

**PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN DECISION- MAKING PROCESS:  
ALBANIAN CASE**

**ALI ZAIMI**

Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
in Political Science and International Relations

Department of Political Science and International Relations

EPOKA UNIVERSITY

2023

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

Student Name and Surname: Ali Zaimi

Faculty: Faculty of Law and Social Sciences

Department: Political Science and International Relations

Thesis Title: Participation of citizens in decision-making process: Albanian case

Date of Defense:

I certify that this final work satisfies all the requirement as a PhD Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and International Relations.

Dr. Reina SHEHI

Head of Department

I certify that I have read this final work and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a PhD Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and International Relations.

Assoc. Prof. Lisen Bashkurti

Supervisor

Examining Committee Members:

Title/ Name & Surname

1. Prof. Dr. .... \_\_\_\_\_
2. Prof. Dr. .... \_\_\_\_\_
3. Prof. Dr. .... \_\_\_\_\_
4. Prof. Dr. .... \_\_\_\_\_
5. Prof. Dr. .... \_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

To my family

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Ali Zaimi

January 2023

# **PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN DECISION- MAKING PROCESS: ALBANIAN CASE**

## **ABSTRACT**

Citizen participation is an opportunity given to individuals to influence public decisions and known as component of the democratic decision-making process due to positive effect on the quality of democracy. In literature as well as in practice, the forms of citizen participation start from general consultations and send comments to the draft law by electronic mail to direct negotiations based on strategic deals for partnership; from public debates to the bodies led by civil society organizations (CSO).

This research focuses on participation of citizens in decision making and its impact on democratization and development process in Albania by examining the forms, obstacles to and opportunities for citizen participation. It aims to define the key patterns of decisions-making process in Albania by including the features of the interactive decision-making models and the citizens' participation models in the decision making process.

The original contribution of this research is an empirical analysis of citizens' participation in Albania. The primary research includes the surveys conducted during the summer 2018 and fall 2019 with civil servants and citizens in the decision making process. The study highlights several issues such as: i) the policy actors engaged in different stages of the decision-making process; ii) the degree and level of citizen's involvement in public decisions making process; iii) increasing transparency and accountability of government to build effective citizen participation and iv) bringing a solution to this problem in further research and action in this direction.

Based on empirical research, the thesis finds that Albanian citizens are aware that their voice is not heard or taken into consideration by the responsible authorities in the decision-making process in Albania due to the lack of a control mechanism during the decision making process and misfit of interest between decision making authorities and citizens. In conclusion, citizens should be an integral part of decision-making process, and when faced with a lack of service, institutions must act immediately to resolve this issue.

In conclusion, citizens should be an integral part of decision-making process, and when faced with a lack of service, institutions must act immediately to resolve this issue.

**Key words:** citizens participation, development, decision-making, transparency, accountability

# **PJESËMARRJA E QYTETARËVE NË PROCESIN VENDIMMARRËS: RASTI I SHQIPËRISË**

## **ABSTRAKT**

Angazhimi i qytetarëve në vendimmarrje është një mundësi për të influencuar në procesin e vendimeve publike dhe njihet si një element i procesit të vendimmarrjes demokratike për shkak të impaktit pozitiv në rritjen e cilësisë së demokracisë. Si në literaturën akademike ashtu edhe në praktikë, pjesëmarrja e qytetarëve shfaqet në forma të ndryshme duke nisur nga konsultimet e përgjithshme dhe dërgimi i komenteve të projektligjive në mënyrë elektronike tek negocimi I drejtëpërdrejtë bazuar në marrëveshjet strategjike për partneritet; nga debatet publike e deri tek organizmat e udhëhequra nga shoqëria civile (OSHC) me përfaqësues të pushtetit qendror apo lokal.

Ky punim fokusohet në pjesëmarrjen e qytetarëve në vendimmarrje dhe ndikimin e saj në procesin e demokratizimit dhe zhvillimit të shqipërisë duke analizuar format, pengesat dhe mundësitë e pjesëmarrjes së qytetarëve. Punimi synon të përkufizojë modelet kryesore të procesit të vendimmarrjes në Shqipëri duke përfshirë tiparet e modeleve ndërvepruese të vendimmarrjes dhe modelet e pjesëmarrjes së qytetarëve në procesin e vendimmarrjes.

Kontributi origjinal i këtij hulumtimi është një analizë empirike e pjesëmarrjes së qytetarëve në Shqipëri. Hulumtimi primar përfshin anketime të kryera në periudhën verë 2018 dhe vjeshtë 2019 me nënpunës civilë dhe qytetarë të përfshirë në procesin e vendimmarrjes. Studimi analizon disa çështje si: i) angazhimi i aktorëve politikbërës në faza të ndryshme të procesit të vendimmarrjes; ii) shkalla dhe niveli i përfshirjes së qytetarëve në procesin e vendimmarrjes; iii) rritja e transparencës dhe llogaridhënies së qeverisë për të ndërtuar një pjesëmarrje efektive të qytetarëve në vendimmarrje dhe iv) ofrimi i zgjidhjeve të këtij problemi në kërkime të mëtejshme në këtë drejtim.

Bazuar në kërkimet empirike, kjo tezë konstaton se qytetarët shqiptarë janë të vetëdijshëm se zëri i tyre nuk dëgjohej apo merret në konsideratë nga autoritetet përgjegjëse në procesin e vendimmarrjes në Shqipëri për shkak të mungesës së një mekanizmi kontrolli gjatë procesit të vendimmarrjes dhe mospërputhjes së interesit të autoriteteve vendimmarrëse me atë të qytetarëve. Si përfundim, qytetarët duhet të jenë pjesë integrale e procesit të vendimmarrjes dhe institucionet duhet të veprojnë menjëherë kur qytetarët përballen me mungesën e shërbimeve në këtë drejtim.

**Fjalët kyçe:** pjesëmarrja e qytetarëve, demokratizim dhe zhvillim, vendimmarrje, transparenca, llogaridhënie



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Writing my PhD thesis has been a long and arduous journey, during which I also understood to be grateful to have had people who contributed toward the completion of this thesis. Completing this thesis now grants me the opportunity to express all my gratitude to them.

First and foremost, my highest esteem goes to my supervisor, Prof. Assoc. Lisen Bashkurti, for all his valuable discussions, guidance and encouragement during the three years of my PhD research time. His professional insight and advice have been an added value to bring this project to fruition.

Secondly, I would like to thank Prof. Assoc. Salih Ozcan, Dr. Avdi Smajlaj, Dr. Reina Shehi for all their professional insight and advice which have been an added value to bring this project to fruition.

Last but not least, I want to express my profound gratefulness to my family. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DEDICATION .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABSTRAKT .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES.....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>xvi</b>
<b>LIST OF PUBLICATIONS BY THE CANDIDATE.....</b>	<b>xvii</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Introduction.....	1
1.2. Significance of studying citizen engagement in Albania.....	5
1.3. Research Background .....	10
1.4. Research questions, objectives, and hypothesis.....	11
1.5. Research Methodology .....	12
1.6. Limitation of the study .....	13
1.7. Outline of the Thesis .....	14
<b>2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1. Introduction.....	17
2.2. Community Development.....	18
2.3. History of public participation .....	20
2.4. Decision- Making Process .....	29
2.5. Theoretical Literature Review .....	34

<b>3. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1. Public participation and related concepts.....	36
3.2. Typologies of Participation.....	42
3.3. Participation Failure.....	52
3.4. The concept of Decision-making process .....	54
3.5. Factors that influence in participation.....	57
3.6. Involvement of Public participation in local government level.....	59
3.7. Engaging citizens at legislative process.....	66
3.8. Conclusion .....	68
<b>4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION- MAKING PROCESS IN ALBANIA: HISTORICAL APPROACH.....</b>	<b>70</b>
4.1. Introduction.....	70
4.2. Role of Citizen Participation in the Development of Democracy .....	72
4.3. Normative framework of participation of citizens in decision-making process at local and national level in Albania.....	74
4.4. The principles of local government regarding civic participation .....	82
4.5. Political Participation in Albania .....	84
4.6. Participation of citizens in the decision-making process in Albania during the period 1990-2018 .....	86
<b>5. METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>96</b>
5.1. Introduction.....	96
5.2. Research Methods.....	96
5.3. Research Design .....	97
5.4. Data Collection .....	99
<b>6. DATA FINDING AND ANALYSES I: SURVEY FINDINGS OF PUBLIC SERVANTS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING IN ALBANIA.....</b>	<b>101</b>
6.1. Discussion of Research Findings.....	101
6.2. Pre-decision making process .....	105

<b>7. DATA FINDING AND ANALYSIS II: SURVEY FINDINGS OF CITIZENS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING IN ALBANIA .....</b>	<b>111</b>
7.1. Introduction.....	111
7.2. Discussions of results .....	111
7.3. Summary of key findings.....	122
<b>8. DISCUSSION ON THE LIMITED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ALBANIA. 126</b>	
8.1. Barriers to effective public participation .....	126
8.2 Overcoming barriers to effective citizen participation in Albania .....	128
8.3. New treatments and ways of thinking about participation .....	129
8.4 Key steps in the planning process for improving citizen participation in Albania	130
<b>9. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>133</b>
8.1. Best practices and Models .....	134
8.2. Best practices for Albania.....	135
8.3. Conclusion .....	137
<b>REFERENCE.....</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>140</b>
Appendix A – Number of Voters .....	153
Appendix B– Survey I (English Version).....	154
Appendix C – Survey I (Albania Version) .....	162
Appendix D: Survey II (English Version).....	166
Appendix E_ Survey II (Albanian Version).....	172
Appendix F – Educational specialization of the respondents.....	177

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Comparison of proposed process models.....	30
Table 2: Objectives of civic participation, initiatives and similar types of participation....	40
Table 3: Sort of activities implied by citizen participation .....	41
Table 4: Eight rungs on a ladder of citizens' participation .....	43
Table 5: The benefits of public participation in government decision making.....	65
Table 6: Likert Response Scale .....	97
Table 7: Please give your opinion on the following types of actors which actually influence in a certain manner the decision-making process in the public sector. ....	106
Table 8: The influence of the following types of actors on the elements of the classic policy cycle.....	107
Table 9: Please give your opinion on the following types of actors which actually influence in a certain manner the decision-making process that takes place in the institution where you work. ....	108
Table 10: How often decisions adopted by local public institutions encounter resistance and dissatisfaction from the citizens?.....	109
Table 11: How often the decisions made are based on the information provided by the following?.....	110
Table 12: Question 10 - 15 .....	114

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The policy-making cycle.....	30
Figure 2: Framework for the public participation process .....	45
Figure 3: Pretty's (1995) Typology of Participation .....	46
Figure 4: Thomas' (1993) Approaches to Decision Making.....	48
Figure 5: Cohen and Uphoff's (1980) Dimensions of Participation .....	49
Figure 6: Map of Participation Types.....	50
Figure 7: White's (1996) Table of Participation .....	52
Figure 8: Macmillan's (2011) Forms of Participation Failure .....	53
Figure 9: A diagram of the policy analysis process .....	56
Figure 10: The process of drafting a policy and extraction a decision.....	63
Figure 11: Citizen Participation in the Legislative Process.....	66
Figure 12: Number of voters in Albania by district in last 10 years .....	89
Figure 13: The total number of voters in Albania in the last 10 years .....	90
Figure 14: Gender Composition of Public Servants on Public Participation .....	102
Figure 15: Age Composition of Public Servants on Public Participation .....	102
Figure 16: Educational Level of Public Servants .....	103
Figure 17: The educational specialization of the respondents.....	103

Figure 18: Number of Participants selected across occupation / department.....	104
Figure 19: How often the following types of actor’s/stakeholder’s rest at the origin of a public decision? (%) .....	106
Figure 20: Gender Composition of Citizen on Public Participation.....	111
Figure 21: Education of Citizen on Public Participation.....	112
Figure 22: Reason to move in another city.....	112
Figure 23: To Know what is happened in my country is: .....	113
Figure 24: Participation in Public opinion or consultation process in community .....	113
Figure 25: The social factors influencing public participation in decision-making process .....	115
Figure 26: The economic factors influencing public participation in decision-making process .....	116
Figure 27: Public Attitude influencing public participation in decision-making process .	116
Figure 28: Public Trust influencing public participation in decision-making process.....	117
Figure 29: Do you think that decision making process should involve members of the general public?.....	118
Figure 30: Do you think that the opinions of the community are presently being heard in the decision-making process?.....	119
Figure 31: Do you feel that decision-makers generally value public input in the decision-making process? .....	120
Figure 32: Were the results of public input into the public decision-making process ever reported back to the public? .....	121

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
MP	Member of Parliament
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OGP	Open Government Partnership
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nation
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization



## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Number of Voters in Albania from 2009-2019 .....	153
Appendix B: Survey I (English Version) .....	154
Appendix C: Survey I (Albanian Version) .....	162
Appendix D: Survey II (English Version) .....	166
Appendix E: Survey II (Albanian Version) .....	172
Appendix F: The educational specialization of the respondents .....	177

## **LIST OF PUBLICATIONS BY THE CANDIDATE**

### **Journal Publication**

Ali Zaimi. 2022. European Integration of Albania as Model of Religious Tolerance and Dialogue. *Journal of Positive School Psychology* 6(8):5513

Ali Zaimi. 2022. Citizen Participation in Decision Making Process in Albania: The Case of Local Government. *Specialusis Ugdymas / Special Education* 1(43):6270

Ali Zaimi. 2021. Participation in Governance: Challenges and Achievements of Representative Democracy in Albania. *Journal of Social Research and Behavioral Sciences* 7(13):518

Ali Zaimi. 2022. Rehabilitation and Countering Violent Extremism from the Realism theory perspective: the case of Afghanistan. *Beder Journal of Humanities* 15:27

### **Conference Presentation**

Ali Zaimi. 2019. Policy-Making in Public Participation at Local Government Level. *International Conference on Academic Studies in Human Education and Social Sciences* 8th ASHESS 2019. 29-30 March 2019, Richtmann Publishing, United Kingdom

Ali Zaimi. 2021. The Approach and Treatment of Interest-Bearing Loans (Interest/Usury) in various Doctrines and Religions. *25th International Conference on Multidisciplinary Studies* 17-18 September 2021, European Center for Science Education And Research, California

Ali Zaimi. 2021. Pjesëmarrja publike në periudhën e fillimit të pandemisë: Rasti i Shqipërisë. "The 7th International Conference on Humanities and Law" Perspectives on Covid-19: Challenges, Solutions, and Opportunities, 27 May 2021, Beder University

# CHAPTER

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Introduction

After the fall of communism regime (1990), the transition period was characterized by a tremendous process of democratic transformation. Promotion of democracy, human rights and an open market economy were the main priorities of US's foreign policy and the newly established Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU. The Central and Eastern European Countries and Western Balkan countries prioritized democracy as the only political option. Democratic transformation is not a smooth process, and it is a long and complicated action where some progress can be intertwined with setbacks, and backlashes may occur (Carothers 2006, Keane 2009). Democratization is an ongoing process which requires efforts, interaction and constant improvement from government and citizens at the same time.

In its broadest understanding, participation is a process that includes all actions and initiatives undertaken by individuals or groups in social or civic areas (Cornwall, 2008). Brodie et al distinguish three model on participation (Brodie et al, 2009): i) individual participation; ii) social participation and iii) public participation. Individual participation relates to everyday politics including the actions that indicate the kind of society in which an individual wishes to live. Monitoring individual participation is very difficult since the actions are sporadic and informal. The social participation focuses on collective activities like members of different communities, mutual or trade union, and also referred to cultural participation. Finally, the public participation refers to the engagement of individuals with democratic institutions (Brodie et al, 2009).

After the 1990s and the departure of authoritarian leaders, citizens' participation reflected democratization of political relations in the representative government. A full democratic consolidation does not only promise expanding rights and freedoms for citizens, but it also demands from them responsibilities and duties especially in decision-making and policy formulation that guarantees transparency and accountability.

Participation in decision-making is the opportunity given to citizens, parties, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other interested parties to influence the development of policies and legislative process on issues that have an impact on their lives. Public participation in decision-making is an important element for a democratic, transparent and responsible democratic system. It ensures a continuous dialogue between citizens and Member of Parliaments (MP) even outside the electoral campaign period.

The promotion of citizens' participation in governmental policies started in the 1950s based on the assumption that direct citizen participation will promote more democratic and effective governance (Day, 2016). One of the key objectives of participation is "to create a healthier and more active democracy" (Barnes, 1999, p. 67). Advocates of political participation indicate that this concept has grasped the inspiration of policy makers for five reasons that helps to analyze and advocate greater citizen involvement. First, citizen participation involved in decision making bring greater transparency and reinforce public belief in decision making process (Mansbridge 1999, Brodie et al, 2009). Second, through involvement of citizen participation better outcomes will be achieved and the efficacy will be increased (Duffy, 2007) when deployed in collaboration with service users or local citizens to provide public goods and services suited to local needs. Third, citizen participation increases the responsibility of being a public citizen with a greater responsibility to participate in decision making (Pieterse, 2001). Fourth, citizen participation develops democratic knowledge and skills as well as increases the self-confidence required to operate in civic spaces (Schugurensky, 2010). Fifth, participation can lead to empowerment, which shows that participation can gain self-esteem, learn new skills and heighten personal efficacy (Barnes and Shardlow, 1997).

According to Chetwynd and Chetwynd, citizen participation is the combination of three elements: i) responsive; ii) citizen need-based and iii) joint national government plans

(Chetwynd and Chetwynd 2001). An effective way to integrate and stimulate citizen participation in politics is through a decentralized mechanism which brings power closer to citizens. As an example, the European Union's Lisbon Treaty involves citizens in at least three main stages: i) putting issues on the agenda setting; ii) expressing their views on those issues and iii) exercising some form of authority through voting (Protocol no 2 of the TFEU 2010, Maiani 2011; Deplano 2011). It also sets out to support a more democratic and transparent Europe, with a strengthened role for the European Parliament and national parliaments, a clear sense of who does what at European and national level, and more opportunities for citizens to have their voices heard.

Creighton (2005) argues that “public participation is the process by which public concerns, needs and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decision-making. It is a two-way communication and interaction, with the overall goal of better decisions that are supported by the public (p. 31)”. The emergence of citizen participation in policymaking nowadays is related with the focus of people in policies that improve the quality of government's decisions and maximize benefits of communities (Mannarini, et al, 2010; Oldfield, 1990).

The collaboration of citizens' participation and government in decision making process, especially on the issues affecting their lives with different community meetings and discussion, can result in an effective use of resources by directing them to priority areas as well as designing effective and sustainable policies. As it is known, the transition countries from centrally planned economy toward a market economy have struggled many years to recover and improve their economies and well-being of their populations. But this target remains still unattained, especially for the Western Balkan countries including Albania.

Several studies are conducted on citizen participation, civic health and the overall role of citizens in the decision making process in Europe, Australia, Canada and USA (Irvin and Stansbury 2004; Conklin et al 2015; Macaulay et al, 2022). This subject seems to be neglected in the case of Eastern European and transition countries where the concept of citizen participation and democratic citizenship are still relatively new subjects.

Throughout the democratic world as well as after the financial crisis in 2008, the public trust in government has decreased (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2012) due to reasons such as political scandals, corruption, individualism, cuts in public expenditure and unreasonable expectations as low turnout at general or local elections. According to the results of a survey done by STATISTA (2019) in Europe, trust in public institutions is lowest in Spain where only 16 percent of the Spanish respondents said they trusted their own parliament. Whereas, the military seems to be the more trustworthy national institution.

In December 2016, IDM (Institute for Democracy and Mediation) and United Nation Development Program (UNDP) prepared a report on Albania that reviewed the level of trust in public institutions, attitudes towards the performance of public institutions as well as delivery services in the country. 74 percent of respondents mentioned the judicial system as the least trusted institution in Albania, followed by an approximate margin of about 72 percent from political parties. Parliament is ranked as the third less trusted institution with 71 percent of respondents who do not trust it. Furthermore, 79 percent of citizens surveyed have the perception that they do not have enough opportunities to participate in decision-making process/consultations with institutions at the central level, compared to 69 percent at the local level. It is important to mention that 77 percent of respondents expressed willingness to engage in volunteer work for the benefit of the community (IDM and UNDP 2016).

This research aims to fill the gap and examine the citizen participation in decision-making process by analyzing forms, patterns and opportunities as well as the impact on democratization and development process in Albania. Throughout this thesis, the term “citizen participation” is used interchangeable with “citizen’s engagement”, “civic participation” and “civic activism”. It indicates the involvement of every individual in public through different activities such as taking part in community meetings, voting, petitioning the government, demonstrating, protesting for their rights and against decisions, collaborating with authorities on different issues in their communities and participating in public affairs.

The original contribution of this research is an empirical analysis of citizen's participation in decision-making process in Albania as well as their impact in the democratization and development of this country.

## **1.2. Significance of studying citizen engagement in Albania**

In the beginning of the 90's, Albania faced the great challenge of transforming the political system from an authoritarian regime toward a democratic system (Vickers 2001). The transition path was a long process of change including a whole structural, economic, legal and social package. The democratization of the country after the overthrow of the communist regime caused a significant change of the political elite. However, despite these changes, the current elites have a great deal in common with their communist predecessors (Biberaj 1999). The transition began as a complex process; destroying the old and creating or adopting new institutions. The design of reforms and institutions was oriented towards political goals, and the reform was faster in areas where the political cost was smaller. Economic transition began with radical changes in the political system and economic reforms started in a time of total economic collapse, moreover, in the lack of institutional existence and weaknesses. Albania's transition to democracy and the free-market economy proved to be more difficult. The shift from the centralized and completely closed system of the Albanian economy to the market economy was associated with the destruction of its economy and a significant decline in the level of life of Albanians (Biberaj 2011).

In the early years of political transition, the strongest effects of the communist legacy were felt (Pettifer 2000). The recent past would significantly affect a very difficult start to the democratic process in the country. The communist regime left a model of mismanagement and it created "an elite without a sense of responsibility to the community, fearing the power of the most powerful, unable to resist evil" (quoted in Zotaj 2014, 108). Furthermore, elements of communist political culture are also observed in the developments of political life in the country. Political entities waged a fierce and violent power struggle (Bidelux and Jeffries 2007, 22-73; Bogdani and Loughlin 2007).



Compared to all the former communist countries, Albania was less prepared for the painful transition from dictatorship to pluralistic democracy. In the early years of transition as well as later, the state was characterized by weak institutions and the use of administration by the ruling party. The Democratic Party came to power after the win in the general elections held in 22 March 1992. Electoral promises by both political forces seemed more like spontaneous wishes rather than serious political commitments. Once Democratic Party came to power, several fundamental reforms were undertaken that had an immense impact in the Albanian society (Bidelux and Jeffries 2007, 43-56). Nevertheless, the newly established democratic government faced some of the following difficulties.

*i. Lack of Expertise and Experience*

Being the product of the same political system, the new Albanian political leaders encountered difficulties and limitations in terms of experience, knowledge and expertise of the system of liberal democracy as well as the appropriate mechanisms shifting toward market economy. The central planks of the economic programme introduced by the Prime Minister Ylli Bufi government in June 1991 were (i) rapid macro-economic stabilization by means of a balanced budget, price liberalization and currency convertibility; (ii) privatization and (iii) the privatization of agriculture and 'real estate' (Bidelux and Jeffries 2007, 43).

*ii. Politicized Public Administration*

The Democratic Government undertook reforms to change the central and local administration, which largely consisted of communist bureaucrats. Since 1992, governmental changes have been associated with politicised nomination in public administration (Kajsiu et al 2002; Elbasani 2009). For example, during the period 1992 - 1997 Miranda Vickers and James Pettifer noted that public officials "had their biographies scrutinised so that grounds could be found for dismissing them in favour of Democratic Party (DP) loyalists and northern clansmen" (Pashaj 2010, 25). According to a secondary source, when the Socialist Party (SP) came to power in 1998, roughly 15 000 public employees from key positions in administration were dismissed for political reasons and were replaced by SP supporters (Elbasani 2009, 13). The same phenomena occurred in

2005 when democratic party came to power or in 2013 when again the Socialist Party (SP) came to power. This politicisation of bureaucracy has brought “the absence of sound accountability mechanisms in public administration [which] increases the opportunities for bypassing established procedures” (Commission 2008, 8). According to the Commission Report of 2012, bureaucracies “suffer from shortcomings related to politicisation and a lack of meritocracy in recruitment, promotion and dismissal of civil servants” (Commission 2012, 10).

### *iii. Several Financial Problems*

The country had a very weak economy and the debt alone amounted to over \$600 million. Albania had a severe bankrupt industry and backward agriculture, alarming unemployment and unskilled human capital. Under this condition, Albania was unable to get the credibility of obtaining loans.

In the last decade, there have been many debates related to citizens’ involvement and empowerment in the decision-making process. But this issue is more rigid when dealt with the political, economic and social contexts of a young democratic state like Albania, which had limited experience in civic engagement due to the communist regime. After the fall of communist regime, Albania has undergone a series of reforms for citizens’ involvement in the decision making process and concentrated in making new laws in order to build its democratic system.

Albania faced many challenges on the participation of citizens such as: i) lack of information; ii) misrepresentation of citizens’ rights and duties; iii) low participation of citizens in the policy cycle process and iv) incorrect implementation of the regulatory framework by public officials. Voting is the most common accepted form of public participation in Albania. The capability of the citizens to elect public officials and to mandate them the right to represent the opinions of the majority go hand in hand with other democratic principles like transparency and accountability (Haurta and Radu, 2010). Also, there are other forms of public participation such as public meetings, public debates, citizens’ polls, citizens’ juries and written notices.

In addition, public participation in Assembly decision-making is a complex activity, whose main functions are raising awareness of the Assembly as an institution, facilitating the dissemination and exchange of information, ideas and views among citizens and Assembly bodies. The result of participation is in the most responsible politics and legislation in line with the needs of citizens. Civil society organizations play an important role in this participation as they serve as a bridge between the Assembly and the citizens. Public participation is especially important when talking about vulnerable groups, whose voice is often overlooked by decision-makers. The participation of civil society in drafting and implementing legislation is an important element known as participatory democracy.

Participation of civil society in the decision-making process of the Assembly creates the necessary conditions for citizens to participate actively in political life throughout the legislature and not just when asked to choose it. It gives to the citizens the opportunity to advocate for their legitimate interests and thus contribute to the creation of a steady democracy. Also, civic participation forces the institution to be more transparent and bring MPs more closer to the voters by improving the legislation and facilitation of law implementation. It is important for the Assembly itself to encourage the development of a sound and responsible civil society for the establishment and advancement of a permanent and non-spontaneous dialogue on mutual trust between the institution and the citizens.

In this context, the Bureau of Assembly, by the Decision 17/2014 adopted the Public Participation Manual in the Assembly's decision-making process. This manual was drafted with the support of the OSCE Presence in Albania and underwent a broad consultation process with civil society organizations. In this manual, the Assembly is committed to drafting an annual report on the participation of civil society in the legislative process. In public participation, government and people come closer to each other and allow citizens to set policy priorities and become associated in the decision-making process and many others. In recent years there has been a tendency to promote transparency at the local level, in order to guarantee the good governance of local government units. For the majority of citizens, local government is the main public sector confrontation, ranging from public procurements, building permit procedures or various licenses, to core services such as schools or housing.

### **1.2.1. Impact of various factors on political culture in Albania**

The influence of different factors, whether social or economic, is inevitable in the way of thinking and perception of citizens on the political system and the way how it functions. As such, Albania faces a large number of problems such as high unemployment, corruption, poor health care system, poor quality of education in the country, institutional failures to obey the law, lack of accountability and lack of basic living conditions. All these factors, in a way or another, define the beliefs, attitudes and orientations that citizens have towards the political objects and actions in the country.

#### *i. Historical factor*

In the extensive literature on democratization, within the framework of the culturalism paradigm, political culture is seen as an important factor in the development and consolidation of democracy in a country (Evrard 1997; Welzel 2016; Gorodnichenko and Roland 2021; Ghasemi 2019). This directly interacts with and determines other democratization factors. In the case of the Albanian transition, the lack of a sound democratic political culture has been given to explain the lack of consolidation of democracy in the country. Unlike other factors that can change overnight, political culture takes years or generations to change as these patterns tend to be inherited from one generation to the next. Based on this, it is recommended that, in addition to the long wait and the continued circulation of the elites in politics, a sustained and consistent reform of the entire education system in Albania should be made in order to lay the foundations of a political culture in line with democratic values.

The various historical periods that the people of Albania have been through, reflected the political orientation that the citizens had towards the political system in the country. Since these periods also include regimes that have been in the territory of Albania, depending on the politics chosen, the political participation of the people of Albania has been extremely small and symbolic.

ii. *Unemployment and poverty*

After 1990, high level of unemployment and poverty remains the main concern for citizens in the country. The employment and unemployment rate has changed frequently over the years and has marked negative trends compared to previous years. According to INSTAT (2021), the Albanian unemployed rate was 11.5 percent in 2021, about 163,000 persons. The unemployment rate for men was 11.3 percent and for women 11.8 percent.

iii. *Lack of trust in public institutions*

One of the key factors characterizing the political culture in Albania is the skepticism, distrust or dissatisfaction of citizens with public institutions and other actors who are part of decision-making and policy-making in Albania. Reasons why Albania citizens do not trust public institutions are numerous but mostly this dissatisfaction comes as a result of very high corruption, nepotism, lack of engagement for economic development and unemployment alleviation.

iv. *Ideological Factor - Political parties*

Political parties are a very important element of democracy and they play an essential role in the development of the state and of democratic process. Orientations or ideologies that they represent and call upon define in one way or another the planning and formulation of state and public policies.

### **1.3. Research Background**

In essence, this study focuses on all those obligations and rights that the decision-makers have in relation to their constituents and their citizens in decision-making process, where in any case we are dealing with a broad public interest. It provides a model or alternative ways concerning the civic participation in decision making process. Also, the study examines how public participation has changed during the last 30 years after the transition of Albania to an open-market economy and barriers that challenge the transition from theory to practice.

This research aims to contribute and address an important and complicated topic, speaking to local and central government officials in their decision-making process by submitting concrete ideas and proposals on how to communicate with their citizens who have delegated to them a portion of their rights and benefiting concrete ideas and models of citizen participation. Also, it presents a brief statement of the legal and regulatory framework that affect citizen participation including the most important principles and rights mentioned in the Constitution of Albania which affect the freedom of expression, the right of organization and information. Furthermore, the research studies the relation between citizen participation and democracy.

The methodology includes questionnaires, and the focus group study with civil servants, employee at local government units and citizens in different cities in Albania. The qualitative data aims to provide important findings in order to promote new reforms to encourage citizens' involvement in decision making process and focus on all steps of policy process from agenda setting to implementation in all government levels. The primary research is carried out in public institutions located in Albania and is made possible with the support of my networking in those institutions.

#### **1.4. Research questions, objectives, and hypothesis**

The main research questions that guided this study:

- i. Why is citizen participation extremely important in policy-making and how citizens' participation interacts in the cycle of political decision-making in Albania?
- ii. Which are the necessary elements for constructive citizen participation and increasing impact on democratization in Albania?

The research seeks to explain the nature of participation spaces as well as how citizens are participating. The first and the second questions are answered in the theoretical part of literature (Chapter 2, 3, 4 and 7). The findings of qualitative and quantitative data's

address the current situations in Albania and recommendations about the improvement of citizen participation in decision-making in Albania.

The study is carried out through three qualitative studies and focuses on three main objectives:

- i. to examine and clarify the concept and process of citizen participation use in decision-making process;
- ii. to evaluate the impact of citizen participation on democracy and to examine the values and assumptions that underpin current and proposed relationships between them; and
- iii. to identify the range of factors that influence how citizen participation is used in policy decision-making, while acknowledging the nuances and complexity of the concept of 'use' as well as the considerable political and institutional constraints.

Based on these objectives, the following hypothesis have been formulated to be tested during the research:

**Hypothesis I:** Active participation of citizens in political forums and civic groups will bring about positive change and contribute to decision-making process, improving services and democracy standards in Albania.

**Hypothesis II:** Abandoning the practice of using and manipulating people during election campaigns for political purposes, would restore trust and would increase the desire for community engagement and participation in the further development of democracy.

## **1.5. Research Methodology**

In this thesis the methodology used is based on primary and secondary data, which are used according to the specific goals set out in this thesis. The primary data are collected by

questionnaires distributed to public servants in different public institutions located in Tirana, Shkodra, Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Korca, Saranda, Peshkopi and Vlora. The selection of these cities has been chosen according to the city size and their large number of populations. Also, questionnaires are distributed to different citizens in selected cities as mentioned above. Both groups who participated in questionnaires were asked to identify core current problem/ situation and express their innovative ideas on how to solve the problem and increase citizen participation in the decision-making process.

The secondary data were obtained from the publications of the Central Election Commission on the election results from 2009 to 2019. The processing of this data was done at the electoral population level (otherwise the electoral census), thus, reducing the measurement error in the results of representative research to a minimal level.

In addition to primary and secondary data, secondary sources have been used. Relevant books, journal articles, different funded projects from the US Embassy and European Union, various national and international reports or international indexes concerning promotion of citizen participation and democracy in Albania have been taken into account.

The combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques has been used to collect information and the necessary data for this study and to demonstrate the perception of civil servants and public officials' views towards citizens' involvement in the decision making process.

## **1.6. Limitation of the study**

This study has two limitations. The first limitation concerns on the inability to get information and people fear to fill up the surveys. Albanian citizens do not trust public institutions. Citizens do not believe that their opinions can be taken into consideration in decision-making process, especially in a country where the level of corruption, lack of engagement for economic development, unemployment rate are at considerably high levels.



The second limitation is the embellishment of the current situation. The respondents may present the situation perceptibly better than it is, because the instruments have no correct or incorrect answers.

## **1.7. Outline of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of nine chapters.

Chapter one provides an overview of participation as a process and the benefits of citizen participation in decision making especially on the issues affecting the quality of life in general and in addition to that the significance of citizen participation in Albania during the economic transition which began with radical changes in the political and economic system. The goal of this research is clarified by the research methodology along with the structure of the thesis.

Chapter two describes the main principles of participation focusing on the Public Participation Guide and elements provided by IAP2 (2006). It demonstrates by providing a broad literature of participation, central concepts and the three core characteristics of participation. First, participation is known as a catch all term and may mask many agendas, interests and motivations (Eversole, 2010). Second, participation is considered as highly normative in the academic and policy literature while some expectations are noticed in the shape of the post-structural perspective. Third, despite much effort for clarity and specificity, the mentioned qualities for this topic remain rare. The whole process of participation can not be interpreted in practice even if we use different theories, accounts or typologies because of the complexity of this topic. It is highlighted that the main purpose of public participation is to offer the public an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process related to development planning. Besides, the active and enduring participation of ordinary citizens in public decisions is the base of participatory democracy. Government should redefine systems of governance through incorporating greater citizen involvement and focus on analyzing the normative typologies addressed above to evaluate claims for empowerment, citizen control or transformative participation. To conclude, participation in policy making is fundamental to governing effectively and efficiently in a democracy.

Chapter three begins with a review of different authors on the democratic participation and democratic transformation in transition economies. The central typologies of participation are set out by Arnstein's (1969) which explain the participation as a tool applied among people to produce significant social reform which allows them to share in the benefits of the affluent society. The factors affecting the civic engagement in politics are mentioned because they may not be fully affected by benefits/costs expectancy of participation, the willingness to participate could be influenced by other variables. Furthermore, it describes the models of policy-making applicable to the issue of public participation such as classical, group, elite, and systems models.

Chapter four critically reviews the democratic system of the Albanian republic and legislation and practices of public participation in the decision making process by emphasizing the system's strengths and deficiencies. There are two forms of civic participation in local self-government of Albania such as: local elections and direct participation. Citizen participation will bring benefits for society and for the government too. With a wide range of citizen involvement, drafting and enforcing decisions becomes easier, while trust and legitimacy reach higher levels. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the influence of different factors that define the beliefs, attitudes and orientations that citizens have towards the political institutions and policies in the country.

