

## **Framing culture: Participatory governance in the European Capitals of Culture programme**

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### **Abstract:**

This article aims to address the framing of participation in the European Union's cultural policies based on an analysis of the policy documents of the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) programme. It intends to point out the selectivities of the policies that are embedded under the veil of inclusivity. It claims that through performative practices these selective framings of participation can lead to the reproduction of existing power structures and divisions. To reveal their presence, I apply a critical frame analysis to five policy documents of the ECoC programme in order to investigate the distinguishable categories of participants and participation.

**Keywords:** participation, participatory governance, ECoC, critical frame analysis

### **Introduction**

Participation in its most general form means the adoption of an open approach so that a planning process or a given programme should involve all actors who will be affected by it (Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts 2010). The concept of participation as a form of community involvement in public decisions requires transparency and the involvement of various parties in the decision-making process through dialogue (Banyan 2007: 660). As the notion of participation attains a stronger and stronger presence in recent policy documents of the European Union (EU), one could be under the impression that the EU is aiming towards participatory governance. But is this really the case, or is participation a 'veil' to hide the symptoms of the democratic deficit? In this article I investigate this 'participatory turn' in EU policies through the analysis of the ECoC programme decisions.

Although participatory governance appears to appeal to the EU, when it comes to the implementation of policies its presence is not so clear. In relation to the application of the term 'participation' in policies, we have to acknowledge that it does not have the same meaning for every citizen or actor. Therefore, there is a high chance that each actor will

implement different measures depending on its own interpretation of the concept (Fischer 2012; Verloo 2005).

For this article I have chosen to analyse the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) Programme. It is a cultural programme of the EU, where each year two or three cities are designated for a period of one calendar year to organise cultural events with a strong European dimension. The host member states are officially selected by the European Commission, currently up to 2033. The ECoC programme – initially called ‘European City of Culture’ - was launched in 1985, becoming one of the first schemes in the area of culture at European Community level (Staiger 2013).

The ECoC programme is an ideal case for analysis as (1) it is a smaller-scale well-defined programme; (2) the participatory turn became a very apparent feature in EU policies from the 2000s, and these policies had a recognisable impact on the programme and (3) as the main policy documents are available in the EU’s web archives.

This article assumes that policy-making is not a rational process in the sense that one understands public problems and issues as social and political constructions. In policy design, there are different actors involved. Policies and programmes are thus the result of struggles between these actors, reproducing existing power structures, instead of addressing and implementing the best solution to a given problem. Bustelo and Verloo approach such policy designs as ‘assemblages’ rather than as rational sets of interventions, as they are ‘constructed in a context of existing and emerging dominant discourse frames’ (Bustelo and Verloo 2006).

My analysis could be considered interesting in the context of Fischer’s call for a more focused analysis of political-cultural strategies in relation to deliberative empowerment in participatory governance. As he points out, there is a lack of analysis that goes further than the formal principles, especially in the realm of participatory frameworks from the perspective of discursive practices (Fischer 2012). I have chosen to follow the Critical Frame Analysis methodology: a methodology that aims to analyse dimensions of frames and to pay specific attention to the role of various actors and their voices in defining a problem or suggesting a course of action (Verloo 2005).

With the help of these theoretical lenses, I aim to address the question of whether the selective framing of participation in the EU policy documents under consideration could lead to the reproduction of existing power structures and divisions. I assume that within these policies certain selectivities are embedded under the veil of inclusivity. My hypothesis is that the recognisable presence of performative practices in the policy documents would mean that these selectivities are also present thereof. To track these processes, I point out and analyse the performative practices interlinked with these mechanisms, as they create the distinguishable categories of citizens and participants. Therefore, the question I intend to answer is as follows: Are there recognisable performative practices outlined in the policy documents?

## **New Governance**

'New Governance' refers to the visible transformation of the mode of governance in advanced democracies. Various governance models are collectively named as 'new governance', being generally characterised by a change in structure from hierarchical governance to state-society collaborative arrangements, advanced communication and information technologies, complex public policy and an engaged civil society (Lynn 2011). Some scholars approach governance as the result of the decline of the state, while others see it as the new role of the state in an era of increasing societal complexity (Bevir 2011a; Bevir 2011; Lynn 2011). Therefore, these studies focus on the various elements, actors and models of these changes, instead of focusing on timeframes and causation.

According to Bevir, at the most general level we can describe governance as 'theories and issues of social coordination' and practices of governing (Bevir 2011a). Governance draws attention to civil society and its interaction with the formal institutions of states. Bevir uses the following definition: 'governance as theory, practice, and dilemma highlights phenomena that are hybrid and multijurisdictional with plural stakeholders who come together in networks' (Bevir 2011a: 2). He highlights four distinctive features of governance: (1) governances are often hybrid practices, being combinations of administrative systems, non-profit organisations and non-governmental organisations and market mechanisms; (2) they are multijurisdictional and established across different policy sectors and multiple geographical levels – local, regional, national and international; (3) they can be described by the plurality of stakeholders and (4) networks have an highlighted role in governance structures (Bevir 2011a). As the outcome of these features, governance appears in multiple forms and is seemingly in a state of constant change. Here I focus on participatory governance, as a sub-category of new governance, where the collaborative arrangements between state-society relations and the role of civil society are especially relevant.

