



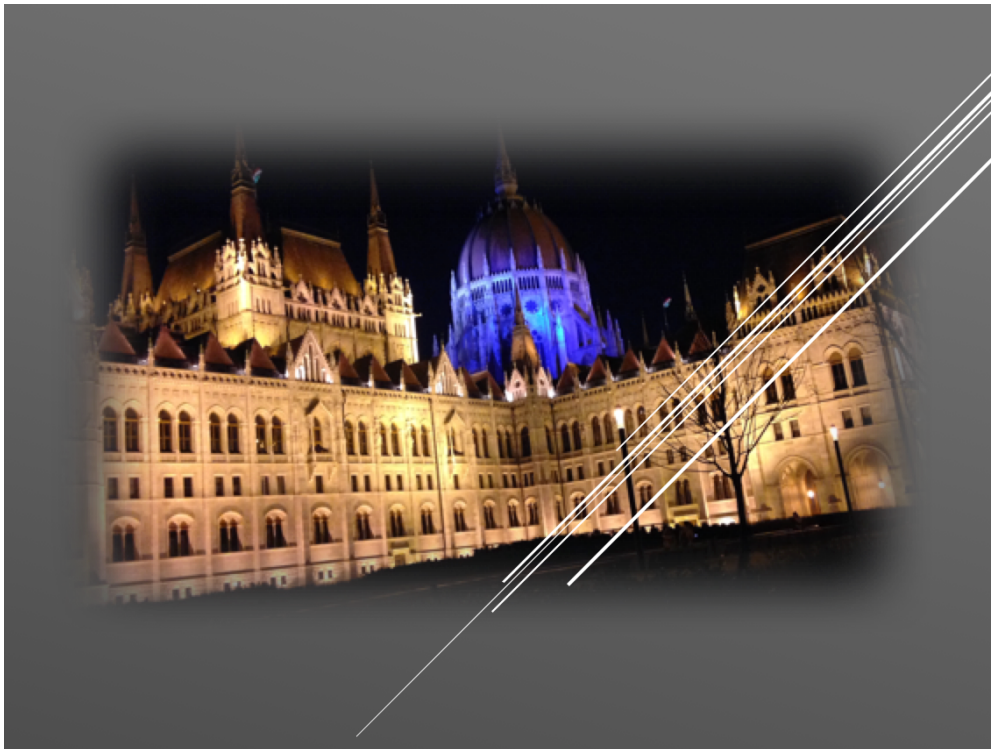
Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
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Water Management in Transition?

*Investigating the underlying reasons of low level of
public participation in water planning in Hungary*

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Department of Urban and Rural Development
Master's Thesis • 30 HEC
European Master in Environmental Science (EnvEuro)
Uppsala 2018

Water Management in Transition?

Investigating the underlying reasons of low level of public participation in water planning in Hungary

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Credits: 30 HEC

Level: Second cycle (A2E)

Course title: Independent Project in Environmental Science - Master's thesis

Course code: EX0431

Programme/Education: European Master in Environmental Science (EnvEuro)

Place of publication: Uppsala

Year of publication: 2018

Cover picture: House of Parliament Eliot Martin 2017

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Online publication: <http://stud.epsilon.slu.se>

Keywords: public participation, deliberative democracy, water planning, citizen dialogue

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Abstract

This thesis examines how the Water Framework Directive has been implemented in Hungary with a particular focus on public participation. Hungary with its heavily centralized water management is relatively new to deliberative approaches, so it is interesting to assess how the country is dealing with a piece of legislation, which requires decentralized steering during the making (planning, reviewing, updating) of the river basin management plans. The qualitative research was based on the semi-structured interviews to identify and explore the underlying reasons of the low level of participative potential in the country. During the investigations, the key concept of deliberative democracy served as a theoretical framework.

The main finding of the paper is that the participative and communicative processes during the implementation of the Directive are reduced to an elite of participants, deforming deliberative ideals and that the broader public is not even motivated to take a more significant role. It is argued that the establishment of institutions which are based on more deliberative foundations would be crucial for a more democratic water planning, as currently the efficiency and effectivity of social participation is strongly dependent on and limited by the national characteristics. The findings of this paper can be of interest to both Hungarian and non-Hungarian audiences, as it reflects the current democratic changes, which are happening in the polarized population of the EU.

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Introduction

*All the major problems which are not immediately economic
can only be resolved by the pressure of public opinion.
(Brigitte Bardot)*

In the last decades, not only professionals and environmental organizations but also the state administration bodies and the general public imposed a growing need for good quality of water. Only with joint efforts it is possible to reduce water pollution. The increasing public demand for clean water made it necessary for the European Commission to plan and introduce the Water Framework Directive (2000/60 / EC). In contrast with previous, more technocratic approaches, this Directive encourages participatory catchment management with community involvement. The Directive explicitly requests a role for the public. Information supply and public consultation under the Water Framework Directive Article 14 is mandatory, while active involvement is encouraged (European Commission 2000).

The success of the directive is heavily dependent on the participative potential of the country. The introduction of the WFD, made it necessary for Hungary, as a member state of the European Union to make a shift towards environmental governance, and not to exclude the public from the decision making.

Problem formulation

Despite this requirement, the government made a contract (signed in 2014 December, based on the Bill T/13628) with the Russian Rosatom Company, about a nuclear power plant capacity upgrade in Paks (Paks II), Hungary. The deal was made without informing the public about the planned development project, which will have serious environmental consequences on River Danube (Antal, 2017) (Greenpeace, 2015). Because of the upgrade of the power plant, thermal pollution can happen, as the heat load from the cooling water will be doubled, and it can cause

eutrophication (with the overgrowth of some warm water-loving species of algae, reducing the biological diversity of the water) (Greenpeace, 2015). The decision-making process about this project was characterized by the lack of transparency, and all the preparation and planning was carried out without real public participation (Antal,2017), though it was required not only by the WFD but by other legal instruments too (ESPOO Convention, Aarhus Convention).

There was only one public hearing in Hungary, on 7 May 2015, with previously submitted questions, and only a limited number of people could attend the event. This hearing failed to fulfil EIA requirements and the Aarhus specification (Greenpeace,2015). As Antal wrote:

“The situation is serious because the Hungarian Government imposes a huge financial, social and environmental burden not only on the present society but also the future generations. This is one of the greatest environmental and climate injustice case in the Hungarian history” (Antal, 2017).

To reduce the controversy, the legislative environment was reshaped by the government to avoid the necessity to inform the citizens and to make the deal legal (at a national level). There is a new act, Act VII of 2015 on Investment Related to the Maintenance of the Paks Nuclear Power Plant’s Capacity and Amendment of Concerning Acts. It stipulates that “in the case of extension of Paks Nuclear Power Plant, the legislator excludes the public. (Antal, 2016). Regardless the fact that this goes against European Directives (WFD, EIAS, SEAD). This case demonstrates that the Hungarian government can assert its priorities through legislative, regulatory instruments without public consultations (ibid).

Aim

Based on semi-structured interviews with ordinary citizens, and with professionals (who are familiar with this case of PaksII and with the characteristics of the Hungarian way of participative water management) a qualitative study was carried out in the form of a thesis.

The paper explores how participation is understood today in Hungary. How the people working with participatory processes make sense of the concept and compare their views with the thoughts of the general public. This way the national participative potential in water planning is examined.

<p>1st: Research question: What Hungarians think about public participation, how would they define it?</p> <p>Sub-question for ordinary citizens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can they provide arguments pro and contra?
<p>Objective - general understanding of public participation in a national context</p>

The findings of this investigation highlighted that even though serious efforts have been made during the first planning cycle of River Basin Management Plans (2007-2015) -required by the Directive-, the public had hardly any significant influence in improving the efficiency and legitimacy of the decision-making processes. During the making of the interviews, it became evident that participatory processes (supporting environmental decision making) left a lot to be desired.

Hungarians are unselfconscious in their freedom to get involved and often do not even know what is going on. Citizens still think that to have an opinion or to ask for information can mean that we have to choose a “wondrous road of broken glass.” This attitude not only affect water-related issues, but there are a general passivity and apathy in the whole society concerning fundamental environmental values. Therefore, the second research question was made to unpack the reasons further.

<p>2nd research question: What are the underlying reasons for the low level of public participation in Hungary?</p>
<p>Objective – To shed light on the deeply rooted reasons that block the way of the democratization of water management</p>

It turned out that bottom-up initiatives are rare in Hungary mainly because people do not take it granted that their needs can require a platform, providing space for meaningful discussions. Not like in other countries, where an idea that comes from an individual can change a whole plan (Waylen,2015). The role of ordinary citizens is usually underestimated. People can meaningfully participate and have the knowledge and resources to challenge the views of officials (who often estimate, and sometimes make assumptions based on little evidence). As Margerum put it: real life knowledge can “shake up existing patterns of political control” (Margerum, 2008).

This thesis brings us closer to have a fuller understanding of the real reasons why public participation in water management and governance is still cannot be a reality in Hungary. Concrete recommendations, how ground-level actions can be made, will be provided.

Structure of the thesis

The first chapter will contain the methodological and the theoretical part of the paper. The second chapter will provide a contextual background with two sub chapters explaining why social participation in the environmental decision making is essential in the broader context. The first sub chapter will introduce the relevant policy documents with a broad definition of public participation based on principle 10 of the Rio Declaration: fostering public awareness and participation in environmental decision. The second sub chapter will give an overview, about how different EU member states are dealing with the proposed paradigm shift towards environmental governance, presenting different “national know how-s,” how they implement the WFD. How the complexities and contradictions of the Directive were approached and embraced by the different national governments. It should be noted here, while other countries produced critical studies to discuss the practical level of the participatory processes during the implementation of the directive and the making of the RBMP-s, Hungary produced none. The fact that Hungary received little or no scholarly attention so far is evidenced in a contemporary article (Boeuf, 2016). Therefore, chapter three will focus on Hungary, as a case study. Raw results will be interpreted in the discussion chapter with the help of the theoretical framework, with a central accent on the concept of deliberative democracy, mainly based on the work of Jürgen Habermas, complemented with thoughts of other authors, who worked with Habermasian concepts and theories (Graham Smith, Bo Elling, Hans Wiklund).

1 Analytical Context

Method and Methodology

The thesis employed a mixed research design to reach its objective. The methodology was based on a policy analysis (I), on a literature review and mainly on semi-structured interviews (III). These main methods were complemented with some statistical data (to verify findings).

Policy analysis

A significant amount of material has been collected and analyzed to perform a content analysis. The review of relevant legal and policy documents happened at an early stage of the research to provide a knowledge base for further investigations.

Most relevant documents at a European Level

To be able to have a general overview I started with a content analysis of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) with its guidance documents. Annex II of the CIS provided several examples of public participation that became helpful during the data analysis phase and during the preparation for the interviews. International conventions were also reviewed for a fuller understanding. Beside the ESPOO Convention, Aarhus Convention became an important piece to work with, with a particular focus on its three pillars (access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision making, access to justice in environmental matters), and its theoretical conception about public participation (see Chapter 4). To explore how Hungary has

implemented the legally binding Water Framework Directive, the national Implementation report (of the WFD) was investigated. The same report of other member states was also the object of my assessment. Public participation was not so visible in the implementation reports (and there is no official obligation to make blueprint reports on public participation). Therefore, I complemented the findings with familiarizing myself with the content of critical scientific articles from selected EU Member States, written by scholars in the field of water management. I used those articles to broaden my perspective, to enhance the odds of a balanced critical overview, and to be able to identify general patterns (see chapter four). Later in the analysis, I contrasted the empirical results about Hungary with the findings of these articles about other member states.

National and local level

Narrowing down the scope, the focus was on national primary and secondary legislation together with the practices applied by administrative bodies. I wanted to find out to what extent they fulfil the legal and political obligations derived from the WFD or not. Investigating the legal environment for this ambitious Directive in Hungary was an essential step to be able to evaluate how suitable is the centralized administrative structure of the country for the decentralizing and participative aims of this legal piece and to prepare me for the interviews with professionals.

Finally, the case of Paks II (mentioned in the introduction) required the understanding of the Danube Regional Strategy by the EU Commission and to examine in detail the Environmental Impact Assessment Study of Paks II. To assess the quality of participative part of this impact assessment, I worked with the criteria of the EU Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC) and with the content of the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC), complemented with the aspects of the report of the European Environment Agency about public participation: contributing to better water management (No 3/2014). Also, archival documents were provided by NGO representatives (containing a transcript of the public hearing about PaksII and open letters and notes from experts from ENGO-s - Greenpeace and Energia Klub Hungary). NGO-s are a big part of the institutional dimension of public participation) helped me to gain some in-depth knowledge about certain problems in the region.

Theoretical review

The theoretical review consisted of the reading of selected books and articles. During the making of the paper different theories were used, as the complexity of the topic required it. Here is a thematic overview of the most important pieces.

Deliberative democracy

The idea of deliberative democracy will function as the main frame for the paper. It will help to investigate the nexus of the pluralistic ideal of deliberation and the current state of the Hungarian participatory methods and practices. In this regard, the concept of deliberative democracy will serve as a comparative tool to estimate the potential of the communicative power of the citizens in the environmental decision making in Hungary. The results of my empirical investigations (“how it is”) will be contrasted with the “ought to be” ideal. The theory of deliberative democracy will be reviewed in the next chapter, together with a concluding paragraph about why it fits the nature of my investigation. Here I would like to mention the most important books that helped me to shape my opinion about the about the concept:

- Bo Elling - Rationality and the Environment (2008),
- Jürgen Habermas - Communication and the Evolution of Society (1979),
- Jürgen Habermas - Between Facts and Norms (1996),
- Jürgen Habermas - The theory of communicative action (1984),
- Graham Smith - Deliberative Democracy (2003).

The following book chapters and articles provided even more food for thoughts for my research:

- Bo Elling - Rationality and effectiveness: does EIA/SEA treat them as synonyms?,
- Christian F. Rostbøll - Legitimacy and Democracy,
- Christian F. Rostbøll - Freedom of Expression, Deliberation, Autonomy and Respect,
- Hans P. Hansen & Helle N. Nielsen & Nadarajah Sriskandarajah - Recovering Multiple Rationalities for Public Deliberation within the EU Water Framework Directive,
- Hans Wiklund: In search of arenas for democratic deliberation: a Habermasian review of the environmental assessment.

All of these sources were used to have a better understanding of the Habermasian concept of deliberative democracy, and to be able to link it to environmental questions.

Additional concepts

These complementary tools were used to reduce the misinterpretations during the assessment. Their essence is also summarized in the next chapter.

- Culture: The book, called Meanings and Messages (2006), by Inger Askehave and Brigitte

Norlyk provided a practical and applicable knowledge about how to analyze the dimensions and the context of the national culture. Based on the instructions of this book I applied and made a frame about the Hungarian culture, using the theories of scholars like Geert Hofstede and Edward Hall. I will present the results of the application of these theories, summarized in two tables with comments in the next Chapter. These tables were used during the planning of the interviews and group investigations and during the analytical part of the research process.

- Levels of Participation: Like an unwritten rule, Arnstein's ladder was considered to estimate the level of the participation during the national implementation phases of WFD. Thus, Arnstein's concept was merged with the three pillars of the Aarhus Convention in a table which can be seen in the next chapter.

- Classification of participatory groups, based on the work of Richard D.

Margerum was considered during the making and evaluation of the research results.

Empirical Data

An essential phase of this qualitative research was to compile semi-structured interviews with key informants and ordinary citizens. A hermeneutic approach was chosen to be able to interpret the findings based on to face to face ground work. To be able to make sense of the given answers interviews were conducted in a "free flowing" manner to enhance the odds of reaching a more in-depth understanding and find underlying meanings through interpretation (Bernard, 2000).