Chapter six and seven explore citizen participation through in-depth study of a local community involved in different public institutions as well as citizens who consider engagement in public institutions. Both questionnaires were conducted during the summer 2018 at local and national levels in addition to secondary data taken from the long desk-based research. Similarly, it brings together empirical findings and theoretical frames suggesting solutions for increasing the participation for future citizen involvement.

Chapter eight focuses on the barriers encountered for an effective civic engagement in the decision making process in Albania and finding the best ways to improve it. If the public understands the participatory process, the benefits derived from them will increase.

The thesis concludes with chapter nine which describes how the research questions have been answered and summarizes the contribution to knowledge. In addition, it explains the implications for policy and recommendations for future research

## **CHAPTER**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

One of the most controversial forms of governance and analysis of politics is “community” where citizens by influencing policies by factorizing intervention as much as possible by state authorities can solve their common issues or problems (Pierre and Peters 2000, 21). These ideas and theoretical approaches are especially elaborated by communitarianism which defines the policy-making process based on prevailing circumstances and dominant values of the community. Communitarianism is the aspiration for a social order in which individuals are united by common values that inspire and maintain community ties.

Amitai Etzioni was one of the most vocal proponents of studying the role of community in the background of the analysis of public policy. According to him there are levels of responsibility, starting from the individual to family, community, and society in general. Thus, public policies should promote and develop institutions that will help collaboration between individuals and the state like voluntary organizations and religious communities. Especially, the institution and the role of the family should get more attention due to its importance in the community (Etzioni 1995).

In public policy, the concept of collective action, empowerment of discriminated communities and especially the development of community are of great importance. This is used especially in social policies, poverty and more specifically in local development policies.

Putnam (1993) argued that the notion of social capital dealt with the idea that social networks have values and virtues, which affect the productivity of individuals and the whole society. Social capital is the link between people based on the values of mutual trust and reciprocity which leads to commitment and cooperation. Comparing various region in Italy, Putnam was able to show the impact that social capital has on Italian policy making and governance efficiency by building mutual trust and civic participation (Putnam 1993).

## **2.2. Community Development**

Community development is understood as the core and process of action, engagement and support of certain social groups to participate in collective actions. The common interest of community is to bring about justice, development and social equality. Community development focuses on two aspects. The first aspect relates to the purpose that usually involves achieving social change. The other aspect is about the process of participating and empowering decision-making in a coordinated manner. If we refer to the term itself, we can say that it means people commitment to improve the social, cultural, economic and ecological conditions of their community. Hence, community is the very purpose and means of development of infrastructure, conditions and situation. The main principles of community development as considered by the University of Ireland Galway are as follows: i) individual and collective action; ii) participation; iii) consultation; iv) empowerment; v) equality; vi) justice; vii) partnerships; and viii) process and purpose (Jackson et al 2021).

Jackson and O'Dorherty divides community development process into the following stages. The first stage relates to the willingness and determination to act that stems from a common cause or concern. The second stage is the identification of his motivation by active persons or leaders of that community. The final state relates to the organization and involvement of the population and engagement in the community development (Jackson and O'Dorherty 2012). The development of communities differs from social and political movements, social services or work, NGO engagement or by protest actions of citizens.

Public participation is the involvement of citizens in administrative functions and decision-making which is achieved by the availability of various mechanisms in different areas and through participation in decision-making process. It can be defined in very broad context.

Some of the key definitions are presented in “Public Participation Guide” (Creighton, 2005) which are summarized as follows:

- i. Public participation relates to administrative decisions, which are issued by institutions, in this case municipalities;
- ii. Public participation is not limited to giving information only. It means more interaction between decision-makers and citizens who want to be part of the process.
- iii. Public participation means an organized process for it involving the general public in the decision-making process where citizens have the opportunity to influence.

International Associations for Participation (IAP2 2022) defined participation with the same elements/ features as mentioned below:

- i. The public must exercise its voice in the decisions as it influences their lives.
- ii. Public participation includes the promise that civic influence will affect the decision –making.
- iii. The public participation process should convey interest and meets the needs of citizens.
- iv. The public participation process should facilitate the involvement of citizens who are affected.
- v. The public participation process should define the ways in which citizens should be involved.
- vi. The public participation process should provide information which requires meaningful participation.
- vii. The public participation process should communicate how the inputs of citizens have influenced decisions.

In social science, participation refers to the various mechanisms that are used for the public to express their opinion and possibly influence the political, economic, management and social decision making. Brager et al (1987) define participation as a means of educating citizens and to enhance their skills. It is a tool to influence decisions that affect the lives of citizens and an opportunity to transfer political power. Furthermore, Armitage (1988) defines citizen participation as a process through which citizens act in response to public concerns, expressing their opinions on decisions affecting them and taking responsibility for bringing about change for the good of the community (quoted in Lucky 2016). Pran Manga and Wendy Muckle suggest that civic participation can be a response to the traditional sense of powerlessness that the general public feels when it comes to influence government decisions: “people often feel that health services and those social are out of their control as decisions are made outside their community by bureaucrats and unknown technocrats” (quoted in Lucky 2016).

The change in the form of civic and political engagement is conditioned by the context of socio-economic variables of countries. According to this view, the life of all people has fundamentally changed in recent decades. Different authors from academic fields have addressed the social changes that affect citizens in democratic societies (Roche 1987; Paxton 2002). According to them, the lives of people are less defined by traditional social structures and more by choice and risk which influence and reflect the transition from youth to maturity (Arnett 2004). The citizens of countries with new democracies are more inclined towards the improvement of life quality. Even civic and public participation is focused on the function of socio-economic changes that have also influenced the change of values.

### **2.3. History of public participation**

During the late 1960s, a period of social and political changes started around the world and a challenging time came for planners who had their roles changed from agency advocates to neighborhood representatives (Warren 1969). Public participation was not part of the planning or decision-making process in the past but it started to change during this period. Expert planners who had experience working with communities were more likely to get hired (Warren 1969) but city administrators were not ready to collaborate with citizens,

irrespective an increase in resident power because of the frequency of social movements in the cities. Local officials were forced to collaborate and share power with citizens and build strong relationships with neighborhood associations to gain support during elections (Wilson 1963). The main problem of increasing public participation during the beginning of public participation was the choice of strategy or community power strategy which would solve the problem.

In the 1970s, public participation was classified as one -way communication where the government produced and provided information to citizens while citizens felt that they were active participants in the process. During the 1980s, the situation changed slightly. A collaborative approach was introduced to deal with all opinions and conflicts. Citizens were able to provide the feedback to the government and feel fairly treated and feel that decisions were made in fair ways. The early 1990s was a starting point of social media and increased the role of computer-based technologies. Social media tools allowed people to contribute in different ways into the planning process (Evans-Cowley and Hollander 2010). Nowadays, public participation is a mandatory constitutional requirement either at central or local government.

### **2.3.1. Levels of Citizen participation**

The participation of different groups in decision-making process, regardless of race, gender or religion, should be considered as an elementary right. The discussion on this issue can be shown in two different aspects: i) as a basic right of the citizen to participate in decision-making for the space in which he lives, works and invests; and ii) as the obligation of the municipality to obtain the opinion and approval of taxpayers for any plan that creates or even changes. Investments in public space by the municipality are investments from the budget created with citizens' taxes. Therefore, it is the duty of the municipality to involve its community in this process.

The Organization for Economic Co-operations and Development (OECD 2017; OECD 2022) provides a classification of civic participation referring to the nature and direction of the relationship between government and citizens as follows:



*Information* – a one way relationship in which the government only produces and provides information to its citizens.

*Consultation* – a two-way relationship in which citizens can provide feedback to the government by contributing their views and opinions.

*Active participation*- a relationship based on co-government, in which citizens engage in the decision-making process.

### **2.3.2. Mechanisms for citizen participation**

The best and safest way to achieve successful and sustainable models to ensure citizen participation is through structured and institutionalized mechanisms. Therefore, this section aims to emphasize the institutionalized mechanism for citizen participation in general. These mechanisms are: i) public information; ii) public consultation; iii) the right of petition; iv) civic initiatives; v) referendums and vi) consultative committees. Citizen participation mechanisms are generally effective when citizens see them as credible and where there is political commitment to their implementation.

#### *i. Public Consultation and transparency*

Public consultation is one of the forms of exercising democracy directly from citizens enabling them to be part of decision making at the local level. Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015, p. 6) define public participation as “an umbrella term that describes the activities by which people’s concerns, needs, interests, and values are incorporated into decisions and actions on public matters and issues”. The World Health Organisation (quoted in Fraser, 2009) defined public participation as a:

“a process by which people are enabled to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them, in making decisions about factors that affect their lives, in formulating and implementing policies, in planning, developing and delivering services and in taking action to achieve change”.

Generally, municipalities are obliged to maintain a public meeting during the year, where each person can participate individually or as part of an organization. The purpose of such meetings and public consultation is to inform citizens about the activities, for any plans of public interest and to give the right to citizens to ask questions. Part of municipal transparency is also the meeting of the mayor with its citizens. These meetings are intended for direct notification with the problems faced by the citizens in the respective municipality. Every decision which affects the interest of the citizens should be public and published on the website of the municipality.

*ii. The right of Petition*

The right of petition is another mechanism of citizen participation. Every person or organization has the right to present the petition in the municipal assembly on any issues related to responsibilities and competencies.

*iii. Civic initiatives*

Initiative is the act by which citizens start near the bodies of local self-government unit resolving certain issues for which they are interested. Citizens have the right to initiate, review and decide on certain issues which are of interest to the local population. Issues in which initiative can be taken can be very different but some of them are as follows: i) setting local taxes and fees, spatial planning and regulation; ii) public transport of passengers outside and inside of the city; iii) social issues; iv) child protection. Citizens can take the initiative to propose regulations for approval in the assembly or by vote of the citizens. Proposers must submit the proposed regulation to the chairman of the City Council.

*iv. Referendum*

Among the oldest forms of direct democracy is the right of citizens in referendums. This issue is of fundamental importance to the state, as it can change the form of government through adoption of the constitution. For example, Albanian citizens in 1998 organized a popular referendum and passed the constitution which was approved by the Assembly of

Albanian. Referendums may be mandatory, in the sense that for certain political or normative issues the organization of the referendum is required, and the state bodies are obliged to act according to the results deriving from the referendum. Among the latest cases of political referendums with legally binding effect is the referendum in the United Kingdom on whether Great Britain must remain a member of the European Union (EU). This referendum took place on 23 June 2016 and 51.89 percent of voters declared that the United Kingdom should leave the EU. This referendum then paved the way for parliamentary approval of the UK's exit from the EU (Craig and de Burca 2020, chapter 2; Oliver 2018; Armour and Eidenmüller 2017).

Furthermore, referendums can be optional when it is not defined by the law but can be initiated by citizens or state bodies. For instance, the Swiss Constitution stipulates in Article 141 the optional referendum. This provision determines that 50,000 eligible citizens or eight cantons, within 100 days from the official publication of an act, can request the organization of the popular referendum for federal laws.

As a conclusion, for the public participation to be successful, some very simple prerequisites should be taken into consideration:

- the ability to hold a meaningful participation process;
- the willingness of the municipality and the citizens to share their opinions and listen to each other;
- having resources that support the participation of citizens, this also means forms of financing initiatives;
- understanding the difference between giving information, consultation and participation;
- understanding which mechanism is being used in which situation and ensuring that MPs are involved in the process of citizen participation;
- Understanding that public meetings are only a form of participation and if not properly managed can be put at the service of those who are more vocal and articulate; and
- having policies that push municipal staff to promote civic participation.

#### **2.3.4. Form of participations**

There are three different forms in public participation which complement each-other in implementation of decision-making process such as: i) direct participation; ii) representative participation; and iii) mixed system of participation.

Direct participation implies direct and volunteer engagement of citizens. This form of participation does not require membership in civil society organizations, trade unions or political parties. Direct participation is possible for small communities.

Representative participation includes the indirect participation of citizens through representatives appointed and selected by the people. Representatives are involved and mediated with the local government in the decision-making process on behalf and in the interest of the citizens.

Mixed participation system allows citizen participation in both of the above forms.

#### **2.3.5 Paths to influence decision makers**

Paths to influence decision-makers depend on the required facilities to be reached and the authorities involved. The most common ways are as follows. The first most old form is by writing a letter to local authorities, where the problem is presented and intervention is expected from local authorities. A second way is participation in civic commissions which are a great opportunity to raise the voice for specific needs of the respective group of interest. A third way is participating in meetings with local leaders and elected officials. These meetings give citizens the opportunity to address their problem and needs directly to the responsible authority. A fourth way is participation in City Council meetings. City council is an important part of local government where the decisions made by them will directly affect the life of the community. The law provides holding meetings open to the public (must inform the community about the day and time of the meeting) while municipal councillors are obliged to consult with community and stakeholders for decisions in advance. Also, public hearings organized in accordance with certain objectives are a good tool to discuss the problems on specific issues, to propose change

and encourage local decision-makers to engage in changing the situation. Final way of influence is media and social networks. Media is an extremely important path to influence both decision makers to react and initiate necessary changes as well as to mobilize community cutters in defense of certain interests. Social Networks are becoming more and more an important way of communication.

### **2.3.6 Benefits of civic participation**

Citizen participation in decision-making is a key element for development of democracy and increasing the level of transparency and accountability of municipalities regarding decisions made by them. One of the most effective ways to increase participation in governance and improve stability as well as community safety is the municipal decentralization of competencies. According to the principle of subsidiarity, decentralization defines the power of the state over the citizens which requires sustained commitment and organization by municipalities and structured relations between actors through dialogue and open communication with the public.

Public participation in the decision-making process has many benefits. Firstly, there is an increasingly growing consensus on the importance of citizen participation for strengthening democracy, promotion of good governance and improvement of the process and mechanisms that can be used to achieve development goals (UNDP 2002). The attributes involved for good governance and democracy must include accountability, transparency, participation, efficiency, control of corruption, political stability, absence of violence and realization of human rights, which will contribute in building democracy and economic development (UNDP 2002). Most of the researchers suggest that citizen engagement is a key factor for promotion of democratic values as well as improvement of economic performance. Robert Dahl, an American political theorist, argues that democracies must provide equal and adequate opportunities for citizens as following: i) putting issues on the agenda; ii) expressing their views on those issues; iii) exercising some form of authority (quoted in Agolli et al 2013, 19). Thus, the public participation maintains credibility and legitimacy of both citizens and government.

Secondly, a positive correlation is found between civic engagement and economic growth in the transition countries. Citizen participation is the redistribution of power because it enables all citizens to be active in the decision-making process. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society (Arnstein,1969).

Thirdly, public participation educates citizens to influence decisions that affect their lives (Creighton, 2005, pp. 18-19). In the similar vein, Hartay argues that participation can help towards better decision-making and increasing partnership, ownership and responsibility in implementation. Also, civic engagement prevents conflict among different groups and between the public and the government and increases confidence in public institutions (Hartay 2001, pp. 5-6).

Fourthly, it minimizes the cost and delays. Making decisions is a fast process but the cost of implementation is high due to the resistance of citizens, consequently putting the decision on hold. On the other hand, decisions previously consulted with the public may go through a slower process of drafting, but the implementation in practice is more successful.

Finally, civic participation improves the quality of decisions. Public consultation always helps clarify the municipality's goals to reach up to the most effective solution.

### **2.3.7. Theories of participation**

Theories in important topics are considered as normative, but it is important to mention that theories in broad meaning are worldviews on how to perceive, model and understand information, process, or developments. Practice is impossible to be applicable if it is not related to theoretical theory to offer a clear view of concept first.

#### *i. Socio-Psychological Approach*

The theory of socio-psychology provides an interconnection of individuals and society which helps us to understand and explain social behavior. Individuals try to meet the

interest of the society while society helps them achieve their goals. Generally, humans behave differently around a group of close friends compared to a group of colleagues or at work. Habermas (1984) argues that the construction of reality is influenced by the individual's own perceptions, moral reasoning, and emotive feelings and by interactions with other individuals. The participation demonstrates the interactions of individuals where they put into use their knowledge and skills.

During the interactions, individuals' thoughts, feelings, attitudes, or behaviors can be affected by social influence which directly impacts the participatory process and its achievements. Which means that social actors may persuade the other social actors and change their opinions which are the way of building consensus. Communication and power are two important factors of socio-psychological theory. According to Terry (1997, p. 269), communication based on Habermas's studies, is "a means to reach agreement through informed discourse in a revitalized sphere of public debate". During the communication process, social actors learn about each other's interests and try to persuade each other to reach consensus in their interests. Power, using the well-known definition of Dahl (1957, p. 202), is defined as "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do". Different researchers refer to power in terms of punishment and manipulation.

## *ii. Rational Choice Approach*

The theory of rational choice is one of the most controversial theories in policy studies. Based on economic theories and in the wake of the positivist tradition, this approach emphasizes the strength of human reason to make decisions that will be primarily for personal benefits and consequently also collective. A kind of utilitarianism, philosophical doctrine about utility, according to which rationality necessarily leads to good and useful decisions (Gilboa 2010). According to the rational approach, problem recognition represents the first step in their solutions. What follows after identifying the problem or the issue is the provision of all potential options that exist for their solutions.

There is a difference between rational choice as a theory of individual choice and theory of collective choice. Human beings can make choices in a fundamentally rational way which

means, based on the ability to think and imagine the possible side effects of the alternatives we have before the decision and from there to choose the option that is most suitable for our benefit at the moment (thinking under a cost-benefit logic). Individuals have enough capacity to generate emotional self-control, so that there are no variables other than reason itself when making decisions. Individuals use their self-interest to make choices related to individual voting behavior. Also, decisions made by individual actors will collectively produce aggregate social behavior. Rationality has two important components where choice must be consistent when it can rank all alternatives in a transitive way and choice is instrumental when the individual is doing the things for a reason. While human behaviour is purely instrumental, on the other hand the cultural context is what determines the alternatives on which we can decide the behaviours which would also be predetermined by culture.

There are also a range of concepts and models that assist in public policy related with participation such as incrementalism which is elaborated in 1960s by Charles Lindblom, as a model alternative to rational choice and according to which decisions are taken based on developments and their adaptation (Krstić 2022). Incrementalism is a model in permanent development which asserts that decisions are not based on certain strategies and plans or with clear goal, but they are formed according to the circumstances of time and interest of citizens (Hayes 2017; Smith and Larimer 2009, 53)

## **2.4. Decision- Making Process**

### ***2.4.1. Policy making process***

In our daily life we are constantly influenced by various policies directly or indirectly. Policy making also means translating the vision and political program into concrete actions in order to improve and change the lifestyle of citizens. However, what we are not very clear about, is the process from its initial stage to the final one when the policy is implemented. So where and how politics begins and where it ends. The development of the cyclic model will be presented below comparing scholars' proposals to reflect the differences as well as similarities (Table 1).

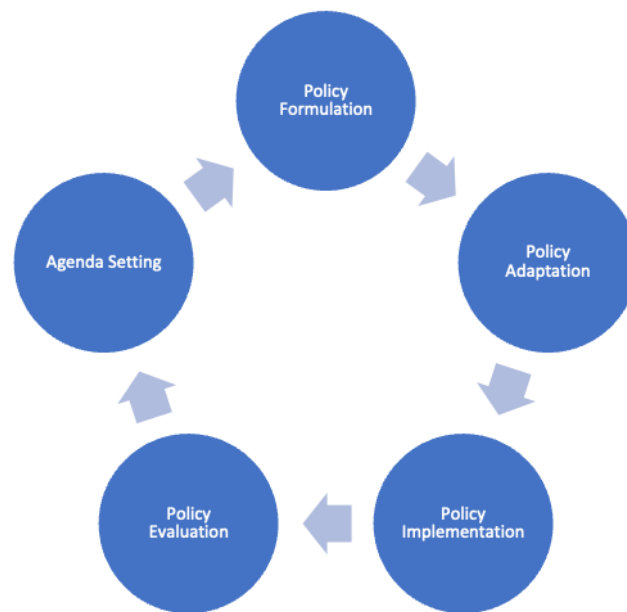


**Table 1:** Comparison of proposed process models

<b>Proposals of the policy making process</b>		
Harold D. Lasswell (1971, 28)	James E. Anderson (1974, 19)	Hill (2009) Hill and Huper (2009)
i. Intelligence	i. Problem identification and formation of agenda	i. Agenda Setting
ii. Promotions	ii. Formulation	ii. Policy formulation
iii. Descriptions	iii. Adaptation	iii. Implementation
iv. Invocation	iv. Implementation	iv. Organization of the process
v. Application	v. Evaluation	v. Evaluation and accountability
vi. Conclusion		
vii. Evaluation		

Source: Data compiled by the author

The policy-making study describes and analyzes policies as one problem solving process and divides this process cyclically and stepwise in the following stages (which is also known as the policy cycle), each of which is defined by a central category.



**Figure 1:** The policy-making cycle

According to the model described in Figure 1, the key stages of a policy-making cycle are: i) identification of issues or assigning agenda; ii) formulation; iii) executive decision-making or adaptation; iv) policy implementation and v) evaluation.

Decision-making must be seen and understood as an integral part of the policy-making process, which can appear at different levels and stages. Even in the agenda setting, it is necessary to decide what to include or not in the agenda, even in the wording the decision is made for which option must be “set” for compilation. Anderson (2006, p. 119) defines decision-making as the action of officials or authority for the purpose of accepting, modifying, or rejecting preferred political alternatives. Decision making analysis can be divided into its phase as observational and evaluative. Thus, the decision-making process means working on the operating and cooperating strategies with all relevant factors for gaining support and legitimacy for the way of resolution of any proper matter. Necessary political and legal measures are taken in the empowerment of certain policies and the respective counties are authorized to act in this regard.

From the various models offered for the analysis of decision-making, the most common are those of rational choice, incrementalism and process model organization, similar to the institutionalist approach. For, rationalist decision making consists of taking a series of steps that lead to the increase of knowledge and the growth of technology, which will be used for problem solving. This means that decisions come after goals have been set, through selected activities and by comparing options one makes the right decision. Accordingly, the right decision is that which meets the intended purposes (Parsons 1995, pp. 271-275). In his book Quade (1989, p. 45) considers that policy analysis consists of drafting reasonable strategies to find the best solutions for problems and this strategy should contain the following elements:

- *Formulation* – problems are clarified and limited, and goals are set;
- *Search* – identify, design and choosing alternatives;
- *Forecast* – predicts future circumstances and operational context;
- *Modeling* – building and using models to determine the effects;
- *Evaluation* – comparison and ranking of alternatives.

Decision-making also depends on the decision-makers themselves, respectively orientation, interest and commitment. Then from the situation and circumstances in which they operate, the issue at hand, the information as well as the time available to them. Therefore, these factors determine in most cases, the style of decision making. In other

stages of policy making, even the decision-making process varies depending on the nature of the specific sector, as well as the conditions and circumstances in which actors act. Significantly decision making also depends on the questions, based on what information, data, values or recommendations and tips that decisions will be made.

#### ***2.4.2. Theories of decision-making***

Decision-making theory is an interdisciplinary project in which philosophers, economists, psychologists, scientists, and statisticians contribute in a collaborative effort to make sense of how individuals or groups should make decisions (Resnik 1987). At the core of decision-making theory all authors make the distinction between normative and descriptive theory. Normative decision theory determines how decisions should be made while descriptive theory focuses on how decisions are made. With the advancement of scientific research, the distinction between descriptive and normative theories has become blurred. According to Slovic et al (1977), normative and descriptive theory are two interrelated aspects of behavioral decision-making theory. Normative theory deals with the action paths that most closely agree with the beliefs and values of decision makers, while descriptive theory deals with the description of these beliefs and values as well as the way in which individuals incorporate them into their decision-making.

#### *Normative theory and prescriptive theory of decision making*

Early decision-making research focuses on the degree to which people follow normative theories for optimal choice while modern decision-making research deals with how the decision-making problem and decision-making situation affect the decision-making process (Thunholm 2004).

Over (2004) lists formal logic, probability theory and decision theory as normative theories that enable rules to be followed for rational thinking. Rational theory is normative depending on people's definition of rationality. The normative model is an abstract system that seeks to capture the way that ideal people can behave (Bell et al 1988). Normative theory ignores all the psychological limitations of the decision makers, doubts,

contradictions and biases, which is often referred to as a rational model of decision-making.

Keller (1989) believes that perspective research has been developed to fill the gap between descriptive and normative principles by developing and testing methods to help people adapt to the desired normative principles. The perspective approach deals with the art and science of practical decision-making (Raiffa 1994). Prescriptive analysis can be called decision engineering or the engineering side of normative theory (Raiffa 1994). Prescriptive analysis uses normative models to guide the development of decision-maker perception toward an aspired ideal recognizing real cognitive limitation (French 1995). Also, prescriptive theory is a special union created by the softening of the normative with the descriptive.

#### *Descriptive theory of decision making*

Descriptive theory is contained in psychology and behavioral theory. Dean and Sharfman (1993) demonstrate that neither elections nor organizational decision-making process meet the heroic assumptions of normative economic models. Simon (1959) notes a slip in the schematic model of traditional economic theory for the economically rational, knowledgeable, well-organized and stable. There are environmental conditions and constraints related to the decision makers as an information processor, which make the theory orient the interest in real behaviour rather than in the normal behaviour of individuals.

Descriptive analyses are highly empirical and clinical activities that directly affect the field of social sciences that deal with individual behaviour. According to researchers, with descriptive theory, scientists can study individual behaviour without having to worry about trying to modify behavior, influence behavior or moralize about that behaviour. Descriptive research on decision-making process shows that information and strategies used to build preferences or beliefs appear to be dependent and predictable on several factors, related to task, context and individual differences (Payne, et al. 1992).

## **2.5. Theoretical Literature Review**

In the past decades, there has been a growing incentive for effective development policies and democratization in transition economies which often copy or adapt the best practices of the developed democratic states. The EU has been considered as a “normative power” (manner 2002) or “transformative power” (Grabbe 2004; Young 2005). Due to European influence, the Central Eastern and European countries made significant progress in political and economic developments (Cowles et al 2001). On the other hand, the Western Balkan countries have been in waiting room for more than 20 years due to their internal problems. Fight against poverty, corruption, achievement of economic growth and implementation of democratic principles still remain in some transitional economies. Many researchers on the difference in democratization and development outcomes for transition states have found that the main factors affecting are the capacity of the state, past legacies, social capital and different political trajectories (Carothers 2002; Acemoglu and Robinson 2012).

In the early 1960s, different theorists from sociology, politics and philosophy fields have produced a significant body of scholarship on the effectiveness of participatory and deliberative democracy as a way to empower community leaders and citizens to influence public decisions. The active and enduring participation of ordinary citizens in public decisions is the base of participatory democracy. A reliably democratic order requires promoting the political involvement of citizens in the civil associations, workplace as well as public institutions.

During the last years, there has been an increased awareness of the political dimension of development (UNDP 2002). There is an increasingly growing consensus on the importance of citizen participation for strengthening democracy, promotion of good governance and improvement of the process and mechanisms that can be used to achieve development goals (UNDP 2002). The attributes involved for good governance and democracy must include accountability, transparency, participation, efficiency, control of corruption, political stability, absence of violence and realization of human rights, which will contribute in building democracy and economic development (UNDP 2002). Most of the

researchers suggest that citizen engagement is a key factor for promotion of democratic values as well as improvement of economic performance.

A positive correlation is found between civic engagement and economic growth in the transition countries for a period from 1989 to 1998 by Raiser 2008. Citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic process, to be deliberately included in the future. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society (Arnstein 1969). World Health Organisation (WHO 2002) who envisaged public participation as a:

process by which people are enabled to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them, in making decisions about factors that affect their lives, in formulating and implementing policies, in planning, developing and delivering services and in taking action to achieve change (WHO 2002, p. 10).

According to the UN, civic participation implies the inclusion of citizens in a wide range of decision-making activities in order to guide government programs straight to community needs, to build public support and build one sense of cohesion within the community. Therefore, civic engagement in the administrative public is the involvement of citizens in the decision - making process of the state through measures and / or institutional arrangements in order to increase their impact on the programs and public policies to ensure a very positive impact on their social and social economic life (UN 2013).

It is highlighted that the main purpose of public participation is to offer the public an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process of related development planning. Here, related development planning refers to a stakeholder engagement with any development plan that might affect physically, mentally or both. However, the success of the process depends on how far the public is allowed to be involved (Hashim, 1986; Lukić, 2011).

## CHAPTER

### 3. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1. Public participation and related concepts

Citizen participation is a process of individual or collective actions to identify issues of public interest and to influence public decisions. Also, it has been regarded as “the essence of democracy” and a “force for creating a sense of community and a sense of control over our lives and institutions” (Wandersman et al 1987, p. 534). Generally, there are four broad areas related with the concept of citizen participation. The first area is community service where citizens participate in voluntary services to serve to community. The second area is collective action where in any activity citizens come together to fulfil their role as citizens (Diller 2001, 22). The third area is political involvement where citizens resolve problems related to political process. And the final area is social change where participation of citizens in the community’s life with the aim of bringing positive changes in their future (Adler and Goggin 2005).

According to UN Public Administration Glossary (2008), citizens participation implies:

“the involvement of citizens in a wide range of policymaking activities, including the determination of levels of service, budget priorities, and the acceptability of physical construction projects in order to orient government programs toward community needs, build public support, and encourage a sense of cohesiveness within neighborhoods. In addition, the World Bank (2002) defines participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and control the development of a common orientation, decision-making power and influence to their resources are essentially involved in a number of characteristics widely recognized.”

In his book, titled *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, Ehrlich (2000) defines civic engagement as:

“means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political process.”  
(Ehrlich 2000, vi)

From the above definitions, it can be seen that citizen participation is beneficial to society because. It provides to the citizens the opportunity to participate in formulating public policies that directly affect them and produces policy outcomes that more closely resemble the broader public interest (Day 2016). The collaborative approach allows citizens to participate in policy making which directly affects their lives and communities. In the same time, it is beneficial because it produces policy outcomes that reflect the citizens' visions for their communities

In 2017, the OECD presented simpler interpretations of different types of citizen participation. According to the OECD methodology (OECD 2017; OECD 2022), there are three main levels in citizen participation: i) information, ii) consultation and iii) active participation.

#### *i) Information*

Information is the first and fundamental right that describes the whole process of participation. This is a one-time process where information comes from authorities to citizens. This kind of interaction provides passive access to information based on citizens' demand and in the same time lay down an obligation to the government to disseminate information to citizens such as: request for official documents or other preparatory documents. Information is classified as the weakest level of participation which usually consists in the one-sided way of information by the local government without requesting or expecting interaction with non-state actors or being properly involved in the process. Even though it represents the lowest level of participation, it is quite useful at all stages of the decision-making process.



### *ii) Consultation*

This is a mutual relationship where the government invites citizens to express their opinions, comments and views on a particular issues or documents. This is a way of reacting participation, where citizens are involved because the government asks for their comments on the draft laws. The consultation includes all the stages of the decision-making process, in particular the design, monitoring and reformulation of the decision-making program.

### *iii) Active participation*

This is a higher level of two-way relationship, where citizens are actively involved in proposing policy options and in shaping dialogue of policies. This can be described as a situation where citizens' representatives share chairs at the table with government representatives, for example by participating the working groups. Citizen participation is crucial in ensuring the protection of rights, transparency, accountability, equity, self-determination influencing decision making, and effective democratic citizenship. According to Cahn and Camper (1968), there are three rationales for citizen participation. Firstly, citizen participation promotes dignity and self-sufficiency within the individual. Secondly, citizens participation contributes to the energies and resources of individual citizens within community. Thirdly, citizen participation provides a source of special insight, information, knowledge and experience, which contributes to the soundness of community solutions.

The dialogue between the parties (citizens and authorities) can be of a general characters or cooperative characters. General dialogue is a two-way communication process, based on mutual interests and objectives that appear to be shared, thus ensuring a regular combination of views. The general dialogue makes it possible for the local government to consult with the citizens, but it makes the final decision.

Collaborative dialogue is more dynamic than a general one as it takes place in joint meetings on quite frequent bases with the aim of developing together a strategy that often leads to acceptable results by mutual consent. Dialogue is highly valued in all phases of

the development cycle of a decision-making process, but it takes decisive importance for the creation of a program, its design and reformulation. Collaborative dialogue is based on mutual interests for the elaboration of special programs and usually leads to recommendation and a strategy.

Another form is partnership which implies separate responsibilities for everyone at each stage of the political decision-making. It represents the highest form of participation. The two characteristics of partnership are: i) cooperation and ii) decision-making. Partnership represents the highest level of participation. Citizens and the local government gather to work closely together, given the fact that citizens are independent to express their opinions. It is the degree to which citizens are “empowered”. The experiences of countries reveal that the turnout varies between 1 percent and 15 percent of voters. Cases with a turnout of more than 15 percent are considered exceptional (Solijonov 2016). Usually, participation is higher in small local units and localities with small geographical subdivisions. If participation is made possible through representatives of civil society organizations, the number of participants tends to be relatively lower rather in small local units.

In this research, citizen participation refers to the above-mentioned definitions from voluntary actions to political involvement and participation of citizens in the community in order to improve the conditions of life for the whole community. As well, citizen participation means applying their civic rights and freedom of speech as well as being active citizens by participating in decision-making process regarding the issues affecting their communities’ lives.

**Table 2: Objectives of civic participation, initiatives and similar types of participation**

Author	Objectives of Citizen participation	Types of Participation
Walters et al. (2000)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assistance in seeking definition, alternatives or criteria (disclosure)</li> <li>2. Public education on a proposed and up-to-date issue (education)</li> <li>3. Public opinion assessment regarding a set of options (measurements)</li> <li>4. Persuade the public towards a recommended alternative (conviction)</li> <li>5. Fulfillment of public norms and legal requirements (legitimation)</li> </ol>	Consultation Information Consultation Information / Consultation / Active Participation
OECD (2017; 2022)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Democracy strengthening</li> <li>2. Increasing Transparency and accountability</li> <li>3. Getting Better Services Active</li> <li>4. Reaction to the pressure of similar groups (social pressure) at the international level through applying superficial measures to improve interaction with citizens without change essential in traditional decision-making process</li> <li>5. Division of responsibility (or blame) for a difficult or unpopular political decision</li> <li>6. Deferring Difficult Decisions Through Debates and Extended Discussions</li> <li>7. Removing / Avoiding Protests</li> </ol>	Active participation Information Consultation / Participation Information  Information / Consultation  Active Consultation / Participation Information
Involve (2005)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Governance, ex: strengthening of democratic legitimacy, increasing interest and engagement in politics, accountability, promotion of active citizenship</li> <li>2. Social cohesion and social justice – ex: building relationships, community cohesion, ownership, social capital, justice and equity</li> <li>3. Quality of service - the most efficient and best public services that meet the real needs and reflect the values of the community</li> <li>4. Capacity building and learning - increasing skills, confidence and empowerment of individuals and organizations, to provide the basis for growth and development in the future, particularly, for it helping build powerful communities</li> </ol>	Information / Consultation / Active participation  Consultation / Active participation Consultation / Active Participation Information / Consultation / Active participation
Pindado et al. (2002)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Participation to legitimize"; to strengthen the government's position, objectives, and interests, without changing them</li> <li>2. "participation to transform"; what is required is not to maintain the status quo, but also to promote change, or transformation where citizen participation is considered fundamental</li> </ol>	Information / Consultation  Consultation / Active participation

Source: Yetano (2009)

Table 2 illustrates the continuation of citizen activities as a spectrum of activities classified according to the degree of their formality (from informal to formal) and the agent type (individual and community/group).