## **Participatory Governance**

Participation in general is discussed as an important element of democracy and as a requirement for legitimacy and accountability. According to Fischer, 'participatory governance is a variant or subset of governance theory that puts emphasis on democratic engagement, in particular through deliberative practices, a form of democratic engagement to deepen citizen participation in the governmental process' (Fischer 2012: 457). In this approach, governance refers to a new space for decision-making, while participatory governance offers a framework for public engagement through deliberative processes, especially for the empowerment of citizens. Therefore, in participatory governance the most general and widest understanding of participation is applied, one in which participation means that a planning process or given programme should involve the actors that are to be affected (Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts 2010).

According to Banyan, the concept of participation ‘implies involvement in public decisions, as distinguished from other forms of community involvement’ (Banyan 2007: 660). Participation requires transparency, equal access to decisions, openness, competence, and a respect for individual liberty. The role of government in participatory democracy is described as one of educating citizens and involving them in decision-making through dialogue (Banyan 2007). Participation not only has a wider scope than many other governance theories, such as, for example, collaborative governance, but can equally also be a top-down or bottom-up initiative.

Therefore, participatory governance can lead to: citizen empowerment and community capacity building; the development of a wide and transparent exchange of knowledge and information; a more equal distribution of political power; the establishment of collaborative partnerships; a fairer distribution of resources; the decentralisation of decision-making processes; an emphasis on inter-institutional dialogue; and greater accountability (Fischer 2012; Banyan 2007).

Participatory governance theories are interlinked with participatory democracy approaches. Schaap and Edwards describe participatory democracy as ‘democratic arrangements and practices that allow for direct individual and collective participation of citizens in public decision making, where the key feature is the citizens’ direct participation in the regulation of the key institutions of the society’ (Schaap and Edwards 2007). They track the origin of the concept back to the 1970s – especially to the ‘New Left’ model of democracy – and connect the current participatory turn with the global democratic deficit of the 1990s, which was mainly indicated by decreasing electoral turnouts, the lack of trust in government and traditional politics and a crisis of legitimacy in local government. Therefore, on the one hand, new forms of political participation had to be offered to citizens; whilst, on the other hand, the local knowledge that citizens possessed was re-evaluated and mobilised during this process (Schaap and Edwards 2007).

To further analyse participatory democracy, Schaap and Edwards draw a participation ladder, distinguishing the various scopes of participation from consultation to self-governance. While the first three modes of participation relate to the participatory democracy model, the last two fall within the remit of representative democracy. According to Schaap and Edwards, the most complete form of participatory democracy is self-governance: when citizens organize themselves and take the initiative. In this case, governments only have a supporting role. In the case of a partnership, they refer to co-operation based on equal involvement in both planning and policy making. In delegated co-decision making, citizens are no longer equal partners, taking their role within the previously set frameworks whilst government functions as the main policy maker. Citizens have even less of a significant role in the participatory form of open advice, only being invited to give opinions or fulfil small roles in policy implementation, while the set of questions to which they can refer in consultations is even more controlled (Schaap and Edwards 2007).

This model of the participation ladder further emphasises the importance of equal partnership, in line with the general definition of participation. According to this definition,

participation means that the planning process or the given programme should involve the actors that are to be affected (Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts 2010).

<b>PARTICIPATION FORM</b>	<b>CITIZENS' ROLES</b>	<b>GOVERNMENTS' ROLES</b>
<b>1. Self-governance</b>	<b>Initiators, self-governance of communities or groups</b>	<b>Supporter (financially or offering facilities)</b>
<b>2. Partnership</b>	<b>Equal partners, coproducing plans and policies</b>	<b>Equal partners, coproducing plans and policies</b>
<b>3. Delegated co-decision making</b>	<b>Delegated co-decision makers, within policy lines previously set by governmental actors</b>	<b>Main policy makers, leaving lesser abstract decisions to (groups of) citizens</b>
<b>4. Open advice</b>	<b>Advisors, all kinds of problem definitions and potential solutions may come to the fore during the policy-making process</b>	<b>Requesting advice by formulating open questions</b>
<b>5. Consultation</b>	<b>Consultant, advising on rather closed set of questions, formulated by governmental actors</b>	<b>Consulter, asking advice on limited and controlled questions</b>

**Figure 1:** Participation ladder

Based on: Schaap, L. and Edwards, A. (2007) in: Bevir, M. (ed.) (2007, 659-663).

### **Tools and Theories in Critical Policy Analysis: Performative Practices and the 'Veil of Inclusivity'**

Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts (2010) have discussed participation as the most distinguished feature of decision-making and policy planning processes. According to a general definition of participation, the scope of stakeholders and their role could be easily identified: the planning process or the given programme should involve the actors that are to be affected (Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts 2010). Nevertheless, they point out that, in policy documents, participation is never defined; instead, the use of the term builds on a general assumption of participation. However, the term is rarely used without referring to intentions such as enhancing learning processes, supporting empowerment and democratic citizenship or ensuring the sustainability of a programme. Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts (2010) add that 'participation unavoidably involves (1) restrictions about who should be involved and about the space of negotiation, (2) assumptions about what the issue at stake

is, and (3) expectations about what the outcome of participation should be and how the participants are expected to behave' (Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts, 2010: 2).

Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts aim, on the one hand, to provide a framework for the analysis of participation through the discussions of the restrictive side of participation with assumptions about the issues at stake and expectations about the outcome. On the other hand, they investigate the unintended outcomes of participation and argue that it does not establish a neutral place. Instead it creates various categories of citizens. Therefore participation can be framed as *performative practice* (Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts 2010). For the framework of their analysis they provide the following definition:

'participatory practices are seen as staged performances in which the various actors, based on the script, the instructions of the director and their improvisation skills, play their parts. Conceiving of participation as a performative practice emphasizes that identities, knowledge, interests, and needs are not represented but shaped, articulated, and constructed in the participation process itself' (Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts 2010: 9). As participation influences how citizens become involved and represented, it is inevitably selective: some citizens are recognised as relevant participants while others are excluded.

### **Methodology: Critical Frame Analysis**

To identify the performative practices related to participation, I follow the above-mentioned assumptions of Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts. The participatory initiatives and programmes I am going to discuss also involve expectations and restrictions about who should be involved, how participants should behave and what their role should be in the process. In relation to the restriction of roles, the important question is not only whether participatory frameworks are limiting or controlling, but to focus on how that happens (Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts 2010).

To answer these questions, I apply Critical Frame Analysis, a methodology to systematically study the framing of participation as a policy problem. In this understanding, frame refers to the interpretative scheme that structures the meaning of reality: 'a policy frame is an organising principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful policy problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly enclosed' (Verloo 2005: 20). According to Verloo, Critical Frame Analysis builds upon social movement theory, gender theory and policy theory (Verloo 2005). This methodology is based on the assumption that there are multiple interpretations, dominance issues and exclusions present in policy-making, Policy implementation is seen as a political process, and there are different frames and understandings present on the various levels of multi-level governance (Verloo 2005). These frames are often overlapping with exclusion processes and strategic selectivities.

I apply this methodology on the five main policy documents of the European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) Programme to address the framing of participation: to highlight dominant frames, selectivities included in the policies, and also to analyse consequences and inconsistencies. The analysis I have conducted consists of two phases: the analysis of the

policy documents following a set of ‘sensitising questions’ and an analysis of the participatory frame. According to Bustelo and Verloo, sensitising questions are the basis for describing and analysing frames, as they are tools to facilitate the comparative analysis of frames (Bustelo and Verloo 2006). The model for sensitising questions was developed by a research team whose goal was to analyse gender equality policy frames (Verloo 2005). The team used four main sensitising questions: the diagnosis of the policy problem (what’s the problem represented to be?); prognosis of the policy problem (what action is proposed?); roles attributed to various actors in diagnosis and prognosis; and voice given to various actors (Verloo 2005). Through these questions the frame analysis addresses both the multiple interpretations of policies and the selectivities connected to policy making.

The main policy documents for the European Capitals of Culture Programme are available in the European Union’s web-archive. Therefore, there is a convenient data-source available for an analysis of the history and development of participatory focus in the ECoC programme. Since the programme was established in 1985, the first policy document – a resolution – is dated to that year. Altogether I include the five major documents in this case selection. All of them were published either at a major turning point in the programme or when a new cycle was due. These policy documents are the main resolutions, conclusions and decisions establishing the programme, published in 1985, 1990, 1999, 2006 and 2014.

I follow this model for Critical Frame Analysis for the first analysis of the policies and I use sensitising questions to outline a framework for the understanding of participation. For the analysis of the participation framework I add one more sensitising question about the official references of the document and separated the attribution of roles for the diagnosis and prognoses.

#### SENSITISING QUESTIONS FOR THE FIRST ANALYSIS

- What are the official references of the document?
- Who are the voices behind the policy?  
(Voices speaking, references, actors and audiences)
- Diagnosis: what is represented to be the aim/problem? What is the cause?
- The attribution of roles in the diagnosis: who caused the problem?  
Who is responsible for it? Whose problem it is?
- Prognoses: what to do?
- The attribution of roles in the prognoses: who should do what?  
Who are the target groups?

**Figure 2:** Supertext-template for the first analysis of the policy documents. Based on: Verloo, M. (2005). Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Europe. A Critical Frame Analysis. *The Greek Review of Social Research* 117 B’: 11-34.

I summarize the results of the sensitising questions in *supertexts* – one supertext for each policy document and five supertexts overall (**Appendix I**). These supertexts are, according to

Bustelo and Verloo, systematic and structured summaries that can be understood by readers who have not read the original policy documents (Bustelo and Verloo 2006).

For the second analysis of participatory approaches in the policy documents I also use sensitising questions, but focus on the framing of participation, based on the proposed questions by Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts (2010).

### SENSITISING QUESTIONS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPATION

- How participation is named?
- Who should participate?
- In what should they participate?
- Why should they participate?

**Figure 3:** Sensitising questions for the analysis of participation. Based on: Turnhout, E., S. Van Bommel, and N. Aarts (2010) How Participation Creates Citizens: Participatory Governance as Performative Practice. *Ecology and Society* 15(4): 26.

Hence through this second analysis I aim to investigate (1) all the synonyms of participation and inclusion; (2) restrictions about participants; (3) assumptions about what the issue is and what action should be taken and (4) the intentions and expectations of participants. Here, instead of a supertext as an outcome, the questions lead to a comparative analysis of both the understanding and instrumentalisation of participation within the various categories. I code 27 segments from the main resolutions, conclusions and decisions establishing the programme, published in 1985; 1990; 1999; 2006 and 2014 (**Appendix II**).<sup>1</sup> These segments frame participation directly or indirectly.

