participation with regard to spatial planning?*
3. *What is Participatory Budgeting?*
4. *How is e-participation applied in Participatory Budgeting projects with regard to spatial planning in the cities Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt?*

1.5 Research methodology

To answer the research question a combination of desk research and interviews has been adopted. This is displayed in a schematic overview in figure 3 and will be further expounded in this paragraph.

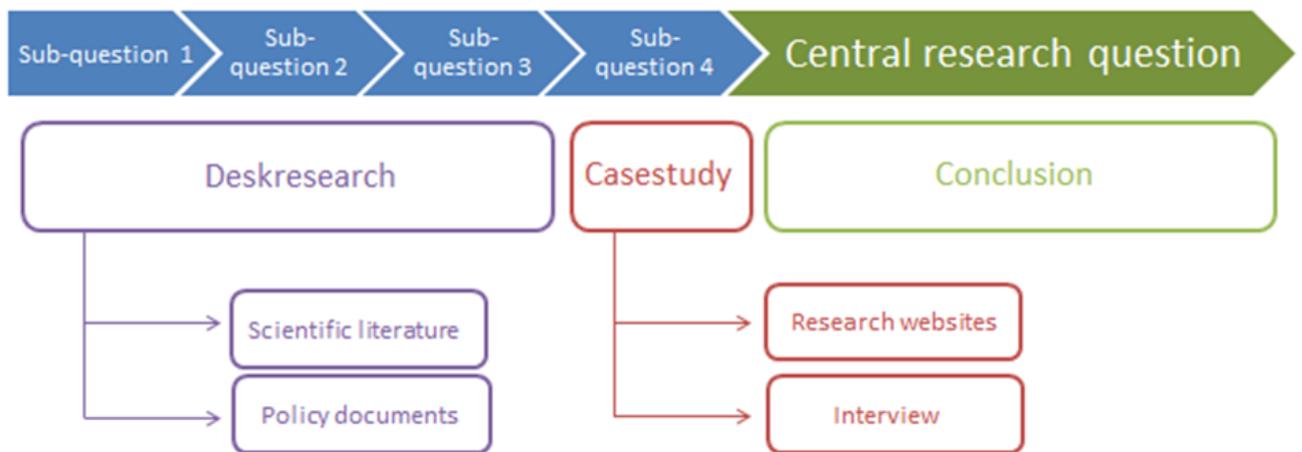


Figure 3. Schematic overview Research Methodology

Desk research

The most important phase in this research is desk research (secondary research). The field of e-participation is still in its infancy with a growing number of e-participation projects being documented and published. The prospects for the use of e-participation in municipalities seem to be promising but the status quo indicates there is a lack of clear strategy and knowledge among stakeholders regarding the subject (Arend, 2007; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2011).

In recently published literature the focus is on analysing the results of e-participation cases and conclusions were moreover unique for every case. In this research, by conducting an in-depth literature review it is wished to achieve more general conclusion and recommendations.

Henceforward, this comprehensive view can be a guideline for municipalities for improving or

incorporate e-participation in their policy.

An important challenge in this literature review is looking past the euphoria that appears to dominate this discussion and therefore a large scale literature review is necessary.

The desk research involved gathering data from many different sources in order to provide this comprehensive view on the subject. The used sources encompassed academic journals and publications, online publications, websites and policy documents.

The sources are mostly available via websites and are found using the search engines Google Scholar and the online catalogue of the Library of University of Groningen, The Netherlands.

The key terms used are; citizen participation and e-participation (in English, German and in Dutch).

These key terms were combined with terms as; e-government, e-democracy, participation ladder, citizen-power, governance, eGovernance, quality of life, social capital, participatory democracy and social cohesion (also in English, German and in Dutch).

Case studies

The focus of this research is on the literature review. These congregated findings will be connected to practice by conducting four case studies. The results of the literature findings were per finding objectively documented per case and listed in a table. Secondly these objective results were examined for any patterns or meaningful logic that corresponds or contrasts with the found literature findings. Although, the case studies entail only a small part of this research they may play an important role because these findings can give more (or less) legitimacy and additional insights to the results as found in the literature review.

Information on the case studies was gathered through examining the websites of the Bürgerhaushalt projects. To fully access all the information on the websites it was necessary to create an online profile. Therefore it was necessary to create four fake profiles with an existing address in the city centres. With these profiles it was possible to obtain access to the full online formats as provided on the municipal website for these e-participation projects. A targeted research was possible on these websites due to the literature review findings.

To check this information and in order to obtain additional information, interviews were conducted. The municipalities were e-mailed with the request for an interview with an expert on the online tools applied in the Bürgerhaushalt project of their city. As a result an interview with one public servant and one expert in the field of developing e-participation tools was conducted. The aim was conducting more interviews (at least one for every case) but unfortunately this was not possible because of the language barrier. The government officials could not speak English and the researcher could not speak German well enough.

The interviews had an open structure based on a guideline developed in advance (see Appendix). The gathered objective information on the cases was firstly discussed. Then the interviewees were asked to elaborate on their own role in the project; their opinion on power distribution and collaboration with citizens; and their vision of the future of e-participation.

On June 15th (2013) the interview with Joachim Geiger, public servant of Frankfurt am Main took place. The second interview was conducted on the 16th of August with Hans Hagendorn (DEMOS-Deutschland) who is an expert in the field of developing e-participation tools. He amongst others was involved with developing the online tools for the cities Hamburg, Berlin and Cologne.

In the period between the interviews and the end date of the focus of this report (September 2013) there was additional phone and e-mail contact with the interviewees and Lila Langert, public servant in Berlin-Lichtenberg.

1.6 Theoretical concept

A careful well-thought selection of cases is a crucial element of case studies. Previously it is explained why the biggest cities in Germany are object of study. Also the demarcation has been made that offline participation methods, and eAdministration tools will be left out. Further specifying which media elements are included is necessary. Therefore it is important to provide a theoretical concept to provide more insight in what determines meaningful participation between governments and citizens.

Participation Ladder

Arnstein (1996) wrote an article that had great influence in the discussion of citizen participation. She argued that there is a critical difference between ‘the empty ritual of participation’ and actually having ‘real power’ in the process. She captured this fundamental point in ‘The ladder of participation’. This ‘ladder’ shows a difference between one-way and two-way participation. One-way is ‘*non-participation*’ (giving information by the government) and ‘*citizen-power*’ (power to the citizens) with stages of two-sided participation in between. This point of view is widely accepted and used in the discussion of citizen participation. This concept will be discussed in depth in chapter 3. Consultation, Placation, Partnership and Delegated Power are steps on the ladder where a two-sided interaction between government and citizens takes place. When only on-way participation is attained (thus the government giving information to its citizens) no form of citizen participation is retrieved: *non-participation*. In this research therefore only two-sided participation is considered (electronic) citizen participation. For this reason only participation tools that allow this interaction between government and citizens will be evaluated.

1.7 Reading guide

This report consists of six chapters. Chapter one (this chapter) gives an introduction of the subject and explicates the scope of the research. In chapter 2 –*Citizen Participation and Spatial Planning*- and chapter 3 –*Meaningful Citizen Participation*- the first sub question “*What is meaningful citizen participation with regard to spatial planning*” is answered. eParticipation is a tool for applying citizen participation and for this reason citizen participation is firstly approached in general.

The second sub question “*What is e-participation with regard to spatial planning*” is covered in chapter 3. The title of this chapter is *eParticipation in Spatial Planning*. In this part of the report e-participation is linked with citizen participation.

In chapter 5 the case studies are introduced and evaluated by answering sub question 3 “*What is Participatory Budgeting?*” and sub question 4 “*How is e-participation applied in Participatory Budgeting projects with regard to spatial planning in the cities Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt*”.

In the final chapter the conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research are given. This report is completed with a short paragraph that contains a concluding remark.

Chapter 2 - Citizen Participation in Spatial Planning

The reason for implementing citizen participation in general is briefly discussed in the introduction. In this chapter this will be discussed in more detail. Also, its place in spatial planning will be explored.

2.1 Citizen participation

A frequently used definition is given by Verba et al. (1995). They define citizen participation as any voluntary action by citizens more or less directly aimed at influencing the management of collective affairs and public decision-making.

This paper chooses to use the definition provided by The Institute for Public and Politics (IPP) in the Netherlands (which is now called ProDemos). Translating their definition into English gives the following:

Citizen Participation is a type of policymaking in which citizens are involved, directly or indirectly, with policy-development,-implementation and –evaluation (Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek, 2006).

The two major differences in the definition is that IPP defines citizen participation firstly as a policy form and secondly by naming the different decision making moments in which citizen participation can take place.

Although the definition given by Verba et al. does incorporate an important aspect, namely it is a voluntary action by citizens (whilst democracy is voluntary), The Institute for Public and Politics in the Netherlands recognizes that the legal and political framework for enabling citizen participation is provided by the government and is therefore a policy form (and not only by choice of the citizens).

Political context

The etymological roots of democracy suggest that citizens retain power in a certain district and therefore all democracies are participatory (Adegboye, 2013). Liberal theories promote the idea that this citizenship is a status and that this status entitles individuals to a specific set of collective rights which need to be established by the state. The central notion to this thought is that citizens act 'rationally' to gain in their own interests and the role of the government is to protect citizens in the exercise of these rights (Oldfield, 1990). The actual exercise of these rights is seen as citizens own choice, on the assumption that they have the resources and opportunities to do so (Isin & Wood, 1999). This proclaims that to be a citizen in the legal and sociological sense it means you have to be enabled to (Lister, 1997).

While these rights to participate are fundamental to liberal thought, these participation rights were mainly seen as rights to vote, to exercise free speech and to form associations (such as parties). Emphasizing on inclusive participation as the very foundation of democratic practice, these liberal views propose a more active notion of citizenship as one which acknowledges the agency of citizens as 'makers and shapers' rather than as 'users and choosers' (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000).

With more involved forms of citizen participation a shift is made towards participatory democracy: citizens as 'makers and shapers'. Participatory democracy is a form of democracy in which the citizen has a significant influence over decision-making. Thus decisions are hereby not only left to elected representatives as is the case in a parliamentary democracy. The incentive for this approach is establishing higher equality of and between citizens and it emphasizes participation of citizens on the subject of for example environment issues and the operation of political systems. A participatory democracy strives for higher inclusion levels by creating opportunities for all citizens to make meaningful contributions to decision-making, and by expanding the range of citizens who have access to these participation opportunities. However, as a result so much information must be gathered for the

overall decision-making processes the danger for an information overload occurs. Technology is believed to provide the solution for managing this information and leading to the type of empowerment needed for participatory models (Elster, 1998).

This shift in the method of governing in the planning process can be formulated as the shift from 'governing' to 'governance'. In governing the local government acts primarily according to the legal authority that is formulated by the national government level. In governance, the government works together with other governments, private/social organizations and citizens and has more legislation to do so (Spit & Zoete, 2005).