**Table 3:** Sort of activities implied by citizen participation

Types of activities: <b>Informal</b>		<b>Formal</b>
<b>Individual (Examples)</b>		
Volunteering Helping a neighbour Helping a neighbour Watching news Listening to news on radio Reading news in printed and digital media Discussing news with family, friends Boycotting a product, a brand, etc.	Contributing to a cause Organizing or taking part in a boycott, protest, demonstration Spreading news, voicing opinions on political and other events Initiating or taking part in (including online) campaigns Writing blogs, posting articles, comments; discussing news and events online with friends and larger audiences Participating in Community Council meetings, etc.	Voting Establishing an NGO, a union, other CSO Joining a CSO, union, league, etc. Donating to a charity Signing a petition Writing letters to officials Appealing a decision (of court, government agency, etc.) Raising community issues in the local, regional, national governments and other institutions, Running for office, etc
<b>Group/Community (Examples)</b>		
Working with others in community to fix a problem Collectively boycotting a product, a brand, etc.	Attending community meetings as a part of a group/association Organizing and participating in protests and demonstrations as a group, etc.	Protecting/promoting interests of a certain group of people or a cause in a coalition, a CSO, a group, etc Working as a member of a political party/movement, etc

Source: Adler and Gogin (2005)

### 3.1.2 The value of citizen participation

Citizen participation is beneficial and valuable to society (Laurian 2004). It can bring improvements in communities; build relationships and strengthen the social fabric; and create feelings of personal and collective empowerment (Florin and Wandersman 1990). Moreover, citizens participation is beneficial for democratic process due to increase in government accountability in the public and public support for policies. It increases public

awareness and contend that process involving conflict resolution and citizen participation may “improve the effectiveness of environmental policies and enhance the potential for affected citizens to become part of the decision-making process rather than being the victims of the decisions made by anonymous agencies or institutions” (Renn et al 1995, p.1). Goldstein and Butler (2010, p. 239) agree that decades of research on collaborative planning have shown that plans formulated through stakeholder collaboration “enjoy broad support for implementation.”

Having a program for public participation, it gives answers to the most important questions of: “What will be done?”; “When will be done?”; “How will be done?”; “By whom will be done?”; and “Where will be done?” As a conclusion, it is necessary to define the steps, activities and resources needed to implement the public participation process and confirm its effectiveness.

### **3.2. Typologies of Participation**

Since the 1960s, many researchers have been focused on the studies of participation by providing innumerable attempts to provide a holistic model or typology of democratic participation. Three common classifications of typologies will be provided below:

#### ***3.2.1. Continuum participation***

Continuum typology can be defined as a model where the characteristics of participation are normatively set out from “lesser” to “better” forms. The best example for explaining this form of participation is Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation which explains clearly the different ways that citizens can be involved in decision making. In 1969, Arnstein created the idea of “participation rates”, which functioned consistently, ranging from the most useless and powerless to the most controlled and powerful.

According to Arnstein (1969), there are eight rungs on a ladder of citizens’ participation. Arnstein ladder of citizens’ participation model is divided into eight levels of participation that are grouped into three different groups: i) in passive citizenship; ii) creating an image of active citizenship (tokenism) and iii) active citizenship. With her metaphorical ladder,

Arnstein (1969, p. 217) demonstrated that some process reduce citizen participation to empty ritual that effectively amounts to “non-participation”

**Table 4:** Eight rungs on a ladder of citizens’ participation

8	Citizen control	Degrees of Citizen power
7	Delegated Power	
6	Partnership	
5	Placation	Degrees of tokenism
4	Consultation	
3	Informing	
2	Therapy	Non-participation
1	Manipulation	

Source: Arnstein (1969)

The first two levels, 1 and 2, include manipulation and therapy, which according to Arnstein constitute passive citizenship. Manipulation and therapy that make up the active citizen require the education of citizens / participants which constitute the “non-participation” category.

Stages 3, 4 and 5 include information, consultation and appointment or symbolic participation belonging to the group of active citizenship (token) creation. This category is referred to as the “thin veneer of participation” or “tokenism” (Cornwall 2008, 270), where citizens are involved in decision-making only symbolically without power developed. The third stage is a one-way process where citizens become informed regarding what is being discussed at the decision making level. In the consultation rung, citizens may affect the outcome, though in a limited and often circuitous manner because the citizens' voices are heard. Lastly, in the placation rung, citizens participate through their representative on decision making boards. As a conclusion, the purpose of information, consultation and placation is to gain access to information, public meetings, and the appointment of representatives to legitimize participation.

The last three degrees include: i) co-governance; ii) civic decision making and iii) citizen control belonging to the active citizen group. In these stages, political power is distributed between citizens and those in power. Citizens have the opportunity to participate in the planning, and policy formulation.

Arnstein contends that “citizen participation” is equivalent to “citizen power.” She explains that participation is the means by which “have not” citizens can redistribute power and induce social reform, and a strategy that allows the “have-nots” to be deliberately included in sharing information, setting goals and policies, allocating tax resources, operating programs, and distributing benefits (Arnstein 1969, p. 216).

Similarly, Pateman (1970) argues that citizen participation can be understood as taking place in a continuum. Pateman focuses more on the relationship between representatives and participatory democracy and seeks to rework the central characteristic of democracy as well as “the notion of participation at its heart”.

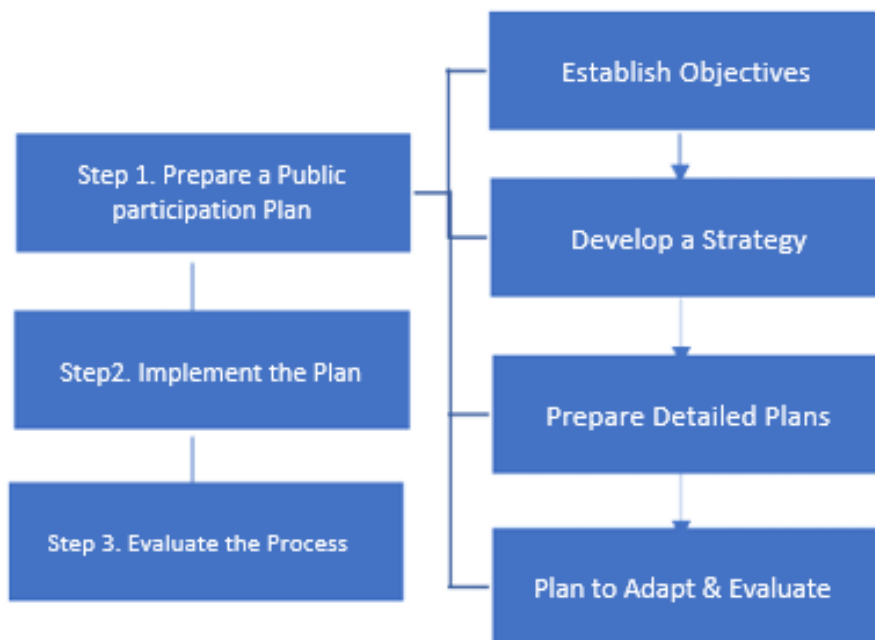
Contrary to Arnstein (1969), Pateman’s (1970) distinguishes between pseudo, partial and full participation. Participation seems to become meaningful when the transfer of power from elites to ordinary citizens exists. Pateman argues that the idea that socialization into a society with participation is central to her project and dismisses pseudo participation as not meaningful thus preventing the opportunity for information sharing between citizens and authorities.

Another example of the continuum approach is developed by Pretty’s (1995). His functional participation concentrates on the efficiency argument which is mobilized to legitimate the use of participation for achieving goals for the external agency, maybe with the aim of reducing costs. The ordinary decisions seem to be pre-determined by the parent agency (Pretty’s, 1995) and the use of “structured learning process” has significant effect within interactive participation which helps the participants to gain a stake in maintaining structures and practices.

Making a comparison between Pretty’s typology (Figure 2) and Arnstein’s typology (Figure 1) seems to be equally normative and both of them are progressing from “bad” to

“good” forms of participation. In the interactive participation process, participants are able to learn more about the decision-making process as well as take control of decisions. Pretty supports the idea that this is only exceeded by self-mobilization since any group can achieve the same goals and the need of external organizations is not required.

Pretty has written during the mid-1990s when the neo-liberalism was well established. Pretty (1995, p. 1252) argues that “self-initiated mobilisation may or may not challenge the existing distributions of wealth and power”. Cornwall (2008) argues that self-mobilisation may be entirely consistent with the neo-liberal approach, where self-mobilisation is actively promoted by the state.



**Figure 2:** Framework for the public participation process



**Figure 3: Pretty's (1995) Typology of Participation**

Nr	Typology	Characteristics of each type
1	<b>Manipulative participation</b>	Participation is simply a pretense, with 'people's' representatives on official boards but who are unelected and have no power.
2	<b>Passive participation</b>	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.
3	<b>Participation by consultation</b>	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering process, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
4	<b>Participation for materials incentives</b>	People participate by contributing resources, for example, labor, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Farmers may provide the fields and labor but are involved in neither experimentation nor the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.
5	<b>Functional participation</b>	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision making, tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people may still only be co-opted to serve external goals.
6	<b>Interactive Participation</b>	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen a right, not just the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning process. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
7	<b>Self-mobilization</b>	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need but retain control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used. Self-mobilization can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.

Source: Pretty (1995, 1252)

Comparing at Arnstein's and Pretty's models, it can be seen that both approaches are compatible with each other, irrespective the difference of 26 years between the two publications. Pretty's highpoint of participation is totally compatible with the current system of governance and reminds us that the motivations of those who adopt participatory practices should be factored into any analysis (Cornwall 2008, p. 270). In the same vein, Arnstein's (1969) typology reminds us that political participation is ultimately a question of power and control.

The benefit of the continuum participation focuses on what policies can offer to the public, especially the critical division between tokenistic and more progressive forms of participation. Also, Cornwall (2008) notes that Arnstein's ladder of citizens' participation leads to three important questions. The first question is: Who are the citizens being empowered? The second question is: What are citizens actually in control of? The third question is: What are the benefits for the state in ceding this power to citizens?

The continuum approach undertakes a "continuous space-an incremental change to the same phenomenon" (Bishop and Davies 2002, p. 18) where a smooth movement of participation from tokenistic to real takes place.

### ***3.2.2. Tailored participation***

As discussed in previous section, the continuum approach recognizes the uncertainties in defining participation as well as avoids some of the precision's difficulties. Thomas (1993) argues that authorities should identify and classify the policy problems first in order to employ the appropriate participatory initiatives. Therefore, Thomas supports the idea that each policy problem includes some central characteristics suited to certain types of participatory initiatives (Figure 4)

**Figure 4:** Thomas' (1993) Approaches to Decision Making

<b>Autonomous managerial decision</b>	The manager solves the problem or makes the decision alone without public involvement
<b>Modified autonomous managerial decision</b>	The manager seeks information from segments of the public, but decides alone in a manner which may or may not reflect group influence;
<b>Segmented public consultation</b>	The manager shares the problem separately with segments of the public, getting ideas and suggestions, then makes a decision which reflects group influence;
<b>Unitary public consultation</b>	The manager shares the problem with the public as a single assembled group, getting ideas and suggestions, then makes a decision which reflects group influence; or
<b>Public decision</b>	The manager shares the problem with the assembled public, and together the manager and the public attempt to reach agreement on a solution.

Source: Thomas (1993)

Thomas' approach proposes that policy problems are different, which means that participation should be tailored to those differences (1993, 461). This approach illustrates that the need for initiatives must be tailored to the policy problem and context.

Another comprehensive typology is provided for this approach by Cohen and Uphoff (1980) which highlights the "who" and "how" of participation which can be achieved by addressing the phases of participation. This approach focuses on the suitability of one dimension of participation to another.

**Figure 5:** Cohen and Uphoff's (1980) Dimensions of Participation

<b>Kinds of participation</b>	Participation in decision making
	Participation in implementation
	Participation in benefits
	Participation in evaluation
<b>Who participates?</b>	Local residents
	Local leaders
	Government personnel
	Foreign personnel
<b>How is participation occurring?</b>	Basis of participation
	Form of participation
	Extent of participation
	Effect of participation

Source: Cohen and Uphoff (1980, p. 219)

As is shown in the figure 5, Cohen and Uphoff (1980, p. 219) typology intend to secure “clarity through specificity” which focus on the design for action to promote participation.

**Figure 6:** Map of Participation Types

Participation Type	Objective	Key Instruments	Limitations
<b>Consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to gauge community reaction to a proposal and invite feedback</li> <li>• consultation is only participation when information gathered can influence subsequent policy choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• key contacts</li> <li>• surveys</li> <li>• interest group meetings</li> <li>• public meetings</li> <li>• discussion papers</li> <li>• public hearings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delay between consultation and any outcomes</li> <li>• communities feel betrayed if they do not like the decision</li> <li>• expensive and time consuming for complex decisions</li> </ul>
<b>Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• involving citizens and interest groups in aspects of government decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advisory boards</li> <li>• citizens advisory</li> <li>• committees</li> <li>• policy community forum</li> <li>• public inquiries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• issue of who can seek for a community</li> <li>• bias toward established interest groups</li> <li>• legitimacy issues with those excluded from the process</li> </ul>
<b>Standing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allowing third parties to become involved in the review process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review courts and tribunals</li> <li>• open and third party standing</li> <li>• statutory process for social and environmental impact assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only relevant for those issues which come to court</li> <li>• expensive and time consuming</li> <li>• bias toward well-funded interests</li> <li>• legal approach may be inappropriate for some issues</li> </ul>
<b>Consumer Choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allowing customer preferences to shape a service through choices of products and providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• surveys, focus groups</li> <li>• purchaser/provider splits</li> <li>• competition between suppliers</li> <li>• vouchers</li> <li>• case management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relevant only for service delivery issues</li> </ul>
<b>Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to hand control of an issue to the electorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• referendum</li> <li>• community parliaments</li> <li>• electronic voting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• costly, time consuming and often divisive</li> <li>• are issue votes the best way to encourage deliberation?</li> </ul>

Source: Bishop and Davis (2002, p. 27).

Bishops and Davids (2002: 26) support the idea that continuum typology is not compatible with Thomas' (1993) approach. The former approaches for citizen participation need to sideline or undermine representative government. While Thomas' approach is measured from the perspective of the policy maker which has different concerns regarding the forms of participation being offered. Bishop and Davis (2002) have provided a “map of participation” (Figure 6) without pursuing to improve hierarchy or direction. They try to

move away from normative typologies towards a more negotiated account of participation by explaining the participation's forms under neo-liberal agendas.

### **3.2.3. Interest-centric participation**

The approach of interest-centric participation focuses on the motivations of the parties involved and recognizes the agendas that contribute to the field of participation. The participation can be divided into planner-centered or people centered (Michener 1998). The people-center approaches concentrate on the ability of participants to build capacity as well as empower citizens to meet their needs. While, the planner-center approach is based on outcome where the participants are more process oriented and focused more on their welfare. In addition, it focuses on administrative, financial and efficiency while enabling "local people's acceptance of new policies and technologies promoted by outsiders" (Michener 1998, p. 2106). The perspective of planner center approach is a cynical challenge to achieve local knowledge and labor. It can be reframed as mutually beneficial where the knowledge about the topic and process can be gained by the participation of local citizens which can contribute to the overall efficiency in the decision-making. The benefits achieved by the planner-centred approach can be noticed when the goals of the planner-center approach contradict the benefits of the participation that this analysis gains relevance. If cost-saving measures exist, consultation is used instead of other forms of participation where the initiative may be seen as too planner-centric.

White (1996) focuses more on the normative continuum approach (Figure 7), with the forms of participation moving towards more nominal to transformative forms.

**Figure 7:** White's (1996) Table of Participation

<b>Form</b>	<b>Top-down</b>	<b>Bottom-up</b>	<b>Function</b>
<b>Nominal</b>	Legitimation	Inclusion	Display
<b>Instrumental</b>	Efficiency	Cost	Means
<b>Representative</b>	Sustainability	Leverage	Voice
<b>Transformative</b>	Empowerment	Empowerment	Means/Ends

Source: White (1996:144)

The Figure 7 shows the divergent expectations of participation from the viewpoint of different stakeholders. The views of the planners and people are conflicting in the nominal, instrumental and representatives' stages while in the last stage the expectations are shared. At this stage 'being involved in considering options, making decisions, and taking collective action to fight injustice is itself transformative' (White, 1996: 216) Also, White shows that participation as a dynamic process is changing over time but that typologies necessarily present a static picture that cannot account for changing motivations, interests, or power dynamics (White 996: 149).

### **3.3. Participation Failure**

Macmillan (2011) proposed the concept of participation failure along with the familiar ideas of state, market and government failures. If a participatory initiative displays forms of participation failure, then it is impossible to get a positive, legitimate or progressive outcome. Thus, avoiding participation failure must be one of the priorities in society. Participation can be significantly affected by the size of the population.

**Figure 8:** Macmillan’s (2011) Forms of Participation Failure

<b>Form of participation failure</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Insufficient participation</b>	“due to time pressure, labour market participation, family life and private consumption and leisure pursuits”
<b>Social gradient of participation</b>	“where some groups such as the better resourced are more likely to participate than others”
<b>Geography of participation</b>	“here it appears to be stronger in some places than others, such as the idea that voluntary and community action struggles in more deprived areas”
<b>Temporality of participation</b>	“where provision, and thus participation, comes and goes according to changing funding regimes and trends in charitable giving”
<b>Interest- centric participation</b>	“where participation may concentrate on particular interests and enthusiasms, rather than on meeting essential welfare requirements for sustainable livelihoods”

Source: Adapted from Macmillan (2011: 112)

Successful participation affects directly the likelihood of future initiatives as well as the professional political involvement. Furthermore, the increase in political consciousness leads to a better associational life, active informed citizens and well prepared to self-govern and self-mobilise.

Macmillan (2011) investigates the pitfalls of participation and notices that it is important to recognise who decides the parameters for failure. An example is the state-led participation which can be tailored to a specific outcome such as increasing the citizen's knowledge, expertise and resilience. An initiative of participation can be considered successful if a certain threshold of participants is achieved.



### **3.4. The concept of Decision-making process**

It is important to understand the policy development process in order to explain the participation of civil society in decision-making. The product of the policy-making process is a public policy. The policy-making is the activity that precedes the publication of a goal, while the policy is the result of this policy (Hanekom and Thornhill, 1996:63). Policy making as a comprehensive process involves several participants such as: public officials, interest groups, legislatures and individual citizens. Legislative process is stipulated in general terms in the Constitution of the countries and further elaborated by executive by laws or guidelines. The objective of policy making is to solve the challenges and problems in a society as well as to ensure better services to members of the society

This section focuses on the overview of citizen participation in decision-making process and on patterns of implementation including public hearing, public meetings, civic involvement, discussions with stakeholders, hearing organizations and associations that work to protect the public's broad interests and referendum.

#### ***3.4.1. Models of policy making process***

Several scholars have devised several models of policy-making applicable to the issue of public participation. Woll (1974:21) has developed the following models of policy making process: i) classical model; ii) group model; iii) elite model, and iv) system model. It should be noted that not all these models encourage public participation in the policy making process.

The classical model known as the institutional model focuses on the interests of legislature, executive and judiciary before developing and implementing the public policy. According to Henry (1992:290), the institutional model with its focus on the organizational chart of government has ignored the links between the different organs of government. Thus, it does not include any form of public participation in the policy-making process.

In the group model, different pressure groups tend to have different interests concerning particular issues. They are reacting in the way to influence policy-making (Henry 1992:

289). Therefore, public policy outcomes tend to favor the interest of the group with stronger influence. The group model shows that methods of public participation such as negotiation and collective bargaining could be utilized by interest groups in order to influence the outcomes of the policy-making process.

The third model is the elite/mass model where the individuals can be divided into two classes for the purpose of policy-making. The small elite groups are the leaders and the large groups of the masses are the followers (Woll 1974, p. 46). Public officials are responsible for implementing public policy that flows from the elite to the masses. In the elite model, public policy focused on the preferences of the elite and not in the demands of society. The masses are, to a great extent, passive and have only an indirect influence on policy-making by participating in elections (Dye 1978:27). There is only one form of public participation in this model known as voting.

Lastly, in the system model, policy-making is observed as a system containing major subsystems such as inputs, conversion, outputs and feedback (Fox et al 1991, pp. 31-32). The production of inputs lies on the demands, needs, problems and goals. The implementation of public policy influences the environment while the evaluation and adaptation of it may generate new inputs leading to a new policy-making cycle. There are six important questions to analyze these model (Dye 1978, p. 39):

1. What are the significant dimensions of the environment that generate demands in the political system?
2. What are the significant characteristics of the political system that enable it to transform demands into public policy?
3. How do environmental inputs affect the character of the political system?
4. How do characteristics of the political system affect the content of public policy?
5. How do environmental inputs affect the content of public policy?
6. How does public policy affect, through feedback, the environment and the character of the political system?"

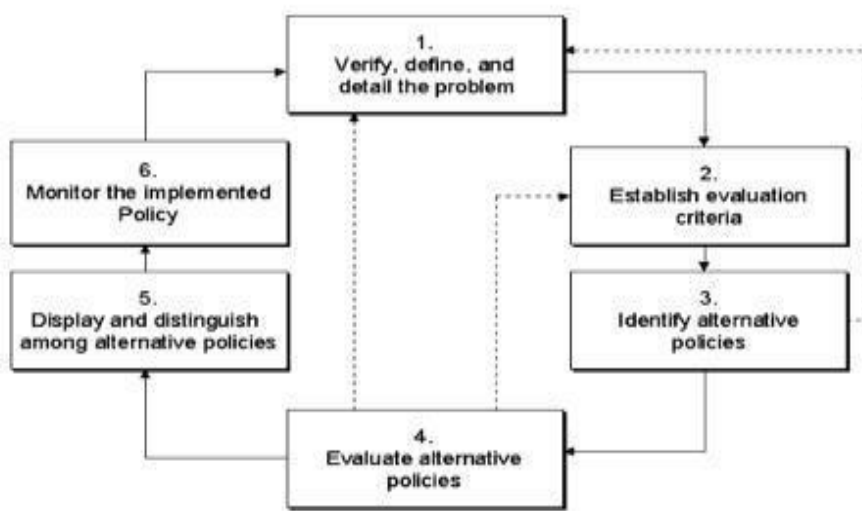
### 3.4.3. Decision – making structures

In their study DeSario and Langton (1987) found that public decisions are progressively being influenced by technology. There are many theories of decision-making structures helping us to examine the theory of public participation but the broadest are the technocratic approach and the democratic approach. Technocratic approach is a system of governance where decision-makers are selected on the basis of their scientific knowledge. Also, it is defined as the application of technical knowledge, expertise, techniques, and methods to problem solving.

Democratic approach refers to citizen involvement activities in relation to government planning and policy making (DeSario and Langton 1987, p. 5). Democratic approach seeks to maximize participation in decision making. This theory argues that a redistribution of power is just as likely to achieve a favorable outcome as any solution brought by experts.

### 3.4.4. Public participation in Rational policy making

Generally, all the “rational” decisions are taken by using the process of policy analysis. A rational decision is when it matches the best available means of achieving a given end. According to Patton et al, the policy analysis process consists on six steps: i) defining the problem; ii) goal identification and objectives; iii) development of alternatives iv) evaluation criteria development; v) identification of the best alternative and vi) evaluation of the outcome (1986, p. 26).



**Figure 9:** A diagram of the policy analysis process

### **3.5. Factors that influence in participation**

There are many factors that determine the level of citizen participation in the decision-making process. The most important factor is education. The high level of education of citizens leads to a higher possibility to participate in decision-making because of: i) better understanding the importance of involvement in the process; ii) the need for local institutions for different experiences and opinions, and iii) the assurance of harmonious decisions with civic requirements. Also, gender, age, ethnicity, trust, and expectations affect the level of participation in the process of democratic governance due to high levels of dissatisfaction with institutions, lack of trust or exclusion from the discussion process and important public decisions.

Generally, governments promote civil engagement in the policymaking, but in reality, the direct involvement of citizens in policy making is often avoided (Antonini and Fini 2011). Main reason of not involvement is related with the dissolution that their engagement or voice is not heard. Therefore, their participation will stimulate no changes within the government (Fowler and Kam 2017). In large populations, there is a very small probability that a single act of participation will remarkably affect the outcome. A rational choice perspective of participation is not effective at fostering public engagement. According to the different rational choices approach, motivation of civic participation in collective action and social movements for the public decision-making process is based on two important models like pure self-interest (Aldrich 1993; Feddersen and Pesendorfer, 1996) and expected value (Feather 1982).

The self-interest models provide participation of citizens in the decision making process if there is a type of personal benefits or implies low costs. While expectancy-value theory argues that motivation of citizens to participate in political actions is affected by the value of the expected outcomes. In this situation, cost-benefit analysis is the best model that describes the motivation of citizen's participation in decision-making such that the decision to engage in collection action. Policy making is based on rational evaluation of the benefits and personal costs due to participating (Olson 1965). However, the civic engagement in politics may not be fully affected by benefit/cost expectancy of participation, the willingness to participate could be influenced by other variables.

### **3.5.1. Factors Imposing Public Participation in the Making and Implementation of Policy**

The interaction between the governors and the governed is an essential indicator to ensure if the needs and aspirations of the citizens are taken into consideration during the process of policy making and implementation. Public participation is necessary for policy making and implementation process in any democratic country. It should include the following factors:

- i. to provide information to policy makers and the members of the public
- ii. democratization of the policy-making and implementation process
- iii. encouraging responsiveness to public needs
- iv. enabling the process of policy implementation
- v. facilitating community development
- vi. establishment of a control mechanism for policy-making and implementation

In a democratization system, the public is allowed and encouraged to contribute to the structure and functioning of public institutions. The local authorities in every country must encourage city council members to promote the involvement of the community in the design and delivery of municipal programs. As the policy makers make policies for the society, they need to take in consideration the needs and aspirations of society during the process of policy-making and implementation. In addition, taking the input of citizens into consideration, will contribute towards fighting dictatorship and focusing on the promotion of principles of good governance. Public participation in the local government sphere is therefore a mechanism by which information about local conditions, needs, desires, and attitudes can be obtained (Brynard 1996, p. 40). Citizens of any local authority are the ones who pay in the form of rates, taxes and other levies for the rendition of services on their

own behalf, so it is important to put them in a position that demands the delivery of those services.

Furthermore, the local government has to take the responsibility for any problems deriving from the non-delivery of service to them. Responsiveness of the public official to public needs can be defined as the taking of non-arbitrary, pertinent and timely actions by a public official in response to needs expressed by the public (Brynard 1990:60). Encouraging responsiveness to public needs, is important to continue with the application of strategies like citizen participation, the employment of public relations officers, reorganization and citizens' awareness. Public participation paves the way for the process of policy implementation to run smoothly. (Midgley et al 1986, p. 34)

### **3.6. Involvement of Public participation in local government level**

Public participation in the decision-making process is extremely important. There are many reasons for involving of the citizens in the policy making decision process which affect positively in creating a democratic country. To create a democratic government, citizens have to directly or indirectly influence, participate and co-produce policy making process. Policies have a direct impact on groups in society. It is important to take part and influence.

Public administrators need internal and external support to maintain a favorable public image which is essential for success. External support and co-production can prevent paternalism which is a big problem when policies are developed over the heads of people involved. Moreover, policies can be better qualitatively, in the sense they have variance of ideas from different target groups and policymakers at the same time. The knowledge and awareness of citizens for certain issues may be more interesting. In this context, it may reduce the risk of violent confrontation and may make it clear which options are considered (Dukes, 1996:64).

### ***3.6.1. The obligation and importance of Citizen participation***

Local government could be perceived as an essential tool in which every individual has the right to voice his/her needs. Without public participation, local government cannot be democratic. According to various research, the greater extent of public participation in government could lead to the accomplishment of the democratic ideal of self-government by communities (Arblster 1991, p. 62) and could successively bridge the gap between government and the people. There are various strategies that could help with the challenges of the future local government, such as: i) democratizing development; ii) empowerment, and iii) redistribution.

Citizen participation can contribute to strong collective intelligence by providing a better analysis of potential impacts and more inclusive parliamentary decision-making. Moreover, it increases trust and confidence of citizens in parliament, gives citizens a clearer understanding of the role of parliament and parliamentarians thus, making them more accountable and transparent. It gives citizens an opportunity to communicate their legitimate interests.

There are many reasons why public participation has to be improved. Firstly, public participation strengthens democracy and legitimizes democratic institutions. Secondly, public participation gives the public the sense of ownership in the lawmaking process and provides the opportunity for the education process. Thirdly, public participation empowers the public. Finally, public participation contributes to the creation and maintenance of democratic culture between citizens.

### ***3.6.2. Benefits of Citizens Participation in government Decision making***

Since the 1950s, citizen-participation programs have been launched in all level of governance with an essential belief that if citizens are involved actively in decision making, the governance will be more democratic and more effective (Day 2016). All the countries have developed extensive initiatives to involve citizens in the governing process (OECD 2017; 2022) because of the belief that citizen involvement will produce more public-preferred decision making on the part of administrators (Oldfield 1990). Enhancing

citizen participation leads to the benefits of the process itself. Moreover, the participation process can be a transformative tool for social change (Nelson and Wright 1995). Public participation provides opportunity for communication and making agreements between the public and agencies making decisions. Effective public participation allows the public's values to be identified and incorporated into decisions that ultimately affect them (IAP2 2022). Citizen participation as a key element for development of local democracy affects the increase of transparency and accountability of municipalities regarding decisions that municipal officials make.

Decentralization of municipal competences is the most effective ways to increase attendance, involve citizens in governance, and improve stability and community security. According to the principle of subsidiarity, decentralization implies the approach of the power of the state to the citizens. This requires sustained engagement and organization by the municipalities, as well as structured relations with the middle actors, through dialogue and open communication with the public. In every country, citizen participation is important for many reasons, which are best summarized in the Participant's Guide Public (Creighton 2005, p. 18). All the benefits that civic participation brings are listed below in the context of citizen participation in the policy making process at the municipal level.

*i. Minimizing costs and delays*

Decisions or policies taken unilaterally deliver a much easier and quicker output, but the cost of implementation is much higher. Citizens often show resistance, and the result is that these decision or policies are implemented properly. However, decisions or policies which are consulted with the public go through a slower drafting process, but their implementation in practice is more successful.

*ii. Improving the quality of the decisions*

Public consultation helps clarify the municipal goals to achieve the most effective solution of the problem. Citizens usually have important information about problems and the way they should be addressed in practice. This indicates they have predispositions to offer new alternatives that are not foreseen by the municipality.



*iii. Facilitating the Implementation of Decisions*

Participation in designing any decision / policy offers citizens the sense of ownership for that decision / political issue. After it has been issued, citizens want to see it applied in real life. This means that in addition to the willingness or political support for the implementation of a decision, participation and the enthusiasm of citizens in this process is indispensable.

*iv. Ensuring credibility and legitimacy*

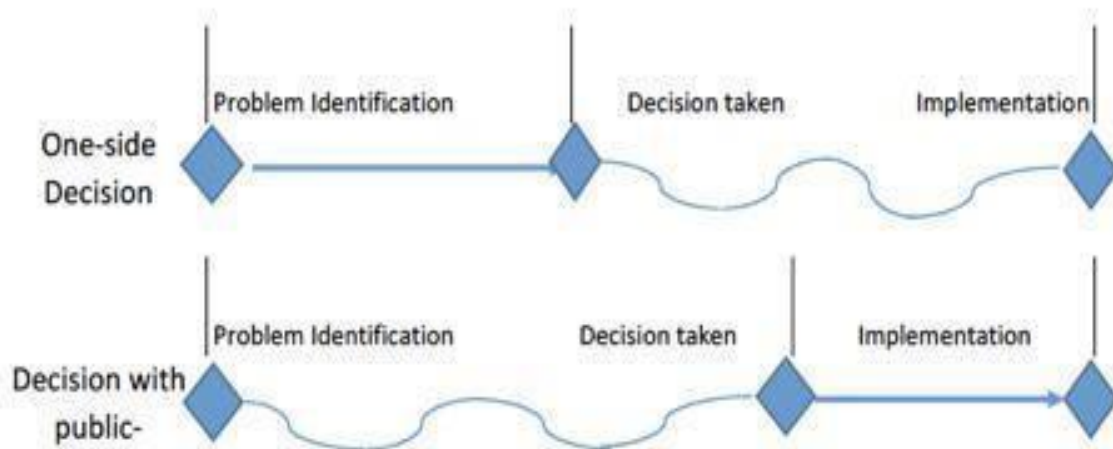
When the process in policy making involves citizens, the credibility and reliability towards the municipality is high, which directly affects the enforcement of decisions. In order to reach the highest level of reliability and legitimacy, the municipality must develop a process that is more informative and open to higher participation of citizens.

*v. Civil Society Development*

Civic participation means a more educated society. Participants not only learn about topics or issues which should be addressed, but they learn how and why municipal decisions are taken. This also affects the creation of young community leaders who have the skills and knowledge for solving problems.

Two of the most important benefits are: i) to minimize the cost and delays and ii) quality improvement of decisions. With more involvement of citizens in drafting and enforcing decisions, the implementation becomes much easier. On the other hand, the trust and legitimacy are higher. This has a multiplier effect on civil society development that will be more proactive in the process as the municipality is more open to cooperation. Effects in the best civic participation is illustrated in the figure below which shows how the process of drafting a policy and extraction of a decision involving civic involvement may be slower due to the difficulties of building a consensus for solving a problem, but that implementation of the decision is much easier. In comparison, the one-sided decision issued by the municipality without or limited public consultation shows many delays in its implementation.

**Figure 10:** The process of drafting a policy and extraction a decision



In order for the municipality to benefit from civic participation, municipal officials should focus on : i) identification of stakeholders; ii) identification of mechanisms of public participation, and the way of cooperation with the public and iii) identify the way of cooperation (Beierle 2002).

*i) Identification of stakeholders*

Depending on the issue, officials should decide whether public participation involves the ordinary citizen, representatives of certain civil society organizations (CSOs), or representatives of other groups. Participation of ordinary or interested citizens will serve more to represent the public values, while representatives of civil society or interest groups can bring more capacities and experience in addressing an issue.

## *ii) Identifying Citizen Participation Mechanisms*

Encouraging public participation depends on techniques or ways of engagement of citizens in the policy making process. Information serves the most to sensitize citizens about an issue and certain decisions, but not enough to achieve general goals. Direct consultation for review of issues is more effective in solving the problem and improving relations between the parties.

## *iii) Identify the way of cooperation*

Space and level of public participation should be defined from the beginning of the planning. Ways to overcome previous conflicts should be found and opportunities to improve cooperation and trust between the municipality and the stakeholders should be created. On the one hand, inclusiveness and active commitment are important during the process of policy making, especially when it comes to trusting citizens' municipalities. On the other hand, the excessive impact on the process of policy making deprives the successful participation of citizens.

Citizen participation provides opportunity for communication and making agreements between the public and agencies making decisions. Effective public participation allows the public's values to be identified and incorporated into decisions that ultimately affect them (IAP2 2022).

Regardless of the many advantages that citizen participation has, sometimes it can be time-consuming and expensive. Generally, organizations must build capacity, trained staff in order to have good results in the participation process otherwise they may lose faith in the agency.

Participants could have negative perceptions of the outcome due to a negative experience of the process which leads to less desire to participate in future process. To evaluate the effectiveness of the citizen-participation process, there are two tiers of benefits to consider (process and outcomes) and beneficiaries (government and citizens).