### **Performative Practices in ECoC Policies: Participation as a ‘Veil of Inclusivity’**

The ECoC programme was first implemented in 1985, becoming one of the first schemes in the area of culture on the Community level (Staiger 2013). In his article, Mittag traces the origins of the ECoC programme back to the Hague summit (1969), which, together with the ‘Document on European Identity’ (1973) and the Tindemans Report (1975), served as the basis of the new approach to culture within the European Community, which aimed to ‘consider culture as a ‘tool’ to foster European identity and to strengthen the support for European integration’ (Mittag 2013: 40).

In the first years the programme was mainly a summer event, focusing primarily on high culture and incorporating existing events and festivals. However, the main role of the initiative should have been to promote a European dimension to cultural action and further the rationale of a cultural basis for integration (Staiger 2013; Mittag 2013).

In the 1990s the attention of ECoCs shifted from already established cities of high culture (such as Athens or Florence) to smaller, post-industrial cities. The ECoC programme was interweaved with culture-led urban regeneration programmes, cultural tourism, diversified socio-economic growth, involvement of local communities and the establishment

of alternative cultural spaces (Staiger 2013). As these regeneration projects aimed to ground long-term effects, the ECoC programme became a tool for post-industrial urban renewal through the implementation of cultural policy (Patel 2013).

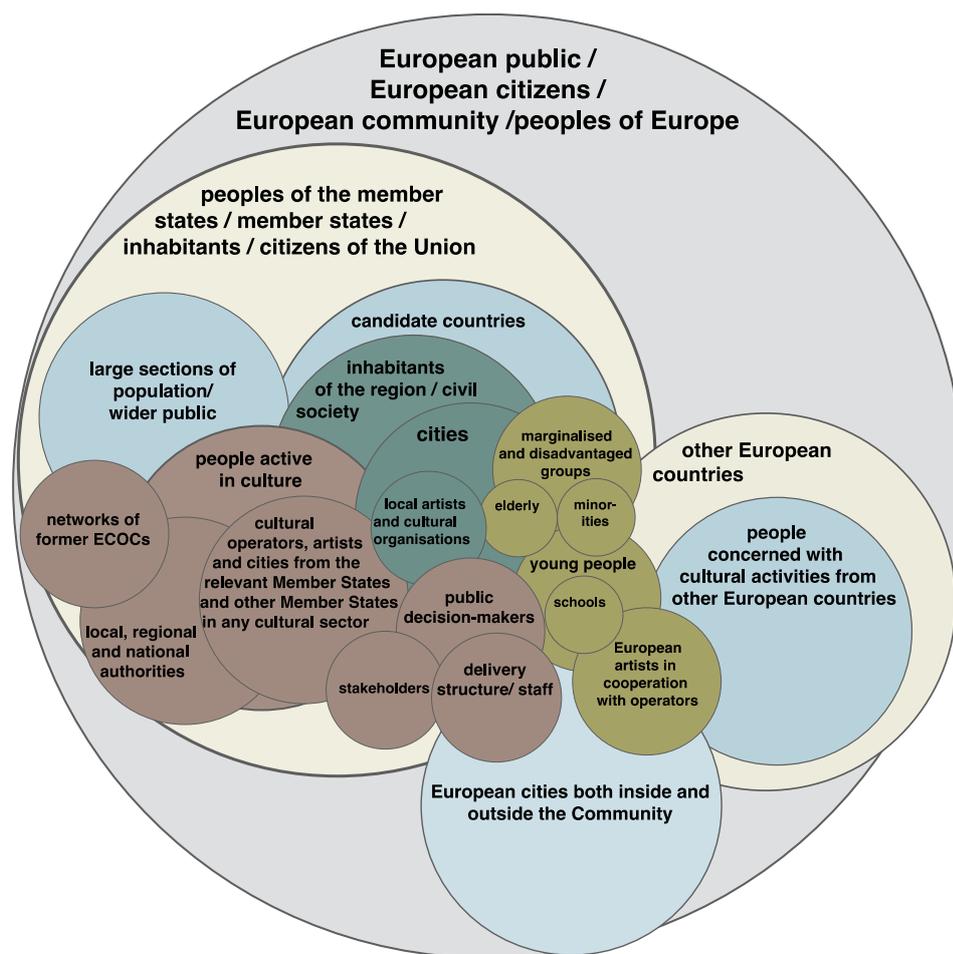
The participatory framework in the ECoC programme became directly present only from the decision of 1999 onwards; nevertheless, some form of inclusive approach was named in all of the documents. One very apparent shift in the three decisions (1999, 2006, 2014) is concerning the scope of participation. As the multi-level governance approach and the subsidiary framework became general guidelines in the EU's laws and policies, there was a shift from the supranational level to the regional and local levels. This shift is visible in policies for the European City/Capital of Culture programme as well. The 1985 and 1990 documents' conclusion only refers to member states and non-member states, but all at state level. There is, however, a strong change in the structure and wording of the following three policy documents. The shift from state-level regulation to multilevel governance is directly visible in the 1999 and 2014 decisions. In the 1999 decision, the references are dedicated to the regional level (*inhabitants, society, large sections of population*), with possible further applications at the local level (*young people, people concerned with cultural activities*).<sup>2</sup> As a follow-up, the 2014 decision provides the full shift to multi-level governance: here – next to the EU level and regional level – participation is very specifically designated as including local artists, local organisations and local populations, further narrowing the field of concern to certain components of local society, such as *young people*, the *marginalised and disadvantaged* and *minorities*.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore during the second analysis of the ECoC policy documents I could trace 27 segments, where 'participation' is mentioned (**Appendix II**). These coded segments outline 23 separate categories for participants. To help to form an understanding of the various categories, I provide a figure with a visualisation of the multiple groups and sub-groups, as well as a spatial contextualisation of the named participant groups.