Perceived benefits

The concept of citizen participation in its political context was defined in detail in the previous section, but why does our society need to have citizen participation? Which benefits are there to be expected? Advocates in favour of citizen participation -thus the shift towards a more participatory democracy- argue that citizen involvement in democracy will produce more citizen-supported decision making on the part of administrators and a better appreciation of the larger community among the public (Healey, 1992; OECD, 2001; Potapchuk, 1996). Some scholars argue improved citizen participation could halt the deterioration of public trust and hostility toward the government (Kweit & Kweit, 2007). Participation research provides ample evidence that when citizens are involved in the planning process they are more likely to be supportive of the development and implementation of linked policies and projects (Edelenbos, 2000; Potapchuk, 1996).

Thomas (1995) argues citizen involvement is intended to produce better decisions, and thus result in more efficiency benefits to the rest of society. More effective opportunities for participation in political procedures are possible so that more "fit for purpose" decisions are arrived at. These "fit for purpose" decisions are believed to improve the livability and quality of life (Leidelmeijer, 2012).

Quality of life

In the last thirty-five years quality of life as a central societal goal has guided national policy in western Europe. The concept of quality of life substituted the idea of wealth as the central goal of societal development (Berger-Schmitt & Noll, 2000; Leidelmeijer, 2012). The wide-ranging and multidimensional concept of quality of life enlarged and gave a more normative character to the perspective on societal development. Not only economic aspects are relevant, but also social and ecological concerns became important. In this day and age, the concept of quality of life is the most prominently used approach for considering the living conditions and wellbeing in a society. To benefit society as a whole (the collective) it is believed that there has to be attention to the individual (Berger-Schmitt & Noll, 2000; Leidelmeijer, 2012; Schnabel, 2000). This changing view on society is related to the on-going trend of growing independence and individualisation of society (Berger-Schmitt & Noll, 2000; Schnabel, 2004).

Empowerment

Participation is often brought in relation with the concept of 'empowerment'. Empowerment is, as stated by the World Bank, "*the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes*". Central in this process are actions which build both individual and collective assets.

Two dimensions

Thus, according to the concept of empowerment, the benefits of citizen participation have two dimensions. The Dutch institution for Societal Development (Raad voor Maatschappelijke

Ontwikkeling), (RMO, 2006; RMO, 2007) links these two dimensions in their studies on citizen participation to emotional and economical assets. These emotional and economical assets for the

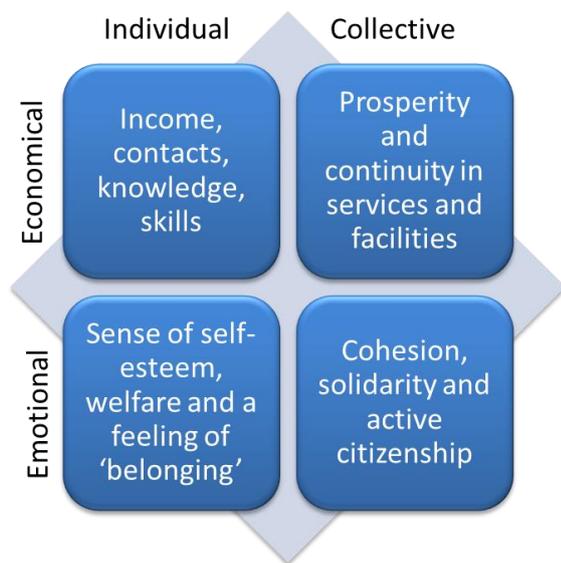


Figure 4. Benefits citizen participation (Own figure, based on RMO report 2006/2007)

collective are believed to emerge when attention is paid to the individual. Only then as a result four types of benefits can be defined as shown in Figure 4.

Emotional benefits

The overarching goal of citizen participation for the collective is creating interaction between individuals which is believed to result in cohesion, solidarity and active citizenship. Social cohesion as defined by Schnabel (2000) is the degree to which people express their commitment to social relationships in their private lives, as citizens in society and also as a member of society. This illustrates the wide scope of the concept. Roughly it can be stated that the concept refers to the internal unity of a social system such as a group, an organization or a society. (Berger-

Schmitt, 2000). Social cohesion is also believed to relate to individual benefits. The Hart (2002) connects social cohesion with; (1) feeling of belonging, (2) sense of identification and (3) feelings of solidarity.

Striking is that especially in the policy literature an intrinsically positive value is assigned to the concept. The thought that thereby persistently recurs is that 'social cohesion' and 'solidarity' distinguishes a successful neighbourhood apart from a less successful neighbourhood inter alia due to higher levels of social control and a bigger social network (Leidelmeijer, 2012).

However, these benefits may be selective beneficial for individuals. Social exclusion is believed to root in the malfunction of societal institutions and thus resulting only in benefits for the socially included (selective beneficial) (Putnam, 1995). Social inclusion is thus an important aspect to consider when discussing cohesion.

The UNDP Human Development Report 2000 argues that '*the fulfilment of human rights requires democracy that is inclusive*' (p. 7). For this, elections are not enough. New ways must be found to '*secure economic, social and cultural rights for the most deprived and to ensure participation in decision making*' (UNDP, 2000).

Economic benefits

Social capital does not have a clear, undisputed definition. However, the premise behind the notion of social capital seems to have the same core, namely that investment in social relations and networks have expected productive benefits (Dolfsma & Dannreuther 2003). By means of connecting with each other, knowledge and skills can be combined or exchanged and this has the premise to build on the creation or expanding of social networks (Dekker & Uslaner, 2001). Although different social sciences emphasize different aspects of social capital and social networks, they tend to share the core notion "that social networks have value" (Berger-Schmitt, 2000). This interaction and building on social relations is believed to (besides emotional benefits) also result in economic benefits for society (Berger-Schmitt, 2000; RMO, 2006; RMO, 2007).

2.2 Place in spatial planning

Because of the changed political context, as discussed earlier, a different view on governing is emerged in which citizen participation plays an important role.

Political locus

Ideological differences about citizen participation and debates over its place in governing are related conceptually to the discussion in European and American politics about the decentralization of administrative authority (Panopoulou et al. 2009). Citizen participation is an application of the decentralist principle, which grants value in allocating decision-making authority to broader numbers of affected actors. This view implicates more focus on the individual and relates to the trend of independence and individualisation of western society as discussed earlier. The concept of quality of life and also self-discovery has become important. A reason for this is amongst others because citizens are better educated and have access to more information (Dalton, 2004). There is “*an ever increasing technology-savvy and demanding citizenry*” (European Commission, 2007) and as a result citizens are more demanding and more assertive.

Decentralization as a mode of operation permits wider participation by affected actors because it gives a greater assurance that the existing spectrum of opinion will receive a hearing because it gives the opportunity to lend more legitimacy to the process and the outcomes of these local decisions (Milakovich & Gordon, 2009). Research has shown that citizens feel they are more personally involved and have a greater expectation about the effect of their participation in their own municipality (European Commission, 2007). When citizens have the feeling and confidence their voice will be heard, they are expected to feel more “*compelled to engage in civic activity*” (Fraser & Dutta, 2008). In Western Europe this concept of decentralization of administrative authority seems to be accepted and this slowly results in a shift to more responsibilities and control over the policies regarding the own living environment for local governments. The impetus for decentralization are enshrined in international treaties (Treaty of Lisbon, Treaty of Nice & Treaty of Amsterdam) (Dalakiouridou et al., 2008), where is stated that to improve democracy it is important to enhance participation by inhabitants regarding decision making in spatial planning of their own living environment.

2.3 Discussion

The trend of independence and individualisation of western society has influenced the democratic political views. To benefit society as a whole it is believed that there must be attention for the individual. Building social relations and actively involving citizens by means of citizen participation is believed to achieve this objective and this investment in social has expected returns. The returns expected for politicians are ‘free’ use of knowledge in society and more fit for purpose results. Another benefit from building on social relations is the premise of social cohesion and solidarity among citizens, which should result in better neighbourhoods. An important aspect of citizen participation is therefore not only the interaction between government and citizens, but also the interaction between citizens.

An important aspect to be alert to is the contradiction that lies within the premise of incorporating citizen participation in planning. From political point of view it is promoted as a way to include citizens in planning processes and build on social cohesion. In scientific literature there is also a downside recognized, namely that social exclusion is believed to root in the malfunction of societal institutions. It is therefore important for policy makers to pay attention to this aspect.

Chapter 3 - Meaningful citizen participation

In this chapter the context in which meaningful participation can be achieved is explored and discussed.

3.1 Commitment

As Hoberg et al. (2013) state, the most important resource for participation is commitment. This commitment is needed from participants (the citizens), who give their time in return for a noticeable improvement in decisions that affect them; commitment from decision-makers, who invest time and public money and expect to see positive results; and from politicians, who invest political capital and need to be convinced that they can achieve more (than they would have otherwise been able to) by supporting participation projects.

While commitment from citizens is an important factor for meaningful participation it is important to know if citizens have the desire for this interaction. This desire is therefore a relevant topic of research for many governments. The Dutch government conducted a research in 2007 in which 891 citizens participated. 50% of the participants answered 'yes' to the question if they were interested in participating in spatial planning issues (Burger@Overheid.nl, 2007). This indicates there is a substantial amount of citizens that have a desire for citizen participation in these subjects.

Recent citizen responses of public protest as seen in Germany for example also illustrate and support the view that participation is demanded from citizens. The protest labelled as "Stuttgart21" was against changing the railway station in the city Stuttgart from a terminus station into a passing through station. The protest took place online and offline. On 11 October 2008, approximately 4,000 citizens of Stuttgart demonstrated against the demolition of the Hauptbahnhof's north wing. In 2009 these demonstrations were held weekly. Eventually the biggest protest took place on 1 October 2010, with an estimated 100,000 people taking part. These protests were for a long time taken too lightly and it is believed that as a consequence, the Christian Democrats lost the elections (Rolf Luehrs & John Heaven, 2012).

Interestingly, the majority of the citizens of Stuttgart voted in favour of changing the function of the railway station when it was put to a referendum by the new elected party. Rolf Luehrs & John Heaven (2012) and others suggests that the main obstacle was not the project itself but the fact that people wanted to be involved in the decision process.

This interpretation can be backed up by the current discussion about building high-voltage power lines which are required to connect renewable energy sources to consumers. This is needed as a consequence of the Government's decision to shut down atomic power plants (Rolf Luehrs & John Heaven, 2012). A representative survey conducted in 2012 by Putz & Partner commissioned by the city of Stuttgart, showed that the vast majority of the citizens generally agree that these measures are required (79%) and would even tolerate power lines in sight of their own house (82%). At the same time, more than half of the respondents said that moderated participatory processes should be conducted prior to the decision, and 30% demanded referendums.