Interviews with key informants

Interviews with key informants were conducted in a way that all these interviews remained flexible with its elements, as it was important to provide space for interviewees to be able to articulate their opinions freely (Seaberg, 1985). All of the interviews took at least an hour, in person or through Skype. It was a prerequisite for participants to show a high interest in environmental decision making, to compensate the small sample size. A total of nine interviews were made with Hungarian experts, and all of them has expertise or have been involved in some form of social participation in connection with the national implementation of the WFD (or the making of the River Basin Management Plans). Some of them professionally analyzed, others took active roles in the process before, representing either the governmental/administrative side, or the point of view of an educational institution, or an NGO (representing the civil society). A sensitive balance was created during the conversations to provide space for self-expression based on the interviewee's perspectives (ibid). I wanted their opinion and knowledge to appear. With this approach

the goal was to be able to reflect on issues of social inclusion in Hungary in connection with water management. I wanted to understand how these people with competence frame the topic, how they approach it, what kind of stories and examples they have about public participation. It was interesting to see how they interpreted the participatory requirements of the WFD and reflected upon the subject. I was interested how they see the role of the general public. Can we, ordinary citizens participate in the real planning process (especially in the famous case of Paks II)?.

The following table summarizes the interviewees, and I will reflect upon their thoughts later in the analysis section, based on this list and their respective numbers and occupation.

Interview number	Occupation
#1	Politician
#2	University professor - Sociologist
#3	Employee of the Ministry of the Environment
#4	University professor - Economist
#5	NGO Legal Expert
#6	NGO activist
#7	NGO politician
#8	Regional NGO expert
#9	Research NGO expert

Table 1. Interviews with Professionals

It was a purposive sampling procedure, though the sample size was small. The informant selection was carefully considered and planned (Seaberg, 1985).

Interviews with ordinary citizens

Public Participation can be interpreted differently that is why it was important to get to know what people think in an inductive way (Creswell, 2014). Interviews were flexible. There were no fixed questions, just relevant themes. Participants were free to express themselves.

Interviews were made with ordinary citizens, regardless their gender, age, and education.

Citizens from Paks number	Informed about PP in connection with the WFD	Not informed about PP in connection with the WFD
	10	14

Table 2. Interview with citizens of Paks

The results of this group of interviews were later compared with the professional answers provided by the key informants. Even at the phase of pilot testing it became clear that the biggest problem is that people are not interested and motivated at all

in public participation. Even when they were open for a discussion, their lack of interest in water management and participation itself was evident. This phenomenon is not easily measurable through a survey, but it was identifiable during these interviews. Ilonszki wrote almost three decades ago that the most damaging to public participation “is the prevailing culture of public quiescence and cynicism regarding the ability of the public to impact government policy.” (Ilonszki, 1990). Unfortunately, this statement is still true today based on the findings of this study. To be able to make sense out of this experience I started to ask more general questions about participation and democracy. It was a useful idea to operate with different type of questions (leading questions, alternative questions, sharp-angled questions, information gathering questions). Results were complemented with secondary data (where researchers worked with more significant sample size and with more objective measures).

Group Discussions

The use of group discussions had the purpose to help to complement the findings of the interviews. Also, it filtered potential errors out of my understanding. It was interesting to see the development of social opinions, as it helped me to envision how these actors would interact in participatory workshops (or at other deliberative arenas).

The focus groups consisted of 6-7 people. All of them were local people from Paks.

- People with extensive knowledge about the planned capacity upgrade
- Concerned about social/cultural/scientific/economic/ecological aspects
- Different political views
- Different income
- Different educational background
- Age, gender
- A “guest professional” – potential opinion leader

The relevance to investigate of how respective viewpoints are shaped by the ongoing interaction and discourses (representing lifeworld) was high. Through participant observation this type of method functioned as an interpretive technique (Creswell, 2014). The interactive dimension of the focus group investigation resonated quite well with the theoretical framework of deliberative democracy.

Statistical data

Statistical data, as secondary data, was used to discover what kind of picture do citizens have about their national democracy. The primary aim of this approach was to complement my findings with bigger sample size with more generalizable results.

I would like to highlight two sources I used.

- First, the Environmental Democracy Index by the World Resources Institute. This Index provided a broad frame.
- Second, and more importantly, the European Social Survey of Hungary from 2013 provided information about the political values and attitudes of citizens about democracy in Hungary. I could apply these data to my other findings. Moreover, in this case, the sample size of the survey was 1500-2000 people.

Overall remarks on methods applied

Altogether it can be said about the empirical findings of this research that these results could have been improved with a more prominent sample size. However, I tried to compensate the small number of participants with right interpretations and complementary methods. Having a pilot testing phase provided a possibility to correct deficiencies, reduce problems and overcome barriers. It became necessary to slightly shape and change the research based on the findings. That is why investigations finally had two levels:

- (A) views about the PaksII project (participation in practice) and
- (B) about participation more generally.

The most valid arguments were collected from the interviews with key informants, but these results must have been treated with care. There is a limitation of choosing scientific and social science experts as approximations of the public interest. It was considered that the general public rarely has the same knowledge as professionals.

The concept of democracy and culture was difficult to operationalize and measure as they are strongly interlinked. The scientific knowledge of the professional respondents helped to understand the present systems, problems, reasons, trends. I “borrowed their expertise” from their respective fields. With doing this, different viewpoints (environmental, economic, scientific, political) were represented in the mix.

In my conclusion I relied on critical common sense. I used the ordinary public as validation when I linked back the findings of my paper to the deliberative ideal.

The scope of the study.

This study was conducted in Hungary. Citizen interviews and focus group investigations were held in Paks, Hungary, which belongs to the Danube River Basin. The time scale of the thesis was given, it lasted 20 weeks (involving the two weeks of pilot testing). Making the interviews took two months, while focus groups investigations were planned for three weeks and conducted in 2 days. Information exchange with representatives of governmental institutions and NGOs were continuous throughout the whole process.

<i>Objective achieved with interviews</i>	<i>To identify the dimensions of PP and to collect pros and cons To identify possibilities and barriers to develop water planning</i>
<i>Objective achieved with focus groups</i>	<i>To complement findings</i>
<i>Objective achieved with literature review</i>	<i>For context setting, to gain applicable knowledge, be able to critically reflect on results</i>
<i>Objective achieved with own arguments</i>	<i>Synthesis of findings</i>

Table 3. Objectives

The Method of policy analysis highlighted the importance and necessity to investigate public participation on a more practical level and provided me with assumptions about what kind of efforts have been made or have been missed so far to include the wider public in the planning process.

Most of the participants asked for anonymity (and even asked me to sign confidentiality forms). Therefore, I decided to identify them based on their education, and job. Each time when it was possible I recorded the interviews, to be able to analyse the text (transcript) afterward. Certain interviewees did not agree to make recordings, so I made notes during and after the discussion. I will use some excerpts from these interviews or notes during the discussion chapter.

During the evaluation the results of the interviews, I combined content analysis with interpretive analysis. I put together all the gathered data and checked out the

different type of people and topics. Typed all my notes into the computer and searched for keywords, how much they were mentioned, and check out the context of them. Searching for similarities or conflicting reasoning. Several themes emerged, but I only focused on the ones with the most robust narratives during the final analysis. Also, individual perceptions about problems and possibilities gave richness to the results.

With the help of my notes and impressions, I tried to expose myself to the results, trying to evaluate the validity of my small set of data and label the outcome. Based on the recommendation of the book of `Miljökommunikation` by L. Hallgren, L & M. Ljung (2005) I kept a diary, a journal to make notes about of all the communicative situations that happened. About how their perception of what is morally right or wrong differed in case of every people. It was important to make notes about their reactions, besides their answers (ibid). Later it gave me the possibility to read it from a distance, and I could become more objective in my understanding about what happened (ibid). After I completed these interviews I decided that even my preconceptions can help me to use a `double hermeneutic approach`. I can investigate through my own experiences too (as I share culture and history with the respondents, I know the national characteristics and the complex interplay of national politics). After all, I am a Hungarian citizen too. My “insider knowledge” helped me to uncover present value judgments and to identify which of the “subjective” results are meaningful, and decode them. That way it was easier to group thoughts and develop themes.

Challenge

The main challenge of this research emerged during the pilot testing phase. It became clear that the idea of deliberation should be the main focus and the guiding principle of this thesis. People were far more concerned about the lack of meaningful democracy (they highlighted the national democratic deficit) than anything else. `Politics` was impossible to exclude from the research equation. It was the most commonly used word that people were repeating.

Another limit was the data availability. Survey statistics about the Hungarian democracy, and about the democratic deficit are not up to date. The last ESS results are from 2013, despite the fact that it should have been published in every two years. There's no update.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework employed in this paper contains a variety of concepts. In the first part theories about deliberative democracy will be introduced and summarized based on the selected literature. The second part will provide tools to investigate the cultural characteristics of the country, considering both the functionalist and the interpretivist approach.

The Habermasian idea of Deliberative Democracy

The Habermasian idea of deliberative democracy has been chosen to frame the findings of the thesis and to highlight the importance of bringing people into the conversation about environmental decision making. The main idea of deliberative democracy lies in the concept of discursive action (Habermas, 1984). In discursive action arguments are tested continuously to find the best possible solution for the common good with the “forceless force of the better argument.” (Habermas, 1975: 108).“ By applying a set of guiding principles (the so-called ‘discourse ethics’) every citizen should have access and opportunity to participate, equally (ibid). The Discourse ethics also implies that all participants must be open to listen and have the willingness to consider the opinion of the others. To form a “we-perspective” (Rostbøll, 2011). The discursive action should be a circular process with constant feedback, not just a one-way transmission (Habermas,1984). Beside active involvement, it requires a particular competence (Elling, 2008) from the participants with the ability to provide relevant and accurate information defending their viewpoints.

The deliberative ideal has the potential to have strong procedural legitimacy, because according to this approach, decisions must be made by those who will be affected by the outcome (ibid) (Rasmussen 1994). That is why participants must consider the final result acceptable and the evidence convincing and justifiable. This acceptability will enhance the odds of enforceability. Habermas wrote that legitimate decisions based on these cooperative planning acts would result in more just decisions (Habermas, 1996b). Another essential requirement during the rational discourse is to fully avoid coercion, lies and the abuse of power (Habermas, 1984). Results must be free from these dominating forces, as the agreement cannot be the product of “deception, manipulation, fear or another form of domination” (Rostbøll, 2013). The role of rational dialogue is important for Habermas, who would like to preserve and defend the ideals of the Enlightenment (equality, liberty, and fraternity) to be able to keep the continuity of the primary purpose of his ideal of deliberative democracy (Habermas, 1984).

With aiming for mutual understanding through transparent communication the Habermasian approach is a compelling democratic theory which requires deliberative forums for the process itself. If we adapt it to the river basin management planning, ideally issues should be raised at a local level (lowest possible level) and be validated by all the attendants. If an issue is considered to be significant, then it would be distributed throughout the public sphere, moving through networks (discussed, contested, completed in public forums), obtaining further discursive validation. The issue will be tested many times through different lenses and the three levels of decision making (Margerum, 2008). In its final form the issue (or argument or idea) which was raised by an individual will belong to the public as it was filtered, formed by the public (Habermas, 1992)(Smith, 2003). What can also be relevant in connection to the river basin management planning is that deliberative democracy seems to offer an approach which can be compared to social learning, as it provides space for learning during the participatory public debates (Elling, 2008).

“Deliberation offers the conditions under which actors can widen their own limited and fallible perspectives by drawing on each other’s knowledge, experience, and capabilities.” (Dryzek, 2005)

There is a given opportunity for everyone to offer their knowledge or to frame certain information in a way that it becomes convincing for others. The constant need to articulate our reasoning can be the source of education too because it becomes important to develop our communicative skills. Also, the feeling of “community” will be stronger. The chance to feel for the other (to walk in their shoes) will enhance the level of solidarity within the society (ibid). During open debates to consider values becomes necessary to be able to create a joint meaning (standards of the members of the society will be reflected in the outcome).

If we would like to position deliberative democracy among the current democratic models, we would probably locate it between direct democracy and representative democracy.

Paradigm	Democracy	Distinguishing features	Type
Representative	Constitutional model	Liberalism, Political elite, Passive citizens, Protection of individual rights	Vertical
	Preference aggregating model		
Direct	Participative model	Republicanism Conservatism	Horizontal
Direct	Direct Model	Common good, Active citizens	

Table 4. Democratic Models (own made)

While direct democracy would like to operate with an unachievably big arena with too many participants, representative democracy works with great distances between the representatives and represented (Habermas, 1996). For Habermas the core of the democracy is discourse (conversation) and it denies the idea of the utilitarian approach. He thinks that legitimacy can be only given to those decisions that were made through debates that were open for everyone and where free speech was guaranteed (Habermas, 1984). There is an accent on transparency.

Creating meaningful conversations and dialogues among the citizens is crucial to create a shared understanding of the given problem. To find out the best available solution collective action is needed. Action that is based on individual arguments (ibid). Habermas tried to incorporate the best liberal and republican tradition in his concept. He states that private and public autonomy mutually presuppose each other in such a way that neither human rights (Kant) nor popular sovereignty (Rousseau) can claim primacy over its counterparts (ibid) (Elling, 2008). He does not promote a purely procedural or purely substantive way. It is indicated that there is a possibility to combine both these principles (Elling, 2008). A deliberative approach should not necessarily disregard all the realities of representative democracy, but it can be a solution to the “imbalance between the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of democracy” (Hansen, Von Essen, Sriskandarajah, 2016).

As formulated by Elling, the importance of using the concept of deliberative democracy lies in the fact that representative democracy rarely provides a possibility for environmental feedbacks from the public (Elling, 2008).

“...criteria for testing the validity of statements exist implicitly in every situation where dialogue takes place...” (Elling, 2008, page 33).

The absence of such dialogue between policy makers and the public is a serious problem in case of river basin management planning. Habermas identified deliberation as an ‘attitude toward social cooperation’. If we apply this way of thinking we can see that the lack of (environmental) feedback can block the way of social learning (disregarding the diversity of voices) and result in the discontinuity of the planned developments throughout the planning cycles of the River Basin Management Planning (promoted by the Water Framework Directive).

The practical dimension of the Habermasian concept

Habermas considered law as an instrument which represents the social integration based on discursive agreements (Habermas, 1984). Rules and laws have their legitimacy based on the fact that citizens “self-determined” them and applied these rules to themselves. (Habermas 1984)

To Habermas law is a coercive instrument (Rasmussen, 1994).

“... the condition for the possibility of its coercive implementation is that it is valid.” (Rasmussen, 1994).

Once a deliberative idea is institutionalized, we have to treat it with respect. All those countries that signed the Aarhus Convention should accept and apply its requirements. This is how Bo Elling summarized the aim of the Aarhus Convention during the Danish implementation conference in 1999:

“If politicians and not least administrators and planners fail to understand that the Convention should be used to give the public a de facto influence on the decisions taken, and thus change the intended decision-making process at all levels, then the aims of the Convention will have been negated. The process will have become manipulative and create the impression of influence rather than a more democratic decision-making process.” (Elling 1999b, pp9 18.)

These words highlight the necessity to democratize the process of environmental decision making in the modern world. For Elling, both the instrumental and communicative rationality in environmental assessments can be used jointly (Elling, 2008). EIA alone is just a tool that can be applied by experts based on pure technocratic knowledge, but often it should include a relevant communicative dimension too (not reduced to pure technicalities). Nowadays EIAs should not just aim for an end anymore. They can function as procedures with an aim to include the public in the mix, providing space for development. This reflects the Habermasian thinking, where the accent is on the procedure not on the final objective. As Smith formulate it:

“A decision implies the end of a discursive process. However, deliberation is, in principle, ongoing: excepting universal consensus, there is no obvious end-point to the process of mutual understanding, reasoned dialogue, persuasion, and judgment.” (Smith, 2003 page 73)

It is important to mention that according to Elling there is no perfect balance among Social, cultural, scientific or economic perspectives. These factors should be considered in every single situation differently, assessing which is the best approach in that concrete case. There are not two identical cases. Consultation with the public with the concerned and interested parties should aim for a shared understanding of the different factors that can lead to a decision. Moreover, it should be acceptable to

all of them (Elling, 2008). The aim should be to construct a decision in which the involvement of different voices is guaranteed, letting the things we value be articulated. Understand why these values are important from a common sense. This approach is more democratic and trusts worthy than asking for individual preferences in surveys (ibid). Because in a deliberative debate arguments can be measured more correctly (in a given context) and they are transparent. Well-argued preferences can highlight or question attitudes to natural scientific assessments of risk, based on the current knowledge and the current understanding of risk (Elling, 2008). Adding to this, deliberative debates can function as control tools and check mechanisms.