**Table 5:** The benefits of public participation in government decision making

	<b>Government</b>	<b>Citizens</b>
<b>Decision Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquire a knowledge of and inform government representatives (education)</li> <li>• Persuade and advise government</li> <li>• Gain skills for activist citizenship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acquire a knowledge of and inform Citizens (Education)</li> <li>• Persuade citizens and build trust</li> <li>• Build strategic alliances</li> <li>• Gain legitimacy of decisions</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break deadlock, achieve outcomes</li> <li>• Gain control over policy process</li> <li>• Better policy and implementation decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break deadlock, achieve outcomes</li> <li>• Avoid litigation costs</li> <li>• Better policy and implementation decisions</li> </ul>

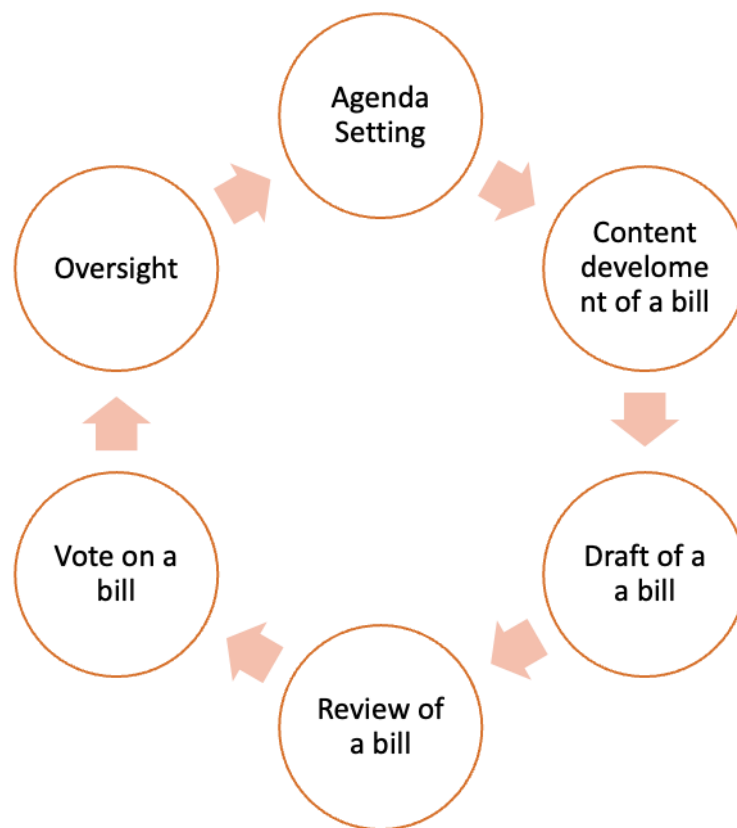
Source: Data compiled by author

Informed and involved citizens understand difficult situations, seeing holistic and community wide solutions. The high level of education of citizens leads to the higher possibility to participate in decision-making because of better understanding the importance of involvement in the process. Educated citizens with a more sophisticated level of technical and social understanding can help in better policy decisions as well as better social and environmental outcomes. In addition, administrators can benefit by getting education on specific community groups' positions.

A policy that is well grounded in citizen preferences might be implemented in a smoother way and less costly fashion because the public is more cooperative when the policy is implemented (Vroom and Jago 1988). Generally, public participation reduces the probability of litigation and it is expected to be cost-effective. The self –interest models provide participation of citizens in the decision making process if there is a type of personal benefits or implies low costs. While expectancy-value theory argues that motivation of citizens to participate in political actions is affected by the value of the expected outcomes. In this situation, cost -benefit analysis is the best model that describes the motivation of citizen's participation in decision-making such that the decision to engage in collection action. Policy making is based on rational evaluation of the benefits and personal costs due to participating (Olson 1965). However, the civic engagement in politics may not be fully affected by benefit/cost expectancy of participation, the willingness to participate could be influenced by other variables.

### 3.7. Engaging citizens at legislative process

There are many opportunities to engage citizens at different stages of the legislative process which are coordinated by various actors responsible for the process at any stage. The responsibilities of corresponding actors and finding the right type of input required at each stage, can help in determining the appropriate methodology and combination of mechanisms to effectively obtain the citizens' input.



**Figure 11:** Citizen Participation in the Legislative Process

The oversight investigates the impact of existing laws and supervises the actions of the Executive. Citizens deal with open-ended dialogue on the implementation of government policy. Responsible actors in this stage are legislators in plenary during question period, questioning and scrutinizing executive appointees.

In agenda setting, specific issues are established as public policy priorities. Also, open-ended dialogue between citizens and actors allows the identification of issues and suggestion of legislative solutions. Actors participating in this stage are political parties which develop policy patterns, legislators of constituents, committees defining their agenda, board of directors of parliament responsible for plenary agenda and cabinet/ public institutions determining government legislative priorities.

Content development of a bill focuses on the main components of specific legislation with a responsible actor like cabinet, public institutions and legislators which propose the bills in parliamentary systems as well as parliamentary committees. Citizens participating in this stage can bring input on a specific issue and recommend legislative solutions.

Generally, the cabinet, public institutions and legal departments can draft the bill and members of Assembly can introduce it for consideration. While citizens engaged in this stage can add input on the text to be included within a specific bill.

After drafting the bill, it is submitted to the Assembly committee for discussion and then to Assembly for plenary debate. In plenary debates, legislators consider the principles, content and proposed amendments of bills.

Lastly, the voting process is the stage to adopt or reject a bill. Legislators vote in plenary sessions on the principle and adaptation of the bill, while citizen participation shows citizens' views on specific bills.

### **3.7.1. Developing strategies for citizen participation**

Citizen participation strategies can be developed by issue-based process and actors responsible for distinct stages by considering the existing laws and regulations such as parliamentary standing orders. Government has to propose a plan to promote opportunities and provide incentives for participation. Also, citizens can be involved in developing the opportunities and ensure that the strategies meet their expectations.

*Political parties* can invite citizens and improve opportunities to contribute to the development of policy platforms.

*Legislator* can focus on building relationships with constituents by engaging actively in dialogue including through constituency offices.

*Parliamentary Committees* should focus on inviting citizens to contribute on different issues or bills when adopting their agenda.

All the above-mentioned actors have to focus on principles of citizen participation, development of strategies to enhance their participation in the legislative process and give the right to citizens to discuss with respect to the design and implementation of fiscal policies.

### **3.8. Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed in detail the concept of citizen participation and the decision-making process. Citizen participation is the involvement of citizens in different policymaking activities and gives them the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas in formulating public policies. Their participation is beneficial because it can build communication and relationships between citizens and public authorities, increase government accountability and public awareness. According to the OECD methodology (2017; 2022), there are three main levels of citizen participation: i) information; ii) consultation and iii) active participation. There is a plan for public participation which defines the steps, activities and resources needed to implement the process. Policy making as a comprehensive process itself involves several participants such as public officials, interest groups, legislatures and individual citizens which aims to solve the challenges and problems in a society as well as to ensure better services for members of the society.

Citizen participation is crucial in ensuring the protection of rights, transparency, accountability, equity, self-determination influencing decision making, and effective democratic citizenship. Two different theories reviewed about the decision-making process; first, technocratic approach which is a system of governance where decision-

makers are selected on the basis of their expertise in their areas of responsibility, particularly scientific knowledge. Second, democratic approach refers to citizen involvement activities in relation to government planning and policy making (DeSario and Langton 1987, p. 5). Researchers have devised several models of policy-making applicable to the issue of public participation such as: i) classical model; group model; iii) elite model and iv) systems model. However, it should be noted that not all these models encourage public participation in the policy making process except the system model which focuses more on outcome and feedback of the participants.

Citizen participation will bring benefits for society and for the government too. But two of the most important benefits are: i) to minimize the cost and delays and ii) quality improvement of decisions. With more involvement from a wide range of citizens, drafting and enforcing decisions is easier as well as trust and legitimacy is higher.



## **CHAPTER**

### **4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION- MAKING PROCESS IN ALBANIA: HISTORICAL APPROACH**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The Albanian state has gone through different stages in relation to the governance of the country. For around 50 years, Albania lived under the communism regime. During this period, civil participation in the decision making process was legally allowed. However, citizens behaviour was limited in accordance with state ideology. The wind of change for Albania came with student movement (December 1990s) which in collaboration with other Albanian actors, quickly turned into a genuine political movement that produced the first opposition political party. The establishment of the democratic system in Albania ended a period of almost half a century of communist regime.

After 50 years, the political pluralism and market economy was introduced. In this way the country entered the path of democracy. Based on this system Albania would naturally focus on establishing diplomatic relations with the western countries and becoming a member of many international organizations and expressing aspirations to be part of them.

The Constitution of Albania, adopted in 1998 and last amended 2022 (hereafter Constitution of Albania as amended), enshrines the values and ideals of democratic systems and guarantees civil participation in the decision making process. In Albania, representatives are elected by free and democratic elections. Their power is defined by the Constitution of Albania, laws and bylaws.

A governing body is formed for each electoral period that is responsible for acting in the interest of citizens, with sufficient authority to exercise actions required under the circumstances. However, voting is not the only way citizens can take part in political process. There are other forms or mechanisms that can be used by citizens to increase their participation in decision-making and policy making process. Some of them are guaranteed under the legislation and include public information and consultation, petition, civic initiative, and consultative committees.

By these means, citizens identify goals and community priorities, take into account the actions of the representatives and municipal officials, monitor and evaluate the results and the impact that policies bring. An important dimension in this context is the relationship between municipal institutions and the public (citizens, organizations, interest groups, and businesses).

However, voting is not the only way citizens can take part in political process. There are other forms or mechanisms that can be used by citizens to increase their participation in decision-making and policy making process. Some of them are guaranteed under the legislation and include public information and consultation, petition, civic initiative, and consultative committees. By these means, citizens identify goals and community priorities, take into account the actions of the representatives and municipal officials, monitor and evaluate the results and the impact that policies bring. An important dimension in this context is the relationship between municipal institutions and the public (citizens, organizations, interest groups, and businesses).

This discusses briefly the role of citizens in democracy and then analyzes the current situation, legislation and practices of public participation in the decision making process in Albania by emphasizing the system's strengths and deficiency. In order to analyze civic participation in the decision-making process in Albania during 1990 -2018, a relevant literature has been analyzed relating the concept of civic participation in Albania and its importance in the development of the Albania state and functioning of democracy as a governance system. To understand properly the decision making process in Albania, the main historical events have been outlined. The impact of which are inevitable in the political orientation and political culture of Albanian society different historical periods.

Furthermore, there are various social, economic and political factors that affect citizens participation and their political involvement. As such, this research could not achieve its purpose without analyzing the main factors that have affected citizens and their perception and orientation towards the political system in Albania.

#### **4.2. Role of Citizen Participation in the Development of Democracy**

Citizen participation is a key element for a country's democracy. Citizens are involved in decision-making process in order to improve public policies and establish a system of cooperation between state institutions and citizens. Such involvement in decision-making process influences the formulation of public policies that respond to the needs of citizens as well as the overall improvement of their well-being and life. Democratic societies cannot function without a developed political culture, which includes a high participation of citizens in political life. The right to participate in decision-making process is a fundamental right which belongs to citizens and is guaranteed by higher legal acts. In this context, Albania has undergone major changes regarding the involvement of citizens in the design, formulation and in decision-making process related to the law and the shaping of its democratic system. However, what remains a challenge for the citizens is the lack of information and understanding about their rights and responsibilities as citizens and the poor participation of the individuals involved in the drafting, formulation and monitoring of laws and in the decision-making and implementation process.

The right of citizens to participate in decision making process and other instruments of public participation is an explicitly right specified by the Constitution of Albania. This right derives from a set of principles of the democratic political system, which are guaranteed by the Constitution as the right to freedom of access to public information or with importance to the public, the right to petition the authorities, the right to a healthy environment, the right to propose laws, the right to referendum, the right to freedom of speech, assembly and organization. The exercise of these rights is regulated by other laws and normative acts in detail.

It seems that involving citizens in decision-making is an obligation that requires commitment and collaboration between community and government too. The greatest burden of responsibility for involving citizens in decision-making falls under the local authorities. However, citizens also have an important role to guarantee their active involvement in the process by which decisions are made that affect their lives. Citizens should see their involvement in decision-making process as part of the role they should play in the development of democracy in Albania. In democracy, every citizen has some basic rights that the state cannot take them from you. Rights are guaranteed by international law, by the Constitution and specific national laws.

The key role of citizens in democratic society is to participate in public life. To become active citizens, one should first be informed about public affairs, observe carefully how political leaders and mandated representatives use their power as well as to express their opinions on how they are governed and the quality of governance. Voting in elections, for all of those who enjoy the right to vote, is an important task that leads to the beginning of civic participation.

The mandate of elected governors have an impact in decision making process for and in favor of the whole community. However, it is not enough to guarantee effective governance that takes into account the interests and needs of all community members. I strongly agree with this one as the needs of the community are diverse and can change over time. So, mandated individuals or parties must be constantly in coherence with the development and address all community issues properly. Also, citizens must be willing to be actively involved in any initiative undertaken by local structures. It is important to fulfill these objectives by putting pressure on local governing structures to build those kinds of mechanisms that enable communication between the two parties. This in turn leads to citizen involvement in decisions that affect the quality of community life.

In addition to voting there are other ways that citizens can choose to be active in public life, such as: i) ongoing information on local developments; ii) the activity of local authorities, and iii) local decision-making. The information should even start with the recognition of the authorities and responsibilities of all local government structures, from which in fact derive the expectations that citizens have toward these institutions.

The City Council makes important decisions related to administration management and development of community life therefore citizens should not remain indifferent to its developments, decisions, and activities.

Citizens can address letters to local authorities that essentially aim to increase the accountability or efficiency in the services they provide to the community. Furthermore, citizens can participate in roundtables, meetings and debates and process aiming for effective participation of the community in local decision making. They can be organized at the initiative of the local structures or initiative of civil society in accordance with the problems of their community life. To be part of initiatives that aim to increase the accountability and efficiency of the local authorities. These initiatives come from the community and later develop in the form of letters or holding referendums on vital issues important to the community. Another form of participation is membership in non-governmental organizations which represent a variety of interests and beliefs from different individuals from the community. Involvement in NGO is a good opportunity to take initiatives that are well-organized and to increase the chances of influencing decision-makers and local authorities.

#### **4.3. Normative framework of participation of citizens in decision-making process at local and national level in Albania**

Participation of citizens in the political process is an essential element of democracy. The functioning of democratic systems depends, inter alia, on the development of forms and strategies through which the governing bodies of a country stimulate citizen involvement in particular on a local basis. Citizen participation in decision-making is defined as a process in which the concerns, needs and values of citizens are involved and represented in the decisions of government institutions, including municipalities (Creighton 2005) indicating that communication between institutions and citizens should be open, regular, and effective.

Active civic participation contributes to increasing transparency, accountability, the rule of law and the creation of a more open government in general. The level of civic participation depends on many factors related to the public management of state institutions. The level

of active participation of citizens in political life is conditioned by: i) the high level of corruption; ii) the restriction of access to public information; iii) the lack of freedom of expression and iv) lack of trust in institutions and a number of other socio-economic factors. Effective communication in the process of formulating and implementing public policies between government, citizens and civil society results in improving the overall public management situation and increasing the level of public services. Apart from the policies that the government needs to initiate to stimulate citizen participation and guarantee them the rights they possess, it is very important for the society to raise citizens' awareness of the impact, importance, and responsibilities they have towards the country where they live. So, citizens have to understand and exercise their rights that enable political participation. Albania has already been subjected to its major changes in the involvement of citizens in the design, formulation and decision-making process of the law and the shaping of its democratic system.

However, a lack of information in knowing their rights as citizens, in accountability and poor participation of individuals involved in the drafting, deficiency in formulation and monitoring of laws in the decision-making and enforcement process continues to be a challenge for the appropriate legal structure by public officials and local governments.

For more than 45 years, Albania experienced the harshest form of communism. After 1945, citizen participation at the decision-making process was only formally, to legitimacy what the communist party interests and ideology stipulated. In 1949, a law regulating local governance was adopted which remained in force until the regime changed in the 1990s (Law 684/1949). Local governments did not play any role because political, economic and social lives were guided by the central government. Most importantly, local government officials were appointed by the central government in accordance with political ideology (Ndreu, 2016, pp. 56-64; Bogdani & Loughlin, 2007, p. 196). Furthermore, the local government budget was entirely funded by the central government (Isufaj, 2014, p. 459; Xhaferaj and Skara 2021, p. 48).

As the communist regime fell, Albania's legal framework changed. International and European standards started to penetrate into the Albanian legal system. In this context, at the central level, a constitution law was approved which introduced for the first-time

provision stipulating that “sovereignty belongs to citizens who may exercise through their representatives or referendum” (Law 7491/1991, Art 3/2). On the other hand, at local level, in 1992, Albania introduced for the first time the Law 7572/1992 ‘On Organization and Function of Local Government’ which laid down the organization and functions of the local government. The Law 7572/1992 reflected the principle of self-governance, local autonomy, legality and free and fair elections (Article 1). While de jure civic participation was introduced in legislation, in reality, the participating level was very low.

The remaining part of this section discusses the main legal basis for Local Government in Albania.

### ***i. Constitution of Albania 1998 as amended by Law 16/2022***

As Albania adopted its Constitution in 1998 (Law 8417/1998), citizens’ role was increased in line with international and European standards. Albania ratified most important international convention such as: i) Universal Declaration of Human rights; ii) the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1996); iii) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1991); iv) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters - Aarhus Convention (2001) and v) the European Charter of Local Self Government (2000).

Drafted in line with these standards, the Constitution of Albania, in itself, did not contain a specific provision on the right of the citizens to participate in the decision making process. This right derived from general principles such as:

- the people exercise sovereignty through their representatives or directly (art 2);
- the right to free access to information of public importance;
- the right to petition to authorities;
- right to a healthy environment;
- the right to propose laws;
- the right to referendum, freedom of speech and association.

Public authorities, in carrying out their duties, must respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and contribute to their realization. Article 23 of the Constitution of Albania stipulates the basis and constitutional guarantee of the right to information and the obligation to apply the principle of transparency in all state activities and the right to information is guaranteed.

Everyone has the right to be informed, in accordance with law, with information on the activities of state bodies and to persons exercising state functions. The Constitution of Albania also recognizes and guarantees the right to vote and to be elected as one of the rights of citizens to participate. "Every citizen who is at least eighteen years old, including the ones that turn eighteen on election day, has the right to vote and to be elected" (Article 45). The right to information and consultation is also guaranteed as prescribed by law (Article 48).

The Constitution of Albania recognises the right of citizens (20 thousands) to propose law (Art 81/1) and the right of citizens (50 thousands) right to a referendum for the abrogation of a law, as well as to request the President of the Republic to hold a referendum about issues of special importance (Art 150). While Article 108 (4) of the Constitution stipulates that the 'Self-government in the local units is exercised through their representative organs and local referenda', in practice, referendum, at the local level, has never been held.

Furthermore, the previous Law – Law 8652/2000 – did not foresee the initiative right of citizens at the local level (Xhaferaj and Skara 2021). The initiative right of citizens is recognised as well at the local level. According to Article 20 (1) of Law 139/2015 as amended, each community, either through its authorized representatives or not less than one percent of the inhabitants of the municipality has the right to submit for decision-making in the municipal council initiatives on issues falling within the jurisdiction of the local self-government unit. If the proposal has a financial impact on the budget of the local self-government unit, the council can not approve without obtaining firstly the opinion of the mayor of the local self-government unit (Law 139/2015, Art 20/2).



*ii. Law 139/2015 “On Local Self-Government in the Republic of Albania” as amended*

The Law 8652/2000 has been considered as one of the most important initial step in the reform of local governance, establishing the framework for full administrative and fiscal decentralization (Xhaferaj and Skara 2021). Articles 7 and 8 specified the rights and competencies of local government units. Article 10 emphasized key specified competences of the local government such as: urban planning, construction and maintenance of the objects of local infrastructure, provision of public services to private citizens, local economic growth, development and maintenance of the institutions of public sector in the area of education, culture and social welfare related to regional development aspects. Articles 54-62 stipulated the competencies of the Regional Council and of the Chairman of Regional Council.

In addition to Law 8652/2000, Albanian Assembly adopted the Law 8653/2000 ‘On the administrative – territorial division of local government units in the Republic of Albania’. According to Law 8653/2000, the Albanian local government followed two tier system: the first level consisting of 373 administrative divisions divided between 65 municipalities (bashkia) in urban areas and 308 communes (komuna) in rural areas, whereas the second level structured in 12 regions (qarku). While, the Municipality of Tirana, as the economic centre of the country and the capital of the Albania, enjoyed a special status being covered by a special Law 8654/2000 ‘On the Organization and Functioning of the Municipality of Tirana’ which divided Tirana Municipality into 11 municipal units. Each unit has a local council elected by the same electoral system and function as the other municipalities of the country, but with more limited powers, since some of these powers are assumed by the Tirana Municipality (Xhaferaj and Skara 2021).

Once the Socialist Party came in power in 2013, it declared the administrative and territorial reform as one of the key priorities of the Government program. In the framework of the new administrative-territorial reform and decentralization reform that begun with the adoption of the new ‘Inter Sectorial Strategy for Decentralization and Local Government 2015-2020’ (Ministry for Local Issues 2015) on 29th of July 2015, it becomes necessary to adopt a new law regarding the organization and functioning of local government in

Albania, respectively the Law 139/2015 'On Local Self-Government', which entered into force on January 2016.

Law 139/2015 takes a special significance because the new administrative - territorial reform that has started to be implemented required a new legislative framework for local self-government. Built on the best experiences accumulated concerning decentralization process, the Law 139/2015 considered as well the deficiencies and defects encountered since the implementation of the Law 8652/2000 (Xhaferaj and Skara 2021).

The units of local self-government are municipalities and counties. The municipality is a basic unit of local self-government which represents an administrative-territorial unity and a community of residents (Law 139/2015 as amended, Article 2).

The mission of this law is to effectively promote inclusive community participation in local government (Law 139/2015 as amended, Article 3). The law also stipulates that local self-government units are consulted, through local self-government representative associations and other stakeholders, through which they are allowed to present their opinions, comments and proposals on policies and legislation that have a direct impact on the exercise of local self-government their rights and functions (Law 139/2015 as amended, Article 12).

The units of local self-government also guarantee the public for the transparency of their activity (Law 139/2015 as amended, Article 15). Through this law, local self-government bodies are obliged to guarantee public participation in the decision-making process. Each unit of local self-government is obliged to appoint a coordinator for public notification and consultation, in accordance with the provisions of the applicable law on public notification and consultation (Law 139/2015 as amended, Article 16).

One of the innovations of this law, compared to the previous law, is the sanctioning of civic initiative (Law 139/2015 as amended, Article 20). According to Article 20 of the law, every community, through its authorized representatives, or not less than one percent of the municipality's inhabitants have the right to submit to the municipal council for decision making civic initiatives on issues that fall within the jurisdiction of the local self-

government unit. The manner and form of submission of these initiatives, the procedure for their review and approval are set out in the rules of organization and functioning of the municipal council. When proposals submitted to the council as a civic initiative have a financial impact on the budget of the local self-government unit, they are reviewed by the council on the agenda, and cannot be approved without first obtaining the opinion of the head of the local self-government unit.

***iii. Law no. 146/2014 “On Public Notification and Consultation”***

Law 146/2014 “On Public Notification and Consultation” regulates the process of notification and public consultation of draft laws, national and local strategic draft documents, and policies of high public interest. The obligation to notify and hold public consultation is set out in Article 6 of this law, which stipulates that public bodies are obliged to take all necessary measures in order to create opportunities for the public and all interested parties to participate in the process of notification and public consultation.

Law 146/2014 ‘On Notification and Public Consultation’ regulates the process of notification and public consultation of the draft-laws, national and local strategic draft-documents, and policies of high interest for the public. While this law stipulates the procedural rules to be applied in order to ensure the public transparency and participation in the policy-making and decision-making process from the public entities, even the local self-government bodies are obliged to guarantee public participation in the decision-making process. According to the Law 146/2014 ‘On Announcement and Public Consultation’, public bodies and municipalities should appoint a person as coordinator of public notification and consultation, who is responsible for the coordination and general administration of work to guarantee the right to notification and public consultation, provided by this law (Art 10). Law 146/2014 regulates the process of announcement and public consultation of the draft laws, project documents, national and local strategic plans and policies with higher interest for citizens. In addition, the Law 146/2014 stipulates procedural rules that should be applied to ensure transparency and public participation in the policy-making and decision-making process of public bodies (Arts 1 and 3).

Furthermore, Article 11 of the Law on Public consultation regulates the notification procedure for public consultation for public bodies. The notification for draft law is done through the electronic register. Only in cases when it deems necessary, notification may be done in one or more of the following forms: i) electronic post; ii) announcement on the premises of the public institution; iii) with a notification in the national, regional or local audio-visual media, and iv) with the publication in local newspapers or in the two most widely read newspapers nationwide. After publication in the electronic register, the responsible institutions shall organize a direct consultations and public meeting with the interested parties (Law 146/2014, art 6). Whereas at local level public consultation is mandatory only for certain issues, before reviewing and approving the acts. Public consultation should be done in accordance with the manner prescribed by the Council Regulations using one of the necessary forms such as: i) open meetings with residents and interest groups; ii) meetings with specialists; iii) meeting interested institutions and non-profit organizations; or iv) by taking the initiative to organize local referendums (Xhaferaj and Skara 2021).

#### *iv. Law 119/2014 “On the Right to Information”*

The law “on the Right to Information” regulates, inter alia, the right of access to information produced or maintained by public authorities, the right to request information from public bodies, the latter's obligation to reply within specified legal deadlines.

According to this law, public bodies and self-local government units are obligated to guarantee transparency of their activities for the public because an effective public participation is based on the right to access information which is the fundamental precondition of the active involvement of citizens. According to Law 119/2014 ‘On the Right to Information’, every public sector as well self-local government unit should nominate one of the civil servants as coordinator for the right to information and approve the transparency program by providing access to all, especially to the vulnerable citizens of the community (Art 10/1). His/her power include, inter alia, providing access to every applicant to the public information and coordinating the efforts for meeting the applications for information within the time period provided in this law (Art 10/2a; c).

Furthermore, the principle of public participation in Albania is stipulated as well in the following by laws:

- Decision of Council of Minister 994/2008, “Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making”;
- Decision of Council of Minister 16/2012, “On Public Access to environmental information”;
- Decision of Council of Minister 247/2014, “On the determination of the rules and requirements of the procedures for information and involvement of the public in environmental decision making.

#### **4.4. The principles of local government regarding civic participation**

According to the Constitution of Albania as amended, municipalities are obliged to encourage and ensure the active participation of citizens in the decision-making process. The two forms of civic participation in local self-government are: local elections and Forms of direct participation (referendums). According to the Constitution of Albania as amended, local Government Units (LGU) are “established by law on the basis of mutual economic needs and interests and historical tradition. Their borders may not be changed without first taking the opinion of the inhabitants” (Art 108). The representative local authorities are the councils, which are elected in every four years, through general, direct and secret voting (Art 109). According to Article 113 of the Constitution of Albania as amended, the municipalities have the following powers:

- a) regulate and administer in an independent manner local issues within their jurisdiction;
- b) exercise the rights of ownership, administer in an independent manner the income created, and also have the right to exercise economic activity;
- c) have the right to collect and spend the income that is necessary for the exercise of their functions;
- d) have the right, in compliance with law, to establish local taxes as well as their level;
- e) establish rules for their organization and functioning in compliance with law;

- f) create symbols of local government as well as local titles of honour;
- g) undertake initiatives for local issues before the bodies defined by law.

In this context, the municipalities' council members need to bring decision-making closer to the citizens in order to promote good governance (transparency, accountability, transparency and integrity), to create a good living environment for citizens and to provide services in good quality. These principles ensure the proximity between the municipality and the citizens. Local government ensures governance as close as possible to the citizens through: i) recognizing the existence of different identities and values of communities; ii) respecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens sanctioned in the Constitution or in other laws; and iii) choice of different types of services and other local public facilities that benefit the community. Thus, it requires incentives for citizen participation in the process of decision-making for better governance.

In 1999 Albanian Assembly ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Law 8548/1999). The European Charter of Local Self-Government commits the signatory parties to applying basic rules guaranteeing the political, administrative and financial independence of local authorities. Article 2 stipulates the obligation of signatory parties to enshrine in domestic legislation the principle of local self-government. According to Article 3 (1) of the Charter 'Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population'. Article 12 of the Charter requires each signatory country to comply with at least twenty paragraphs where at least ten paragraphs selected are obligatory. When the Law 8652/2000 was adopted, it complied with 19 paragraphs where only 11 were obligatory. In 2004 the Law 8652/2000 was further amended and complied with 26 paragraphs where 14 were obligatory (Muçollari 2008, pp 15-28). Therefore, in order to comply with Constitution provisions and European Charter of Local Self-Government, Albanian Assembly enacted the Law 8652/2000, 'On the Organization and Functioning of Local Government'.

Citizens should not only be given the opportunity to participate in governance, but they should also be encouraged to do so. This incentive is an obligation of the local authorities,

through building and implementing mechanisms that guarantee such a mission, as well as civil society as an important tool in democratic systems to mobilize and engage groups of interest and citizens in general.

Ways to make local participation in decision making real are as follow:

- i. *Target Community questionnaires*: enable local authorities to identify the community's position / opinion on local issues or measure the level of satisfaction for services provided by local structures.
- ii. *Focus groups*: gathering together with community representatives in a joint roundtable to get ideas and opinions on local issues.
- iii. *Public Hearings*: There are public meetings of leaders, elected officials and the local structure with the community providing opportunities for the community to express concerns on local development, decisions or specific local issues.
- iv. *Civic commissions*: These commissions aim to strengthen relations between the elected local structure and citizen participation through development of programs or policies enriching them with different perspectives for the community.
- v. *Community Consultation*: Refers to a process that takes place before obtaining one important local decision which enables community members to give their opinion and comments before making the final decision.

#### **4.5. Political Participation in Albania**

For Albania, the return to democracy has not been easy. After the Second World War, Albania established relations with Communist countries such as Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and China at different periods of time (Pond 2006, pp 194 – 196). However soon, these relations were cut off on the grounds of their deviation from pure communist ideology (Vickers 2001, pp. 170-203). Albania became an isolated country with no point of reference in economic and political terms and it was considered as the toughest

communist regime in the world (Bogdani and Loughlin 2007, p. 23). The collapse of communist regime had political importance for Albania because it changed the regime and economically reoriented its market toward capitalism.

At the beginning of the 1990's, Albania oriented its foreign policy toward International Organizations, especially the Council of Europe and the European Union membership. Its main goal was to achieve political, institutional stability and sustainable economic development. Having a primary agenda fulfilling the criteria for European integration, Albania has been able to meet a number of criteria and agreements with the European Union.

However, democracy cannot develop solely on political culture. Sound democracy in Albania depends very much on the degree of development of Albanian political culture, which means that every citizen with his attitudes, practices and moral norms defines the ability as an individual, as a society and a people to be self-governed. Albanian society, coming from a totalitarian communist political system for five decades, with the advent of democracy in 1990 inherited a dictated and submissive citizen, which in itself prompted slowness, routine and indifference (Rama 2020).

In the beginning of transition when both parliamentary and municipal election were held, numerous irregularities occurred, making the elections as not democratic. Due to these irregularities, citizens began to refuse to participate in elections which is considered as the most expressive form of civic participation in the policy-making process. Recently, the situation has changed. Albania has managed to hold central and local elections to a fairly democratic level recognised by OSCE and ODHIR. This positive climate has returned the trust of citizens on the importance of voting and participating in elections. However, participation in elections is not the only way of civic participation.

Democratic systems require a continuous citizen engagement so that public institutions remain in service of citizens and accountable to them. In the last years, a new political culture has begun to emerge in Albania. Citizens are beginning to become aware of the role and importance of their participation in the development of the state. In addition to



elections, citizens have started to recognize and practice other forms of public participation such as civic initiatives, participation in protests, referendums, and so on.

On the other hand, government should be more committed to fulfil international obligations and democratic standards. Insufficient engagement of institutions to fight corruption or foster economic development has negatively affected citizens to be less confident. Corruption, poor health system, poor quality of educational institutions, lack of rule remains among the biggest problem in Albanian society.

#### **4.6. Participation of citizens in the decision-making process in Albania during the period 1990-2018**

Currently, Albania is in the process of implementing decentralization reforms in order to make the democratic system more sustainable, increase governance effectiveness and transparency, stimulate the creation of a sustainable base for economic development, ensure the participation of citizens in public life at the local and regional level. These reforms incorporate the input and experience of all actors involved in the process, such as local government, civil society, the international community, and more important to the citizens themselves. The Inter Sectorial Strategy for Decentralization and Local Government 2015-2020 and reforms undertaken have created legal spaces for wider civic participation in decision-making in order to increase the quality of services for the benefit of communities. However, one of the major obstacles in the decentralization process remains the strengthening of the direct participation of communities in local government. This is also due to the lack of tradition in this area, which is made more evident by the communities' low self-esteem towards local government bodies and continued support in central government.

Active participation of citizens in the public sphere has increased transparency and accountability of public authorities. The Constitution of the Republic of Albania guarantees to all its citizens, with no exception, the fundamental rights, and freedoms. The constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression, access to public documents and electoral rights and participation. Participation of citizens in the decision-making process is manifested in different forms depending on the practices of certain states and societies.

However, in a representative democratic system like Albania, the elections are still the most popular form of citizen participation in the decision-making process. Through which citizens choose the party / candidates they believe will best represent their interests. Thus, by choosing their representatives, citizens give legitimacy to power and thus indirectly govern the state.

For the implementation of good local government, a broad and serious involvement of the community in the decision-making process is necessary. In the Albanian environment, this approach became a necessity due to the legacy inherited from the communism mindset where the democratic tradition has been absent.

Numerous projects have been implemented over the last few years to increase the civic participation. The latest study written by Bino et al 2021 found that:

“the legal and policy frameworks for enabling cooperation between public institutions and civil society are largely in place, but the challenges remain: lack of feedback and follow-up mechanisms, poor implementation of legal framework, and superficial collaboration with CSOs with very limited substantial impact. By and large, the structures and process of collaboration with the CSOs are badly integrated, not sustainable, loosely defined and lack internalization. Institutions have limited capacities to prioritize public information, consultation, and overall cooperation with CSOs”.

#### ***4.6.1. Albanian Elections in the last ten years***

Since the early 1990s, all political actors have had a sufficient consensus on a three-tier investment strategy to support new democracies. The first level of the strategy was to build new democratic institutions, highlighting the balance of powers, an independent judiciary and a legislative system that systematically balanced the executive (Balinski and Young 1982). The second level of the strategy concerned building and empowering civil society, promoting the creation of community-based organizations, organizations in defense of the most neglected groups in society, and independent media. The third level of the strategy was to organize competitive, free and fair political elections. Only the ballot box provides the opportunity for the general public to elect its representatives to enable accountability of

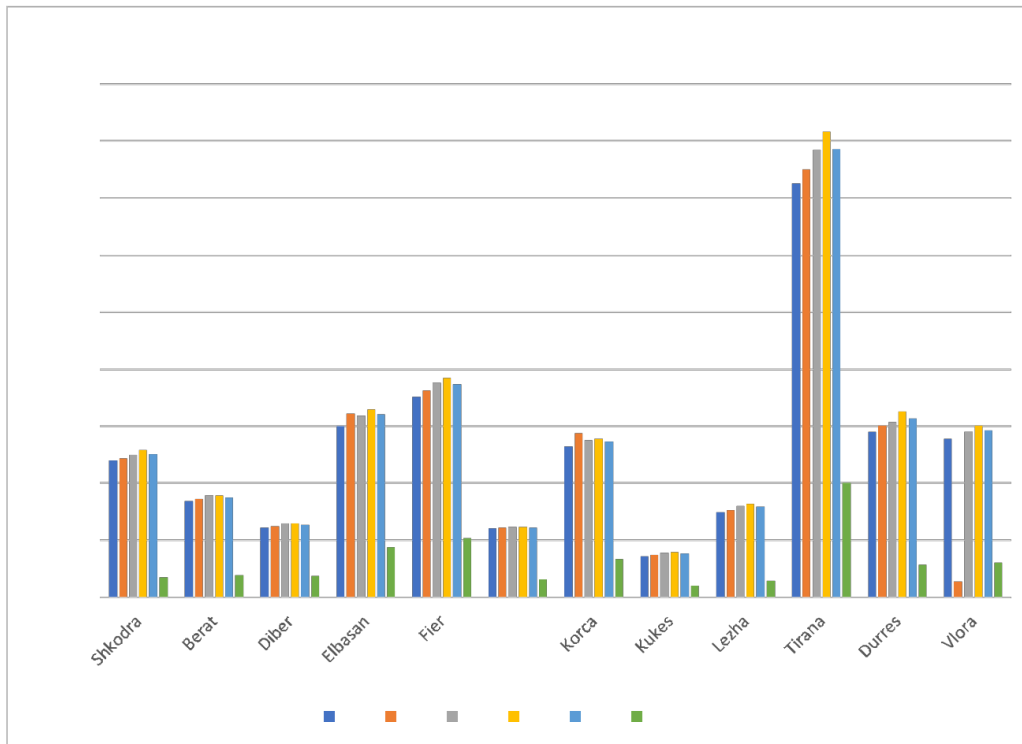
the government and to rule out violators of law and abusers with power (Gallagher 1992). Certainly, holding a competitive political election is not a sufficient condition for representative democracies, but without reservation it can be considered as the minimum necessary condition. To ensure democratic legitimacy, these political choices should be free, non-violent, non-manipulated, developed not in an atmosphere of fear and manipulation. Voters should be free to choose the subjects and candidates they prefer. Opposition political parties in the race should not be systematically discriminated against the distribution of public funds and the media space (Farell 2001)

Introducing free and fair election in Albania after the fall of communist regime was very important. For the first time, after 50 years, Albanian citizens could express their willingness to elect their representatives. However, debates on political developments and dynamics in the case of Albania have dominated the interest of various public actors in these years of post-communist transition. Special attention in public opinion has been paid to way of how the candidates are elected from the party, organization and functioning of political parties. Even in this case, the vague experience with political pluralism and the long period of time of political parties in power seems to be strongly reflected in the practices, competition, organization, functioning of political parties on the one hand and perception, expectation and identification with them, on the other. The other common denominator of these transitional years is their predominant position in relation to institutions, law and society itself, taking on a variety of roles not inconsistently similar to the two-decade state party.