Although this clearly illustrates the desire for participation, this does not seem to result in high participation levels in every case. It is possible that there is a distinction between having a general desire to participate and following this up with actual active participation. At this point the main reason for this can be identified. Citizens often have the impression that the aggregation of results

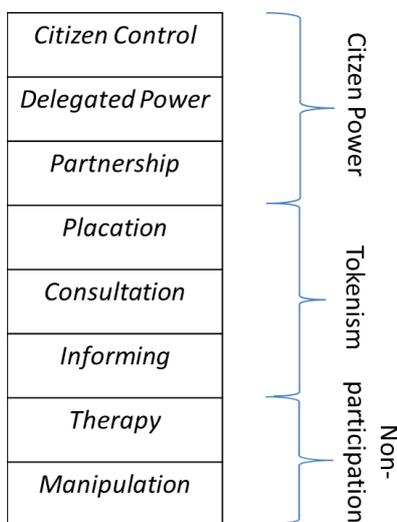
takes place within a ‘black box’; in other words, that the procedure for arriving at the results is opaque (Hoberg et al. 2013) and it is a “voice without influence” (Gaventa, 2002). As the public becomes less deferential, and new means of two-way electronic communication evolve, citizens want more direct exchange with their representatives. They demand to be heard by politicians and need opportunities to converse with them because they want to be understood by them and to understand them. Coleman (2005) states a great part of this current dissatisfaction with our political system can be traced back to its failure to supply this sort of understanding.

In this context it can be argued that municipal governments should improve their strategies and facilitate interaction, participation and collaboration plus that the input from the citizens is used and feedback is given.

3.2 Defining citizens power in participation

To be meaningful, amongst others Cornwall and Gaventa (2000) claim participation and institutional accountability must become grounded in a conception of rights which, in a development context, strengthens the status of citizens from that of beneficiaries of development to its rightful and legitimate claimants.

Sherry Arnstein developed an influential typology in her article published in 1969 “A Ladder of Citizen Participation”, in which the role of citizen participation by means of rights and legitimacy is discussed. This remains perhaps the most cited work in the literature on participatory democracy. In her article Arnstein defined the concept by stating it is the redistribution of power that enables citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in



the future. From her point of view, citizen participation must be classified with reference to the level of influence citizens get in the process of decision making. According to Arnstein there are eight types that can be represented in a ladder (Figure 5) in which;

1 **Manipulation** and 2 **Therapy** both characterize non participation. So in these cases there is no participation and the aim in the process of decision making is only to ‘educate’ the ‘participants’ on the proposed plan with as goal to achieve public support.

3 **Informing** is the transition from non-participation to tokenism. The main emphasis is on one way information (from government to citizens) and there is no channel for feedback.

4 **Consultation** represents tokenism: neighbourhood meetings and public enquiries are held, but there is no power given to the citizens in the policy-process.

5 **Placation** represents tokenism. It allows citizens to advice or plan a proposal but it retains the power for the power holder to

judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the proposal.

6 **Partnership** is the first step in citizen power. The power redistributed is through negotiation between citizens and power holders and the planning and decision-making responsibilities are shared.

7 **Delegated power** characterizes citizen power. In this case citizens have a majority of the votes on committees and are able to make decisions.

8 **Citizen Control** represents full citizen power (Arnstein, 1969).

Figure 5. Arnsteins Participation Ladder (1969)

Arnsteins classification in the distribution of power is proven tenable. During time several organisations have described citizen participation and the redistribution of power that relate to the participation ladder as described by Arnstein. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2001) for example describes a classification of the process of citizen involvement in decision making with focus on the level as described by Arnstein as Tokenism. OECD identifies three levels of participation (Figure 6). The highest form of citizen participation in this classification is *active participation*. This is a much less extreme form compared to Arnsteins highest level of citizen participation. It is more similar with the step placation in Arnsteins ladder. Active participation entails a partnership between citizens and governments but retains government responsibility for final decisions.

Active participation	<i>an advanced two-way mechanism where citizens and governments are partners in policy formulation, retaining government responsibility for final decisions</i>
Consultation	<i>a limited two-way relationship in which citizens provide feedback on issues defined by the government</i>
Information	<i>a one-way relationship between citizens and government, in which government delivers information to citizens</i>



Figure 6. OECD (2001) Participation Ladder

In 2007 the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) also defined citizen participation in three levels (Figure 7), but in this classification the highest level, ‘empowerment’, is a broad level and corresponds with the three highest levels in Arnsteins ladder of participation; *Partnership, delegated power and Full citizen power*. ‘Collaboration’ corresponds with placation on Arnsteins ladder and ‘involvement’ with consultation.

Empowerment	<i>Corresponds to placing final decision-making in the hands of the public</i>
Collaboration	<i>represents government partnering with citizens in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution</i>
Involvement	<i>the process of working directly with the public to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered</i>



Figure 7. IAP2 (2006) Participation Ladder

Arnsteins ladder provides a classification of citizen participation by making a distinction in amount of power for the citizen. The classifications of OECD and IAP2 support the structure of the ladder. However, Arnstein goes further in her analyses of her ladder. According to her, institutions that offer citizen control are more desirable than those that provide only consultation. This claim is not supported by amongst others OECD and IAP.

3.3 Distribution of power

There may indeed be contexts in which citizen control is desirable, but there are others imaginable in which for example a consultative role for citizens is more appropriate than full “citizen control”. Although it is noted that everyone should be capable of making judgments about a particular problem, it is recognised that for example differences in age, background, education, profession, etc. require different levels of information, communication and interface complexity if effective and meaningful interaction is to be achieved (Fishkin, 1999).

Also, citizens have an incentive for ‘rational ignorance’ – that is, although they participate they have an incentive to remain ignorant about certain issue because the time and energy of educating and informing themselves about the topic outweigh the benefits of doing so. While it is believed that for many public issues a substantive background knowledge is needed this is defined as a weakness for citizen participation (Fishkin; 1999).

This aspect is smartly captured in the ‘Deliberative Polling’ experiment. As a polling method, the Deliberative Poll sought to account for the preferences and opinions of citizens both before and after they had an opportunity to arrive at considered judgements based on information and exposure to the views of other citizens. This experiment resulted in differences in outcome and thus indicates these factors have influence on decision-making (Fishkin; 1999).

In analysing the results of various Deliberative Polling experiments, Fishkin argues that ‘ideal conditions’ have to be created by government institutions to which citizens have access to. Important is the provision of balanced background information of the subject and that it is possible to account for the different opinions of other effected stakeholders..

Although this concept seems true in a theoretical sense there are obstacles and problems in practice. The use of participatory policy-forming opens the decision-making process to citizens and gives them more power to contribute yet in practise this appears so far an intrusion. The public official generally becomes defensive despite their acceptance of the presence of the existing “gap” between citizens and politicians and its need to be reduced (Arend, 2007). In order to adapt to this intrusion the role of the government and their public officials need to change towards a more facilitating role. They need process management skills that help to accept and use this new input from citizens (Bruijn, et al., 2003).

3.4 Discussion

As it seems, individualisation has resulted in citizens being more outspoken about their desires. This leads to unique challenges in every case that require “fit for purpose” decisions. To a great extent, this knowledge about these unique challenges lies with the citizens. Additionally, it seems citizens desire to be involved in decision-making and creating fit for purpose decisions. Recent citizen responses of public protest, as seen in Germany for example, illustrate and support the view that participation is demanded from citizens on spatial planning issues. In this respect, it can be stated that decision makers cannot neglect citizen participation in these decisions.

While increasingly ‘participation’ is promoted as a right, there is little conceptualisation on what this implies: Who is eligible for rights and on what basis are they obtained? Are these individual rights, collective rights, rights to participate on the basis of particular interests, identities or maybe subjects? These questions need to be answered when talking about which distribution of power is appropriate in

which situation. For example, if decisions are made on the local scale about a railway station are they linked to only citizens living in the district, or do they extend beyond it? It is imaginable that, for example, commuters have a meaningful opinion, and maybe even have 'the right' to have a voice in the decision-making process.

Another lesson learned in Stuttgart was the moment at which citizens were involved in the process. The main reason for the protest was the fact that the plans were already made, and citizens could exert no influence on the plan.

For meaningful participation it is key that the rights of citizens are defined so it is clear what effect their input will be in each and every participation project.

The most important resource for meaningful citizen participation is commitment from the government as well as the citizens. The government should create the ideal conditions for citizens to participate. The context is most likely to be successful on the local scale and on matters which affect citizen's daily lives. Spatial planning and development is therefore a promising arena. Another precondition for commitment for participation by citizens is transparency by means of communication and feedback to avoid the 'blackbox'.

Making citizen participation work requires informed and active citizens who understand how to voice their interests. They need knowledge to make decisions about policy choices along with the skills to voice their concerns, act collectively and hold public officials responsible. They also need to have the desire to exercise their rights, and most importantly; they need the political space to do so.

There can be concluded that a readiness on the part of both citizens and government institutions is necessary for successful citizen participation. This entails a responsibility for both parties. This responsibility lies for the municipality in providing information to the public regarding the possibilities and topics of participating. Also the framework in which they present the possibilities is important. For citizens this responsibility lies in informing themselves before participating. This readiness is related to commitment, as discussed in this chapter.

Although the benefits of participation are recognized, as discussed in chapter two, the problem of trusting participants with this responsibility seems to be a barrier for the distribution of power to citizens by politicians. This concern is based on the acknowledgement that differences in age, background, education, profession and the phenomena of "rational ignorance" have influence on decision-making of citizens. Therefore aspects as finance and the interest of the collective are possibly ignored in shaping their opinions.

Concluding, it can be said that the participation ladder Arnstein designed is a helpful tool. Arnstein proposed that 'citizen control' is the most desirable but as discussed previous this view is not shared and is thus far seemingly out of reach in practice. Reasons as citizen ignorance, differences in backgrounds of the participants and low participation levels (which has influence on the representativeness of the outcomes) are aspects that need to be addressed but are expected to be difficult subjects because of their normative nature.

Chapter 4 - eParticipation in spatial planning

In the previous chapter the context of meaningful citizen participation is defined. The way this is physically organised determines the role it can play and is therefore key in citizen participation. It determines who may, can and will participate. eParticipation is a tool for applying citizen participation and has great promise of enriching the process and possibilities of citizen participation in spatial planning.

4.1 ICTs and internet

The European Commission (2008) stated that many people are losing interest and confidence in the way their countries are being governed. Involving a large number of citizens in decision making is believed to regain support, interest and confidence among citizens.

Traditional participation venues such as public meetings can be inefficient and ineffective because they are held in a fixed location and at a fixed time. Here, the citizen experiences barriers to participate because it requires time and effort.

These methods of participation result in only a few people attending these meetings. Mostly those who choose to participate are as a group frequently dismissed as unrepresentative of the society. Citizens who are better educated tend to participate in policy formation than those who lack these advantages. Public meetings also tend to draw those who have special interests in the subjects on the agenda as well as citizens with stronger views in general (Fiorina, 1999).

ICTs and internet

Over recent years the internet has become a popular medium for carrying out all kinds of commercial, social and governmental activities. Arguably the internet has encroached upon and become a part of society very rapidly and can therefore not be ignored.

The empowering capability of internet is believed to be centred on the ability to permit previously marginalized individuals and groups- who would otherwise be silent and invisible- to be heard and seen. By doing so, the internet reveals the diversity in society, and range of opinions that was hitherto without voice in politics (Milakovich, 2010).

Toffler (1984) argued that the use of internet relaxes the time and geographic constraints to participate and as a result of this, direct democracy becomes feasible. Robbins et al., (2008) also acknowledge this benefit by stating “*it provides flexibility of engaging in the program whenever citizens want to revisit the website to see on going forums and posting their ideas under their time control*” (p. 564).

