

Participation in Public Administration Revisited: Delimiting, Categorizing and Evaluating Administrative Participation

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The aim of this paper is to provide a theoretical reflection on the concept and substance of administrative participation, and on research efforts concerning this topic. Firstly, participation in public administration is defined and delimited from other types of participation in modern democracies. Secondly, the paper provides an overview of the types of direct public involvement in administrative functions and its forms (instruments). A threefold typology of participation in public administration is elaborated (regulative, implementing and oversight participation). Thirdly, underlying principles upon which participation in public administration is based are explained. Finally, an overview of existing research and evaluation of participation is presented, including theoretical and methodological contri-

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butions and concerns. The focus is on the twofold nature of the phenomenon – its intrinsic and instrumental value; benefits and problems; process and outcome dimension; and potential and practical effects.

Keywords: public participation, public administration, administrative participation, types and instruments of participation, evaluation

1. Introduction – the Relevance of Participation in Contemporary Public Administration

While at its outset administrative science was preoccupied with technical aspects of the organization and management, current issues emphasize the relationship between administrative organizations¹ and society, including the issue of public participation (see Koprić, 2017). The relevance of participation in public administration has been growing continuously since the last quarter of the 20th century. As by Smith & Dalakiordiu (2009, p. 5), it could be described as a kind of a mantra in modern societies, under various labels – engagement, involvement, inclusion, empowering, etc. On the one hand, participation is perceived as a means of democratic renewal of public administration, being related to the processes of decentralization and deconcentration of power, and representing a value in itself. On the other hand, the literature assumes its instrumental value in achieving positive outcomes with respect to the quality of regulation and public services, the legitimacy of administrative organizations, etc.

Although currently a prominent issue, participation is far from being a newly discovered phenomenon in public administration, as it has been advocated by scholars and practitioners since the 1950s (Neshkova & Guo, 2011, p. 270), in both old democracies and beyond.² However, it is possible to identify at least three indicators of its increasing relevance. First, a theoretical indicator is found in growing and refined scientific literature

¹ The term refers to all types of organizations within the system of public administration, i.e. regulative, coordinative and service-providing organizations/bodies (see Ivanišević, 1987; Koprić, Marčetić, Musa, Đulabić & Lalić Novak, 2014). When referring to personal aspect of administrative organizations, both civil servants and political officials are encompassed.

² Forms of citizen participation were the groundwork of self-management project in former Yugoslavia (more in Koprić, Manojlović & Đurman, 2016).

focused on public participation in all stages of policy-making process, in various sectors, and via different participatory instruments (see section 3). Second, a doctrinal indicator can be identified in the postulates of contemporary administrative doctrines, such as good governance and neo-Weberian state, whose inherent component is direct citizens' involvement.³ Finally, a third indicator points at the *practical* relevance of participation, arising from its regulatory obligation in different policy areas, demonstrating "direct citizen participation is no longer hypothetical; it is very real" (Roberts, 2008, p. 4). Participation is a fundamental principle of European administrative space and one of the main standards for the functioning of European institutions.⁴ As a principle, participation is also found in legal acts and documents of the Council of Europe⁵, as well as in a number of other international organizations (OECD, UN, etc.). National regulation often mandates participation systematically via provisions referring to all public bodies or via special, sectoral laws (environment protection, urban planning, healthcare, education). In addition, an increase in the use different participatory instruments can be noticed worldwide. This includes new instruments, such as consensus conferences, deliberative polls, citizen juries, facilitated by modern information-communication technology (ICT) which complements the standard ones, such as public hearings. That said, there is "a renewed interest in participation that extends beyond pluralist and corporatist models of interest group bargaining" (O'Mahoney, 2010, p. 19), allowing for a delimitation of participatory public administration (see Patten, 2001).

The incentives for such a participatory turn (Tholen, 2015) can be found in wider contemporary social and political trends, which can be reduced to *democratic* and *pragmatic* argument. According to the democratic argument, the growing interest in participation can be seen as a reaction to decreasing levels of public trust in politico-administrative institutions from the last few decades of the 20th century onwards (Box, 2007). In

³ On contemporary administrative doctrines, see Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011).

⁴ Basic democratic principles are contained in the Treaty on the EU and the Treaty on the functioning of the EU. White paper on European governance contains transparency and openness as the main principles. A number of regulations and directives in sectoral areas (e.g. environment protection, urban planning, and service provision) refer to public participation in policy-making process, as well as some recommendation documents (e.g. Commissions' General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties).

⁵ E.g., Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority, Recommendation CM/Rec (2018) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of citizens in local public life, etc.

that sense, public dissatisfaction and apathy have been a result of citizens' perception of rather limited possibilities to influence policies via conventional institutional channels (Crosby, Kelly & Schaefer, 1986; King, Feltey & O'Neill Susel, 1998). However, this has stimulated requests for governments to function more effectively and be more accountable and responsive towards the public. As Rowe and Frewer (2004, p. 514) put it, "a non-consulted public is often an angry one and involving the public may be one step toward mollifying it". The second, pragmatic argument perceives participation as a resource for coping with the complexity of modern societies. That complexity is twofold – collective problems tend to be more difficult and wicked, while the public itself is in general more informed, educated, and interconnected, thus being able to provide new ideas, different perspectives and innovative solutions to these problems (Cuthill & Fien, 2005, p. 64). Modern ICTs provide additional opportunities for facilitating public participation, especially with respect to accessibility and usability of participatory instruments.

Peters (2010, p. 210) argues that "public administration is becoming an increasingly important locus for democratic participation" or even its focal point (Roberts, 2008, p. 4). The main purpose of the paper is to provide a theoretical reflection on this popular, although not new phenomenon in administrative science and to give an assessment of research efforts concerning this topic. The first part of the paper delineates, defines, and elaborates the administrative type of public administration. In that respect, administrative participation is delimited from political and civil participation, with its main apparent forms (instruments) identified and classified within three categories (regulatory, implementing and oversight participation). The main underlying principles of administrative participation are also elaborated. The second part of the paper provides an overview and evaluation of participation research efforts, which have been a subject of theoretical and empirical endeavour for several decades. The author explores the main research contributions, problems, and open questions.

2. The Concept of Participation in Public Administration

2.1. Delimitation of Administrative Type of Participation

Scholars in the area of political science, public administration and public policies, as well as interdisciplinary literature, refer to public partici-

pation or citizen participation to describe processes through which the public/citizens are involved in issuing decisions affecting their lives (Bora & Hausendorf, 2010; Reed, 2008; Bishop & Davis, 2002.). Wider definitions of public participation, however, often specify neither the attributes of those decisions nor the scope of the public. Public participation is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon (Jager, Newig, Challies & Kochskämper, forthcoming), “the scope and definition of which is open to debate” (Rowe & Frewer, 2004, p. 514). In general, participation can be differentiated according to the sphere where it takes place, the type of actors involved, the modes and the characteristics of involvement, the policy process phase in which it takes place, etc. In order to formulate a more precise and comprehensive definition of participation in public administration (administrative participation) as a distinctive participation type, it is necessary to consider different aspects of the phenomenon complexity. One of the main determinants of administrative participation, as explained by Wang and Wan Wart (2007, pp. 267-268), refers to the sphere where participation takes place. While political participation takes place in the legislative domain, administrative participation is located within the executive. The second difference between the two types of participation is related to the frequency of involving the public; political participation occurs mainly during the election cycles, while administrative participation takes place continuously. Unlike Wang and Wan Wart (2007), who reduce political participation to electoral process, other scholars (Burton, 2009; Stewart 2000), differentiate between electoral and non-electoral type of political participation. However, the literature disagrees on participatory instruments pertaining to these two subcategories.⁶ Involvement in administrative decision-making and management processes is opposed to political and civil type of participation (volunteering) by a number of other authors (e.g. Yang & Callahan, 2005; Yang & Pandey, 2011; Callahan, 2006), although not always recognized in the literature.