With the essence of these considerations about deliberative democracy in mind it is possible to identify and investigate barriers of deliberative citizens participation in the country. To assess the current level of participation and compare it to the ideal of the deliberative model.

Culture

For the relevance of my investigations conceptualizing culture can be a tool to understand norms and values of a society better. Culture can be viewed as a synonym of civilization. (Norlyk & Askehave, 2006). Traditionally water resource management was considered to be an area dominated by technicalities (technology based), but then it started to change with a shift towards a more integrated approach in which values, human attitudes became an integral part of the process (Pahl-Wostl, 2007).

I draw from Norlyk and Askehave when I outline culture as a shared human behaviour with a silent consensus about the rules of living, based on what people at an individual community learned, experienced and based on how they defined themselves and their values through socialization (Norlyk & Askehave, 2006). It is a natural process and there are two classic ways to look at it. From a functionalist or an interpretive point of view (ibid).

The functionalist point of view represents a positivist approach, placing logic in the center of attention. Functionalists also can be called framework theorists because they make patterns based on the geographical regions. They do believe that there are specific common values per nation. We may say that human relations are never easy like that. Of course, they are not, but we cannot deny the fact that it is good to be aware of the dominant features of a nation. Not to fully identify someone with his or her nationality but to use it as a map. Not to predict the outcome, but to prepare for certain things that can likely to happen. When planning a multilateral meeting

(Danube level, EU level) it is useful to have some basic knowledge about the traditions of the participating countries. It is a chance to avoid mistakes and possible noise (in the communication) which can arise from major differences.

It is good to have an idea about specific and predictable patterns of behaviour, but never fully associate people with the place they come from. This approach is a generalized tool. Useful to have a basic understanding of the values of a particular culture. It was highlighted in the paper by Pahl-Wostl that this way of evaluating a society, is a seemingly correct way, as empirical evidence proved it (Pahl-Wostl, 2007).

Using Geert Hofstede's (Dutch researcher) dimensions as a framework the "collective mental programming of" the Hungarian people were identified, using the given indicators. The following results as pre-estimations were used as a complementary tool during the analysis.

Dimensions	Description of dimensions	Hungarian results
PDI Power Distance Index	it shows the degree of equality/ inequality in the country – among people	high power distance with deep rooted set of norms, importance of hierarchy, indirectness, politeness, respect, formality, strictness *
IDV Individualism Index	indicate whether there is a high importance of individualism or collectivism	individualism – interpretation of relationships and family is limited to the nearest work relations, and to the nuclear family
MAS Masculinity versus Femininity	shows the degree of reinforcement in the society, meaning to assess the role of power and control.	hard values, masculine value orientation, highly competitive atmosphere
UAI Uncertainty Avoidance Index	measure the tolerance level towards uncertainty within the given society.	high uncertainty avoidance – important role of: structure, rules, regulations, formalities; people and employees need strict control to avoid inefficiency long term orientation – importance of tradition and long term commitments **

* It was recognized by Hofstede that societies with high power distance "usually being characterized by nepotism and by making bilateral deals"(Norlyk & Askehave, 2006).

** Change and innovation is often considered and perceived as threat in countries with high UAI.

That is why in a country like Hungary, the government must have a focus on reducing uncertainty (not encrypting contracts with other countries) and provide proper information for the wider public (Norlyk & Askehave, 2006).

Analyzing a country like this (together with historical, political, economic, scientific considerations) can help us understand why the level of participation is low in the country.

To promote deliberative techniques, it can be useful to appeal to past and present values of citizens (ibid). As Clifford Geertz said, we can assume reactions in a given context. (Norlyk & Askehave, 2006). This following short context analysis based on Edward Hall American anthropologist's concept of context can be used together with the previous investigations.

Hungary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is a high context country
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● with formal, roundabout manners in the communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● with implicit discursions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● with non-direct approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● with a highly coded communication style

Table 5. Culture – (own made, based on the book of Meanings and Messages)

This analytical approach to context analysis helped me during the interpretive analysis of my findings, but there are also limitations to consider. As mentioned, we are not only the product of our nationality. Our characteristics vary. Generalization can lead to misunderstandings or towards a biased set of assumptions, like the concept Ethnocentrism. It is a radical version of the functionalist approach. We prefer to think that our norms are right because we were socialized a certain way, but our values and worldview and habits are not better than others'. Just different (Norlyk & Askehave, 2006). It is something we should keep in mind.

An interpretive approach is an alternative approach to the functionalist approach. This one avoids stereotyping, ethnocentric value judgments. It does not build on seemingly fixed features and facts (ibid). It based on the idea that behaviours can be modified. Change is inevitable. If we add meaning to our message it can conquer traditional strictness and create a deeper understanding of each other. That is how we can modify the simple transmission into a circular process (ibid). Based on the interpretive approach we can make a fusion of horizons. Unique worldviews have common grounds, that is why they can meet. After all, people usually want the same things. There is always a chance to “meet” and debate and negotiate. We should learn to express what we want. In this theory, we can have an impact during the interaction (there is a space for influencing tools, like nudging). Here we can use cultural differences (as productive sources of valuable input). They are not necessarily obstacles - we can learn and profit from them (ibid). This approach has a connection with the deliberative ideal. There is a necessity not to rely on one-way

communication and “routine monologues”. We should be present in the communicative situation and provide strong arguments (based on shared interests). An agreement will only last if all perspectives were considered. Under values, I understand:

*“Beliefs, either individual or social, about what is important in life and thus about the ends or objectives which should govern and shape public policies”
(21st report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, 1998).*

With the assumption that cultural frames are in correlation with my other findings I included these frames (and tables) to decode ideas and ideals of people, which can manifest into norms and routines over time and become social practice (which cannot be ignored during the investigation of participatory methods). Societal, cultural perspectives are necessarily crucial in river basin management plans, as the boundaries are not based on country borders (but on river basins). Different countries with entirely different cultural backgrounds have to work together, like in case of the management of the Danube river basin.

Additional tools:

Arnstein’s ladder

Arnstein created the ladder of participation in 1969 with the typology of eight levels of participation starting with non-participative phases (with expressing the passivity of citizens) to the more active phases in which citizen control is higher. Arnstein considers the “informing” phase crucial, as it is the basis of the legitimacy of civic participation. Without information it is impossible to participate in any decision making process (Arnstein, 1969). Here is a figure in which Arnstein’s ladder is merged with the three principal ways of participation based on the Water Framework Directive (information supply, consultation, active involvement).

Arnstein’s ladder

Three levels of public participation,
(WFD Guidance document no 8)

Citizen Control	Active Involvement
Delegated Power	
Partnership	
Placcation	Consultation
Consultation	
Informing	Information Supply
Therapy	
Manipulation	

Table 6. ‘Own model after Arnstein, 1969’

Arnstein's ladder was complemented with additional elements in 1994 by Burns, Hambleton, and Hogget. Their ladder of citizen empowerment consists of 12 rungs instead of 8, from civil hype to independent control. (Burns, Hambleton & Hogget, 1994). The main difference is that they considered partnership as participation (not as citizen control like Arnstein). In their view the partnership does not necessarily mean that citizens have the final say in decision making itself, but rather that they have advanced communicative and collaborative power in their hands (ibid).

Margerum: level is of decision making

Margerum made a classification of levels of decision making, where the first level is the policy level, with a focus on government legislation, policies, and rules (Margerum, 2008). The second level is the organizational level with a focus on the policies and the programs of organizations (mainly governmental agencies, but NGO-s are also involved) (ibid). The third level is the operational or action level with “on the ground” direct activities, like monitoring, education, and restoration included (ibid).

1 - Policy level
2 - Organizational level
3 - Operational level

Table 7. Levels of decision making

Vertical and Horizontal dimension of democracy

The concept of a Vertical and Horizontal dimension of democracy (Hansen, Von Essen, Sriskandarajah, 2016) was considered to and examine the barrier of deliberative participation in the country.

Based on the collected primary and secondary data, there is a thin democracy in Hungary.

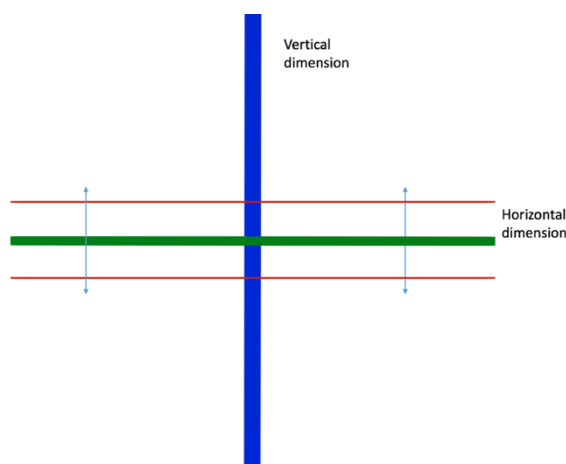


Figure 1. Dimensions of democracy (own made)

To change this thin democracy into a strong democracy a more deliberative approach with stronger participative aim would be necessary, which is not limited to representatives. It would mean a broader horizontal dimension (indicated with red lines). In this strong democracy, there would be arenas open for citizens to debate about the important aspect of their life. Such debates can provoke or support social learning processes in which citizens can educate each other through knowledge exchange. That is the only way the existing reality can be changed with a positive impact on the horizontal dimension.

Societal Context of Public Participation

Main Policy documents

Rio Earth Summit

From the nineties there have been significant moves towards increased public participation in many different areas of environmental decision making. Participation can take the form of the election of politicians (with the principle of democratic accountability) or more direct ways of participation, like consultation (including the local levels, where individual planning has relevance) or with the availability of judicial review remedies for people with sufficient interest. To improve the quality of participation there have been moves towards encouraging people to participate. The Rio Earth Summit produced Agenda 21 (which is essentially a lengthy blueprint - soft law document) to realize sustainable development, with attention to the recommendations of the Brundtland Report (the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development 1987 – Our Common Future) and to promote greater public involvement in decision making. The Brundtland Report previously stressed that there is a need for:

“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

This concept of sustainable development builds heavily on public participation, because it has a focus on fairness and justice. It highlights the importance to acknowledge the globalization of various crises and the connection among the different sectors. The UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio in 1992 provided an opportunity to flesh out the concept of sustainable development

in the environmental law, and address the concern of the importance of public participation, which is recognized in Principle 10 (Fostering public awareness and participation in the environmental decision):

“Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.” (Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, June 1992)

Aarhus Convention

This basic principle (Principle 10) was evidenced and reinforced by the Aarhus Convention (on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental issues) in the EU in 1998. This convention has three pillars to promote public participation. These pillars are access to environmental information (I), public participation in environmental decision making (II), access to justice in environmental matters (III). The first pillar of the convention promotes access to environmental information by the public, which covers both the reactive supply (based on request) of information (usually with a time frame) and the active dissemination of environmental information (creating a positive obligation for relevant authorities). The main aim of the first Pillar is to make environmental information freely available and enhance the role of the public in environmental decision making. The public needs a well-informed basis to be able to meaningfully participate. As Jamie Redford said, (co-founder and board chair of Redford Center):

“...you cannot care if you do not know.” (Robert Redford, 2017)

The second pillar promotes increased public participation, where the accent is on the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. It requires a transparent and fair framework for decisions, like for the planning (already in the preparation phase) of river basin management plans (which is closely related to the Programmes of Measures too). The Third pillar about the access to justice on environmental matters raises another question: - Do the public have the right to challenge decisions? It will be investigated in the case study with relevance to Hungary. This convention alone is relatively weak to have a serious impact on participative matters in relation

with the making of river basin management plans, but together with the European Community legislation (e.g., Water Framework Directive) and appropriate national legislation it can be complemented, become stronger and more effective on a domestic and local level.

Water Framework Directive

In the area of water management, the key legal instrument behind of participatory processes is the Water Framework Directive, which gives the legal foundation for participative actions and requirements. Article 14 of the Directive separates the three main forms of public involvement. These forms are active involvement, consultations and information services. These are the levels of participation. Article 14 states that the Member States shall promote to involve all stakeholders in meeting the requirements of the Framework Directive, in particular in the preparation, revision, and modernization of river basin management plans, which improves the transparency of these steps and the whole implementation process.

By the provisions of Article 14, the first basic requirement is information supply. Based on this the society must be adequately informed about water-related issues. This obligation of the administrative authorities shall contain not just the general information (about a planned project), but they shall inform the citizens about the purpose and the necessity of their provisions. The aim is to develop the awareness and the environmental consciousness of society. Water management issues are affected by professional and civic organizations, business organizations and residents of the region. They should be provided with detailed information.

Consulting opportunities are required based on the second level of participation. It can happen in the form of a forum, where participants and interested parties can exchange information (which shape their opinion) and have in-depth discussions. Consultation is also a minimum requirement, just like information supply (based on article 14). However, to attain the goals, the involvement of the public should not be merely reduced to these two levels. Informing and informing through consultation is only a one-way communication. Which can be illustrated with the help of the classic communication model of Shannon-Weaver model (see below) (Shannon-Weaver, 1949).

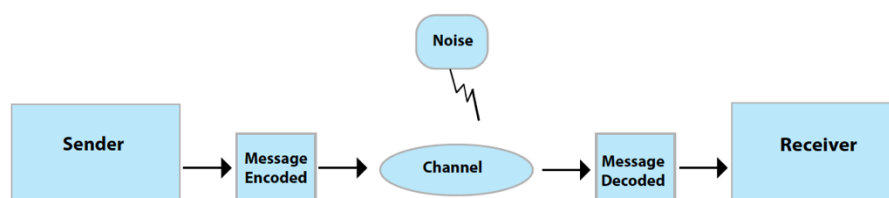


Figure 2. (Moore, 2013) *Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, The Mathematical Theory of Communication

In this case, it can be seen that responses from the public (receiver) are not used. But if we consider the developed version of this model (developed Warren Weaver) which includes a feedback loop (see below), the one-way (linear) progress will become a circular (interpersonal) process. In this way public input can reach the relevant authorities.

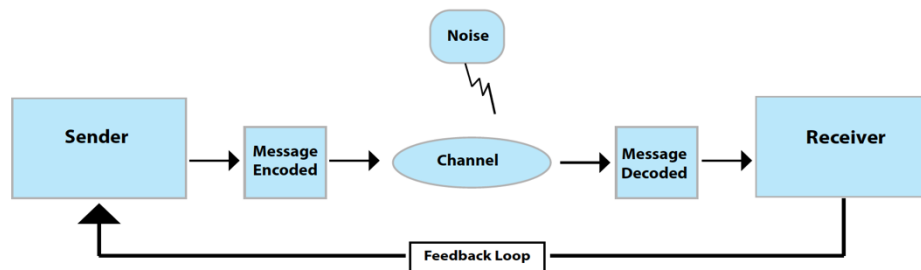


Figure 3. (Moore, 2013) *Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, The Mathematical Theory of Communication

With this classic model of communication, the importance of active involvement can be illustrated, because in case of active involvement the receivers (citizens) can have an influence on the process (based on their approach, opinions, ideas, and observations). To create space for communicative action, the meaningful involvement of the wider public in environmental decision making is a crucial task. Especially, as the increasing complexity of environmental legislation is outstripping the ability of the basic administrative structures to address all the water-related issues that we face. Often, the existing instruments are not flexible enough to cover all the aspects of the issues in which water is a central element (e.g., agriculture). The overlapping controls of different sectors require a case related approach in river basin management planning. Mobilizing the citizens for the sake of the quality and quantity of their waters is a shared responsibility of the public and private sector.