Smith (1995) considers the characteristics of democracy before examining how the internet can contribute to this. She names accordingly the following conditions of a democracy: responsibility for those whom grant power and responsibility, participation by citizens in politics, possibilities for access to information, opportunities for collective discussion and debate and a framework of freedom, equality and civil liberties. She then identifies the unique features of the internet that can potentially support this. These specific features are *volume and speed of information, user control, narrow casting* (as opposed to broadcasting), *decentralised nature* and *interactivity*. She states that each of these feature have the premise to contribute to a more democratic society. The interactive nature of the internet enables contribution from the user instead of only broadcasting data in a one-way matter. Thus the medium has the prospective to broaden and also deepen political participation by enabling citizens to connect with one another and with their civil servants.

Using Internet and Information- and Communication Technology (ICTs) for governing is called eGovernance. eGovernance is defined by The United Nations (2005) as “*The employment of the Internet and the world-wide-web for delivering government information and services to the citizens with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective*”. It is a way of using ICTs to support democratic processes and institutions in law making, jurisdiction and administration, and is therefore a way of enhancing and aiding democracy itself (Edelmann & Parycek, 2009).

As discussed in chapter 1 and chapter 2, the political context is changed and is using more electronic methods with the aim to improve democracy. Firstly, as also discussed in chapter one, eAdministration was the main policy goal. In the European Union i2010 initiative the goal is set to a shift to electronic democracy, in which e-participation plays an important role. In figure 8 the role of e-participation in eDemocracy is visually displayed.

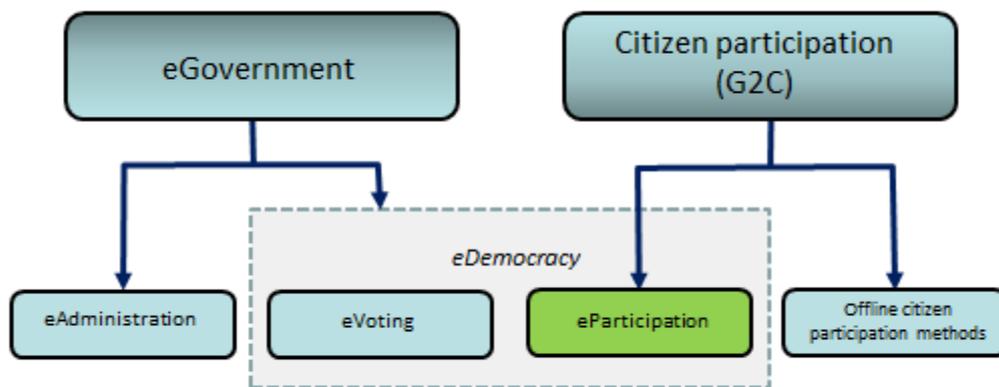


Figure 8. Own figure: political context

4.2 eParticipation

The use of internet and ICTs for citizen participation is termed electronic-participation (e-participation). It is argued that the relationships between government and citizen can become closer and more frequent with the use of information and communication technologies. This is because ICTs produce a higher level of possibilities to do so.

These benefits and possibilities provided with e-participation are referred to by Smith and Dalakiouridou (2009) as (1) service effectiveness and efficiency, (2) decision-making quality and legitimacy, (3) active citizenship, (4) reduced transaction and coordination costs in social and political relationships, (5) greater deliberativeness due to the qualities of the medium, and (6) enhanced information-processing capacity.

Facilitating e-participation through municipal websites provides a great opportunity for the internet generation to avoid traditional channels like town hall meetings and participate (EuroSpace, 2009). For example the working population can participate more easily via the internet as it is independent of time and place as mentioned earlier. But the medium also lowers the barriers-to-entry because of its relative anonymity and lack of social pressure (EuroSpace, 2009). Yet on the other hand, the steadily increasing influence of ICT means that disadvantaged people can get excluded in terms of e-participation (European Commission, 2008).

The objective to introduce and improve e-participation is supported by the European Union's (EU) i2010 initiative, in which the goal is set to produce better decision-making processes and greater participation of citizens in all phases of decision-making. In previous years the focus was on the spread of ICT infrastructure and broadband connections, providing information to citizens and transferring offline services into online transaction services in the form of eAdministration. Government entities are generally becoming familiarized to implementing and maintaining these aspects, but the deeper elements of e-participation are still in their early stages (Albrecht, 2008). Yet it is not sufficient to simply focus on administrative efficiency, as "*being citizens of an information society means not only being able to access the services of a more efficient public administration...but also being offered a new way of taking part in public life*" (EuroSpace, 2009).

Power distribution

As discussed citizen participation can be classified in levels of citizen power. Based on the OECD's participation levels, Macintosh (2008) proposed three levels of *e-participation*: *e-enabling*, *e-engaging* and *e-empowerment* that correspond to information, consultation and active participation on the OECD ladder. E-enabling is characterized by giving support to those who would not typically access the internet helping them to take advantage of the large amount of information available and addressing the aspects of accessibility and understanding of information. E-engaging refers to enabling deep contributions and supporting deliberative debate on policy issues through consulting a wide audience. Lastly, e-empowerment is concerned with citizens' active participation and influence on policy formulation.

Meaningful e-participation

Today there is high agreement in the research community that citizens' and governments attitudes and behaviour cannot be changed simply by presenting new technical tools in existing policy processes and cultures. In a report for the Council of Europe, Lawrence Pratchett recaps this position: "*New technologies, in whatever form, are socially and politically neutral devices and have no inevitable consequences for democracy, participation or political engagement. However, the way in which such technologies are used and the purposes to which they are put can have radical consequences for the practice of democracy. The design of particular tools and their association with existing democratic practices (and other aspects of governance) shapes their value and impact, as does the way in which citizens and intermediary bodies (such as the news media, political parties and so on) adopt and use the technologies*" (Pratchett 2006, p3.).

Important for meaningful e-participation is a clear procedure, in which it is agreed at the start what will happen with the results. This necessitates reworking the cacophony of individual voices and opinions into one condensed result. As seriously as online discourses may be intended, participants often perceive them as opaque black boxes whereby it is difficult to know how the results will be processed. This type of discourse is often dismissed as political window-dressing. Low numbers of participants can be interpreted as an indication of this scepticism. There appears to be a large uncertainty amongst potential participants as to whether taking part is worthwhile (Hohberg et al., 2013).

Possible downsides and limitations

The internet has the potential to reach a large amount of the population. Therefore the internet as a medium for citizen participation seems desirable, but notes have to be made.

A possible downside of e-participation was given by Elshitain (1987). He believed that the critical

element of democracy is the process of deliberation and claimed that, if electronic voting or participation is overused, the democratic process will be replaced by mechanic button selection. It is recognized that 'informing' and 'deliberating' on political topics are necessary for contemplated decision making. This reasoning seems logical and therefore this is an important aspect to be considered. The risk and magnitude of citizen-ignorance, as discussed in chapter 3, will possibly be greater in effect on the internet.

Another downside is that internet possibly generates self-selection. As a result these discourses are frequently dismissed as unrepresentative of the population. The questions of who participates in e-participation projects and on what grounds determine much of the legitimacy for e-participation projects. Fung elaborates on this issue, as he argues that *the possibility for public participation strengthening the capability of democratic governance* "[...] depends in large measure on who participates: Are they appropriately representative of the relevant population or the general public? Are important interests or perspectives excluded? Do they possess the information and competence to make good judgments and decisions? Are participants responsive and accountable to those who do not participate?" (Fung 2006, p.67).

Karlsson (2012) states that the democratic legitimacy of e-participation processes relies on a participant recruitment process that eliminates the existing inequalities of new information and communication technologies known as the 'digital divide'. An entirely legitimate participation process can, as he states, only be assured if e-participation processes are capable to include inexperienced or citizens in the process.

He stresses that whilst the most used open self-selection recruitment strategy offers the potential of high participation levels and political parity, it also creates opportunities for dominance by specific interests and groups. Strategies of randomized or selective recruitment do provide opportunities for compensating for such asymmetries but in its place creates risks of biases.

Karlsson (2012) concludes in his research analysis that both randomized and open self-selected recruitment can create situations where a specific interest or ideological perspective becomes dominant. His test case does not conclude with the answer for the best recruitment method in e-participation processes, and neither with any reason to believe that any panacea for participant recruitment for e-participation processes exists. He concludes that each case is unique and therefore it is necessary to evaluate this issue thoroughly.

Limitations for enhancing possibilities for participation may also be of other natures. Possibly the finance or expertise for implementing ICTs is a problem. How well multi-level systems can be engineered depends very much on the complexity of the problem to which they are addressing in combination with the ICT expertise present. Currently, methods of involving the public in the planning process are often limited in effect and extent by the organisational structures within planning authority (Forester, 1999).

4.3 Discussion

Thus far, the research has shown citizen participation can be classified with reference to two important factors, namely the level of citizen participation, and the physical way participation is organised. The level of participation is determined by the power that is distributed to citizens in the process, as discussed in chapter 3. The way this is physically organized has influence on who can, may and will participate. eParticipation is believed to have the features to include more people in decision-making processes.

eParticipation initiatives improve citizens access to information and public services and should promote participation in public decision-making. The definition of the concept suggests that use of ICTs gives greater opportunity for consultation and dialogue between government and citizens and has the potential to reach a wide range of citizens. By this means advances in ICTs promise a much more substantial implementation of democratic ideals.

Thus, the benefits that participation gains with the introduction of ICTs seem unquestionable, as it enables both government and citizens with the necessary tools to interact with each other. This growing range of possibilities has great promise to narrow the gap between politicians and citizens and resolve issues of trust and transparency in decision making. Hence, while introduction of ICTs in politics itself is not questionable, to which extent power should be distributed through the use of ICTs is. At this point politicians decide to which extent e-empowerment is implemented. Their motives for implementing e-participation (or even citizen participation in general) are often based on their views and the existing organisational structure. These views are for example based on the acknowledgment of the increased risk of citizen-ignorance and self-selection. This is believed to have a negative influence on contemplated decision-making and on the representativeness of the results.

Chapter 5 - The case studies: Participatory Budgeting

The cases that are object of study use Participatory Budgeting as a type of citizen participation.

Therefore, Participatory Budgeting will be discussed first in this chapter.

Secondly the case studies are discussed. While new technologies are in itself socially and politically neutral devices, as described in chapter 4, it is possible to use these technologies in a way to achieve political and social goals, such as meaningful e-participation. eParticipation tools used for spatial planning in the cities Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt in Participatory Budgeting projects are benchmarked (compared) in this chapter.

5.1 Defining Participatory Budgeting (PB)

Participatory budgeting allows citizens of a geographical area to participate in the allocation of part of the local Council's or other statutory agency's (for example health services or the police) available financial resources. *This means engaging residents and community groups representative of all parts of the community to discuss and vote on spending priorities, make spending proposals, and vote on them, as well as giving local people a role in the scrutiny and monitoring of the process and results to inform subsequent Participatory Budgeting decisions. Participatory Budgeting aims to increase transparency, accountability, understanding and social inclusion in local government affairs* (definition retrieved from www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk, 2013). Participatory Budgeting can apply to a varying amount of the local Council's budget and the actual process is developed to suit local circumstances.