The electoral process in its entirety has become more and more institutional in character, where political actors have expanded their consensus to accept the rules of the race despite continuous controversies. The proportion of conditionality for political parties from the rules of competition in the elections has been increasing with the transition from one party to the next, which has allowed a relatively "stable" in the second post-communist decade compared to the first decade. The fact that during the second decade, winning political groups have used the entire mandate compared to the elections in the first decade where winning parties did not stay till the end of the term, is an indicator of stability.

Based on the data provided by the Central Election Commission, there is a drop in the percentage of voters in the last 10 years. The number of voters in the polls by districts over the years is as demonstrated in Figure 12.

**Figure 12:** Number of voters in Albania by district in last 10 years

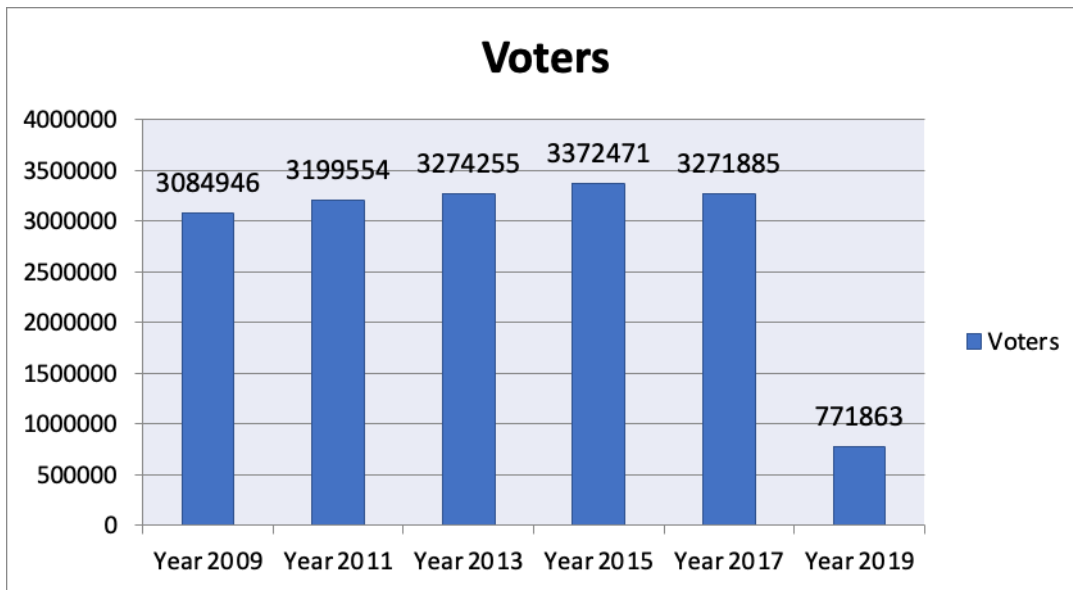


Source: Central Election Commission

According to the Institutionalization of the Rational Election, formal elections have an influence on political behavior of political actors. By formatting the political behavior of actors, electoral rules seem to have an indirect impact on voters. Voters are indirectly influenced by the strategies chosen by political parties and candidates for election.

Modeling the ballot paper and organizing candidate lists again affects voters in the selection they make. Also, electoral rules have a direct effect on voters despite the role of the political actors. For example, it is interesting to see the turnout in different electoral systems in different countries to understand the role of the electoral mobilization system. The compulsory voting (the non-application of which leads to penalties for citizens) certainly has a direct impact on voters and their behavior.

**Figure 13:** The total number of voters in Albania in the last 10 years



According to data provided by Central Election Commission, there is a slight increase in the number of Albanian voters from 2009 to 2015 who express their desire to elect new mayors to run municipalities in every city. But a slight decrease is noticed in the number of voters in 2017 which may be caused by the emigration of 39 905 Albanians, who left their country to pursue a better life in the developed countries.

Furthermore, there is a huge decrease of Albanian voters due to political party fights. The election in 2019 caused a tense situation between political parties. It was an unusual electoral period because the President of the Republic of Albania annulled the local elections and postponed them to October. The government opposed President decision and election were held on June 30, 2019. This situation affected negatively the citizen participation in the election.

There are some concerns over the voters lists and the fact that there is no initiative or effort by government institutions to actively engage Albanian emigrants in the election process which makes it difficult for these citizens to exercise their right to vote. In addition, the current situation makes it difficult to verify the accuracy of Voters' Lists and to calculate the real numbers of citizens' participation in the polls. Another concern regarding the election process is that most polling stations across the country were not accessible to voters with disabilities. The local administration failed in the effort to remove obstacles for

voters with mobility restrictions, thus failing to ensure inclusive elections and promote full and equal participation in them.

#### ***4.6.2. Socio-economic impact and geographical impact in civic participation***

In order to have an effective civic participation certain condition should be fulfilled. First, an appropriate organization for voluntary participation is needed to be established. Secondly, the leadership credibility is an important condition. Thirdly, convenience for active participation within the perspective group by respecting the principle of equality and non-discrimination. Finally, it is important to have certain benefit for the community not necessarily of an economic nature.

Inequalities and differences are noticed in low participation for poorest citizens, less educated, homeless, unemployed, disabled, the rural and minority groups who are normally the most interested. Main reason for low participation is a weak economy and social base which means that the socio-demographic variable of geography is still quite sensitive to civic participation in terms of Albania. Also, the need for more ethno-cultural tolerance and solidarity with the Rome group is required.

Social protagonism influenced the increase in demand for participation by citizens to express their experience in new decision-making to be heard and to play a more active role even in the sphere of representative democracy. Governments and institutions are obliged to answer such questions recognizing the importance of installing a report between the authorities, the administration, and the citizens about it facilitating the development of actions of institutions in the territory. Since the beginning of the reform, Albania has been trying to implement effective reforms to achieve standards that would rank the country among democratic countries.

Fulfilment of democratic principles and standards cannot be achieved through mechanical changes. It is necessary to start from the gross roots which is the basement for the development of mechanisms to increase civic participation in the decision-making process.

#### ***4.6.3. Models and Practices for public participation in Albania***

##### *i. Contacts between members of parliament and citizens*

Albanian citizens have little opportunity to influence the work inside the Assembly. Nevertheless, as digital technology has been developed communication is much easier. Citizens can address directly their concerns to their representative either by e-mail or through physical contacts in their offices at respective electoral zones. In the Assembly website, it can be found contact numbers of the representatives. This increases transparency and brings to the attention of the MP main problems that community face.

##### *ii. Public Discussion*

A more inclusive and open way for public participation in the work of the Assembly during the preparation of any law is through public discussion. When it comes to the draft law, which is of a broad interest, the Assembly decides after general discussion, for a particular law to hold public discussion and assign a working body that organizes the public debate.

Working bodies must ensure that the draft law is published and available among citizens, civic associations, and other actors. The text of the proposed draft law should be published in official website for any comment. Also, citizens, civic associations or other stakeholders may attend the public discussion. In the end, a report has to be delivered.

##### *iii. Public hearing*

Public hearing is a public séance of commission, where the commission discusses findings, analysis and information from other external actors, pointing out the importance of any issue, that may come up or improving any public policy.

*iv. Passive public involvement*

It is important for the Assembly to distribute information related to its activities and inform the citizens on how it operates, how laws are debated and later approved. Informed citizens are a prerequisite for democracy and any kind of citizen participation. Therefore, any kind of public information related to the Assembly, even when it doesn't involve the participation of citizens, is critical to provide the basis for possible participation in decision making. The most well known forms that Assembly is using to increase the information are as follows:

First, through Parliamentary Television channel, citizens can attend any hearing plenary on the parliamentary television channel. The same is for sessions of committees, councils and other parliamentary bodies. Parliamentary television channels inform and educate citizens about political life, through educational and civic programs. TV channels should broadcast programs that contribute to socialization and interethnic cohesion, can fight discrimination, and reflect social diversity.

Second way is through participation in plenary sessions and open day for citizens. Citizens can participate and attend any session of the assembly but there is no evidence that citizens are involved in any parliamentary session inside the assembly. There are many visits organized for citizens inside the parliament but most of them are only to introduce the architecture of the building and spaces where representatives work and amend laws, but citizens are not allowed to attend the plenary sessions in person.

Third, increasing communication with the public through social media such as Facebook and Twitter. The Assembly of Albania has a Twitter and Facebook account with more than 6454 followers, where information about sessions and seances is published on those profiles. Both social media profiles provide basic data but do not share detailed information about the Assembly and its structures where the deputies hold speeches during the hearings, or detailed information on amendments, arguments raised in discussion or other details.



#### ***4.6.4. How the participatory decision-making process occurs in Albania***

The local self-government bodies are obliged to guarantee public participation in the decision-making process. According to the Law 146/2014 ‘On Announcement and Public Consultation’, municipalities should appoint a person as coordinator of public notification and consultation, who is responsible for the coordination and general administration of work to guarantee the right to notification and public consultation, provided by this law (Law 146/2014, Art 10). Law 146/2014 regulates the process of announcement and public consultation of the draft laws, project documents, national and local strategic plans and policies with higher interest for citizens. In addition, the Law 146/2014 stipulates procedural rules that should be applied to ensure transparency and public participation in the policy-making and decision-making process of public bodies (Arts 1 and 3).

Article 8 of the Law 146/2014 gives information for the subjects whom this law provides the rights and obligations for. Subjects in the public consultation are classified based on their type, duties, rights and competencies. Based on these criteria, there are two main categories: i) public individual bodies and ii) legal entities. Albanian law does not specify which public bodies have the obligation to conduct public notification and consultation procedures. Pursuant to Article 3 (6) of the Code of Administrative Procedures (Law 44/2015), the public bodies are:

- a) central government bodies;
- b) local government bodies;
- c) armed forces;
- d) public entities; and
- e) any natural or legal person, who has been given by law, the right to exercise public functions.

In the sense of the law on public consultation, a public body is any kind of body that initiates the process of drafting a law, draft strategic documents, or policy of high public interest. Under the term of “public bodies” are included some institutions, but to have a clear analysis, it should be analyzed the extent to which these “public bodies” are obliged to respect the law on public notification and consultation, as not all institutions have the competence to draft acts, subject to public consultation. However, the division into

categories means the parties for the consultation process, are public bodies on one hand and the citizens on the other.

Notification for different projects that are subject to the public consultation is done through the electronic register. In cases when the public body is required, the notification can be made by email, with a public account posted on the premises of the initiating public body, announcement on audiovisual media (national, regional or local), publication on local & national newspapers (Law 146/2014, Art 11). Receiving comments and recommendations in the public consultation process is done in one of the forms mentioned above, as well as in certain cases recorded in the minutes of public meetings. Under Law 146/2014, consultation is mandatory for:

- budget and its changes (medium-term budget programs and annual draft budgets);
- local taxes and fees alienation or transfer of use of third-party properties;
- internal regulation of the functioning of the municipal council norms;
- norms, standards, and criteria for regulating the functions of the municipal council given to it by law, as well as for the protection and guarantee of the public interest.

Any comments or recommendations received during the public consultation process are collected by the coordinator of the notification and public consultation of the public body and are reflected in the meeting minutes (Law 146/2014, Art 6). The review of comments and recommendations is performed by the public body responsible for drafting the draft act. The responsible or inclusive body of the given problem, suggestion is signaled in writing by the coordinator. This body decides on the acceptance or rejection of the recommendations received from the consulted interested parties.

## **CHAPTER**

### **5. METHODOLOGY**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter describes a detailed overview of the research methods, research design and data collection. It describes how methodology used to explore the perception of citizens and civil servants' views towards citizens' involvement in decision making in order to establish a decision-making pattern within Albania.

#### **5.2. Research Methods**

The purpose of this study is to measure the perceptions and the real level of citizen participation in policy making and their current representation in decision-making structures of policymaking in Albania.

In addition to primary and secondary data, secondary sources have been used. Relevant books, journal articles, different funded projects from the US Embassy and European Union, various national and international reports or international indexes concerning promotion of citizen participation and democracy in Albania have been taken into account. The quantitative research method was the best alternative for this research since it gives the opportunity to gain the holistic and in-depth view of the study through direct contact with people (Punch 1998).

The combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques has been used to collect information and the necessary data for this study and to demonstrate the perception

of civil servants and public officials’ views towards citizens’ involvement in the decision making process. Consistent with quantitative methodology, the primary research instrument is survey.

### 5.3. Research Design

The research is based on two surveys which were conducted at national level during two different periods: i) summer 2018 and ii) fall 2019. These surveys were conducted in Tirana, Shkodra, Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Korça, Saranda, Peshkopi and Vlora. The selection of these cities has been chosen according to the city size and their large number of populations.

The first survey titled “Public participation in Decision-making process” is designed in two parts. The first part includes demographic information and the second part includes questions related directly to the topic. The survey questions are formulated based on relevant literature review on public participation in decision making in developed and developing countries and concentrated. By adopting Likert (1932) response scale, the six main questions attempt to measure the top servants view on the public participation in the decision making process. Likert (1932) response scale have been used as bipolar questions where there is a neutral point and opposite opinion.

**Table 6:** Likert Response Scale

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>1. Not at All</b>	<b>1. Never</b>
<b>Disagree</b>	2. Not Often	2. Rarely
<b>Neutral</b>	3. Sometimes	3. Sometimes
<b>Agree</b>	4. Often	4. Often
<b>Strongly agree</b>	5. Always	5. Always

Additionally, Likert (1932) uses another type of response which contains the following five elements of the policy cycle:

- *Agenda Setting*

- *Policy Formulation*
- *Adaptation*
  
- *Implementation*
  
- *Evaluation*

The questionnaires were submitted to the people employed in various public positions such as: mayor of municipality, deputy mayor, secretary of the administrative unit in Albanian administrative system and civil servants in various positions as: heads of departments or offices, specialist or public administrator.

The second survey focuses on the perception of common citizens on understanding their perspectives of participating in the decision-making process. It is designed in two parts. The first part contains questions related with the demographic information. The second part contain questions related directly to the topic. By adopting Likert (1932) response scale, the five main questions attempt to measure the regular meeting, regulation and clear policy in encouraging public participation in the decision making process.

- *Strongly Agree*
  
- *Disagree*
  
- *Neutral*
  
- *Agree*
  
- *Strongly Agree*

Additionally, four other types of Likert (1932) response are used to measure the social factors, economic factors, public trust and public attitude influencing public participation in decision-making process. To engage effectively, citizens not only need to be aware of their roles and responsibilities but to possess the necessary knowledge and skills on how to

execute these responsibilities. Capacity building consists of developing knowledge, skills and operational capacity so that individuals and groups may achieve their purposes.

#### **5.4. Data Collection**

The primary data are collected by questionnaires distributed to public servants in different public institutions located in Tirana, Shkodra, Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Korça, Saranda, Peshkopi and Vlora. The selection of these cities has been chosen according to the city size and their large number of populations.

The primary data were obtained by two questionnaires conducted in summer 2018 and fall 2019. The first questionnaire was filled by public servants working in different positions such as: secretary, public administrator, head of departments or offices and top-level civil servants in the Albanian administrative system. The questionnaire was designed and implemented in such a way to investigate the current situation of citizen participation in Albania and the thoughts of top civil servants on how public officials evaluate citizens' participation in relationship with their institutions. In addition, it helped me to recommend the best practices and techniques that must be employed throughout the country in order to improve the involvement of citizens in the decision making process. The second questionnaire was distributed to the citizens, asking to identify core current problem/situation and express their innovative ideas on how to solve the problem and increase citizen participation in the decision-making process.

Referring to the bias in this quantitative research study, it is necessary to mention that all questions are designed in such a way that people can proactively address them. All questions are created to understand the citizens' wants and perceptions about their participation in the decision-making process. A better perspective of the scope of the survey topic is gained by surveying the target population with open-ended questions. The target population were the citizens which worked in public institutions and citizens working in different companies with a high level of education.

In addition to primary data obtained by surveys, the desk-based research was used to obtain the secondary data needed to support the outcomes and arguments of this research

such as: on-line resources, books, scientific journal articles and national and international reports. All the reports and scientific studies conducted for this topic before and after the transition period, provide valuable data by adding more confidence to the arguments of the research findings.

Finally, data published by the Central Election Commission on the election results from 2009 to 2019 were consulted during the process of writing of this thesis. The processing of this data was done at the electoral population level (otherwise the electoral census), thus, reducing the measurement error in the results of representative research to a minimal level.

## **CHAPTER**

### **6. DATA FINDING AND ANALYSES I: SURVEY FINDINGS OF PUBLIC SERVANTS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING IN ALBANIA**

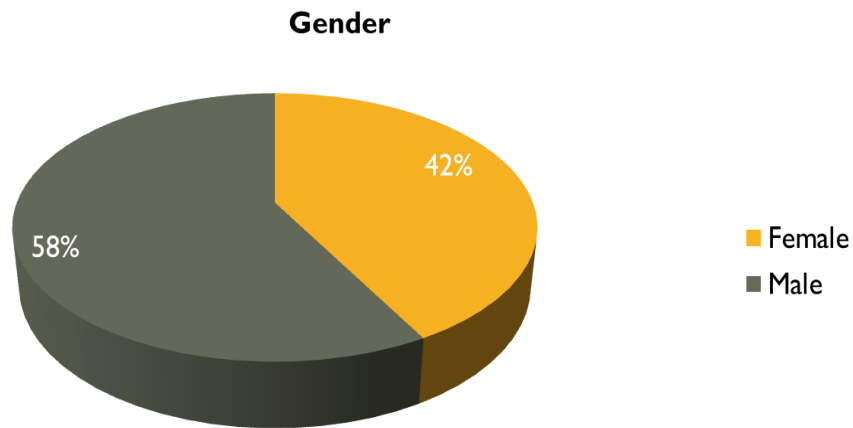
#### **6.1. Discussion of Research Findings**

The survey was submitted to 300 civil servants in public institutions in Albania. The response rate of the questionnaire was approximately 70 percent. The first survey was focused more on public officials, as civil servants are considered as knowledgeable citizens for the decision-making process within public institutions.

Most of the civil servants in Albania refused to take part in research for the following reasons: i) fear of something will happen to them because most of the surveys related to decision-making are political surveys that may affect their current job; and iii) lack of credibility in the surveys as a result of previous bad experience in the surveys. All civil servants who filled in the survey are employed to various positions such as: mayor, deputy mayor, head or secretary of the administrative unit or public administrator. The survey was submitted both online and on paper. On average, all the participants took from ten to fifteen minutes' time period to fill up the survey.

From questions 1-6 of the survey, participants were asked to provide basic information about their gender, age, education level and education qualification and their roles within the industry and specific sectors. The Figure 14 shows a clear view of gender composition of public servants on public participation. 87 of the respondents are female representing 42 percent and 122 are male which constitutes 58 percent.

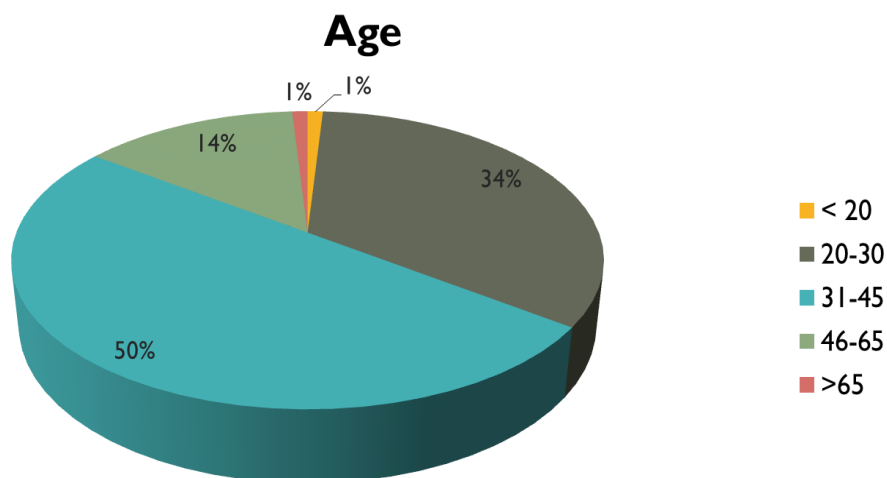




**Figure 14:** Gender Composition of Public Servants on Public Participation

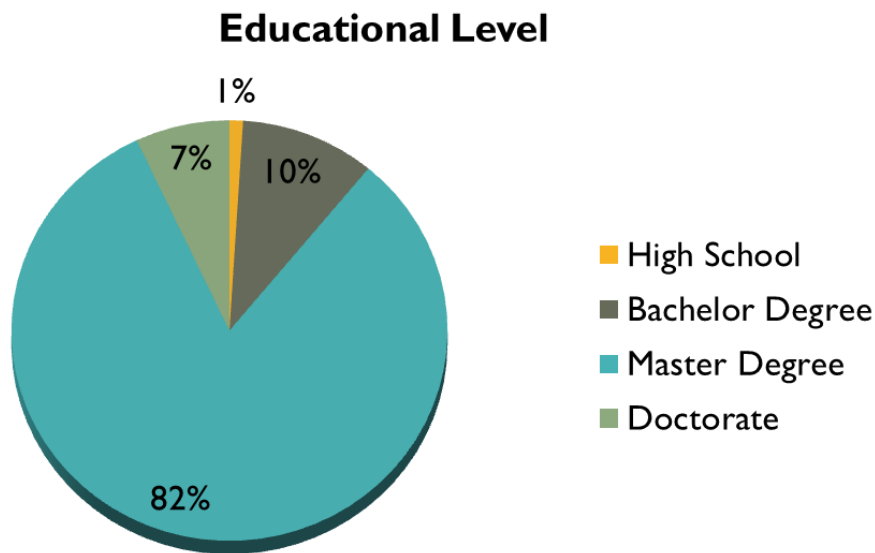
Figure 15 shows age composition of public servants on public participation. According to the findings, 50 percent of the respondents belong to the age group 31-45 years old. 34 percent are from the age group of 20-30 years old which comprises new graduates or less work experience public servants. 14 percent of the respondents belong to the age group 46-65 years old. Only 1 percent are from the age group above 65 and from the age group below 20, respectively.

Seeing this data, it can be said that most of the top-level civil servants and public officials belong to the middle age category. This category is expected to be more reliable and productive than their older colleagues or the others without experience.

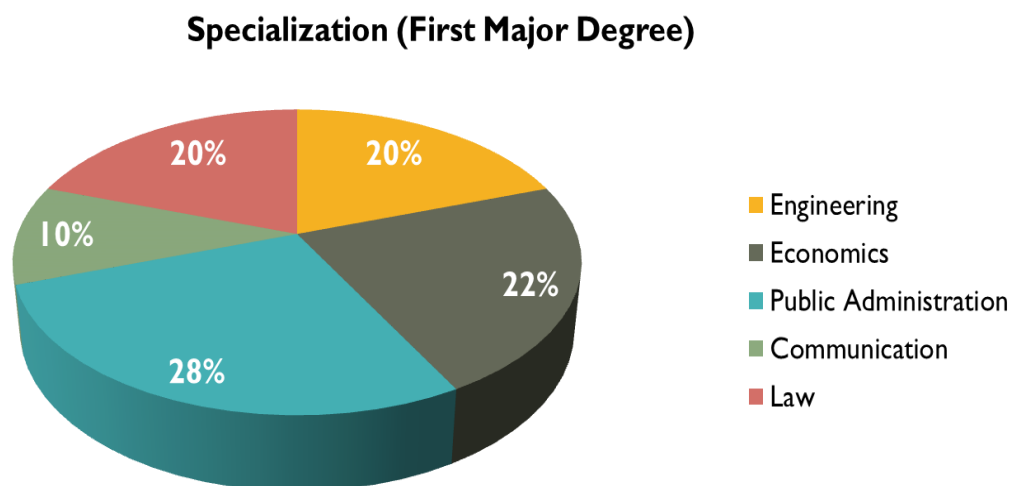


**Figure 15:** Age Composition of Public Servants on Public Participation

Regarding the education of public servants, Figure 16 shows that 82 percent are in the possession of a Master degree, followed by 10 percent in possession of the Bachelor degree, 7 percent of respondents have a PhD degree and only 1 percent are with a high school diploma. The highest level of public officials employed in managerial positions hold a master's degree is justified with the legal requirement to hold with position.



**Figure 16:** Educational Level of Public Servants

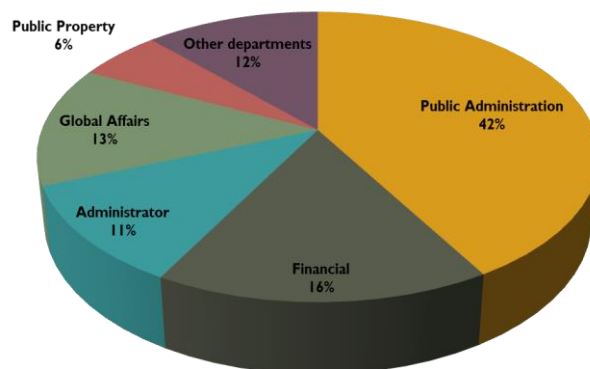


**Figure 17:** The educational specialization of the respondents

Based on the data of Figure 17, public administration degree is the most preferred educational specialisation with 28 percent. 22 percent of the respondents have a specialisation in economics; followed by 20 percent in law and 20 percent in engineering. The less preferred education specialization to work in central government is communication (Figure 17).

According to Punch (1998), there is no methodological framework and way to analyze qualitative data. The method for data analysis is the systematic and disciplined way to explain the objectives and the complexity of the issue in this research. This section presents the survey results according to the perceptions of public officials and top civil servants in Albania. All the questions will be discussed based on general results, gender, and occupation differences. Age differences and education level are not taken into account as most of them belong to the 31-45 age groups with a master's degree. In the end, some concluding remarks will be provided to clarify whether our hypothesis has been accepted or rejected.

Figure 18 shows that public officials work in different position of the local authorities. 42 percent of the respondents work in public administration department, followed by 16 percent in financial sector. 11 percent of the officials work as administrators in municipalities of Albania, whereas 13 percent in the department of international relations. Only 5 percent of officials declared to work at public property department and 12 percent of the respondents declared some other departments.



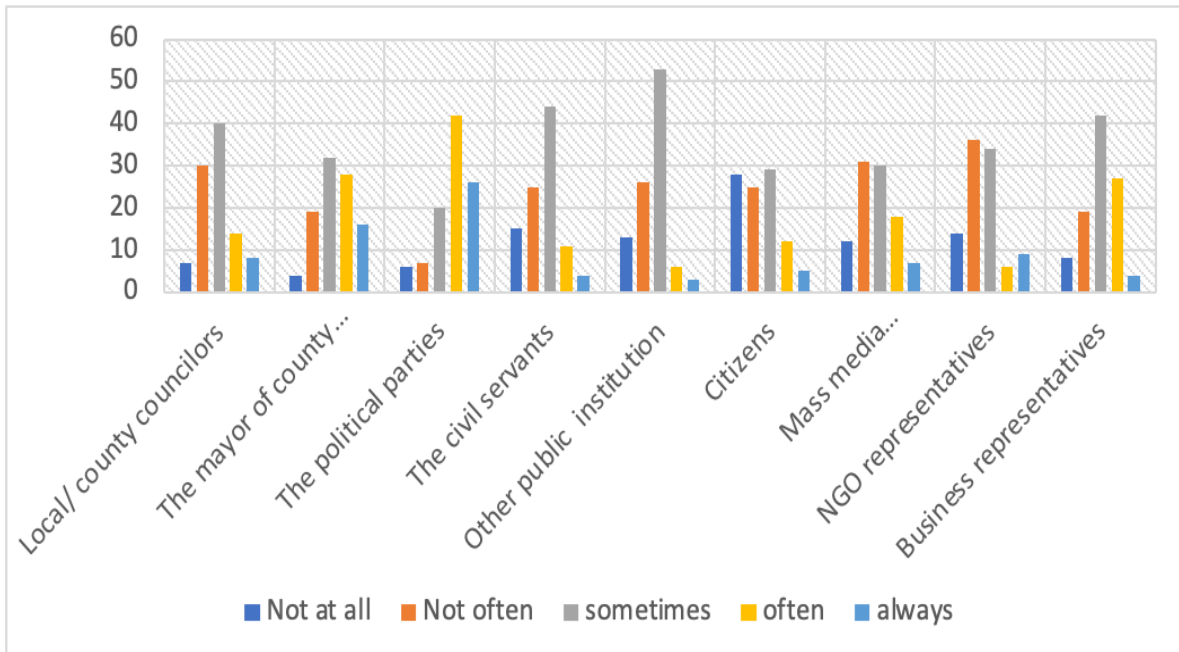
**Figure 18:** Number of Participants selected across occupation / department

## 6.2. Pre-decision making process

There is a difference between the two stages of the pre and post decision making process in this research study. The main components of the pre-decision-making process are as follows: i) agenda setting; ii) policy problem structuring; and iii) estimated policy outcomes. Meanwhile, the post-decision-making stage includes the main parts of the policy cycle like: the implementation, policy evaluation, learning and policy dynamics (Majone 2006).

As the aim of this research is to explore the pattern of decision-making in the public sector, we can start with the investigation of the initial stages of the pre-decision-making process. Firstly, the respondents were asked to define how often the main stakeholders rest at the origin of a public decision and then they were asked to identify the people who have the most influence the most in the decision-making process in the public sector. A list consisting of 9 actors is taken into consideration which seems to have high impact in public decision. The respondents were asked to indicate how these actors rest at the origin of public decision.

According to the results, the political parties have the highest influence on initiating a public decision. The accumulated percentage of the responses for the category of “often” and “always” is 66.5 percent, followed by the Chairman of City Council with an accumulated percentage 44.5 percent. The findings show that citizens have little impact on initiating a public decision. The accumulated percentage is 53.1 percent for the category of “not often” and “sometimes”. Generally, citizens tend to bring issues on the public agenda of the local council and initiate more decisions at the local level in collaboration with the city councils. However, Figure 19 shows that involvement of citizens in initiating public decisions is reduced for the category of “often” and “always” from 13.4% to 5.3%. It is important to mention that business sector representatives and mass media representatives play an important role at the early phase of public decisions.



**Figure 19:** How often the following types of actor’s/stakeholder’s rest at the origin of a public decision? (%)

**Table 7:** Please give your opinion on the following types of actors which actually influence in a certain manner the decision-making process in the public sector. Specify on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1- Strongly Disagree 2-disagree 3- neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly agree.

	Av Score
<b>City Councillors Member</b>	3.15
<b>The Chairman of City Council</b>	3.58
<b>The political parties</b>	4.01
<b>The civil servants and the employees of the public institutions</b>	2.82
<b>Other central and local public administration institution</b>	2.92
<b>Citizens</b>	2.80
<b>Mass media Representatives</b>	3.15
<b>NGO representatives</b>	2.83
<b>Business sector representatives</b>	3.59

Table 7 shows that three top actors that have high influence in a certain manner the decision-making process in the public sector. According to the responses in this question, the political parties, business sector representatives, the chairman of city councils, city

councillors member and mass media representative have the largest influence in the public decision process. These findings indicate that these actors tend to control the agenda setting and formulation of public policies. From the results of Table 5, citizens have less influence on the process. What is the reason for that?

**Table 8:** The influence of the following types of actors on the elements of the classic policy cycle

	Agenda Setting	Policy Formulation	Adaption	Implementation	Evaluation	Total %
Local/ county councilors	19.62	31.58	23.44	14.83	10.53	100
The mayor of county councils	35.41	13.88	15.31	30.62	4.78	100
The political parties	32.06	20.57	16.75	22.97	7.66	100
The civil servants & employees of public institutions	11.96	29.67	29.67	23.92	4.78	100
Other central and local public administration institution	9.09	27.75	33.01	22.49	7.66	100
Citizens	18.75	21.15	21.63	16.35	22.12	100
Mass media Representatives	12.44	28.23	12.44	12.44	34.45	100
NGO representatives	15.31	26.32	16.18	14.44	27.75	100
Business sector representatives	12.92	30.14	21.33	21.73	13.88	100

Comparing the influence of different policy actors over the elements of the policy process cycle, we identify that the political parties and the Chairman of City Councils have a high impact in agenda setting. In policy formulation, the scores are high for city councils, business sector representatives, civil servants and the employees of the public institutions. The civil servants and the employees of the public institutions score high for the adaption element. Similarly, other central and local public administration institutions have high impact in the adaptation of the policy. When comparing the influence of actors in policy implementation, the scores are similar in many cases except the Chairman of City Councils. Lastly, in the evaluation process mass media and NGO representatives have higher influence, respectively 34.45 percent and 27 percent. According to the results of this question, the research indicates that citizens scores low in all stages of the policy process. A statistically significant difference of 0.49 indicates that citizen's involvement tends to get involved more in three stages of the policy cycle such as: i) policy formulation; ii) adaptation and iii) evaluation.

In the last years, legislative reforms have improved local self-government. One of the changes introduced is being open for citizens and other stakeholders to participate in the decision –making process. These changes give the opportunity to citizens to bring in the table of public institutions specific problems caused by the existing policies and to mention all the public needs. The findings show that the respondents, comprising the civil servants and other employees working at central and local public administration institutions, are involved more in formulating and adaptation of public policies rather than identifying problems. Conflict of interest is an important aspect of concern in the Albanian policy agendas.

**Table 9:** Please give your opinion on the following types of actors which actually influence in a certain manner the decision-making process that takes place in the institution where you work.

Specify on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1- Strongly Disagree 2-disagree 3- neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly agree.

	Average Score
Local/ City councillors	2.81
The Chairman of City Councils	3.21
The political parties	3.5
The civil servants and the employees of the public institutions	3.01
Other central and local public administration institution	2.99
Citizens	2.76
Mass media Representatives	3.07
NGO representatives	2.71
Business sector representatives	2.92

Table 10 shows how often decisions adopted by local public institutions encounter resistance and dissatisfaction from the citizens. According to the answers given by the public institution employees, political parties and mass media representatives have a higher influence in the decision-making process that happens in the workplace of public institutions while citizens seem to have less influence on it.

**Table 10:** How often decisions adopted by local public institutions encounter resistance and dissatisfaction from the citizens?

	Never	Rarely	Smtimes	Often	Always	Total
The decision-makers fail to understand the needs and difficulties of the citizens	4.33	20.19	27.88	24.52	23.08	100
The citizens are not properly informed about the pending public issues.	4.33	16.35	25.96	32.21	21.15	100
The citizens believe that the decision-makers choose to address the problems of some interest groups, not the general interest of the community.	3.37	7.69	33.17	35.58	20.19	100
The decision-makers do not inform correctly the citizens about the aims and advantages of a certain decision.	5.77	25	29.81	28.37	11.06	100
The decision-makers pursue their own self-interest.	10.58	19.23	27.40	27.88	14.90	100

In this research study, opinions from the top-level civil servants regarding decisions adopted by local or country public institutions which face dissatisfaction and resistance from citizens were obtained. Table 8 shows that 55.77 percent of the respondents identify that “often” and “always” citizens believe that the decision-makers choose to address the problems of some interest groups, and not the general interest of the community. The results indicate a low level of trust of the citizens in the trustworthiness and good intention of decision-makers to solve all the issues within a community. In addition, 58.18 percent of the respondents declared that “sometimes” or “often” the decision-makers do not inform the citizens correctly about the aims and the advantages of a certain decision. Top civil servants believe that firstly, the decision-makers pursue their own self-interest and secondly, citizens are not properly informed about the pending public issues. There is 53.36 percent of all respondents who selected the category of “often” and “always”. In general, respondents believe that most of the time, the decision-makers fail to understand the needs and difficulties of citizens. Taking in consideration all the findings from Table 9, we can conclude that the information provided by public institutions is incomplete; it may be available sometimes, but is not properly conveyed to citizens.