As one of the main goals of this paper is to construct a fuller understanding of public participation, therefore a basic definition of the concept is provided here drawing from Creighton. According to him “public participation is

“the process by which public concerns, needs, and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decision making. It is two-way communication and interaction, with the overall goal of better decisions that are supported by the public” (Creighton, 2005, page 7).

The fact that active involvement is not a minimum requirement (based on article 14) should be highlighted, as it only has to be “encouraged,” not “ensured” (like information supply and consultation). Relevant authorities are relatively free to decide upon how much they actively involve the public in their decision-making processes during the implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

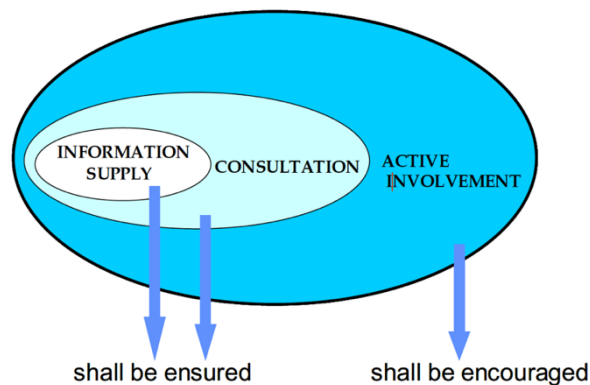


Figure 4: Requirements of Article 14 (Guidance document no 8 - CIS Working Group 2.9, 2003)

Although the Directive does not require active involvement, the Guidance Document (no 8) shows how active involvement can be beneficial for reaching the objectives of the Directive. Active involvement of the citizens can result in better decisions, as more perspectives (local knowledge) can be involved in the outcomes. It can raise the level of legitimacy and increase the support from the wider public.

Active involvement can improve the collective power. Discussing diverse opinions allow us to take in more information and therefore see a wider range of solutions to the problems. Bottom-up approaches can help us to consider competing values and to incorporate common values in local planning projects. A consensus can be reached in a transparent way, where the outcome will be justified by all the parties who took part in the discussions. The concept of environmental citizenship can be understood as a responsibility that individuals take for their actions (interaction with the environment). Today this responsibility is bigger than ever, including the necessity to go after our interests and be active. To promote this view, we need participative techniques with the function to raise awareness about environmental issues. Beside review mechanisms (consultations) there is a need and space for more deliberation. To empower, mobilize and educate the public.

From a Habermasian perspective the Directive together with the Guidance Document (number 8) is in line with the concept of deliberation and discourse ethics. Member States have the responsibility to decide whether or not they follow these suggestions of the Guidance Document or not.

If they follow the suggestions public participation will have a key importance in their water planning. National governments and authorities can enable and encourage their citizens to get involved in decision making.

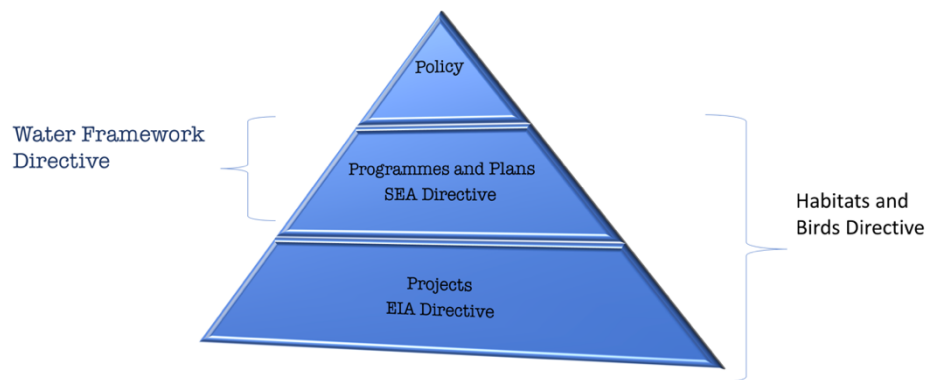


Figure 5. Policy Pyramid (European Commission – Environment)

Here you can see that the WFD is positioned in the middle level of the policy pyramid and it is dependent on the national policy and closely interlinked with the SEA and EIA Directive (Carter 2005). These levels are quite similar to the levels identified by Margerum. During the making of River Basin Management Plans consultations are required by these Directives. Harmonizing these activities can be cost reducing and enhance efficiency (Carter 2005).

An Overlook at the European level – some examples

This chapter provides a selection of European examples about how different member states approached the task to implement the Water Framework Directive and to fulfil the participatory requirements. Paying close attention to what some of the other member states have done so far would help us to assess the Hungarian efforts.

EU – A land of shared waters

Investigating the implementation processes, it is essential to consider that the European Union has the characteristics of a federal state and the characteristics of a collection of separate sovereign member states at the same time (Fishkin, 2009). To reduce the complexity emerged from this duality, member states have relative freedom (discretion) to choose the best possible solution (selecting methods tailored to the national conditions) to realize participative ideals themselves. Moreover, often they choose entirely different paths. Countries were selected to present these differences. Denmark, Sweden, France, and Netherlands were chosen because the available literature provided detailed information about these.

Denmark

The participative approach of Denmark can be described as a top-down, centralized approach (Nielsen, H.; Hansen H. P. & Sriskandarajah N., 2016). The state plays the central role in the implementation of the directive, responsible for the making of the water plans. Four river basin districts were established in the country with 23 main catchment areas. Municipalities had the task to implement the plans at local levels (the number of the existing municipalities were reduced to ninety-eight from two hundred and seventy) (Wright, 2011). Water and Nature Councils were established to provide a link between the state and the municipalities (ibid), and they held approximately one-three meetings per each (during the first cycle) (Wright, 2011).

While in other countries (like the Netherlands) most of the water bodies were classified as heavily modified in Denmark. Only ten percent heavily modified water bodies were reported (according to the Danish National Blueprint report), which means high ambitions.

In contrast with the high ecological ambitions, the involvement of the public was limited in the country and there was a general lack of active participation (Wright, 2011).

In Denmark, the main form of participation were public hearings, in which ordinary citizens could participate. Because of the politicized atmosphere and the bureaucratic confusion, the flow of the water planning process became fragmented, and River Basin Management plans were delayed (Nielsen, Hansen, Sriskandarajah, 2016). It happened because during the first phase too many comments arrived from the hearings. It can be considered as criticism, or as the sign of a functioning democratic society. What is noteworthy, that these comments mostly originated from organized interests (Wright,2011). Plans were revised and a second hearing took place. However, the second hearing (supplementary 10-day long) was too short and it was declared invalid by EU. It became necessary to repeat it and provide the required six months long period for the public to comment (Nielsen, Hansen, Sriskandarajah, 2016)(Wright,2011). The Danish plans were only implemented by the end of 2014. With this delay in the time plan, Denmark was one of the eight MS that did not publish the River Basin Management Plan in time (Kampa et al. 2009).

While countries like Poland used wide range of tools (27 tools, e.g. like websites, campaigns, radio spots, newspaper articles, meetings in town halls to mobilize the citizens), Denmark only used seven types of these tools to enhance the success of public involvement (Kampa et al. (2009:12) (Jager).

Additionally, it is important to mention that the agricultural needs also had a relevant impact on the river basin planning in the country. A governmental committee, called Green Growth was established, to create a dialogue between the representatives of the agricultural production and the environmentalists. The Danish AG-WAPLAN – emerged to involve farmers in the planning and to jointly decide upon measures about diffuse nutrient pollution reduction (Wright,2011). Pros political decision (ibid). A difficult one. Because it is not possible to drastically reduce agricultural activities for water quality matters, and to push externalities from one sector to the other (to ban most of the agricultural activities and import from countries outside EU instead).

In short, high ambitions in Denmark meant a costly way to make the first plans, especially so that participation had no real function to form or affect the goals. According to Wright and the national blueprint report of the country, the outcome of the participative processes had little or no visible influence on the final plans. The Danish example shows that half solutions are not enough, as they do not worth the effort. It is not possible to benefit from participative methods without a high degree of public participation (Mostert, 2003).

As a conclusion, Denmark failed to democratize its water planning (Nielsen, Hansen, Sriskandarajah, 2016).

Sweden

The Use of water boards (125 all over the county) in Sweden can be considered a more decentralized, participative way, in comparison with the Danish approach (having a stronger municipal level) (Nielsen, Hansen, Sriskandarajah, 2016). Swedes even introduced a new governmental body with five regional districts, called the Water Authorities (ibid). The implementation was the joint task of the Country Administrative Boards and the municipalities. The relevance of having five quite different water districts resulted in different outcomes, as the importance of public participation was considered quite differently in these districts (ibid). Some considered public involvement less necessary, while in other districts it was found to be essential and it was actively promoted (ibid). One underlying reason of different perspectives was in connection with the unclear legal status of the water boards, dependent on "changing political winds" (ibid). Members/employees of the water boards could not be sure about the practical tasks (missing guiding principles, not having a clear purpose and vision, not knowing their function and real authority). As a result, Sweden failed to democratize its water planning, just like Denmark (ibid), despite the different approach (ibid).

A system of water councils was developed (on the sub-river basin level) to encourage and ensure active involvement/participation (Hedelin, 2008). Originally it was planned to make approximately one hundred councils, but it was not a feasible idea. Without the above-mentioned lack of real power and lack of proper funding. In reality there were areas without water councils, so representatives of special interests could only attend open consultations and reference groups (which complemented the work of the councils) (ibid). Hedelin reached a similar conclusion as Wright, decision makers seemingly did not weight water planning as a political process, though a lot depended on whether or not they recognize their political relevance. Because only they can encourage the main involved actors (farmers, industry, the general public, NGOs) towards better involvement and more useful participation. Therefore, the relevance of the normativity of the decision makers and water planners are high (Nielsen, Hansen, Sriskandarajah, 2016). Hedelin proposed that the awareness among these local and regional water planners about their roles in the political process must be better understood. They should know that their decisions can reduce noise and avoid misinterpretations during the whole planning process. They can improve democratic processes (Hedelin,2008). Because of this, they can be viewed as "gatekeepers" of local and democratic values. Moreover, in their hands their lies the advantage, given by the nature of the Directive. To a certain extent they are free to decide upon measures about participation (ibid). The HarmoniCOP hand-

book and the guidance document can help their work, but it is their individual decision that determines the internalization or lack of internalization of deliberative ideals, or democratic techniques.

In short, Sweden “ended up in the traditional stakeholder model” (Nielsen, Hansen, Sriskandarajah, 2016), reproducing the existing power dynamics and replicating the former governance style, just like Denmark (ibid). Though in Sweden, there was a possibility for democratic openings (thanks to the decentralized approach), with the help of the general managers of the districts(ibid). Still, there was no place for real deliberation either.

<i>Denmark: centralized</i>		<i>Sweden: decentralized</i>	
<i>Top down approaches</i>	<i>Bottom up approaches</i>	<i>Top down approaches</i>	<i>Bottom up approaches</i>
WEAK	WEAK	WEAK	WEAK
STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK
WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG
STRONG	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG

Figure 6: Assessment of general implementation approaches in Sweden and Denmark (own made)

The Netherlands

There are four river basin districts in the Netherlands: Rhine, Meuse, Scheldt, Ems. Water planning itself is the shared responsibility of several authorities. Districts are responsible for strategic planning, and they make a synthesis from lower level plans (from regional water boards and provinces) which will constitute the final River Basin Plans. Water boards work in collaboration with local municipalities (who are responsible for urban water management). Provinces should approve the work of the water boards (there are twenty-seven of them), and the approved content will be moved to regional water plans. This kind of structure makes it possible to have a collaborative approach within and between the different levels and to control the functioning of the districts.

The planning process in the Netherlands was guided by certain principles. Namely by pragmatism, feasibility and affordability (Dieperink,2012). The Netherlands strategically designated low or limited ecological ambitions and classified most of their water bodies as heavily modified or artificial (fifty-five percent artificial, forty-two percent heavily modified according to their blueprint report) (ibid).

Only percent of natural water bodies were designated (in contrast with the Danish approach). The main driving force behind this classification method was cost limitation and to safeguard the interests of the agricultural sector, like in Denmark. Unlike various MS they seriously considered the various goals of society (Rahaman, 2004), and tried to integrate “cross-cutting” management issues (CAP, Climate Change policy, Flood management, recreation, public access, scarcity, renewable energy strategy) in their water planning. They decided to let go the more courageous initiatives purposefully. As authorities feared to fail and not meet the legal obligations, so water boards often did not report small waters to lower their tasks (Dieperink, 2012). According to Dieperink, ambitious points disappeared from regional agendas over time, as implementing agencies harmonized their actions and lowered their ambitions together. They reduced costs and avoided to confront with socioeconomic, agricultural interests systematically, knowing that they have interlinked and overlapping controls that are mutually dependent on each other (Rahaman, 2004). Though it can be said that the ambition level was low, and they did not press for a shift action towards environmental governance, they still reached what they aimed for. The Netherlands proved to be a realistic country, as they made pragmatic decisions during the first cycle. They realized the high costs of a more ambitious plan.

Regarding public participation, stakeholders were involved on a regional level (again priority was given to certain interest groups), helping to make the objectives and to shape the programmes of measures (Dieperink, 2012). The public involvement did influence some of the outcomes, but these inputs originated mostly from organizations (ENGOs), agricultural, drinking water companies and business organizations, who participated in regional processes. While a comparative study by Jager et al. indicated that in comparison with the other Member States the Netherlands performed well, according to Dieperink some of the non-governmental (especially nature/environmental) organizations and stakeholders were not satisfied with the results. Participatory processes were considered unsatisfactory by them. The reason for the dissatisfaction of the representatives of certain NGOs can be because of their limits. Dieperink findings of the Netherlands can be coupled together with the findings of the paper by Hüscher about Germany, they both noted that a high level of public participation did have a negative impact on the NGO's influence, as their overall power is lower than before as they cannot be present in everywhere, and their concentrated efforts can lose their strength and impact.

Parallel with previous findings on Sweden and Denmark, the case of Netherlands proves again that a lot depends on how regional actors use their power, discretion, and understand their responsibilities. A collaborative approach can help to solve many issues. Establishment of sub-river basins and further divide them into smaller units which are open to working closely together (sharing, exchanging experiences)

make it possible for actors to build a joint strategy. Maybe a bit more ambitious, next time.

France

France has a decentralized approach (with three levels of water planning) which fits their decentralized water management system. To fulfil the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, they identified thirteen river basin districts (EC, 2017), out of which four considered to be an overseas territory, and six are shared with another EU member states. There are six River Basin Agencies (Agences de l'Eau) and six Basin Committees (Comités de Bassin) in the country in the following main districts: Rhône-Mediterranean, Adour-Garonne, Rhine-Meuse, Artois Picardie, Seine-Normandy, and Loire-Bretagne. They are the most important water planning bodies, and they function as intermediaries between the lower level authorities (municipalities) and the State. The Ministry of Environment is the main coordinator and legislator, but it works closely with the agencies to create the river basin management plans. (Baghdady, 2016) (Eau France, 2015). The control and monitoring of the municipalities (with their local action plans) is carried out by the local commissions – with a particular focus on public participation. The members of these commissions are representatives of both state and non-state actors. The local commissions belong to Basin Committees. In these Basin committees none state actors, mainly NGO-s are represented in a high ratio (forty percent) (Jager, 2016) thanks to the directive.