The second criterion for delimiting administrative participation refers to the course of initiation. While civil participation is directed bottom-up and forms of political participation can be both top-down (elections) and

⁶ Under extra-electoral participation Stewart (2000) lists 26 instruments: advertising, citizen advisory board, citizens' assembly, citizens' jury, focus group, green/discussion paper, initiative, interactive website, Internet chat group, local government, newsletter, participatory budget, plebiscite, public hearing/inquiry, public meetings, public service announcement, referendum, research panel, sponsored lobby group, stakeholder forum, study circle, survey (closed-ended questions, deliberative and open-ended questions), telepolling/televoting, and white paper.

bottom-up (demonstrations), administrative participation is typically organized and initiated by government (administrative) organizations, and it encompasses formal types of involving the public, such as public consultations, citizens' panels, co-optation in working groups and boards, etc.

The third criterion employed here refers to the phase of the policy process during which the public is involved. Although the public can be involved in all stages of the process, from initiation to evaluation, the role of administrative organizations is crucial in the formulation (drafting regulation and coordinating different actors involved) and implementation of policies (administration as an enforcing and providing instrument). Administrative organizations are also included in the evaluation of policies, while the decision-making phase is mostly reserved for political bodies. The agenda setting ability generally pertains to a spectre of different actors, but depends on various factors and specificities of the concrete state.

The fourth criterion is that the public involved in these administrative functions is typically the interested, not the general public, affected by certain regulation or policy. Thomas (1993, p. 446) emphasizes that relevant publics are those who can ensure useful information in resolving certain public issue or somehow influence the implementation of certain decision. Although a wider public (not just direct customers or targeted groups) can be interested in regulations and policies (Svara & Denhardt, 2010, p. 4) – since basically everyone can at some point become affected by a regulation (a patient, a student, a person with disabilities, etc.) – most of the public usually do not have the time or the financial, educational and other resources and capacities to get involved. Therefore, Svara and Denhardt (2010, p. 14) refer to “special-interest participation”. With regard to the type of the stakeholder, participants encompass different categories of actors – individual citizens, NGOs, professional and scientific organizations, etc. Administrative organizations and other public authorities can also be involved as stakeholders in the participation process (for instance, in public consultations, advisory boards, and similar).

The final criterion for distinction of administrative participation is the level of participants' influence. The influence of participants is widely elaborated in the literature via different levels or forms of participation, which rank from one-way interactions or symbolic participation to partnership interactions to complete delegation of a decision to the public. One of the most common classifications encompasses the distinction between informing (communicating), consulting and participating (OECD, 2004; Frewer & Rowe, 2005, etc.). IAP2 (2007), Nabatchi (2012) and Svara and Denhardt (2010) further elaborate this classification into five levels

– informing, consultation, involvement, collaboration and empowerment. Arnsteins' (1969) well-known ladder of participation encompasses eight levels of citizens' influence ranking from manipulation to citizens' control. Moynihan (2003), for instance, differentiates between full, partial, and pseudo participation. However, it is important to stress that the interested public, as an external actor, co-operates with administrators in the process of formulating regulations and policies, but the administration preserves the final say on the adoption of their input (Golden, 1998, p. 264), which generally implies non-binding effects of participation processes. When the entire decision is *ex ante* delegated to the public, a decision-making takes place, which represents a different stage of the policy process and is a prerogative of political institutions with electoral mandate. Therefore, although the level of acceptance of public input can vary – from purely symbolic to partnership relation with administration – when a complete delegation of influence to the public is in place, they no longer participate, but decide (see Catt & Murphy, 2003).⁷

Thus, participation in public administration or administrative participation could be defined as the processes through which the interested public is directly involved in regulative and implementation function of administrative organizations as well as in the oversight of their functioning. The twofold distinction between public participation in drafting regulation and policy-making processes, and in the provision of public services has been adopted in the literature (Wang, 2001; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007; Svara & Denhardt, 2010). Public involvement in performing oversight of functioning of administrative organizations is elaborated here as a special category. Apparent forms of participation in practice occur via different instruments and lead to different levels of public influence (empowerment) on administration, and to the responsiveness of administration to the public. The interaction of the administration and the public rests upon four basic principles – transparency, openness, mutual trust, and responsiveness. All definition elements are elaborated in the following chapters.

⁷ Catt and Murphy (2003) differentiate between decision-making and consultation matrix, while Pusić (1996) makes a distinction between the forms of decision-making and forms of participation. According to Bobbio (2019), decision-making and consultation constitute one out of several dilemmas of public participation design.

2.2. Categories and Instruments of Administrative Participation

Participation in public administration takes place in policy-making or decision-making process (Wang, 2001; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007), which is sometimes perceived as genuine or meaningful participation in the literature because it is about how “public beliefs and values can be realized” (Wang, 2001, p. 323). Further, participation also occurs in service delivery, which is often termed “co-production” and put into management functions (Wang, 2001, p. 323; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007, p. 271). Citizens’ requiring information from administrative organizations and addressing feedback information on public policies effects is here placed into the third category of administrative participation referred to as oversight participation. Because of its contemporary relevance, the forms and characteristics of online (e-) participation are elaborated as a separate category.

a. Participation in formulating regulations and policies. The importance of public participation in formulation of regulations derives from the importance of the regulation process itself, as “every major aspect of contemporary life is affected by government regulation” (Beierle, 2003, p. 2; Coglianese, Kilmartin & Mendelson, 2009, p. 924). Therefore, involving the public in formulation of the rules directly affecting their lives is “one of the most fundamental, important, and far-reaching of democratic rights” (Noveck, 2004, p. 517). The key role in the rulemaking process pertains to administrative organizations. On the one hand, they draft regulations, strategic and other laws and documents that are going to be adopted by the legislative and executive bodies, while on the other, they issue a number of different by-laws. The latter encompass technical, implementation regulations elaborating in detail the substance of the law or specific matter delegated to independent regulatory agencies. As civil servants, who as a rule draft laws and regulations, cannot be held accountable directly but only through the mechanisms of representative democracy (parliament), and as these regulatory processes sometimes take place “literally behind closed doors” (Coglianese, 2005, p. 36), the role of participation is one of “a substitute for the electoral process that bestows constitutional legitimacy on legislation” (Furlong & Kerwin, 2005 p. 354). In other words, the function of participation is to ensure that public interest is going to be considered prior to issuing regulations on behalf of unelected bureaucrats (Golden, 1998, p. 246) or before the adoption of laws in the legislative body. Although participation is in function of procedural accountability, which ensures that

“proposals are based on sound factual and legal premises” (West, 2004, p. 68), the general purpose of involving the public is to democratize the whole process and revive the legitimacy of public administration.⁸

According to Coglianese and colleagues, (2009, p. 926) public participation refers to “the involvement by citizens, small businesses, nongovernmental organizations, trade associations, academics and other researchers, and others outside of government in helping develop agency rules, whether through the open comment process required by section 553(c) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) or through other participatory processes.” The key element of such an interaction is the cooperation of civil servants and officials with interested external stakeholders (Patten, 2001, p. 228). Unlike traditional ideas, contemporary approaches to participatory policy-making stress the need for an early involvement of the public in order to be able to exert some influence on the outcome. In addition, the emphasis is on the attributes of the process itself and the benefits resulting from mutual interaction (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2005, p. 418). The participation process can be completely formal or it can be conducted during informal discussions, especially when stakeholders include “sophisticated stakeholders”, such as the representatives of industry, trade associations, and major advocacy groups (Farina, Epstein, Heidt & Newhart, 2012, p. 106). Another important aspect of the participation process is whether the possibility to influence a regulation is reserved only for “a select few of the more socially privileged societal interests”, or the goal is “to open up and democratize policy formation within the executive branch” (Patten, 2001, p. 228). Further, some regulations are very specialized and technical and do not attract broader public interest, while less technical and value-laden issues can be interesting to a wider circle of stakeholders (Farina, Newhart & Heidt, 2014, p. 673).