**Table 11:** How often the decisions made are based on the information provided by the following?

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometime</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Total</b>
Citizens	14.83	37.32	26.79	7.18	13.88	100
Mass media Representatives	10.05	22.01	33.97	27.27	6.70	100
NGO representatives	16.35	28.85	41.83	12.02	0.96	100
Public surveys and polis	11.48	40.19	31.58	13.88	2.87	100
Reports/statistics/analyses provided by civil servants	15.31	14.35	34.93	29.67	5.74	100

Table 11 shows how often the decisions made are based on the information. It reveals the sources of the decision taken. The survey found that when adopting decisions, decision-makers are focused “sometime” and “often” on mass media representatives (61.24 percent) and reports, statistics analysis provided by civil servants (64.6 percent). It should be noted that involvement of citizens in the decision making process, from a legal point of view, it is well established. International conventions have been ratified and reflected in the Law 139/2015 ‘On Local Self-Government’ as amended. However, when it comes to implementation, the situation is quite different. 64.11 percent of respondents believe that “rarely” and “sometimes”, public institutions make their decisions according to the information provided by citizens. As can be seen, local authorities, still, do not follow legal procedures and obligations regarding the involvement of citizens in decision-making process and policy making.

## CHAPTER

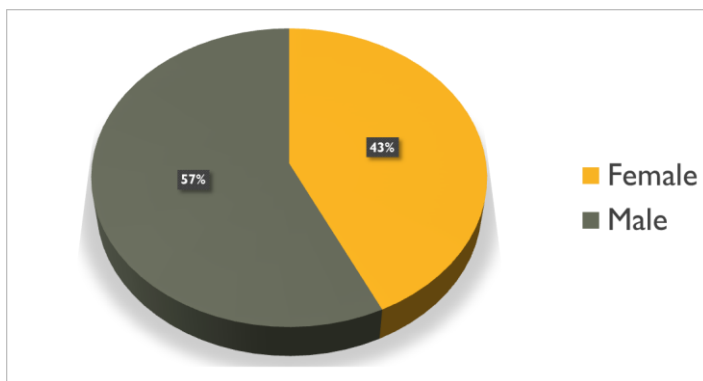
### 7. DATA FINDING AND ANALYSIS II: SURVEY FINDINGS OF CITIZENS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING IN ALBANIA

#### 7.1. Introduction

The second survey targeted only citizens ranging from 15-70 years old. As explained in the Chapter 5 “Methodology”, the survey was conducted in the following cities: Tirana, Shkodra, Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Korça, Saranda, Peshkopi and Vlora. Out of 800 questionnaires distributed, the returned questionnaires were only 585 near to 73 percent response rate. The remaining questionnaires were not returned due to skepticism and the fear that this survey would affect the employment status.

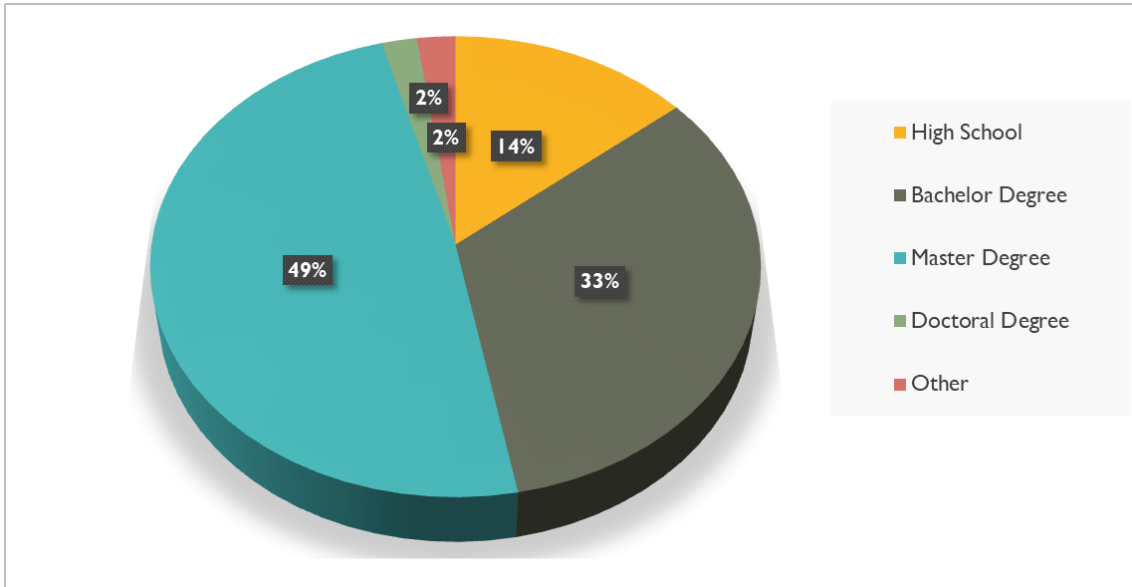
#### 7.2. Discussions of results

Data collected were both qualitative and quantitative. The data are entered in the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Computer system before analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis was employed to determine distribution of the respondents in percentage. As it is shown in the Figure 20, 57 percent of the respondents are male and 43 percent are female.



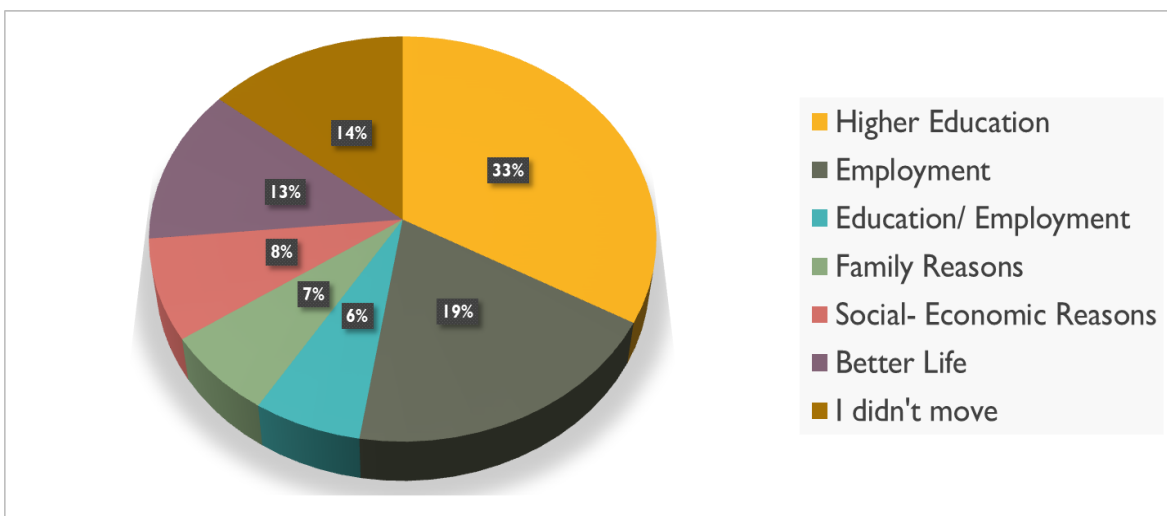
**Figure 20:** Gender Composition of Citizen on Public Participation

Figure 21 shows the education background of citizens that answered the survey. 49 percent of the respondents have achieved the master's degree, followed by 33 percent with Bachelor degree (Figure 21).

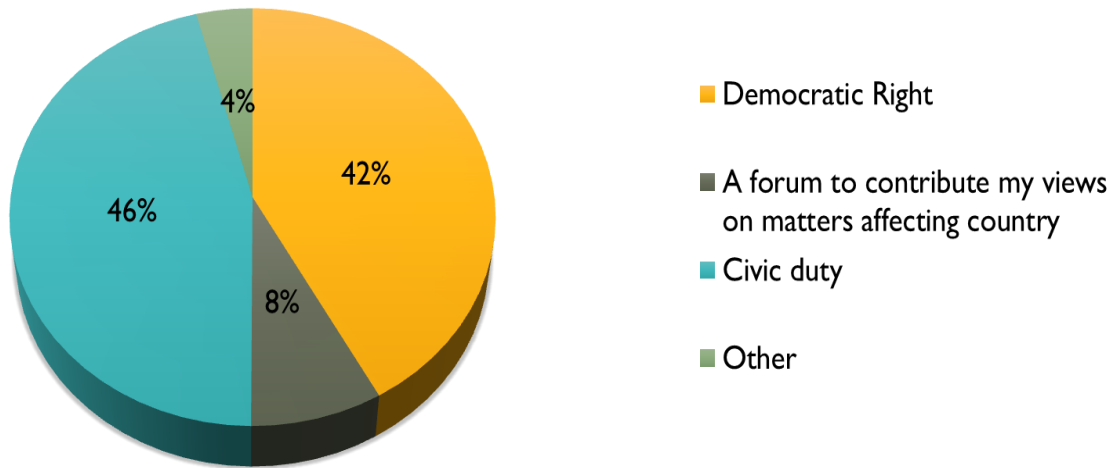


**Figure 21:** Education of Citizen on Public Participation

Figure 22 shows reasons to move from one city to another. In the last 15 years, the Albanian population has migrated toward the city of Tirana. According to INSTAT (2019) almost 31 percent of Albanian population is concentrated in Tirana. Based on the survey, the main reasons for moving to another city are higher education reasons with 33 percent and employment reason with 19 percent.



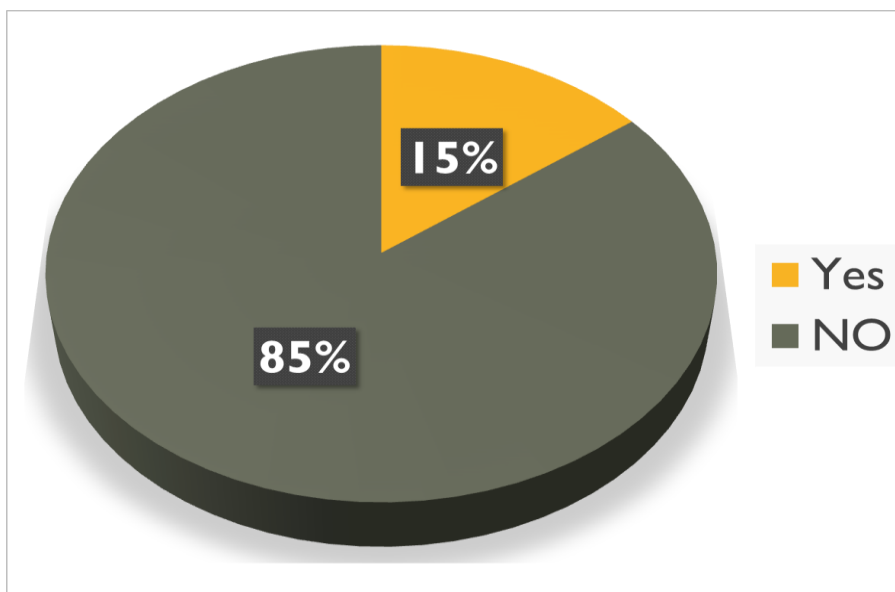
**Figure 22:** Reason to move in another city



**Figure 23: To Know what is happened in my country is:**

As shown in Figure 23, approximately 46 percent of respondents' think that information about what is happening in their country is a civic duty and 42 percent think that it is a democratic right.

Figure 24 shows the citizens view involvement in public opinion or consultation process. 85 percent of respondents have not participated in any public opinion or consultation in the community. The remaining 15 percent of respondents confirmed that have participated in work meetings in the municipality, forums organized by university, public hearings organized by political parties during the electoral campaigns.



**Figure 24: Participation in Public opinion or consultation process in community**

**Table 12: Question 10 - 15**

Q10-Q15	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The current regulation support and encourages public participation in decision making process:	14	18	24	21	22
The municipality has clear policy on public participation in decision-making process	21	31	25	9	15
There is regularity in conducting meetings by the municipality	29	29	23	5	15
The meetings are responsive to the needs of the citizens because they are done in time	33	35	19	3	9
There is a district policy or regulations that advocate public participation	13	17	38	6	25
The public is often involved in local government authority meeting or activity	25	35	26	3	12

Table 12 contains five questions. Based on the response for question 10, most of the respondents, respectively 21 percent “agree” and 22 percent “strongly agree”, agree that the current regulation support and encourages public participation in decision making process. 24 percent were neutral, 18 percent of respondents disagreed and 14 percent strongly disagree.

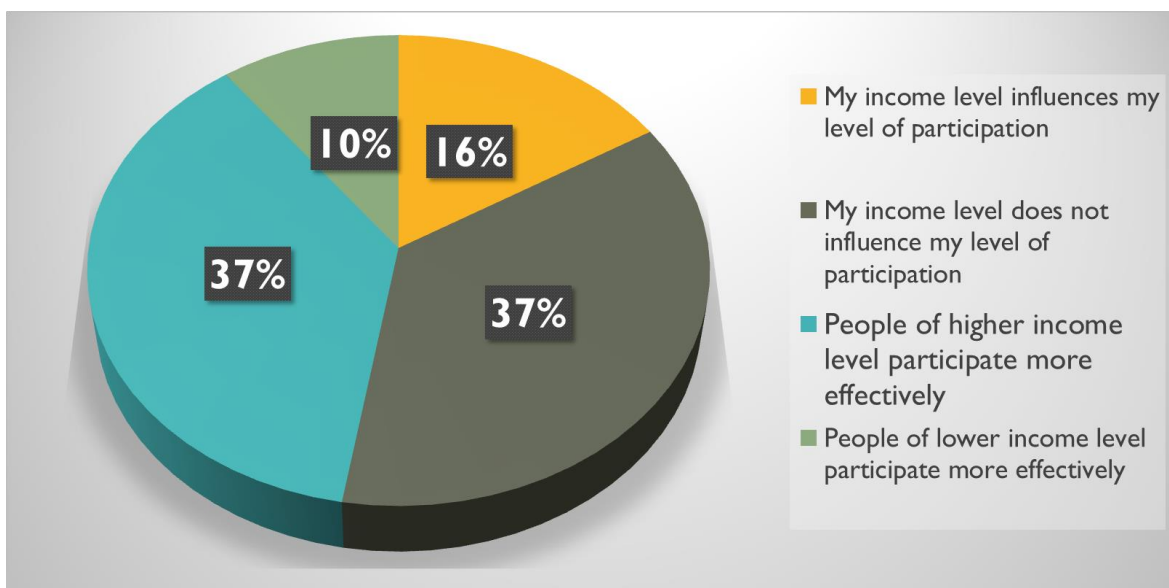
From the results of question 11, findings established that most of the respondents, respectively 31 percent “disagree” and 21 percent “strongly disagree” with 31 percent, disagree that the municipality has clear policy on public participation in decision-making process. 25 percent of respondents were neutral. 15 percent of respondents strongly agreed and 9 percent of respondents agreed.

Question 12 asks whether there is regularity in conducting meetings by the municipality. From the answer of the respondents, 48 percent of respondents “strongly disagreed” and “disagree”. 23 percent of respondents were neutral whereas 15 percent of respondents strongly agreed and 5 percent of respondents agreed. As can be seen, most of the respondents disagreed that there is regularity in conducting meetings by the municipality.

Question 13 asked if the meetings are responsive to the needs of the citizens or not. The findings show that most of the respondents disagree, respectively 35 percent “strongly

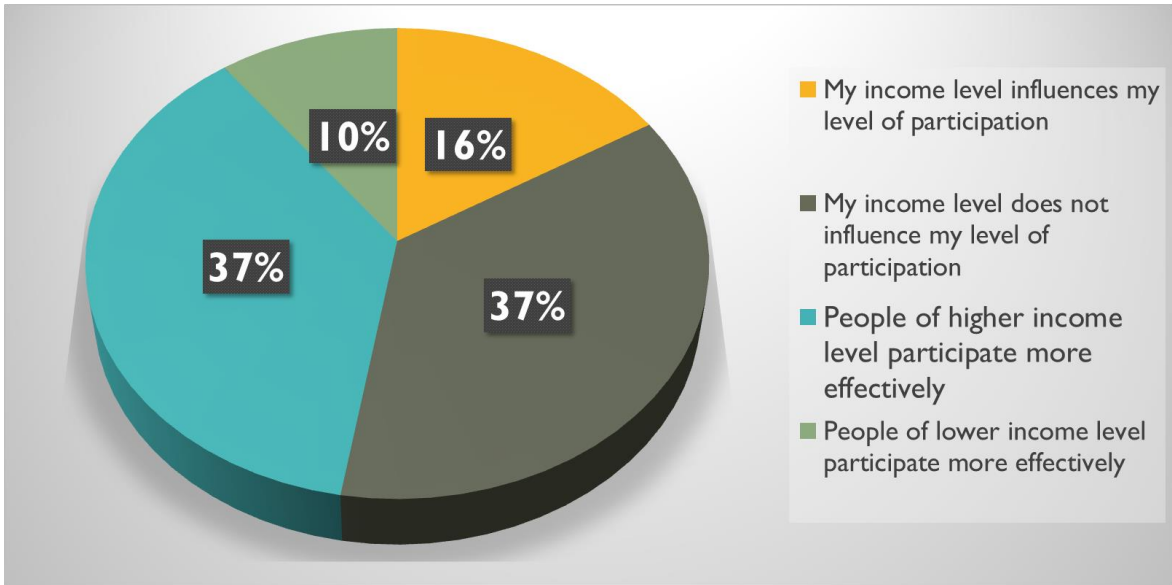
disagree” and 33 percent “disagree”, that meetings are responsive to the needs of the citizens. 19 percent of respondents were neutral. Only 9 percent of respondents strongly agreed and 3 percent of respondents agreed.

Question 14 shows that the most of respondents disagreed that the public is often involved in local government authority meetings or activities. Approximately 38 percent were neutral that there is a district policy or regulations that advocate public participation. About 25 percent of respondents strongly agreed, followed by 17 percent of respondents disagreed and 13 percent strongly disagreed. Only 6 percent of respondents agreed.



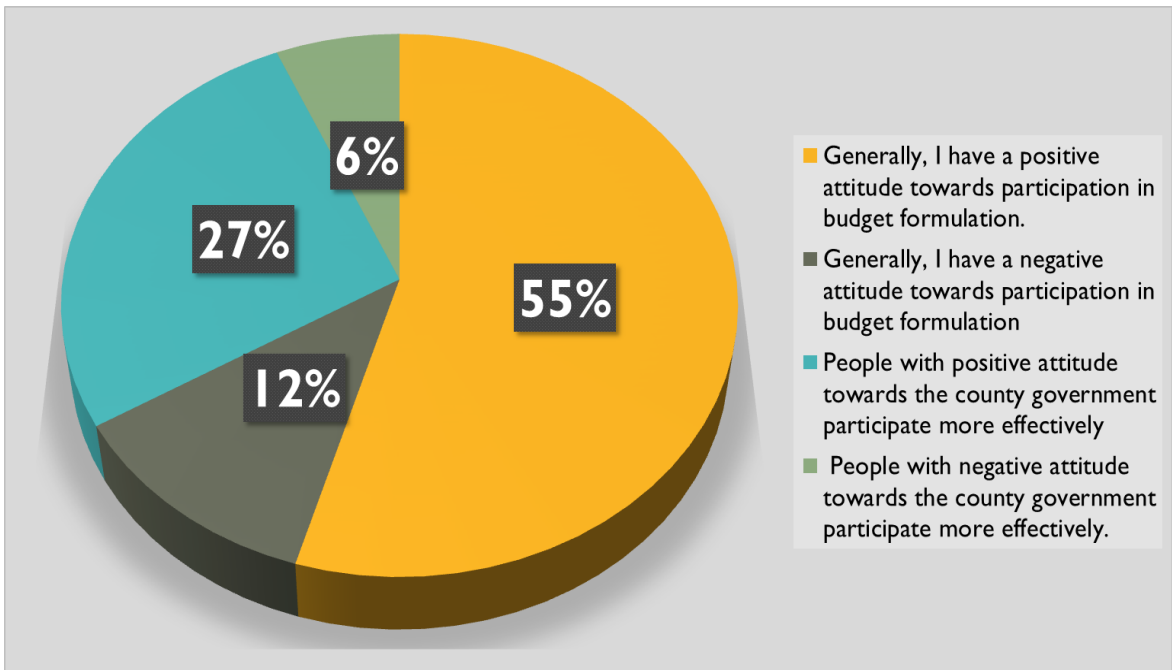
**Figure 25:** The social factors influencing public participation in decision-making process

Figure 25 shows that approximately 46 percent of respondents think that education level is an important factor that influences public participation in decision-making process. 43 percent of respondents have chosen other factors and only 11 percent of respondents have chosen gender and age as social factors that influence in public participation in decision making process.



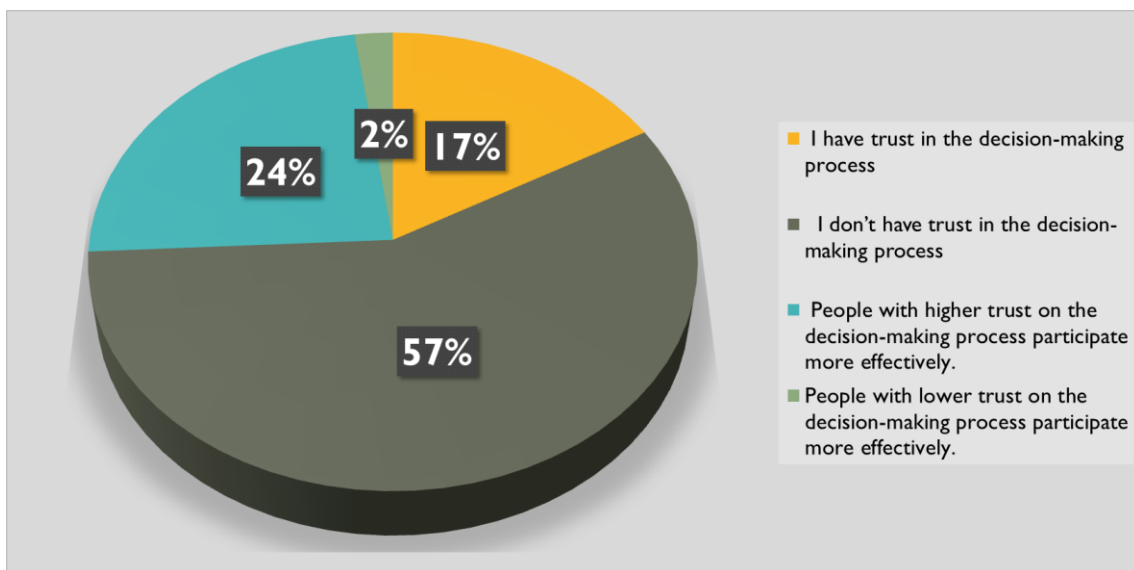
**Figure 26:** The economic factors influencing public participation in decision-making process

Figure 26 shows that 37 percent of respondents agree that income level does not influence their level of participation. Whereas 37 percent of respondents agreed that people of higher income level participate more effectively. Thus, economic factors seem to have a higher influence on public participation in decision-making process.



**Figure 27:** Public Attitude influencing public participation in decision-making process

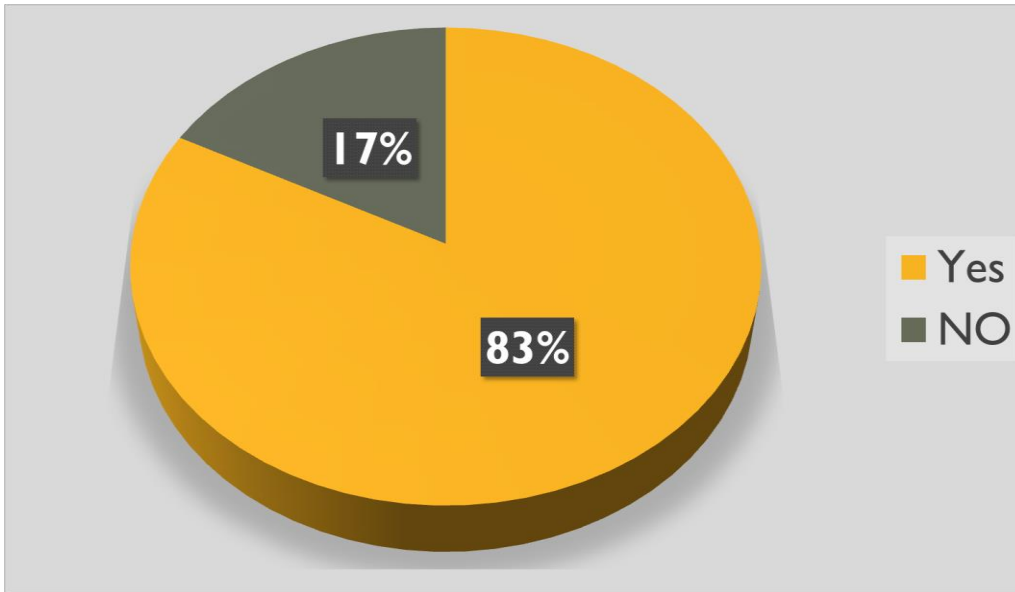
According to the results on Figure 27, 55 percent of respondents have a positive attitude towards participation in budget formulation. 27 percent of respondents agreed that people with a positive attitude towards the government participate more effectively. 12 percent of respondents have a negative attitude towards participation in budget formulation, and only 6 percent think that people who have a negative attitude towards the government participate more effectively.



**Figure 28:** Public Trust influencing public participation in decision-making process

Trust in government represents confidence of citizens in the actions of a “government to do what is right and perceived fair” (Easton, 1965). Most of the respondents, around 57 percent, do not trust the decision-making process. Whereas 24 percent of respondents think that people who trust the decision-making process participate more effectively, 17 percent of participants trust the decision-making process. Only 2 percent of respondents think that people with lower trust in the decision-making process participate more effectively (Figure 28).

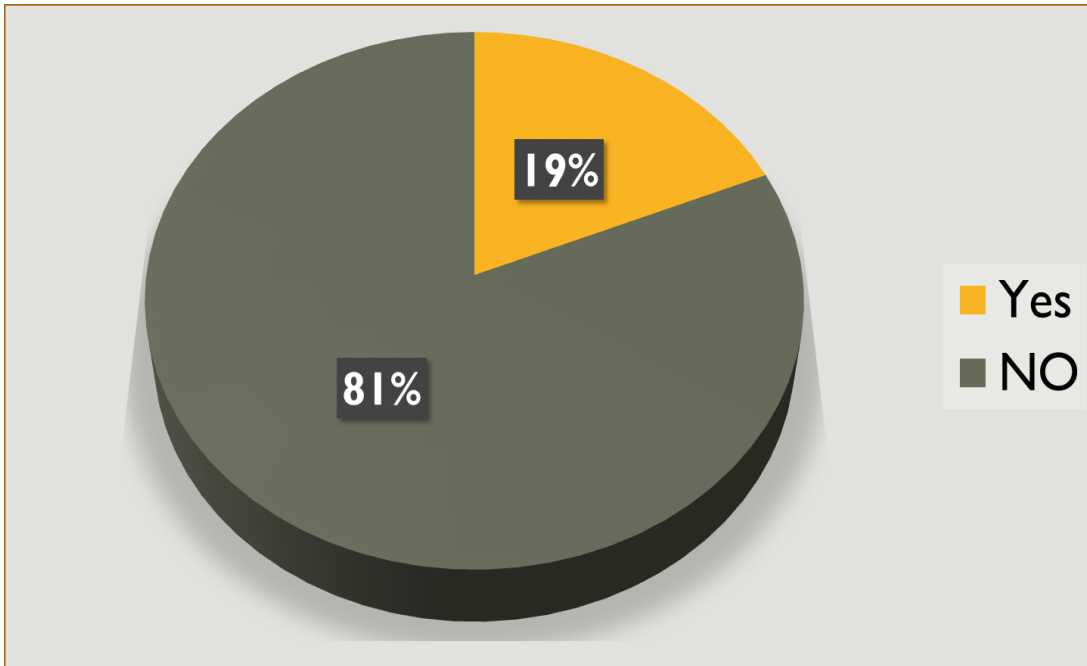




**Figure 29:** Do you think that decision making process should involve members of the general public?

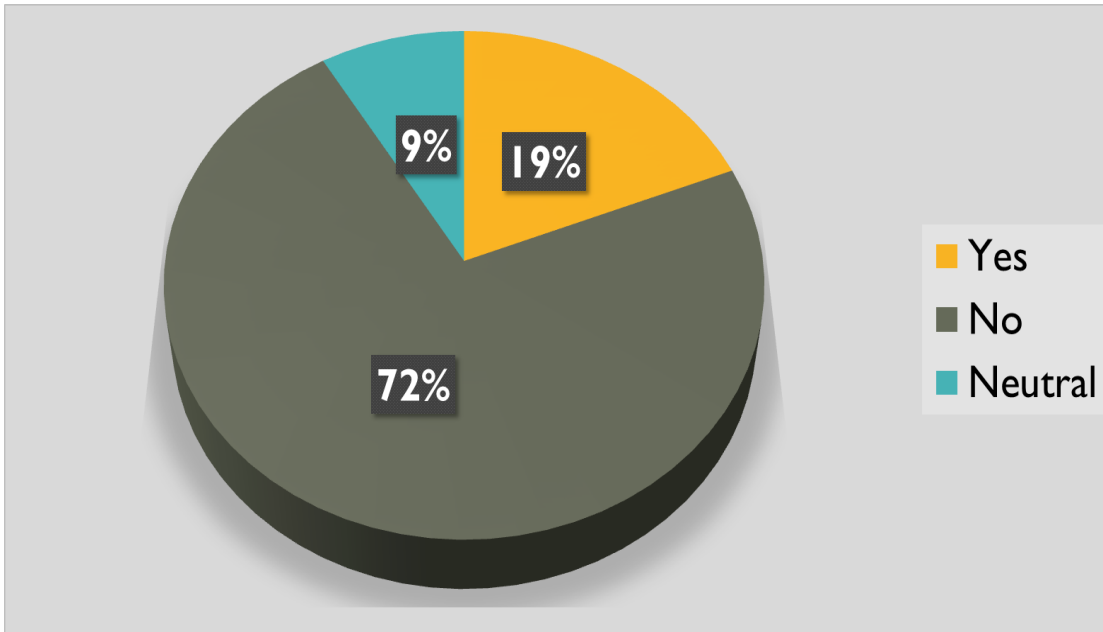
According to international standards which are reflected in the Constitution of Albania, everyone has the right of speech and to participate in decision making process by expressing their voice. Figure 29 asks citizens whether should be involved in the decision making process. 83 percent of respondents think that the decision making process should involve citizens as they are part of the community and have the obligation to be involved in decision-making for a better future. Every person has the right to express their opinion and reflect on the problems that they face every day. Every member of the community must give his/her opinion on any decision that affects the community. It is important that a decision is made after the opinions are received by the community. People needs can be determined in such a way that everyone can be satisfied, and the decisions directly affect the lives of all communities. The process will be more transparent, every member of the community can express their ideas. All the people have the right of speech and all the laws affect the community directly.

On the other hand, 17 percent of respondents think that it is better not to participate because different people with different ideas would never agree to the right decision. They think that the representatives would be more efficient than the citizens. In democracy it is necessary to have regular elections so issues will have a positive outcome and efficient decisions in the decision-making process.



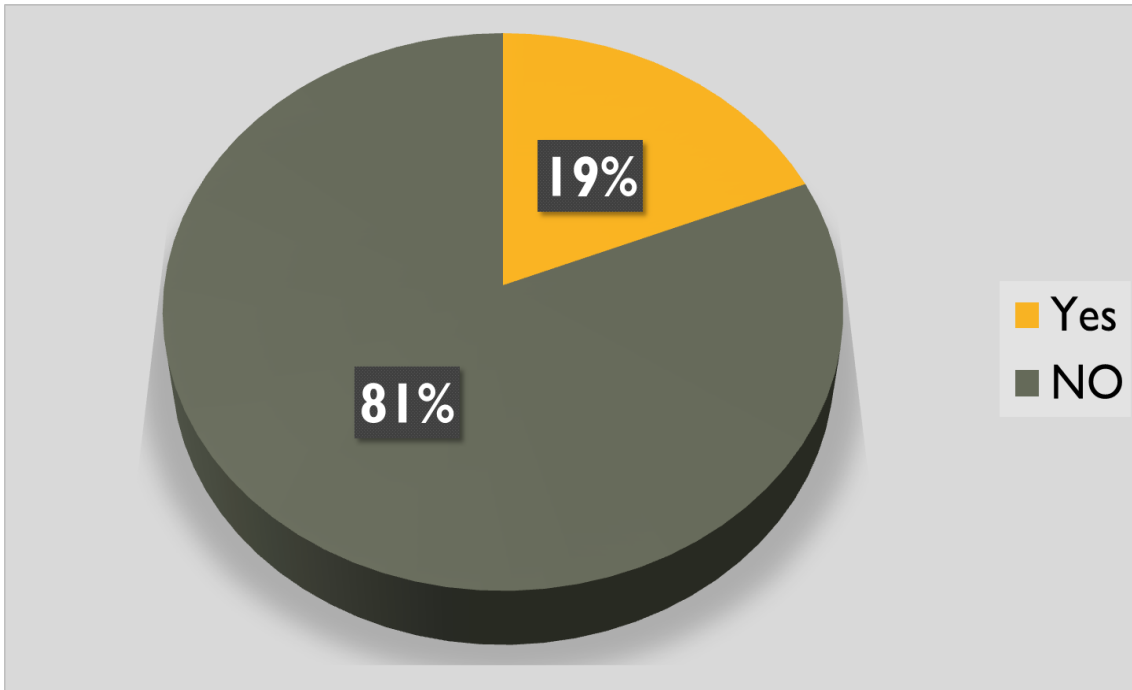
**Figure 30:** Do you think that the opinions of the community are presently being heard in the decision-making process?

As shown in Figure 30, 81 percent of respondents are totally sure that the opinions of the community are not heard in the decision-making process in Albania. Respondents voiced the following reasons that have negatively influenced the trust of the community in the decision-making process: i) no control systems during the process; ii) the public interests do not match the leaders' interests; iii) the voice of the community is not heard; iv) the low level of democratic culture; v) the undermining of the community; vi) lack of transparency, and vii) high level of corruption. Only 19 percent believe that somehow the opinions of the community are heard in the decision-making process.



**Figure 31:** Do you feel that decision-makers generally value public input in the decision-making process?

Public input is a key element to facilitate an efficient decision-making that the community feels comfortable. As shown in Figure 31, 19 percent of respondents think that decision-makers value the public input in decision-making because they see themselves as community representatives and try to look like active decision-makers. Most of the respondents, around 72 percent, think that public hearings are only for show or as a monologue and not a dialogue or discussion between community and decision-makers. Furthermore, there is a conflict of interest between community and decision makers. Only 9 percent of respondents are neutral.



**Figure 32:** Were the results of public input into the public decision-making process ever reported back to the public?

In Figure 32, 81 percent of respondents support the idea that the results of public input into decision-making process are not reported back to the public. Thus, it exists a lack of transparency. 19 percent of respondents think that results are reported back to the public, but are not convinced of their truthfulness.