Added to the normative claim that Participatory Budgeting gives citizens the opportunity to participate in decisions that directly affect them, it is expected that citizens as end-users of public services are the most suited ones to identify public demands and hence citizen participation in Participatory Budgeting should naturally lead to a better allocation of budgetary resources (Berner, 2001). Key public policy decisions are made during the budgeting process, so this would appear to be an important opportunity for meaningful citizen participation. The participation takes place in an early stage and that can give more power and meaning to their input.

Critics

Observations include that particular groups are less likely to participate once their demands have been met and that slow progress of the process of Participatory Budgeting can frustrate participants (Berner, 2001).

5.2 Case study

In this paragraph the cases will be discussed. As mentioned in chapter 1 the Bürgerhaushalt projects in Berlin-Lichtenberg, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main are selected as object of study.

Introducing the cases

Firstly, the cases are introduced by providing general information (table 1) and discussing the processes used for citizen participation in these cases. The focus will remain on the online element.

Table 1: Description of the cases	Berlin-Lichtenberg	Cologne (2010)	Hamburg (2009)	Frankfurt am Main (2013)
Surface area	52,29 km ²	405.2 km ²	755 km ²	248.3 km ²
Inhabitants	258.586 (Source: data.un.org)	1.017 million (Source: data.un.org)	1.799 million (Source: data.un.org)	691.518 (Source: data.un.org)
Offline element	Town hall meeting	No offline element	Town hall meeting	Town hall meeting
Online tools used*	-Interactive map (GIS based technology) (fig.9&10) -Forum	-Forum (fig. 12)	-Forum (fig 13) -Chat	-Forum (fig. 14) -Chat
Start and end project	-Start project 2006. -Online submitting of proposals is an on-going process. Possible any time.	-Start project 2008 -Online submitting of proposals possible in the five weeks prior to the Bürgerhaushalt meeting (town hall meeting). Every 2 years.	-Realised twice: 2006 and 2009 -Online submitting of proposals possible in the four weeks prior to the Bürgerhaushalt meeting (town hall meeting).	-Realised twice. -Online submitting of proposals possible in the four weeks prior to the Bürgerhaushalt meeting (town hall meeting). Every two years.
Subjects under discussion	Subjects of place based nature.	"School / Buildings" and- "Environment issues"	-All themes, categorised by naming the topic on the forum.	All themes, categorised by topic
% of the total budget used for participation	6% of the total districts budget	2,6% of the total municipal budget	No set budget	No set budget
Registered users for online tools 24/09/2013	3160	3953	635	4099

*Not all tools are available online at this moment due to the fact the Participatory Budgeting project is not of on-going nature in every case

Difference in scope: There is a difference in scope between the selected cases. In the case of Berlin-Lichtenberg it entails only a district of the city Berlin. In the other three cases it involves the city as a whole. Thus, subjects that concern the whole city are not discussed in the Berlin-Lichtenberg case. This naturally leads to a demarcation in subjects.

Online and offline elements: Cologne is the only case in which there is no offline element included in the process. The online proposals are directly send to the municipal board for final decision making. In the other three cases the proposals made online are discussed in a town hall meeting and hereafter send to the municipal board for final decision making.

The used online tools are:

- *Interactive map (GIS based): An interactive map is an application where information such as notices and landmarks are shown on a digital map of an area. Users can interact in some form with these maps, such as placing their own items, reacting to others, or selecting different types of information to view.*
- *Forum: This is an online discussion website, which can be open or closed to the general public, where users can either posts new topics for discussion or reply to other people's posts.*
- *Chat: Chatting is an online media form where users can send each other text messages in a live environment or through an application such as MSN Messenger. Such chat sessions can be many-to-many or a one-on-one conversation (Boon,2010).*

In the case of **Berlin-Lichtenberg** they provide an interactive map in combination with a forum. This format enables people to make proposals on space based nature. In this format you can post your proposal by following a few steps that entail choosing the exact geographical location, explaining the problem or proposal, providing pictures and finally provide your contact details.

As a result it provides an orderly view of all proposals that have been made: the exact location is given and pictures are provided with each proposal (Figure 9 & 10). Citizens can find proposals on this interactive map by clicking on this map. They can give comments on these proposals. This is an on-going process and proposals and comments may be omitted any time anywhere.

On the **Cologne** website they provide a forum. For omitting a proposal you have to choose between 'ausgabe vorschlag' (spending proposals) or 'sparvorschlag' (saving proposal), describe your proposals and finally give details on the district regarding the proposal (figure 12). Citizens can give comments and vote in favour or against these proposals.

It is necessary to register on the website in order to participate. The possibility to participate is provided in a delimited period of time, prior to the Participatory Budgeting town hall meeting.

On the website of **Hamburg** two interactive tools are provided: Firstly, a tool is provided to make your own investment plan for the city. However, this tool is excluded in this research because this does not facilitate any interaction possibilities. Secondly, they provide a forum and chat. In this forum you can discuss certain topics with other citizens and experts working for the municipality of Hamburg. The chats are arranged live and regard a certain topic set by the municipal. Each chat session was set on a certain day.

These possibilities were provided in a delimited period of time, prior to the Participatory Budgeting town hall meeting.

On the website of **Frankfurt am Main** they provide the same format as in Cologne. You choose between a spending and a saving proposal, give a description and provide details on the geographic location of the proposal. Other citizens can give comments and vote in favour or against these proposals.

These possibilities were provided in a delimited period of time, prior to the Participatory Budgeting town hall meeting.

Critic on the used format as in **Berlin** is given by J. Geiger (Frankfurt am Main) (interview, 2013.): providing this format (interactive map) shuts down the possibility of an open discussion. Therefore, only limited subjects can be discussed. Thus, however this interactive map provides a framework for pitching proposals and deliberating on them regarding spatial planning, this does not provide the possibility to deliberate and discuss other topics.

Critic on formats used in **Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main** by H. Hagedorn (interview, 2013) is that it is more difficult to implement proposals when the nature of the discussion is open.

The interactive map as used in the Berlin-Lichtenberg case are specified by Hagedorn (interview, 2013) as an interesting tool for spatial planning issues because amongst others it is very user friendly. In scientific literature these Web-based GIS services are branded as having great potential to become established information frameworks for city authorities, urban planners and 'untrained' persons because it facilitates collaboration by providing interactive and dynamic visual tools. Visualization is promoted and proven (in scientific literature) to be an effective way to deliver knowledge. Maps provide a visual format about the deeper understandings of the living environment. In this respect, maps can be used in the analysis process, and not only as end-products (Wood, 1992).

GIS should not only be seen as a container of maps in digital form, but also as a supporter of spatial decision-making (Nedovic-Budic, 2000), a facilitator of spatial thinking throughout the whole process of decision-making (Pavlovskaya, 2005) and, in addition, a tool for revealing what is otherwise invisible in geographic information (Kwan, 2000; Pavlovskaya, 2005). By allowing citizens to share localized experiential knowledge (Manzo, 2003) social spatial patterns become visible. The place-based nature of spatial planning encourages the adaptation of GIS techniques, and is also a tool that makes it possible to connect with the end-users, namely the inhabitants (Nedovic-Budic, 2000). When transferring these new information techniques to urban planning practice, it is important to realise that planners are struggling with a huge amount of information. Because urban and spatial

planning is graphical by its very nature visualization is believed to play an important role in this challenging task. The role of mapping has changed from the end-product to a tool that is actively used in all phases of spatial planning to make gathered information visible when processed in the right manner.

The success and influence the GIS approach can have in the planning processes is subjected to the willingness and commitment of planners and decision-makers to use this new produced experiential knowledge (Kahila & Kytta, 2006). Thus, organising the gathered information as well as the user friendliness for participants can be of high quality and use when used in the right manner.

Subjects under discussion: In the case of Berlin-Lichtenberg a natural demarcation of subjects is made due to the fact it only involves a district of the city.

In Cologne they decided to set the discussion subjects. The subjects concerned "School / Buildings" and- "Environment issues". In both these cases (Berlin-Lichtenberg and Cologne) they set a budget in beforehand.

In the other two cities all subjects -thus the whole municipal budget- could be discussed.

Registered users: To participate online it is in all cases necessary to register. This is possible on the municipal website. You must provide e-mail, name and address. In all cases this address must be an address within the city (in the Berlin-Lichtenberg case it has to be an address in the city of Berlin). However, in all cases it is possible to view all proposals and comments of the registered participants without registration.

In all cases citizens are approached in more or less the same way to participate: via a folder in the mail and announcements on the municipal website. In the case of Frankfurt they also broadcasted a short promotion film on the local television net.

The amount of registered users can be called low compared to the total inhabitants of the district. With 3160 online participants in Berlin-Lichtenberg (1,3% of the total population), 3953 online participants in Cologne (0,4% of the total population), 635 online participants in Hamburg (0,4% of the total population) and 4099 online participants in Frankfurt am Main (0,6% of the total population).

Although this amount seems low, these projects are relatively new with e-participation and have a growing number of participants (interview, Hagedorn 2013) (except in Hamburg, this amount lowered and will be discussed further in this chapter).



Figure 9. Website Berlin-Lichtenberg

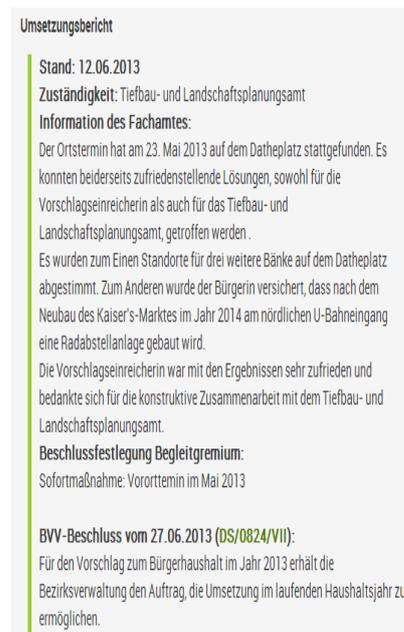


Figure 11. Website Berlin-Lichtenberg

Foren-Übersicht

- Hauptforum**
Neue Beiträge: 0
Beiträge Gesamt: 278
- Diskussion mit Wolfgang Rose (ver.di / SPD)**
Neue Beiträge: 0
Beiträge Gesamt: 37
- Leistungen & Projekte**
Neue Beiträge: 0
Beiträge Gesamt: 18
- Mögliche Einsparungen**
Neue Beiträge: 0
Beiträge Gesamt: 223
- Begründungsforum**
Neue Beiträge: 0
Beiträge Gesamt: 1286
- Livediskussion Bildung**
Neue Beiträge: 0
Beiträge Gesamt: 41
- Expertenforum**
Neue Beiträge: 0
Beiträge Gesamt: 47
- Lob & Kritik**
Neue Beiträge: 0



Figure 9. Website Berlin-Lichtenberg

B-650 Vorschlag B-650 von schriftlich eingegangen, 29. Januar - 9:51

Kein Umbau Hauptstr. Porz

Dieser Vorschlag wurde schriftlich von Herrn Hartje eingereicht und von der Redaktion eingegeben:

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- 1 Kommentare
- Sparvorschlag
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Abstimmung

16 Pro-Stimmen

2 Contra-Stimmen

Figure 13. Website Hamburg

Figure 12. Website Cologne

Bildung, Gesundheit und Soziales

Ausgabevorschlag 1 Kommentare 22 Bewertungen

10.02.2013 - 22:01 | Vorschlag Nr. B1193 von Bruecke71 (Bürger) | via [Internet](#) @

Öffentliches Spielgelände/Aufwertung Kleines Zentrum

Anstelle des verwahten Platzes vor dem GHR 77 (Niederursel/Nordweststadt) sollte schnellstmöglich ein öffentliches Spielgelände eingerichtet werden, auch und vor allem, um für die 80-100 Kinder, die in den Einrichtungen des Kleinen Einkaufszentrums untergebracht sind, Spiel- und Auslaufmöglichkeiten anzubieten. Darüber hinaus sollte eine kinderfreundliche Neugestaltung des Innenbereiches des Kleinen Einkaufszentrums, wie sie vom Quartiersmanagement und den Anliegern des Kleinen Zentrums angestrebt wird, ermöglicht werden.