The most common instruments for involving the public in regulatory and policy processes are public hearings and discussions, advisory boards, questionnaires, focus groups and citizens’ panels. In addition to these conventional instruments, some more innovative and deliberative instruments have recently appeared across democratic countries (for example, consensus conferences, citizens’ juries, and deliberative polls). Both categories of instruments can be marked as consultative, referring to the procedural possibility for the public to influence regulation, but with final say resting on administrative organizations (Stewart, 2000, p. 1071).

⁸ On legitimacy of the executive and delegated legislation, see Rakar (2017).

The difference between the conventional and new instruments is mostly related to deliberative nature of the process and aspiration for better inclusiveness and/or representativeness of the latter. A wide spectrum of instruments employed at the local level of government (referenda, initiative, citizens' assemblies, participatory budgeting, etc.) can be distinguished within a larger category of local democracy instruments, which, in addition to administrative instruments, also encompasses initiation and decision-making ones. Their distinctiveness derives from the character of local self-government. Namely, at the local level – much more than at the central – political and administrative spheres are interrelated (Yang, 2005, p. 23), which complicates a clear split between the forms of political and administrative participation.⁹ Along with the forms of participation employed both at the national and local levels (such as public discussions, questionnaires, advisory boards), instruments of local democracy include specific modes of participation, such as participatory budgeting, agenda-setting and decision-making instruments (referenda, initiative, citizens' assemblies) and forms of submunicipal self-government. These instruments apply a partial (e.g. participatory budgeting, see Talpin, 2012, p. 184), or full delegation (e.g. referenda) of power to the public.

The type of instrument is recognized in the literature as one of the major determinants of process features and outcomes of participation efforts (Beierle & Cayford, 2002; Franklin & Ebdon, 2005; Yang & Callahan, 2005; Yang & Pandey, 2011; Walters, Aydelotte & Miller, 2000; etc.). The selection of particular participatory instrument affects the levels of inclusiveness, representativeness, deliberation, responsiveness towards participants' input, etc.

b. Participation in implementing regulations and policies. Participatory administration reflects itself not only in the formulation of regulations and policies but also in their implementation, which is – with the inclusion of service consumers and wider public – no longer reserved for administrative professionals (Bovaird, 2007, p. 846; Brandsen & Honingh, 2016, p. 427). In the literature, this type of participation is mostly referred to as co-production. Brandsen and Honingh (2018, p. 10, p. 14) distinguish between more established term of co-production, which “concerns the design and implementation of a service”, and a newer term co-creation,

⁹ In addition, principal function of local self-government is the satisfaction of citizens' everyday needs, suggesting the provision of services is a more pronounced form of participation than regulatory participation.

which refers to “the initiation and/or strategic planning of a service”. Both terms refer to the implementation stage of policy process, i.e. to the production of public services. There are two sides of production: “regular producers” and citizens who voluntarily participate in the provision of public services in order to improve their quality and/or quantity (Pestoff, 2009, p. 219; Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006, p. 495). Co-production, as well as regulatory participation, is aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of public services on the one hand, and enhancing individual capacities and democratic skills of participants, on the other. As Boyle and Harris (2009, p. 14) emphasize, “co-production is certainly about effectiveness, but it is also about humanising services”, i.e. “about mobilising the huge untapped resources that people represent, in and around schools or surgeries, but also prisons, probation centres, housing estates, social work.”

In identifying forms of co-production appearing in practice, some authors detect the distinction between different levels on which co-production takes place: individual, group and collective (Brudney & England, 1983), or individual and organizational, according to Brandsen and Pestoff (2006). Individual-level co-production includes cooperative behaviour of citizens which facilitates and supports effective provision of services on behalf of administrators (for example, informing the police about suspicious behaviours, activating fire alarms, and similar). The scope of such involvement, however, is not wide and it is difficult to separate it from civic duties (Brudney & England, 1983, p. 63; see also Brandsen & Honingh, 2018), as well as from what pertains to the private sphere of individuals (patient following doctors’ instructions, parents helping children in preparing for classes, etc.). “Higher” levels of co-production exert a wider scope of influence and include active participation by larger group of citizens, who can formally be coordinated with administrators. An example of group co-production is neighbourhood watch groups, while collective forms of co-production include citizens’ engagement in police and fire stations, libraries, schools and kindergartens, etc. (Brudney & England, 1983, pp. 63-64). The crucial element here is the “redistribution of benefits from citizen activity” at the group or community levels (Brudney & England, 1983, p. 64). Forms of collective co-production encompass the inclusion of interest groups, private enterprises and other kinds of associations and organizations in joint provision of services.¹⁰ Within the

¹⁰ E.g., the service of childcare or care for the elderly provided by private groups or crafts, in addition to the existing system of public kindergartens and nursery homes. However, this kind of co-production implies financial compensations to involved organiza-

group and in the collective type of co-production – different from the individual-level co-production – citizens outgrow their role as customers or consumers of services in favour of the role of administrators' partners or collaborators. Consequently, only "higher" level forms of co-production can be perceived as actual participation in the implementation function of administration.

Different typology has been developed by Brandsen and Honingh (2018, pp. 14-16), who identify six types of co-production and co-creation, depending on the extent of citizen participation (in planning, design and implementation, and implementation) and the type of activities citizens are involved in (complementary or core service of organization). These are co-creation of a complementary service; co-creation of a core service; complementary co-production in service design and implementation; complementary co-production in service implementation; co-production in the design and implementation of core services; and co-production in the implementation of core services.¹¹

Citizens' co-optation in internal management or supervisory bodies of service-providing organizations is another instrument of public participation in implementation of regulations and policies. Citizens are here included as customers of certain public service who are able to influence the course of policy implementation, i.e. service provision, by providing suggestions about and oversight of the functioning of service-providing organization. Unlike regulatory participation, which is related to framing and setting general rules in certain policy area, this type of participation refers to the planning of service provision and making "narrower" decisions related to the details of policy implementation, according to the rules formulated in earlier stages of the process. This type of implementing participation can be called managerial ("co-management" according to Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006; 2018) and it is common in education, healthcare, social care, and culture.

c. Participation as a form of oversight of public administration. As a means of exerting monopoly of legitimate physical force, public administration disposes with considerable manoeuvre space for using its discretion authorities to the detriment of citizens. Hence, one of the traditional problems

tions and is related to managerial trends in public administration, such as liberalization and contracting-out.

¹¹ On varieties and effectiveness of co-production, see also Nabatchi, Sancino and Sicilia, 2017 and Amirkhanyan, Cheon, Davis, Meier & Wang, 2019.

related to functioning of public administration within its political and social environment is the danger of exceeding administrators' authority or violation thereof. This is the reason why the oversight of public administration has been one of the central issues in administrative science as well as in practice (see Langton, 1978; Meier & O'Toole, 2006).¹² In the past several decades, it has been possible to detect a general trend of proliferation and intensification of instruments for oversight of public administration, in procedural as well as in outcome dimension (Musa, 2019).