Regarding question 24 whether would you recommend any specific improvements for citizen participation in the decision-making process, in general, all the respondents think that citizens should be an integral part of the decision-making process. Some of the recommendations based on the respondents' answers to improve citizen participation in decision-making process are as follows:

- efficient and transparent public hearings, not just façade for social media;
- staying close to the citizens to hear their concerns;
- taking into consideration the voice of citizens by the authorities;
- functioning of trade unions for protection of public opinion and community rights, independently by state;
- functioning of the justice system;

- in every municipal council meeting room, a lodge for citizens who are interested to participate in regular meetings must be made available;
- the level of representation with advisors should be professional rather than political;
- radical change in the election / Fair elections;
- the freedom of speech and the freedom of information for citizens must be respected in order to have improvements;
- the law on referendums should be revised. Referendums are the highest form of direct citizen involvement in decision-making;
- establish confidence in the citizens that their opinion and interest are worth decision-making;
- a complete transformation of the political system. Application of the principle of subsidiarity and referendums;
- leaving aside political and personal interests, prioritizing the common interest of the community for better development of the country;
- representatives of each area have to organize weekly meetings to hear the requests and proposals of the community.

### **7.3. Summary of key findings**

Several scholars have devised multiple models of policy-making applicable to the issue of public participation. The classical, group, elite, and systems models have been devised in order to explain how policy-making occurs (Woll, 1974:21). According to survey results, the classical model of the policy-making process is used by Albanian politicians nowadays. As the classical model focused on the interests of legislature, executive and judiciary before emerging and implementation does not include any form of public participation in the policy-making process.

According to the results, political parties, city council members, and business sector representatives have the highest influence on initiating a public decision. These actors tend to control the agenda setting and formulation of public policies, making citizens the people with the least influence on the process.

There is a difference between the two stages of the pre- and post-decision-making process in this research study. The main components of the pre-decision-making process are as follows: i) agenda setting; ii) policy structuring and iii) estimated policy outcomes. Meanwhile, the post-decision-making stage includes the main parts of the policy cycle such as: i) the implementation; ii) policy evaluation; iii) learning and iv) policy dynamics (Majone, 2006). Political parties, the chairman of the city council, business sector representatives, civil servants and employees of the public institutions have influence on both stages of the pre- or post decision- making process. Citizens are the only ones who have less influence both in pre-and post-decision-making process. So, the public institutions still do not follow legal procedures and obligations regarding the involvement of citizens in decision-making process and policy making.

Most Albanian citizens support the idea that the current regulation is not encouraging public participation in the decision making process and disagree that the municipality has clear policy on public participation in decision-making process. From the answers, it is clear that the public is not involved in local government authority meetings or activities. The main factors influencing public participation in decision-making process are: i) education and ii) economic level. This is confirmed by the first survey with civil servants which revealed that people in power and holding a good job position have higher influence.

Currently, 30 years have passed since communism but again 81 percent of citizens are totally sure that their opinions are not heard in the decision-making process because the public interests do not match with the leader's interests (Figure 30). The characteristics required for good governance and democracy must include: i) accountability; ii) transparency; iii) participation; iv) efficiency; v) control of corruption; vi) political stability; vii) absence of violence and viii) realization of human rights, which will contribute to building democracy and economic development (UNDP 2002). But in Albania, the low level of democratic culture, the lack of transparency, and high level of corruption has directly influenced the trust of the community in the decision-making process. According to the results of the survey, public hearings are only for procedure or show in most of the cases and every meeting is a monologue not a dialogue or discussion

between community and decision-makers (Figure 31). This is the main reason why most Albanian citizens do not participate in public opinions and consultations.

The involvement of civil society, mainly youth organisations in politics during the transition in Albania, has diminished the role of young people in community life and public hearings. However, it has attained to significantly increase the expectations of youth to reach the peak of power without going through the stages of the scale participation shown by Arnstein (1969). This model aims to use NGOs as a tool to reach politics.

Hypothesis I: Active participation of citizens in political forums and civic groups will bring about positive change and contributing to decision-making process, will improve services to them and standards to democracy in Albania.

In general, the direction of the relationship between government and citizens in Albania resembles more to consultation (OECD 2017; OECD 2022) which focuses on a two-way relationship in which citizens can provide feedback to the government by contributing their views and opinions. In the beginning of the 1990s, all the discussion between government and citizens during the consultation process were not considered in the decision making process. Nowadays, the situation has changed. Citizens are participating in the democratic process by voting. They vote for the leaders to represent them, their ideas, and support citizens' interest. Some new ways that are being used nowadays by Albanian citizens to participate in civic life are: i) volunteering; ii) community gardening or iii) participating in a group activity. Active citizens in Albanian politics will help maintain a strong democracy, a good economic system and at the same time ensure the protection of their rights.

Hypothesis II. Abandonment of the use and manipulation of people during election campaigns for purposes of power by politicians, would restore trust and would increase the desire for community engagement and participation in development of democracy.

Lately, citizens have been encouraged to be more active in community and ensure the protection of their rights and interests by taking part in the decision making process.

Citizens have started to take several initiatives to reduce the level of corruption by reporting via online platforms or taking other measures.

To conclude, local or central authorities are obliged to provide safe spaces for people to ask questions, express opinions, comments, suggestions or arguments for the decision makers. Usually, simple communication channels work best, but the organizers need to be creative and seek the help of community members as well. The authorities should use all possible communication channels, traditional and online platforms, in order to: i) effectively inform people for the opportunities to participate in the decision making process that affects; ii) mobilize citizens for the process, especially vulnerable groups and those that are difficult to reach; and iii) open up possibilities for the public to comment.



## **CHAPTER**

### **8. DISCUSSION ON THE LIMITED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ALBANIA**

#### **8.1. Barriers to effective public participation**

Barriers to effective public participation often negatively affect the community decision-making process in Albania. Many factors affect negatively the accomplishment of a successful civic engagement process in decision-making.

##### ***8.1.1. Lack of communication and dialogue***

Human relationship as a whole, relies on good communication as its strongest point. Communication is essential between parties and society, and for a successful decision-making process in the public interest. Without a communication, there is no dialogue or cooperation between the parties. If both of them try to listen and understand each-other, then it will be easier to solve common problems and get mutual benefits. There are many ways to establish dialogue such as meetings, mediations or public activities. According to the results of the survey with citizens, 81 percent of respondents support the idea that the results of public input into decision-making process are not reported back to the public (Figure 32). In other words, people noticed a lack of transparency and communication. Most of the respondents, around 72 percent think that public hearings are in most cases only for procedure or show due to conflict of interest between community and decision makers, with the latter thinking they are the only ones who have the right of speech (Figure 31).

### ***8.1.2. Lack of trust***

Participation requires two-way or mutual communication between citizens and local government lawmakers. When the lack of trust exists, this communication is not achieved. Lack of trust leads to a lack of solidarity and consensus. The skepticism of citizens to influence decision making is obvious in the data collected from the survey. Citizens do not believe they can influence the decision making to local authorities. The survey findings show a relatively low level of trust in public institutions as well as in decision-making process. Around 57 percent of respondents do not have trust in the decision-making process (Figure 28).

### ***8.1.3. Lack of collaboration***

Collaboration is the means by which both citizens and local government authorities can realize their common goals for better governance. The inability to cooperate reduces the likelihood of successful citizen engagement in decision-making. Actors' relationships can be seen simply in the light of cooperation. The basic rule is as follow: “Not only are there no conflicts between us, but our interests are the same or intertwined to the extent that we can win or lose together”. The best strategy for achieving effective citizen participation is to fully cooperate and avoid all possible conflicts. 81 percent of respondents are totally sure that the opinions of the community are not heard in the decision-making process in Albania due to several reasons including: i) lack of a control system during the process; ii) conflict of interest between the public and the leaders, and iii) the voice of the community not being heard (Figure 30).

### ***8.1.4. Lack of information***

Every individual has the right to access public information without having to explain motives. The responsible information coordinator near local authority is obliged to inform the applicant whether or not he possesses the requested information. For the public, access to information is of primary importance because without this information, they cannot understand their right to be active participants in decision-making and policy-making.

Above all, it is the state authorities that are obliged to provide the public with appropriate access to information and to respond promptly to their requests.

## **8.2 Overcoming barriers to effective citizen participation in Albania**

After the transition of the economy in 1990, Albania has gone through this long “tradition” where the government doesn’t show responsibility or accountability for its citizens. The main root cause for the problems in Albania and the reason for these failures of governance, is corruption (Kajsiu 2016). Fighting corruption with systematic and sustainable governance improvements, will open the door for improvement, transparency and accountability.

While in these 30 years Albania has made great progress in economic development, still the government has been unable to gain the trust and full confidence of citizens in the fundamental legitimacy. There are outside actors seeking to support democracy and good governance in Albania helping improve administrative procedures and government efficiency as well as reducing barriers to political participation and formalizing the economic system (USAID 2006).

There are several levels of public participation, but this research reports low tokenistic level of participation-consultations with the public which translates to little or no opportunity for citizens to submit written comments or attend any public hearing meetings. As part of the questionnaire, for the question that queried whether the decisions taken were based on information provided by citizens, 37.2 percent of the participants believe that this happens rarely (Table 9). The fact that the laws in Albania provide a sufficient framework for the implementation of various public participation mechanisms is a great help for authorities. However, there is a lack of bylaws to provide further information for public participation to be involved in the decision making process. Preparing a plan helps make communication and efforts to participate more efficient, effective, and long lasting. For this reason, the authorities are still failing to properly plan public participation as a result of one or more of the following problems:

- participatory activities organized quickly and unplanned as process;

- lack of clarity about the impact that the public may have on final decisions;
- fatigue of stakeholders;
- damaged reputation of the groups involved; and
- problematic conflicts and relationship

### **8.3. New treatments and ways of thinking about participation**

Incorporating participatory engagement in Albanian administration is a slow and gradual process. Public participation requires changing the old way of thinking and doing things and introducing broader concepts of good governance where different actors play their role in the decision making process. The change that participation brings can be reflected in different ways, which include:

- better information and decisions based on citizens' opinions and preferences;
- sustainable change if the public is willing to accept new policies;
- public ownership of decisions taken;
- addressing real problems that citizens face;
- avoiding conflicts or managing them better;
- reduce costs – provided that the right decisions are taken;
- changing relationships – people regaining confidence in the authorities;
- improving the reputation of the authorities in public;
- mutual learning provided through exchanges; and
- good social capital - a good starting point for further challenges

The effects of public participation are greater in the case that citizens understand the participatory process and most importantly, the benefits derived from this process. It is easier for civil servants to start the decision-making process and decide for themselves the expected results. Following this path, they may not be able to judge whether the decisions are acceptable to the community. Potential resistance to these decisions could slow down the implementation or could completely halt planned developments. All the benefits of the first stages of the process would be lost in the implementation phase. Therefore, alternative treatment with public participation has become a predominant standard. Although a somewhat longer preparatory stage is needed, the long-term benefits offset the resources

invested. In line with this view, public participation is an integral part of the process - and not a cause for delays.

#### **8.4 Key steps in the planning process for improving citizen participation in Albania**

The planning of the public participation process should be guided by the principles and obligations as specified in Article 6 (4) of the Aarhus Convention: “Each Party shall provide for early public participation, when all options are open and effective public participation can take place”.

This would help organizers to identify and analyze stakeholders, identify risks and resistance that should be properly addressed in order to avoid arguments that hinder the process. On the other hand, citizens need to understand that the process is open and transparent, and they must be enthusiastic to get involved. In practice, this means that citizens should be asked about their needs and opinions at the early stages of the process, such as situation analysis, fact-finding or need for assessment. Technocrats tend to think that this phase is part of their job, but consulting people before the discussion phase would help get better solutions and decisions that are widely accepted.

Public participation procedures have to include:

*i. Setting reasonable deadlines for participation*

Initially, the public needs time to learn about the background of the issue. For example, gaining specific domain knowledge about the process. This means that the authorities must provide general information about the issue, and upon request from citizens, must provide additional information in order to facilitate the process of public consultation.

Afterwards, the public needs time to prepare for the participation process. This may include various activities, depending on the type of process and activities planned by the authorities (written consultations, series of meetings, public hearings). Finally, the public needs time to participate in activities, make written contributions and engage in online discussions.

*ii. People have to be effectively informed about the opportunities to participate*

The authorities should draw up a clear procedure for public participation and then notify the citizens concerning the decision-making process. In addition, the authorities should lay down the basic rules for decision-making by adopting appropriate regulations. The set of information to be provided to the public should include: i) information about the decision-making process; and ii) information about the subject of decision-making accompanied with technical studies, legal documents, project plans and programs. Also, the information should be given announced in a public space where citizens have access.

In order for the public to prepare for a well-informed decision-making, the authorities should provide the following information: i) a description of the proposed activity; ii) draft alternative decision or proposal; iii) information about the authority responsible for decision making; iv) a description of the entire decision-making procedure, including the possibilities for submitting public comments; and v) details of the domestic or international legal framework for this decision-making.

*iii. All information used in decision making should be available for review*

The authorities should provide the public with all relevant information related to the decision-making process. The information should include all relevant data and necessary documentation. This is one of the requirements stipulated in the Aarhus Convention which Albania has the obligation to respect since based on Article 122 of the Constitution of Albania as amended “Any international agreement that has been ratified constitutes part of the internal juridical system after it is published in the Official Journal of the Republic of Albania” and “has superiority over laws of the country that are not compatible with it.” While the international and domestic law requires respecting this procedure, when it comes to putting into practice, it is difficult to get all the necessary information for the decision making process.

*iv. Opportunity to submit comments*

Every member of the public has the right to submit comments or opinions during the public participation process. The authorities must respond to the citizens' requests. The preferred way is to use the same form that the citizen used to express their opinion (e.g., written responses if comments are submitted in writing). If a large number of comments were collected, it would be advisable to prepare a report summarizing the comments according to the content and publish them through the communication channels used during the participation process. All contributions must be recorded and taken into account during decision making.

*v. Information on the final decision should be provided in a timely manner and without delay*

The authorities are obliged to inform the public about the decision taken. This information should include the text of the decision and a report on the reasons and evaluations on which this decision is based, as well as the public contributions that were taken into account in the decision. The package should also contain information about the possibilities to appeal against the decision.

Information should be sent to all those involved in the process, to the public concerned and made available to the general public and accessible online. It is expected that the information will be made public through the same communication channels used during the first phase of the process announcement.

## **CHAPTER**

### **9. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

The greatest challenge of modern democracies including Albania is the level of decision making and effective participation of citizenship in the decision-making process. This research aimed to provide some suggestions how to increase real participation in the decision-making process. The usage of information and communication technologies and the greater pressure of society for better accountability has changed the philosophy of policy and decision makers. The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a good initiative to provide assurance from the government to achieve accountability and transparency between decision makers and the public. In addition, it ensures active and direct civic engagement in governance. Albania became part of the Open Government Partnership initiative on 2 August 2011.

While legislation concerning public participation in decision-making process at the local government is in line with the Open Government Partnership standards, the usage of the digital technology has reshaped the democracy by offering new possibilities of interaction with citizens (Coleman and Gøtze 2001, p. 5; Dunleavy et al 2005, p. 478). Many developed countries have introduced e-government, aiming to reduce costs, increase efficiency, effectiveness and transparency to improve citizen government interaction (Manoharan and Ingrams 2018; Wohlers and Bernier 2016; Edmiston 2003). In the same vein, Albania has introduced several online tools that have had positive impact (Xhaferaj and Skara 2021). However, based on responses of the citizens, there is a lot of work that must be done to have active and real citizen participation in Albania.



Engaging citizens in the public decision process may strengthen the democracy of the country, and help the country fulfill all the requirements to enter the EU. There are many reasons for this weak relationship between citizens and government such as political scandals, individualism, corruption and unreasonable expectations which lead to public distrust. Currently, Albanian citizens do not trust the political parties and parliament any more.

Scholars have offered at least five explanations for the decline of trust in government. They include three big social/political factors: i) poor institutional performance; ii) large-scale global “shocks” and iii) growing political polarization—and two specifically economic factors: i) rising economic inequality and ii) declining economic mobility (Marx et al 2019). The first way to fix the current situation is to improve the relationship between citizens and government officials and build trust by making common decisions. Democracy is seen as a domain of public discussion, dominated by “the unforced force of the better argument” (Habermas 1984) and leading to the common good.

### **8.1. Best practices and Models**

Based on an in-depth literature review, there are numerous practices of citizen participation in various countries in Europe and around the world. The right of citizens to be informed for all the policies is related to citizen participation and policy making. There are a variety of ways in which government bodies, interest groups, not-for-profit organizations can promote participation in policy-making. Furthermore, nowadays there is a wide range of mediums and tools that could be used to promote citizen involvement, and make policy development. The influence of social, political and historical environment on the development of civil society has a high impact on researching and analyzing citizen involvement in policy-making.

One of the best examples is Canada. The “Policy Toolkit for Public involvement in Decision-Making”, published by Canadian Government’s Department of Health, ensures citizen participation in the policy-making process. More specifically:

The Manual sets out the Department's policy and defines (five) levels of public involvement in terms of the overall objective: to inform, to gather information, to discuss, to engage and to partner. For each level, a set of techniques and a case study are offered to illustrate their use in practice. Each technique is described in terms of its application, costs and limits (Heinrich 2007)

The United States models emphasize more institutionalized forms of citizen participation with direct impact on policy making. There are several good examples in U.S. city councils regarding the public hearings, budget hearings and public sessions of city councils. Many city councils set aside time on the council agenda for the public to directly address the council. City councils may also hold public hearings as part of their agenda in order to gather facts and opinions on proposed legislation, ascertain public opinion on and to provide for media coverage of an issue.

In the Czech Republic there are certain segments of civil society such as professional associations and trade unions which have a great impact on policy making in specific areas to foster congenial relations with the government. According to Heinrich (2007), civil society in Czech Republic plays an important role in influencing public policy and engaging with the government on policy issues, particularly on environmental protection and social services. CSOs working on these issues have succeeded in placing their demands on the public agenda and providing an important influence in the Social Services Act (Zákon č. 108/2006 Sb). In addition, trade unions and professional and economic associations are traditionally active and successful in influencing public policies at the national level. Civil society owes much of its success in influencing the policy agenda to the generally cooperative and amicable relations with the government (Heinrich 2007)

## **8.2. Best practices for Albania**

Programs for citizen participation in Albania have to be implemented effectively in order to motivate citizens to participate in the decision-making process. This way, the government can ultimately be more responsive to community needs. Education is one of the key factors that determines the level of citizen participation in the process of decision-making. In general, the higher the level of education of a person, the higher the chance that

individuals take part in decision-making. People with a high level of education are able to better understand the importance of civic involvement in the process and the need that local institutions have for different experiences and opinions as well guaranteeing decisions in harmony with civic demands. Also, age, ethnicity and gender, sometimes determine the level of their participation in the process of democratic governance. The reasons for this often relate to the level of dissatisfaction they have with the institutions, lack of trust, non-representation by institutions, exclusion from the discussion process and important decisions.

The first strategy is to develop a comprehensive communication for citizen engagement by reaching out and broadcasting to citizens on a routine basis via email, social media, door to door or hosting informational sessions. Firstly, it is important to educate citizens by raising campaigns to inform them about the function of parliament, expose them to existing participation mechanisms and then to promote participation in specific process. Also, civil society organizations can collaborate with parliament staff to provide various courses on the function of the legislative process and the role of citizens in this process.

The second strategy is to give some power and authority to citizens closest to the issues as they can provide insights on funding allocations, cultural issues and help develop community partnerships. To implement this strategy, governments need to remove barriers to participation and implement procedures and policies that make it easier for citizens to participate and express their thoughts. An important step toward effective participation is to build citizen participation offices in every city and communication departments in order to disseminate information on the work of the policy process, educating the citizens about different legislations and collecting direct input from citizens. So, they will promote spaces for dialogue with citizens and submission of citizen's proposals and opinions on governmental oversight.

The third strategy includes two components such as: i) financial and ii) human resources. The lack of those resources results in a low citizen participation. The technology reduces some of the costs of in-person mechanisms but moving completely to a digital system would not be an inclusive approach. There should be a balance between the information sharing and discussion online and face-to face services and training. Also, an exchange of

experiences of Albanian decision makers with other decision makers in other countries has to be done. Such exchange of experience may take the form of seminars, workshops or conferences with a sole purpose: how to influence in the decision making process.

The last but most important strategy is to promote educational programs for children and youth in order to prepare and educate them to become politically active citizens. Different programs can be organized in person or virtually to provide personal opportunities for young people to gain a better understanding of the public policy process and decision-making process. In high school, students must have the right to select elective courses such as: introduction to law, Human Rights; State and Constitutions. All the youth must have general knowledge about public policy in order to understand the importance of involvement of citizens in public process. In addition, incentives for participation must be provided to encourage the youth and citizens in the beginning including prizes, awards or different benefits.

### **8.3. Conclusion**

After the fall of communism regime (1990s), the participation of Albanian's citizens in the decision-making, either at central or local government, was low and mainly manifested only through elections. Other forms of participation have been very limited. Lack of trust in public institutions has caused Albanian citizens passive in seeking accountability. However, political culture in the country has begun to get a new and more positive approach. Albania has ratified several international agreements that now are part of domestic legal system. In this context, the citizens are more involved in the decision making process. On the other hand, central or local authorities are obliged to take into considerate the feedback of the citizens.

Citizen participation is a process through which citizens together with policymakers decide on the initiation and content of public policies and their implementation. Both sides will have to contribute in order to achieve this purpose of which entails raising transparency, accountability, rule of law, open governance and policy formulation which respond to the demands and needs of the citizens. So, engaging citizens in decision-making may strengthen democracy as well as an effective allocation of scarce public resources.

The level of civic participation in Albania is challenged by numerous factors, which define the orientations, attitudes and beliefs that citizens have towards the political system. The high level of unemployment, corruption, lack of economic development, rule of law, and the poor quality of public services, in particular health and education, reflect in some form or another the level of participation and civic engagement in the political- sphere. This is a right guaranteed by the widest acts' legal instruments and key international instruments.

Referring to the primary data and secondary data conducted in the course of this thesis, the factors influencing the effectiveness of citizen participation in decision making process are: i) unclear regulations; ii) no public access ensured; iii) little or no access to information; iv) lack of trust in government and public institutions, and v) political pressure on the decision making process.

The best policy strategy lauded for holistic consideration of local economic interests is the delegation of environmental decision-making authority to citizens. The knowledge and participation of the public in the process of public interaction and policy making is an indicator for the progress of democratization and empowerment of the government of any country. The emergence of citizen participation in policymaking nowadays is related to the focus of people in policies that improve the quality of government decisions and maximize benefits of community. Citizen participation brings numerous direct benefits for communities as well as for government, stockholders and business sectors with interest in improving relations between government-citizens. The policy option of supporting participatory governance as directly benefiting effective policy-making, building effective government-citizen relations and enhanced transparency based on the respective roles of actors responsible and institutionalizing the participatory governance. Effective communications between local and central governments and citizens will bring more transparent, accountable and legitimate policy-making. In addition, not-for-profit organizations need to collectively represent the voice of communities as well as to ensure that public concerns are fed systematically into the policy debate and formulation process.

Citizens, as the most important actors, need to investigate and endorse policy reform by actively participating in any form of community mobilization initiative and improving policies. Civil society such as labour unions, community-based organizations, professional

associations need to understand their role in the policy process and their limitations in enacting and formalizing public policy including availability of resources, legal frameworks and government agencies.

Lastly, business organizations play an important role in tri-partite partnerships which help and empower communities as policy entrepreneurs. Their participation in the policy process benefits their own corporate interests, philanthropy and social accountability efforts. One of the possible ways to increase the public trust and to fix the situation in Albania is to improve relationships between government officials and citizens. Accepting joint responsibility for actions taken and making common decisions will increase the trust and wellbeing of this country.

To conclude, this thesis recommends that raising awareness through various forums and campaigns for citizens to understand that participating actively in decision-making process can improve their economic situation, development, social and cultural well-being. On the other hand, both central and local level should maintain bridges of communication with civil society as well as continuously advance and strengthen these bridges through continuous consultation before drafting of public policies, which directly affect the social life of the country as well as to achieve the necessary impact on citizens.

## REFERENCES

- Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J. (2012) *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*, Crown Business, New York
- Adler, RP, Goggin, J. (2005) "What Do We Mean By "Civic Engagement?"", *Journal of Transformative Education*, Vol. 3 No. 3, July 2005, pp. 236-253
- Agolli, A., Guga, B., & Kapexhiu, E. (2013). *Participation of Citizens and Civil Society in Decision Making: Study on the Legal and Regulatory Framework and Practice in Albania*. Partners Albania & Centre for Change and Conflict Management
- Aldrich, J. H. (1993) 'Rational choice and turnout'. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol 37, pp. 246-278
- Anderson, J. (2006) *Public Policymaking. An Introduction*. 6th edition, New York: Houghton Mifflin
- Ank, M. De Graaf, L. (2010) 'Examining Citizen Participation: Local Participatory Policy Making and Democracy', *Local Government Studies*, 36:4, 477-491, DOI: 10.1080/03003930.2010.494101
- Antonini, M. Fini, V. (2011). 'Gestire il cambiamento: La partecipazione come oggetto del discorso psicologico', *Scritti di Gruppo*, Vol 9, pp. 59-66.
- Arblaster, A. (1991) *Democracy*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Armour, J. and Eidenmüller, Horst. (2017) *Negotiating Brexit*, Nomos
- Arnett, J. J. (2004). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties*. Oxford University Press.
- Arnstein, S. R. (1969). 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation'. *Journal of the American Institute of Planning*, 35(4), 216- 224
- Aya Hirata Kimura (2010) 'Between technocracy and democracy: An experimental approach to certification of food products by Japanese consumer cooperative women', *Journal of Rural Studies* 26 (2010) 130-140
- Balinski, ML. Young, Hp. (1982) *Fair Representation: Meeting the Ideal of One Man, One Vote*, New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press

- Barnes, M. (1999) 'Researching public participation', *Local Government Studies*, 25(4), pp. 60–75
- Barnes, M. Shardlow, P. (1997) 'From Passive Recipient to Active Citizen: Participation in Mental Health User Groups', *Journal of Mental Health*, 6 (3), 289-300
- Beierle, T. (2002) *Democracy in practice: public participation in environmental decisions*, Washington, New York, Routledge
- Bell, DE. et al (1988) *Decision Making: Descriptive, Normative and Prescriptive Interactions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Biberaj E, 'Albania: the Challenges of Transitions' in Sharon L. Wolchik and Jane L. Curry (eds), *Central and East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy* (2nd edition, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC 2011)
- Biberaj, E. (1999) *Albania In Transition: The Rocky Road To Democracy*, New York, Routledge
- Bideleux, R. Jeffries, I. (2007) *the Balkans: A Post – Communist History*, Routledge
- Bino, B. et al (2021) *Civil Society Participation in Decision Making in Albania*, WFD Albania by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation in Albania (IDM)
- Bishop, P. and Davis, G. (2002) 'Mapping public participation in policy choices', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 61 (1), 14-29
- Bogdani, M. Loughlin, J. (2007) *Albania and the European Union: the Tumultuous Journey towards Integration and Accession*, I.B. TAURIS
- Bozeman, B. (2002). 'Public-Value Failure: When Efficient Markets May Not Do', *Public Administration Review*, vol. 62, no. 2
- Brager, G. et al (1987) *Community Organizing: A Holistic Approach*, Columbia University Press; 2nd edition
- Brodie, E. et al (2009) *Understanding Participation: A literature review*, Pathways through participation, National Council for Voluntary Organisations
- Brown, R. Vari, A., 1992. 'Towards a research agenda for prescriptive decision science: the normative tempered by the descriptive', *Acta Psychologica*, 80(1), pp. 33-47.
- Bryman, A. Crammer, D. (2008), 'Introduction to Qualitative Research' Sage Publication, Oxford University Press, London
- Brynard, D.J. (1996) 'Public Participation in Local Government and Administration: Bridging the Gap', *Politeia*, 15(2):39-50
- Callahan, K. (2007) 'Citizen Participation: Models and Methods', *International Journal of Public Administration*, 30:11, pp. 1179-1196



- Carothers, T. (2002), "The End of the Transition Paradigm", *Journal of Democracy*, 13, no.1, pp. 5-21
- Carothers, T. (2006), "The Backlash against Democracy Promotion", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, available online at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2006-03-01/backlashagainst-democracy-promotion>
- Chetwynd, E. Chetwynd, F. (2001) "A Practical Guide to Citizen in Local Government in Romania". Research Triangle Institute under the Local Government Assistance Program USAID. Romania
- Ciara Fitzgerald, Stephen McCarthy, Fergal Carton, Yvonne O Connor, Laura Lynch & Frederic Adam (2016) "Citizen participation in decision-making: can one make a difference?" *Journal of Decision Systems*, 25:sup1, 248-260, DOI: 10.1080/12460125.2016.1187395
- Cohen, J. Uphoff, N. (1980) 'Participation's place in rural development: seeking clarity through specificity', *World Development*, 8 (3), 213-235
- Coleman, S. Gøtze, J. (2001) *Bowling Together: Online Public Engagement in Policy Deliberation*, Hansard Society
- Commission, 'Albania: 2008 Progress Report' (Commission Staff Working Document) SEC (2008) 2692
- Commission, 'Albania: 2012 Progress Report' (Commission Staff Working Document) SWD (2012) 334
- Conklin, A. et al (2015) 'What is the evidence base for public involvement in health-care policy?: results of a systematic scoping review' *Health Expect*, 18(2): 153-165
- Consolidate Version of Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union [2010] OJ C83/53
- Constitution of the Republic of Albania 1998 as amended
- Cornwall, A. (2008) 'Unpacking 'Participation': models, meanings and practices', *Community Development Journal*, 43 (3), 269-283
- Cowles, M G., Caporaso J., Risse, T. (eds.) (2001) *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca
- Craig, P and de Burga, G. (2020) *EU Law: Text, Cases, and Materials*, Oxford University Press, Oxford
- Creighton, James L. (2005) 'The Public Participation Handbook: Making Better Decisions through Citizen Involvement'. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco
- Dahl, RA. (1957) 'The Concept of Power', *Behavioral Science*, Vol 2, Issue 3, p. 201-215

- Day, D. (2016) 'Citizen Participation in the Planning Process: An Essentially Contested Concept?', *Journal of Planning Literature*, Vol 11, Issue 3, pp. 421-434
- Dean, J. W. Sharfman, M. P., (1993) Procedural rationality in the strategic decision-making process. *Journal of management Studies*, 30(4), pp. 587-610.
- Decision 17/2014 of the Bureau of Assembly (2014) 'Public Participation Manual in the Assembly's decision-making process', Available at: [https://shtetiweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/manuali\\_i\\_azhornuar\\_21298\\_1.pdf](https://shtetiweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/manuali_i_azhornuar_21298_1.pdf)
- Decision of Council of Minister 16/2012, "On Public Access to environmental information"
- Decision of Council of Minister 247/2014, "On the determination of the rules and requirements of the procedures for information and involvement of the public in environmental decision making"
- Decision of Council of Minister 994/2008, "Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making"
- Deplano, Rossana (2011) 'The Citizens of Democracy: Participation for Integration in the European Union after the Lisbon Treaty' *Human Rights Brief* 19, no. 1: 8-12.
- DeSario, J. Langton, S. (1987) *Citizen participation in public decision making*, Greenwood Press, New York
- Diller, E. (2001) 'Citizens in service: The challenge of delivering civic engagement training to national service programs', Washington, DC: Corporation for National and Community Service.
- Duffy, S. (2007) 'Participative public services' in Parker, S. and Parker, S. (eds.) *Unlocking Innovation: Why citizens hold the key to public service reform*, London, Demos, 33-47
- Dukes, E.F. (1996) *Resolving Public Conflict*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Dunleavy, P. et al. (2005) 'New Public Management is Dead-Long Live Digital – Era Governance', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol 16, Issue 3, pp 467–494, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mui057>
- Dye, T.R. 1978. *Understanding Public Policy*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Easton, D. (1965), *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*, John Wiley, New York
- Edelman Trust Barometer. (2012) Record decline in Government [online]. Available at: <http://www.slideshare.net/fullscreen/EdelmanInsights/2012-edelman-trust-barometer-global-deck/5>.
- Edmiston, KD. (2003) 'State and Local E-Government: Prospects and Challenges' [2003] *The American Review of Public Administration*, Vol 33, Issue 1, pp. 20-45

- Ehrlich, T. (2000) *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, Greenwood Publishing Group
- EIPP. (2009). *Public Participation in Europe: An International Perspective*. European Institute for Public Participation
- Elbasani, A. (2009) 'EU Administrative Conditionality and Domestic Downloading: the Limits of Europeanization in Challenging Context' KGF Working Paper Series 2
- Etzioni, A. (1995) *The spirit of Community: rights, responsibilities, and the Communitarian agenda*. New York: Crown Publishers
- Evans-Cowley, J. and Hollander, J. (2010) 'The New Generation of Public Participation: Internet-based Participation Tools', *Planning Practice & Research*, 25:3, pp. 397-408
- Eversole, R. (2010) 'Remaking participation: challenges for community development practice', *Community Development Journal*, 47 (1), 29-41
- Evrard, Y. (1997) 'Democratizing Culture or Cultural Democracy?' *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, Vol 27, Issue 3, pp. 167-175.
- Farrell, DM. (2001) *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction*, Basingstoke: Palgrave
- Feather, N. T. (1982). *Expectations and actions: Expectancy-value models in psychology*. Hillsdale, NJ, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Feddersen, T. J., & Pesendorfer, W. (1996) 'The swing voter's curse', *The American Economic Review*, 86, 408-424.
- Florin, P., & Wandersman, A. (1990) 'An Introduction to Citizen Participation, Voluntary Organizations, and Community Development: Insights for Empowerment Through Research', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 18(1), 41- 54.
- Fowler, J. H., Kam, C. D. (2007). 'Beyond the self: Social identity, altruism, and political participation'. *The Journal of Politics*, Vol 69, pp. 813-827. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2508.2007.00577.x
- Fox, W. et al (1991) *Public management*, Cape Town: Juta
- Fraser, D. (2009) *The Evolution of the British Welfare State*, 4th edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan
- French, S., 1995. An introduction to decision theory and prescriptive decision analysis. *IMA Journal of Management Mathematics*, 6(2), pp. 239-24
- Gallagher, M. (1992) 'Comparing Proportional Representation Electoral Systems: Quotas, Thresholds, Paradoxes and Majorities', *British Journal of Political Science*, 22/4: 469-96

- Ghasemi, M. (2019) 'Paradigms of Postmodern Democracies' SAGE Open, 9(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019843698>
- Gilboa, I. (2010) Rational Choice, Cambridge, The MIT Press
- Gildenhuisy, J.S.H. et. al. (1991): Public Macro Organisation, Juta and Co., Ltd., Kenwyn.
- Goldstein, B. E., & Butler, W. H. (2010) 'Expanding the Scope and Impact of Collaborative Planning', Journal of the American Planning Association, 76(2), 238-249
- Golubovic, D. (2010) "An Enabling Framework for Citizen Participation in Public Policy: An Outline of Some of the Major Issues Involved, International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law/ Vol. 12, nr. 4
- Gorodnichenko, Y. and Roland, G. (2021) 'Culture, institutions and democratization' Public Choice, 187, pp. 165–195
- Grabbe, H. (2004) The EU's Transformative Power: Europeanisation through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe, Palgrave, Basingstoke.
- Habermas, J. (1984). The Theory of Communicative Action. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Hanekom, S.X. Thornhill, C. (1993) Public Administration in Contemporary Society: A South African Perspective. Revised edition. Pretoria: Southern.
- Hartay, E. (2011) Citizens Participation: Best Practices in the Western Balkans and the European Union. KCSF
- Haruta, C. and Radu, B. (2010) 'The Invisible Hand or What Makes Bureaucracy Indispensable? A Short Theoretical Inquiry into the Bureaucracy's Role in the Policy-Making Process', 2010, Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences, vol. 29E, pp. 62-70
- Haruta, C., Radu, B. and Radu, L (2009) 'The Ruling Political Class? A Theoretical Analysis of the Political Actors' Role as Major Decision Makers in the Context of the Politico Administrative Relations', 2009, Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences, vol. 27E, pp. 71-88
- Hashim, H. (1986). Grassroots Participation in Local Planning Process. Unpublished Master Thesis. Iowa, USA: Iowa State University.
- Hayes, M. (2017) 'Incrementalism and Public Policy-Making' Politics, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.133>
- Heinrich, VF. (2007), Global Survey of the State of Civil Society: County Profiles, Kumarian Press
- Henry, N. (1992) Public Administration and Public Affairs. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Hill, M. (2009) The Public Policy Process. 5th edition, Pearson Education: London