France has been quite concerned with public participation, having a nationwide campaign/ advertisement to motivate the masses with the slogan: L'eau, c'est la vie, Donnez nous votre avis!" ("Water is life, give us your opinion!"). The institutional conditions for participation were quite good, as there were already developments based on the French Water Management Provision (from 1992). After the WFD, they only have to develop the existing system further. From 2005 public consultations (both a nation-wide consultation and a locally organized consultations) were held to gather information about public issues, concerns, and ideas. Also, citizens have the chance to fill in questionnaires or leave comments to help to develop RBMPs. The River Basin Districts summarized the participatory outcomes in a separate document. Results showed common patterns (most citizens had concerns about pollution and water misuse). Commissions dealt with more professional and comprehensive concerns in their contributions and therefore became more successful in influencing the final plans (because of the more systematic and institutionalized way of dealing with selected issues) (Eau Seine Normandie, 2015). In the paper by Jager,

it is mentioned that certain stakeholders were not satisfied, did not understand technicalities or got involved too late with too little scope in the decision-making process (Jager et al., 2016), but the high diversity of the representatives in the consultations of the Commissions resulted in a “rich” public participation process.

Based on a current assessment, France became a leader of the pack, described as a “water governance pioneer,” because they treat the diversity of opinions better than other countries (Jager et al., 2016). According to Marshall, France has a polychronic culture, which means that French people are quite open to experimenting with more deliberative approaches. They have a good variety of democratic openings for the general public and the organized interests as well. In case of environmental questions, there is a general requirement for a well-represented democracy, even on project level (making a close link between thinking and practice (ibid). In contrast, other countries with a dominantly monochromic culture (Austria, Germany, Denmark, and almost all European countries) follow a more managerial approach, with clearly determined routes. France is more open for a game change and to experiment on the action level (Margerum, 2008).

In France, high ambitions in public participation compensated their less ambitious ecological ambitions (seventy-two percent of exemptions were reported in their national interim report). Strong public participation in France seemed to be fundamental, to compensate the lack of central top-down pressure.

France	
Ecological ambitions	Participative ambitions
LOW	LOW
LOW	HIGH
HIGH	LOW
HIGH	HIGH

Figure 7: Assessment of the general implementation strategy of France (own made)

What is the goal?

After seeing these different solutions, the question is legit. Do member states consider water protection (seeing the Purpose), or they just follow imposed measures (complete tasks)?

Member states chose significantly different solutions, based on their historical and cultural background, and current wealth and knowledge. It can be seen, that

there is no perfect scenario or receipt how to implement the WFD. There is no generalizable way to structure the implementing institutions (organizational structure). Certain member states had centralized solutions, others had organizational groups at River Basin level, but action groups are rare in Europe at the local operational level (Margerum,2008). The reason behind of this can be, that there is no standard guideline on a European level to develop responsibilities at the lowest appropriate level (Rahaman,2004).

Another common pattern can be identified during the investigation of the national interim reports. Most member states invented a strategy to lower objectives (to be able to fulfil them without problems, avoiding sanctions). The modus operandi of this strategy was to classify most of the waterbodies as heavily modified, so they could refer to the exemptions (eligible for time delay) and reduce their costs and obligations. (Dieperink,2012). Having a strategy like this makes it necessary for member states to consider the purpose of the directive itself (do not try to avoid action in the field).

When searching for an indication of the presence of strong or at least meaningful participatory activities (to balance the voluntary measures), it is hard to find any convincing evidence in the official European documents. Only case studies from different countries can offer some insights. Often with competing claims (Jager et al., 2016).

As Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi said in 1993:

“ideals are rarely implemented in the real world.”

The idea behind the Water Framework Directive is good in the sense that it gives great flexibility for contracting parties to shift from government to governance, but the responsibility is with the member states.

Participative objectives are especially hard to meet, and the responsibility of those who decide about the way these goals must be reached is also high (Hedelin, 2008). Currently public participation is often “ignored and undermined at the local political level” (Nielsen, Hansen, Sriskandarajah, 2016), despite the fact that a lot depends on the normativity of these decision makers (ibid) and the perspective of the competent authorities (Newig, J., C. Pahl-Wostl and K. Sigel, 2005) (Hedelin,2008). There should be a certain willingness from their side to discuss concrete measures and include the wider public in this debate. Promote bottom-up initiatives, include state and none state actors and support them with funds, advice, knowledge and training opportunities (Britta Kastens & Jens Newig, 2008).

Case study: Public Participation in Hungary

First, this chapter provides some background information about the Hungarian implementation of the participatory requirements of the Water Framework Directive. Second, the empirically collected results are presented in form of two tables. Finally, a discussion of these results and the findings of the paper (together with additional quotes from the respondents) is provided, using the theoretical framework introduced in chapter one.

Background

Here is a short introduction of the Hungarian water planning, with a focus on public participation.

Hungary has a centralized water planning system; there are four sub-basins in the country (River Danube, River Tisza, River Dráva and Lake Balaton) with 17 planning units which are further divided into 42 sub-units (ibid). The Ministry of Environment and Water is the responsible authority which has the task to implement the Directive at a national level, working closely with the Central Directorate (since 2006 it is called Central Bureau of Water and Environment). The planning and making of the RBMPs are carried out by cooperative work of the regional environmental and water directorates, with the help of participating institutions like inspectorates (green authorities) and national park directorates. They consist the middle/sub-basin level together. Other partners are municipalities, water boards, non-governmental organizations and the citizens themselves. This system has been characterized with a certain degree of fragmentation because of the overlapping controls and competences of the central and middle-level authorities; they are often confused with their past and present roles (EC, 2012).

To link the implementation activities together and see them as a process, a timeline (summing up what happened up until today, and what are the next steps) is provided together with an organizational chart (illustrating the central decision making in the environmental arena to help to visualize the administrative system of the national water management) as appendix.

Venues of participation

The main venues of public participation with restricted stakeholder selection are the central and regional water management councils (in line with the OECD recommendation). The National Water Management Council has a central function and oversees and coordinates the regional units, (12 at local and four at sub-catchment level - called district water management councils) (EC,2012). The NWMC has the primary task, to approve the final form of the RBMP and make sure, that local planners are aware of the necessary details, and their local plans are in line with the main plan. There was a relative balance (Jager,2016) between the different interests in the Councils, both at central and local level.

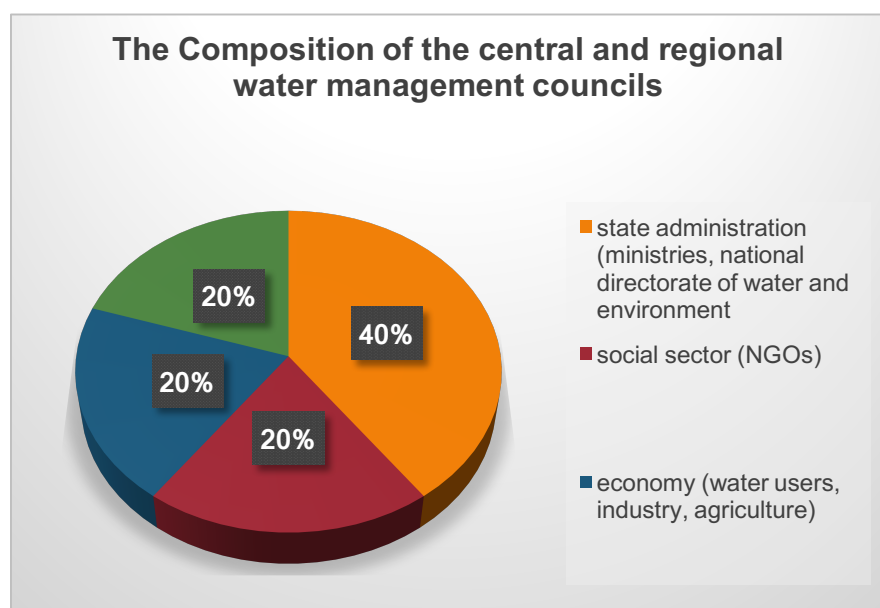


Figure 8. The Composition of the central and regional water management councils (own made)

Public hearings

Public hearings were held in the forty-two planning units and also on the sub-unit levels together with national consultations with thematic programs (e.g.: agricultural issues, about thermal waters, fisheries...etc.) (EC,2012). Each time thirty-four stakeholders were invited (Ministry of Rural Development).

Despite the aim to have equal footing, there was still a risk that the represented (organized) interests (industry, agriculture, Ngo-s, communities) were characterized by power asymmetries (ibid).

During these conferences, 1500 comments were collected. Approximately 700 organizations had the chance to contribute to draft the RBMP (ibid). According to Gayer, the official guidance document (No.8) and the HarmoniCOP Handbook was considered during the making of the participatory strategy (ibid).

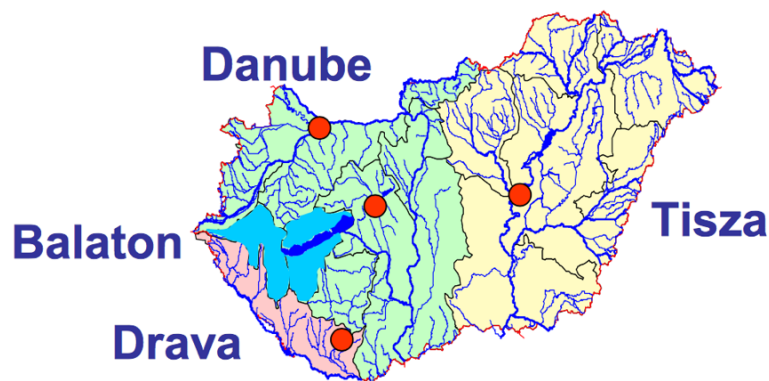


Figure 9: Regional Centers at sub-catchment level – District Water Management Councils (Ministry of Rural Development, 2009)

All the forty-seven draft plans (country, four sub-basins and forty-two planning units) became available for the public in May 2009. (The final RBMP was ready and published on 21 May 2010, and it was internalized as a governmental decision into the national law 1127/2010.) To provide stakeholders enough time to comment on all the plans, the consultation period was extended until November 2009. Sub-units facilitated separate public debates, to discuss the material. These consultations took written and verbal forms. Drafts were published in 3000 copies nationwide, and citizens had the chance to leave comments at the website of www.vizeink.hu. According to Gayer 3800 comments was made and evaluated – and the results are documented as an annex of the final plan (Gayer, 2009).

According to the official reports participatory approaches in Hungary had a centralized character, but they reached the scope of sub-unit and local level too. During the time phase of 2006-2009, the main interest groups that shaped the Participatory Strategy of Water Management in Hungary were professionals, water users, non-governmental organizations and governmental bodies (both central and local). Just like in other member states, public participation had no real influence in decisions (mostly consultative and informative function was fulfilled by these events). Participants had little impact on the final plans or on the direction of the planning. Formally and procedurally the criterion of public participation seemed to be fulfilled

but with a limited definition of the public (making a false equation between stakeholders and the public).

Here is an example which highlights the asymmetry in representation. Even company leaders in Hungary are aware of the fact that there are only three groups with relevant influence on the environmental decisions (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2003). See the table below, which represents the central problem of the society:

Weak influence	Moderate influence	Strong influence
Banks, insurance companies, Public, Industrial associations, Scientific Institutes, Neighbourhood, Employees, Competitors, Consumers, Consumer's organisations, Media	Local authorities, Environmental organisations	Legal authorities, Managers, Owners

Table 8. Stakeholder's influence on corporate environmental efforts (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2003)

It can be seen that participative approaches are reduced to an elite of participants. Economic actors and official institutions dominate.

Empirical Results

In this section, the interview results are presented. The Investigations had two levels. The level of professionals (with experience with formal participatory venues) and the level of citizens (mixed sample from individual and group discussions complemented with secondary data). The findings of the interviews are used to answer the first research question (RQ1: What Hungarians think about public participation, how would they define it?), but the developed insights will be used in the final section (3.3) to unmask the underlying reasons of the low level of public participation in Hungary (Second Research objective).

Results of the interviews with professionals

In these interviews, the respondents reflected on their current views on public participation, with an accent on its present meaning. All of them were selected according to the criteria that they dealt with the Water Framework Directive in the past ten years. They are from different domains with different opinions about public participation. They tried to define public participation in a broad context.

The reason of this table is to present the different views and the managerial approach of professionals. The participative problems usually stem from the fact that there is no definition of what participation means and how participation can be exercised. It is not regulated accurately in Hungary. In the following table Scheleiermacher's approach was utilized in order to identify and organize key words, phrases and individual statements.

<u>Respondent</u>	<u>Definition by the respondent</u>	<u>Key words, thoughts</u>
University professor, sociologist	It is a dialogue between the decision makers and the interested parties (concerned citizens), (stakeholders). Dialogue between experts and laymen. A dialogue in which most of the information becomes available to everyone, and they participate with the highest possible competence. The final decision is the result of this joint effort, of a debate of all the involved actors.	Dialogue, debate Decision-making vs. concerned Expert vs. Layman Possess available information Competence Your argument is being heard and considered Direct participation

Politician	<p>We must work on social dialogue. The question is how to use the dialogue.</p> <p>In the current system, there is a social dialogue in the parliament, in the second chamber there is a place for churches, minorities, civils, trade unions, professional advocates. That is how we give an institutionalized form of their opinions. To truly Participate, means work. Not just only talk about pollution or floods, but to do something.</p>	<p>dialogue</p> <p>Two-chamber parliament</p> <p>Church</p> <p>Minority</p> <p>professional organizations</p> <p>professional interests</p> <p>representation</p> <p>institutionalized dialogue</p> <p>on the ground action</p>
Employee of the ministry of the environment	<p>What it means for me is different all the time. It is based on the given area, or act, for me it is a broad term. For me almost everything is open for public interest. Everyone has a right to know about what is happening, form my neighbour to public agencies... it's a full circle, everyone should have the right to participate. In case of the RBMP, you can go to hearings, or send comments from your home.</p>	<p>Identified by the law</p> <p>Obligations of the neighbour/organization</p> <p>Circle</p> <p>Public hearings</p> <p>Online comment</p>
Economist	<p>On the one hand, it is the integration of the interests of concerned groups (at river basin level), on the other hand it is involvement at an early stage in the decision-making process, long before the decision is being made, and also after the decision, to review. Constant consultation throughout the whole process of planning.</p>	<p>Concerned groups</p> <p>Integration of interests</p> <p>Involvement</p> <p>Constant consultation</p> <p>Involvement from the very beginning</p> <p>Review - feedback</p>
Ngo legal expert	<p>There are three pillars: right to information (I do not consider it participation though), the middle one is the right to speak, and the last is to have the right for justice.</p>	<p>Getting information,</p> <p>Right to speak</p> <p>Remedies</p>
Ngo activist	<p>Direct participation in decision-making, which means (funnily enough) that the citizen can go to an elected representative in the water board, who will help – telling what can be done and how.</p>	<p>Direct participation</p> <p>Representation</p> <p>Getting help</p> <p>Learn about decision-making</p>
Ngo politician	<p>Realization of social participation is not equal to the highest level of representation. Far from it. As far as I concerned the civil sector is involved in water management on a regular basis. There are institutional guarantees, but in an ideal scenario, there is a platform for the wider public too, to join and be able to participate in making these plans. Participation is not limited to civil society organizations. It must be provided to the general public.</p>	<p>Institutional guarantees</p> <p>Civil Sector</p> <p>Wider Public</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>Possibility to get involved</p>
Regional ngo expert	<p>At least those who are directly affected should be able to have a voice. That is the minimum</p> <p>The higher the distance between the elected officials and the represented, the higher the possibility to miss the essence. I would differentiate between active and passive possibilities. In some planning units, authorities actively go ahead and inform people and invite them to public hearings. Or invite a delegation of representatives of the public to have a discussion with the decision-making body. If you ask me, giving in-</p>	<p>Meaningful involvement</p> <p>Minimum requirement</p> <p>Active / Passive Information</p> <p>Public Hearing</p> <p>Invitation</p> <p>Residential Representatives</p> <p>Delegate</p> <p>Opportunity to react</p>

	formation cannot even be considered as participation, if you do not have an opportunity to react.	
Research NGO expert	I only want to have a say in the local matters of my own place of residence. There is a representative democracy, and decisions are being made by a few elected politicians. Even in an NGO, selected individuals have more power than others. So, the participation is dependent on how much they listen to others. Do they represent the interest of the citizens or not? Or do they consider the value of the water. Topic and case based.	Local matters Residency Represented groups Interests Power asymmetry Dependent on openness Interest of the Citizen Case dependent Casual Value

Summarizing the findings of the individual interviews, the definitions and thoughts (summarized in the above table) on public participation given by our interviewees Are loosely in line with the baseline definition, cited from Creighton in chapter 2.