The bigger group, the *Member States* – also named as *peoples of the Member States, inhabitants and citizens of the Union* – is further divided into multiple categories. Their role in general is similar to the role of the *European public*: namely, that of audience and tourism framed as participation. Within this group, there are two recognisable groups, one is based on the given ECoC city and its region – I will call it *locals* – and the other one is that of *experts*, people active in culture and organisers.

The *locals* category includes the region's residents and the local *civil society*. They are named as the ideal beneficiaries of the programme, whilst mainly being approached as the audience. Local residents in general are encouraged to take a more active role and recognise both their importance and the economic and social benefits of the event.

It is only in the latest decision, in 2014, that local participation is introduced in a way that overlaps with Fischer's definition of participation. Here, participation stands as a part of the outreach criteria, as the programme should be based on the 'involvement of local population and civil society in the preparation of the application and the implementation of



- I. European public /European citizens / European community /peoples of Europe
- II. European public is subdivided to two categories: 'Member States' and 'other European countries'
- III/I. 'Citizens'
- III/I. 'Locals'
- III/I. 'Outreach'
- III/II. 'Experts'

**Figure 4:** Participants named in the five ECOC policy documents

the action'.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, as it is listed amongst many altering framings of participation, this perspective does not appear as an overarching definition and a valid requirement, but as one option amongst many. Especially as it is seemingly further 'clarified' in a strategically selective way: the programme's aim being defined as 'the creation of new and sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural activities, in particular young people, volunteers and the marginalised and disadvantaged, including minorities, with special attention being given to persons with disabilities and the elderly as regards the accessibility of those activities'.<sup>5</sup> This sounds more akin to an attempt to fulfil the general EU requirements on equality, with participation being used as a synonym for

accessibility. Similarly, other subgroups with a similar role, such as young people and schools, are named, which are seen to fulfil educational requirements.

The other recognisable group is that of the *experts*, including *people active in culture, local-, regional- and national authorities, networks of ECoCs, public decision-makers, stakeholders, delivery structure/staff and cultural operators*. Differentiated from *locals*, experts fulfil the roles of advising, planning, implementing and monitoring, as well as ensuring the success and sustainability of projects. The experts are addressed because of their field of expertise and fulfil specific roles.

Public decision makers were specifically addressed in the 1999 decision, being directed to apply their competences to ‘integrate the cultural project into a dynamic medium-term process’.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it seems apparent that they should serve the sustainability of the programme. They are also named as stakeholders in the 2006 decision. Based on the consultation with such officials, a new part was added to the policy guidelines focusing on monitoring. In 2014, a new, highly authoritative role was added to the role of local, regional and national authorities, as they became the stakeholders of the ‘capacity to deliver’ category of the criteria. According to this requirement, a successful ECoC application should be able to claim the broad and strong support and the commitment of these authorities.

The last category I intend to consider is that of *local artists and cultural organisations*. Their participation in the ECoC was only framed as part of the cultural and artistic content in the 2014 decision: ‘involvement of local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme’. This point is further blurred, as it is overwritten by the more specific designations of the decision.<sup>7</sup> Such a category as *local artists and cultural organisations* has a central role to play. Even if full participation of the local society is not targeted, the involvement of people from the local cultural sector should still be key to the planning, implementation and sustainability of the programme, especially as such people are not only *locals* but also *experts*. Local artists, cultural workers and activists, and other people active in the cultural field, are the stakeholders of local participation, as they are well rooted in the local cultural sector, linking the local population, the actors of the local, national, international cultural or social field and the ECoC board. They can be involved in the ECoC programmes at different stages and on various levels, but the best practice guidelines highlight their full involvement from the planning period throughout the whole process. In the case of ECoC this means, that local artists and cultural organisations should be the main stakeholders and actors of the programme, as they are rooted in the local cultural scene and they can directly communicate with various groups of civil society. They represent the needs and interests of the civil society; therefore they can ensure wider participation.

## **Conclusions**

The selectivities of multilevel meta-governance – according to Jessop – are based on the presumption that we approach the state as a social relation. Jessop argues that the state

does not exercise power: powers 'are activated through the agency of definite political forces in specific conjunctures' (Jessop 2014). If this approach is applicable to a state, I argue that it is also applicable – or at least as one possible theoretical frame – to the European Union. Although the EU, as a *sui generis* entity, is clearly not a state-structure, it can be framed through social relations, especially as it is not the states that act, or even the EU itself, but specific sets of actors, politicians, ministers and state officials located within the system. In this framework, actions and policies are approached as structured and structuring tools. This was the starting assumption for my discussion and analysis. Therefore, I aim to point out the presence of this structuring function and the structurally inscribed selectivities in the policies.