- Hill, M. Hupe, P. (2009) *Implementing Public Policy: An Introduction to the Study of Operational Governance*. 2nd Edition, SAGE Publications
- IAP2 (2022) 'IAP2 Core Values', Available: <https://www.iap2.org/page/corevalues>
- IDM and UNDP (2016) 'Trust in Governance 2016' IDM
- INSTAT (2021) 'Unemployment in Albania', Available at: <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/statistical-literacy/unemployment-in-albania/>
- Involve (2005) *People & participation: How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making*. Involve, London.
- Irvin, R. Stansbury, J (2004) 'Citizen Participation in Decision Making: Is It Worth the Effort?' *Public Administration Review*, Vol 64, Issue 1 p. 55-65
- Isufaj, M. (2014) 'Decentralization and the Increased Autonomy in Local Government', *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 109, 459. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.490>
- Jackson, A. and O'Doherty, C. (eds.) (2012) *Community Development in Ireland: Theory, Policy and Practice*. Dublin: Gill Education
- Jackson, R., et al (2021). *Conceptualising Participation in Practice in YAP Ireland: A Case Study*. Galway: UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland Galway.
- Kajsiu, B. (2016) *A Discourse Analysis of Corruption: Instituting Neoliberalism Against Corruption in Albania, 1998-2005*, *Southeast European Studies*, Routledge
- Kajsiu, B. et al. (2002) 'Albania – a Weak Democracy a Weak State', *Report on the State of democracy in Albania*, Albanian Institute for International Studies
- Kathy K. et al (2015) 'Conceptualizing the use of public involvement in health policy decision-making', *Social Science & Medicine* 138, pp. 14-21
- Katz, R. S. (1997) *Democracy and Elections*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Keane, J. (2009), *The Life and Death of Democracy*, Simon & Schuster UK Ltd
- Keller, L. R. (1989) 'Decision research with descriptive, normative, and prescriptive purposes—Some comments', *Annals of Operations Research*, 19(1), pp. 485-487
- Krstić, M. (2022) 'Rational Choice Theory – Alternatives and Criticisms' *Soc. ekol. Zagreb*, Vol. 31 (2022.), No. 1, 9-27
- Lasswell, H D. (1971) *A Pre-view of Policy Sciences*. Elsevier Publishing
- Laurian, L. (2004) 'Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making', *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 70(1), pp. 53-65
- Law 119/2014. 'On the Right to Information' [2014] OJ 160

- Law 139/2015. “On Local Self-Government” [2015] OJ 249 as amended by Law 360/2019
- Law 146/2014. ‘On the Announcement and Public Consultation’ [2014] OJ 178
- Law 44/2015, ‘The Code of Administrative Procedure in the Republic of Albania’
- Law 684/1949. ‘On the territorial administrative division of the People’s Republic of Albania’ [1949] OJ Special Edition
- Law 7491/1991. ‘For Main Constitutional Provisions’ [1991] Special Edition
- Law 7572/1992. ‘On Organization and Function of Local Government’ [1992] OJ 3
- Law 8137/1996. For Ratification of European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms [1996] OJ Special Edition
- Law 8417/1998. ‘Constitution of Republic of Albania’ [1998] OJ 28 Albanian Constitution as last amended in July 2020 with the Law 16/2022
- Law 8548/1999, ‘On the Ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government’ [1999] OJ 112
- Law 8652/2000. ‘On the Organization and Functioning of Local Government’ [2000] OJ 25
- Law 8653/2000 ‘On the administrative – territorial division of local government units in the Republic of Albania’ [2000] OJ 26
- Law 8654/2000, ‘On the Organization and Functioning of the Municipality of Tirana’ [2000] OJ 24.
- Likert, R. (1932). A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes. *Archives of Psychology*, 22(140), 1–55.
- Lucky, OO. (2016) ‘Significance of Community Participation in Rural Development’ *International Journal of Agriculture and Earth Science* Vol. 2 No.2, p 44
- Lukić, I. (2011) Influence of planning and civil initiative, as a form of public intervention, on gentrification. *Spatium*, 25: 56-66.
- Macaulay, B. et al (2022) ‘Integrating citizen engagement into evidence-informed health policy-making in eastern Europe and central Asia: scoping study and future research priorities’ *Health Research Policy and Systems*, Vol 20, No 11, pp 1-12
- Macmillan, R. (2011) ‘The Big Society and participation failure’, *People, Place & Policy Online*, 5/2, pp. 107-114
- Maiani, F. (2011), *Citizens Participation and the Lisbon Treaty: A Legal Perspective*, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen
- Majone, G. (2006) *Agenda Setting*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, Moran, M. et al. Oxford University Press

- Mannarini, T., et al (2010). Public involvement: How to encourage citizen participation. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 20(4), 262–274. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.1030>
- Manners, I. (2002) ‘Normative Power Europe: A contradiction in Term?’, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, pp. 235-258
- Manoharan, AP. Ingrams, A. (2018) ‘Conceptualizing E-Government from Local Government Perspectives’ *State and Local Government Review*, Vol 50, Issue 1, pp 56 - 66
- Mansbridge, J. (1999) ‘On the idea that participation makes better citizens’, in Elkin, S. and Soltan, K. (eds.) *Citizen Competence and Democratic Institutions*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 291-325.
- Marx, T. et al. (2019) ‘Crisis in Democracy: Renewing Trust in America’, The Aspen Institute and Knight Foundation, Washington
- Michener, V. J. (1998) ‘The participatory approach: Contradiction and co-option in Burkina Faso’, *World Development*, 26 (12), pp. 2105-2118
- Midgley, J. et al (1986) *Community Participation, Social Development and the State*. London: Methuen
- Ministry for Local Issues (2015) *Inter Sectorial Strategy for Decentralization and Local Government 2015-2020*, Available: [http://km.dldp.al/wp-multimedia/ligje/-strategjia\\_e\\_decentralizimit.pdf](http://km.dldp.al/wp-multimedia/ligje/-strategjia_e_decentralizimit.pdf)
- Nabatchi, T. and Leighninger, M. (2015) *Public Participation in 21st Century Democracy*, John Wiley & Sons
- National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools (2011) *Engaging citizens for decision making*. Hamilton, ON: McMaster University
- National Human Development Report (2001) “Citizen Participation in Governance: from Individuals to Citizens”. United Nations Development Programme, Bulgaria
- Ndreu, A. (2016) *Qeverisja Vendore në Shqipëri pas vitit 1920: Reforma e re Administrativo – Territoriale*. [Doctoral Dissertation, European University of Tirana]. [https://uet.edu.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Aurora\\_Ndreu.pdf](https://uet.edu.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Aurora_Ndreu.pdf)
- Nelson, N. Wright, N (1995). *Power and participatory Development: Theory and Practice* ITDG Pub., London, 1995
- OECD (2017), ‘Recommendation of the Council on Open Government’, OECD/LEGAL/0438
- OECD (2022), *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/f765caf6-en>

- Oldfield, A. (1990) 'Citizenship: An Unnatural Practice?' *The Political Quarterly*, Vol 61, Issue 2 p. 177-187
- Oliver, T. (2018) *Europe's Brexit: EU Perspectives on Britain's Vote to Leave*, Agenda Publishing
- Olson, M. (1965) *The logic of collective action: Public goods and the theory of group*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Harvard University Press
- Ostrom, V & Ostrom, (1971), 'Public Choice: A Different Approach to the Study of Public Administration', *Public Administration Review*, vol. 31, no. 2
- Over, D., 2004. Rationality and the Normative/Descriptive Distinction. In: *Blackwell Handbook of Judgment and Decision Making*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 3-18.
- Parsons, W. (1995) *Public Policy: An introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar
- Pashaj, A. (2010) 'Civil Service Reform in Albania: The Broken Promise of De-Politicisation', M. A. in *Public Policy Thesis*, Central European University
- Pateman, C. (1970) *Participation and Democratic Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Patton, CV. et al (1986) *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*, 1st edition, Routledge
- Paxton, P. (2002) 'Social Capital and Democracy: An Interdependent Relationship' *American Sociological Review*, Vol 67, No 2, pp. 254-277.
- Payne, J. et al (1992) Behavioral decision research: A constructive processing perspective. *Annual review of psychology*, 43(1), pp. 87-131.
- Pettifer, J. (2010) 'Albania: The Democratic Deficit in the Post – Communist Period' in Geoffrey Pridham and Tom Gallagher (eds), *Experimenting with Democracy: Regime Change in the Balkans*, Routledge
- Pierre, J. Peters, G. (2000). *Governance, Politics and the State*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Pieterse, J.N. (2001) 'Participatory Democratization Reconceived', *Futures*, 33 (5), 407-422.
- Pindado F, Rebollo O, Martí J. (2002). Tools for civic participation: foundations, methods and techniques. Available: <https://silo.tips/download/fernando-pindado-coordinator-oscar-rebollo-izquierdo-joel-marti-olive-translatio>
- Pond, E. (2006) *Endgame in the Balkans: Regime Change, European Style*, Brookings Institution Press



- Pretty, J. (1995) 'Participatory learning for sustainable agriculture', *World Development*, 23 (8), 1247-1263
- Punch, K.F (1998) "Introduction to social research: Quantitative and Qualitative approaches"
- Putnam, R. D. (1993) *Making Democracy Work. Tradition in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press
- Quade, ES. (1989) *Analysis for Public Decisions*. 3 edition, Pearson
- Raiffa, H. (1994) 'The prescriptive orientation of decision making: a synthesis of decision analysis, behavioral decision making, and game theory'. In: S. Rios, ed. *Decision Theory and Decision Analysis: Trends and Challenges*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 3-13
- Rama, SA. (ed) (2020) *The End of Communist Rule in Albania: Political Change and the Role of the Student Movement*, Routledge, New York
- Renee A. Irvin, John Stansbury (2004) "Citizen Participation in Decision Making: Is It Worth the Effort?" *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 64, No. 1
- Renn, O. et al (1995) *Fairness and Competence in Citizen Participation: Evaluating Models for Environmental Discourse*, Springer
- Resnik, M. D. (1987) *Choices: An Introduction to Decision Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Roche, M. (1987) 'Citizenship, Social Theory, and Social Change' *Theory and Society*, Vol 16, No 3, pp. 363-399.
- Sabatier, P. A. (1999) *Theories of the policy process*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press
- Schugurensky, D. (2010) 'Citizenship Learning for and Through Participatory Democracy', in Pinnington, E. and Schugurensky, D. (eds.) *Learning Citizenship by Practicing Democracy: International Initiatives and Perspectives*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 1-17
- Sheedy, A. et al (2008). *Handbook on Citizen Engagement*. Available at: [https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10214/3133/Sheedy\\_Handbook\\_on\\_Citizen\\_Engagement-\\_Beyond\\_Consultation\\_complete.pdf;sequence=26](https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10214/3133/Sheedy_Handbook_on_Citizen_Engagement-_Beyond_Consultation_complete.pdf;sequence=26)
- Shendy, A. (2008) *Handbook on Citizen engagement: Beyond Consultation*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Policy Research Networks
- Simon, H. A. (1959) 'Theories of Decision-Making in Economics and Behavioral Science', *The American Economic Review*, 49(3), pp. 253-283.
- Slovic, P. et al (1977) *Behavioral decision theory*. *Annual review of psychology*, 28(1), pp. 1-39.

- Smith, KB. Larimer, C. (2009) *The Public Policy Theory Primer*, Avalon Publishing
- Solijonov, A. (2016) *Voter Turnout Trends around the World*, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm
- STATISTA (2019) 'Percentage of people in selected European countries who trust key institutions in their country as of 2017', Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/896151/trust-in-institutions-europe/>
- Terry, P. (1997) 'Habermas and education: knowledge, communication, discourse', *Curriculum Studies*, 5:3, pp. 269-279
- Thomas, JC. (1993) 'Public Involvement and Governmental Effectiveness: A Decision-Making Model for Public Managers', *Administration and Society*, Vol 24, No 4, pp. 444-469.
- Thunholm, P. (2004) 'Decision-making style: habit, style or both?', *Personality and Individual Differences* 36, Volume 36, pp. 931-944.
- UN Public Administration Glossary (2008) <http://www.unpan.org/Directories/UNPublicAdministrationGlossary/tabid/928/language/en-US/Default.aspx>
- UN, (2013) "Citizen Engagement and the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Report of the Expert Group Meeting", 2013, [http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/EGM%20Report-Beirut-3-4Dec-2012\\_FINAL\\_cleared%20on%2008-07-2013.pdf](http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/EGM%20Report-Beirut-3-4Dec-2012_FINAL_cleared%20on%2008-07-2013.pdf)
- UNDP (2002), *Democracy in a Fragmented World*, Human Development Report 2002, New York: Oxford University Press
- USAID (2006) "Albania: Democracy and Governance Assessment" Democracy International, Inc. 4802 Montgomery Lane, Suite 200 Bethesda, Maryland 20814
- Vickers, M. (2001) *The Albanians: a Modern History*, I.B. TAURIS
- Vroom, V. H. Jago, A. G. (1988). *The new leadership: Managing participation in organizations*. Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Wallace, W. Smith J. (1995) 'Democracy or technocracy? European integration and the problem of popular consent', *West European Politics*, 18:3, pp. 137-157
- Wan-Ling Huang, Mary K. Feeney (2016) 'Citizen Participation in Local Government Decision Making: The Role of Manager Motivation', *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, Vol. 36(2) 188–209
- Wandersman, A. et al, (1987) 'Who participates, who does not, and why? An analysis of voluntary neighborhood organizations in the United States and Israel', *Sociological Forum*, 2, pp. 534-555

- Wandersman, A., et al. (1987). Who participates, who does not, and why? An analysis of voluntary neighborhood organizations in the United States and Israel. *Sociological Forum*, 2(3), 534–555. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01106625>
- Warren, R. (1969) ‘Model Cities First Round: Politics, Planning, and Participation’, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 245-252.
- Waters, LC. et al (2000) ‘Putting more public in policy analysis’, *Public Administration Review*, Vol 24, Issue 4, pp. 349-359
- Welzel, C. (2016) ‘Political Culture Paradigm’ *Politics* <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.67>
- Wilson, J. (1963) ‘Planning and Politics: Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal’, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 29(4), pp. 242-249.
- Wohlers, TE. Bernier, LL. (2016) *Setting Sail into the Age of Digital Local Government: Trends and Best Practices*, Springer
- Woll, W. (1974) *Public Policy*. New York: Winthrop.
- World Health Organization (2002) *Community participation in local health and sustainable development: approaches and techniques*. World Health Organization, Copenhagen
- Xhaferaj, F. Skara, G. (2021) ‘Local Public Participation in Albania: Actions and Reflections after the 2014 Reform on Local Self-Government’, in Doucy, M. et al, *Democratic and Electronic Changes in Local Public Action in Europe: Revolution or E-volution?*, Institut Francophone pour la Justice et la Démocratie
- Yetano, A. et al (2009) ‘What is driving the increasing presence of citizen participation initiatives?’, *Documento de Trabajo 2009-02 Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales Universidad de Zaragoza*, Available: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46464900\\_What\\_is\\_driving\\_the\\_increasing\\_presence\\_of\\_citizen\\_participation\\_initiatives](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46464900_What_is_driving_the_increasing_presence_of_citizen_participation_initiatives)
- Yin, R. K. (2003). ‘Case study research. Design and methods’, *Applied Social Research Methods Series*, Vol. 5, Sage Publications, London
- Youngs, R. (2004) ‘Engaging: sharpening European influence. In New terms of engagement’, In Richard Young. (ed) *Global Europe Report 2: New Terms of Engagement*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London
- Zákon č. 108/2006 Sb., o sociálních službách (Social assistance and services) [2006] *Sbirka zakonu*, 2006-03-31, Castka 37, pp. 1257-1289
- Zotaj, E. (2014) *Tranzicioni Politik dhe Roli i tij në Marrëdhëniet e Shqipërisë me Bashkimin Evropian*, PhD Thesis, UT

## Appendix A – Number of Voters

### Appendix A: Number of Voters in Albania from 2009-2019

Districts	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
<b>Shkodra</b>	239,578	243,367	250,144	258,649	250,803	35,220
<b>Berat</b>	169,423	172,502	177,944	179,011	175,794	39,052
<b>Diber</b>	122,287	124,616	129,298	130,010	127,231	37,380
<b>Elbasan</b>	299,945	322,687	319,457	330,090	321,138	87,730
<b>Fier</b>	352,423	362,501	376,208	384,981	373,706	104,247
<b>Gjirokaster</b>	121,683	122,253	123,883	123,742	122,039	31,397
<b>Korca</b>	264,492	288,129	275,689	277,753	273,287	66,603
<b>Kukes</b>	72,942	73,995	77,968	79,588	77,072	19,938
<b>Lezha</b>	148,491	153,392	160,189	163,885	159,207	29,545
<b>Tirana</b>	725,446	750,375	784,484	816,875	785,086	201,467
<b>Durres</b>	290,258	301,217	308,092	326,255	313,353	57,562
<b>Vlora</b>	277,978	28,452	290,899	301,632	293,169	61,722
<b>Total</b>	3,084,946	3,199,554	3,274,255	3,372,471	3,271,885	771,863

## **Appendix B– Survey I (English Version)**

### **Appendix B:Survey I (English Version)**

#### **Questionnaire**

This questionnaire is prepared as a basis for the doctoral thesis on “*Participation of citizens in decision- making process: Albanian Case*”. Your responses are voluntary and failure to provide some or all of the requested information will not affect you in any way. Your cooperation in completing this survey is appreciated. This information will be kept confidential and used only for study purposes. To that end, the form may only be submitted anonymously.

#### **Demographic Information**

Gender:

- Female
- Male

Age:

- below 20
- 20-30
- 31-45
- 46-65
- Above 65

Education level:

- High School
- Bachelor’s degree
- Master’s degree
- Doctoral Degree

- Other

Educational Qualification (Specialization):

- Engineering
- Economics
- Public Administration
- Other (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Current occupation & Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 1.** How often the following types of actor's/stakeholders' rest at the origin of a public decision?

	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Not often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
<b>Local/ City Councillors</b>					
<b>The Chairman of City Council</b>					
<b>The political parties</b>					
<b>The civil servants and the employees of the public institutions</b>					
<b>Other central and local public administration institution</b>					
<b>Citizens</b>					
<b>Mass media Representatives</b>					
<b>NGO representatives</b>					
<b>Business sector representatives</b>					

**Question 2:** Please give your opinion on the following types of actors which actually influence in a certain manner the decision-making process in the public sector, expressing:  
 1- Strongly Disagree 2-disagree 3- neutral 4- Agree 5-Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Local/ City Councillors</b>					
<b>The Chairman of City councils</b>					
<b>The political parties</b>					
<b>The civil servants and the employees of the public institutions</b>					
<b>Other central and local public administration institution</b>					
<b>Citizens</b>					
<b>Mass media</b>					
<b>Representatives</b>					
<b>NGO representatives</b>					
<b>Business sector representatives</b>					



**Question 3:** The influence of the following types of actors on the elements of the classic policy cycle

	<b>Agenda Setting</b>	<b>Policy Formulation</b>	<b>Adaption</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Local/ City Councillors</b>					
<b>The chairman of City councils</b>					
<b>The political parties</b>					
<b>The civil servants and the employees of the public institutions</b>					
<b>Other central and local public administration institution</b>					
<b>Citizens</b>					
<b>Mass media Representatives</b>					
<b>NGO representatives</b>					
<b>Business sector representatives</b>					

**Question 4:** Please give your opinion on the following types of actors which actually influence in a certain manner the decision-making process that take place in the institution where you work, expressing: 1- Strongly Disagree 2-disagree 3- neutral 4- Agree 5- Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5
Local/ City councillors					
The Chairman of City councils					
The political parties					
The civil servants and the employees of the public institutions					
Other central and local public administration institution					
Citizens					
Mass media					
Representatives					
NGO representatives					
Business sector representatives					

**Question 5:** How often decisions adopted by local public institutions encounter resistance and dissatisfaction from the citizens?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
<b>The decision-makers fail to understand the needs and difficulties of the citizens</b>					
<b>The citizens are not properly informed about the pending public issues</b>					
<b>The citizens believe that the decision-makers choose to address the problems of some interest groups, and not the general interest of the community</b>					
<b>The decision-makers do not inform correctly the citizens about the aims and the advantages of a certain decision</b>					
<b>The decision-makers pursue their own self-interest</b>					

**Question 6:** How often the decisions made are based on the information provided by the following?

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
<b>Citizens</b>					
<b>Mass media</b>					
<b>Representatives</b>					
<b>NGO representatives</b>					
<b>Public surveys and policy</b>					
<b>Reports/statistics/analyses provided by civil servants</b>					

## **Appendix C – Survey I (Albania Version)**

### **Appendix C: Survey I (Albanian Version)**

#### **PYETËSOR**

Ky pyetësor është përgatitur si bazë për tezën e doktoraturës mbi "Pjesëmarrjen e qytetarëve në procesin e vendimmarrjes: Rasti Shqiptar". Përgjigjet tuaja janë vullnetare dhe dështimi për të dhënë disa ose të gjithë informacionin e kërkuar nuk do të ndikojë në ju në asnjë mënyrë. Bashkëpunimi juaj në kompletimin e këtij studimi është vlerësuar. Ky informacion do të mbahet konfidencial dhe përdoret vetëm për qëllime studimi. Për këtë qëllim, formulari mund të dorëzohet në mënyrë anonime.

#### **Informacion Demografik**

Gjinia:

- Femer
- Mashkull

Mosha:

- më poshtë 20
- 20-30
- 31-45
- 46-65
- më lartë se 65

Niveli i arsimit:

- Shkolla e mesme
- Diplomë Bachelor
- Diplomë Master
- Doktoraturë
- Të tjera

Kualifikimi arsimor (Specializimi):

- Inxhinieri
- Ekonomia
- Administrata Publike
- Ligji
- Të tjera (Specifikoni)

Pozicioni actual & Institucioni: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pyetja 1:** Sa shpesh qëndrojnë llojet e mëposhtme të aktorëve / palëve të interesit në origjinën e një vendimi publik?

	Aspak	Jo shpesh	Ndonjehere	Shpesh	Gjithmone
<b>Keshilltaret lokale/ te qarkut</b>					
<b>Kryetari i keshillit te qarkut</b>					
<b>Partite politike</b>					
<b>Nenpunesit civile dhe punonjesit e institucioneve publike</b>					
<b>Institucione te tjera te administrates publike qendrore dhe lokale</b>					
<b>Qytetaret</b>					
<b>Perfaqesuesit e mediave</b>					
<b>Perfaqesues te OJQ-ve</b>					
<b>Perfaqesuesit e sektorit te biznesit</b>					

**Pyetje 2:** Ju lutemi jepni mendimin tuaj për llojet e mëposhtme të aktorëve që në të vërtetë ndikojnë në një farë mënyre procesin e vendimmarrjes në sektorin publik, duke shprehur:  
1- Nuk jam aspak dakord 2-nuk pajtohem 3- neutral 4- Jam dakord 5-Pajtohem fort

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Keshilltaret lokale/ te qarkut</b>					
<b>Kryetari I keshillit te qarkut</b>					
<b>Partite politike</b>					
<b>Nenpunesit civile dhe punonjesit e institucioneve publike</b>					
<b>Institucione te tjera te administrates publike qendrore dhe lokale</b>					
<b>Qytetaret</b>					
<b>Perfaqesuesit e mediave</b>					
<b>Perfaqesues te OJQ-ve</b>					
<b>Perfaqesuesit e sektorit te biznesit</b>					

**Pyetje 3:** Ndikimi i llojeve të mëposhtme të aktorëve në elementet e ciklit klasik të politikës.

	Vendosja e Axhendes	Formulimi i Politikave	Pershatatja	Zbatim i	Vleresimi
Keshilltaret lokale/ te qarkut					
Kryetari I keshillit te qarkut					
Partite politike					
Nenpunesit civile dhe punonjesit e institucioneve publike					
Institucione te tjera te administrates publike qendrore dhe lokale					
Qytetaret					
Perfaqesuesit e mediave					
Perfaqesues te OJQ-ve					
Perfaqesuesit e sektorit te biznesit					

**Pyetje 4:** Ju lutemi jepni mendimin tuaj për llojet e mëposhtme të aktorëve të cilët në fakt ndikojnë në një farë mënyre procesin e vendimmarrjes që zhvillohet në institucionin ku punoni, duke shprehur: 1- Nuk jam aspak dakord 2-nuk pajtohem 3- neutral 4- Pajtohem 5 - Pajtohem shumë

	1	2	3	4	5
Keshilltaret lokale/ te qarkut					
Kryetari i keshillit te qarkut					
Partite politike					
Nenpunesit civile dhe punonjesit e institucioneve publike					
Institucione te tjera te administrates publike qendrore dhe lokale					
Qytetaret					
Perfaqesuesit e mediave					
Perfaqesues te OJQ-ve					
Perfaqesuesit e sektorit te biznesit					

**Pyetja 5:** Sa shpesh vendimet e miratuara nga institucionet publike vendore dhe të qarkut ndeshen me rezistencë dhe pakënaqësi nga qytetarët?

	Kurrë	Rralle	Ndonjehere	Shpesh	Gjithmone
Vendimmarresit nuk arrijne te kuptojne nevojat dhe veshtoresite e qytetareve					
Qytetaret nuk jane te informuar sic duhet per ceshtjet publike ne pritje					
Qytetaret besojne se vendimmarresit zgjedhin te adresojne problemet e disa grupeve te interest dhe jo interesin e pergjithshem te komunitetit					
Vendimmarresit nuk I informojne sakte qytetaret per qellimet dhe perpaesite e nje vendimi te caktuar					
Vendimmarresit ndjekin vete interesin e tyre					

**Pyetja 6:** Sa shpesh vendimet e marra bazohen në informatat e ofruara nga sa vijon?

	Kurrë	Rralle	Ndonjehere	Shpesh	Gjithmone
Qytetaret					
Perfaqesuesit e mediave					
Perfaqesues te OJQ-ve					
Sondazhet publike					
Raportet/ statistikat/ analizat e ofruara nga nepunesit civile					



## Appendix D: Survey II (English Version)

### Appendix D: Survey II (English Version)

This survey looks at the ways citizens participate in decision-making. The goal is to identify ways in which the voices of citizens can be heard. I am very interested in your opinions, concerns, and ideas. To accomplish this, I need your help in completing this questionnaire. It should take about 10 minutes to complete. All responses are confidential. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

#### Part I.

1. Gender:                      Female \_\_\_                      Male\_\_\_
  
2. How old are you (in years)?
  - a. <25 years
  - b. 25-39
  - c. 40-55
  - d. 56-70
  - e. +71 years
  
3. Education:
  - a. High School
  - b. Bachelor's degree
  - c. Master's degree
  - d. Doctoral Degree
  - e. Other:\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Where are you born? \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How long have you lived in your current community (In Years)  
\_\_\_\_\_?

7. Reason(s) for moving to your current Community?  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. To know what is happening in my country is:
- a. Democratic right
  - b. A forum to contribute my views on matters affecting country
  - c. Civic duty
  - d. Other (Please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**Part II.**

9. Have you participated in any public opinion or consultation process in your community?

Yes \_\_\_

No \_\_\_

If yes, please choose the ones that apply: \_\_\_ Written Letter  
\_\_\_ Opinion Surveys  
\_\_\_ Public Hearings  
\_\_\_ Other (Please specify)

10. The current regulation support and encourages public participation in decision making process:

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

11. The municipality has clear policy on public participation in decision-making process:

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

12. There is regularity in conducting meetings by the municipality

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

13. The meetings are responsive to the needs of the citizens because they are done in time:

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

14. There is a district policy or regulations that advocate public participation:

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

15. The public is often involved in local government authority meeting or activity.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Disagree

- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

16. The social factors influencing public participation in decision-making process:

- a. Gender
- b. Age
- c. Education Level
- d. Other (Please specify):\_\_\_\_\_

17. The economic factors influencing public participation in decision-making process:

- a. My income level influences my level of participation
- b. My income level does not influence my level of participation
- c. People of higher income level participate more effectively
- d. People of lower income level participate more effectively

18. Public Attitude influencing public participation in decision-making process:

- a. Generally, I have a positive attitude towards participation in budget formulation.
- b. Generally, I have a negative attitude towards participation in budget formulation
- c. People with positive attitude towards the county government participate more effectively
- d. People with negative attitude towards the county government participate more effectively.

19. Public Trust influencing public participation in decision-making process:

- a. I have trust in the decision-making process



24. Based on your experience or opinion, would you recommend any specific improvements for the citizens participation in decision-making process?  
Please Explain

---

---

## Appendix E\_ Survey II (Albanian Version)

### Appendix E: Survey II (Albanian Version)

Ky studim do te analizoje menytrat se si qytetaret marrin pjese ne vendimmarrje. Qellimi eshte te identifikoj menytrat me te cilat mund te degjohen zerat e qytetareve. Une jam shume i interesuar per mendimet, shqetesimet dhe idete tuaja. Per te realizuar kete studim, me duhet ndihma juaj per plotesimin e ketij pyetesori. Te gjitha pergjigjet jane konfidenciale.

#### Pjesa I.

1. Gjinia: Femer \_\_\_\_\_ Mashkull \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sa vjec jeni?
  - a. <25 vjec
  - b. 25-39
  - c. 40-55
  - d. 56-70
  - e. +71 vjec
3. Edukimi
  - a. Gjinnaz
  - b. Diplome Bachelor
  - c. Diplome Masteri
  - d. Diplome Doktorature
  - e. Tjeter: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Ku keni lindur? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Ku jetoni? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Sa kohe keni jetuar ne komunitetin tuaj actual (ne vite)?\_\_\_\_\_
7. Arsyeja (et) per tu zhvendosur ne komunitetin tuaj actual?\_\_\_\_\_
8. Te dij se cfare po ndodh ne vendin tim eshte:
- a. E drejte demokratike
  - b. Nje forum per te kontribuar pikepamjet e mia mbi ceshtjet qe prekin vendin
  - c. Detyre qytetare
  - d. Te tjera (Ju lutem specifikojoni):\_\_\_\_\_

## **Pjesa II.**

9. A keni marre pjese ne ndonje opinion public ose process konsultimi ne komunitetin tuaj?

PO \_\_\_\_\_

JO\_\_\_\_\_

Nese Po, ju lutem zgjidhni ato qe pershtaten:

\_\_\_\_ Letra me shkrim

\_\_\_\_ Sondazhet e Opinionit

\_\_\_\_ Degjime Publike

\_\_\_\_ Te tjera (Ju lutem specifikojini)\_\_\_\_\_

10. Regullorja aktuale mbeshtet dhe inkurajon pjesemarrjen e publikut ne processin e vendimarrjes:

- a. Jam plotesisht dakord
- b. Nuk bie dakort
- c. Neutral
- d. Bie dakord
- e. Jam plotesisht dakord



11. Bashkia ka politike te qarte per pjesemarrjen e publikut ne processin e vendimmarrjes:

- a. Nuk jam aspak dakord
- b. Nuk bie dakord
- c. Neutral
- d. Bie dakord
- e. Jam plotesisht dakord

12. Ekziston rregullsia ne zhvillimin e mbledhjeve per qytetaret nga bashkia:

- a. Nuk jam aspak dakord
- b. Nuk bie dakord
- c. Neutral
- d. Bie dakord
- e. Jam plotesisht dakord

13. Takimet e organizuara nga bashkia dhe insitucionet e tjera publike u pergjigjen nevojave te qytetareve pasi behen ne kohen e duhur:

- a. Nuk jam aspak dakord
- b. Nuk bie dakord
- c. Neutral
- d. Bie dakord
- e. Jam plotesisht dakord

14. Egziston nje regullore ose ligje qe mbrojne pjesemarrjen e publikut:

- a. Nuk jam aspak dakord
- b. Nuk bie dakord
- c. Neutral
- d. Bie dakord

e. Jam plotesisht dakord

15. Publiku shpesh eshte i perfshire ne mbledhje ose aktivite te pushtetit vendor:

- a. Nuk jam aspak dakord
- b. Nuk bie dakord
- c. Neutral
- d. Bie dakord
- e. Jam plotesisht dakord

b

16. Faktoret sociale qe ndikojne ne pjesemmarjen e publikut ne processin e vendimarrjes jane:

- a. Gjinia
- b. Mosha
- c. Niveli i arsimit
- d. Te tjera

17. Faktoret ekonomik qe ndikojne ne pjesemmarjen e publikut ne processin e vendimarrjes jane:

- a. Niveli im I te ardhurave nuk ndikon ne pjesemarrjen time
- b. Niveli im I te ardhurave ndikon ne pjesemarrjen time
- c. Njerzit e nivelit me te ardhura te larta marrin pjese ne menyre me efektive
- d. Njerzit e nivelit me te ardhura te ulta marrin pjese ne menyre me efektive

18. Cili eshte qendrimi juaj ndaj pjesemmarjes se publikut ne processin e vendimarrjes ?

- a. Ne pergjithesi, kam nje qendrim pozitiv ndaj pjesemarrjes ne processin e vendimarrjes

- b. Ne pergjithesi, kam nje qendrim negativ ndaj pjesemarrjes ne processin e vendimarrjes
- c. Njerezit me qendrim pozitiv ndaj qeveris aktuale marrin pjese ne menyre me efektive
- d. Njerezit me qendrim negativ ndaj qeveris aktuale marrin pjese ne menyre me efektive

19. Besimi i publikut ndikon pjesëmarrjen e tij në procesin e vendimmarrjes?

- a. Une kam besim ne processin e vendimarrjes
- b. Une nuk kam besim ne processin e vendimarrjes
- c. Njerezit me besim me te larte ne processin e vendimarrjes marrin pjese ne menyre me efektive
- d. Njerezit me besim me te ulet ne processin e vendimarrjes marrin pjese ne menyre me efektive

20. A mendoni se processin e vendimarrjes duhet te perfshije gjithë komunitetin?

Pse PO/ Jo?

21. A mendoni se opinionet e komunitetit jane duke u degjuar ne processin e vendimarrjes? Pse PO/JO?

22. A mendoni se vendimarrjet pergjithesisht e vleresojne kontributin public ne processin e vendimarrjes? Pse Po/JO? \*

23. A u raportohen ndonjehere publikut rezultatet e kontributit publik ne processin e vendimarrjes? Pse PO/ JO?

24. Bazuar ne pervojen ose mendimin tuaj, a do te rekomandonit ndonje permiresim specifik per pjesemarrjen e qytetareve ne processin e vendimarrjes? Ju lutem shpjegoni

### Appendix F – Educational specialization of the respondents

#### Appendix F: The educational specialization of the respondents

Specialization (First major degree)	Percent %
Engineering	15.3
Economics	16.8
Public Administration	20.6
Communication	7.7
Law	15.3
Other (Political Science, History, Psychology, Mathematician, Chemistry, Sociology)	24.3
Total	100

#### Number of Participants selected across occupation / department

No	Occupation/ Department	Sample Size	Female	Male
1	Public Administration Department	45	27	18
2	Road Authority Department	7	3	4
3	Coordinator/Specialist	28	8	20
4	Head of Department	32	8	24
5	Finance Department	32	15	17
6	Foreign Affairs & Justice Department	19	8	11
7	Municipality	27	10	17
8	Other	19	7	12

How often the following types of actor's/stakeholders' rest at the origin of a public decision? (%)

	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Not Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Local/ county councilors</b>	7.2	30.1	39.7	14.8	8.1	100
<b>The mayor of county councils</b>	4.3	19.6	31.6	27.8	16.7	100
<b>The political parties</b>	5.7	7.7	20.1	40.7	25.8	100
<b>The civil servants and the employees of the public institutions</b>	15.3	25.4	44.0	11.5	3.8	100
<b>Other central and local public administration institution</b>	13.4	25.8	51.7	6.2	2.9	100
<b>Citizens</b>	28.2	23.9	29.2	13.4	5.3	100
<b>Mass media Representatives</b>	12.4	31.1	29.7	18.7	8.1	100
<b>NGO representatives</b>	13.9	35.9	34.9	6.2	9.1	100
<b>Business sector representatives</b>	8.1	19.1	41.6	26.8	4.3	100