Vorschlag bewerten
Um die Vorschläge zu bewerten, loggen Sie sich bitte ein.

Figure 14. Website Frankfurt am Main

Literature findings- Description per case

In the previous paragraph a general description of the cases is given. In the literature review in the previous chapters there are various important aspects for meaningful e-participation identified. These aspects will be used to benchmark (compare) the selected cases. These literature findings concern:

- Interaction possibilities for using and creating social capital and for arriving at contemplated decision making.
- Avoiding ‘the blackbox’ for participants by providing feedback on their proposals.
- Avoiding a ‘voice without influence’ by distributing some amount of power.

The information on the cases regarding these aspects (mentioned above) is retrieved by conducting research on the municipal websites. The information gathered was then discussed with the interviewees as mentioned in the paragraph ‘Research Method’ in the first chapter. This resulted in Table. 2.

Discussing the findings (Table 2)

Interaction: the tools (for this case study) were only selected if they provide an interaction possibility. The tools all provide the possibility to interact with the government and with citizens (as described in table 2).

A difference is noted in the accessibility of the online tools. In the cases Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main the tools are only accessible in the weeks prior to the budget meeting. In Berlin-Lichtenberg this is an on-going process. Each proposal on the website of Berlin-Lichtenberg which is provided with argumentation is send to the organisation or department concerning this topic. These organisations can be citizen committees or even companies that may be responsible. They decide if it gets implemented or not. If the proposal is not implemented by the companies or committees they will be discussed in the budget meeting that is held once a year.

Feedback: Hagendas mentioned in the interview (2013) that the method used in the first **Hamburg** Participatory Budgeting projects provoked a lot of criticism, mainly due to the fact that the selection of cases was never published. During the second Participatory Budgeting project in 2009 some of the local media questioned the value of the participatory budgeting, because of the comparatively few political consequences of the first one which, for the participant, had resulted in the ‘feeling of a voice without influence’ and ‘the black box’. He suggests this might be the reason that the number of participants decreased drastically in 2009.

In all cases government officials interacted with citizens on the forums (also in the case of Hamburg). However, the difference is mainly found in the documentation of the selection and feedback on why and which proposals are or will be implemented.

Berlin-Lichtenberg, Cologne and Hamburg provide an online documentation on this subject and these can be found on their website.

In the case of Berlin-Lichtenberg this documentation is also visible through the interactive map (GIS based) as discussed earlier (green, orange and red give an overview of all the implemented and not implemented cases).

Table 2: Benchmarking the cases	Berlin-Lichtenberg	Cologne	Hamburg	Frankfurt am Main
Interaction	-Submitting a proposals (of place-based nature) -Reacting on proposals (Any time anywhere (on-going process)).	-Submitting a proposal. -Reacting on proposals and voting on proposals. (All possible in the five weeks prior to the Participatory Budgeting meeting).	-Starting a discussion - Reacting on discussions. -Reacting on proposals done by professionals (municipal servants who have the subject in their portfolio). -‘Chatting’ live with professionals on a certain subject. (All possible in the four weeks prior to the Participatory Budgeting meeting).	- Submitting a proposal or starting a discussion -Reacting on submitted proposals and voting on proposals. -‘Chatting’ live with professionals (municipal servants who have the subject in their portfolio) on a certain subject (All possible in the four weeks prior to the Participatory Budgeting meeting).
Feedback	The submitter of the proposal is contacted by phone or e-mail. The progress is documented in each stage in a banner under the proposal (fig. 11). The colours red, orange and green on the interactive map show this progress in a simplified way, for everybody to see (fig. 10). The colour green means ‘implemented’, orange ‘under consideration’ and red ‘not implemented’.	The status on each proposal is updated every six months online.	-No feedback is given on which proposals on the forum are implemented or considered. -In the chat feedback is directly given by professionals. However, feedback on if and which input is used or implemented is not given.	Online publication on all the proposals that are (partially) implemented (every two years).
Implemented proposals*	In the period 2010 until 02/09/2013 a total of 397 proposals were submitted online. 12,4% are implemented, 69,4% are still under consideration and 18,2% were rejected.	1.254 proposals were submitted online. The 100 proposals with the most votes were set to be discussed in the budgetary meeting. In this meeting they decided to implement more proposals, namely 392. Thus, 31, 3% of the submitted proposals were implemented.	Information unavailable	1.269 proposals were submitted online. The 100 proposals with the most votes were discussed in the budgetary meeting. 3 proposals were implemented. Thus, a total of 0, 8% of the online proposals were implemented. 3% of the 100 forwarded proposals were implemented.
Citizen Power	E-enabling/Placation	E-enabling/Placation	E-enabling/Placation	E-enabling/ Placation

* It has to be mentioned that there are some major differences in scope between the cases. In Berlin only the district Lichtenberg uses Participatory Budgeting. In the other three cases it regards the whole city. For that reason the results in this section are calculated in percentages and hence better comparable.

Citizen power: In Berlin-Lichtenberg each proposal provided with argumentation is sent to the organisation or department concerning this topic. These organisations can be citizen committees or even companies that may be responsible. Then, it gets implemented or send back.

Thus, another institution decides if a proposal gets implemented (although this sometimes can be a citizen committee, this does not happen online). The definition of Placation is: * *It represents tokenism. It allows citizens to advise or plan but retaining for power holder the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice.* Therefore, categorized as E-enabling/Placation

In Cologne the first 100 proposals with the most votes were promised to be discussed in the Participatory Budgeting meeting. In this meeting the council decides. (Eventually they decided to implement even more proposals) (see definition *). Therefore, this case is categorized as E-enabling/Placation.

In Hamburg there is no clear procedure on which and how proposals get discussed. However, the municipality enables citizen to make proposals by providing the tools and it is clear that power holders (the city council) decide (see definition *). Therefore, categorized as e-enabling /Placation

In Frankfurt am Main the first 100 proposals with the most votes were discussed by 100 randomly selected citizens of the city. They decide which proposals are further elaborated. The final decision lies with the government (see definition *). Therefore, this case is categorized as E-enabling/Placation.

The projects are all categorized, in this research, on the 'Participation Ladder' as Placation/ e-enabling. However, when evaluating the likability a proposal will be implemented differences are revealed. In Cologne 31,3% of the proposals were implemented in the Participatory Budgeting project in 2010. In Berlin-Lichtenberg in the period 2010 up until 02/09/2013 12,4% was implemented and still 69,4% is under consideration. These are substantial higher scores then in Frankfurt with 0,08% and in Hamburg where there is no record on which proposals were considered.

These differences show there is difference in likelihood a proposal will be implemented and therewith is a 'voice with influence' between the cases. There could be several reasons underlying this difference. As discussed in the literature findings it could be that Berlin-Lichtenberg and Cologne are more committed to the concept of e-participation compared to the other two cases and are therefore more willing to implement proposals made by citizens. This conclusion is hard to make based on the available information. However, when analysing the cases the most striking difference between the cases is found in the way the projects are composed and this is likely to be of influence on the likelihood a proposals is implemented. This makes the procedure more clear and therefore more 'easy' to implement. Hans Hagedas endorses this in the interview (interview, 2013).

For example, in the city Cologne the most proposals where implemented (compared to the other cases). A reason for this could be because the topics were set ("School / Buildings" and- "Environment issues") and there was a set budget. In Berlin-Lichtenberg a reason for higher implementation levels could also be because of the set nature of the topics. Hagedas (interview, 2013) added: "*The on-going nature of this approach results in high level interaction between government and citizen*". "*It works really well and a lot of proposals get implemented due to the well-organized back office.*" The other two cities promote a more open discussion which is indicated by Hagedorn (interview, 2013) as difficult to implement, mainly due to the high risk of a black box.

However, Geiger (interview, 2013) revealed that the council of Frankfurt am Main has decided to change their approach in the nearby future. Their plan is changing the Participatory Budgeting process online to an on-going process (more similar to Berlin-Lichtenberg).

5.3 Discussion

The premise of Participatory Budgeting is enhancing democratic value and empowering citizens. Participatory Budgeting is originally designed as an instrument of direct democracy with a binding decision of the citizenry. However, the state of play (in Berlin-Lichtenberg, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main) is different. More likely the process is used for consultation and thus a high level of citizen power is not arrived at. The citizens are given opportunity to have their say but it is up to the elected representatives to finally decide about the proposals.

When considering all aspects identified in previous chapters it becomes clear that distributing power to citizens is a difficult aspect, amongst others because in-depth deliberation is considered important but impossible online. It is also questionable if citizens even want this kind of citizen power. However, it can be stated that e-participation without distributing some amount of power or influence to citizens results in a 'voice without influence' and thus not in meaningful participation.

Discussing these cases suggest that there are a few aspects that determine the level of 'citizen power' in these cases. These aspects could increase the 'likelihood' a proposal was implemented and concerned the scope of the subjects discussed, a set budget and the organization of the back office. In many cases only selected parts of the public budget are under consideration, in others the entire budget is subject to citizen participation. Interestingly the scope seems to depend on the chosen approach: When the entire budget is under consideration, the opinions and preferences of the citizens are unlikely to be implemented as is the case in Frankfurt am Main and Hamburg.

What can be concluded is that government officials are more willing to implement spatial planning proposals (on small scale) and hence this indicates this topic can be deliberated on meaningful at this point. This gives the process some kind of legitimacy because the key actors support and accept the process and the outcome.

Most topics discussed by citizens on the Participatory Budgeting forums are related to spatial planning. In Hamburg for example, 89% of the discussed topics were concerning city development (buildings, environment issues, traffic, development projects, schools etc.) (Lührs, 2009). This indicates investment in e-participation tools that facilitate interaction on these themes is useful.