The public can perform oversight of administrative organisations in numerous forms. Although previously elaborated forms of regulatory and implementation participation inherently represent a mechanism for public oversight of the administration (although exceeding the role of a controller), oversight participation assumes instruments that are primarily or directly aimed at overseeing the functioning of administrative organizations. One type of these supervisory instruments is described in the literature as lower-level participatory instruments, since they do not enable two-way, active or partnership interaction between the public and the administration. They rather represent public communication (Rowe & Frewer, 2004) or public informing (Arnstein, 1969; Svava & Denhardt, 2010; etc.), as they include a proactive or reactive (upon a request) provision of information on different aspects of administrative organization and functioning. The reason for classifying these instruments as participatory (not only informational) lies in the interpretation that requesting and acquiring information (via right to know requests, petitions, and complaints or by activating independent control institutions)¹³ necessarily connotes an engagement on behalf of citizens.

Public participation in evaluation of public policies and regulations can also be considered a means of oversight of administrative organizations'

¹² According to Pusić (1996, pp. 98-117), political oversight of public administration can be divided into category of organizational and functional instruments. The former refer to steering the administrative organizations towards expected goals via instruments whose purpose is to prevent ex ante the concentration of power within public administration (separation of powers, decentralization, and collectivity principle). Functional means of oversight include ex post verifications of the achievement of political goals conducted via mechanisms of politico-democratic accountability (through the parliament and forms of citizen decision-making and participation), legal and professional accountability.

¹³ 'Integrity-keepers' (see Musa, 2019) perform oversight of administration by preventing and sanctioning different forms of illegal behaviour, as well as by promoting good principles and practice. Regardless whether they function as separate bodies within the administrative sphere, or as legislators' extension, they can ensure an additional channel for public influence over administrative organisations.

functioning, although it could be placed in the separate category of evaluation participation. Examples of these instruments include working groups for monitoring or evaluating the implementation of certain regulations, independent analyses made by NGOs, professional and scientific institutions, and similar (see OECD, 2004, p. 22). Oversight of public administration is also performed by the media and by the pressure of public opinion. However, this type of external influence on public administration is informal and very diffuse (Pusić, 1996, p. 112; Koprić, Marčetić, Musa, Đulabić & Lalić Novak, 2014, p. 70).

Table 1. *Categories and instruments of participation in public administration*

Regulatory participation	Implementing participation	Oversight participation
Consultative instruments (public hearings/discussions, advisory boards, polls, focus groups) Consultative deliberative instruments (citizens' panels, consensus conferences, citizens' juries, deliberative polls) Instruments of local democracy (referenda, initiative, citizens assemblies, participatory budgeting, submunicipal self-government)	Individual, group, community and organizational forms of co-production (Brudney and England, 1983; Brandsen and Pestoff, 2006) Forms of managerial co-production (contracting-out, public-private partnerships, etc.) Forms of management participation (co-optation in management and supervisory boards of service-providing organizations)	Instruments of public informing (right to know requests, petitions, complaints, activating independent control institutions) Instruments of evaluation (working groups for monitoring and evaluation of regulations/policies, analyses)

Source: Author

d. Digital perspective of participation in public administration – e-participation. As public administrations increasingly rely on information and communication technologies, this practice provides an additional dimension for participatory landscape and for the scope of participatory instruments (Kubicek & Aicholzer, 2016, p. 15). Along with novel online forms of participation (e.g. GIS, Geographic information system participation), a number of traditional instruments for involving the public can today

be found in online form (public consultations, petitions, referenda, etc.). In referring to public involvement in the formulation of policy and decision-making processes via ICT, the literature widely applies the term e-participation (see Steinbach, Sieweke & Süß, 2019; Zheng, 2017; Aichholzer, Kubicek & Torres, 2016).¹⁴ The main purpose of e-government is to achieve greater efficiency of administrative functioning and quality of public services, as well as to enhance the transparency and openness via online channels for interaction with the public.

The main potential of e-participation derives from enabling the interaction of a large number of participants, regardless of physical space and time of their involvement, and from facilitating the access point for the public to participate. Hence, e-participation can “eliminate or at least considerably reduce structural obstacles to the realization of a participatory democracy in modern societies” (Fuchs, 2007, p. 43), which should result in higher level of participation and greater inclusiveness. Additionally, online participation can ensure a more transparent policy and decision-making process as well as reduce the costs of participation, not only for citizens but also for public administration. However, e-participation can strengthen the existing or create new divisions in society¹⁵ (Kubicek & Aichholzer, 2016, p. 17; Shulman, 2005, p. 628, p. 635).

Despite great initial optimism in the literature with regard to the effects of e-participation, current research comparing offline and online instruments has not revealed the supremacy of the latter (Schlosberg, Zavesotoski & Schulman, 2007; Pina & Torres, 2016; Kubicek, 2016). Namely, the technology can be a facilitator, but not a complete solution to the problems of public participation (Pina & Torres, 2016, p. 304) because those problems are mainly not technological (Coglianese, 2006) but rather political (political will, political culture) administrative (civil servants' resistance) and social (citizens' lack of interest or other resources, marginalization of certain social groups). Therefore, while modern ICTs can fa-

¹⁴ E-participation includes a wide spectrum of instruments, from e-voting and e-referenda to e-petitions and e-consultations. E-governance is a wider concept referring to different electronic interactions between the government and the public, including online public participation and online service provision (Meijer, 2015, p. 198). The most comprehensive concept is e-democracy, encompassing the use of ICTs on behalf of “democratic sectors”, which include not only the government, but also the media, political parties, NGOs, individual citizens, etc. (Clift, 2000).

¹⁵ Yetano and Royo (2017, p. 418) stress that participants in online and offline instruments have rather different socio-demographic characteristics. This is related to the problem of digital divide (see van Dijk & Hacker, 2003).

cilitate the use of participatory instruments (both conventional and new), it is necessary to take into account – alongside their technical functionality – the wider organizational, social and political context which highly determines their effectiveness (Kubicek & Aichholzer, 2016, p. 22; see also Steinbach, Sieweke & Süß, 2019). What is more, interaction in person may have some advantages for the deliberation process and consequently for the quality of participants' contribution (Kubicek, 2016), which is the reason why an optimal choice may be a combination of traditional offline and online instruments for involving the public (Pina & Torres, 2016, p. 304; Yetano & Royo, 2017, p. 418).

2.3. Underlying Principles of Administrative Participation

The relation between the public and the administration is based upon several fundamental principles installed during the development of democratic states. Today, these principles are guaranteed legally or constitutionally, with the purpose of protecting and strengthening citizens' relation with public administration, as they have traditionally been in an inferior position. There are three elementary principles established in the late 18th and during the 19th century – the legality, fallibility, and accountability of administration. These were supplemented in the second half of the 20th century by the principle of publicity, which refers to “the efforts for ensuring the maximum access to organization and functioning of administrative organizations, as well as informing administration on public needs, attitudes and preferences with respect to administrations' functioning” (Pusić, 2006, p. 29; Koprić et al., 2014, pp. 49-51).

The concept of participatory administration, whose substance is reflected in wider opportunities for public participation in administrative functions, has further modified the relationship between the public and the administration, which now rests upon principles allowing for even larger influence of external actors on the functions that were traditionally administrators' prerogative. These principles imply more cooperative and equalized relationship between the public and the administration. Moreover, unlike legality, fallibility and accountability, which are primarily legal principles, the nature of constituent principles of participatory administration is mainly politico-democratic and related to the distribution of power between the public and the administration. Some participatory principles may even be placed into subjective and psychological categories (e.g. trust). Although these principles are usually embedded in the national normative framework

(transparency and openness in the constitution and other legal acts) and in the documents and recommendations of international organizations, they are also present in the political, public, media and scientific discourse.

a. Transparency. Transparency and openness are fundamental principles for participation in public administration. Although sometimes used as synonyms, there is an important distinction (as well as interconnection) between them. Transparency is related to access, insight, visibility and similar concepts, referring to the accessibility of information on different aspects of internal organizational functioning to the external actors. It is about opening internal organizational processes and decisions to third parties (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2012, p. 139). The secrecy of functioning of administrative organizations has always had a negative connotation, even when they perform effectively (Pusić, 2006, p. 30). By being transparent, the organization demonstrates its willingness to be exposed to public scrutiny and declares there is nothing to hide. The components of transparency of public administration include the visibility and accessibility of the decision-making processes, the content of public policies, and policy outcomes (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2012, p. 139). Transparency implies one-way process of ensuring information to the public, proactively or upon their request (Musa, 2013, p. 11), which is a precondition for the public to be able to provide feedback information to public administration. Therefore, transparency is a precondition and an inherent part of the principle of openness. As Creighton (2005, p. 9) explains, it is “an essential component of an effective public participation program. People cannot participate unless they receive complete and objective information on which to base their judgments”.