My research question was whether participatory approaches serve selectivities under the veil of inclusivity in the European Capitals of Culture Programme. According to my hypothesis, the recognisable presence of performative practices in the policy documents would mean that selectivities are present in these policies, as these practices create specific roles for the fulfilment of specific functions. This selective approach to participation is what I theorised – following Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts – as selectivities under the 'veil of inclusivity'. To further analyse these selectivities, many possible inquiries are imaginable. As such selectivities can be implemented at various levels – the EU policy level, the national level, according to the subsidiarity principle, or the local level of city leadership, for example – each issue would require a different research design and different methodological approaches.

To answer my proposed question – *Are there recognisable performative practices outlined in the policy documents?* – I have coded and analysed the various categories of participants and the roles dedicated to them. The participant categories exhibited a strong differentiation, not only between member state-level actions and local guidelines, but also on all other levels, most strikingly between *locals* and *experts*. This is the most problematic issue here, as, under the veil of inclusivity, there is a strong differentiation – and even control – for the planning and implementation of the programme, where *locals* are not approached as *experts*, while the general approach of participatory governance would aim to erase such distinctions. One could argue that locals are not experts in the field of cultural programming, but, as we have seen, there are *local experts* – local artists and cultural managers, and civil society organisations – whose involvement could be the means to a more participatory approach. They could fulfil a central role, as the key actors involved in the planning, implementation and sustainability of the programme. Nevertheless, their involvement is mostly instrumentalised. Therefore, my answer to my research question is that there are recognisable performative practices outlined in the policy documents of the European Capital of Culture Programme, and they strongly differentiate between the various actors and the roles fulfilled by them.

Furthermore, in this analysis I have used the classification of the participatory governance approach as outlined by Schaap and Edwards's in relation to their participation ladder (Schaap and Edwards 2007). Based on this ladder, I can indicate whether it is really

the participatory governance approach that is being introduced in the cultural policies. Participatory governance, according to Schaap and Edwards, is based on the citizen's participation in public decision-making. As I have pointed out, although some of the policies included recommendations to involve citizens, these applied mainly to certain groups of citizens. In the different stages of the programme – in the planning, decision-making and implementation stages – this programme of participation never reached the level of partnership, which would fulfil the general requirement of participation according to my working definition. Such delegated co-decision making is mainly valid for decision-making between the European Union and the ECoC boards, as it is required by the subsidiarity principle. Nevertheless, within the ECoC programme itself, the main participation form – according to the ladder – is 'open advice', where citizens only comment in situations that were previously determined by the ECoC board and stakeholders. In Schaap and Edwards' model, only the first three steps of their ladder are within the remit of the participatory democracy model (Figure 1). Therefore, my conclusion is that the form of participation framed in the ECoC policies only fulfils the scope of representative democracy.

My main analysis problematized the cultural policies' selectivities by pointing out the variety of participatory frameworks, and by revealing the 'veil of inclusivity' implemented through the assertive use of participation. This approach might lead to a 'naturalisation' of participation, where it might act as a fogged veil, obstructing the analysis of social context and the requirements of its usage. I argue that until there are distinctions embedded under the label of participation, one cannot really talk about the participatory governance approach. Therefore, I propose that participation should be the focus of further thorough analysis in order to reveal the 'polymorphous' discourses forming around this phenomenon.

### **Biographical note:**

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2. CONCLUSIONS OF THE MINISTERS OF CULTURE MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL of 18 May 1990 on future eligibility for the 'European City of Culture' and on a special European Cultural Month event. Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1429448744130&uri=CELEX:41990X0703>. [Accessed 10 February 2015].
3. DECISION 1419/1999/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 25 May 1999 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019. Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1429449002824&uri=CELEX:31999D1419>. [Accessed 10 February 2015].
4. DECISION No 1622/2006/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019. Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1429449575218&uri=CELEX:32006D1622>, [Accessed 10 February 2015].

5. DECISION No 445/2014/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 16 April 2014 establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1429449850241&uri=CELEX:32014D0445> [Accessed 10 February 2015].

## Appendix I. / Policy Supertexts

I. The European Capitals of Culture Programme was established in 1985 under the name European City of Culture. The first policy document was the *RESOLUTION of the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs, meeting within the Council, of 13 June 1985 concerning the annual event 'European City of Culture'*.<sup>8</sup> Through the resolution the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs – in agreement with the Council – established a yearlong cultural programme in rotation of the nominated cities of the member states with multiple exhibitions, performances and cultural activities. The represented issue behind the action is to reach an *ever closer union* and further integration through culture. According to the plan the given European City of Culture should organise the programme, where cultural contributors from other member states contribute, *the European public and peoples of the Member States* take part as audience and from what the inhabitants of the region benefit.

Although the resolution was signed by the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs, the voices behind this action can be traced back also to Melina Mercouri Greek minister, who came up with the proposition of the programme and to the group of ministers who supported her proposition. The issue behind the programme – the aim for *ever closer union* – was a clearly top-down integration initiative, which according to the programme should be an internalised aim of the citizens of member states. As the Resolution is very short, there were no special statements how the European dimension should be reached, rather than giving the title for 'culturally significant' cities, especially in the understanding of cultural heritage. In this context the cultural programme appears as a tool of European integration.

II. The second policy document is the *CONCLUSIONS OF THE MINISTERS OF CULTURE MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL of 18 May 1990 on future eligibility for the 'European City of Culture' and on a special European Cultural Month event*.<sup>9</sup> The conclusion – signed by the Ministers of Culture – did not introduce bigger changes, only aimed to enlarge the programme that was established by the 1985 resolution. It aimed to widen the scope with the involvement of countries outside the European Community ('not only Member States of the Community but also other European countries basing themselves on the principles of democracy, pluralism and the rule of law should be able to nominate cities for the event'<sup>10</sup>) and also to enlarge the publicity of the programme within European Community Member States and other European countries. The policy is stated to be valid until 1996, until the end of the first cycle of the member states.