On a forum of the website pep.net.eu Loeffler (Governance International) stated the following on the topic of Participatory Budgeting in 2012: *"The time has come to get real. Effective co-commissioning of public services requires the use of customer insight techniques. But it does not gain from using 'catch-all' internet platforms, where we ask general questions to everybody, rather than the right questions to the right people. Spatial and urban planning is a theme that by great means concerns our citizens We have now got sophisticated marketing and internet tools which allow us to have our dialogue with the people who want to talk to us, around things they care about, in ways they find interesting. Let's use them"*.

One of the most crucial questions is how to analyse and present the experiential knowledge in planning practice in sufficiently digestible ways. If this task does not succeed, the experiential dimensions are unlikely to become embedded in design and planning practice. The most important aspect for meaningful e-participation is having a structured back office for giving feedback on the proposals regarding implementation of the proposals.

The user friendliness of an online tool such as GIS does not entail that that it is used in a fancy way, for example by making 3D maps. Keeping the format simple has the potential to be more users friendly and easier for categorizing all the output. The process in which the information is gathered and distributed throughout the departments is of big importance for avoiding the black box (interview, Hans Hagedorn, 2013).

Chapter 6 – Conclusion and Recommendations

The objective of this research is contributing to the knowledge and understanding on spatial planning issues by means of e-participation with reference to case studies in Participatory Budgeting projects in Germany and providing deeper insight in the possibilities and delimitations of meaningful e-participation.

Two important dimensions in the field of citizen participation were identified. These two dimensions- level of citizen power and the physical aspect of citizen participation- can be confronted with each other as shown in figure 15. This determines effectively which role citizen participation plays in a (spatial) planning process.

The trend of independence and individualisation of western society has influenced the democratic political views. To benefit society as a whole it is believed that there must be attention for the individual by means of inclusion and empowerment. Individualisation has resulted in citizens being more outspoken about their desires and they want to be informed and involved regarding decision-making of their own living environment. This leads to unique challenges in every case that require “fit for purpose” decisions. To a great extent, it is believed that this knowledge about these unique challenges lies with the citizens. Enhancing ‘possibilities for participation’ in municipalities is therefore considered as desirable.

Traditional forms of citizen participation are mostly held in fixed places on fixed times, while e-participation gives the possibility of participating ‘anytime, anywhere’. The flexibility and possibilities to interact determine how many barriers citizens experience for participating. This is reflected on the horizontal axe ‘possibilities for participation’.

Besides this quantitative aspect of e-participation it is also believed that e-participation has the potential to inform citizens better regarding participation projects. Therefore this axe also has a qualitative dimension.

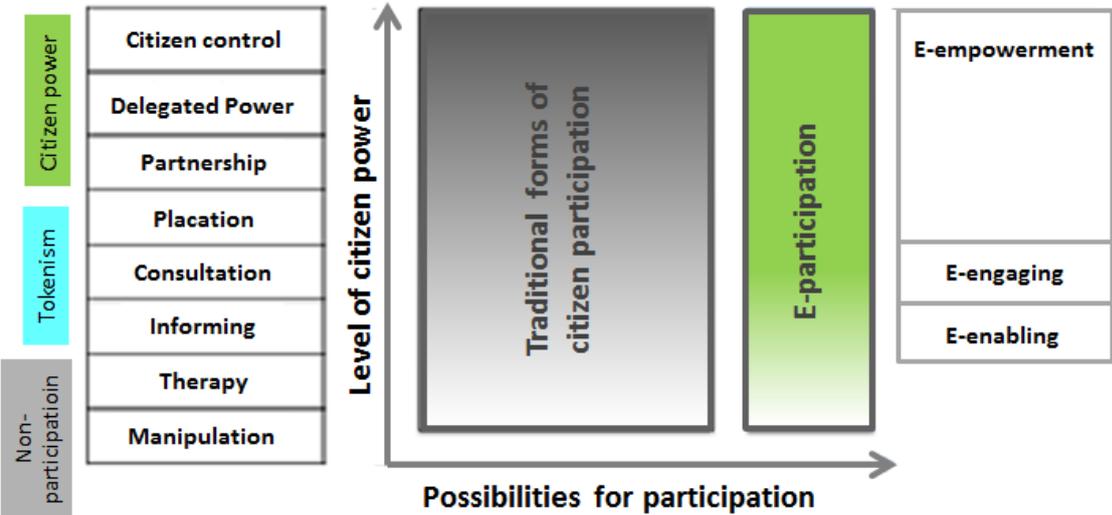


Figure 15. Two dimensions of citizen participation (Own figure, based on Arnsteins participation Ladder (1996) & Ladder of eParticipation by Macintosh (2008)).

Although municipalities are using ICTs and internet for citizen participation and many useful services are already developed, most of them are not established practices and consequently meaningful collaboration is not arrived at. Municipalities lack a clear strategy and the expertise and as a result this overload of information retrieved from e-participation disappears in the ‘black box’. This ‘black box’ is identified in this research as one of the main reasons why citizens feel participating online has no use and is ‘a voice without influence’.

For meaningful participation it is important that the voices of citizens are heard. This is established by distributing a certain amount of power/influence to citizens (reflected on the vertical axe of figure 15). Else the use of internet and ICT for citizen participation is only used as a modern day window dressing ritual. If citizens have confidence that their voice will be heard, they will feel more compelled to engage in civic activity. However, this distribution of power/influence is still determined by the elected representatives and remains a difficult issue in practice.

Currently electronic methods of involving the public in the planning process are often limited in effect and extent by the organisational structures within planning authority. These structures have to change to a more facilitating role in order to create collaboration between municipals and their citizens. Planners need to acquire new skills and professional roles in their field and accept and use this new input from citizens.

This asks for commitment to the concept of citizen participation. Even though the benefits of some kind of level of participation are recognized the problem of trusting participants with this responsibility seems to be a barrier for the distribution of power to citizens by politicians. This concern is amongst others based on the acknowledgement that differences in age, background, education, profession and the phenomena of “rational ignorance” have influence on the decision-making of citizens.

A solution for this issue is establishing interaction between government and citizens and also between citizens. However, reaching this interaction and depth in an online discussion to arrive at considered judgement is held to be impossible online and therefore power distribution remains a difficult aspect by means of e-participation. Consequently it is likely that the offline component in citizen participation will remain in some form in the nearby future.

Key public policy decisions are made during the budgeting process, so this would appear to be an important opportunity for meaningful citizen participation. Participation takes place in an early stage and that can give more power and meaning to citizens input.

However, the state of play in the case studies (in Berlin-Lichtenberg, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main) is in line with earlier conclusions. The process is used for consultation and thus a high level of citizen power is not arrived at. Power distribution to citizens by means of e-participation in these cases is also recognized to be a difficult aspect.

However, there is a difference between the cases in likelihood online proposals made by citizens are implemented. In Cologne and in Berlin-Lichtenberg this likelihood is higher than in Frankfurt am Main and Hamburg.

Suggested reasons for this difference in likelihood between the case studies are proposed:

- Opinions and preferences of the citizens are unlikely to be implemented when the whole municipal budget is under consideration as is the case in Frankfurt am Main and Hamburg.

- Setting a budget and setting the nature of the topics that can be discussed increase transparency and likelihood for implementation of the proposals, as is the case in Berlin-Lichtenberg and Cologne.
- Government officials in the case studies are more willing to implement spatial planning proposals (on small scale) and hence this indicates this topic can be deliberated on meaningful. It gives the process some kind of legitimacy because the key actors support and accept the process and the outcome. This indicates investment in e-participation tools that facilitate interaction on these themes is useful.
- More ICT technology innovations are needed but moreover the political structure behind these online tools needs to be functioning.

In this paper it is made plausible that municipalities must launch the ideal conditions in which e-participation can evolve. The final conclusion of this paper therefore regards the following recommendations for municipalities for arriving at meaningful e-participation. These recommendations are based on the literature review and case study findings:

- Commitment to the concept of e-participation and willingness to listen to citizens input.
- Inclusion: informing citizens about the possibilities of participating.
- Provide interaction possibilities. This is needed for using and creating social capital/social networks and for arriving at contemplated decision making.
- Avoiding ‘the blackbox’. Provide feedback on citizen’s proposals: be transparent and organize the back office.
- Avoid a ‘voice without influence’. This can be accomplished by distributing some amount of power/influence to citizens in the decision making process. By for example setting a budget.

Discussion

It comes to notice that in the case studies no high level of e-participation was reached. A reason for this could be the fact that the participatory budgeting projects are relatively new. Committing to the concept and informing citizens about their possibilities could change this in the future.

Nevertheless, providing citizens with a range of possibilities to participate (and e-participation enables people to do so) empowers them to make themselves heard. Therefore this is a form of citizen power. This interpretation gives an extra dimension to the horizontal axe in figure 14 and fits the description of democracy discussed in chapter 2: The actual exercise of rights is seen as the choice of citizens, on the assumption that they have the resources and opportunities to do so (Isin & Wood, 1999).

Suggestions for further research

It can be said that there are roughly two different moments in which citizens can play a role in spatial planning decisions;

- (1) Citizens propose spatial planning plans (thus, no proposed plan on forehand by the municipality).
- (2) Municipalities have a spatial development plan (such as redeveloping the train station in Stuttgart) and need support and/or suggestions from their citizens

In my case studies the focus was on option number 1 because of the moment of participation. In further research it would be interesting to focus on participation item number 2.

In a further research it would also be interesting and comprehensive to ask the opinion of the citizens who participated online in the Participatory Budgeting projects in the cities Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main to get a deeper understanding on the subject. At this point the perception on how citizens experience e-participation in these projects is based on assumptions and conclusions made from desk-research and also based on the views of only a few of the government officials and

experts on e-participation. To get a more comprehensive view and to be able to make sharper conclusions it is important to expand this knowledge.

An interesting phenomenon to research would be the fact that in Hamburg the participation level dropped drastically in 2009. This could be because they did not give feedback on how they used the input from the participants.

The relatively low level of e-participation is an additional interesting aspect to research.

- Do citizens know that participation is possible?
- Do they want to participate?
- Do they only want to have the possibility to voice their opinion when they feel it is necessary?

Reflection on the research

I think the literature research is based on solid research and the recommendations and conclusions that resulted from it can contribute in the field of e-participation. Due to these conclusions it was possible to draw case study conclusion but I do feel much more information could have been obtained when more empirical research was possible. It has been a handicap that my skills in the German language were insufficient to conduct the desired amount of interviews (for the empirical part) with the local municipal staff. Their knowledge of the English language is on a relatively low level which was not expected by me on forehand. Because of this I could not realise the on forehand targeted interviews with municipal officials (policymakers and ICT specialists) to get a better understanding on data selection and processing. The desk-research in my case studies was on a higher level than initially planned and it would have been of additional value if field- and desk-research would have complemented each other and/or filled in the vacancies..

Concluding remark

The power of internet in our society is unprecedented; think about Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and others. Some of these online applications will not survive but the direction is clear and it is therefore most likely that governmental e-participation is here to stay.

Citizen Participation by means of e-participation is a policy in the European Union as formulated in i2010, so embodiment of the process and ICT tools might change but e-participation will become part of our society.

My message to municipals is to embrace e-participation and to start enrolling the process in phases with special attention to the political structure behind these online tools. Spatial planning has proven to be a good topic for e-participation.