In doctrinal aspect, the principle of transparency has been promoted by the postulates of the new public management and good governance. In practice, its realization has been significantly facilitated by modern ICTs and the development of e-government. From the legal aspect, the principle of transparency is achieved through the right to know instrument, i.e. the right of the public to access information of public authorities which can be implemented by proactive release of information on the websites, social media, information campaigns, etc., or following legally guaranteed citizens' requests. Achieving the principle of transparency can in practice be in conflict with other principles (e.g. personal data protection, national security, etc.), and it can be related to other implementation problems (more in: Musa, 2013, pp. 19-20; 2017, pp. 34-35).

b. Openness. The principle of openness presupposes as well as supplements the principle of transparency. Openness is reflected in the two-way

process of providing information to the public on behalf of public administration and providing feedback information to public administration on behalf of the public (Musa, 2013, p. 11; 2017, pp. 38-39). Therefore, openness is a higher category and a wider principle than transparency. While transparency is achieved via citizens' right to know, openness can be accomplished through their right to reveal attitudes, preferences, and suggestions on issues affecting their lives. Openness enables an active role of the public in relation to the administration (Musa, 2013, p. 11), which is why it constitutes the very core of the concept of administrative participation. The ability to influence policy-making and decision-making processes implies the procedural right of the public to be involved, not an obligation of the administration to accept their suggestions. The level of public influence depends on a number of factors – from concrete instruments in use to participants' characteristics – and is still an object of theoretical and empirical discussions (see 3.3.). Openness is closely related to the principle of responsiveness towards the public, which implies the willingness of the administration to hear and accept public input.

Procedural obligation of administrative organizations to provide opportunities for the public to get involved in the formulation of legal acts and other policy documents serves as legal instrument for achieving openness of public administration. Different from the principle of transparency, the content of openness can be comprehended differently and distinctively implemented (Bugarič, 2004, p. 502, p. 504). However, forms of achieving openness are not always legally mandated but politically decided. As explained by Musa (2013, p. 11), while transparency largely reflects itself legally, openness is much more closely related to the processes of political decision-making and power.

c. Responsiveness. Referring to administrations' adherence to public requests, the principle of responsiveness upgrades the principle of openness. It can generally be determined as an "extent to which decision makers take note of the views of the public" (Catt & Murphy, 2003, p. 414). However, in its realisation the concept is multi-layered. Since the public consists of different actors including both "customers and noncustomers of government organizations" (Yang & Pandey, 2007, p. 216), Bryer (2006), for example, explains that administrators may express different types of responsiveness.¹⁶ According to Vigoda (2002, p. 529), respon-

¹⁶ Responsiveness to elected officials, rules, administrators' goals, individuals as customers, stakeholders' consensus and conflicting demands (Bryer, 2006, pp. 484-489). The

siveness refers to the speed and accuracy of administrations' reaction to public requests. The speed refers to the period between public addressing a request for an action or information and administration answering to it. The accuracy reflects the extent to which administrators' answer meets the requested preferences of the public. The aspect of accuracy is, according to Vigoda (2002, p. 529), harder to assess because it includes the issues of "social welfare, equity, equal opportunities, and fair distribution of 'public goods' to all citizens". Because of such complexity and fluidness of the public interest, Yang and Callahan (2007) suggest a moderate approach that consists in addressing responsiveness in terms of willingness to listen or balancing different requests, rather than assessing the compliance of public and administrators' values and priorities. Hence, responsiveness can be defined in terms of willingness to respond to public requests, as well as in terms of the level of their acceptance. The higher the level of perceived administrative responsiveness, the higher should be the level of public satisfaction. Responsiveness can largely be described as a subjective concept since different actors (the public and the administrators) can perceive the level of responsiveness rather differently (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006; Berner, Amos & Morse, 2011).

d. Trust. Trust is a multidisciplinary concept widely explored in social sciences. However, its multi-layered nature represents a barrier for formulating a single definition as well as for identifying the factors upon which it depends. Offe (1999, in: Fledderus et al., 2014, pp. 428-429) defines trust as "the belief that others, through their action or inaction, will contribute to my/our well-being and refrain from inflicting damage upon me/us". This comprises fundamental assumption of (i) a risk of betrayal, because otherwise a need for trust would not exist, and (ii) interdependence between the trustor and the trustee (Fledderus, Brandsen & Honingh, 2014, pp. 428-429).

In political science, sociology, public administration and other social science disciplines, the concept of social trust is related to the "people's willingness to rely on experts and institutions in the management of policy issues that have direct impact on the public or the environment, and thus relates to their confidence in the competence of institutions to protect them from harm" (Frewer & Rowe, 2005, pp. 86-88). The level of public trust in political institutions has been decreasing for the last three dec-

latter three refer to administration's responsiveness towards its social environment, i.e. to the public, while the first three types are related to political and professional accountability.

ades. This trend also includes public administration although public trust in administrative organizations is usually not explored as a separate issue (Musa, 2017, p. 44). Regardless of a standpoint – wider perspective of politico-administrative system or narrower perspective of administrative organizations (see Musa, 2017, p. 49) – recent ‘participatory turn’ (Tholen, 2015) can be interpreted as a remedy to adverse trend of declining public trust (see Wang & Wan Wart, 2007; Pina & Torres, 2016).

Trust is therefore a necessary component of participation in public administration because certain level of public and administrators’ confidence in positive effects of participation is necessary for its implementation (Yackee, 2015, p. 431). The claim that citizens participate because they are not sure whether administration will act in their best interest is actually in accordance with the mentioned postulate of the concept of trust. Since there is a risk of failure, citizens are motivated to get involved in order to protect their interests. The existence of betrayal risk does not imply there is no certain level of confidence necessary for participation (otherwise, apathy or alienation would be in place). Conversely, the same logic can be applied – the opening of administrative organizations towards their social environment assumes some level of confidence in the public and the acceptance of public requests confirms that claim.

3. Evaluation of Administrative Participation between the Potential and Practical Effects

Arnstein (1969, p. 216) compared public participation to “eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you”. In both theory and practice, participation has generally been considered as a positive practice (Gregory, 2000, p. 179). Most of the earlier literature on participation was largely normative and descriptive, arguing for wide inclusion of the public. Scholars were largely preoccupied with benefits and possible functions of the participation processes. Today, literature is more focused on instrumental and empirical dimension of participation. The analyses of participation effects in real life have become quite refined. It is generally recognized that participation can perform many functions, although unambiguous conclusion on their accomplishment in the practice is still missing. In addition, recent literature is more preoccupied with problematic aspects and costs of participation processes.