It is important that the conclusion's aims correspond to the regime change in the Central and Eastern European countries and with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Therefore the wider scope of participants is addressing the new, independent states and tries to popularise the democratic foundations as reflected also in the requirements.

III. The following policy document – DECISION 1419/1999/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 25 May 1999 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of

Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019 – indicates major changes in the programme.<sup>11</sup> The three main changes are the following:

(1) With the signature of the European Parliament and the Council the form of the programme has changed from event to action, and the title from *European City of Culture* to *European Capital of Culture*.

(2) The main aim of the decision was to establish a new community action – the European Capital of Culture Programme – in the framework of the legal bodies. Therefore the Maastricht Treaty and the establishment of European Union is the guideline for the institutionalisation of the programme, and the voices behind the decision changed accordingly to this new legal body. The new programme in its main track follows the European City of Culture event: ‘Its objective shall be to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens’.<sup>12</sup> The action is similarly as the first document – the regulation – calls for ‘both for strengthening local and regional identity and for fostering European integration’.<sup>13</sup>

(3) The sustainable impact of the programme became a new requirement: ‘the positive impact has none the less not always produced results lasting beyond the duration of the project (...) the attention of public decision makers in the cities chosen should be drawn to the need to integrate the cultural project into a dynamic medium-term process’.<sup>14</sup>

To reach these aims next to the main actors on the international level, the stakeholders were specified as *people active in culture* and *people concerned with cultural activities* as organisers and performers; *large sections of the population* as participants and *citizens of the Union* as audience on the local and regional level. According to the decision in order to reach further integration, these stakeholders should engage in cultural cooperation, promotion of the events and ensure mobilisation and participation of large sections of population for long-lasting social impact.

IV. Although the decision of 1999 would have been valid only from 2005, the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 required modifications already in 2006. This was the DECISION No 1622/2006/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019.<sup>15</sup>

Just as the previous decision, the decision of 2006 was also authored by the European Parliament and the policy addressed the same issues as the previous decision. It aimed to ‘highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens’.<sup>16</sup> The main actors on the international level are narrowed to the member states. On the local level for the operational part of the programme they are addressed as the stakeholders, inhabitants and networks while citizens are named as general participants. There were two new criteria for the programme, *the European Dimension* and *City and Citizens*. Under *the European Dimension* the main aim was to establish cooperation and highlight the richness of cultural diversity, where cultural operators were named as stakeholders. In *City and Citizens* criteria the sustainability of the programme has been linked to the participation of the citizens through long-term cultural and social development. Additionally – in correlation with the subsidiarity principle of the Maastricht Treaty –, the programme was required to be consistent with national cultural strategies of the relevant member states.

V. The latest policy document – DECISION No 445/2014/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 16 April 2014 establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC – indicates smaller legal changes.<sup>17</sup> First of all instead of a Community action this decision is establishing a Union action. The proposal still originates from the Commission, but next to the Committee of the Regions, the national parliaments also could place their opinion in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure.

The main objectives of the action divided to general and specific action. The general action's main aim is 'to safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe and to highlight the common features they share as well as to increase citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area' and to 'to foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities in accordance with their respective strategies and priorities'.<sup>18</sup> While the specific action's aim is numerous: 'to enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offering in cities, including through transnational cooperation; (...) to widen access to and participation in culture; (...) to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with other sectors; (...) to raise the international profile of cities through culture'.<sup>19</sup> These objections include all the previous points, such as the focus on diversity and sustainability, but the earlier central role of European dimension became a specific category, together with participation and economic interests. Nevertheless in the reference points the highlighted aim of *ever closer union* still very present, but there is a new added aim: to reach *smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* and to understand culture as a *catalyst for creativity within the framework for growth and jobs*. This shift reframes culture in relation to the general model of cultural and creative industries and economic enterprises.<sup>20</sup>

## Appendix II / Coded Segments

Document name	Code	Begin	End	Segment
resolution1985	participation	1: 567	1: 734	The event has been established to help bring the peoples of the Member States closer together, but account should be taken of wider European cultural affinities.
resolution1985	participation	1: 737	1: 1277	The event should open up to the European public particular aspects of the culture of the city, region or country concerned. It may also concentrate on the city concerned a number of cultural contributions from other Member States, primarily for the benefit of the inhabitants of the particular region. Between these two poles, a wide variety of emphases can be placed and inter-related themes chosen so as to enhance the city concerned and mark the particular occasion, if any, which has provided a reason for choosing it
conclusion1990	participation	1: 590	1: 839	They agree that for the years after 1996 not only Member States of the Community but also other European countries basing themselves on the principles of democracy, pluralism and the rule of law should be able to nominate cities for the event
conclusion1990	participation	1: 1299	1: 1639	In view of the widespread interest in holding the event of European cities both inside and outside the Community, the Ministers agree to create a further cultural event, which would be a special European Cultural Month in one city (from a European country basing itself on the principles of democracy, pluralism and the rule of law
decision1999	participation	1: 1917	1: 2299	Whereas the positive impact has none the less not always produced results lasting beyond the duration of the project itself and whereas, while recognising their competence to decide about the content of their project, the attention of public decision-makers in the cities chosen should be drawn to the need to integrate the cultural project into a dynamic medium-term process
decision1999	participation	2: 1343	2: 1614	A Community action entitled 'European Capital of Culture' shall be established. Its objective shall be to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens
decision1999	participation	2: 3194	2: 3399	The nomination shall include a cultural project of European dimension, based principally on cultural cooperation, in accordance with the objectives and action provided for by Article 151 of the Treat
decision1999	participation	2: 3611	2: 3801	to promote events involving people active in culture from other cities in Member States and leading to lasting cultural cooperation, and to foster their movement within the European Unio
decision1999	participation	2: 3904	2: 4090	to ensure the mobilisation and participation of large sections of the population and, as a consequence, the social impact of the action and its continuity beyond the year of the events