Although citizen participation on local scale is presumed to be the best feasible and therefore the most successful so far, disregarding national and international participation projects could be short-sighted. Internet itself has no boundaries but the boundaries of e-participation are yet to be discovered.

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Website cities:

- Berlin-Lichtenberg: <http://www.buergerhaushalt-lichtenberg.de>
- Cologne: <https://buergerhaushalt.stadt-koeln.de>
- Hamburg: <http://www.buergerhaushalt-hamburg.de/>
- Frankfurt am Main: <http://www.ffm.de/diskussion>

Appendix-A

Interview guidelines Hans Hagedorn- Demos Deutschland

Discuss the cases Berlin-Lichtenberg, Cologne, Hamburg.

-Berlin:

Burgerhaushalt: interactief kaartje, GIS? discussie. Hoe komt deze informatie binnen? Voorkomen van de blackbox? Ik vind het heel overzichtelijk, op de kaartjes klikken, overzichtelijke dan bv burgerhaushalt Kolln, met stoplicht. Waarom verschil in keuze?

-Hamburg:

Burgerhaushalt: simulation?

DEMOS-plan; via internet bouwplannen inzien, reageren. Is er interactie tussen burgers mogelijk?

Living Bridge: hoe zag dit project eruit? Konden mensen ideeën aandragen via internet?

-Koln:

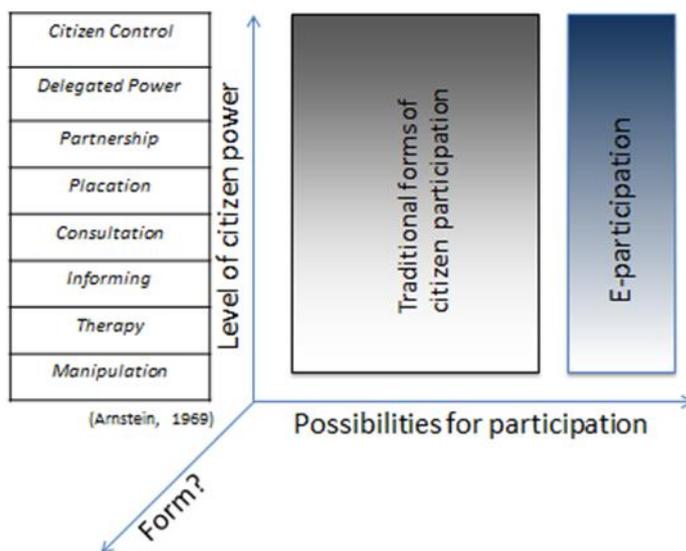
Burgerhaushalt: Traffic light ,ranking.

My thesis

How can eParticipation play a role in spatial planning?

Two-fold: Where to think about when wanting to implement eParticipation?

What are the possibilities concerning Form?



Step 1: Who may participate? Who gets control? Think about representativeness. Only for ideas? Or Important for participation is the interaction part. So, up until consultation no citizen participation.

Step 2: Who can participate? Easy to participate. Think about the dangers of citizen ignorance, clicking.

Step 3: Which form? Interaction possibilities.

-What is your function?

-How long do you work here?

-Important aspects to consider when implementing, and therefore designing, eParticipation tools are citizen ignorance, exclusion (of elderly for example), commitment.

-How make it interesting for citizens to participate? Is this an aspect in de designing process?

Citizen ignorance; voting without consideration of other needs or aspects.

-Exclusion: how prevent this?

-What makes a eParticipation tool succesfull?

-How do you prevent exclusion,for example, for elderly?

-Which project are you working on at the moment?

-What will be the future of eParticipation? 3D models?

Appendix-B

Interview notes Hans Hagedorn 16/08/2013

-Even if you have all the methods and finance to implement all the eParticipation tools it is not always a matter of quantity versus quality. Very importantly it can be more useful to reach a small amount of people and discuss certain topics more in depth.

Dividing the task and sharing it in different times is very worth full. Thus the core is not numbers, it is one aspect but it is often overestimated.

-It is expensive in terms of money and citizens time. If you reach ten thousand people and everybody spends an hour on it, this is a huge amount of information. City planning proposal, is this worth it? Or is het better to work with a repetitive sample of the society of the city and work with them intensely and get better results. But do give other people/citizens the chance to be involved by informing. Important aspect of eParticipation is that you give citizens the possibilities. If somebody then rings the bell and then online you can give a very strong signal as a group.

-It's very complex. You work on a plan for a year. Then you ask the public for their opinion. Then it is the question if citizens really take the time to really get into the plan to shape an informed opinion. Better to get a group together.

-Depth is really important. When talking about interaction; this could be in numbers but also about depth. What is better?

Berlin: submit a proposal, moet een aantal stappen volgen. Have to describe more detail. Photo. Guided through a process. Regrestrate yourself; adres. Be able to contact you for questions. The first idea is submit more or less everything. There is a clearing spot where the first decision is who is actually responsible for resolving this issue? Can go to a institution, then feedback is given. Or it is given to Keatsform; a small jury of citizens can decided on a smaal budget. Mayby they will submit it. If they don't implement it, it comes back and the the next decision; go's to another organisation.

Simpel and small but behind it is large organisation. It is not always working, often hard working. But in theory and more and more often in reality it works in reality. And eventually on the website they give feedback. You can track the proposal every day everywhere. So you know how far it is in the process.

The tools evolve. In the beginning it was big discussion; aggregate things and conclusions and then decides. Most cities did it this way but problem was number of participants. The participants didn't see enough results.

Berlin new strategy; don't do it in limited time. But all year. You can submit it every day every night. Clearing they do every three mounts. On-going process. Works pretty well, it works to well! Many proposals. In other cities they don't use it, but they will. Frankfurt for instance is going to change. Ongoing system.

The on-going nature of this approach results in high level interaction between government and citizen". It works really well and a lot of proposals get implemented due to the well-organized back office. Citizens can elaborate on proposals during the whole year.

The method used in Hamburg provoked a lot of criticism, mainly due to the fact that the selection of cases was never published. During the second Participatory Budgeting project in 2009 the local media

questioned the value of the participatory budgeting, because of the few political consequences of the first one which, for the participant, had resulted in the 'the black box'. This is probably the reason that the number of participants decreased drastically in 2009. Also the themes were too broad, impossible to implement the variety of ideas. Same case in Frankfurt am Main.

Exclusion is an important issue. How do you address this? It is impossible to reach 100%. But not even in English available. They provide brochures in different languages.

It is difficult to have an debate in Multilanguage. In Canada there was a project with translators. But, very extensive and expensive.

There is a working language; but have to provide the first excess in other languages. So provide in Turkish, when they are interested they can read that brochure in Turkish, then they have a understanding and can more easily participate. Bu motivations is important.

DEMOS-plan; future plan involving citizens. Not only for governments. Detailed planningzones.

Future mayby; alarm system for you postcode. When something happens you get an alert.

Reducion of paperwork. A lot of development to do.

Future. 3D models; not a lot of fancy tools. It is very interesting to work with, But cost benefit? And what is the benefit? It's more of a marketing tool. More important is translating input from citizens. More low tech but with high political value. That participation Is not a task but more a task that is interesting at the core of their work. Representatives should use tools to really represent people. Also shy people can be included. They maybe have bright ideas.

You have to listen to you public, work with their input. Tools are needed and quality procedures.

(SIC).

Appendix-C

Interview guidelines Joachim Geiger

Discuss the website: discuss the tools.

General questions

What are the goals and motives for involving citizens in the *allocation of the municipal budget*?

What was the reason and/or goal for implementing online participation tools?

On your website I found that it is possible to write suggestions/comments on a forum categorized by subject and location. All these suggestions/comments are classified in umgesetzt, in bearbeitung und nicht umgesetzt. What are the criteria for implementing the suggestions that are made, and when is decided not to?

When decided to implement a suggestion are participants also involved in the designing process? Do they have any say in 'how it will look like'?

I could not find an online tool for participating by voting on a subject. I know that you do use voting for the allocation of the municipal budget in downtown hall meetings. Is there a reason for not using this option as participation tool online?

Is online or offline participation of higher value for the project? Can you explain?

How do you inform the public of the possibilities of participating?

Is this a successful way of informing the public do you think? Can you support this answer by download data or data on how many visitors your website has, or maybe other data?

What is the ratio online participation compared to offline participation (by means of downtown meetings etc)?

What is the demographic composition of the online participants? And is this different from citizens that participate in a face-to-face matter (like downtown meetings etc)?

Future plans

What are the plans for the future with online participation tools?

Appendix-D

Interview notes Joachiem Geiger 15/06/2013

Ziel ist, Bürger für den Städtischen Haushalt zu interessieren und neue Ideen von nicht organisierten Bürgern abzufragen.

Von Beginn an, also beim ersten Aufruf an die Bevölkerung; sich am Bürgerhaushalt zu beteiligen.

Der Grund war, dass die meisten Bürger über Internet verfügen bzw. leicht an einen Internetanschluss gelangen können.

Wir wollten in Frankfurt nicht nur einzelne Themen zur Diskussion stellen, sondern den gesamten Haushalt. Allerdings wurden die Vorschläge und Kommentare auch in Kategorien zusammengefasst und geordnet, um eine bessere Übersicht zu schaffen.

Wir wollten eine breite Diskussion ermöglichen, die auch das Für und Wider einschließt.

Die 100 Vorschläge mit den meisten Stimmen wurden von 100 per Zufall ausgewählten Bürgern in Diskussionsrunden erörtert. Die Bürger legten dann selbst fest welche Vorschläge weiter verfolgt werden sollten. Dies erfolgte dann auch. Am Ende entschieden dann aber der Magistrat und den Stadtverordnetenversammlung über die Umsetzung.

Maßgeblich ist die Qualität der Vorschläge, unabhängig davon, wie sie eingebracht werden.

Im ersten Jahr gab es eine Zeitung, die an alle Haushalte verteilt wurde, außerdem Werbespots in den Tageszeitungen, im Radio und Fernsehen. Beim zweiten Bürgerhaushalt wurden Flyer an die Haushalte verteilt, um die Kosten zu minimieren.

Dieser Punkt ist strittig. Einerseits wird gefordert, weitaus mehr Öffentlichkeitsarbeit zu leisten, andererseits werden die Ausgaben dafür kritisiert. Unsere Meinung ist, dass man nicht wesentlich mehr tun kann, als ein solches Angebot zu unterbreiten. Wenn die Bevölkerung dieses nicht annimmt, ist das eben auch eine Entscheidung - gegen das Projekt.

An der Online-Plattform beteiligten sich ca. 2000 Bürger, zu Sitzungen kommen selten mehr als drei oder vier.

Angesichts der relativ geringen Beteiligung (in einer Stadt mit 700.000 Einwohnern!) ist vorgesehen, eine ganzjährige Internetplattform zu schaffen, auf der ständig Vorschläge zum Haushalt eingebracht und diskutiert werden können. Noch nicht entschieden ist, welche Bedingungen erfüllt sein müssen, damit sich die politischen Gremien mit Vorschlägen beschäftigen. Diese Entscheidung ist bis zum Herbst geplant.