“The process by which public concerns, needs and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decision making “ (Creighton,2005)

Of course, there is no perfect definition in which we can, as one of the respondents said: "pack it all in." But their thoughts can bring attention to important aspects. It is common in their thinking that public participation is about a collective, social decision (community interest). More precisely it is related to the know-how of a decision making. How a decision is made is important. Who is included or excluded from this dialogue also matters. In this process, every group of society should be involved who is concerned. There should be alternatives in the community decision-making. From a legal point of view, they are the clients, so it is important to highlight that their interests must be represented in some form. Not just professionals and elected representatives should be included in public participation, but also the "laymen," non-experts, non-professionals should have a chance to take part in the decision making. The voice of "amateurs" also counts, it is not necessarily the question of competence. Furthermore, in all aspects of the decision-making process, public participation must be a part of it. From the beginning to end (from drafting a plan, preparing, making and reviewing a plan) Those who are concerned, interested - should be present personally or through their direct representatives and have a voice, share their ideas, comment.

Some of them said that public participation requires a real dialogue. It was a recurring theme in several interviews. It can be viewed as a discussion process, which happens before the decision making and when and where all the concerned citizens can share their opinions and must listen to the views of other, at the same time. This

criterion suggests – according to the views of the respondents, that a good decision maker can talk, argue, listen and evaluate. Besides listening, in addition to hearing others, he must be able to integrate the most important interests. The most laborious task to be able to have a proper overview – interdisciplinary thinking. Categorizing the inputs and assess them (eliminate the non-relevant ones). Create a fusion of horizons, find a common solution or develop a consensual alternative (decision-making alternative). Moreover, the debate may enable all the participants to get to know and understand all the relevant information, which is necessary for a responsible decision making and to legitimate the process. Transparency is fortunate, but not common. Providing equal opportunities for the participants is often a guiding principle. During the dialogue, all of the actors is equal, with similar opportunities. These opportunities are ensured by a moderator or facilitator. There lies another responsible task, the dialogue must be sensitive to the variety and different levels of competences (taking into account all the competences), building up the dialogue to be able to have a meaningful participation. Not to exclude certain members who would not be able to engage in the dialogue. They might learn.

Citizen tidbits

Vari said that " the use of scientific and social science experts as approximations of the public interest is a popular strategy", but it seemed to be accurate to complement the professional answers with the views of the citizens too. To arrange their thoughts in a table, their opinions were organized as negative or positive aspects of participation. Both informed and uninformed citizens were selected from the capital city and from Paks.

<i>Advantages of Public Participation</i>	<i>Disadvantages of Public Participation</i>
Makes decisions morally acceptable - Legitimize	Biased opinions – like the NIMBY phenomenon
We can measure the quality of the plan (decision) with it	Problems with how to represent environmental issues
Lack of pp cause apathy *	Too late, too little
Community, openness Good feeling of involvement	Lack of professional/scientific knowledge
Lack of self-awareness	Elitism stakeholderism
Help to build more just institutions	No perfect mix of diverse opinion is possible
Can be more costly if it is not applied (Long Term)	Costly (Short Term)
Local knowledge of residential groups	Time-consuming, slowing decision-making processes
Holistic, seeking for alternatives	Source of a trouble, cause problems
Networking, sharing responsibility	No real impact no real chance to have any influence

Learning social learning process	Underrepresentation
Experimentation Innovation - basis for future decisions	Lack of professionalism, incompetence
Provide good basis for decisions	Polar opposite directions, never ending debates
eliminate possible top down steering	Promote false facts
Political risk can be reduced help keep the abuse of power in check	It can be mistaken
Democratic	Unprofessional
Complex interactive process	Too complex
Allow locals a sense of ownership of the plan/ project	Risk of bad decisions
motivation, Active citizens	lack of power – commons are eroded
Proactive information	useless
Pluralist approach	Environmental concerns can be secondary

It can be seen from the results of the guided group discussions that the loose phenomenon of public participation is understood, but most citizens do not have an in-depth knowledge. As it was mentioned before, during the pre-testing phase it became evident that these interviews must have been complemented with group discussions to provoke detailed answers and to encourage the participants to make sense of the concept during brainstorm sessions.

Having said that it is important to note that the raw public opinion (based on individual small, short, informal interviews with the participants – before group discussions) only reflected narrowed views. According to these views Hungarian citizens:

- may not think much about the issue
- may not well informed
- may, in fact, have no opinion at all
- do not care
- do not have time or energy to get engaged

In short, the biggest identified problem here is that the willingness of the citizens to participate in water management (attend hearings for example) is that there is a massive gap between their values and their actions (cognitive dissonance). It was found that the general public is not aware of the deep meaning of the concept, and they are unaware of their possibilities and have a lack of interest. They have a basic understanding of participation in general, but they do not actively seek for possibilities to engage in the making of the local plans better. The main recurring problem is their lack of motivation.

To eliminate the possibility of statistical error data was contrasted with these results. According to this more than seventy percent of the Hungarian citizens are a sceptic, and these results are verified by other researchers (Banszegi, 2009) (Bakonyi 2011). Results of the Institute for Political Science, MTA Centre for Social Sciences shows that the most active participants in Hungary are the citizens aged 36-50, and above 51. The most inactive participants are the younger groups 15-25 26-35 (Javor and Beke, 2012), which means that the youngest age group has the highest rate of scepticism.

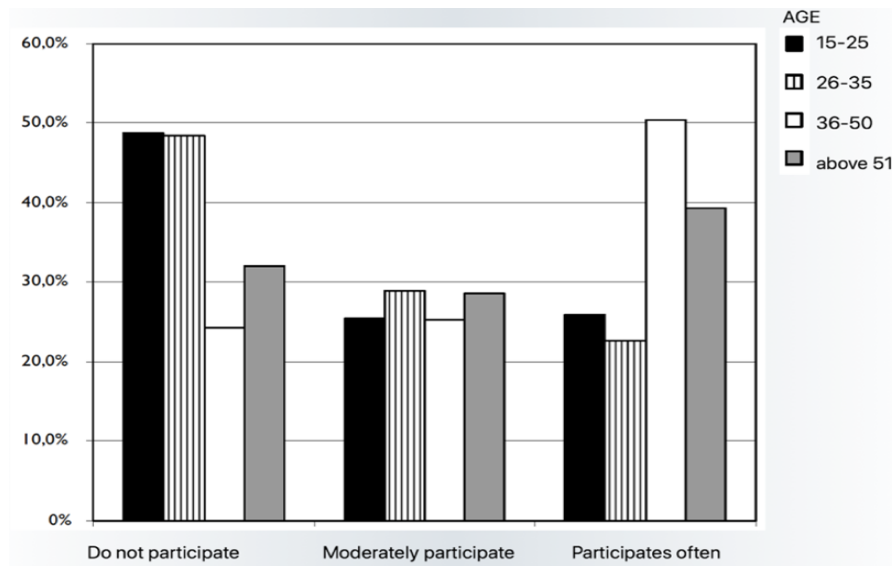


Figure 10. Participation level of citizens (Javor and Beke, 2012) – effective participation and age

This passivity is quite talkative and is in line with the findings. Even large groups of university students are not interested or do not express their interests in the public issues and in participative processes, which refutes the belief that the inherited debts (conditioning before the political transition) cause the decline in active involvement. Absurdly, the most passive citizens are, who were born and educated after the transition (ibid). This is the result of a mainly unbroken trend of declining trust in the state and fellow citizens. Makes it harder for the people to take the perspective of others and they are not motivated to participate.

View of democracy

Even though all of the questioned citizens are residents of Paks (and the nuclear upgrade is happening "in their backyard") none of them was aware of the risk of thermal pollution, as they were not informed and did not aim for becoming an informed citizen. None of them attended the public hearing or checked online publications. It indicated a deeply rooted problem which is in connection with the huge democratic deficit in the country. This deficit may be correlated with the results, but at least, it paves the way for further investigation.

A national report (European Social Survey of Hungary from 2013) which measured how Hungarians views on democracy, shows the attitudes and values of the citizens had the following relevant findings. Thoughts about an ideal of democracy were contrasted with the current reality, which is experienced by the citizens. All aspects of the existing democracy were estimated to be below the envisioned ideal one by the Hungarian society. Which means that the current system failed in all criteria. The 2013 study the age or education does not give rise to significant differences in opinion. All citizens agreed upon that there is a democratic deficit in all areas. Some of the most important criteria of a well-functioning democracy were considered to be that "The government should justify its decisions", "the most important political affairs, questions there should be a referendum in order to give power to the citizens to make the decision" and "political parties should represent clear alternatives – compared to each other". All these aspects are strongly linked together with public participation. Moreover, this dissatisfaction with democracy in international comparison is under the EU average, and this has always been the case in the last ten years. (ESS, 2013)

The previous results of the interviews with professionals and citizens (together with the secondary data) indicate that further investigations are necessary in order to find answer to the second research question and to reach a higher level of abstraction.

Discussion

The objective of the second research question (RQ2: What are the underlying reasons for the low level of public participation in Hungary?) is to shed light on the deeply rooted reasons that block the way of the democratization of water management. In this part, the views of the respondents (from all the interviews and group discussions) are grouped and organized in themes to reach this objective and to make a better sense of the Hungarian situation. This way broader implications of the primary and secondary findings about the implementation of the participative requirements and ideals of the Water Framework Directive can be considered. The descriptive themes are 3.3.1 Legitimacy, 3.3.2 Culture and History, 3.3.3 Learning and Deliberation. The analysis of these themes is complemented with the use of critical reflections (with the help of the theoretical framework).

Legitimacy

The first theme is legitimacy. National interim reports about the implementation of the Water Framework Directive do not indicate serious deficiencies or lack of legitimacy of the participative processes, but the empirical findings suggested otherwise.

Empirical findings

The case of PaksII indicates that there is a systemic problem with participation, as in hard cases (with serious economic, corporate interests) policy makers try to exclude the general public from the complete decision-making process. The public hearing about PaksII was reduced to an elite of participants without transparent communication. According to the respondents (interviews with professionals), it failed to provide space for meaningful deliberation. Public participation during the scoping and reviewing (see Figure below) phase of the relevant impact assessment (deliberative tool to institutionalize public participation) would have been necessary, but in case of Paks II the general public was not invited during the scoping phase.

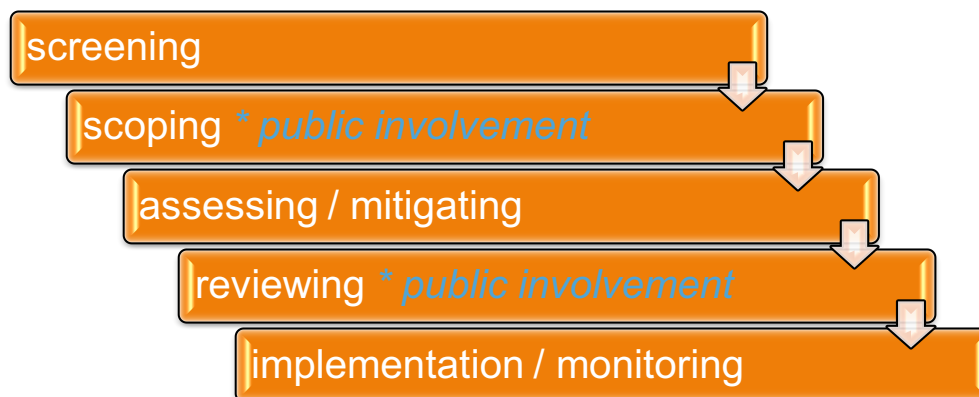


Figure 10. Stages of EIA (own made)

Participation was required not only by the Water Framework Directive but also by the Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment Directives. There was only one public hearing on 7 May 2015 (review phase) and it failed to fulfil EIA and Aarhus specification (Haverkamp, 2015). The insufficient participative dimension of the environmental impact assessment made it evident that there was an attempt to:

“...sell an impoverished version of the truth to the public.” (Respondent #9, NGO expert)

According to the respondents (interviews with professionals) the mentioned public hearing was used in order to legitimize a project which was preferred by the Hungarian and Russian government. Only a few ENGO representatives raised their voice against the planned nuclear capacity expansion during the public hearing. During the interviews NGO experts (Respondent #5-#9) highlighted that this case is not individual, it can be considered the general practice in the country. Authorities formally declare that public involvement happened, even though no real effort was made to involve the citizens.

“The arenas have a uniform choreography, all you see is elitism. Even at small scale, government representatives dominate” (Respondent #8, Regional NGO expert)

It is in contrast with what the communicative rationality dictates. There is no chance for a real involvement of the public. No opportunity to get information or contest views and arguments. Just a one-way transmission (illustrated in Figure 2. In Chapter two).

This means minimum efforts by authorities. They only want to

*"Tick off this task to fulfil the requirement for participation in the written form."
(Respondent #1, politician)*

Most of the respondents (professionals and ordinary citizens too) agreed on that the close cooperation of the ruling elite serves the greedy goal to ensure the most favourable outcome for the policy makers (short term corporate interests and private wealth.) Only the illusion of freedom is maintained.

"They are being utilized by the governing parties and the big corporations. Central steering processes dominate the context"(Respondent #6, NGO activist).

During the interviews NGO experts raised their concerns about the role, public participation can play nowadays in water management. According to them, institutions do not work properly because they do not want to (and have to) meet the needs of the citizens.

"Authorities, developers can listen to what people say but do not take it into consideration anyway" (Respondent #5, NGO legal expert)

Based on the findings there is a lack of substantive legitimacy in Hungary. People, especially policy makers do not focus on common good. The reason of this is two-fold. They are partly cultural and historical. See these two heavily interlinked and interdependent dimensions in 3.3.2.

Reflection

Without equality and inclusion legitimacy cannot become reality (Habermas,1987)(Habermas,1996). The very reason for public consultation is to let the general public exercise their civil rights (from the praxis of citizens) (Rostbøll,2008). According to discourse theory, there is a need for an institutional context to make deliberative forums legitimate and accountable (Habermas,1996). It could be seen that even a basic institution (EIA) is manipulated in order to lower the relevance of the public. The legitimacy of the public hearing of PaksII deviates from the ideal scenario. According to the respondents it is not free from governmental interference and manipulation. It means that it is in contrast with the Habermasian ideal. It is not free from the distortion of stakeholderism (in which the strongest stakeholders are government representatives).

There is no substantial reason from an objective point of view, no compelling reasons to leave the general citizens out of the planning process. Those who are interested and or affected by the outcome of a decision should be involved in the decision-making process. People should be heard on an equal level; every viewpoint must be seen, noted, heard. (Habermas 1987).

Based on the empirically collected opinions, there is no formal equality – which means that Hungarian citizens only have minimal rights in the current water planning processes, where organized interests can easily dominate. Substantive equality would require equal, close power influence and opportunity to have an impact on decisions or on the agenda itself. Based on the findings there is no substantial equality either, which is a barrier of legitimacy too. An NGO representative (Respondent #5) even claimed that public participation is "empty" in the national legal context. He explained the reason behind of his comment.