3.1. Intrinsic and Instrumental Values

Frequently emphasized desirability of public participation comes in two aspects: normative/ intrinsic/moral and instrumental/practical/pragmatic. As explained by Morse (2006), the relevance of participation for public administration stems from the intrinsic importance of democratic values. However, its significance goes beyond it and encompasses pragmatic aspect of its effectiveness. Therefore, participation can be examined as a value in itself and as a means for accomplishing other goals (Kubicek & Aicholzer, 2016, p. 11; Nabatchi, 2010, p. 392; Svava & Denhardt, 2010). The intrinsic aspect emphasizes the moral basis of participation, which consists of freedom, equity, and fairness as human rights, and procedural justice and accountability (Olivo, 1998, in: Moynihan, 2003, p. 165; Lewis, 1999, p. 2). Vujčić (2000, pp. 115-116) stresses participations' "expressive value in the sense of freedom of articulation and action, or enhancing the quality of life and political satisfaction of individuals". The main premise arising from this is that subjects of a certain decision or policy should have a right to participate in the process of its formation (Neshkova & Guo, 2011, p. 270). This aspect of participation accentuates the process itself – the procedural aspect – implying that participation is a purpose in itself and not necessarily a means for other goals (Svava & Denhardt, 2010, p. 6). In Catlaw and Rawlings' words (2010, p. 115), it is a right thing to do. Nevertheless, the instrumental aspect of participation is related to a presumption of accomplishing other purposes. Participation is perceived as an instrument for achieving these purposes, implying that the output dimension of participation ought to be emphasised. The instrumental value of participation is primarily linked to formulating and implementing more effective regulations and policies (Kathi & Cooper, 2005, p. 559), but also to overcoming the problem of democratic deficit through strengthening the legitimacy and support for public policies. In that respect, participation is seen as "a smart thing to do" (Catlaw & Rawlings, 2010, p. 115).

3.2. Potential Benefits and Shortcomings

The literature relates participation in public administration to a number of potential benefits. They can be summarized as (i) more solid basis for formulating regulations, (ii) legitimation potential, (iii) educational and integration potential, and (iv) promotion of democratic principles. Probably the most fundamental argument in favour of participation is that the

public can improve the quality of regulation and its implementation by providing additional information as useful input to the administrators. By extending the scope and type of information, potential problems, and solutions, participation can improve the quality of regulations and facilitate their implementation. As non-professionals, citizens possess different kind of knowledge, described as 'local' (Callahan, 2006; Kubicek & Aicholzer, 2016, or 'practical' (Neshkova & Guo, 2011), which – in the complex environment of modern administrative organizations – can ensure more comprehensive, specific or innovative perspectives for formulating regulations which administrative professionals lack (Fung, 2015, p. 517; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007, p. 266).

Participation can promote accountability towards the public by allowing public critique of administrative proposals and modifying them in accordance with public preferences. It can also ensure the legitimacy of regulation in whose formulation the public was involved, but it has a potential to expand this legitimacy to the level of politico-administrative system and increase the level of public trust as well (Roberts, 2008; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007; Kubicek & Aichholzer, 2016; etc.).

Participation can serve as a kind of a school of democracy for citizens. It can strengthen social capital and enhance the development of individual and social skills useful not only to individuals themselves but to the wider community as well, qualifying participants for active citizenship (Brague & Gallego, 2003; Cuthill & Fien, 2005; Neshkova & Guo, 2011; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Educational and integrative benefits can appear not only for the public, but also for civil servants involved in participatory processes. Experiential learning, as part of a wider institutional transformation of administrative organizations towards deconcentration of power, can lead to re-examination of existing values, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour (Pimbert & Wakeford, 2001, p. 25).

Finally, participation promotes the realization of democratic principles, especially equity, fairness, minority protection, deconcentration of the power of elites, etc. (Robbins, Simonsen & Feldman, 2008; Kubicek & Aicholzer, 2016, Fung, 2003).¹⁷

However, the literature recognizes problematic aspects of conducting participation process and its effects. These include (i) problems of public

¹⁷ Online participatory instruments are supposed to ensure additional benefits, since they can reduce the costs of transaction and coordination, and facilitate wider and easier involvement of the public.

motivation and resources, (ii) problems related to conducting participation process, (iii) costs and negative effects on internal functioning of administrative organizations, and (iv) non-genuine participation. One of the most commonly stressed deficiencies related to public participation is the lack of citizens' resources for participation – time, financial costs, knowledge, self-confidence, interest, etc. Incoming costs for participants always exist, no matter how low they seem to be (Nabatchi, 2010, p. 387; Rosener, 1982, p. 344). Problems related to the exercise and attributes of the participation process can include a low level of participation and the lack of participants' representativeness, potential for encouraging disagreements and conflicts, non-transparency in informing the public, different symbolic barriers, etc. (Fung, 2003; Moynihan, 2003; Schalk, 2015). For administrative organizations, transaction costs of participation include financial, time and personal resources. Involvement of external actors necessarily complicates and possibly slows down the existing procedures, and it requires additional coordination mechanisms (Moynihan, 2003, p. 173; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 58; Yang & Callahan, 2007, p. 251). Finally, it is possible that the effects of participation remain only symbolic or that the quality of regulations degrades as a result of involving the wider public. As emphasized by Halvorsen (2003, p. 540), "a history of participation with no visible impact on agency decisions can be worse than no participation at all". Unfortunately, the possibility that involving the public does not improve the quality of regulations or even contributes to poorer regulation cannot be excluded.

Table 2. *Overview of potential benefits and problems of participation in public administration*

Benefits	Problems
<p>Solid basis for formulating and implementing regulation</p> <p>Wider spectrum of knowledge and information</p> <p>Better quality of regulation</p> <p>Easier implementation</p> <p>Legitimacy potential</p> <p>Accountability</p> <p>Legitimacy</p>	<p>Problems of citizens' motivation and resources</p> <p>Lack of interest, time, financial resources, knowledge, self-confidence</p> <p>Problems related to conducting participation process</p> <p>Lack of representativeness and interest domination</p> <p>Enhancing conflicts</p>

Support and trust	Lack of transparency
Education and integration potential	Symbolic barriers
Citizens' education at individual and community levels	Negative effects on internal organizational functioning
Integration and social capital	Limited time, financial and personal resources
Education of administrators	Complicating the existing procedures
Promotion of democratic principles	Additional coordination
Social justice	Non-genuine participation
Equity, protection of minorities	Symbolic influence
Dispersion of power	Poorer quality of regulation

Source: Author

3.3. Evaluation of Participation Processes and Outcomes

In contrast to the literature approaching participation normatively and descriptively, the other end of the spectrum contains a growing corpus of literature focused on practical effects of participation and its effectiveness (Kathlene & Martin, 1991; Rosener, 1982; Rowe & Frewer, 2004;) or success (Crosby, Kelly & Schaefer, 1986; Pratchett et al., 2009; Kubicek & Aichholzer, 2016). The literature on real, actual effects that participation yields in practice still requires further empirical findings. As Neshkova and Guo (2011, p. 285) put it, “an important question missing from the literature is whether citizen participation has some real value for public administrators beyond its normative desirability”. Abelson and Gauvin (2006, p. 5) point at “a lack of precision about the purpose, features and dimensions of participation” of most of the literature, which is why the questions of evaluation criteria and methods still preoccupy the scholars. Although the research has continuously been moving forward, systematic investigation of some areas is still missing, which is why the evaluation of participation processes and outcomes can be described as a still evolving area (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006, p. 37; Michels, 2011, p. 275; Uittenbroek, Mees, Hegger & Driessen, 2019, p. 2544).