decision1999	participation	2: 4096	2: 4245	to encourage the reception of citizens of the Union and the widest possible dissemination of the various events by employing all forms of multimedia
decision1999	participation	3: 79	3: 384	Each city shall organise a programme of cultural events highlighting the city's own culture and cultural heritage as well as its place in the common cultural heritage, and involving people concerned with cultural activities from other European countries with a view to establishing lasting cooperation
decision1999	participation	5: 576	5: 711	organisation of specific activities designed to encourage artistic innovation and to generate new forms of cultural action and dialogue
decision1999	participation	5: 717	5: 860	organisation of measures to increase access to and awareness of fixed and movable artistic assets and artistic productions specific to the city
decision1999	participation	5: 865	5: 950	organisation of specific cultural projects designed to bring young people to the arts
decision1999	participation	5: 956	5: 1033	organisation of specific cultural projects designed to increase social cohesion
decision1999	participation	5: 1044	5: 1181	the planned activities to a wider public, particularly through the use of multimedia and audiovisual means and a multilingual approach
decision2006	participation	1: 813	1: 1257	A study into the results achieved by the European City of Culture event until 2004 showed that it had a positive impact in terms of media resonance, the development of culture and tourism and the recognition by inhabitants of the importance of their city having been designated; however, the action still needs to be improved, particularly with regard to its long-term effect on the cultural development of the city and region concerned
decision2006	participation	1: 1265	1: 1419	By enabling cities to involve their surrounding region, including any islands, a wider public can be reached and the impact of the event can be amplified
decision2006	participation	1: 1427	1: 1580	The stakeholders in the event stressed problems in the selection process laid down in Decision No 1419/1999/EC, and recommended monitoring the proposal
decision2006	participation	1: 3264	1: 3526	networks of former official European Capitals of Culture should be encouraged to play a constructive role in sharing their experiences and best practice with future European Capitals of Culture, notably on the basis of exchanges during the preparation phase.
decision2006	participation	2: 1068	2: 1326	A Community action entitled 'European Capital of Culture' is hereby established in order to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens
decision2006	participation	2: 1835	2: 2048	Every application shall include a cultural programme with a European dimension, based principally on cultural co-operation, in accordance with the objectives and action provided for by Article 151 of the Treaty
decision2006	participation	2: 3219	2: 3366	foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector
decision2006	participation	3: 60	3: 213	foster the participation of the citizens living in the city and its surroundings and raise their interest as well as the interest of citizens from abroad

decision2014	participation	1: 765	1: 1131	The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) aims at an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe and confers on the Union the task, inter alia, of contributing to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.
decision2014	participation	2: 184	2: 557	The evaluations of the European Capitals of Culture, as well as the public consultation on the future of that action after 2019, have revealed that it has progressively become one of the most ambitious cultural initiatives in Europe as well as one of the most appreciated by European citizens. A new action should, therefore, be established to cover the years 2020–33

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> For the coded segments please consult Appendix II. / Coded segments

<sup>2</sup> Official Journal 1419/1999/EC

<sup>3</sup> Official Journal 445/2014/EU

<sup>4</sup> Official Journal 445/2014/EU, page 6, article 5

<sup>5</sup> Official Journal 445/2014/EU, page 6, article 5

<sup>6</sup> Official Journal 1419/1999/EC

<sup>7</sup> Official Journal 445/2014/EU, page 5, article 5

<sup>8</sup> Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1429448470101&uri=CELEX:41985X0622> [Accessed 10 February 2015].

<sup>9</sup> Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1429448744130&uri=CELEX:41990X0703> [Accessed 10 February 2015].

<sup>10</sup> Official Journal 90/C 162/01, page 1, paragraph 2

<sup>11</sup> Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1429449002824&uri=CELEX:31999D1419> [Accessed 10 February 2015].

<sup>12</sup> Official Journal 1419/1999/EC, page 2, article 1

<sup>13</sup> Official Journal 1419/1999/EC, page 1, point 6

<sup>14</sup> Official Journal 1419/1999/EC, page 1, point 5

<sup>15</sup> Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1429449575218&uri=CELEX:32006D1622> [Accessed 10 February 2015].

<sup>16</sup> Official Journal 1622/2006/EC, page 2, article 1

<sup>17</sup> Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1429449850241&uri=CELEX:32014D0445> [Accessed 10 February 2015].

<sup>18</sup> Official Journal 445/2014/EU, page 4, article 2

<sup>19</sup> Official Journal 445/2014/EU, page 4, article 2

<sup>20</sup> Official Journal 445/2014/EU, page 2, point 6