"There is a lack of real, substantive implementation, as the discretionary rights provide enough space for authorities to decide as they wish." (Respondent #5, NGO legal expert)

Participants of the interviews with professionals said that there are good and articulated views about what kind of rights and responsibilities are there for citizens and stakeholders (in theory), but accountability is another question. There are enforcement problems. And this problem lies with the weak environmental policy not with the constitutional basis (Antal, 2017). While constitutional environmental rights are articulated in legal documents, the procedural rights are not well functioning.

There is a definite gap between the text and the spirit of the law which goes against the Habermasian ideal (Habermas, 1996) (Hedelin, 2008). As respondent #2 said:

"there is a fundamental contradiction present between the regulation and enforcement of the written law and law enforcement." (Respondent # 2, University professor - sociologist).

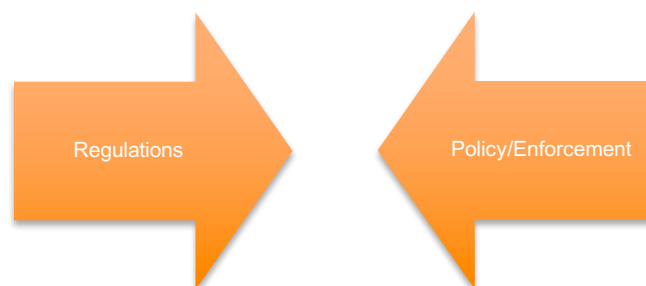


Figure 11. Written law vs Enforcement

According to Habermas political problems can be resolved rationally (Wiklund, 2002)(Habermas, 1996), but it only applies if rational arguments are heard, and all the interested and affected parties can be part of the decision making process. That is a way to provide legitimacy, enhance acceptance and the democratic commitment of the public (ibid). In case of PaksII the process was illegitimate, the social acceptance is not justified, and it has a negative effect on the future commitment and motivation of the general public. In this regard, EIA as an institutionalized deliberative tool failed to represent the Habermasian ideal role of law because of the way it was utilized.

Elling suggested that the EIA can be a tool to “help keep the abuse of power in check.” In case of Paks II, it could only function as an “alert” for other Danube countries to realize the magnitude of the problem (a serious breach of international conventions and EU law, sign of huge democratic deficit). Again, it is not the legal background that is the source of the problem. The real problem lies with the people, who do not apply them well. The EIA in case of PaksII cannot even be considered as a reflexive arrangement, because it did not have a democratic character based on Bo Elling’s criteria mentioned in chapter one (Elling, 2008).

Culture and History

In this section, the participative culture of Hungary is being analysed. In contrast with developed democracies (examples described in part 2.2) Hungary has a quite different culture of communication which heavily influences the quality of participation in the country, just like historical debts from the past.

Empirical findings

The main viewpoint of the professional respondents was that public participation could not work because often it is in contrast with the interests of the ruling elite, and often it is considered as an obstacle. It is because of to anti-democratic reflexes, inherited from the previous regime, and because of the clash of interests (elite vs. masses).

"Hungarians cannot join forces in the name of social participation; they are powerless." (Respondent # 2, University professor - sociologist)

Only some non-governmental organisations, small networks can have dialogue about environmental issues, discussing public matters, consider the interest of the

society. To the question what can be done, the respondent #2 said that we need real democracy, to avoid this attitude. The lack of democratic culture makes it impossible to rebel successfully. There is not an existing, stable base of supporters. Respondent #2 painted an accurate picture of the short history of social participation in Hungary. He thinks that in the dimension of power the political elite has a key role. Environmental movements around "89-98" provided a 'good cause' for them to advertise themselves. It came in handy, as during that time they had a direct interest (political) in generating a public, citizen movement to undermine the power of the previous regime. During that time, the environmental interests coincided with the interests of the elite and with the social interests. This is not the case anymore. This changed drastically. No one is interested in those ideals anymore. Values were 'illuminative' and they changed radically. The elite is no longer interested in what the public want. They are no longer interested in mobilizing citizens or listening to them. Respondent #4 agreed with this view. Saying that the process of privatization, building a market society, inspired the new elite to neglect ecological interests and silence that complaint about it.

"The parties everywhere ate environmental movements. The need for public participation was lost." (Respondent # 2, University professor - economist)

Today citizens ignore politics and they consider it an 'unsavory practice'. This passivity (which is reinforced) helps power holders to keep the reins in their hands. The characteristics of the political transition (1989) were connected to a whole system switch, which had an impact on power dynamics at all scales. Respondents (both professionals and general citizens) complained about anti-democratic "power reflexes."

"Papers are signed according to power relations." (Respondent # 2, University professor - sociologist)

Still, people are conditioned to be passive. During the interviews with citizens people were afraid to talk. As it was acknowledged during group discussions, they do not have the courage of their convictions, what is good for the power holders. Citizens themselves sense that developments remain heavily dependent on the relevant authorities. There is a strong indication (based on the interviews with professionals) that these authorities hold the power in such a way that they become gatekeepers. They are able to restrict democratization processes.

It is interesting to briefly compare Hungary (with its fragile democracy) with countries with developed democracies. In contrast with France, Hungary does not compensate its low ecological ambitions with public participation.

Hungary		France	
Ecological ambitions	Participative ambitions	Ecological ambitions	Participative ambitions
LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW
HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH

Figure 12. Comparison I (own made)

It can be seen on the figure below that the implementation of participative processes is seemingly similar to Denmark, but the huge democratic deficit in Hungary makes the realization (real life application and practice) much more threatened by illiberal forces.

<i>Denmark: centralized</i>		<i>Sweden: decentralized</i>		<i>Hungary: centralized</i>	
<i>Top down approaches</i>	<i>Bottom up approaches</i>	<i>Top down approaches</i>	<i>Bottom up approaches</i>	<i>Top down approaches</i>	<i>Bottom up approaches</i>
WEAK	WEAK	WEAK	WEAK	WEAK	WEAK
STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK
WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG
STRONG	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG

Figure 13. Comparison II (own made)

The shadow of the past is long and people routinely stay silent.

“The basic experience of our socialization is that something is banned” (Respondent # 2, University professor - sociologist)

According to respondent #2 it is due to past events (silent police, arrests, jailings and the killing of thousands of people during the communist era). People never learnt how to express themselves freely. A citizen said:

“I have spent my life writing articles for people who have grown adept at reading between the lines. Today I can write feely and clearly, but I do not know how.” (Anonym citizen – journalist)

Adding to this market prices shocked the public after the regime change (according to respondent #4), which resulted in that water consumption decreased with almost 60 percent. Beside living in fear (due to silent terror), citizens also had to

face the problem of high fees and prices that threatened their daily lives. As respondent #2 told, fees and prices is still the major (almost the only one) concern of the society.

“If a politician says that he will lower prices, he can win. Regardless what else comes with that victory and how manipulative that strategy is” (Respondent #7, NGO politician)

This is underlined in Antal’s study, who reminded us that 72 percent of the population think that they are worse off (economically) now, than during the communist era (Antal, 2017). This is a very high number.

The final significant finding in this section is that there is no real middle class in Hungary. Middle class in this case, means the moderately prosperous, wealthy and well-educated dimension of the society. As evident it is, people rarely articulate it, though it was discussed during the group investigations. As a result of these group discussions it was voiced that participation is almost identical or “broadly identified” with ENGO-s and local government authorities in the country. Only ENGO-s deal with environmental questions effectively (functioning as the “phantom” middle class). That is why it is extremely important to safeguard NOG-s as they function as a heart of the Hungarian civil society.

Fact box - Current Context of NGO-s

Hungary is today on the international agenda because of controversial laws on higher education and the functioning of NGOs in the country. All of these laws will impact environmental questions: loss of multicultural research platform and losing foreign funds to help ENGOs represent who are not heard or underrepresented. The fragile situation of the ENGOs is especially sad, as they do receive foreign/overseas funding, which is necessary for their survival. Those who earn more than 24000€ should register as “foreign-supported.” If they do not comply and do not disclose the identity of the donors, they face closure. Below, there is a photo of a protest in Budapest because of this proposed law.



European relevance

Frans Timmermans on behalf of the European Commission said that civil society is the very fabric of democratic communities. It is in line with Habermas’s views on society and democracy. According to Habermas (1996) it is essential for deliberative processes, deliberative discourses to include civil society.

Timmermans also said that "...I would therefore deeply regret any action by the Hungarian authorities aimed at shrinking the space of civil society organizations or any attempt to control or stigmatize their work". (Timmermans,2017) Carlos Moedas European Commissioner also expressed his concerns about the freedom of scientific research in Hungary, together with Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who said that "Europe cannot remain silent when civil society organizations or the academic world are being suffocated, as it is happening right now in Budapest" (Steinmeier, 2017)

Reflection – Theoretical frame

Deliberation is an "attitude toward social cooperation" (Habermas 1998)

In the analytical chapter, it was assumed that there is a high uncertainty avoidance index in Hungary. It means that Hungarian people need rules because the connection with each other is low. This systemic characteristic evolved by chance thanks to historical events, as a result of random response to accidental conditions, but soon they became part of the norm and solidified into structure. Now, the citizens take it granted from the depths of their life itself that they should be guided by rules and do not try to understand what is happening around them and seek alternatives. They systematically forget to think about important matters, as the state regulates it. The informal barriers are especially huge in a Hungarian setting, where there is a general huge power distance among communicating parties. Some people are considered superior to others (based on their social status, education, personal achievements, family background).

Hofstede recognised that societies with high power distance usually being characterized by making bilateral deals. Paks II (Russian - Hungarian bilateral contract about) falls into this category. Logic would require that the government of a country with high uncertainty index should provide proper information for the public to reduce uncertainty and enhance the odds of social acceptance. In case of PaksII the contract is encrypted for 30 years, citizens do not know its content, even though they have to pay for it. This contradictory practice proves that there is a distortion towards populist tendencies.

Habermas makes a distinction between rational arguments and personal interests. He sees purposive rationality (with the forceless force of a better argument) legit and a way to help the citizens emancipate themselves from the biased set of assumptions (based on culture, tradition, norms). Most citizens (even if they admit it or not) are thoroughly programmed with genetic and cultural desires.

Habermas believes that people can be open and rational enough to focus on the reasoned argument. (Habermas 1975) Hungarian people must unlearn what they are used to, and challenge how they are conditioned. It is the challenge of the future to

confront the truth: there is no dialogue based political culture in the country. Researchers should try to make a deeper sense of social structure and the gravity of times. Without understanding these barriers there is no chance to move closer to the unlimited communication community Habermas envisioned in 1991 in his work *The Theory of Communicative Action*.

The structure of the country is rigid and inflexible. There is no resonance with what people want and value. The need of transformative potential and knowledge is acute.

Habermas's theory can be a guiding principle (or comparative tool) as it does not require pre-existing communities, cultural and historical values. This is a concept which offers hope that citizens can start from zero. Barriers of the democratization of water planning can be eliminated with the help of the vital principle of solidarity. To respect all opinions, and give space for autonomous preference formation. Habermas communicative action theory is based on the theory of argumentation (Habermas, 1987), while Rostbøll utilized theory of freedom (Rostbøll, 2008). One's freedom is reduced without the ability to reconsider our preferences in public, deliberative settings (Rostbøll, 2008, p. 87). Both are quite valuable concepts, that can help us to make sense of the current situation of Hungary and think about potential solutions. Habermas wrote that the function of the law is to preserve and enlarge freedom (Habermas, 1996). Despite all the possibilities the Framework Directive provided (together with the CIS Guidance document) participation did not come alive. The participative requirements of the WFD were not internalized and one of the main reasons behind of it can be found in the cultural and historical characteristics of the country.

Learning & Deliberation

Usually people are not conscious about the complex nature of water, as a medium. Multiple rationalities from various sectors are present (there are possibilities for synergies, but also there are huge interest clashes). Interdependencies and lock-ins characterizes the water management system and it is essential for the general public to be represented in those decisions which will affect their own water sources. To be capable and competent to engage in water planning they should learn.

Empirical findings

In the present public participation rarely happens at the right level (lowest possible

level), but respondents agreed on that today hearings and consultations are still the best chance to articulate our opinions. As an NGO representative said the future of participatory methods is:

“dependent on this learning process” (Respondent #6, NGO activist).

The EU Project HarmoniCOP conceptualized social learning (in line with the Guidance Document), and it was introduced in Hungary. Relevant documents were translated into Hungarian to help authorities to manoeuvre during the implementation processes and to inform citizens. According to the empirical results, the main problem is that these guidelines were not truly considered. The other problem seemed to be that there are no real platforms, arenas for public debates. Current forums could not have an impact on the final plans. Furthermore an interviewee emphasized that:

“there is usually no interaction between decision-makers, and among the decision makers and the citizens” (Respondent #5, NGO legal expert).

Reflection

According to the theoretical framework it would be important to find the right level of participation and establish deliberative arenas, as it is time to rebuild and reinvent “the very idea of the collective, the communal, the commons, the civil, and the civic after so many decades of attack and neglect.” (Klein, 2014)

According to the Habermasian logic, even when there is an increasing centralization of power in a country, people still need platforms to share their opinions and views. This way they can educate themselves, and the nation as a whole. (Habermas, 1987). Local level participation is considered to be the most authentic form of deliberation by the professional respondents.

Town hall meetings (Karpowitz and Mansbridge 2005) can easily be the space where citizens can meet and talk (Hedelin, 2008). Where the professionals and laymen are equal, because they are all affected. People should consider their individual goals and the integrity of the society at the same time (see Figure below). There lies the challenge. There must be arenas where different interests can meet and do experiments how to find the right balance. Even though large scale meetings are more democratic (with a reduced quality), local deliberation can still deliver with its meaningful dialogues.

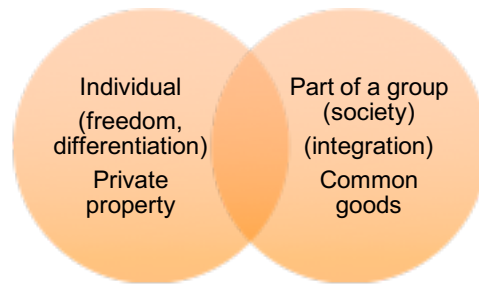


Figure 13. Individual vs Society needs (own made)

Habermas agrees with Rousseau (based on his work, Democracy – rule by the people) that individual citizens sometimes should put their own interests aside (Smith, 2003) (Habermas, 1987)(Rousseau, 1913). Only communicatively rational people are open to debate about what is more important in a specific context. Individualistic behaviour shouldn't be repressed or rejected but each citizen should be aware about the interlinked systems (see below) and have a strong sense of solidarity, otherwise no community would function (from local level to the level of the European Union) (Habermas, 2012). The responsibility of the citizens is high. In a context where NGO-s loosing capacity only citizens can force to fight for their own interests. Water is life, a sacred resource and the only level citizens can fight for it is the operational, action level.

Margerum – levels of participation:

1. Policy level
 2. Organizational level
 3. Operational, action level
- ←

A decentralizing process is needed in Hungary because the Water Framework Directive cannot be implemented properly in this heavily centralized country, but no social change is possible without changing the consciousness of individuals first. The change should start from the ground level (Margerum, 2008), from the action level. It is in line with what Bolier wrote in 2015:

“Even in the best circumstances, conventional policy systems tend to be legalistic, expensive, expert-driven, bureaucratically inflexible, and politically corruptible, which make them a hostile vehicle for serious change “from the bottom” (Bolier, 2015).

Citizen action is required in the spheres of life that matters for the individual and for the community. Cities, neighborhoods, water bodies. To mention a concrete example/suggestion how to do it, a short summary of action research is presented here.