The majority of theoretical and empirical research on participation in public administration can be classified into two groups; one primarily focused on the process dimension and the other preoccupied with its outcomes (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006; Rowe & Frewer, 2004; Beierle & Cay-

ford, 2002). In its process dimension, participation refers to a number of attributes related to planning and implementation, such as informing the public and selecting the participants, the period during which the interested public is involved, the characteristics of the concrete instrument, the rules for management of the process, the costs, etc. However, participation can also be examined from the standpoint of its results (immediate outputs), outcomes, and impacts, which means assessing the achievement of proclaimed (as well as unintended) effects: the incorporation of public inputs into regulations, the improvement of quality of regulations, the legitimacy of and support to implementation of a policy, the education and informing of public, etc. The preoccupation with the outcome dimension of participatory endeavours has become more prominent in recent scientific discussions and empirical research (see Rowe & Frewer, 2004; Abelson & Gauvin, 2006; Yang & Pandey, 2011; Buckwalter, 2014, Hong & Cho, 2018; Kim & Lee, 2019; Jacobs & Kaufmann, forthcoming; Crow, Albright & Koebele, forthcoming; etc.). However, the multiplicity of potential outcomes is probably the main cause of research complexity of the participation phenomenon. Some outcomes are empirically “difficult to catch”, being related to a wide spectrum of actors, and manifested within a longer period of time (e.g., strengthening public trust, participants’ education, quality of regulation). As far as the results are concerned, the findings vary, depending on the research framework and methodology. The majority of authors have assessed public influence on the regulation and policies as low or constrained (e.g. Golden, 1998; Culver & Howe, 2004; Yang & Callahan, 2007; Liu, 2017). Nevertheless, some evaluations are more optimistic in their assessments (e.g. Wang, 2001; Ebdon, 2002; Beierle & Cayford, 2002) while others show mixed or inconclusive findings (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2005; Uittenbroek et al., 2019; Crow, Albright & Koebele, forthcoming).

Empirical research on other participation outcomes, and especially on long-term impacts, is more severe and even less conclusive. Public participation is most commonly discovered as positively related to greater legitimacy of regulations/policies (Michels & De Graaf, 2010; Michels, 2011; Koch, 2013), although it can have a negative effect on legitimacy, especially when participants are unsatisfied with their involvement (Halvorsen, 2003). While Neshkova and Guo (2011) find positive influence of public participation on both efficiency and effectiveness of public services, research conducted by Schalk (2015) points at the clash of the efficiency of public policies on the one hand, and the level and competence of participants on the other. Similarly, Hong and Cho (2018) find trade-off

between the effectiveness and equity. Yang and Oh (2013) come across an opposite conclusion – participation does not diminish the efficiency of public administration, but can rather increase its effectiveness and equity. The outcomes related to the participants (involved public) are perhaps most widely investigated. Participation is assumed to be related to the development of new skills and virtues of participants, which is confirmed by some empirical findings (Geissel, 2009; Michels & De Graaf, 2010; Van Damme & Brans, 2012; etc.). However, according to Michels (2011; 2019), these effects are limited only to the minority of participants.

The distinction between the process and outcome dimension of participation can be related to previously mentioned difference between intrinsic and instrumental value of participation, since participation as a means (instrumental participation) implies an accomplishment of certain *ex ante* defined goals, while participation as a value in itself (transformational participation) emphasizes a continuous process in progress which produces some value regardless of its outcomes (Cornwall, 2008, p. 274; Oakley, 1991, in: Gregory, 2000, p. 182).¹⁸ Buckwalter (2014, pp. 574-575) stresses that the existing research has been more directed at the formal than at the substantial participation which refers to the link between structuring the process and its realised goals.¹⁹ Some papers adopt a complementary approach and combine the process and the outcome criteria in their evaluations of participation exercises. In that respect, studies on the relation between different characteristics of the process and its outcomes, i.e. on the conditionality between the two dimensions of participation as well as on the influence of different contextual factors on both participation dimensions and *vice versa*, are especially valuable although still insufficient. Contextual variables refer to environmental factors, encompassing wider social, political and legal environment of administrative organizations. They can also include organizational variables – factors related to internal characteristics of administrative organizations (internal structure and processes, hierarchy, size, etc.).

¹⁸ Nevertheless, perceiving participation as a purpose in itself could also reveal less ambitious agenda of administrators – completing legal/formal obligation, without aspiration to achieve other goals.

¹⁹ One may say that greater preoccupation with the process of participation than with its outcomes also portrays the situation in the practice of administrative organizations. In their analysis of participation exercises at the local level in Germany, Austria and Spain, Pina and Torres (2016, p. 301) have found that more than 40% do not conduct evaluations of the outcomes of participation programmes.

The relation between the process and the outcome dimension of participation on the one hand, and contextual factors on the other, is not well documented in the existing literature. In comparison with the studies focused only on the analysis of certain process characteristics or particular outcomes of participation, findings on the link between the two dimensions of participation and different contextual variables are insufficient. Within the group of contextual variables, organizational factors²⁰ are less explored than environmental factors – political, socio-economic and legal (see Beierle & Cayford, 2002; Rowe & Frewer, 2004; Abelson & Gauvin, 2006; Yang & Pandey, 2011). In one of the latest research endeavours, Jager and colleagues (forthcoming) investigate the influence between participation and wider environmental and institutional context. The research reveals positive influence of participation on governance outputs (if participants are able to exert significant influence during the participation process) as well as on their acceptance, but only to a lesser extent on their implementation.

Therefore, we can list six conceptual and methodological observations which provide at least partial explanation of the state-of-the-art of the existing research on participation and which should be taken into account in future research efforts. First three notes are theoretical-conceptual in their nature, while the following three refer to methodological issues. First, participation in public administration is a complex and comprehensive phenomenon, encompassing different instruments, process designs and a number of possible outcomes. Therefore, a long list of research variables and their interrelation can be identified; variables related to the process of participation (level of participation, representativeness, inclusion, characteristics of participatory instrument, process management, transparency, level of deliberation, etc.), variables related to the outcomes of participation (acceptance of public input, legitimacy of regulation, efficiency/effectiveness of policies, support for regulation, participants' education, etc.) and a spectrum of different contextual variables related to organizational, social, legal, political and institutional environment which surround each participatory exercise.

Second, the term effective/successful/good participation remains unclear because there are no acknowledged or established evaluation criteria (Kubicek & Aichholzer, 2016, p. 11). As explained by Rowe and Frewer (2004, p. 517), the difficulty lies in the fact that effective participation “is

²⁰ To some extent, civil servants' attitudes on participation are an exception, more widely explored in comparison to other organizational factors, revealing a positive connection to both process and outcome variables.

not an obvious, unidimensional and objective quality (such as speed or distance) that can be easily identified, described, and then measured”, but rather has many aspects. Since universal definition is not feasible, authors start from different criteria, referring to both process and outcomes of participation. Some definitions and criteria of effectiveness are formulated based on a theory, while others are based on empirical insights (Rowe & Frewer 2004, p. 521).²¹

Third observation refers to the conceptual problem of uneven terminology, which has direct implications on research methodology. The literature employs a number of different terms referring to the same phenomenon (citizen/public participation, citizen/public involvement, citizen involvement in government decision making, citizen participation in administrative processes/decision making, citizens’ engagement, interactive decision-making, etc.). Related, but separate terms, such as co-creation, co-production, collaboration, and empowerment add to the confusion. In addition, the same participatory instruments are sometimes labelled differently (e.g. citizens’ juries, planning cells), and vice versa. Non-standardized terminology can reflect in methodological problem of comparability.

Fourth, the evaluation of effective or successful participation is methodologically burdened by different perceptions of actors involved in the process, not only between the administrators and participants, but also between the participants themselves. While one group of actors can assess participation as very successful, the other may think that, according to some other criteria, it was a failure (Creighton 2005, pp. 214-215; see also Van Damme & Brans, 2012; Webler, Tuler & Krueger, 2001).