Participatory action research

Participatory action research has a simple foundation/basis. It considers everyone who is concerned, affected by a given environmental-social issue. This is in line with the Habermasian thinking. By involving the concerned people, it instantly creates a community, that is organized along a common interest (to defend, restore a water resource). In this case participation is not against something but to cooperate (community cohesion) in order to reach a goal or to develop something. Less attention is given to hierarchy (which is quite important in the Hungarian setting), power relations, social interactions in comparison with traditional participative constellations. The emphasis is on learning and knowledge creation from own/local resources. Action research is not connected to any discipline, it is a research method and represents how science can serve the society with utilizing principles of sustainability and community involvement. (Greenwood – Levin, 1998). It combines values (values of civic culture) that are seriously missing from the present reality of water planning in Hungary. Moreover, it is in close relation to the discursive rationality and the idea of communicative action as it creates a communication community, space that is used for planning, action and reflection. It has a disadvantage (or advantage), that it can only work on small scale, and only feasible with the involvement of small communities – as it requires closeness. Highly suitable for strategies on micro level and can be described with the words of John Stuart Mill as: “experiments in living”, as people can create new activities, roles, modes of social organization for themselves (Fishkin, 2009). As mentioned emancipation from the given contexts (from existing traditions, norms and culture) is possible (with the help of deliberative citizen initiatives, like action research and with the help of foreign investors and educators). Caring about our own water resources means caring about what happens in our own backyard. At a micro level, we can get less distorted information, than at higher levels. Living close to the source has its benefits. Our waters belong to all of us, and we will eventually co-produce our future together. It is better in unlimited communication communities with transparent systems, than with manipulated (by propaganda) population of an illiberal democracy.

It is crucial to experiment with community-based actions, where direct communication is possible. The ordinary Hungarian citizen could not grow into informed citizen overnight (as it was said by one of the interviewed citizens) but it is time.

To relevance of this paper, Anthony Giddens see a fundamental difference between the function of culture and social Learning (Giddens, 1981). Based on his thoughts Pahl Wostl made the distinction with the utilization of the concepts of structure and agency (Pahl Wostl,2007). Social learning can be seen as agency, and culture as

structure. According to this view culture is dependent on social learning, as it is reproduced by this transformative process (which consists of several sub-processes). Taking the unit of a small community, the interactions among people on a local/micro level affect the macro level as well. Systematic changes are slow, but possible and can be change can be encouraged. People can start at the lowest possible level, at the level of individuals. Democracy is dependent on the willingness of the people to learn, to develop their views, especially on such important questions as the management of water resources. It is crucial that citizens of Hungary get a clear understanding of their closest environment and become more informed citizens. Know, “what they want and need” (Rostbøll, 2008, p194) and know that there is no absolute truth (Beck,2002) and procedures can be fallible (Rostbøll,2008) but mistakes are useful resources to improve future action and learn..

Without forums they cannot develop their deliberative skills (such as active listening, provide rational argument) and they cannot contest views through dialogues. Discussion itself would provide them with a learning experience, also would function as an integrating force. A discursive opinion-forming process (Habermas, 1996:179) cannot happen without space. These platforms are almost non-existence in the country that is why there is no circular communication, just a one-way transmission from the state (central steering from above). People know that their opinion is not considered, so they do not need the feel to develop their skills, as they cannot exercise them or collaborate for problem-solving. As it was mentioned, only circularity would make it possible to achieve progress, but there is no real starting point and willingness. Thoughts and values can only be translated into societal improvement if there is a system that is open to reabsorb the opinion of the citizens. Regardless the fact that there is no real culture of deliberation in Hungary, social learning (based on Habermas’ concept) can be the answer to many questions and can shape the future development of water management. More broadly, social learning can foster some democratic success. (Holma, 2015). Perhaps the most urgent task is to create new platforms (for example educational platforms) to provide a good chance for people to grow into well informed citizens.

General remarks

“Water flows upwards forwards power” (GWP, 2000)

Sadly, nowadays the education system of Hungary is not doing well, which is evidenced in PISA results (that indicates that 78% of the students are determined by their socio-cultural background). Education is still a mere transmission of abstract information without practice orientation. There is an African proverb which says that "it takes a whole village to educate a child". It means that it is the responsibility of the whole community to educate the members well, and the future will be dependent on how well they are doing their job.

According to this thesis the Hungarian decision-making system is not concerned with public participation there is no principled decision making. There is no intention to create a meaningful dialogue between policy makers and the general public. No shift from government to governance. Public input cannot enrich water planning and resources are wasted on meaningless procedures. There is a huge gap between public input from citizens and Government.



Figure 14: Gap between the government and the citizens

The general participation level in river basin management planning is low. Using the most common tool Arnstein's (1969) ladder it can be illustrated. According to the empirical findings the participation level in water planning is at the level of non-participation, more specifically at the level of manipulation (in case of Paks II).

Arnstein's ladder
(1969)

Three levels of
public participation,
(WFD Guidance doc. no8)

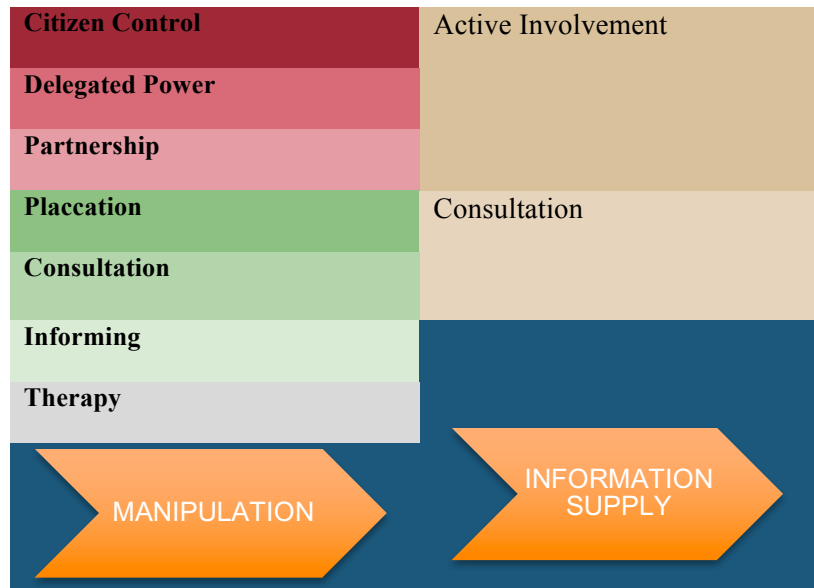


Table 6. 'Own model after Arnstein, 1969'

Almost all respondents agreed that governmental bodies mostly support the elite stakeholders. That does not help to "avoid corruption," "independent" knowledge is rarely integrated, but the general public is almost always excluded from the planning/discussion. Often, they are not even informed, which means that we are on the manipulation level on the ladder of Arnstein, like in case of PaksII. If we investigate the democratic deficit of Hungary in general it can be said that there is a very thin democracy, the horizontal dimension is almost non-existent. It is a far cry from Barber's strong democracy (Barber, 1984). Currently, there is no real chance for citizens' voices to get into the system, shaking up existing patterns. Water management remains an elite project which is not free from governmental interference and manipulation, as it would have been required by the Habermasian frame. Only micro-cosmic deliberation can be a reality (for example: town meetings). Below there is a table which lists the proposed tasks of citizens (highlighted with blue).

Authorities	Citizens	communication
Inform (web site, leaflet, open events)-	Inquire	one way
Consult (surveys, public meetings, focus groups)	Propose Express Opinions	two way
Involve (stakeholder workshops, deliberative polls, citizens juries)	Discuss Deliberate	two way
Collaborate (Participatory decision making – advisory groups and committees)	Continuous Involvement	deliberative
Empower – deliberative democracy delegations	Assume Responsibility	deliberative

People centred views and studies needed in the future. In line with Margerum’s lowest level, let the local people solve issues, as they are aware of solutions and can do so. Citizens initiatives may trigger changes. Democracy needs active citizens. Local communities can invite foreign educators (who can teach social learning theories). People will listen if their own water and community are involved. In the smallest possible units, there is still a closeness. These initiatives would be dependent on the result of small-scale deliberative debates. Citizens would ‘vote’ for projects to be done by community effort. This bottom-up direction would eliminate top-down pressure and bad "reflexes". People would protect their waters not because they have to do it, but because they want to. That way the inflexibility of the central steering would not be absolute. Promoting this notion people would be able to have a "we-perspective" (Rostbøll,2008), as envisioned by Jürgen Habermas. During learning (education), experimental projects (participatory action research projects) and events (workshops), skills would be developed. The members of the communities would realize that they can act together, deliberatively for a joint purpose.

Habermas celebrates civil society because he discovered the potential of idea sharing and communication with direct discursive ethics. Civic initiatives would be in line with the participative ideals and can complement the WFD requirements. Participating in a town hall meeting or having a dialogue with a neighbour can encourage change, but there must be a clearly defined common goal. Each day we must remind ourselves:

“...there is only what each of us is willing to do” (Robert Redford, 2017)

Conclusion

Good participatory practices are considered to enhance the odds of a well-functioning democracy. But democratic governance is not a necessary outcome of the mandatory utilization of participatory processes required by the Water Framework Directive. One of the most important conditions to citizen participation is the existence of a strong civil sector, but it is not present in Hungary, because the country has no real experience with democracy. And the pattern for low civic engagement is deeply embedded in false understanding of democracy.

There is no real tradition of public participation in the country and there is a lack of deliberative culture because of the historical and political context. That is why the thesis aimed to examine the current views on public participation in connection with water planning. Opinion of the general public and key informants was investigated in order to identify the underlying reasons of the low level of participation in the country. It was concluded that general citizens do have a basic understanding of what participation in general means, but they need encouragement and more information in order to articulate their opinion more accurately. Most of the questioned citizens were not informed about the participative possibilities in connection with the WFD, but they did identify possible advantages and disadvantages of the concept. In contrast, the views of professionals were much more detailed and guided the thematic analysis of the paper. The main finding is that there must be space for social learning in water management to establish a more democratic and participative system in the country. Case by case. Only through communicative acts can citizens play a meaningful role in water planning.

The Habermasian discursive rationality as an ideal should motivates us to express ourselves. That is the way we can confront past mistakes, tragedies, social ideas, platitudes and lies. Andrew Feldmar said that the “communication which does not lead to new action is not communication”. In the era of soundbites, headlines, low knowledge, phantom opinions the value of face-to-face communication is higher than ever. There is a need to have real discussions. instead of formal processes (with one way information flow).

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Acknowledgements

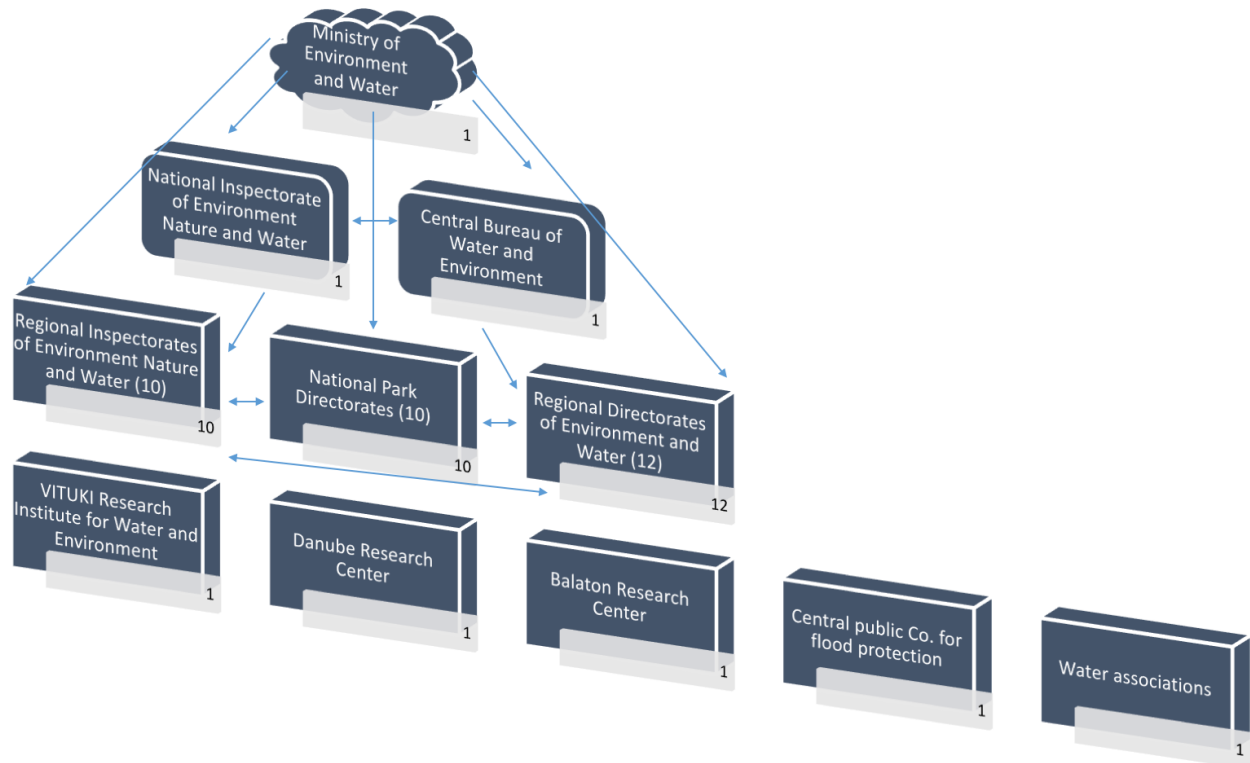
I would like to thank my main supervisor, Hans Peter Hansen, for his continuous help and invaluable support. His positive spirit helped me through the difficulties of this thesis process and I consider him an excellent supervisor.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my co-supervisor, Bjarne W. Strobel and my examiner, Erica Von Essen for reading and commenting on this paper.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for being there for me and I would like to dedicate this paper to the memory of our beloved dog, Scotty.

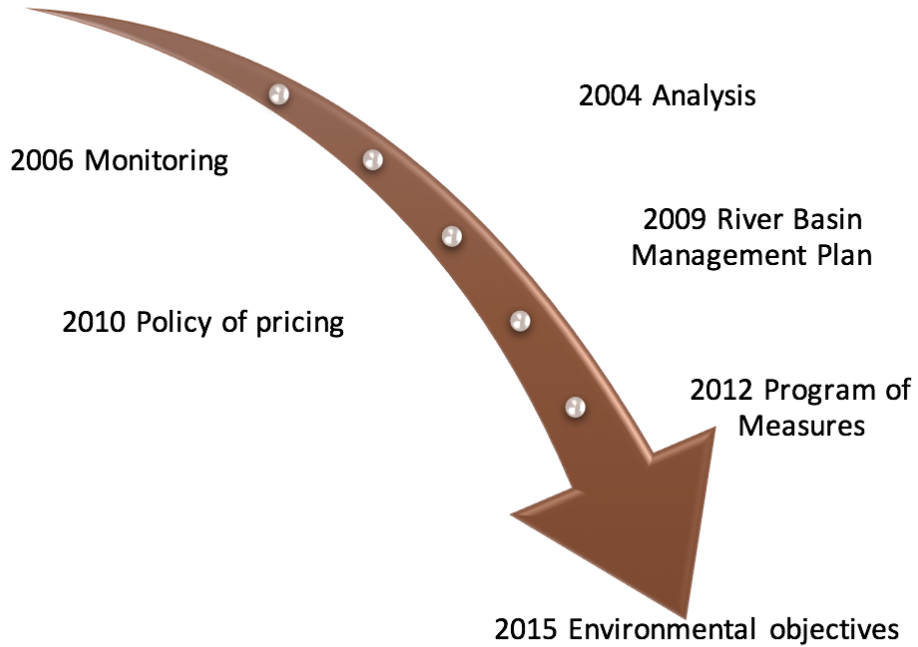
Appendix 1

Here is a schematic overview about the organizational structure:



Appendix 2

2003 Designating the River
Basin Districts and sub units



Timeline of the implementation of the WFD (own made)