Fifth, until recently, research has largely been based on case studies and single factor analyses – often relying on perceptions of included actors (Neshkova & Guo, 2011, p. 270; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007, p. 265). However, during the past decade, literature has been upgraded both in its conceptual and methodological aspect. Research efforts are widely addressing the entry side of participation²² (e.g., Zhang et al., forthcoming; Neshkova & Guo, 2018; Crow, Albright & Koebele, 2016; Hafer

²¹ For an extensive review of the process and outcome criteria for evaluation of public participation employed in the literature, see Rowe and Frewer (2004).

²² Yang (2005, p. 5) refers to the supply of participation which relates to citizens’ willingness and capacity to participate, as well as government efforts to involve citizens. Hence, this refers to different factors influencing the level of public participation, both on the side of the public (e.g., population diversity, motivation) and on the side of the government/administration (governmental financial situation, organizational capacity, etc.).

& Ran, 2016) as well as its outcome dimension (e.g., Yang & Oh, 2013; Buckwalter, 2014; Hong & Cho, 2018; Kim & Lee, 2019; Jacobs & Kaufmann, forthcoming). Methodologically, the literature has been enriched by a number of cross-national comparative studies (e.g. Ríos et al., 2017; Pina & Torres, 2016; Bovaird et al., 2016; Yang, 2016; Pedersen & Johannsen, 2016) and more quantitative research methods or combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (e.g. Van Damme & Brans, 2012; Pedersen & Johannsen, 2016; Liu, 2017; Uittenbroek et al., 2019; Jager et al., forthcoming). Nevertheless, national case studies and qualitative research methods still prevail (see Brandsen, Steen & Verschuere, 2018, p. 6) and systematic empirical studies on conducting participation processes in practice and their outcomes can still be qualified as insufficient (Uittenbroek et al., 2019, p. 2544).

The last but not least important, most research has been conducted in old democracies, especially in the USA, which have a long tradition in involving citizens in decision-making processes, while there is much less evidence from new democracies. This observation is important from the standpoint of influence of wider contextual factors on participation process and outcomes, since “similar solutions are implemented in states with different legal and administrative cultures and traditions” (Rakar, 2017, p. 58). The extent and the effects of public participation are largely dependent on the “types of services, organizations and cultural contexts” (Brandsen, Steen & Verschuere, 2018, p. 5).

4. Conclusion

The aim of this paper is a theoretical reflection on the concept of participation in public administration, which has been a relevant issue in both academic discourse and practice for several decades, but has recently become more prominent. Reasons for that lie in greater complexity of modern societies and public problems, as well as in democratization efforts in politico-administrative institutions. The prominence of the phenomenon can be noted in the proliferation and refinement of scientific literature, in the postulates of contemporary administrative doctrines, and in practical need (and often obligation) to involve the public in formulating and implementing regulations and policies.

Even though scholars have recently been quite preoccupied with particular participatory instruments, it is not always clear to which type of partic-

ipation they refer. Therefore, the first purpose of the paper was to delimit administrative participation as a specific type of participation, especially in contrast to political participation. Administrative participation is further elaborated as participation in formulating regulations and policies, participation in their implementation, and participation in performing oversight of functioning administrative of organizations. Several distinction criteria of administrative participation have been identified. Participation in public administration refers to the processes through which the interested public is directly involved in regulative and implementation function of administrative organizations, as well as in the oversight of their functioning, via different instruments based on the principles of transparency, openness, mutual trust, and responsiveness. This leads to different levels of public influence (empowerment of citizens) on administration, and to the responsiveness of administration to the public.

The second purpose of the paper was to provide an estimation of the existing research efforts of administrative participation. The literature presuming normative desirability of participation and listing its potential benefits is quite extensive. However, the more recent literature recognizes the need for evaluating practical effects of participation. During the last two decades authors have become more preoccupied with empirical research and effectiveness of participation processes and outcomes. Nevertheless, based on current research findings, it is still not possible to elicit unambiguous conclusion on the effectiveness of participation processes and its outcomes. One of the reasons is conceptual because the effectiveness or success of participation depends on evaluators' criteria, which can refer to different process attributes and numerous potential outcomes of participation. Linking these process and outcome variables with different contextual factors inserts additional level of complexity to research frameworks, which still has to be addressed in future research efforts since the existing insights are not extensive. Other reasons are mostly methodological, suggesting methodological approaches should be more comprehensive and grounded in more quantitative data.

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PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REVISITED: DELIMITING, CATEGORIZING AND EVALUATING ADMINISTRATIVE PARTICIPATION

Summary

Participation has been a relevant issue in public administration research and theory for several decades, especially in old democracies. However, recent processes of globalization, Europeanization and digitalisation, coupled with diminishing citizens' trust in public institutions, have again made the concept of public participation topical. The aim of this paper is to provide a theoretical reflection on the concept and substance of participation in public administration and on research efforts. In order to do so, administrative participation is first defined and distinguished from other types of participation in modern democracies (political and civil participation). Participation in public administration encompasses the processes through which the public is directly involved in regulative and implementation functions of administrative organizations, as well as in the oversight of their functioning. The three main categories of participation in public administration are elaborated – regulative, implementing and oversight participation – together with some apparent forms (instruments) within each category. The main principles upon which administrative participation is based are also explained – transparency, openness, responsiveness and trust. The final part of the paper contains an overview of the existing research and evaluation of participation in public administration. The twofold value of participation – intrinsic and instrumental – is explained, its potential benefits and shortcomings are listed, and a distinction between the process and outcome dimension of participation is elaborated. Although the literature has become rather extensive and refined, one can conclude that unambiguous findings on the practical effects of participation are still deficient, especially with regard to its dependence on different contextual – especially organizational – variables. Therefore, some conceptual and methodological observations for further research are formulated.

Keywords: public participation, public administration, administrative participation, types and instruments of participation, evaluation

PONOVNO PROMIŠLJANJE PARTICIPACIJE U JAVNOJ UPRAVI: ODREĐENJE, KATEGORIZACIJA I VREDNOVANJE UPRAVNE PARTICIPACIJE

Sažetak

Participacija je desetljećima važna tema teorijskih rasprava i istraživanja u javnoj upravi, naročito u starim demokracijama, ali i izvan tog kruga. Suvremeni procesi globalizacije, europeizacije i digitalizacije, zajedno sa slabim povjerenjem građana u institucije javne vlasti učinili su participaciju još aktualnijom. Cilj rada je teorijski ponovno razmotriti koncept i sadržaj participacije u javnoj upravi, kao i postojeća istraživanja participacije. Upravna se participacija najprije odvađa od drugih oblika participacije u modernim demokracijama (političke i građanske). Participacija u javnoj upravi obuhvaća procese izravnog uključivanja zainteresirane javnosti u regulativnu i provedbenu funkciju upravnih organizacija te u nadzor nad njihovim funkcioniranjem. Razlikuju se i razmatraju tri vrste upravne participacije – regulativna, provedbena i nadzorna, zajedno s njihovim pojavnim oblicima, tj. instrumentima. Glavna načela upravne participacije su transparentnost, otvorenost, odazivnost i povjerenje. Temeljem pregleda istraživanja i evaluacije upravne participacije razmatra se njezina dvostrana vrijednosna priroda, intrinzična i instrumentalna, navode se njezine prednosti i nedostaci te se utvrđuju razlike između procesne i izlazne dimenzije participacije. Unatoč brojnim i kvalitetnim istraživanjima, učinci participacije još nisu sasvim razjašnjeni, upućujući na njihovu ovisnost o različitim kontekstualnim, naročito organizacijskim, čimbenicima. Temeljem toga se, na kraju, zaključuje o više konceptualnih i metodoloških pitanja za buduća istraživanja.

Ključne riječi: participacija, javna uprava, upravna participacija, tipovi i instrumenti participacije, evaluacija